

Fifteenth session of the IRENA Assembly

High-level Dialogue on Accelerated Partnership for Renewable Energy in Central Asia (APRECA)

11 January 2024, 09:00 – 10:30 GST
St. Regis Hotel, Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi

Background

The UAE Consensus reached at COP28 witnessed a strong political commitment to a global energy transition to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency by 2030 while transitioning away from fossil fuels with a view to achieving net zero by 2050. 133 countries, including those in Central Asia, pledged to IRENA's 1.5°C Scenario recommendation to increase renewable power capacity to 11.2 terawatts (TW) by 2030. Furthermore, COP29 in Baku offered a significant breakthrough in the form of a US\$ 300 billion commitment from developed countries as the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on Climate Finance. The discussions to commit the required level of resources to enable climate change adaptation and mitigation will continue to CoP30.

During COP29 in Baku, IRENA, COP29 Presidency and Ministry of Energy of Azerbaijan co-hosted the first Energy Transition Investment Forum for Central Asia on 15-16 November 2024. The two-day forum promoted a regional dialogue for strengthening investment conditions for accelerated deployment of renewables-based energy transition technologies in the region and facilitating access to finance across Central Asia. The Accelerated Partnership for Renewable Energy in Central Asia (APRECA) was unveiled by IRENA as a new partnership platform to scale up concerted action for accelerating renewable energy deployment while fostering local value creation and green industrialisation in the region.

While the countries in Central Asia have made progress in developing plans and taking actions to achieve their renewable energy goals, the region face a rising demand for energy to support their economic growth and growing population of around 90 million while adopting sustainability objectives. Also, diversifying the energy mix is essential for countries in the region that are heavily reliant on oil, gas, and hydropower, especially for electricity production, to meet the climate change mitigation commitments and mitigate climate-related risks to energy infrastructure.

The countries in Central Asia have made progress in developing plans and taking actions to achieve their renewable energy goals. There is a significant opportunity for Central Asia to tap into the and gain from embracing the energy transition. The energy transition can offer opportunities for stronger economic development, green industrialisation, and job creation, leading to a climate-compatible socio-economic transformation in the region.

Challenges remain to fast track a renewables-based energy transition with robust policies with a view to addressing seasonal power shortages, increasing climate resilience, and improving energy efficiency. Substantial levels of public and private investment from local and international sources will be required to support it.

The APRECA is envisaged to leverage the collective strengths and resources of Central Asian countries through a robust framework of regional cooperation. It aims to develop result-oriented, high-impact partnership to accelerate the renewables-driven energy transition with a view to fast-tracking energy transition, enhancing regional interconnectivity to support renewable energy trade, and maximising socio-economic benefits through economic growth, green industrialisation, and job creation. The Partnership will take forward the COP28 UAE Consensus ambitions in Central Asia and the UAE dialogue, particularly, with respect to tripling renewable power by 2030. Central Asia's abundant renewable energy resources, strategic geographical position, and ambitions to establish a green energy corridor connecting Central Asia and the Caucasus to Europe present significant opportunities for the region. These opportunities can contribute to the global energy transition and promote regional economic development. APRECA intends to harness this potential through a holistic, country-led partnership model that integrates commitments with effective planning and execution.

To realise this objective, the Partnership would focus on four areas of fundamental obstacles hindering accelerated renewable energy development in the region:

1. *Strengthening the Energy Infrastructure Realigned with Energy Transition Ambitions* through a two-pronged approach: (a) to integrate higher shares of renewables into national grids and ensure their flexible and reliable operation; and (b) regional integration of energy systems to serve regional and neighbouring markets.
2. *Policy, Institutional and Regulatory Frameworks and Capacity Building to Facilitate Targeted Investments and Improve Socio-Economic Impact* to attract investments, maximise socio-economic benefits, create an enabling environment for private sector participation, and ensure the sustainability of renewable energy projects.
3. *Enabling Local Value Creation and Green Industrialisation* towards development of a green and competitive regional industrial base through strengthening of manufacturing capacities and maximising local benefits from development of critical minerals for energy transition technologies.
4. *Scaling up Private Sector Investments and Boosting Access to Finance* while streamlining the use of public finance to de-risk and leverage private investments and bring down the cost of capital and increasing access to climate and development finance to support large-scale deployment of energy transition technologies.

As next steps, IRENA, will confirm commitments from central Asian countries as well as IRENA Members and other development and energy transition agencies that offer support to Central Asia to join the partnership.

Once a critical mass of countries and partners have made their commitment to APRECA, IRENA and partners under the ownership of countries will undertake national-level consultations to identify key priorities for energy transition at regional and country level that can be supported by IRENA and development partners and agencies. These priorities can inter alia cover the four broad areas of cooperation viz. energy infrastructure, green industrialisation, policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks, and private sector investments.

Objectives

This High-level dialogue will highlight main opportunities and challenges for scaling up renewables-based energy transition in Central Asia and key areas the APRECA can contribute to national efforts. The event will also offer an opportunity to underscore the national and regional considerations with respect to the four action areas of the Partnership. Development partners, IFIs and other regional stakeholders are invited to provide their perspective and contribute to the dialogue.

Guiding Questions

- What are the main challenges and opportunities for the countries of Central Asia in their efforts to scale up a renewables-driven energy transition investments aligned with the COP28 Pledge of Tripling Renewables goal and the planned UAE dialogue?
- What are the main hurdles to access to the required level of finance to support the energy transition consistent with the UAE dialogue? Where do you see the role of public finance in this picture?
- What are the commitments that your country or agency can make to join APRECA can support the energy transition in your country and the region?
- What additional resources or mechanisms should be considered to strengthen the impact of international cooperation in advancing energy transition across Central Asia?
- How can the EU and Central Asia mutually benefit from energy transition in Central Asia and particularly through APRECA?
- How can IRENA best contribute to supporting Central Asian countries through APRECA?

Associated Publications

[Renewables Readiness Assessment for Azerbaijan](#) (2019)

[Renewables Readiness Assessment for the Kyrgyz Republic](#) (2022)

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