

deserted areas, Uzbekistan's economy is particularly exposed to climate change. Current projections estimate that – barring resolute mitigation measures – average temperature in the country will increase by 1.8 to 3.3 C° by 2050. Without additional adaptation measures, climate change and overexploitation of natural resources will decrease Uzbekistan's economic potential in the years to come. The agri-food sector, which accounts for 32% of GDP and 90% of water use, will also be negatively impacted as soil salinisation rise and yields drop. Increased emissions of particle matters in the air will lead to more respiratory diseases and lower labour productivity. All of these effects are already apparent in the Aral Sea ecological disaster. To ensure that growth, job creation and human development remain sustainable, Uzbekistan will need to address the dual challenge of climate change and environmental protection by greening its economy.

Uzbekistan's green policy framework has historically been aimed at preventing direct environmental damage rather than mainstreaming sustainability into the economy. Uzbekistan inherited from the previous central-and-command regime a fairly well-functioning set of institutions which assess the environmental impact of investment projects and regulate air pollution, wastewater discharge and waste generation. Policies supporting the green economy and green and circular transition are managed by a plurality of ministries and agencies, notably the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Finance (MoF), the State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection, Uzhydromet and dedicated line ministries (in particular energy and agriculture). However, the acceptance of Uzbekistan into the GSP+ scheme in 2021 and the adoption of the Green Economy Strategic Framework (GESF) require a shift in mentality and practices of the administration.

The Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction (MoEDPR) was tasked with revamping the GESF. The MoEDPR created a dedicated department for the green economy which has now been working with donors for over a year. At the suggestion of its development partners, the GoU not only committed to revise the framework but also to design a concrete action plan with result indicators and clear lines of accountability to track progress. The outline of the new framework has been presented to development partners in early 2022 and working groups are currently working on a first draft for each of its building blocks. This process resulted in preparation of the first draft which was approved by relevant governmental bodies. It is currently at the level of Presidential Administration and expected to be adopted by the Presidential resolution in the first half of October 2022.

Since early 2021, AFD has engaged the GoU on how to mainstream the fight against climate change and environmental protection into economic policies. At the request of the GoU, AFD has designed and committed a budget support programme to support the GESF. The programme consists of an in-depth **policy dialogue** on the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the Strategy; a series of **three concessional budget loans** disbursed against progress in policy implementation (indicative total amount: EUR 375 million) and **capacity-building programme** funded by a dedicated grant (EUR 1.5 million).

Uzbekistan was granted a GSP+ status in April 2021 and it has ratified all 27 relevant conventions. During several stakeholder meetings and discussions, governmental parties responsible for implementing conventions related to the environment and to governance principles reiterated the lack of capacity and expertise in the field of hazardous wastes, chemicals and persistent organic pollutants.

Uzbekistan's chemical industry is one of the country's key economic sectors, being a major supplier of raw materials and chemical products to almost all the economy. Thus, it has a significant impact on the scale, direction and efficiency of the development of other sectors, including agriculture.

Uzbekistan is a party to the **Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal**. Uzbekistan also ratified the **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP)** in 2019. Concrete practical steps on implementation of obligations of the Republic on the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants are reflected in the related National Implementation Plan for 2022-2024. **Uzbekistan is currently considering acceding to two other international conventions: The Rotterdam Convention** on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (1998) and the **Minamata Convention on Mercury** aimed at protecting human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and its compounds.

Uzbekistan has today legal and regulatory frameworks for chemicals management as well as corresponding institutions in place. But with the further development of agriculture, industry, logistics and entrepreneurship, **there is an urgent need for improving chemicals management.**

During the Soviet period, pesticide application was mandatory on most crops, without needs assessment or practical management of pesticides to ensure absence of pesticide residues on the final food crop, and pesticides