



Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM)

CACILM is a partnership between Central Asian countries and international donor community to combat land degradation and improve rural livelihoods

Land Degradation in Central Asia

Land degradation¹—overgrazing, soil erosion, salt damage to irrigated land, desertification—is a serious economic, social, and environmental problem in Central Asia.

The Central Asian region, comprising the five countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, has a fragile ecosystem with arid and semiarid areas of very low natural productivity. Agricultural and other land-use practices aimed at maximum production with scant regard for sustainability have resulted in severe land degradation.

Land degradation directly affects the livelihood of nearly 20 million rural inhabitants by reducing the productivity of land resources and adversely affecting the stability, functions, and services derived from natural systems. Agricultural yields are reported to have declined by 20–30% across the region since these countries achieved independence over a decade ago. Available data² show that approximately 70 % of the total area of Turkmenistan has become desert; salinized irrigated areas account for 50% in Uzbekistan and 37 % in Turkmenistan.

CACILM Partnership

The five Central Asian countries have organized themselves, with the support of the international donor community, to work toward sustainable land management and reverse land degradation—through the Central

Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM).

The five Central Asian countries have the following development partners: Asian Development Bank (ADB), Canadian International Development Agency, Convention to Combat Desertification Project of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Global Mechanism, International Center for Agricultural Development, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, and World Bank.

Other participating organizations include the Islamic Development Bank, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat.

CACILM's Goal

CACILM's goal is to restore, maintain, and enhance the productive functions of land in Central Asia, leading to improved economic and social well-being of those who depend on these resources while preserving the ecological functions of the land.

CACILM Program

CACILM program areas and activities are being implemented in a multi-country framework, which includes a 10-year program of activities in each country based on their respective

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National Programming Framework (NPF). Each country prepared an NPF, which has projects/activities in the following areas: capacity building for strengthening the enabling environment; capacity building for integrated land-use planning and management; sustainable agriculture in rain-fed land; sustainable agriculture in irrigated land; sustainable forest and woodland management; sustainable pastureland management; integrated resource management; protected area management and biodiversity conservation; and remediation in the region of the former Aral sea.

At the multi-country level, activities include capacity building for mainstreaming sustainable land management and integrating them into planning and management; developing a sustainable land management information system; promoting sustainable land management research; and supporting knowledge management and information dissemination.

National Projects

CACILM partnership will showcase an initial eight priority national projects and two multi-country projects, as follows:

- Rangeland Ecosystem Management in Kazakhstan
- Integrated Agricultural Development and Land Improvement, and Mountain Pasture Management in Susamir Valley, Kyrgyz Republic
- Rural Development and Demonstrating Local Responses to Combating Land Degradation and Improving Sustainable Land Management in southwest Tajikistan
- Capacity Building and On-the-ground Investments for Integrated and Sustainable Land Management in Turkmenistan
- Achieving Ecosystem Stability on Degraded Land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum Desert and Land Improvement in Uzbekistan
- CACILM Multicountry Partnership Framework Support and CACILM Multi-country Capacity Building Project

Coordination

The CACILM Task Force, comprising of members of the CACILM partnership and other interested international organizations, designed and developed CACILM. ADB is responsible for overall coordination of CACILM activities.

The CACILM Steering Committee, the successor to the Task Force, will take the lead in coordinating and directing CACILM. Its tasks include approving changes in CACILM work and financial plan, endorsing proposals for funding, monitoring CACILM performance, and reporting to and updating partners. A CACILM secretariat at ADB supports the work of the CACILM Steering Committee.

National coordination councils supported by their respective national secretariats have been created in each member country. Its members are UNCCD Focal Point and representatives of key government agencies, non-government organizations, the private sector, and civil society. The council's functions are to coordinate overall implementation of projects and activities, supervise and monitor performance of all national project activities, report to CACILM Steering Committee, as well as review and endorse proposals for consideration by the CACILM Steering Committee.

Financing

The total program financing is to up to \$1.4 billion over the period 2006–2015. Committed funding up to end of 2008 is approximately \$155 million, of which GEF will contribute \$20,000,000 in grant cofinancing. ■

¹ Land degradation is defined by GEF as "...any form of deterioration of the natural potential of land that affects ecosystem integrity either in terms of reducing its sustainable ecological productivity or in terms of its native biological richness and maintenance of resilience." Cited in GEF. 2003. *Operational Program on Sustainable Land Management (OP 15)*.

² <http://enrin.grida.no/ara/aralsea/english/land/land.htm>