

FINAL THEMATIC REPORT ON KEY RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNT (2020-2022)



TASHKENT
2022

UNDP/FCDO project “Policy Action for Climate Security in Central Asia, Phases I and II

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UNDP assistance to Uzbekistan is aimed at achieving common interrelated goals: supporting the Government in accelerating reforms in the field of sustainable economic development, good governance, climate change adaptation and environmental protection.

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List of Abbreviations

CAREC	Central Asian Regional Environmental Center
COP	Conference of the Parties
COP26	26th Conference of the Parties
CSSF	UK Stability and Security Fund
FCDO	Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
IDU	International Digital University
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDC2	2nd Nationally Determined Contributions
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Introduction

The regional UNDP/FCDO project “Policy action for climate security in Central Asia” aimed to enhance policy action for climate security in Central Asia through supporting more robust and coherent climate change action and increasing public awareness. The project targeted Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and led by UNDP Kyrgyzstan in close cooperation with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO, UK). It was a part of the larger overarching framework supported by the regional FCDO Climate Program and contributed to stronger COP26 commitments.

The project was implemented in two phases. Phase I was run in 2020-2021 and Phase 2 in 2021-2022. The current document is a Final Thematic Report that presents the results achieved by the project within the two phases, lessons learnt from the project implementation and impact and sustainability of the results on enhancing policy action for climate security in Central Asia through supporting more robust and coherent climate change action and increasing public awareness.

Phase I work focused on the three main outcomes:

- Research for enhanced evidence-based and ambitious climate policy;
- Enhanced engagement with the Paris Agreement, NDCs, and UNFCCC;
- Education and public awareness raising.

Phase II work focused on the five main outcomes:

- Enhanced, targeted and relevant evidence-based information on climate change and its social and economic impacts available for national decision makers to ensure the formation of robust climate policy;
- Increased national engagement with the Paris Agreement and COP26 outcomes;
- Increased support among the government, journalists, young people and the public for climate action;
- Enhanced opportunities for attracting climate finance;
- Strengthening youth participation in climate-related policymaking.

Considering complex nature of the climate agenda the project has engaged various stakeholder groups such as international organizations, climate expert and research communities, government organizations of the countries engaged, representatives of the private sector and youth communities. Activities and events organized within the project framework received support from the marketing campaigns for raising public awareness and helped to buttress the achievement of the project outcomes in scale.

The COP26 held in Glasgow in November 2021 and its outcomes were the focus of all project scope of various activities. Hence, the phasing of the project included pre-COP and post-COP actions. While the project Phase 1 was focusing on support provided for the target

countries in preparation of their inputs for COP26, the Phase 2 was targeting the accelerated action in support of implementation of the second generation of more ambition Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC2) announced by Uzbekistan at the COP 26.

Marketing support was also at the core for increasing public awareness and advocacy for locally appropriate climate actions. As part of this component, the project had concentrated efforts on involvement of youth in its activities.

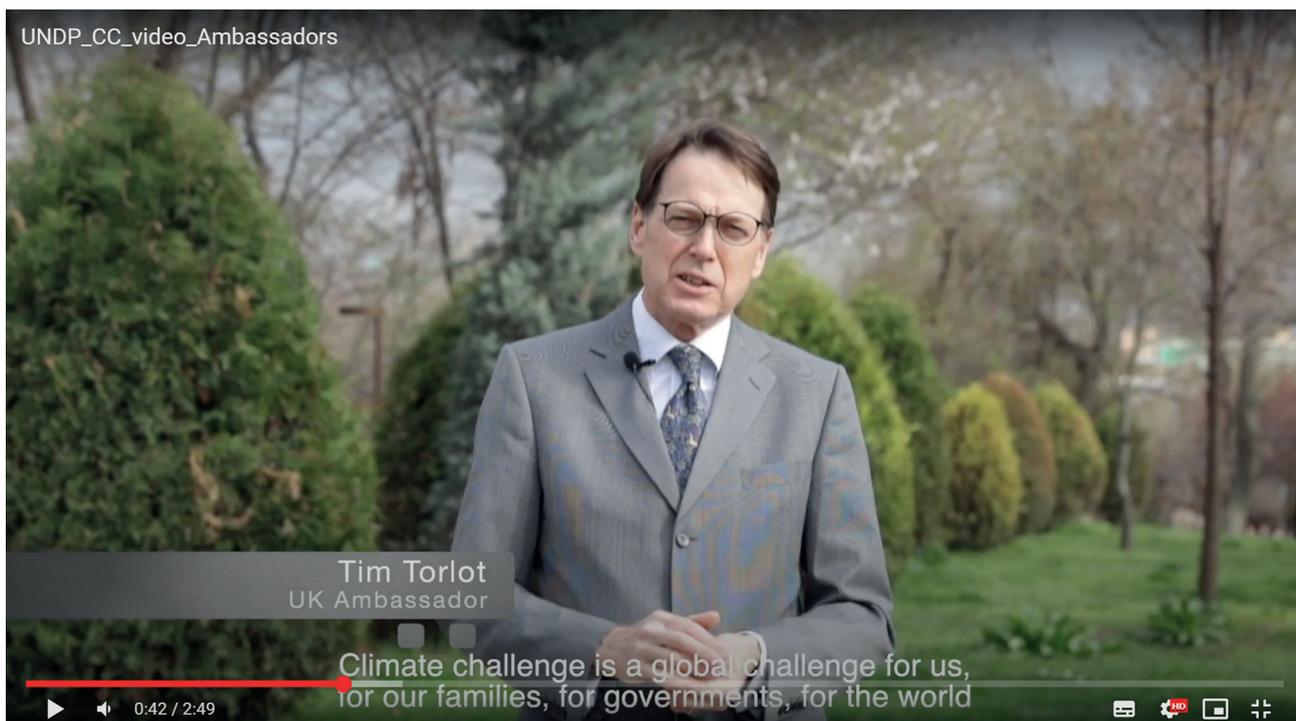
The outputs of the project were set to be achieved using appropriate strategy ensuring sustainability of the results and lead the target countries to enhanced climate action in the most appropriate ways, which are country specific, socially responsible and goal oriented, thus contributing to the global efforts in combatting the climate change.

The project has been able to achieve the stated results through events, activities, conferences, feedback sessions, round tables, research studies, surveys, study tours and preparation of reports all thoroughly supported by a media campaign to raise awareness of the public and enhance collective action. This section of the report outlines the main results achieved and their contribution to achieve the main project objective of enhancing policy action for climate security in Central Asia.

The overall strategy based on research supported actions, wider stakeholder engagement and dissemination of information, which was chosen for implementation of the project results was successful and allowed to reach the expected outputs.

Regional cooperation within the project framework

The project spanned the three countries of Central Asia: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Cooperation between the project teams and stakeholders took place at all stages of the project and ensured holistic, while targeted approach to reach the stated outcomes. Involvement of international experts have taken place at the project level to address the needs of the three countries. The experts worked towards the enabling rapid acceleration of efforts in the run-up to COP26 and laid the foundation for further government funded action and regional cooperation as required by Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan's commitments to Paris Agreement implementation.



The three countries despite their differences share a number of commonalities. Conducting the relevant research studies and formulation of capacity building and training strategy targeted the commonalities and differences identified in each specific case were instrumental for strengthening knowledge and experience sharing and climate action focused cooperation between the countries.

Analysis have shown that in all three countries the sectors most at risk are agriculture, energy and water resources, with women disproportionately affected, particularly in rural areas. Together with that, social, economic and institutional factors are increasing sensitivity to climate change in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The major achievement of the project Phase I was consolidated efforts to help the three nations to form stronger, reachable and sustainable commitments for COP26. The countries have submitted their enhanced commitments and publicized them in Glasgow, which have been well received by the global community and the countries were praised for their ambitious NDCs. The Republic of Uzbekistan communicated that it targets reducing the specific greenhouse gas emissions per unit of GDP by 35% below 2010 levels by 2030.

The project contributed to the regional and national climate action. The project enabled deployment of actions following COP 26 and helped to lay the foundation for post-COP26 required action and climate-focused cooperation in the Central Asia. The changes brought about through project implementation were country-specific, but well aligned for resonating the regional actions.



Stakeholder involvement determination took place at the national level and included government and non-government organizations, selection of public and private companies, ministries and agencies, universities, youth associations and various funds. At the regional level, the project involved Central Asian Regional Environmental Center (CAREC). Their participation was multifaceted and at two levels: national and regional. A number of conferences, events, feedback sessions, training activities and research studies involved stakeholders throughout the project implementation for maximizing impact.

Climate change impact and climate risks focused research and studies

The teams of international and local experts as well as specialists from the national partner government agencies such as the Center of Hydrometeorological Services of Uzbekistan (Uzhydromet) and other relevant government agencies were contributing to the preparation of scientific studies for the project. Research findings went through the process of validation with the wider community of stakeholders through a set of surveys and feedback events to make sure that the recommended actions find support in the communities and are feasible in their implementation. The events organized received support from the marketing campaigns in order to scale the outreach and have a well-rounded view of the communities on the recommended actions.

In 2021, considering the fact that the commitments related to the actions in climate change adaptation and mitigation made by the countries have a long-term impact on the national economy, development of infrastructure and social wellbeing of population, the project included the research activity on modelling to develop recommendations for the formation of new commitments of Uzbekistan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) undertaken under the Paris Agreement in 2021. This research provides the results of modeling and assessment of the three sectors - energy, agriculture and water management that are the key ones for low-carbon development in Uzbekistan.

They have been considered in the twofold: in terms of formation of a national socially-oriented model of transition to a green economy and, at the same time, the implementation of the international obligations committed nationally to reduce greenhouse gases emissions. The associated overall importance of these sectors for the Central Asia region and the need for appropriate concerted action was considered as well.

It was found that developing countries, achieving the greatest success in switching to a low-carbon development trajectory, managed to form a climate policy model that contributed to strengthening social progress, expanding employment, and increasing the average income of citizens of their countries. In the process of searching for such a model for Uzbekistan, findings suggest that large-scale investments in green technologies alone are not enough to transition to a low-carbon economy. Investments in green projects will be ineffective without proper strengthening of institutions, improving the macroeconomic environment, changing the priorities of economy, development policy aimed at reducing the pressure on nature resources, and diversifying the economy. As a result, an active climate policy is largely formed in the sectors of energy, agriculture and water resource management.

Also, the “Political Economy Analysis of Climate Action in Uzbekistan” was produced to understand pathways to and opportunities for effective and ambitious climate action, enhancement, and effective implementation of NDC, and complying with the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement requirements. The research was based on analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data collected during desk review of the country’s climate-related documentation, regulations, statistics, and relevant reports. The analysis has resulted in findings and recommendations on mitigation of GHG emissions, adaptation to climate change, and requirements for climate financing and transparency system.



Discussions of research outcomes

In 2022, the studies focused on climate projections for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in a changing world and climate risk management implications for energy infrastructure were conducted jointly by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) from UK and national experts. The study was facilitated by various rounds of consultations with international and national experts and government officials in the respective countries, and resulted in development of the two publications. The first one presents results of analysis of climate risk projections for the existing and planned generation and transmission infrastructure and produces country-specific good practice recommendations for reducing economic, social and environmental risks to energy infrastructure. The second one formulates opportunities and co-benefits of transitioning to a net zero economy and shares an overview of economic and energy needs, assess opportunities and co-benefits of adopting more renewable energy sources and outline country-specific challenges and potential opportunities to overcome them for each of the three countries.

National engagement with the Paris Agreement, NDCs, UNFCCC and COP26 outcomes

Within the project Phase I implemented within 2021, the project focus was on supporting the government of Uzbekistan in preparations to the COP26 that were held in Glasgow in November. This year was affected by the COVID pandemic, and the majority of the events were held in online mode. In February, the Center of Hydrometeorological Services of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Uzhydromet) was hosted an introductory national training on climate diplomacy, for representatives of and key ministries, departments and public organizations, and in October the online session on preparations of the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction for Side Event on Green development at COP26. OpED “People and Government of Uzbekistan take action to confront the climate crisis collectively” developed and posted on 1 November 2021.

Financial support using FCDO funding was provided for 7 members of Uzbekistan’s delegation attended COP26. During the COP26, the online thematic support was provided to the national delegation of Uzbekistan within the CA side event platform for:

- Climate Change Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 and adaptation to climate change session (Uzhydromet), 4 November 2021;
- Climate Change and Biodiversity in Uzbekistan session (Goscomecology), 8 November 2021;
- Green Economy Transition Strategy of Uzbekistan session (Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction), 9 November 2021;
- Sustainable development of Aral Sea region session (Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade), 9 November 2021;
- Uzbekistan’s second NDC session (Uzhydromet), 10 November 2021

The COP26 follow up meeting (online) with the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction was held on 2 December 2021. As a follow-up of the meeting, UNDP Country Office has been requested to support development of green development framework, including support in the further analysis of the medium and long-run GHG emissions reduction targets to achieve net zero carbon economy development. UNDP CO provides requested support through a dedicated project facility, funded by UNDP. Brief on COP26 key outcomes with consideration of Uzbekistan’s environment developed on 6 December 2021 and disseminated among the government agencies.

Phase II was focused on supporting of implementation of the commitments announced at COP26 by the Republic of Uzbekistan. The concept and roadmap on establishment of a national MRV system in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in accordance with the requirements of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement” were developed with support of the international consultancy and based on the available national data as well as best international practices. It was built on findings of review of existing methodologies on estimation of GHG emissions, national survey of private sector companies, and feedback collected during the sessions with

stakeholders on estimation of GHG emissions. The outcomes have resulted in justification for the creation of an MRV system of GHG emissions at the level of individual enterprises and companies in Uzbekistan.

A methodology on estimation of carbon footprint by SME and private companies was based on implementation of NDC2 under the Paris Climate Agreement. The methodology for calculating carbon dioxide emissions from direct combustion of fuel was chosen as a pilot one, since such emissions are most common in most industrial enterprises of the country. The purpose of this work was to adapt the international methodology for calculating carbon dioxide emissions from fuel combustion to the conditions of Uzbekistan, based on many years of experience in preparing a national GHG inventory. It was important to ensure that the developed methodology is compatible with the methodology of the national inventory and applicable for an individual enterprise to estimate its GHG emissions within the national MRV system that is to be established.

Uzbekistan intends to reduce specific greenhouse gas emissions per unit of GDP by 35% by 2030 from the 2010 level. The energy sector is the largest contributor (76.3%) to total greenhouse gas emissions. According to IMF estimates, in 2020, fossil fuel subsidies in Uzbekistan amounted to \$12,659.6 million or 21.5% of GDP. Most (85%) of subsidies are hidden and only a part (15%) is explicit. The Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan is committed to reforming fossil fuel subsidies in Uzbekistan to achieve the goals of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). In this regard, a brief on the trends and/or current efforts in undertaking the fossil fuel subsidy reductions in Belarus and formulation of recommendations, which are workable in the development context of Uzbekistan was developed with the international consultant support to unlock potential for fossil fuel subsidy reduction and re-direct them into development of renewable energy sector in Uzbekistan.

In 2022, the further support in increasing knowledge of national government agencies about the COPs architecture and preparations to the forthcoming COP27 will be held in Sharm-El-Sheikh (Egypt) in November 2022, two of workshops were designed and conducted for the Ministry of Energy staff represented the energy sector, which is the biggest GHG emitter but at the same time is being implementing a number of investment projects on construction of solar power plants and wind turbine parks to generate green energy.

Moreover, the COP26 provided strong underlying signals that the Paris Agreement is working. Therefore, it will be critical for COP27 to ensure an ambitious outcome that protects people and planet, and especially those on the frontlines of the climate crisis. To meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, it is essential for the biggest emitters, to increase ambition and deliver action on the ground. To support the key national partners in climate action and sustainable development, connecting the global discussions to programming on the ground on key issues, such as energy, mitigation, adaptation through capacity building and preparations of national delegates from Uzbekistan, the key outcomes of the UNFCCC Bonn Climate Change Conference held in June 2022 and expected agenda for the forthcoming COP27 were formulated in a brief with consideration of Uzbekistan's environment and presented by the national responsible agencies.

Climate education and youth engagement

In 2021, the national events, including “World Climate” activity based on a methodology developed by MIT University, were conducted in Tashkent and Urgench cities for students interested in climate change issues and seeking to contribute to their resolution.

Within the project Phase II in 2022, the students from various universities in Uzbekistan participated offline in eight national events included study tours and student conferences, and in two online regional events. The regional events involved students from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and were conducted using the “Climate Fresk” methodology developed based on IPCC reports and aiming at explaining the climate science to non-scientific audiences. Overall, more than 20 students from Uzbekistan benefited from participation in the regional events.



The ‘Climate Change Map’ seminar held in March 2022 was attended by the students from the International Digital University (IDU) and TEAM University to learn on what are the connections between various climate change problems, and how can these be solved with the use of modern technologies? Participating students worked on creating cause-and-effect maps which will help mitigate the consequences of climate change, and identify the contributions of human activities in its acceleration. They also developed prototypes of mobile and computer applications to increase public awareness and people’s better adaptation to adverse environmental phenomena associated with climate change.

In April 2022, the meeting of the members of the Volunteers Association of Uzbekistan and climate change experts was held in the format of the Café Scientifique in Tashkent. Climate

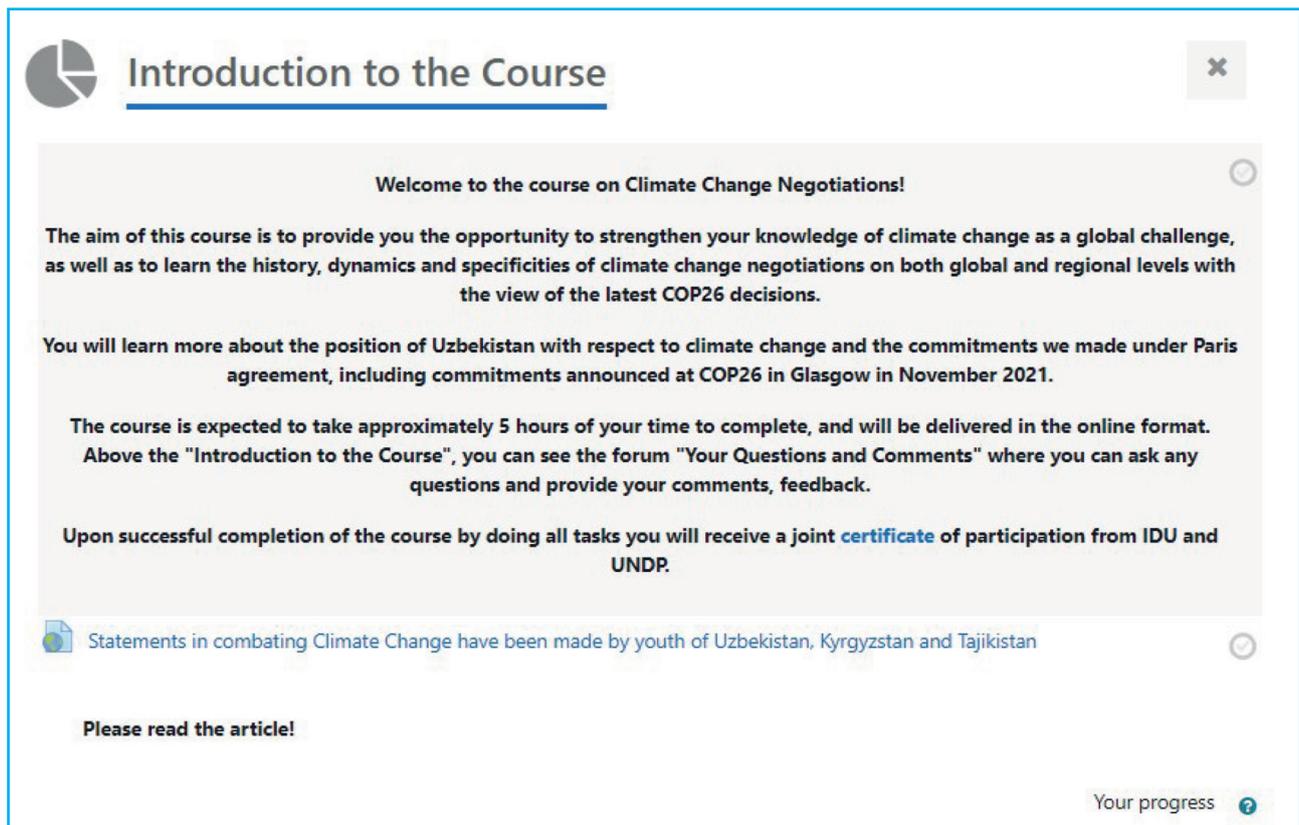


change impacts and possible ways of their mitigation and adaptation, the prehistory, root causes and actions required for the associated environmental protection action were discussed. *“I am under a great impression from what I have heard and discussed today, because until now I have never realized the magnitude of climate change caused by human activity. Uzbekistan has undertaken ambitious commitments on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, which cause the global climate warming. We, citizens of the country, should contribute into fulfilment of those commitments. I will be soon a young medical professional and fully realize that the climate change would affect the human health”,* - said Dilnoza Sulaymonova, a student from the Tashkent Pediatric Medical Institute, and a member of the Association.

Two online educational products resulted from the project expertise and served to raise awareness of the youth about the climate change. The first online course “Climate Change Negotiations” developed within the project Phase I in 2021 was focused on preparation to COP26 to raise awareness of the interested parties of climate change negotiations, Kyoto Protocol and Paris Climate Agreement.

While the second online course “Climate Change Negotiations and COP26 Outcomes” designed and launched within the project Phase II in 2022 was a logical follow up of COP26 and provided summaries of the main agreements reached at COP26 as well as familiarized the youth with the commitments taken by Uzbekistan. Regional engagement of youth ensued from both phases of the project and in addition to the national events students participated in regional conferences and educational activities, which involved youth of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Moodle platforms for two universities: TEAM University and IDU University in Tashkent, hosted the courses. Teaching involved both synchronous and asynchronous instructional methods as well as multimedia materials including audio, video, textual and interactive-online resources. Target audiences for both educational products were students from Uzbekistan. Student lifecycle starting from course registration to its completion were administered online. Synchronous activities were organized using zoom and made available to all the registered participants. The first course was delivered in the English language and targeted preparation to the international and regional climate change negotiations. The second course was available in three languages: English, Russian and Uzbek, and targeted enhanced action based on the COP26 outcomes and commitments communicated by Uzbekistan to the UNFCCC at COP 26.



The screenshot shows a Moodle course introduction page. At the top left is a circular logo with a stylized 'L' shape. The title 'Introduction to the Course' is centered at the top. Below the title is a large text box with the following content:

Welcome to the course on Climate Change Negotiations!

The aim of this course is to provide you the opportunity to strengthen your knowledge of climate change as a global challenge, as well as to learn the history, dynamics and specificities of climate change negotiations on both global and regional levels with the view of the latest COP26 decisions.

You will learn more about the position of Uzbekistan with respect to climate change and the commitments we made under Paris agreement, including commitments announced at COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021.

The course is expected to take approximately 5 hours of your time to complete, and will be delivered in the online format. Above the "Introduction to the Course", you can see the forum "Your Questions and Comments" where you can ask any questions and provide your comments, feedback.

Upon successful completion of the course by doing all tasks you will receive a joint **certificate of participation from IDU and UNDP.**

Below the text box is a link with a document icon: [Statements in combating Climate Change have been made by youth of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan](#)

At the bottom left, there is a button that says 'Please read the article!'. At the bottom right, there is a 'Your progress' indicator with a question mark icon.

Introduction section

Overall, there were 124 registration forms completed for "Climate Change Negotiations" in English and 298 registration forms for "Climate Change Negotiations and COP26 Outcomes" with 81 registrations for the course materials in the Uzbek language, 82 in the Russian language and 135 in the English language.

As part of the project activities, a survey of young people was conducted, in which more than a hundred students from various universities of Uzbekistan participated, who expressed their opinions on the climate change at the national and global levels.

The approach to the development of the youth-views survey was based on its goal that is to engage youth in the implementation of the climate agenda in Uzbekistan aimed at combating the global climate change challenge at the national level. The responses of young people to the survey's questions allowed to collect their opinions and determine the level of awareness about the required measures and actions to combat climate change, to which youth can make big contributions. Within the survey, participants also acquired basic knowledge of the outcomes of the 26th Conference Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Glasgow, UK in 2021 that were adopted by the world community.

Moreover, the youth awareness about climate change was raised through participation in seminars, round tables and study tours to renewable energy sites conducted withing this project.

Participants of the online courses were also actively engaged in a number of youth events at the national and regional levels. During phase I of the project a regional conference involving students from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan has resulted in development of a common youth statement termed *“Statement by the youth of the three Central Asian countries: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, – on measures for adaptation, mitigation, food and energy security.”* The statement was validated by the youth of the three countries and officially communicated to UNDP and FCDO for presentation at the COP26.

The youth-focused study tours were conducted to renewable energy sites and facilities such as the Institute “Physics of the Sun”, Electric buses depot, demonstration Nearly Zero Energy Building, Photovoltaic Power Stations, and private house equipped with PVs for electricity generation to the national grid. Overall, there were more than 100 participants of the study tours. In addition to those, students engaged in a number of activities aiming at solving the climate issues resulted in formulation of the Youth Statement as a potential youth of Uzbekistan contribution to implementation of NDC2 announced at COP26.



Regional Youth Cooperation

The success story on youth engagement for the lifelong climate action is given in the Annex to the Report.

Involvement of the youth and raising their awareness as well as knowledge in the area of climate change was analyzed by the project through survey of youth on education events, study tours and conferences. The report draws on the statements developed by the youth in May 2022 and cross validated through a survey of more than 100 participants of various thematic events and students who have gone through “Climate Change negotiations and COP26 outcomes” online course. Preparation of this report and involvement of the youth in its formulation helped to build a common understanding among the student-participants as well as identify their individual contributions in resolving the matters on the climate agenda.



During the implementation of the project Phase II in 2022, the youth focused activities were culminated with formulated of Uzbekistan's Youth Statement through working in groups, discussing the required measures and actions that they can contribute or implement to achieve the ambitious climate targets committed by Uzbekistan to contribute to the global GHG emission reductions pledges committed under the ratified Paris Agreement.



Study tours to renewable energy sites

Engagement of private sector

Climate action requires more than the government agenda, but concrete involvement of all public and private stakeholders including communities and actions at the level of individuals. The project has been successful in engagement of these groups in a diverse range of events, capacity building sessions and research. Stakeholders engaged within their respective groups as well as in the mixed setting to grow the momentum of cohesive and aligned climate action at all levels.



Private companies as a relatively new group in climate action, nonetheless have the highest potential in bringing about the changes at the level of the communities. Alternative energy sources and their prospective in the three Central Asian countries are well known. However, realizing their full potential using the market mechanisms was somewhat impeded by the regulatory framework of the respective countries. Considering the fact that energy prices are subsidized by the states, production of solar, wind and to a lesser extent hydro energy is regarded as less profitable. In the recent years, there were certain shifts in this approach and private sector companies as well as individual households received incentives to explore the alternative generation of power with the possibility to sell excess power to the grid.

Engagement of the private sector in climate action was one of the foci of the project and *“Recommendations for the private sector on participation in energy efficiency and renewable*

energy project, as a contribution to national climate change targets” document was developed based on the review of the current projects, state legislation and market analysis. The recommendations were shared with the representatives of the private sector and provided them with the guidance on their involvement facilitating more active and effective engagement in climate projects.

Greenhouse gas inventory is an essential part of implementing Uzbekistan’s national obligations within the UNFCCC. Such an inventory makes it possible to monitor progress in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement as well as to identify sectors of the national economy with the greatest potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In March 2022, the workshop was organized for private sector to learn from the national climate experts from Uzhydromet on why the IPCC approved methodology is crucial for monitoring and assessment of GHG emission status in the country.

“The private sector has two ways of contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through modernization of equipment and increasing carbon sink by expanding forested areas. Private companies should purchase more modern equipment that can increase energy efficiency and contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and also invest in forestry development. These measures will lead not only to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, but also improve the overall environmental situation in the country,” emphasized Zarif Garayev, Director of Energy Auditing company.



The increasing volume of municipal solid waste in rapidly growing cities has led to public concern about the resulting consequences for human health and the environment. In Uzbekistan waste is still disposed of inefficiently, despite solid waste disposal being an important component of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

A supplementary, separate analysis on the effectiveness of round table discussions and events related to the implementation of national commitments helped to determine their effectiveness. A vivid example of such analysis is the round table with the private sector representatives: utilization of solid waste conducted by the specialist from the State Committee for Ecology and Environment Protection, which draws upon the participation of stakeholders and their feedback during the relevant events. These studies provided justification for organization of round tables as they add value to such components as validity and reliability of the studies, validation of actions and their methodologies, raising public awareness, building common understanding among stakeholders and synchronizing actions.

Awareness raising campaign and mass media

All project activities were covered by PR and informational products in social networks, and national media within the awareness raising campaigns conducted within both phases of the project implementation: 24 project events that directly attended by 613 participants (52% of woman) were publicized through various information channels such as internet resources, press, youtube, social network, etc.

In April 2022, the meeting of the first-year students from the University of Journalism and Mass Communications of Uzbekistan with climate experts were conducted in the format of an open lesson on the topic “Critical thinking and fact-checking” to inform about the global problems associated with climate change and its consequences for humanity. “Over the past few years, the media space has seen an increase in the number of posts and articles containing false claims that climate change has not been confirmed by scientific knowledge. The authors of such materials take advantage of the audience’s insufficient level of critical thinking. That is why it is important for student journalists to be aware of climate change processes and their consequences in order to debunk myths and present information correctly,” concluded Lola Islamova, the University’s lecturer and journalist.

In the Fergana region, the mass media representatives and the climate expert from Uzhydromet met in the format of the Café Scientifique in May 2022. They discussed the global challenge of climate change, learned about the background, root causes, and required actions to address the environmental problems, and potential climate mitigation and adaptation efforts can be taken at the regional and national level.

Further on, the training “Non-standard solutions and tools in covering socially significant problems” was held in Bukhara where the well-known bloggers and journalists shared their skills in covering and promoting relevant topics in social networks.

Easy accessibility, simplicity of presentation, clear and unpretentious visual range, a space where you can express your point of view – that’s what blogging is. It is difficult to overestimate





the impact that bloggers have today. Blogging is always a personal choice and personal responsibility. 12 bloggers from Karshi, Samarkand and Bukhara united in their desire to gain skills in professional coverage of socially significant issues, including the problem of climate change.

Climate expert from Uzhydromet explained the problems associated with climate change at the global, regional and local level faced in Uzbekistan. There is evidence of increasing climate aridity and aggravating water scarcity in Uzbekistan, and if urgent resource-saving measures are not taken, the country will face associated health threats caused by more frequent and intensive heat waves and a lack of safe drinking water.

“Today we have witnessed the climate change impacts – a dust storm has passed in Bukhara and other cities of Uzbekistan. This is result of climate change, which will lead to more frequent droughts and other dangerous hydrometeorological phenomena, including mudflows, floods, landslides, have rains and winds, etc. It is important for bloggers to cover this undoubtedly important topic so that people change their behavior and take more care of water and energy resources,” - said Shakhnoza Sultonova, a young blogger from Samarkand.

To document the knowledge generated within the project activities, publications in English, Uzbek and Russian were produced, posted at UNDP Uzbekistan website and the regional web-platform, and shared with the national partners and project beneficiaries:

- Recommendations on development of monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system for greenhouse gases emissions in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan
- Pilot methodology on calculation of carbon dioxide emissions with consideration of Uzbekistan’s climate and economy features
- Private sector’s contribution to combating climate change in Uzbekistan
- Awareness of youth in Uzbekistan about climate actions and statement on youth views on contributions to combating climate change.

Gender representation



The principles of gender equity and parity supported the project implementation. All research studies/policy briefs developed, and the project took effective measures to ensure gender disaggregated data capture and promotion of gender-sensitive policymaking.

All the events conducted in the framework of the project have kept the gender representation in focus and ensured that both genders are adequately present in the project activities and events. Moreover, the marketing campaign directed its efforts to reach out to communities and make sure that women stakeholders are informed and have the opportunity to engage with the project and use its results.

Within the project Phase II, the twenty-four events were organized during the first and second quarters of 2022 with participation of 323 women (52% of all participants) and 290 men (48% of all participants). The youth online educational activities that targeted the students' population had 46% of female students participated in the Phase I and 36% in the Phase 2. Within the project Phase II, there were more male students due to the involvement of students from the technical universities, which are traditionally dominated by the male students.

However, project team encouraged participation of female students in all the events and activities. Offline educational events addressed the gender balance matter

through encouraging more female participation and at 10 offline events organized for the youth participation of female students was 40%.

Gender component was also strongly integrated with the research work conducted within the project and in the media campaign. The reports highlight recommendations, which are gender specific and media campaigns have specifically targeted female communities to disseminate information on the events and activities of the project. This fulfilled the promise of the project to produce climate evidence-based and gender-responsive knowledge products and attribute a significant role in informing and capacity building of government officials, civil society and academia so that to stimulate adjustments/changes to those policies or practices at institutional level to respond to the inequalities and any power imbalances.

Lessons learnt from project implementation

Implementation of the project has led to a number of lessons learned that can serve as a basis for development of new projects and the follow up actions formulated based on the project beneficiaries' feedback during the project Closing Workshop held on 29 June 2022.

The project Phase I (2021) has demonstrated that involvement of youth the project activities was successful and revealing. Youth-focused events were highly successful, and youth was identified as a key group for further engagement in promoting broader support for climate action during the project Phase II (2022). Young people are becoming actively involved in the climate agenda, they want their voice to be heard, and they want to participate in decision-making on national climate action plans. The youth engagement component included various educational activities and events aimed at raising awareness about climate change impact and capacity building for climate action. Within the project Phase I, the activities and educational materials were developed in the English language, while within the second phase in the English, Uzbek and Russian.

Despite participation of youth in the educational activities and events, regardless of the language, it was felt that using the three languages was more inclusive and allowed for more productive youth engagement. Students were preparing statements and working with the documentation in



the language of their choice and have provided positive feedback on the opportunity to choose the language for their outputs such as presentations, statements and participation in the discussions. “Climate Change Negotiations and COP26 outcomes” online course was made available in the three languages, although the majority of students have chosen the English language, choice of Uzbek and Russian languages combined have shown that more than 50% of students would prefer to undergo learning using these alternatives.

The project Phase I was important for the NDCs revisiting process in each country, due to the provision of resources and platforms for broader discussions involving academic and civil society organizations, diplomatic corps, media, and youth. The support provided contributed to formulation

of more ambitious, better aligned and at the same time achievable NDCs communicated at COP26.

Uzbekistan remains one of the most energy demanding economies in terms of energy expenditure for each US dollar of GDP, which requires urgent action to be taken not just to address the climate change challenge, but also the economic agenda. Access to clean energy especially in some of the Central Asia's most densely populated areas became the focus of government agenda and its alignment with the NDCs helped to formulate stronger internal commitments.

Communication of NDCs and participation in UNFCCC negotiation events have highlighted the need to develop capacity of the three countries for conducting negotiations at the international as well as regional levels. The project laid the foundation for building capacities in climate diplomacy in Central Asian countries, which was highly appreciated by the beneficiaries. More continuous and substantial updating of diplomats and the setting up of platforms for discussions on the regional climate agenda were one of the lessons learned.

The project, through the Phase II implementation, has further accelerated efforts for regional cooperation and exchange between the three countries. Building further on the project achievements would help the countries to better synchronize their efforts, understand the regional dynamics and participate in regional and international negotiations more effectively, i.e., addressing the national priorities while contributing effectively to the achievement of the goals stated in the Paris Agreement. The recommendation from this lesson is that regular capacity building events on climate policy should be planned in the future. At the stage of implementation of NDCs this will help to improve engagement with a wider range of stakeholders, develop a leaning scheme for climate reporting and transparency, and determine new ways for cooperation with emerging partners such as private sector, women and youth organizations.

In addition to diplomatic capacity building, support on building technical capacity was provided by the project and proved to be a great success. The regional technical workshop was an excellent opportunity to bring together government technical staff from the three countries to learn and exchange ideas, and to hear presentations by international speakers from renowned institutions and organizations. This was a key learning opportunity and it produced tangible outcomes, reinforcing the benefit of regional-level activities that bring together technical staff. Events of this nature better integrate the efforts of the three countries and help stakeholders to build regional and international networks as well as learn about further opportunities for learning and exchange.

Another major lesson was a step to inclusivity and transparency through involvement of private and public partners as well as ministries through validation and feedback sessions on research outputs conducted by the national and international research teams. During the feedback sessions, stakeholders had an opportunity to comment on the results, direct the research teams in terms of data collection and formulation of research questions. This made the research outputs more tailored to the demand and their results usable by all stakeholders.

The approach taken towards the research was multifaceted and stakeholders engaged at three levels. Independently through collection of views and recommendations from the groups of stakeholders, which had materialized into common vision statements related to green development and scaling up alternative energy generation. Within the groups of stakeholders, to gather collective views and discuss the issues and possible ways of their resolutions. This was mainly achieved through events and round table discussions. Finally, in wider groups of stakeholders, involving representatives of the public and private sector, government ministries and agencies, research communities to form a common vision and approaches to overarching support for the green development. The wider events took form of feedback sessions, thematic workshops and round tables.

The project has shown the effectiveness of the selected approach and it can be viewed as one of the lessons learned from the project implementation.

Sustainability of the project results and their impact

The support provided to the stakeholders in the three countries in formulation of the strengthened NDCs has a long-lasting effect at the national, regional and international levels. The three countries have drastically increased their commitments and alignment of the NDCs to the national priorities serves as a warrant that the commitments will be implemented in the years to come after the completion of the project. Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders was a key component in safeguarding the foundations for the actions implementation and their truly inclusive nature with participation of public and private actors provides a very healthy balance for risks mitigation as private companies can engage in nationwide public-private partnership initiatives to address the climate agenda.

Research driven approach to development of recommendations has also contributed to safeguarding the sustainability of the proposed actions as it provided the unbiased evidence of the consequences from the actions, which are directed at addressing the climate risks, while supporting the regional economic development. Synchronization of Uzbekistan's and Kyrgyzstan's approaches in relation to MRV methodologies, forecasting the impact of climate change on energy generation, agricultural and wider economic output helped to





ensure that individual actions taken at the national levels will contribute to addressing the regional matters, which span across the Central Asian states.

Youth involvement and inclusive approach to education in terms of addressing the language, gender, learning styles and regional differences helped the project to build an overarching methodology for youth involvement into the climate agenda. Innovative approach taken in development of online capacity building courses can be further scaled by the stakeholder institutions as well as other projects and can serve as a basis for development of full-scale climate negotiations courses for capacity building of a wider range of stakeholders. The project has succeeded in building a network of students across the region and their further involvement in climate actions can lead to better and more sustainable results. It was found that more often than not, the youth is lacking practical experience in the area of alternative energy generation and organization of thematic study tours helped the project to address the issue. Moreover, regional engagement of students has demonstrated converging visions of the youth in the three countries, and it can serve as a basis for their further involvement in addressing regional climate issues in Central Asia.

Capacity building for the representatives of the national negotiation teams contributed to active engagement of the three countries at the international UNFCCC negotiations. COP26 has been a vivid example of how negotiation teams preparation can result in a completely different engagement level. Not only more ambitious NDC have been highly praised at the COP26, participation of teams in thematic events have demonstrated that the three countries are active participants of the global efforts in combatting climate change. It is anticipated that the capacity building events already conducted will have a long-lasting impact on future engagement of the three countries in negotiations at the level of COP as well as at diverse working groups that meet between the COPs to solve technical and implementation matters.

Annex

Success Story: Engaging the youth for lifelong climate action

Climate change is not an obscure topic for the youth of Uzbekistan. The Aral Sea disaster and country's potential is solar energy generation are all part of the standard school curriculum. However, most of the students have never been in the Aral Sea region or seen the solar energy generating facilities. Many are unaware of the global efforts in combatting climate change, which forms a rather myopic and purely theoretical vision on the topic among the youth. As a result, the young generation is hesitant in taking action to combat climate change in their communities and beyond. With integration of Uzbekistan to the global community and political will to take ambitious commitments in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, youth engagement and inputs to climate action is vital. UNDP/FCDO project "Policy action for climate security in Central Asia, Phase II" has come up with an approach to address the issue and set an example for youth participation in the climate agenda.

The solution proposed focused on the development of engaging education and training activities to buttress the capacity building of youth in the area of climate change. Two educational products related to international climate change negotiations and COP 26 outcomes developed by the project engaged more than 420 students of 30 universities in Uzbekistan. Modern and innovative pedagogical approach was integrated into the





online educational products and enriched student experience through various interactive methods such as the use of forums, blog entries, quizzes, submission of reflective paragraphs, synchronous sessions with the professionals and provision of multimedia materials such as videos, interviews, authentic documents and entrée to social media channels. Active participants from educational institutions joined efforts with their fellow students from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The apogee of cooperation manifested through a regional conference where students have produced a joined statement on “Water, Food and Energy security” in the three countries. Their vision statement reached UNDP and became part of the portfolio of documents circulated during the COP 26 in Glasgow. Despite diverse circumstances and challenges faced by the three countries, students have formed a single vision on the issues. Bakhtigul Raimqulova, a student participant from Uzbekistan commented: *“The organization of this event really helped me to understand that we live in a strikingly interconnected region. Use of Russian and English languages at the conference created a unique international atmosphere, but despite difference in language and our backgrounds it felt natural to find the commonalities in our vision and formulate those into a joint statement”*.

The practical and pilot learning approaches were bolstered during the second phase of the project. In addition to regional engagement and interactive educational activities, including conferences and student-centered negotiation rounds, which enabled the youth to learn about the opportunities for engagement and the global efforts in combatting climate change, the study tour component was introduced. Students visited objects of the social infrastructure, research facilities, private businesses operating in production of alternative energy. The tours gave students the feel and touch experience of photovoltaic stations, wind power-generating facilities, near zero energy building, infrastructure for electric buses and research infrastructure, including a unique “Physics of the Sun” facility in the Tashkent region. Visits to private sector companies and households have been especially well received by the students. They learned about the range of technologies on the market

both for the private housing and industries, costs for the technology and legalities of selling the generated electricity to the grid.

The result achieved through project action went beyond addressing the issues of building confidence in youth and providing them with the practical experience at alternative energy facilities. Through participation in the events, students were able to build networks locally and regionally and experience international negotiations at the regional level. Currently, there are 512 students in the network built within Uzbekistan.



Timur Badretdinov, a student from Tashkent state Transport University has shared *“I can see selling electricity generated in households to the grid can be very beneficial. Studying the rail transport at the University I know that there is a great potential of recuperating energy, where locomotives can send power back to the grid, but currently this is only being at the point of discussion. I will definitely pursue this topic as it can increase efficiency of the energy use in railroad transport.”* Benefitting students now view the alternative energy generation not as a future development, but as a current reality. During the visit to Electric buses facilities Doniyor Turajanov from Tashkent State Architectural institute has highlighted *“Electrobuses can be up to 9 times more efficient than fossil fuel-driven buses and being exposed to their maintenance facilities proved that they are not only efficient but are much better suited for the urban environment. I believe that greening the transport should be centered on e-vehicles forward from the current practices.”*

Student engagement using modern pedagogy as well as versatile activities at national and regional level have demonstrated a great potential for the future. Students truly change their mindset and attitude toward green technology moving from considering it as an ephemeral might-be future category to today's necessity. The approach developed allowed for manifold engagement opportunities for the youth and its subsequent praxis can help scaling up the youth participation in solving the climate challenge.

