



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

## CENTRAL ASIAN DESERT INITIATIVE

Cold winter deserts (CWDs) provide ecosystem services (ES) and harbour unique biodiversity. Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan carry global responsibility for their preservation and sustainable use. However, measures to prevent overuse and degradation, as well as the integration of ES and biodiversity into land management practices, are missing as a result of a lack of technical capacities. This leads to ongoing losses of ES and species diversity. The aim of the project was to address these shortcomings with up-to-date methods, stressing partnerships among stakeholders and focusing on the strengthening of capacities in line with gender equality principles. This would lead to the improved conservation and management of ES and biodiversity of CWDs across borders.



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## WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project had four outputs, all of which were achieved. Under the first output, evidence-based knowledge on ES, biodiversity, conservation status and land use of CWDs was made available through the conduct of two training workshops. Expertise was developed in adapting remote-sensing based methods to inventory land use and its changes, and the valuation of natural resource assets. Under the second output, aimed at providing information on the opportunities and challenges of Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM), the project prepared reports, developed and conducted a Farmer Field School (FFS) programme and provided two Training of Trainers (TOT) courses. This was supported by investment in inputs and the provision of climate-adapted and biodiversity-friendly examples of INRM. The project procured and distributed sewing, knitting and milk processing equipment, and provided small greenhouses to resource-constrained smallholders. These interventions are expected to diversify the income-generating opportunities of local smallholders and will help to remove additional pressure from the local ecosystems. The third output was devoted to developing a joint vision for conservation and sustainable use of deserts in Central Asia. The CADI Interim Regional Secretariat was established and the documentation required for legalizing its status was prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Justice in Uzbekistan. A widely-publicized Regional CWD Conference on the conservation and sustainable use of the temperate desert areas was also conducted for over 100 participants. The final output regarded project management and involved the organization of a series of task force meetings to coordinate project activities.

## KEY FACTS

**Latest Approved Budget**  
USD 1 464 071

**Duration**  
July 2017 – June 2022

**Resource Partners**  
International Climate Initiative under the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, through the University of Greifswald, Germany

**Partners**  
State Forestry Committee (SFC) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, University of Greifswald (UOG), Michael Succow Foundation for the Protection of Nature

**Beneficiaries**  
Community-level institutions (councils, pasture committees, water users' and farmers' associations) and smallholders at project sites

# IMPACT

Feruzha Jabborova opens a bag in her storeroom, takes a handful of wheat grain and shows us the seeds with pride. During the day she works at a small convenience shop near her house; in her spare time, she grows vegetables in the backyard. When FAO began a project to improve the lives of rural people in the area, Feruzha's eldest son, Muhammad, attended an FFS. He came home with a bag of improved wheat seed, and Feruzha agreed to try it, planting grain seeds from the market on a similar area of land as a comparison. Despite a hailstorm in April, Feruzha harvested 256 kg of improved grain, while the harvest of market grain barely reached 75 kg.

# ACTIVITIES

- Two training workshops conducted on assessment and economic valuation of natural resources assets and ES.
- A Manual for Inventory of Cold Winter Deserts prepared, printed and disseminated among stakeholders.
- An analysis made of projects related to the use of forest, land and natural resources in Uzbekistan.
- FFS sessions conducted on improved crop production, vegetable production, greenhouse nursery establishment and the basics of beekeeping for 152 smallholders (87 women and 65 men).
- A TOT course on designing and implementing an INRM FFS held for 26 participants.
- A National Stakeholder Awareness Workshop on the FFS Concept held for over 50 participants.
- A TOT course on improved cultivation of winter wheat and winter chickpea conducted for large-scale farmers.
- Over 10 500 seedlings distributed to farmers and smallholders.
- The project provided drying and beekeeping equipment and energy-effective stoves.
- Handicraft and milk processing and storage equipment provided, and two greenhouses installed.
- Training provided in basic business development and handicrafts for 57 rural women, and in dairy cattle breeding and feeding, as well as milk processing technologies, for 60 women.
- Small greenhouses installed in the backyards of 45 smallholders.
- Handicraft equipment provided to 57 women, and milk separators, milk pasteurizers and refrigerators to 77 women.
- An online training workshop on Integrated Land Use Management Systems in Uzbekistan conducted for 72 participants (22 females).
- A training workshop conducted on best INRM technologies at World Day to Combat Desertification.
- A regional awareness-raising workshop conducted in October 2019.
- An International CWD Conference was organized in December 2021.
- An Interim Regional CADI Secretariat established and members of the CADI National Secretariats in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan identified.

### Project Title

Central Asian Desert Initiative (CADI) - Conservation and sustainable use of cold winter deserts in Central Asia

### Project Code

FAO: MTF/SEC/012/UOG  
Donor: 16\_IV\_052\_Asiem\_A\_Central Asian Desert Initiative CADI

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