

# Water Use in Central Asia: Cooperation with some Conflict

CAWAMNET Workshop - Central Asian Water Conflict and Migration Network

27-28 April 2023 – Dr. Caroline Milow

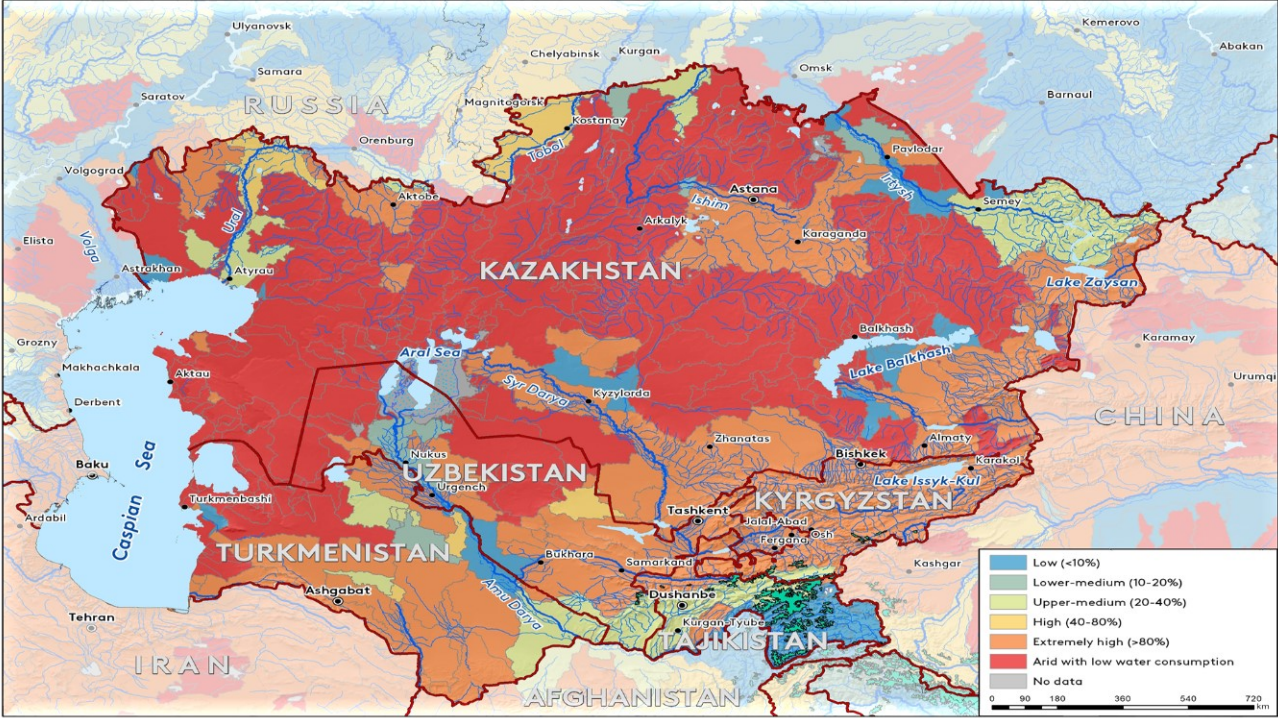


# Agenda

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- **Challenges in Central Asia – International Interest in Central Asia**
- **Central Asia in international processes**
- **Different Levels of Cooperation**
- **Potential Conflicts**
- **Way ahead for Cooperation**
- **Tools / Approaches (Berlin Process, Green Central Asia)**
- **Questions & Answers**

# Climate Change Impact in Central Asia – Water Stress



Source: Eurasian Development Bank, Investment in the Energy and Water Complex of CA

## Additional Challenges in Central Asia



Break-up of the Soviet Union & Economic Crisis



Political changes & nation building: zero-sum game versus the win-win situation



Brain drain and lacking capacities (time needed for new ideas to take root – water diplomacy)



International cooperation: CA as a strategic region between East and West



Water cooperation or conflict with Afghanistan



Climate change



Population growth

# International stakeholders - Cooperation on Water in Central Asia

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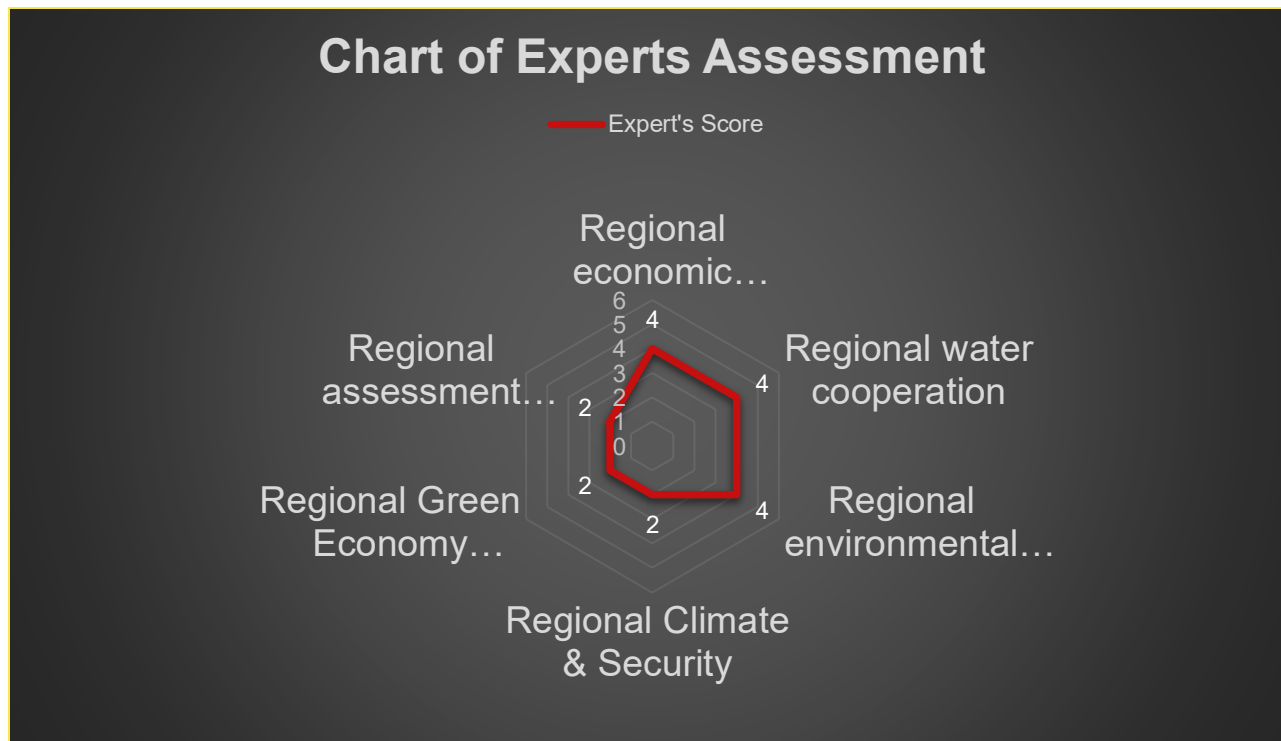
- IFAS (ICWC, ICSD)
- United Nations: UNRCCA, UNECE, UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO, et al.
- EU
- OSCE
- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
- CIS
- Eurasian Economic Union
- Bilateral Development Agencies



# Central Asia featuring in international political cooperation processes

- EU-Central Asia Strategy – New opportunities for a stronger partnership, June 2019
- United States Strategy for Central Asia 2019-2025 - Advancing Sovereignty and Economic Prosperity
- The “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue was launched in August 2004 as a framework for dialogue and cooperation between Japan and the five Central Asian countries. Japan has supported regional cooperation in Central Asia through this dialogue as a "catalyst", from the point of view that regional cooperation for solving common challenges is essential for the “open, stable and self-sustained” development of Central Asia.
- China’s Belt and Road Initiative (2013)
- The “Connect Central Asia Policy” (CCAP) was unveiled at the first meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue, a Track II initiative, held from June 12-13, 2012 in Bishkek to fast-track India’s relations with the Central Asian states. Occurs on regular basis.
- Sendai Framework Program for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 was adopted by CA countries and is implemented through National Disaster Risk Reduction programs and strategies.
- Regular meetings of the 5 CA Presidents

## General Cooperation by Different Sectors



## Bilateral Water Cooperation (not complete)

Agreement on cooperation in the field of rational use of water and energy resources: TJK, UZB

Agreement on the use of interstate water facilities on the Chu and Talas Rivers, 2000: KZ, KG

Joint Turkmen-Uzbek Intergovernmental Commission on Water Issues, 2019

Roadmap on cooperation in the field of water relations between KAZ and UZB, 2020

Agreement between the Governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic on the use of interstate water facilities on the Chu and Talas Rivers

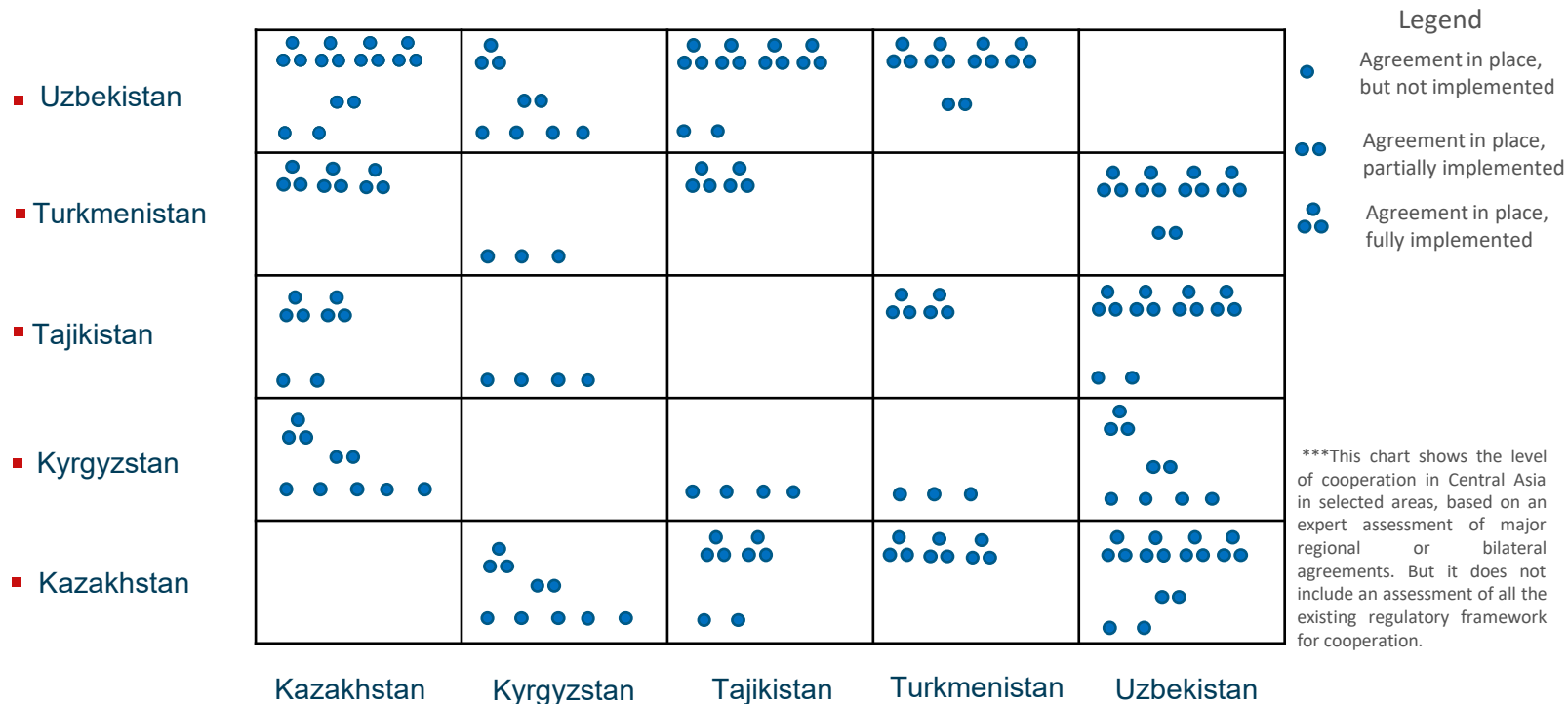
Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on the interstate use of the Orto-Tokoy (Kasansay) Reservoir

Agreement between the Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources Turkmenistan on cooperation on water management issues

Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on cooperation to ensure the functioning of the Farhad Dam, 2018: UZB, TJK



# Central Asia Regional Water Cooperation



## Regional Water Cooperation



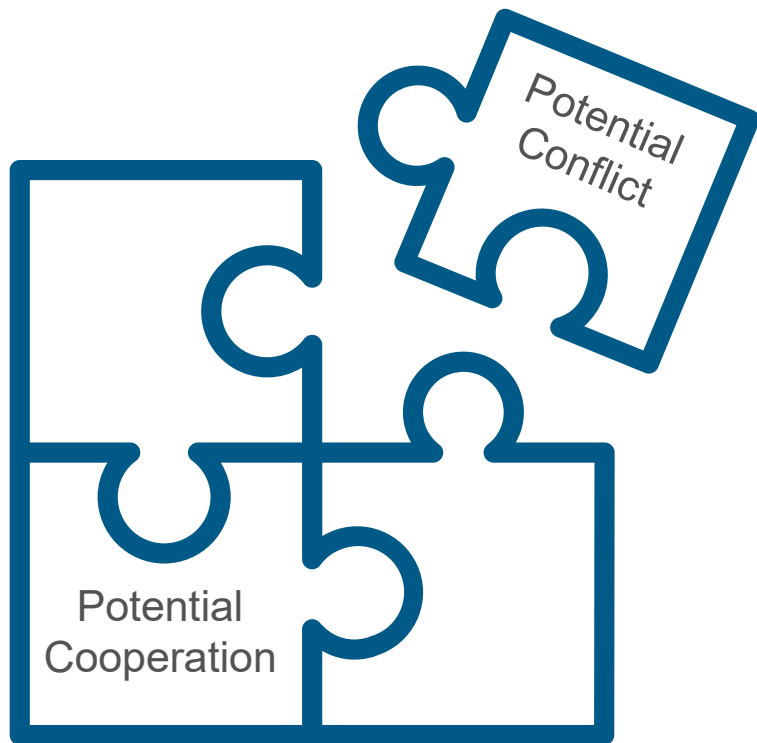
- International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) and its organizations, Ashgabad, 1999: KZ, TJK, TKM, UZB, (KG)
- The Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) and BWOs Amudarya and Syrdarya: KZ, TJK, TKM, UZB, (KG)
- Agreement on cooperation in the field of joint management of use and protection of water resources of interstate sources, Almaty, 1992: KZ, TJK, TKM, UZB
- Agreement on the use of fuel, energy and water resources, construction, operation of gas pipelines in the Central Asian region, Tashkent, 1996: KZ, KG, UZB

## International Water Cooperation

- Energy Charter
- UNFCCC and Paris Agreement
- Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, Helsinki: KZ, TKM, UZB

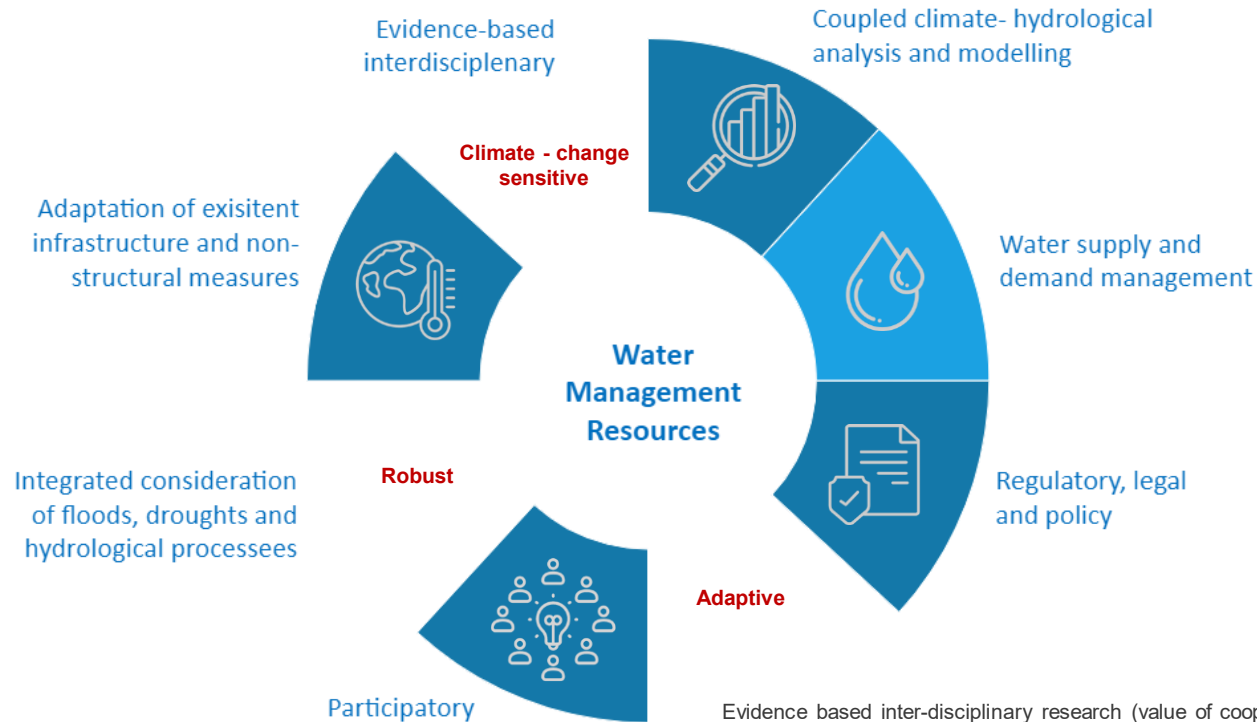


- ➡ Strengthens good governance
- ➡ Strengthens water management (IWRM – cross-sectoral approach)
- ➡ Fosters energy exchange between countries
- ➡ Improves climate change mitigation and adaptation for a sustainable future
- ➡ Increases economic development (costs of inaction)



- Joint investments
- Uzbekistan could take part in the construction of the Rogun hydropower plant, which was discussed in a joint statement by the presidents of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Emomali Rakhmon, signed after the talks in Dushanbe in March 2018 and later – **question of joint management!!**
- Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic signed an agreement on joint preparation of the investment project "Construction of Kambarata HPP-1. – **question of joint management!!**
- Potential NEXUS projects on transboundary water issues (energy, water, food security)
- Understanding international water law (payment for services, not volumes)
- Water allocation and energy exchange between CA countries, application of IWRM
- Afghanistan: Qosh Tepa Canal
- Cooperation in production, removing trade barriers (Jan-Feb 2021: only 18,5% of Uzbekistan's trade was with CA), free flow of people and goods, etc.

# The Way Ahead for Cooperation - Innovative Approaches to Adaptive Water Management



Evidence based inter-disciplinary research (value of cooperation between natural and social sciences)

©Ramesh S.V. Teegavarapu, Elpida Kolokytha, Carlos De Oliveira Galvao, Climate Change Sensitive Water Resources Management, 2022

## The way ahead - innovative approaches to adaptive water management (2)

Accurate data and coupled climate-hydrology analysis and modelling

Water supply and demand management

Integrated consideration of floods, droughts, and hydrological processes

Regulatory, legal, and policy approaches (obstacles in implementation, need for further integration):

Adaptation of existent water resources infrastructure and non-structural measures

Participatory approaches, the role of end-users and stakeholders (informed citizens)

- Collaboration and joint work across different levels of governance (local, regional, central/nations)
- Coordinated governance of adaptive management strategies and policies, which must work both vertically and crosswise in the geographic jurisdiction of a river basin/aquifer
- Institutional integration in terms of recognising successful actions and improving transparency and accountability
- Recognition and consideration of the large uncertainties underlying the current and future states of both natural and social systems in policy formulation and implementation.



# Berlin Process

- Duration: spring 2009 to August 2020
- 2007 first EU-CA Strategy, contribution

- 2008 Frank Walter Steinmeier: Water Unites Conference Berlin

- Several high-level conferences in Berlin – Berlin Declaration
- Continuation with Green Central Asia Initiative

Transboundary Water Management in  
Central Asia Programme



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## Berlin Process

### Success Story



### Why?

- Intervention on three levels: international/regional – basin level/national – local
- Mix of water diplomacy – capacity development – pilot projects as best practice examples
- Time for trust building

## Negotiations happened on different levels



Minister and Deputy  
Minister Level

2008 - 2012  
2015 - 2017 - 2020

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Joint declarations signed  
on a political basis



High-level conferences in  
Berlin and Central Asia



## Negotiations - 2

### Regional working groups and conferences



- IFAS and its sub-organisations: regional working groups on IFAS level for legal reform and ASBP-4 (cooperation between national/regional and international experts)
- Negotiations between ICWC and ICSD and their SICs on a joint information space
- Working group on cooperation between BWO Amu Darya and BWO Syrdarya and their branch offices in the CA countries
- Capacity building on different technical topics and water diplomacy together with Foreign Office and int. partners

## Negotiations - 3



### On bilateral and trilateral level

UZB-KYR joint permanent commission on the interstate use of the Orto-Tokoi (Kasansay) Reservoir in the Ala-Buka District of Jala-Abad Region; support to government negotiations (i.e. TKM-AFG; Uzbek-Kazakh working group on transboundary cooperation at the Syr Darya River) - Fergana Valley KYR-TAJ-UZB with joint declaration

### On local level

Ministry of Water Resources – Basin  
Irrigation System Administrations – Water  
Users Associations





## How to build bridges?



### Tools for Negotiations

Different negotiations need different tools/approaches

- A joint basis, for instance, MoU (regional organisations)
- Garner political support on all levels, work on all levels – not only at the negotiating table (including capacity building)
- Prepare draft concepts/documents between national, regional and international experts (never only one)
- Nomination of focal points (continuity of negotiators)
- Try to find support – look for partners, international donor coordination, etc.
- Accept political/cultural background
- Try for win-win situations and explain to all what you are seeking
- Transparency, not secret diplomacy



# Green Central Asia

The overall goal of the initiative is conflict prevention and strengthening transboundary cooperation on climate impacts in Central Asia.



**Project goal:** A regional political dialogue on questions of environmental and climate-related security risks has been established.

# Green Central Asia Initiative - Structure

## POLICY DIALOGUE



- Joint Regional Action Plan (adopted)
- High-level dialogue
- Working groups (glaciers, water-energy mechanism, e-waste)
- Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

## REGIONAL PRIORITIES



- IWRM / Water Diplomacy
- Land management (biodiversity, desertification, nature protection areas)
- International environment instruments
- Waste Management (e-waste, circular economy)

## CAPACITY BUILDING



- Elaboration of forecasting tools
- Training on modelling and forecasting tools
- Tashkent Water Security Lectures
- Silk Road of Knowledge Conference Series

# Germany's engagement in Central Asia – ,green' portfolio

## *Commissioning Ministries*



- Federal Foreign Office (AA)
- Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ)
- Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV)
- Federal Ministry of Research and Education (BMBF)

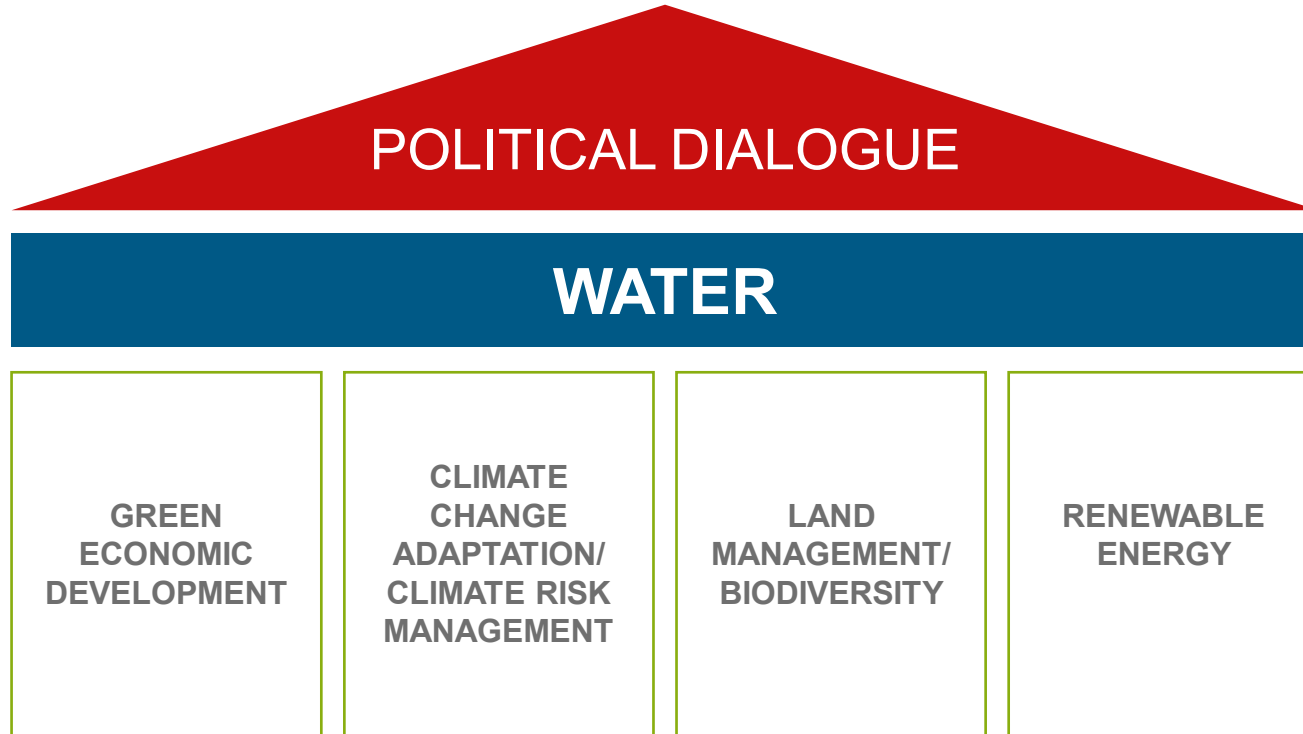
## *In close cooperation with the Central Asian Partner Countries engagement on:*

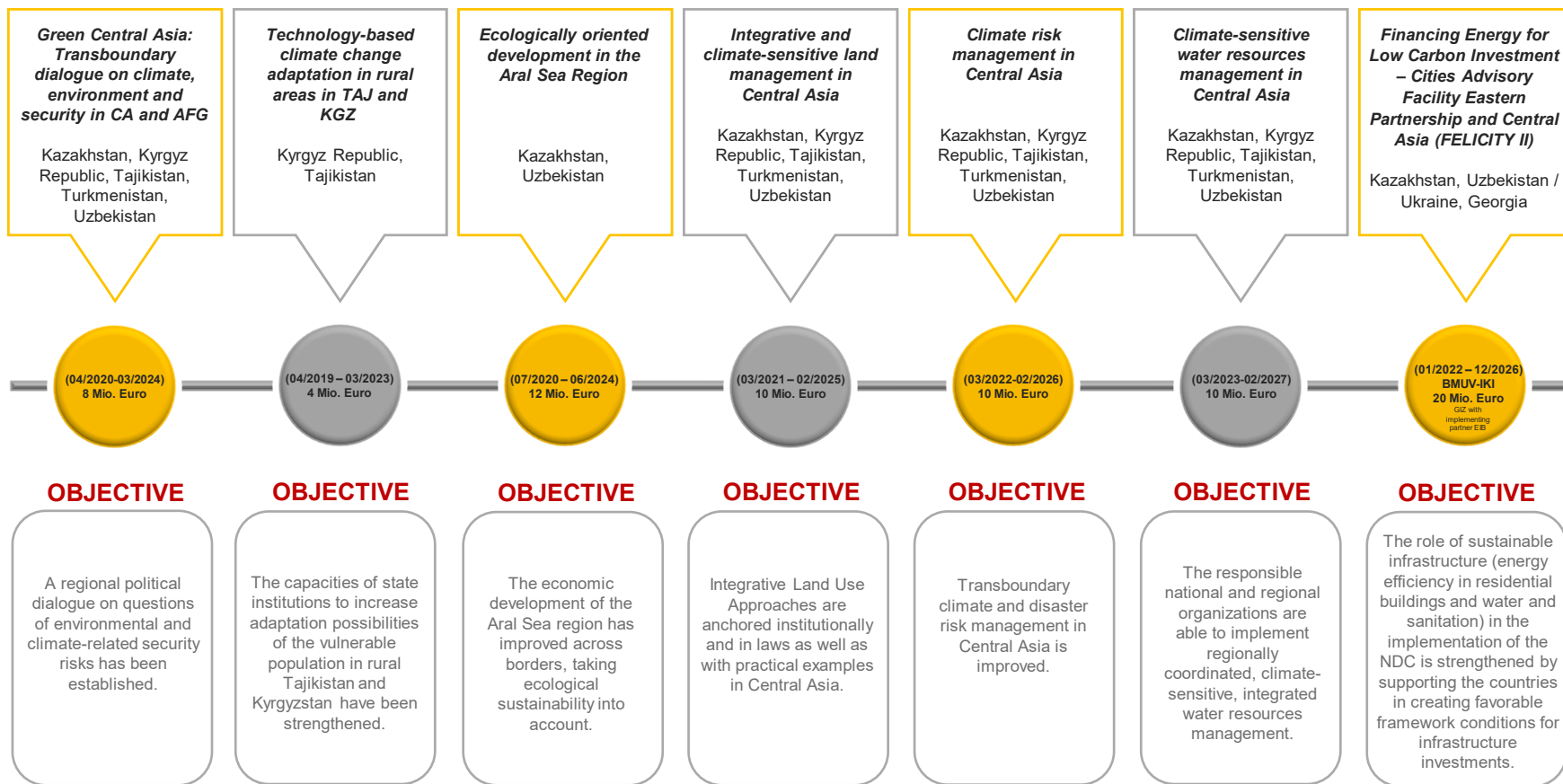


- Improvement of framework conditions for integrative land use approaches
- Development of national spatial data infrastructures
- Establishment of transboundary cooperation mechanisms
- Strengthening of transboundary protected area management
- Improvement of regional water management
- Improvement of transboundary climate and disaster risk management
- Capacity building, knowledge management and information exchange

## Germany's ,green' portfolio in Central Asia

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The background of the slide is a photograph of a long, multi-span truss bridge crossing a wide body of water. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds, suggesting an overcast day. In the foreground, a large, white, semi-transparent geometric shape, resembling a stylized 'A' or a large triangle, is superimposed over the image. This shape serves as a backdrop for the text.

# Questions?

## Thank you very much for your attention!



# Contact



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