

CONCEPT

International Forum "Dialogue for Sustainable Green Development: Investing in a Shared Future"

Date: March 30, 2026 (*dedicated to the International Day of Forests*)

Venue: Republic of Uzbekistan, Tashkent – Central Asian Green University

Organizers: National Committee for Ecology and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Agency for Forest and Green Zone Expansion and Desertification Control.

Languages: Russian, English

Format: Hybrid (offline and online panels)

Background

Forest ecosystems in Central Asia (CA) occupy a relatively small area but they claim strategic importance for the region's survival. They serve as a barrier against desertification, regulate river flow, and protect biodiversity. However, today the forest fund of Central Asian countries is under unprecedented pressure.

- **Degradation and Desertification:** More than 60% of the region's territory is subject to desertification processes. Anthropogenic pressure (overgrazing, illegal logging for fuel) leads to the loss of relict forests.

- **Climate Change:** The rate of warming in CA is higher than the global average. The melting of glaciers in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (up to 30–40% of volume in recent decades) directly reduces water availability for reforestation in the lower reaches of rivers.

- **Transboundary Dust Storms:** The drying up of the Aral Sea has created the new Aralkum Desert, from which salt and dust are carried for thousands of kilometers, suppressing agriculture and forest plantations throughout the region.

Central Asian countries have accumulated unique experience that requires scaling:

- Uzbekistan is successfully implementing the nationwide "Yashil Makon" project and creating a "green shield" on the bed of the Aral Sea (1.7 million hectares). In 2025, an IUCN office was opened in Tashkent to coordinate conservation efforts in CA.

- Kazakhstan is carrying out a large-scale program to plant 2 billion trees, implementing the "Taza Kazakhstan" concept (2024–2029), and actively working on creating carbon offsets in the forest sector.

- Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan focus on preserving unique forests (Arslanbob) and high-mountain ecosystems. They are developing mechanisms for adaptation to glacier melting through afforestation of mountain slopes to retain moisture.

- Turkmenistan possesses unique experience in afforestation in the hyper-arid conditions of the Karakum Desert and in creating "green belts" around cities.

Despite the presence of national programs, the region faces systemic barriers:

- **Water Resource Deficit:** Traditional forest planting methods are becoming ineffective; a collective transition to water-saving technologies is necessary.

- **Financing:** The volume of international climate finance in the region's forest sector remains below potential due to the lack of unified regional projects.

- **Technology:** There is a need for a unified digital platform for forest monitoring and the exchange of seed stock adapted to climate change.

Relevance of the Forum

The hosting of the "Dialogue for Sustainable Green Development: Investing in a Shared Future" Forum in Tashkent is justified by the need to move from isolated national strategies to **Integrated Forest Landscape Management**. This will allow Central Asian countries to act as a united front at global platforms (such as COP29 and COP30) to attract "green" resources.

Furthermore, global warming, water scarcity, and transboundary environmental challenges require the combined efforts of Central Asian countries and development partners to attract green investments and implement innovative water-saving technologies in the forest sector.

Objectives of the Forum

The forum aims to create a unified regional platform for sharing experience, attracting resources, and developing joint strategies for the conservation and expansion of the forest fund.

Key Tasks:

1. Development of regional projects for forest development and expansion.
2. Attracting grants and concessional financing from international institutions (World Bank, ADB, Green Climate Fund, etc.) for reforestation projects.
3. Discussing the role of forests in the carbon balance and the development of the "carbon credits" market.

4. Creating a network of seed banks for Central Asian countries.

Thematic Areas (Panel Sessions)

Plenary Session: Forests as a Driver of a Sustainable Economy: International Cooperation for Shared Development

- Mechanisms for attracting direct investment into the forestry industry.
- Carbon neutrality: creating a regional certification system for forest offsets.
- ESG projects: partnership with the private sector (Acta Climate, Sinoway Forest).
- Water-saving technologies: from hydrogels to smart drip irrigation.
- Use of satellite data and UAVs for forest inventory (in collaboration with FAO and IUFRO).
- Creating a digital platform for seed fund exchange and AI implementation.
- The role of the academic community in project implementation.
- The experience of the "Great Green Wall" (China) and its adaptation to Aralkum conditions, etc.

Participants

This forum, organized by the Agency for Forest and Green Zone Expansion and Desertification Control under the National Committee for Ecology and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan, will bring together leaders and representatives of state bodies of Central Asian countries responsible for the development and implementation of forestry policy.

Specifically, participation is expected from:

- Heads of ministries and departments from Central Asian countries, Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Latvia, the USA, China, Turkey, Korea, etc.
- Experts from international organizations and bank representatives (CAREC, FAO, FDA, KOICA, JICA, World Bank, EBRD, IDB, ADB, IFC).
- Representatives of foreign forestry research institutes.
- Investors and private sector representatives interested in ESG projects: Acta Climate, Sinoway Forest.