

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

# Project on supporting countries of Central Asia in strengthening the safety of mine tailings



**UNECE**

## Introduction and background

Central Asian countries rely heavily on economic activities that extract and process minerals and metals. These activities inevitably result in the creation of waste containing hazardous substances, which is then stored in mine tailings.

Abandoned or improperly managed mine tailings pose a threat that could trigger industrial accidents, including accidents with transboundary effects, and result in water and soil contamination.

The expected increase in the demand for minerals and metals will certainly increase the amount of waste with hazardous substances. Therefore, it is important to strengthen the safety not only of existing, but also of new tailings facilities in Central Asia in order to prevent the accidental release of hazardous substances into the environment.

To ensure the safe management of mine tailings facilities, national standards should be up-to-date.

**To this end, the current project aims to support Central Asian countries in strengthening the safe management of mine tailings.**

## Target groups and beneficiaries

The main beneficiaries of the project are **Kazakhstan, Tajikistan** and **Uzbekistan**, namely the competent authorities and operators of these countries, with whom this project will be implemented in close cooperation and interaction.

The project will focus on enhancing the capacity of national competent authorities to effectively manage the safety of mine tailings in order to prevent industrial accidents in Central Asian countries.

In the implementation of the project, UNECE will apply the [Safety guidelines and good practices for tailings management facilities](#) and rely on the experience of previously implemented projects on strengthening the safety of mining operations, in particular tailings management facilities (TMFs), in [Kazakhstan \(2017–19\)](#) and [Tajikistan \(2019–20\)](#).



The project also aims at strengthening cross-border cooperation and applying its results in other countries of Central Asia and beyond, which will be enhanced by conducting a subregional workshop in 2021. Cooperation with other international organizations will be pursued in the project implementation.



## Key activities

## Project results

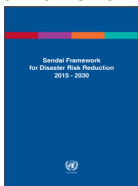
### The two-year project will be implemented in 2020-21 and its key activities are:

- Two national meetings in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan aimed at the establishment of an inter-institutional working group on mine tailings safety and water management
- Subregional workshop for the countries of Central Asia and beyond
- Preparation of a hazard rating list and map of tailings in Uzbekistan

Project activities will assist the beneficiary countries in applying UNECE tools to strengthen mine tailings safety.

UNECE will build on the experience gained by the Water Convention in the establishment of National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on integrated water resource management and water supply and sanitation in Central Asia, with a possibility to make use of synergies between the two processes.

The project will support the beneficiaries in their implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2015-30 and the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 6 /target 6.3: to improve water quality by 2030, by minimizing the release of hazardous chemicals and materials, and SDG 9 to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.



### The expected project results are:

- Improved coordination among national authorities, and other relevant stakeholders in the area of strengthening the safety of and preventing pollution from mine tailings
- Strengthened management of disaster risks related to mine tailings and increased level of prevention of mine tailings accidents in Central Asia and beyond
- Enhanced transboundary cooperation in Central Asia on the prevention of water pollution through mine tailings
- Strengthened implementation of the UNECE Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions, and other relevant policy recommendations, in particular the UNECE Environmental Performance Reviews for Central Asia
- Improved knowledge of and use of existing tools to safely manage mine tailings, developed by UNECE or partners, such as the [Safety guidelines and good practices for tailings management facilities](#), the [Checklist methodology](#) and the [Global Tailings Standard](#).



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