

February 2017



This project is funded
by the European
Commission

European Union Programme for Central Asia
Central Asia Education Platform Phase II (CAEP 2)
EuropeAid 2014/354952

**EXISTING BILATERAL COOPERATION
IN THE FIELD OF VET AND HE
BETWEEN THE EU, EU MEMBER STATES AND
CENTRAL ASIA COUNTRIES**

Stock-taking Report



Jan Helbich and Andrea Miskovicova / on behalf of the EC and GOPA

Authors of the report:

Jan Helbich (Report Coordinator)
Andrea Miskovicova (Reporting Expert)
Nurkyz Suerkulova (Reporting Expert)

Key informants:

Brian Toll (EC, DG Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture)
Piia Heinamaki (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency)
Arjen Vos (European Training Foundation)
Christine Hemschemeier (European Training Foundation)

Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Context and Objectives of the Study	4
1.2 Definition of Project Support at EU and EU Member States Level	5
1.3 International Donor Support to Education in Central Asia	6
1.3.1 EU Support to Structural Reforms in Education	6
1.3.2 The EU Member States and other European Countries	9
1.3.3 Other Development Cooperation Partners	11
2 EXISTING BILATERAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF HE AND VET	14
2.1 Overall Situation	14
2.2 Kazakhstan	17
2.2.1 EU	18
2.2.2 World Bank	20
2.2.3 Asian Development Bank	22
2.2.4 GIZ	22
2.3 Kyrgyzstan	23
2.3.1 EU	25
2.3.2 World Bank	26
2.3.3 Asian Development Bank	27
2.3.4 GIZ	29
2.4 Tajikistan	30
2.4.1 EU	31
2.4.2 World Bank	32
2.4.3 Asian Development Bank	33
2.4.4 GIZ	34
2.5 Turkmenistan	36
2.5.1 EU	36
2.5.2 World Bank	37
2.5.3 Asian Development Bank	37
2.5.4 GIZ	38
2.6 Uzbekistan	39
2.6.1 EU	39
2.6.2 World Bank	40
2.6.3 Asian Development Bank	41
2.6.4 GIZ	42
3 SUCCESS STORIES	43
4 POTENTIAL FIELDS FOR SYNERGIES	45
5 RECOMMENDATIONS	46

1 Introduction

1.1 Context and Objectives of the Study

In 2007, the European Union launched the *EU Central Asian Strategy for New Partnership* in order to support various cooperation priorities, such as education. One of the agreed political and thematic dialogue was the *Central Asia Education Platform (CAEP)* focusing on the two main components of education systems: (i) vocational education and training (VET); (ii) higher education (HE).

The first phase of CAEP entered into force in February 2012 and represents the key pillar of *European Education Initiative for Central Asia* which aims at education and training sector modernisation, strengthen cooperation between European Union (EU) and Central Asia (CA), improvement of inter-regional cooperation between Central Asia countries, as well as improvement of donors' activities in the education sector. These goals are going to be achieved through a process of communication and exchange between the European Union and Central Asia in order to "contribute to the adaptation of education systems of Central Asian States to the needs to the globalised world"¹.

The second phase of CAEP – CAEP 2 – launched in March 2015 and will be running until March 2018. During the second phase, CAEP will continue enhancing cooperation between stakeholders from EU and CA countries, as well as between CA countries. The main goal of CAEP 2 is to strengthen education reforms in CA countries.

The CAEP project has already developed in phase 1 a CAEP project mapping database of relevant projects in the sphere of Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training in Central Asia, which have been implemented with the assistance of multilateral, bilateral or other donor organisations.

However, the CAEP mapping database does not provide any analytical overview with regard to potential synergies among donor funded project interventions or major national initiatives to modernise the education system. Therefore, the project proposed to develop a short, concise analytical overview of existing bilateral cooperation in the field of VET and HE between EU Member States and Central Asia countries.

As a result, this stock-taking report on "Existing bilateral cooperation in the field of VET and HE between the EU, EU Member States and Central Asia countries" aims at providing an analytical overview of the current status of bilateral and donor funded cooperation activities in CA countries, its current level of implementation, highlighting challenges as well as potential good project and cooperation practices, to identify potential synergies with existing or planned initiatives.

The report is divided into five main sections:

This introductory section explains typical aid modalities of the development cooperation and presents a brief overview of donors active in education in Central Asia.

The second chapter presents an overview of existing development cooperation projects in each country. It is an overview of activities of major international donors who foster particularly the

¹ European Union Programme for Central Asia (2013). Brief Project Description.

structural reforms in Central Asia's education systems – namely the EU, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and GIZ. Other development partners who promote primarily the academic mobility with Central Asia (such as DAAD and Campus France) are not mentioned in this report.

The final three chapters present selected success stories, identify potential synergies and formulate recommendations for stakeholders and decision makers in Europe and Central Asia.

1.2 Definition of Project Support at EU and EU Member States Level

On the European Union level, financial aid can be provided through different methods: either as a budget support when the aid is provided directly to the recipient government's budget or through a project approach when it is linked to a specific project.

Budget support represents the “direct financial transfer to the national treasury of the partner country – conditional on policy dialogue, performance assessment and capacity building”², where it is managed according to national systems. This method of aid is addressing the source, not the symptoms, of underdevelopment, and it represents approximately a quarter of all EU development aid.

The budget support is focused on “(i) promotion of human rights and democratic values; (ii) better financial management, macroeconomic stability, inclusive growth and less corruption and fraud; (iii) sector reforms and sector service delivery; (iv) statebuilding in fragile states, (...); (v) better domestic revenue mobilization and less aid dependency”³.

To be eligible for budget support, the country must have defined national or sectoral development strategy or policy, a stable macroeconomic framework, good public financial management, and transparent budget information. Additionally, the budget support is performance-related, i.e. it is provided only if the agreed conditions for results are met⁴.

The financial aid from European Commission to a specific project is provided under the **sector approach**. This approach represents a cooperation between the government, development partners, and other stakeholders and it increases coherence between the national and sector policies, resource allocation and spending practices. “It is a process aiming at broadening government and national ownership over public sector policy and resource allocation decisions within the sector, increasing the coherence between policy, spending and results, and reducing transaction costs”⁵.

This approach is based on project modality, i.e. set of specific activities and objectives fulfilled within a defined time period, and budget. Participating stakeholders, target groups, final beneficiaries, as well as coordinators, management, financing arrangements, and monitoring system should be identified in the project, as well⁶.

A Sector Policy Support Programme (SPSP) is the financial aid instrument of the European Commission for supporting sector programme. The sector programme is developed by the partner's government under the sector approach, and it is based on three elements: “(i) the sector policy and strategy; (ii) the sector budget and its medium-term expenditure perspective; (iii) the

² http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/aid-delivery-methods-different-approaches-aid_en

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/13967>

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/13967>

⁵ European Commission, 2007

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/1563>

sector coordination framework through which the sector strategy, action plans and budget are reviewed and updated”⁷.

On the **EU Member States** level, there are a variety of ways how the financial aid can be provided to the partner countries.

For instance, **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH** is a public-benefit federal enterprise guided by the German and European values. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is GIZ’s main commissioning party. BMZ represents GIZ’s shareholder, the Federal Republic of Germany. The second and the last shareholder is the German Federal Ministry of Finance (BMF)⁸.

GIZ is operating primarily on behalf of BMZ, but it is commissioned also by other government departments, for example, the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the Federal Ministry of Defence and the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology⁹.

The total business volume of GIZ comes from different sources. Almost 92 % of GIZ’s total business volume was accounted for by the public-benefit business area, the rest was generated in GIZ’s taxable business area within International services.

The public-benefit business area comprises the sources from BMZ with the major share (in 2015 it was 85 %) and co-financing. Co-financing arrangements represent third parties providing additional funds for a measure that GIZ is implementing on behalf of BMZ or another German public-sector client. In 2015, the largest co-financing bodies were the EU (108 mil. EUR) and the UK’s DFID (36 mil. EUR)¹⁰.

In 2015, **the international services** created a total business volume of 166 mil. EUR. The main commissioning parties comprise National governments (57 mil. EUR), the European Union (45 mil. EUR), bilateral donors (18 mil. EUR), private sector (20 mil. EUR), UN organisations (15 mil. EUR), international financial institutions and funds (7 mil. EUR), and other (3 mil. EUR)¹¹.

1.3 International Donor Support to Education in Central Asia

This section presents an overview of international donors who foster structural reforms in Central Asia’s education systems. Thus, the partners and instruments focusing primarily on internationalisation of higher education (such as DAAD, Campus France and other initiatives of individual EU Member States) are not mentioned in this report. For more details on academic mobility and capacity building in higher education, please see the Stock-taking Report on Existing Capacity Development and Mobility Programmes between the EU and Central Asia Countries published in the frame of the CAEP 2 project.

1.3.1 EU Support to Structural Reforms in Education

The contribution of the European Union to the development of education systems in Central Asia started in the early 1990s. In general, the European offer of non-prescriptive models and assistance have proved attractive and useful for the CA countries. Key drivers of the EU – CA cooperation have

⁷ European Commission, 2007

⁸ https://www.giz.de/en/html/doing_business_with_GIZ.html

⁹ https://www.giz.de/en/workingwithgiz/german_government.html

¹⁰ GIZ. 2015. Integrated Company Report

¹¹ GIZ. 2015. Integrated Company Report

become the Bologna Process in HE (launched with the Bologna Declaration in 1999) and more recently the Torino Process in VET (since 2010).

In June 2007, the European Council adopted the “Strategy for a new enhanced partnership with Central Asia”. The Strategy is reviewed biannually, most recently in 2015. With regard to education, the Strategy aims to set up a European Education Initiative for Central Asia in order to contribute to the adaptation of the education systems of Central Asian States to the needs of the globalised world. Under the umbrella of the European Education Initiative for Central Asia, the EU and the Member States offer support to all levels of education: primary, secondary, VET and HE. A key pillar of the European Education Initiative for Central Asia is the project Central Asian Education Platform (CAEP) project and its follow-up project CAEP 2.

In December 2015, the EU and Kazakhstan signed an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the first of its kind with a Central Asian country. This agreement is a recognition of Kazakhstan’s growing regional and international standing and the fact that Kazakhstan is the EU’s key partner in Central Asia. Article 244 of this Agreement is dedicated to further cooperation in education.

In the field of **higher education**, the focus of EU interventions in Central Asia has been threefold:

- support to the internationalisation of HEIs¹²,
- capacity development of HEIs, and
- structural reforms of the whole HE sector.

Main channels of the support to HE in CA are the current opportunities offered by Erasmus+ (and its predecessors Tempus and Erasmus Mundus) and the development cooperation projects financed from DG DEVCO.

Tempus was launched in 1990 and its last (fourth) phase ended with the programming period 2007-2013. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan became Tempus partner countries in 1994. Tajikistan and Turkmenistan entered Tempus in 1996. Its main goals were to modernise curricula in order to meet the labour market demands; create new partnerships between HEIs and business, and upgrade teachers’ qualification. The following table compares the number of Tempus projects in the five countries:

Figure 1 Number of Tempus projects in Central Asia countries

Country	Joining Tempus	No. of Tempus projects 1994 - 2013
Kazakhstan	1994	65
Kyrgyzstan	1994	56
Tajikistan	1996	35
Turkmenistan	1996	34
Uzbekistan	1994	76

Source: own processing according to Tempus (2012)

Erasmus Mundus was implemented from 2004 to 2013. The programme had supported academic mobility and cooperation between the EU and CA countries on the one hand and within the CA countries on the other hand.

From 2014 on, Tempus and Erasmus Mundus have been replaced by **Erasmus+** which integrated the best of all previous higher and vocational education cooperation programmes, both internal and

¹² An overview of EU and EU Member States’ support to mobility in HE can be found in the Stock-taking Report on Existing Capacity Development and Mobility Programmes between the EU and Central Asia Countries published by the CAEP 2 project.

external. Mission and objectives of these programmes are now embodied in three Erasmus+ Key Actions:

- Key Action 1 – Learning mobility of individuals
- Key Action 2 – Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
- Key Action 3 – Support for policy reform

In 2015 and 2016, there have been approved several structural projects under the **Capacity Building in Higher Education** (Key Action 2), aiming at promoting reforms in higher education systems, modernising policies, governance and strengthening relations between higher education systems and the wider economic and social environment. These projects are listed in section 2.

The only support to policy reform provided under Erasmus+ Key Action 3 is the network of **Higher Education Reform Experts** (HEREs), a pool of experts supporting the modernisation of higher education in countries neighbouring the EU. They participate in the development of policies and reforms in their countries and contribute to the training of local stakeholders. Their activities are coordinated at the local level by the National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs)¹³.

DG DEVCO is responsible for designing European international cooperation and development policy and delivering aid throughout the world. Since 2007, education in the five Central Asian countries has been supported from the DCI envelope that replaced TACIS. For 2014 – 2020, Kazakhstan is no longer eligible for Development Cooperation under DCI (the country ranked as upper middle-income), but the implementation of bilateral programmes committed before 2014 continues. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan remained DCI beneficiaries for the 2014 – 2020 programming period. However, aid to Turkmenistan will likely be phased out in 2017 when the country is set to reach upper-middle-income status¹⁴.

In the field of higher education, DG DEVCO currently funds several projects in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In addition to that, regional projects CAEP (Central Asia Education Platform) and CAEP 2 covering both HE and VET in all five countries have been implemented since 2012. Infrastructural project CAREN is implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. More details can be found in section 2.

Recently published **Evaluation report**¹⁵ concludes that over the period 2007 – 2014 the EU ‘contributed to the reform of quality assurance systems and practice, an enhanced reflection of socio-economic demands and developments by HE providers and in state education standards, the modernisation of academic education provision (teaching, learning, assessment and study programmes) at higher education institutions which participated in EU programmes, and innovations in HE governance and management.

However, EU regional assistance had a limited and mostly indirect impact on system reform, i.e. national strategic reform design and/or decisions in HE in the CA countries. The CA countries themselves determined the overall strategic direction and scope of (aspired) convergence with EU standards in higher education. Nonetheless, the longevity of the EU programmes in CA, the critical mass of EU-funded projects and the Tempus and Erasmus programmes’ bottom up approach contributed to a changing attitude among national stakeholders, increasing support for reforms in line with EU/EHEA standards and good practice, and strengthened capacities to design such reforms.

The impact of EU support in the individual countries was limited when the application/implementation of project results required changes in the policy framework. The capacity or readiness

¹³ For more details please see <http://supporthere.org/page/about-action>

¹⁴ Source: DG for External Policies, Policy Department: Implementation and review of the European Union – Central Asia Strategy: Recommendations for EU action, January 2016

¹⁵ Evaluation of EU regional support to Central Asia (2007 – 2014), Final Report Volume 1, September 2016

of national systems and decision-makers to absorb, follow-up and capitalise on EU-funded initiatives at policy level was not always sufficient even where government representatives were formal partners of project consortia.

EU regional assistance was successful in inducing regional co-operation and exchange between HEIs and government representatives of the five CA countries in the course of project activities and other EU initiated regional events. Still, the primary appeal of the regional programmes for CA partners was the opportunity to cooperate with EU partners; regional cooperation was not a priority for CA countries. Regional academic networks and networking heavily relied on incentives from external donors (EU and other). Proactive communication and interaction between CA partners in the course of EU projects required sustained support and encouragement. Substantial changes in terms of regional policy dialogue, agreements or policies for enhancing HE quality and relevance of HE provision were not observed.'

The reforms of the **VET sector** in Central Asian countries are supported by the **European Training Foundation (ETF)**, a decentralised agency of the European Union based in Turin, Italy. A key tool for dialogue on the status of VET reforms across partner countries is Torino process. Between 2014 and 2016, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have been active participants in the 2016 process and carried out a self-assessment on developments within their VET system.

Beyond the Torino Process, ETF has in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan engaged VET stakeholders in a dialogue on continuing professional development (CPD) of VET staff, based upon survey results on CPD provision in these three countries (survey carried out 2015). This action was complemented with a peer learning activity on CPD to Germany, with the purpose to formulate recommendations for each country for more flexible and demand oriented CPD. In addition to that, in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan ETF has also supported the work of a number of communities of practice, composed mainly of VET practitioners.

Together with partner countries from Eastern Europe, Kazakhstan has been involved in the ETF "skills connexion" project, which focuses on supporting work-based learning (WBL). Kazakhstan has in 2016 finalised a mapping of its WBL situation, identified possible priorities for future developments and also hosted a peer learning activity on its dual system for a number of countries involved in skills connexion.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, the ETF has in cooperation with the ADB supported the institutionalisation of a tracer study methodology for VET. Cooperation actions covered the training of trainers, the preparation of practical guidelines, training on data analysis for policy developments and input to the draft order. The methodology was adopted in September 2016.

Several projects in VET sector are financed by **DG DEVCO**. More details can be found in section 2.

Support for VET in Central Asia is not available in **Erasmus+**.

1.3.2 The EU Member States and other European Countries

GERMANY

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is a German development agency that provides worldwide services in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. It is headquartered in Bonn and Eschborn. GIZ has a rich experience in the areas of economic development, employment, energy, environment, peace, and security. The main focus of GIZ is providing advisory services and design national development projects in more

than 130 countries around the world¹⁶. GIZ actively supports the reforms of VET systems in Central Asia. Their relevant projects are discussed in following sections.

DVV International is the German institute supporting adult education and development cooperation worldwide for more than 45 years. The vision of DVV is to “fight poverty through education and support development”¹⁷. Their work is focused on building a sustainable system for the further education of adults and youth by cooperating with governments, educational institutions and citizens of countries involved. The work of DVV is financed through funds from institutional and private donors. Within the Central Asia region, DVV has provided support to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan since 2002¹⁸. The most recent projects include:

- **CHANCE – Adult Education in Penitentiary System: A Chance for Better Future** with duration from March 2012 to May 2013. DVV with the Kyrgyz Adult Education Association (KAEA) were the implementing agencies and the European Union provided funding. The total project budget was €199 953¹⁹. The overall objective of the project is to contribute “to the liberalization processes of penitentiary system in the Kyrgyz Republic through adult education”²⁰. The specific objective is to support “the social re-integration process of prisoners by vocational education, life skills and capacity building of personnel in pilot prisons”²¹. Beneficiaries are involved state structures of penalty system, prisoners, and their families, broad public.
- **Adult Education in Kyrgyzstan** with duration from 2012 to 2014. The project aim was “to improve access and availability of adult education, development and lobbying adult education, capacity building for adult and youth education services providers”²².
- **Improved Youth Access to Vocational Education** in Tajikistan. Duration of the project is from March 2015 to 2018, the total budget is €625 thousand and funding is divided between the EU (with 75 % share) and DVV (25 %). The project is a part of a project “Youth Empowerment toward Sustainability and Change” (YES to Change), within the framework of the EU “Peace Building Partnership Programme”. The Project activity targets 7 districts of Badakhshan and its capital town Khorog. The project has two main goals: (i) to strengthen the internal human capacity of the Khorog via staff training, (ii) to strengthen technical capacity/resources of the Khorog.
- **Policy advice project on Adult Education in Tajikistan** promoted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. As a result, the Lower House of the Tajik Parliament adopted a new Law on Adult Education on 26 October 2016²³.

UK

The British Council implements in Uzbekistan the **Skills for Tourism project** supporting national reforms in VET by strengthening links between education and industry, seeking to promote skills development and equip young people with the skills and competencies that employers require²⁴. In addition to that, the British Council in Uzbekistan develops the concept for the **Centre for Innovation in Foreign Language Teaching** that is being established under the University of World Languages²⁵.

¹⁶ https://www.giz.de/en/html/about_giz.html

¹⁷ <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/dvv-international/profile/>

¹⁸ <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/dvv-international/profile/>

¹⁹ <http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/chance-adult-education-in-penitentiary-system-a-chance-for-better-future/>

²⁰ <http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/chance-adult-education-in-penitentiary-system-a-chance-for-better-future/>

²¹ <http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/chance-adult-education-in-penitentiary-system-a-chance-for-better-future/>

²² <http://www.dvv-international.uz/en/kyrgystan/projects/2013/>

²³ <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/dvv-international/news/detail/news/tadschikisches-erwachsenenbildungsgesetz-verabschiedet-dvv-international-hat-beraten/?cHash=78e123bb66346f5190ff0bb33247df75>

²⁴ <https://www.britishcouncil.uz/en/programmes/education-society/skills-for-tourism>

²⁵ <https://www.britishcouncil.uz/en/programmes/education-society/pedagogical-innovation-centre>

NORWAY

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) is a Norwegian public sector agency that promotes international cooperation at all levels of education. SIU's Eurasia Programme supports project cooperation between HEIs in Norway and Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

SWITZERLAND

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation is responsible for implementing the Federal Council's foreign policy on humanitarian aid, development, and cooperation with Eastern Europe. Since 2004, the Agency implements in Uzbekistan a Skills Development Project focusing on the development of cooperation between colleges and enterprises to create more job opportunities for students and building the capacities of colleges' management and teachers/masters. The fourth phase of the project started in 2015²⁶.

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is a development organisation anchored in Switzerland. Its Kyrgyzstan office implements the Second Vocational Education and Skills Development Project (VESD II) sponsored by the ADB (2013 – 2018).

1.3.3 Other Development Cooperation Partners

WORLD BANK

The World Bank was established in 1944 in Bretton-Woods and currently is headquartered in Washington, D. C. It is created by five international institutions managed by their member countries: (i) The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD); (ii) The International Development Association (IDA); (iii) The International Finance Corporation (IFC); (iv) The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA); (v) The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)²⁷. Altogether these institutions create the World Bank Group.

The World Bank represents a unique partnership of these institutions aiming at reducing poverty and support development by providing sources of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. The financial support comprises low-interest loans, zero to low-interest credits and grants and covers various aspects of national economies, such as education, health, public administration, infrastructure, environment. The financing of some projects is based on co-financing by governments, multilateral institutions, commercial banks, or private sector investors. By partnerships with bilateral and multilateral donors, the World Bank also provide or facilitate financing through a trust fund²⁸.

Alongside financial help, the World Bank helps developing countries through policy advice, research, and analysis, technical assistance, capacity development, host or participation in conferences and forums²⁹.

The main goals of the World Bank Group by 2030 are fighting the extreme poverty “by decreasing the percentage of people living on less than \$1.90 a day to no more than 3 %”, and promotion of the “shared prosperity by fostering the income growth of the bottom 40 % for every country”³⁰.

²⁶ <https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/uzbekistan/en/home/news/news.html/content/countries/uzbekistan/en/meta/news/2015/june/uzbek-swiss-bilateral-agreement-on-skills-development-project-is0>

²⁷ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/about>

²⁸ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/what-we-do>

²⁹ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/what-we-do>

³⁰ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/what-we-do>

The World Bank supports reforms in the education sector of Central Asian countries by a number of projects in both higher education and VET. The most relevant initiatives are reviewed in section 2.

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) was established in 1966 and currently is headquartered in Manila, Philippines. From 31 member states in 1966, it has grown to 67 members, of which 48 are from within Asia and the Pacific, the rest of them are Canada, the United States, and some European countries. Alongside member countries, the ADP's organisation consists of the Board of Governors, which is the highest policy-making body and comprises a representative from each member state. Governors elect 12 members to form the Board of Directors. The Directors supervise ADB's financial statements, approve its administrative budget, review and approve policy documents and loans, equity, and technical assistance operations³¹.

ADB is a multilateral development finance institution and its mission "is to help developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people"³². For this purpose, the ADB provides loans, technical assistance, and grants to member governments. In addition, the ADB provides direct assistance to private enterprises of the developing member countries through equity investments and loans. Alongside financial help, the ADB provide assistance by "facilitating policy dialogues, providing advisory services, and mobilizing financial resources through cofinancing operations that tap official, commercial, and export credit sources"³³.

The Bank is an active player in education in Central Asia. More information on ADB's current projects in Central Asia can be found in section 2.

JICA

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) implements the Project for Human Resource Development for Diversification of Economic Sectors through the Kyrgyz Republic-Japan Center for Human Development. JICA's cooperation with Turkmenistan concentrates mainly on supporting the development of the economy and society through providing training in such fields as transportation, health care, agricultural development, and promotion of SMEs³⁴.

KOICA

Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) implemented a Project for Establishing a Vocational Training Center in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (2007-2011, \$4 million). As a result, the employability and income of graduates rose by 95% and 77% respectively. The vocational center is being recognised as an exemplary model of vocational training³⁵.

USAID

USAID actively supports education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic. Since 2002, USAID has supported successful education reforms beginning with a nationwide program to improve teacher training and develop a network of professional development schools. USAID has provided assistance to the American University of Central Asia, based in Bishkek, assisting it to become an intellectual hub of the region. USAID plays a major role in supporting teacher training institutes and financial reforms in education management. USAID has also supported modern curriculum development in math,

³¹ <https://www.adb.org/about/members>

³² <https://www.adb.org/about/our-work>

³³ <https://www.adb.org/about/our-work>

³⁴ https://www.jica.go.jp/english/publications/reports/annual/2016/c8h0vm0000aj21oz-att/2016_12.pdf

³⁵ http://www.koica.go.kr/english/countries/middle_east_cis/index.html

language, and history courses and provided technical assistance to establish the National Admission Test (NAT). Thanks to the partnership of USAID with the Ministry of Education, all high school graduates receive equal and fair access to pursue higher education based on merit. Since 2012, NAT became obligatory for admission to public and private universities.

USAID now focuses on building early grade reading skills in children across Kyrgyzstan, to create a foundation for successful lifelong learning. USAID supports the Kyrgyz Republic's 2012 – 2020 Education Development Strategy by working with 7,500 teachers to improve student reading levels in the country.

USAID Education Programs³⁶:

- AUCA Moving Forward (2010 - 2015)
- Quality Reading Program (2013 - 2017)
- National Admissions Testing (2002 - 2013)
- Education Loan Program (2009-2012)
- Sapattuu Bilim (2007-2012)

OECD

Since 2009, the OECD implements a Eurasia Competitiveness Programme covering all five CA countries. The initiative encourages the exchange of best practices and experiences in policy reforms relevant to improving the business climate, support regional dialogue, and assists governments in developing policies that build a dynamic business environment for local businesses and foreign investors. More specifically, the activities include (i) policy reviews, (ii) forums for dialogue and peer review and (iii) strategic support helping governments to implement structural reforms. One of the outputs of the project is the Handbook 'Developing Skills in Central Asia through Better Vocational Education and Training' (2013) that contains conclusions related to the human capital development and provides guidance for policy-makers on implementing VET systems in order to better equip graduates with skills they need to get jobs³⁷.

UNESCO

As a part of the UN, the **UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training** assists the Member States develop policies and practices concerning education for the world of work and skills development for employability and citizenship, to achieve (i) access for all, (ii) high quality, relevant and effective programmes, and (iii) learning opportunities throughout life. Since 2011, UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office coordinates the Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education (CASIE), a discussion platform for ongoing challenges in education and identification of possible solutions through effective utilization of ICTs in education³⁸.

³⁶ <https://www.usaid.gov/kyrgyz-republic/education>

³⁷ <https://www.oecd.org/globalrelations/centralasiacompetitivenessinitiative.htm>

³⁸ <http://en.unesco.org/news/central-asia-symposium-ict-education-casie-unleashing-power-ict-skills-development>

2 Existing Bilateral Cooperation in the Field of HE and VET

Education is undoubtedly a key driver for economic growth, stability, and prosperity in Central Asian countries. Education is thus a priority task specified in the EU Central Asian Strategy for New Partnership of 2007 and in development cooperation plans agreed with other international donors. The scope and results of the development cooperation, however, differ from country to country. The cooperation between Central Asian countries and key international donors in the field of education will be analysed in the following subsections.

2.1 Overall Situation

The five Central Asia countries are united by a number of important factors, such as the periods of shared history, the knowledge of Russian language, the common origin of the present education system in the Soviet Union, demography with strikingly numerous age groups from 15 to 29. At the same time, there are significant differences in territorial extension, in the overall population, in prosperity, in language, and in many other aspects.

Due to different conditions and needs of beneficiary countries as well as to different strategies and approaches of international donors, the majority of projects analysed in this report are country specific. Few exceptions include the CAEP initiative sponsored by DG DEVCO (all 5 CA countries), CAREN project (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan), GIZ project Professional Education and Vocational Training in Central Asia (implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), the GIZ project Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) and the Russia Education Aid for Development project implemented by the World Bank in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The following table summarises the total value of bilateral projects (excluding above mentioned multi-country projects) supported by key donors (EU, WB, ADB, GIZ):

Figure 2 Bilateral development cooperation in education: financial value

Country	Total value of bilateral projects in EUR ³⁹	Comments
Kazakhstan	187,5 Million	Out of which 129,2 Million EUR is the budget of the Skills and Jobs Project for Kazakhstan (2015 – 2020) co-financed by the WB.
Kyrgyzstan	106,8 Million	
Tajikistan	98,3 Million	
Turkmenistan	8,7 Million	
Uzbekistan	208,8 Million	Out of which 157,5 Million EUR is the loan provided by ADB for the Education Sector Development Programme (2004 – 2009) and 47,2 Million EUR is the loan provided by the WB for Modernizing Higher Education Project (2016 – 2023).

³⁹ Authors of the report used the exchange rate 1,06 USD/EUR of February 2017

Total	610,1 Million	Additional 26,5 Million EUR represent multi-country projects.
-------	---------------	---

Donor's support to the education sector in **Kazakhstan** is mainly focused on VET sector.

In terms of scope, it is clearly dominated by the World Bank and its projects Technical and Vocational Education Modernisation (2010 – 2015) and its 137 Million USD follow up Skills and Jobs Project for Kazakhstan (2015 – 2020). In parallel, GIZ implements its multi-country projects Professional Education and Vocational Training in Central Asia (2010 – 2018) and Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016).

EU supports in Kazakhstan primarily the higher education sector, through the structural projects of TEMPUS and Erasmus+. Since 2012, Kazakhstan participates in the CAREN project. The CAEP project promoting the policy dialogue on both HE and VET across the whole Central Asia and ETF's activities related to Torino process are the only EU initiatives in the field of VET in Kazakhstan. DG DEVCO financed Kazakhstan's country-specific project Support for VET (2010 – 2013).

Kyrgyzstan hosts the highest number of projects among all five countries. At the same time, they are more balanced between HE and VET than the support provided by the donor community to Kazakhstan.

EU provided significant support to reforms across the whole education sector. The most visible project is the 17 Million EUR Support to the reform of the education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic (2013 – 2018) enhancing both the capacities and the quality of education. Higher education has been supported by numerous TEMPUS and Erasmus+ structural projects and the project CAREN.

A key player in support to education in Kyrgyzstan is the Asian Development Bank, currently implementing a 24 Mil. USD higher education project Strengthening Education System - Sector Development Programme (2015 – 2018) and a 15 Mil. USD project Second Vocational Education and Skills Development Project (2013 – 2018). In addition, a 30 Mil. USD TVET project Skilling and Entrepreneurship for Inclusive Growth is currently being designed.

GIZ implements in Kyrgyzstan its multi-country projects Professional Education and Vocational Training in Central Asia (2010 – 2018) and Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016), as well as the country-specific project Prospects for youth, focused on employment of young people.

Another important player in the Kyrgyz donor community is USAID, supporting (i) the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek and (ii) other development projects in the field of education, such as the training of thousands of teachers to improve student's reading skills.

Tajikistan receives development cooperation aid from all major donors in both higher education and VET.

EU recently launched a 15 Million EUR Quality Education Support Programme I (2017 – 2020) aimed at general education and initial TVET. Like in other countries, higher education has been supported by TEMPUS and Erasmus+ structural projects and CAREN.

In Tajikistan, the World Bank channels its assistance mainly to HE. A 15 Million USD Higher Education Project is currently being implemented.

ADB provides funding for a 34 Million USD project Strengthening TVET (2015 – 2021).

GIZ implements in Kyrgyzstan its multi-country projects Professional Education and Vocational Training in Central Asia (2010 – 2018) and Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016). Moreover, a country-specific project Supporting Reform of TVET System in Tajikistan has been completed in 2016.

In the field of education, **Turkmenistan** cooperates (almost) exclusively with the EU. Ongoing project Support to the Education Sector in Turkmenistan (2016 – 2020) fosters further reforms in general and vocational education. Higher education has been supported by several TEMPUS projects and the project CAREN.

The only non-EU initiative in Turkmenistan has been the GIZ regional project Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016).

In **Uzbekistan**, the support of the EU is limited to the policy dialogue in the frame of CAEP project and the TEMPUS and Erasmus+ structural projects in the field of HE. As well, Uzbekistan cooperates with the ETF in the Torino process biannual reviews.

Higher education receives funding from the World Bank through a 50 Million USD specific investment loan (2016 – 2023).

Asian Development Bank provided 167 Million USD for a reform of the whole education sector through the Education Sector Development Program (2004 – 2009). Currently, the Bank provides technical assistance to the TVET sector.

GIZ supported VET in the construction sector (2006 – 2015) by a 1.1 Million EUR project on curricula development and capacity building.

More details on individual projects can be found in the following subsections.

2.2 Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is a full member of the Bologna Process / European higher education area since 2010. At the same time, Kazakhstan actively participates in Torino process. Education is recognised as one of the top priorities in a number of strategic documents: the Strategic Development Plan of Kazakhstan till 2020, the Development Strategy of Kazakhstan till 2050, the Law on Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2007) and its amendment of 2015. Based on that, two State Programmes of Education Development in Kazakhstan for 2005-2010 and for 2011-2020 have been adopted.

The efforts of the Kazakh Government have been supported by various donors:

Figure 3 Kazakhstan: Overview of identified projects

Source of Funding	Project Title (Duration)	Sector	Project Budget
DG DEVCO (EU)	• Central Asia Education Platform (2012 – 2015)	HE + VET	1.8 Mil. EUR
	• Central Asia Education Platform 2 (2015 – 2018)	HE + VET	1.8 Mil. EUR
	• CAREN 1,2,3 (2009 – 2019)	HE	c. 15 Mil. EUR
	• Support for Vocational Education and Training (2010 – 2013)	VET	4.0 Mil. EUR
Erasmus+ Structural projects (EU)	• Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development (2015 – 2018)	HE	0.7 Mil. EUR
	• Enhancement of Higher Education and Corporate Sectors Integration in Accordance with New Social Environment (2016 – 2019)	HE	0.8 Mil. EUR
	• Promotion Internationalization of Research Through Establishment of Cycle 3 QA System in Line with the European Agenda (2016 – 2019)	HE	0.9 Mil. EUR
	• Paving the Way to Interregional Mobility and Ensuring Relevance, Quality and Equity of Access (2016 – 2019)	HE	1.0 Mil. EUR
World Bank	• Technical & Vocational Education Modernization (specific investment loan, 2010 – 2015)	VET	33.2 Mil. USD
	• Youth Corps Project for Kazakhstan (trust fund, 2014 – 2017)	VET	21.8 Mil. USD
	• Skills and Jobs Project for Kazakhstan (investment project financing, 2015 – 2020)	VET	137.0 Mil. USD
Asian Development Bank			
GIZ	• Professional Education and Vocational Training in Central Asia (2010 – 2018)	VET	19.5 Mil. EUR
	• Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016)	HE + VET	N/A

2.2.1 EU

Projects financed from DG DEVCO:

The first phase of Central Asia Education Platform (CAEP) started in February 2012. It represents the key pillar of European Education Initiative for Central Asia which aims at education and training sector modernisation, strengthening cooperation between the EU and Central Asia, improvement of inter-regional cooperation between Central Asia countries, as well as improvement of donors' activities in the education sector. These goals are going to be achieved through a process of communication and exchange between the European Union and Central Asia in order to contribute to the adaptation of education systems of Central Asian States to the needs to the globalised world. The project covers both HE and VET in all five CA countries. The total budget for the first phase amounted to 1 820 450 Euro.

The second phase of CAEP launched in March 2015 and will be running until March 2018. The second phase of the CAEP project builds on the results and challenges identified under the first phase. The overall objective is to enhance co-operation between the European Union and Central Asia, as well as regional co-operation between the countries of Central Asia, in order to strengthen education reforms in the region. The project aims to bring CA stakeholders and EU Member States closer to the EEI. Furthermore, the active engagement and support of EU Member States is considered as a key element to successfully implement the envisaged policy dialogue. Its implementation is divided into three components:

- Component 1: Dialogue Forums
- Component 2: Mapping and Communication
- Component 3: Studies

The budget for the second phase is 1 820 450 Euro.

The project Central Asian Research and Education Network (CAREN) has been launched in 2009 as a follow up of the Virtual Silk Highway (a.k.a. Silk Project), funded by NATO. Currently, the project has four members - Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan since 2010, and Kazakhstan since 2012, more precisely, the project partners are the national Research and Education Networking Associations (RENAs). The project is coordinated by GÉANT, which “interconnects Europe’s national research and education networking (NREN) organisations with an award-winning high bandwidth, high speed and highly resilient pan-European backbone – connecting Europe's researchers, academics and students to each other, and linking them to over half the countries in the world”⁴⁰. CAREN connects national research and education network of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, in order to “provide high-speed broad band network to link higher education institutions in Central Asia with the EU and globally”⁴¹. It links more than 500 000 users at 300 universities and research centres⁴². The project has currently had three phases – the first one started in 2009 and ended in 2013, the second phase started in 2013 and ended in 2015, and the third phase started in June 2016 as a CAREN3, and will run up to 2019. The project is co-funded by DG DEVCO (80 %), the rest is provided by the partners⁴³. The allocations for each CAREN’s phase have been approx.. 4.5 – 5 mil. €.

The most recent country-specific education program was the **Support for Vocational Education and Training**, commissioned by the European Union and implemented by GIZ and GOPA. The project launched in 2010 and ended in 2013, its total budget was €3 984 046 and the beneficiary was the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The objective of the project was “to promote the development of the Kazakhstan economy and stable growth of demand in the labour market, assisting in the development of the vocational education system of the

⁴⁰ http://www.geant.org/Networks/Pan-European_network/Pages/Home.aspx

⁴¹ Jones, P. 2010. The EU-Central Asia Education Initiative. Working Paper 09

⁴² <http://caren.geant.org/pages/faqs.aspx>

⁴³ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/central-asia/eu-support-education-and-research-cooperation-central-asia_en

country”⁴⁴. The project aimed at supporting the development of the Sector Qualification Framework (SQF) and providing training for policy makers, advisers, teachers, and managers in educational institutions⁴⁵.

Erasmus+ (Structural projects):

Kazakhstan benefitted from a number of TEMPUS structural projects that have contributed to a considerable progress in Bologna process, particularly in terms of quality assurance, (re)designing educational programmes and internationalisation of HEIs. TEMPUS IV projects are highly appreciated, especially at the institutional level, and thus many Kazakh HEIs applied for Erasmus+ grants. In 2015 and 2016, there have been following structural projects approved:

Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development – the coordinator and contractor of the project is the Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Poland (Szkola Główna Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego). Partners of the project comprise HEIs from Kazakhstan, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden, Russian Federation, Austria, Poland, and various public institutions from Kazakhstan and Russian Federation. The aim of the proposed project is to develop Lifelong Learning training programmes fostering the green skills of various target groups in ecology, food science, and land management. The wider objective of the proposed project is “enhancement of the role of Higher Education Institutions in ensuring sustainable development of industry and society, support of national “green policies” in Partner Countries and promotion of “green culture” by means of Lifelong Learning”⁴⁶. Contract duration is 36 months with an approved project budget of €712 683.

Enhancement of Higher Education and Corporate Sectors Integration in Accordance with New Social Environment – the coordinator and contractor of the project is the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Kazakhstan. Partners of the project are HEIs from Greece, Kazakhstan, Hungary, Russian Federation, Spain, and France, and public authorities from Kazakhstan and Russian Federation. The aim of the proposed project is to enhance cooperation between HEIs and business “in consortium countries by changing the paradigm of education in line with Bologna process requirements”⁴⁷. To fulfill the main objective, there is a set of following sub-goals: (i) to identify differences between partner HEIs experience in cooperation and interconnection of the study process with business practices; (ii) to identify current quality of skills requirements of employers in partner countries; (iii) to develop a new system of HEIs and business interactions based on best practices of European Universities; (iv) to reskill teaching staff in order to adapt their skills to changed learning environment; (v) to elaborate new methodologies supporting HEIs and business interaction. Proposed contract duration is 36 months and approved project budget is €814 044.42.

Promotion Internationalization of Research Through Establishment of Cycle 3 QA System in Line with the European Agenda – the coordinator and contractor of the proposed project is the French University in Armenia Foundation, Armenia (Universite Francaise en Armenie Fondation). Partners of the project comprise HEIs from Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Spain, France, Poland, and Armenia, and various public authorities from France, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Ukraine, and Mongolia. The proposed project’s objective is “to contribute to the establishment of a knowledge-based society in Armenia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Mongolia through the launch and operationalization of a robust quality assurance system for internalization of Cycle 3 programs”⁴⁸. Proposed contract duration is 36 months and approved project budget is €888 433.33.

Paving the Way to Interregional Mobility and Ensuring Relevance, Quality and Equity of Access – the coordinator and contractor of proposed project is the University of L’Aquila, Italy.

⁴⁴<http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/support-to-vocational-education-and-training-vet-in-the-republic-of-kazakhstan/>

⁴⁵<http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/support-to-vocational-education-and-training-vet-in-the-republic-of-kazakhstan/>

⁴⁶ Description of the Project 574056-EPP-1-2016-1-PL-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP

⁴⁷ Description of the Project 574060-EPP-1-2016-1-KZ-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP

⁴⁸ Description of the Project 574273-EPP-1-2016-1-AM-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP

Partners of the project comprise HEIs from Georgia, Uzbekistan, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, the United Kingdom, Mongolia, Russian Federation, Hungary, and Poland, and public authorities from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russian Federation, Mongolia, and Azerbaijan. The proposed project reflects the constant need for harmonization of higher education systems within Europe. It is based on previous successful experiences of the partnership in Tempus programmes and EMA2 projects in CA, Caucasus, Russia and Asia, and “intends to harmonise the credit allocation and grading system in 5 study areas jointly developed in previous projects, (...), providing a reliable scheme for credit and grades transfer, ...”⁴⁹. Contract duration is 36 months and approved project budget amounts €999 663.

2.2.2 World Bank

Kazakhstan joined the World Bank in 1992 and since then, the country has received the financial aid in the total amount of more than US\$9.1 billion. The leading strategy document for further cooperation between the World Bank and Kazakhstan is the **Country Partnership Strategy (CPS)**. The latest version of the Kazakhstan’s strategy is concerning the financial years 2012 – 2017 and its main objective is to “design a high impact program to help the government implement development priorities”⁵⁰. Current areas of engagement, based on the previous CPSs and their outcomes, are:

1. improving competitiveness and fostering job creation – this area comprises following country development goals: (i) achieve competitiveness gains through macro-stability and international integration; (ii) bolster human capital; (iii) boost employment in agriculture; (iv) develop infrastructure connectivity to reduce economic distance;
2. strengthening governance and improving efficiency in public services delivery with following country development goals: (i) improve public financial management and fight corruption; (ii) raise efficiency in delivering critical public services;
3. ensuring development is environmentally sustainable with country development goals: (i) fight climate change with a cleaner environment⁵¹.

These key areas reflect the continuity in the Kazakhstan’s Development Strategy 2020. In order to meet the priorities, there is a need for close collaboration with the civil society and development partners, such as ADB, GIZ, USAID. As in the previous decades, the cornerstone of the CPS for Kazakhstan is the **Joint Economic Research Program (JERP)** providing “policy analysis, strategic planning expertise, and good practice options to assist the Kazakhstan’s Government to develop economic and social development reform agenda”⁵². This program is based on a cost-sharing arrangement between the World Bank and Kazakh Government. The knowledge activities of JERP represents the main instruments to support the strategic themes mentioned above. These instruments will be complemented by selective investment projects. The expected JERP’s budget is about US\$4.4 million per fiscal year with the government contribution approximately 85 % of the funding⁵³.

The World Bank has supported 55 projects in Kazakhstan in various sectors, for instance, agriculture, capital market, health, energy, forestry, law, public administration. Currently, the World Bank’s active portfolio contains 16 projects, two of them are concerning both VET and HE sector in the country. These projects with one already closed are described in the following text:

Technical & Vocational Education Modernization (TVEM) launched in July 2010 and ended in December 2015. The development objective of the project “is to raise the relevance, quality, and

⁴⁹ Description of the Project 574099-EPP-1-2016-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP

⁵⁰ Kazakhstan – Country Partnership Strategy for the period FY2012-FY2017, 2012

⁵¹ Kazakhstan – Country Partnership Strategy for the period FY2012-FY2017, 2012

⁵² <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2002/04/06/kazakhstan-joint-economic-research-program>

⁵³ Kazakhstan – Country Partnership Strategy for the period FY2012-FY2017, 2012

efficiency of technical and vocational education (TVE) through an improved policy framework and institutional capacity⁵⁴. The project had three main components: (i) development of standards and quality assurance for technical and vocational education; (ii) strengthen governance, management, and financing for the sector; (iii) strengthen skills delivery capacity of technical and vocational education institutions. The final Implementation Status & Results Report has summarized the overall progress towards achieving the project's objectives. The main achievements include: "(i) pilot development of industry-led and employer driven occupational standards in 11 economic sectors and 147 occupations as a basis for modernising curriculum and programs; (ii) development of 147 competency based modular programs; (iii) a modernised accreditation program for assuring quality of TVET institutions and programs; (iv) a conceptual framework for the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) adopted by the government; (v) development of specific policy recommendations to improve the functions and operation of national, regional and sector councils; (vi) development of a per student funding formula to increase efficiency and equity in allocation of public resources; (vii) strengthened capacity for innovations and institutional improvement in 68 colleges through institutional development grants competitively awarded to both public and private providers and establishment of 15 interregional centers and professional development for 1070 skill instructors, college directors and pedagogical staff through training in competency based modular program, management and pedagogical strategies"⁵⁵. The total project costs were US\$33.23 million, comprising funding from the World Bank and non-bank sources. Implementing agency is the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science.

Youth Corps Project for Kazakhstan launched in March 2014 and its end is planned in December 2017. The objective of the project "is to promote young people's community engagement and life skills through a community-based service learning program, especially for vulnerable youth"⁵⁶. The project has three main components: (i) support the community-based services learning and skills; (ii) support institutional development of the committee on youth affairs for youth policy implementation; (iii) the project management, monitoring, and evaluation⁵⁷. The total project costs are US\$21.76 million. Implementing agency is the Ministry of Education and Science.

Skills and Jobs Project for Kazakhstan started in March 2015 and its end is planned for June 2020. The overall objective of the project "is to improve employment outcomes and skills of target beneficiaries and to improve the relevance of technical and vocational education and training and higher education programs"⁵⁸. As in the previous cases, the project comprises three main components: (i) enhance the institutional capacity for increasing the relevance of the VET by establishing a foundation of a national qualifications system; (ii) produce skills suitable for labour market needs by providing relevant training to employed and unemployed persons; (iii) the project management, monitoring, and evaluation. The total project costs are US\$137 million. Implementing agency is the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development⁵⁹.

Kazakhstan Country Program Evaluation FY04-13⁶⁰, published in 2015, concludes that *the Bank's strategic advice on higher education was not in sync with the government's strategic vision. The Bank advocated broad-based reforms in the governance of higher education institutions, whereas the government prioritized the key role of the newly established Nazarbayev University as a model center of academic excellence - experience that could be replicated to other public and private universities. The government made a strategic transition from supporting tertiary education through subsidizing Kazakh nationals' study abroad (the Bolashak stipend program) toward creating a local powerhouse, that is, a "world class" university that could attract and retain local, regional, and*

⁵⁴<http://projects.worldbank.org/P102177/technical-vocational-education-modernization-tvem?lang=en&tab=overview>

⁵⁵<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/662501468283761194/pdf/ISR-Disclosable-P102177-02-18-2016-1455776407090.pdf>

⁵⁶<http://projects.worldbank.org/P127966/kazakhstan-youth-corps-program?lang=en&tab=overview>

⁵⁷<http://projects.worldbank.org/P127966/kazakhstan-youth-corps-program?lang=en&tab=overview>

⁵⁸<http://projects.worldbank.org/P150183?lang=en>

⁵⁹<http://projects.worldbank.org/P150183?lang=en>

⁶⁰http://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/Data/reports/kazakhstan_cpe.pdf

*worldwide talent. ... Regarding vocational training, the current Bank project has provided a sound basis, but much more is needed. The Bank should work with the government to develop a series of follow-up projects to sustain and further develop the initiatives started under the project. Overall, if assessed against the outcome indicator of the 2004 CPS (“assist the government in laying strategic directions and improvements to the education system”), **the Bank was much more successful in providing help for basic education and vocational training than with higher education.***

2.2.3 Asian Development Bank

The ADB has supported Kazakhstan since 1994 through providing loans, grants, and technical assistance in order to boost country’s economy and improve the lives of its inhabitants. Up to now, the institution has approved over US\$4.4 billion in loans to the country⁶¹.

The leading document designed to help Kazakhstan in its priority areas is the **ADB-Kazakhstan Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for the period 2012 – 2016**. The document summarized the need for constant support to business environment for private sector development, for sustaining infrastructure investments, strengthening the financial sector, expanding access to finance for SMEs. These activities will increase the job creation and create new economic opportunities for Kazakh citizens. In the center of the partnership between the ADB and Kazakhstan is the knowledge exchange which will support all improvements and reforms.

The reforms in VET and HE sector are not a priority of the CPS.

2.2.4 GIZ

The initial activities of GIZ in Kazakhstan begun in early 1990’s, initially on behalf of German public sector clients and later for international and private sector clients, as well. GIZ support in Kazakhstan is focused on sustainable economic development, education and vocational training, governance, environment, and health. GIZ has currently two offices in Kazakhstan and operates in the country on behalf of various German public institutions and the European Commission⁶².

From January 2009 to December 2016 GIZ implemented the project **Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia**. Partner countries of the project were Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The purpose of the project was to provide quality education to children and young people of age 6 - 18 by supporting the reform of training and reskilling of teachers. Approximately 2000 partner countries’ teachers from general schools and lecturers from pedagogical colleges have improved their professional, methodological and didactic skills thanks to this project. The new teacher training modules have been implemented by national education ministries into the national training programmes of partner countries, as well.

Currently, there is one common project for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan supported by GIZ - **Professional Education and Vocational Training in Central Asia**. The project launched in 2010 and will end in 2018. The main focus of the project is in agriculture and food processing sector. The objective of the project is to “make professional education in agro & food processing compliant with the needs of the developing labour markets in the region”⁶³. The highest priority of the project is to enhance the employability of trained professionals. Total project budget is €19.5 million.

⁶¹ <https://www.adb.org/publications/kazakhstan-fact-sheet>

⁶² <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/350.html>

⁶³ <http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/professional-education-and-training-in-central-asia-/>

2.3 Kyrgyzstan

In 2012, the Government of Kyrgyzstan adopted the Education Development Strategy 2020 aiming at overall rationalisation of the education sector. The efforts of the Kyrgyz Government have been supported by various donors:

Figure 4 Kyrgyzstan: Overview of identified projects

Source of Funding	Project Title (Duration)	Sector	Project Budget
DG DEVCO (EU)	• Central Asia Education Platform (2012 – 2015)	HE + VET	1.8 Mil. EUR
	• Central Asia Education Platform 2 (2015 – 2018)	HE + VET	1.8 Mil. EUR
	• Fostering and monitoring of the education reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic (2015 - 2017)	HE + VET	0.5 Mil. EUR
	• Support to the reform of the education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic (2013 – 2018)	HE + VET	17.0 Mil. EUR
	• Review of the Sector Policy Support Programme in Education Sector of the Kyrgyz Republic (2013 – 2016)	HE + VET	0.2 Mil. EUR
	• Strengthening the development of social partnership in vocational education and training in Kyrgyzstan (2011 – 2016)	VET	0.5 Mil. EUR
	• CAREN 1,2,3 (2009 – 2019)	HE	c. 15 Mil. EUR
Erasmus+ Structural projects (EU)	• European Dimension in Qualifications for the Tourist Sector (2015 – 2018)	HE	0.7 Mil. EUR
	• Paving the Way to Interregional Mobility and Ensuring Relevance, Quality and Equity of Access (2016 – 2019)	HE	1.0 Mil. EUR
World Bank	• Russia Education Aid for Development Project (READ) (2011 – 2014)	HE + VET	3.4 Mil. EUR ⁶⁴
Asian Development Bank	• Skilling and Entrepreneurship for Inclusive Growth - Sector Development Program (technical assistance, 2016 – 2017)	VET	0.8 Mil. USD
	• Strengthening Education System - Sector Development Program (grant, 2015 – 2018)	HE	24.0 Mil. USD
	• Second Vocational Education and Skills Development Project (VESD II) (grant, 2013 – 2018)	VET	15.0 Mil. EUR
	• Strengthening the Education System – Sector Development Program (technical assistance, 2013 – 2015)	HE	0.8 Mil. USD
	• Vocational Education and Skills Development (grant, 2007 – 2013)	VET	13.0 Mil. USD
	• Vocational Education and Skill Training (technical assistance, 2005 – 2007)	VET	0.3 Mil. USD
	• Skilling and Entrepreneurship for Inclusive Growth – Sector Development Program (grant, project design phase)	VET	30.0 Mil. USD
GIZ	• Professional Education and Vocational Training in Central Asia (2010 – 2018)	VET	19.5 Mil. EUR
	• Prospects for youth (2015 – 2018)	VET	N/A
	• Training and employment promotion (2009 – 2013)	VET	7.9 Mil. EUR
	• Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016)	HE + VET	N/A

⁶⁴ Specific investment loan

2.3.1 EU

Projects financed from DG DEVCO:

Both phases of the regional initiative **Central Asia Education Platform** covering all five Central Asian countries and the CAREN project are described in section 2.2.1.

Fostering and monitoring of the education reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic⁶⁵ – launched in 2015 as a response to problems related to the lack of interest of relevant public representatives to follow the agenda of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic on reforming the education sector. The aim of the project is to improve the potential of the Public Council of Kyrgyz Republic's Ministry of Education and Science (KR MES) and strengthen the involvement of civil society in policy development, decision-making and their implementation through the creation of structured co-operation and consultation mechanisms. The transparency in reforms of education should be improved as well. Total budget allocated is 500 000 Euro and project will be running until 2017. The planned outcomes of the projects are following: (i) development of strategic and operational plans for activities of the KR MES Public Council; (ii) preparation of five analytical reviews on principal directions in the field of education development and educational reform (advanced experience of the EU); (iii) preparation of analytical reports on key aspects of the educational reform in Kyrgyzstan; (iv) analysis of teaching guides on implementation of monitoring procedures (best experience of the EU) and participation of public members in educational reform; (v) organisation of public hearings during which recommendations of the Public Council of the KR MES will be presented for discussion among education experts and members of the Committee of the KR Parliament; (vi) regular updating of a website, where all documents and teaching materials will be published. The project covers both VET and HE sectors.

Support to the reform of the education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic⁶⁶ – duration of the project is from June 2013 to June 2018 and total EU budget is 17 000 000. The project covers both VET and HE sectors. The main objectives are: (i) strengthening the capacities of the national and local authorities to formulate, implement and monitor educational policy, and to ensure sound and effective financial management and resource allocation; (ii) ensuring equitable access to high-quality education and training; (iii) ensuring more significant synergy between the needs of the labour market and the skills and qualifications offered by the general and VET systems. The preliminary results show that pre-school education coverage increased from 20 % of children to 80 %, and the computer/student ratio was improved from 1 for every 50th child to 1 for every 23rd.

Review of the Sector Policy Support Programme in Education Sector of the Kyrgyz Republic⁶⁷ – duration of the project was from August 2013 to January 2016 and the EU budget was 184 211 Euro. The project covered both VET and HE sectors.

Strengthening the development of social partnership in vocational education and training in Kyrgyzstan⁶⁸ – duration of the project was from December 2011 to June 2016 and the EU budget was 492 750 Euro. The project covered the VET sector. The overall objective is to create a sectorial competence based qualification system in the Kyrgyz tourism sector to enable transparency and clarity of vocational education and validation of practical skills. More specifically, to create sectorial professional standards in accordance with the changing requirements of the labour market, develop educational modules that reflect units of profession qualification, and train young people and teachers on how to work with vocational education training modules. Main tasks of the project are:

- To define new specialties and requirements in tourism sector;
- To develop standards and learning modules of professions in tourism;

⁶⁵ https://monitoring.edu.kg/?page_id=163&lang=en

⁶⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/support-reform-education-sector-kyrgyz-republic_en

⁶⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/review-sector-policy-support-programme-education-sector-kyrgyz-republic_en

⁶⁸ <http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/strengthening-social-partnership-development-in-vocational-and-educational-training-in-kyrgyzstan/>

- To train trainers to work with modules and carry out testing;
- To elaborate system of qualification assessment and acknowledgment;
- To develop certification system;
- Information campaigns.

The beneficiaries of the projects were students from 110 vocational schools and 122 secondary vocational education institutions, and teachers from 232 vocational education institutions, as well as local communities, employers, working young people, and public.

Erasmus+ (Structural projects)

TEMPUS played an important role in the modernisation of higher education in Kyrgyzstan. It has become a kind of an engine of reforms and, for the past few years, TEMPUS projects have been a key tool for the implementation of measures specified in the Education Development Strategy 2020.

In the 2014 – 2020 programming period, Kyrgyzstan so far participates in the following two Erasmus+ structural projects that have been approved in 2016:

European Dimension in Qualifications for the Tourist Sector – coordinator and contractor of the project is the Baltic International Academy, Latvia (Baltijas Starptautiska Akadēmija). Partners of the project are HEIs from Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Germany, and the UK, public authorities from Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation and Germany, private sector organisations from Cyprus and Germany, and the Silk Road Tourism Association from Kyrgyzstan. The purpose of the project is to disseminate awareness of Bologna culture, EHEA, OS, SQF and new program, as well, through various conferences for large audiences. Contract duration is 36 months and approved project budget amounts €684 872.

Paving the Way to Interregional Mobility and Ensuring Relevance, Quality and Equity of Access – for more details see section 2.2.1.

2.3.2 World Bank

Kyrgyzstan joined the World Bank in 1992 and since then, the World Bank's commitments have totalled over US\$832 million⁶⁹. The World Bank is helping the country to improve their governance system, fight corruption, boost economic growth, improve social conditions, and to improve their global competitiveness. The strategic focus of the World Bank's support is comprised in the **Country Partnership Strategy for the Period FY 14-17**⁷⁰. The areas of engagement are as follows:

1. public administration and public service delivery with following goals: (i) establish a robust system of public administration and reforming the judiciary; (ii) expanding access to, and increasing the efficiency and quality of education, health, and other public services;
2. business environment and investment climate comprises goals: (i) promoting financial and private sector development; (ii) increasing the efficiency and competitiveness of agriculture;
3. natural resources and physical infrastructure with goals: (i) ensuring energy security and developing export potential; (ii) expanding domestic, regional, and international development transport connectivity; (iii) improving the management of agriculture,

⁶⁹ <http://www.donors.kg/en/agencies/107-wb>

⁷⁰ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kyrgyzrepublic/overview#2>

forestry, mineral, pastureland, and water resources, including extension and other support services, for sustainable development⁷¹.

The average annual financial aid US\$55 million will be provided by the International Development Association (IDA), supplemented by the trust fund financing. Alongside the financial aid, there will be provided intensive analytical and advisory activities.

The WB in cooperation with the Government of the Russian Federation has supported project **Russia Education Aid for Development Project (READ)** in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Duration of the project was from May 2011 until October 2014, total project value was €3.4 million. The main objective of the project was “to promote international development in education and support to member countries in building the capacity of institutions responsible for the measurement of educational achievements and the use of these data to improve teaching and learning”⁷². The project covered both HE and VET sector.

2.3.3 Asian Development Bank

Kyrgyzstan joined ADB in 1994 and has received more than US\$1.5 billion in loans, grants, and technical assistance. The ADB helped to improve country’s economy in various areas – law, finance, business environment, energy, labour market, poverty reduction⁷³.

The leading strategy document is the **ADB – Kyrgyzstan Country Partnership Strategy for 2013-2017** and its objective is “poverty reduction through inclusive economic growth. ADB will help the government achieve inclusive economic growth by addressing key constraints to economic growth, improving the investment climate, and reducing disparities in access to economic opportunities”⁷⁴. The main priorities of the ADB strategy are: “(i) public-sector management for private-sector development; (ii) transport and logistics; (iii) the energy sector; (iv) education and training; and (v) water supply and sanitation”⁷⁵.

The ADB strategy, its objectives and priority ideas are fully aligned with the Kyrgyz Strategy 2020. The common priority in the education and training sector is described in the CPS as follows: “ADB will support the government’s Education Development Strategy 2020 under sector-wide approach umbrella by helping the government reform the education system to produce more skilled and qualified workers and improve the ability of new graduates to find jobs”⁷⁶. The reforms should make the education sector more flexible, demand-driven, adaptable to changes in the economy and the labour market. The overall objective is to improve the quality of education and training in Kyrgyzstan⁷⁷.

Another ADB’s strategic document regarding the reforms of the education sector in Kyrgyzstan is the **Country Operation Business Plan** for period 2017 – 2019, which is fully aligned with the CPS and Kazakh national development strategy. In the education and training sector, the ADB will focus on the quality of education, governance and education financing by providing a support of US\$30 million to the Post-Secondary Education Reform Project in 2018. This project will support: “(i) post-secondary curricula reform in technical and vocational education and training; (ii) entrepreneurship education; and (iii) in-service instructor training”⁷⁸.

The current ADB’s project portfolio comprises two active, three closed and one proposed project in the field of education.

⁷¹ Country Partnership Strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic for the Period FY14-17, 2013

⁷² <http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/russia-education-aid-for-development-project-read/>

⁷³ <https://www.adb.org/publications/kyrgyz-republic-fact-sheet>

⁷⁴ ADB Country Partnership Strategy, Kyrgyz Republic, 2013

⁷⁵ <https://www.adb.org/documents/kyrgyz-republic-country-operations-business-plan-2017-2019>

⁷⁶ ADB Country Partnership Strategy, Kyrgyz Republic, 2013

⁷⁷ ADB Country Partnership Strategy, Kyrgyz Republic, 2013

⁷⁸ ADB Country Operation Business Plan, Kyrgyz Republic, 2016

Skilling and Entrepreneurship for Inclusive Growth - Sector Development Program is a technical assistance program focused on the VET sector. The project launched in November 2016 and will end in December 2017. The objective of the project is to reduce unemployment among youth. The Project Preparatory Technical Assistance (PPTA) of the ADB will “design a project that produces TVET graduates with skills that increasingly match the need for highly skilled workers by the current and future job market”⁷⁹. The role of PPTA is to provide necessary background information to ADB about the project, most importantly review its technical, financial, and economic viability, costs, schedule, risks, implementation arrangements. The total ADB budget for the project is US\$750 thousand, and the executing agency is the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Strengthening Education System - Sector Development Program launched in January 2015 and will end in May 2018. The main objective of the program is to improve the quality of education and to help Kyrgyzstan to join the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in order to implement the Bologna process. The program comprises following components: (i) creation of independent textbooks and curriculum review mechanism; (ii) “approval of quality assurance standards and accreditation system for pedagogy programs; (iii) regulation for delivery of MA/MS program in pedagogy in universities; (iv) defining e-education standards for institutions providing distance education option to students; (v) establishing a school development fund to rehabilitate selected schools; and (vi) strengthening community participation in schools”⁸⁰. Total project budget is US\$24.12 million and the executing agency is the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Second Vocational Education and Skills Development Project (VESD II) launched in July 2013 and will end in March 2018. The objective of the program is to “support the modernisation of the TVET system by making it more responsive to labour market needs, develop skilled workers and craftsmen, technicians and middle-level staff, lobby for the introduction of reforms in the vocational education and training system”⁸¹. The project covers VET sector with a total project budget of €14 746 598. The project is implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Kyrgyzstan.

Strengthening the Education System – Sector Development Program launched in July 2013 and ended in February 2015 and it is the predecessor of the project described above with the very same priorities. The total budget was US\$750 thousand and the executive agencies were the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Finance⁸².

Vocational Education and Skills Development launched in September 2007 and ended in April 2013. The project’s objective was to “boost skills training opportunities for adults and out-of-school youth”⁸³. The priority activities comprised improvement of learning and teaching environment, modernisation of curriculum, assessment methods, study materials, and improvement of skills for instructors and school managers. The executing agency was the Agency for Vocational Education and the total project cost was US\$13 million. Thanks to this project, more than 14 000 students have been educated and trained under the new quality assurance systems and have benefited from new or modernised educational facilities. Additionally, 405 teachers have been trained with quality or competency standards⁸⁴.

Vocational Education and Skill Training – Technical Assistance Project helped to prepare a project for improvement the quality of vocational education and skills training (VEST) for youth and adults. The aim of the project was to: “(i) rationalize the current VEST system and build up capacity required to stimulate relevance, equity, flexibility and efficiency of primary vocational education, including upgrading and rehabilitating selected training facilities; (ii) increase skills

⁷⁹ <https://www.adb.org/projects/50024-001/main#project-pds>

⁸⁰ <https://www.adb.org/projects/46537-002/main#project-pds>

⁸¹ <http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/second-vocational-education-and-skills-development-project/>

⁸² <https://www.adb.org/projects/46537-001/main#project-pds>

⁸³ <https://www.adb.org/projects/38298-022/main#project-overview>

⁸⁴ <https://www.adb.org/projects/38298-022/main#project-overview>

training and retraining opportunities for adults; and (iii) strengthen public-private partnership by expanding linkages between supply of vocational education and skills training and labor market needs”⁸⁵. The technical assistance project launched in November 2005 and ended in January 2007, the executing agency was the President’s Office in Kyrgyzstan, and total budget was US\$300 thousand.

The proposed project in Kyrgyzstan is **Skilling and Entrepreneurship for Inclusive Growth – Sector Development Program**. The project “will improve effectiveness and efficiency of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) at college level”⁸⁶. This project is aligned with the CPS and national sustainable development strategy. The proposed amount of funding is US\$30 million.

2.3.4 GIZ

GIZ has been implementing projects in Kyrgyzstan since 1990’s, mainly on behalf of the German federal institutions and the European Union. The majority of GIZ’s projects implemented in Central Asia are administrated from its offices in Kyrgyzstan. GIZ’s projects in Kyrgyzstan are focusing on sustainable economic development, health system, education (including VET), law, etc.

Alongside the common Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan project Professional Education and Vocational Training in Central Asia (2010 – 2018) and the common Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Turkmenistan project Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016), for more details see the chapter GIZ in Kazakhstan, GIZ has supported two country-specific projects in Kyrgyzstan:

Prospects for youth is a project commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany) which launched in 2015 and will end in 2018. The leading executing agency in Kyrgyzstan is the State Agency for Youth Affairs, Physical Culture and Sports. The project’s sub-title *Youth work: Key to Development* summarizes the need of the Kyrgyz Republic for enhancing employment opportunities for its youth which represents one-third of the population. Alongside youth unemployment, this population group is struggling with poverty and an inadequate education system. The strategic focus of the project is in four areas: (i) improving the framework for a national youth policy; (ii) supporting state and non-governmental actors in the inclusive implementation of youth policy at local level; (iii) scaling up training for governmental and non-governmental actors involved in youth work; (iv) improving the quality of youth promotion activities⁸⁷.

Training and employment promotion was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and implemented by the Ministry of Economy and Antimonopoly Policy, the Ministry of Youth, Labour and Employment, the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Kyrgyz Republic. The project launched in 2009 and ended in 2013. Total project costs were €7.850 million⁸⁸. The main objective of the project was to improve relevant skills of adolescents and young adults to enhance their job placement through VET promotion. The program was “supporting the certification of entry-level vocational qualifications, the accreditation of vocational training institutions and programmes, and the introduction and use of improved employment services for job seekers and employers”⁸⁹.

⁸⁵ <https://www.adb.org/projects/38298-012/main#project-pds>

⁸⁶ <https://www.adb.org/projects/50024-002/main#project-overview>

⁸⁷ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/23383.html>

⁸⁸ CAEP Project Database

⁸⁹ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/15301.html>

2.4 Tajikistan

National priorities in the field of education have been formulated in the National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2020 and the Education Action Plan 2015 – 2017. Despite significant efforts of the Tajik Government and international donor community, the quality of education, lack of skilled workforce, low wages of teachers and a widespread corruption remain a challenge.

Figure 5 Tajikistan: Overview of identified projects

Source of Funding	Project Title (Duration)	Sector	Project Budget
DG DEVCO (EU)	• Central Asia Education Platform (2012 – 2015)	HE + VET	1.8 Mil. EUR
	• Central Asia Education Platform 2 (2015 – 2018)	HE + VET	1.8 Mil. EUR
	• Quality Education Support Programme I (2017 – 2020)	VET	15 Mil. EUR
	• Support to the formulation of the bilateral programme in education and development of baseline studies (2015)	VET	0.2 Mil. EUR
	• CAREN 1,2,3 (2009 – 2019)	HE	c. 15 Mil. EUR
Erasmus+ Structural projects (EU)	• Paving the Way to Interregional Mobility and Ensuring Relevance, Quality and Equity of Access (2016 – 2019)	HE	1.0 Mil. EUR
World Bank	• Higher Education Project (grant, 2015- 2021)	HE	15 Mil. USD
	• Tajikistan Youth Social and Economic Opportunity Grant (technical assistance + loan, 2007 – 2011)	VET	2.1 Mil. USD
	• National Quality Education Program (grant, 2011 – 2014)	HE	8 Mil. EUR
	• Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund Grant Project -3 (specific investment loan, 2010 – 2013)	HE	13.5 Mil. USD
	• Education Modernization Project (grant, 2010 – 2013)	HE	2 Mil. USD
	• Russia Education Aid for Development Project (READ) (specific investment loan, 2011 – 2014)	HE + VET	3.4 Mil. EUR
Asian Development Bank	• Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (grant + loan, 2015 – 2021)	VET	34 Mil. USD
	• Strengthening Private Sector Participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (technical assistance, 2013 – 2015)	VET	0.7 Mil. USD
	• Education Sector Reform II (technical assistance, 2006 – 2007)	HE	0.4 Mil. USD
	• Education Sector Reform (technical assistance + loan + grant, 2004 – 2010)	HE	11.0 Mil. USD
GIZ	• Professional Education and Vocational Training in Central Asia (2010 – 2018)	VET	19.5 Mil. EUR
	• Supporting Reform of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training System in Tajikistan (2008 – 2016)	VET	N/A
	• Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016)	HE + VET	N/A

2.4.1 EU

Projects financed from DG DEVCO:

Both phases of the regional initiative **Central Asia Education Platform** covering all five Central Asian countries and the CAREN project are described in section 2.2.1.

Quality Education Support Programme I⁹⁰ is the first EU support to educational sector in Tajikistan through its bilateral funds. Total EU budget allocated is 15 000 000 €. The programme starts in 2017 with the award of two service contracts on “Provision of Technical Assistance to the Government of Tajikistan in support to improved quality of education in the areas of general education and Initial Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)”. Both contracts are concluded for 42 months.

The initial period of the programme is focused on building a platform of partnership, dialogue, and understanding in the sector and to prepare for the policy reform implementation supported through the two subsequent phases. The overall objective is to contribute to the development of a modern education system, able to prepare informed, qualified and ready for work citizens. The specific objective of the project is to support efficient and effective education service delivery at secondary and initial TVET levels in order to improve learning outcomes. In the initial phase the project will provide support in following areas: “(i) a modern, viable and competence based teachers’ Continuous Professional Development (CPD) system, better responding to teachers’ needs and built on successful national and regional experiences. This area is developed and piloted for secondary school teachers in selected regions. (ii) a modern and viable TVET teachers’ CPD system, better responding to teachers’ and Lyceums managers’ individual needs and built on successful national and regional good practices is developed, piloted and embedded; (iii) a National Learning Assessment System properly developed and implemented, in line with agreed quality standards and targeting selected educational stages; (iv) a strengthened planning, budgeting and monitoring (PBM) process that results in a more equitable and efficient distribution of resources and is informed by improved monitoring of NSED implementation”.

Support to the formulation of the bilateral programme in education and development of baseline studies⁹¹ – duration of the project was from January 2015 to September 2015, the EU budget allocated was 248 957 €. The project focused on VET sector. It’s overall objective was to improve learning outcomes in post-basic education and skills training through support to the Government of Tajikistan to improve capacity to deliver effective, high quality and more equitable educational services.

Erasmus+ (Structural projects)

Like the other CA countries, Tajikistan has been a beneficiary of TEMPUS structural projects that supported the reform of curricula and contributed to the enhancement of the quality assurance mechanisms. Under Erasmus+, up to now, Tajikistan has been successful only with one project in 2016 call:

Paving the Way to Interregional Mobility and Ensuring Relevance, Quality and Equity of Access – for more details see section 3.1.1.

⁹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/aap-financing-tajikistan-2015-action-document_en.pdf

⁹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/support-formulation-bilateral-programme-education-and-development-baseline-studies_en

2.4.2 World Bank

Tajikistan joined the World Bank in 1993 and the IDA in 1994. Since then, the Bank has provided financial aid approximately US\$1.11 billion in IDA credits, grants and Trust Funds. The **Country Partnership Strategy for the Period FY15-18** “supports the transition to a new growth model led by private sector investment and exports, and is aimed at improving the income-earning opportunities of the poorest 40 percent of the population”⁹². The goal stays at three pillars with several development goals:

1. strengthening the role of the private sector with following development goals: (i) improvement of country’s business environmental international ranking; (ii) growth of SMEs and FDI; (iii) increase in agriculture sector labour productivity; (iv) average growth in duration of electricity supply per day (hours); (v) reduction in energy losses; (vi) increase average electricity tariffs;
2. social inclusion with development goals: (i) decline in poverty rate; (ii) increase in rate of universal primary education; (iii) implementation of Universal Entrance Examination for higher education; (iv) increase of population access to clean drinking water in urban and rural areas; (v) volume and targeting of social assistance improved to poorest citizens;
3. promoting regional connectivity through meeting following development goals: (i) increase of automobile roads with satisfactory quality; (ii) development of international cargo transportation; (iii) increase the number of Internet users⁹³.

The current World Bank’s portfolio in Tajikistan includes 68 closed and 14 active projects. Only four out of 68 closed and one out of 14 active projects primarily targets reforms of education sector:

Higher Education Project is the only active World Bank project for Tajikistan in the education sector. It launched in June 2015 and the closing date will be in October 2021. The objective of the project “is to develop mechanisms that improve and monitor the quality and labour market relevance of higher education”⁹⁴. The project has three main components with specific sub-components. On an institutional level, the project aims at: (i) developing and establishing just-in-time grants to reskill and upskill the employees; (ii) developing and establishing a competitive grant program for HEIs. Sub-components on the system level are: (i) enhance the quality assurance; (ii) reform of HE system curriculum; (iii) assess the HE financing. The third component regards project management, communication, training, monitoring, and evaluation. Total project costs are US\$15 million and the implementing agency is the Ministry of Education⁹⁵.

Tajikistan Youth Social and Economic Opportunity Grant launched in September 2007 and ended in June 2011. The main objective of the project was “to expand social and economic opportunities for disadvantaged youth in poor areas of Tajikistan”⁹⁶. The focus of the project was to increase access to information, development of life skills, promotion of youth employability and economic entrepreneurship, and strengthen the capacity on an institutional level, primarily of the State Committee of Youth, Tourism and Sports. The final Implementation Status & Results Report summarized that the project reached over 7 500 beneficiaries and its additional outcome of the project was the development of a new National Youth Strategy in Tajikistan. Total project costs were US\$2.10 million.

National Quality Education Program started in June 2011 and ended in October 2014. The main objective of the project was “to strengthen governance and management of the sector through the establishment of a national assessment center, promotion of monitoring and evaluation and

⁹² <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/overview#2>

⁹³ Country Partnership Strategy for Tajikistan for the Period FY15-18, 2014

⁹⁴ <http://projects.worldbank.org/P148291?lang=en>

⁹⁵ <http://projects.worldbank.org/P148291/?lang=en&tab=overview>

⁹⁶ Implementation Status & Result, 2011

development of an institutional framework for reform”⁹⁷. The project should have increased the accessibility of HEIs and developed the tools for better measurements of improvements in the quality of education. Total project costs were €8 million.

Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund Grant Project -3 launched in April 2010 and ended in June 2013. Its aim was to “contribute to an increased access to improved learning environments and a more efficient delivery of quality education services”⁹⁸. This aim was fulfilled through four main components: (i) improving the learning environment, primarily focused on physical infrastructure and necessary pedagogical inputs, such as reading materials and teacher’s manuals; (ii) in-service training of pedagogical and managerial personnel in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of education; (iii) policy reform, research and evaluation aiming at improvement of the quality and efficiency of the education system; (iv) capacity building and grants management. The total project costs were US\$13.5 million and implementing agency was the Ministry of Education⁹⁹.

Education Modernization Project launched in May 2010, the project has status closed. The overall objective of the project “is to stave off a further decline in the education system in Tajikistan and to support the process of rebuilding”¹⁰⁰. The main contribution of the project is the increased community and local school participation in decision making and increased awareness of the value of education. Total project costs were US\$2 million and implementing agency was the Ministry of Education.

Russia Education Aid for Development Project (READ) is a cooperation project between the WB and the Government of the Russian Federation for Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Duration of the project was from May 2011 to October 2014, total project was €3.4 million. The main objective of the project was “to promote international development in education and support to member countries in building the capacity of institutions responsible for the measurement of educational achievements and the use of these data to improve teaching and learning”¹⁰¹. The project covered both HE and VET sector.

2.4.3 Asian Development Bank

ADB has provided financial and technical assistance to support the country’s economy growth since 1998. The total amount of provided aid has represented approximately US\$1.4 billion. The leading strategic document is the **Country Partnership Strategy** for period 2016 – 2020 aiming at providing help to Tajikistan to achieve sustained and inclusive growth. In order to fulfil the strategic objective there have been formulated three priority areas: “(i) continue infrastructure investments in energy and transport where ADB has had a lead role and initiate support for integrated urban development; (ii) sequence investment climate reforms, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), backed with knowledge work focusing on economic diversification; and (iii) integrate food security with value-chain development, water resources management, and climate change adaptation targeting poorer regions”¹⁰². Fully aligned with the CPS is the ADB’s **Country Operations Business Plan** for period 2017 -2019. According to COBP, the priority in education area is skills development in order to increase productive employment. The key area of assistance is in rehabilitation and reforming technical and vocational education and training. The initiative resource allocation is US\$28 million.

Current ADB’s project portfolio in Tajikistan comprises one active and three closed projects for the education sector.

⁹⁷ <http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/national-quality-education-program/>

⁹⁸ <http://projects.worldbank.org/P115343/fast-track-initiative-catalytic-fund-grant-3?lang=en&tab=overview>

⁹⁹ World Bank, 2014

¹⁰⁰ <http://projects.worldbank.org/P114313/education-modernization-project-addl-fin?lang=en&tab=overview>

¹⁰¹ <http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/russia-education-aid-for-development-project-read/>

¹⁰² <https://www.adb.org/documents/tajikistan-country-partnership-strategy-2016-2020>

Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training launched in November 2015 and will end in September 2021. The outcome of the project should be “demand-driven, quality-assured, and flexible TVET system responsive to labor market needs”¹⁰³. The project has for main outputs planned: (i) modernisation of TVET system; (ii) modernisation of physical learning facilities in selected TVET institutions; (iii) improvement of access to quality TVET programs; (iv) strengthening governance and management of TVET system. The total project costs are US\$34 million and executing agency is the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Population of Tajikistan¹⁰⁴.

Strengthening Private Sector Participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training launched in December 2013 and ended in Jun 2015. It was the Project Preparatory Technical Assistance (PPTA) initiative in order to conduct the Tajik TVET sectoral analysis and design the project. The PPTA “helps design the project to empower the country’s unemployed and underemployed youths and adults to take advantage of employment and income opportunities in the domestic and international labor markets through provision of quality training”¹⁰⁵. The executing agency was the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and the total project cost was US\$700 thousand.

Education Sector Reform II launched in July 2006 and ended in September 2007. The form of support was the technical assistance “in the review and update national sector policies, and analyse sector needs and action plans”¹⁰⁶. The executing agency was the Ministry of Education and Science and total project costs were US\$400 thousand.

Education Sector Reform (2004 – 2010) was the predecessor of the above-mentioned project. It was also the technical assistance project aiming at “strengthening planning and policy dialogue for education sector reform”¹⁰⁷. The executing agency was the President’s Office in Tajikistan and total project costs were US\$11.43 million.

2.4.4 GIZ

GIZ has supported Tajikistan since 1995, mostly on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. GIZ has implemented bilateral and regional projects regarding economic development, health system, education, tourism, environment, and law¹⁰⁸.

Alongside the common Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan project Professional Education and Vocational Training in Central Asia (2010 – 2018) and the common Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Turkmenistan project Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016), for more details see the chapter GIZ in Kazakhstan, GIZ has recently supported one educational project - **Supporting Reform of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training System in Tajikistan**, launched in 2008 and ended in 2016. The project was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the leading executing agency was the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan. The project has reflected the lack of standardized yet flexible VET system in Tajikistan which led to a mismatch between the labour market needs and quality of employees’ skills. The project aimed at enhancing the quality of VET graduates to make them more employable and increase their chances to find a better job or setting up their own business¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰³ <https://www.adb.org/projects/46535-001/main#project-overview>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.adb.org/projects/46535-001/main#project-pds>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.adb.org/projects/46535-002/main#project-pds>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.adb.org/projects/37556-012/main#project-overview>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.adb.org/projects/37175-013/main#project-pds>

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/382.html>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/15436.html>

2.5 Turkmenistan

The National Program of Social and Economic Development of Turkmenistan for the period 2011-2030 foresees the establishment of an education system comparable to developed countries and the increase of the education quality as a precondition for Turkmenistan's growth and competitiveness. In addition, the State Program on the Development of Education for the Period 2012-2016 lays out guidelines for the quality provision of secondary, professional, and higher education in accordance with international standards.

Figure 6 Turkmenistan: Overview of identified projects

Source of Funding	Project Title (Duration)	Sector	Project Budget
DG DEVCO (EU)	• Central Asia Education Platform (2012 – 2015)	HE + VET	1.8 Mil. EUR
	• Central Asia Education Platform 2 (2015 – 2018)	HE + VET	1.8 Mil. EUR
	• Support to the Education Sector in Turkmenistan (2016 – 2020)	VET	4.7 Mil. EUR
	• Support to the modernisation of the Education System (2009 – 2011)	VET	1.4 Mil. EUR
	• Further improvement of quality and relevance of Professional Education (2011 – 2013)	VET	2.6 Mil. EUR
	• CAREN 1,2,3 (2009 – 2019)	HE	c. 15 Mil. EUR
Erasmus+ Structural projects (EU)			
World Bank			
Asian Development Bank			
GIZ	• Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016)	HE + VET	N/A

2.5.1 EU

Projects financed from DG DEVCO:

Both phases of the regional initiative **Central Asia Education Platform** covering all five Central Asian countries and the CAREN project are described in section 2.2.1.

Support to the Education Sector in Turkmenistan aims to further support the Government of Turkmenistan in the creation of a modern education system in line with international educational standards. Project's contribution to the on-going education reform process shall be achieved by facilitating the introduction of educational standards and adapting professional education programmes to labour market needs. Project implementation started in October 2016, with a planned duration of 48 months and a budget of 4 625 200 EUR. Main results shall be achieved in two components:

- Component 1 – Strategic planning – institutional capacity building
- Component 2 – Program development - Delivery of general and vocational education

Project design is based on the results of previous EU assistance to the education sector in Turkmenistan:

- Within the project “**Support to the modernisation of the Education System**” (2009-2011) curricula have been revised and teachers and school principals trained in the general secondary education system.
- The project on “**Further improvement of quality and relevance of Professional Education**” (2011-2013) provided input for the VET Action Plan. Job profiles in the agriculture, tourism, and construction sectors have been identified, related curricula developed, and teacher training in pilot VET schools delivered.

Erasmus+ (Structural projects)

Turkmenistan co-implemented two structural projects under TEMPUS, namely the TuCAHEA, a largescale project aiming to build a Central Asian Higher Education Area compatible with the EHEA, and the QAMEL project focused on e-learning at HEIs.

No Erasmus+ structural projects with Turkmenistan’s participation have been approved in 2015 and 2016.

2.5.2 World Bank

Turkmenistan joined the World Bank in 1995. The first strategic document, prepared jointly by the World Bank Group and the Government of Turkmenistan, was the **Interim Strategy Note (ISN)** regarding the planned reforms in the country for the period July 2013 to June 2015. The purpose of the ISN was to “assist the Government in addressing selected priority issues related to the country’s development goals”¹¹⁰. In 2015, the new **Country Engagement Note for the period FY 2016 – 2017** was adopted. This program will continue in activities covered in the ISN and will broaden them into selected new areas important for Tajikistan’s increased competitiveness. The areas of interest are as follows:

1. improving data for policy making and governance,
2. financial sector modernisation,
3. enhancing competitiveness,
4. managing resources efficiently.

This strategy is focused on international sharing of the World Bank Group’s knowledge, experiences and best practices in areas relevant to Turkmenistan and its overall growth. The current World Bank’s project portfolio in Turkmenistan comprises 1 active and 5 closed projects, none of them is dedicated to the education sector.

2.5.3 Asian Development Bank

ADB started working with Turkmenistan in 2000 and since then the institution has provided US\$125 million to the country. The leading strategy in Turkmenistan is the **Country Operation Business Plan** for 2016 – 2017 which follows the strategic direction of the ADB in Turkmenistan in sectors of transport, finance, and energy. Education is not a priority sector in the cooperation between the ADB and Turkmenistan¹¹¹.

¹¹⁰ World Bank – Turkmenistan Partnership Program Snapshot, 2016

¹¹¹ <https://www.adb.org/documents/turkmenistan-country-operations-business-plan-2018>

2.5.4 GIZ

GIZ currently does not provide any country specific support to Turkmenistan. However, in the last decade, GIZ has provided support to Turkmenistan within various regional programmes implemented in the whole CA region. In the field of education, Turkmenistan benefited from the common Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Turkmenistan project **Reform of Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016)**. For more details see the section GIZ in Kazakhstan.

2.6 Uzbekistan

Key strategic document adopted by the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan is the Education Sector Plan for 2013 – 2017. It is built on the model of lifelong education, aiming to ensure equal opportunities and quality education for all.

Uzbekistan’s reforming efforts have been supported by the following international partners:

Figure 7 Uzbekistan: Overview of identified projects

Source of Funding	Project Title (Duration)	Sector	Project Budget
DG DEVCO (EU)	• Central Asia Education Platform (2012 – 2015)	HE + VET	1.8 Mil. EUR
	• Central Asia Education Platform 2 (2015 – 2018)	HE + VET	1.8 Mil. EUR
Erasmus+ Structural projects (EU)	• Internationalisation and Modernisation of Education and Processes in the Higher Education of Uzbekistan (2015 - 2018)	HE	0.6 Mil. EUR
	• National Qualification Framework: Guidelines for Development and Recognition of Qualifications (2015 – 2018)	HE	0.8 Mil. EUR
	• Furthering the Quality of Doctoral Education at Higher Education Institutions in Uzbekistan (2016 – 2019)	HE	0.7 Mil. EUR
	• Paving the Way to Interregional Mobility and Ensuring Relevance, Quality and Equity of Access (2016 – 2019)	HE	1.0 Mil. EUR
World Bank	• Modernizing Higher Education Project (specific investment loan, 2016 – 2023)	HE	50.0 Mil. USD
Asian Development Bank	• Skills Strategies for Industrial Modernization and Inclusive Growth (technical assistance, 2017 – 2018)	VET	0.9 Mil. USD
	• Education Sector Development Program (loan, 2004 – 2009)	HE + VET	167.0 Mil. USD
GIZ	• Vocational Education and Training in the Construction Sector (2006 – 2015)	VET	1.1 Mil. EUR

2.6.1 EU

Projects financed from DG DEVCO:

Both phases of the regional initiative **Central Asia Education Platform** covering all five Central Asian countries are described in section 2.2.1.

Erasmus+ (Structural projects):

Internationalisation and Modernisation of Education and Processes in the Higher Education of Uzbekistan – the coordinator and contractor is the Rezekne Higher Education Institution, Latvia (Rezeknes Tehnologiju Akademija). Partners of the proposed project comprise HEIs from Uzbekistan, the United Kingdom, and Greece. The proposed project will build on previous work done through Tempus, British Council and IHE programmes in Uzbekistan. The purpose of the project is to address wider International Higher Education and Quality Assurance agendas and to contribute to Uzbekistan-EU dialogue. The specific focus of the project is on the development of: (i) new approaches to Continual Professional Development (CPD) for academic staff and HEI managers; (ii) standards of teaching and learning across various HE subjects; (iii) students’

engagement in teaching and learning. Contract duration is 36 months and approved project budget is €561 742.

National Qualification Framework: Guidelines for Development and Recognition of Qualifications – the coordinator and contractor is the University of Algarve, Portugal (Universidade do Algarve). Partners of the proposed project comprise HEIs from Uzbekistan, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Austria, and the Ministry of Higher and Secondary-Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The main objective of the project is to transform Uzbek HE to be capable to react to needs of social and economic development of the country. The specific objectives are: “(i) establishing of the National Committee on QF in Uzbekistan, together with the national Ministry of Education; (ii) to improve national General Regulations concerning education standards in particular fields, on the basis of QF ideas, Bologna principles, and the EU universities’ experience; (iii) introduction of new national standards on informatics in Uzbekistan and development of a corresponding sectoral QF”¹¹². Contract duration is 36 months and approved project budget is €751 046.

Furthering the Quality of Doctoral Education at Higher Education Institutions in Uzbekistan – the coordinator and contractor of the project is the Institutional Network of the Universities from the Capitals of Europe, headquartered in Brussels. Partners of the project are HEI from Uzbekistan, Hungary, Italy, Spain, and Belgium, and the Ministry of Higher and Secondary-Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Acronym of the project is UZDOC 2.0 and it is the sequel to the previous successful project on the doctoral education reform implementation in Uzbekistan. The aim of the project is to continue in enhancing the quality of doctoral education in Uzbekistan. The project comprises four elements: “(i) institutional support structure; (ii) integration of quality assurance elements and mechanisms; (iii) building the human resources; (iv) creating better connections with the business and industry sector in Uzbekistan”¹¹³. Proposed contract duration is 36 months and approved project budget is €651 017.

Paving the Way to Interregional Mobility and Ensuring Relevance, Quality and Equity of Access – for more details see section 3.1.1.

2.6.2 World Bank

Uzbekistan joined the World Bank in 1992 and since then the institution provided to the country financial aid approximately US\$3 786 million in loans, grants, and credits. The **Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for FY 2016 – 2020** is the latest strategic document of World Bank and its support to Uzbekistan. The CPF is fully aligned with the country’s development goals and it is based on the comprehensive analysis of the economic conditions, challenges, and limitations of Uzbekistan, created by the World Bank Group¹¹⁴. The CPF has three focus areas with specific objectives:

1. private sector growth, including large, medium and small private firms. The area comprises following objectives: (i) improved regulatory requirements for business; (ii) strengthened private sector access to finance; (iii) increased private sector investments; (iv) enhanced corporate governance for facilitation of the efficient and transparent privatization process; (v) broadened policy dialogue on economic governance;
2. agriculture competitiveness and cotton sector modernisation with following objectives: (i) increased efficiency in the cotton sector through the facilitation of a market-led modernisation; (ii) improved the diversification of agriculture production to high-value, job-intensive, and less water-intensive crops;

¹¹² Description of the Project 561742-EPP-1-2015-1-PT-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP

¹¹³ Description of the Project 573703-EPP-1-2016-1-BE-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP

¹¹⁴ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uzbekistan/overview#2>

3. public service delivery with objectives: (i) improved access to quality education and health services; (ii) increased access to improved water supply and sanitation services; (iii) improved energy efficiency; (iv) increased reliability and reduced cost of transport and improved efficiency of infrastructure service delivery¹¹⁵.

The current World Bank's portfolio comprises 15 active and 22 closed projects. Only one is regarding the higher education sector reforms:

Modernizing Higher Education Project launched in April 2016 and the closing date will be in February 2023. The project's objective is to "strengthen the Recipient's higher education system managerial capacity, and to improve both the labor market relevance and the learning environment of selected higher education institutions"¹¹⁶. The project has four main components: (i) enhance the managerial capacity of the HE system; (ii) improve the learning environment in HEIs; (iii) improve the relevance of HE; (iv) project management, monitoring, and evaluation. The total project costs are US\$50 million and the implementing agency is the Ministry of Education.

2.6.3 Asian Development Bank

Uzbekistan joined the ADB in 1995 and since then the country has received US\$5.1 billion in loans and US\$64.9 million in technical assistance grants. ADB is focusing on support the economic expansion of Uzbekistan. Current leading strategic document for Uzbekistan is the **Country Operations Business Plan** for period 2017 – 2019 which is fully aligned with the latest Country Partnership Strategy for period 2012 – 2016. The priority areas of the COBP regarding transport, municipal services, and finance sectors, however, it also includes pilot-based and demand-driven support to education (and healthcare, as well)¹¹⁷.

The ADB's project portfolio in Uzbekistan comprises one active and one closed project for the education sector.

Skills Strategies for Industrial Modernization and Inclusive Growth is a technical assistance project launched in January 2017 with an end in January 2018. The project "will formulate an inter-ministerial working system for forecasting skills needs and the contribution of the education sector to a balanced and inclusive labor market" at the policy level, and, at the practical level, "it will contribute to improvement of the overall situation of the labor market and regional competitiveness in the three pilot regions [Navoi, Tashkent (Angren) and Andijan] through developing and piloting capacity building activities and on-the-job skills development activities with government agencies, firms and the participation of regional human resources"¹¹⁸. The executing agency is the Ministry of Labor, and total project cost is US\$900 thousand.

Education Sector Development Program launched in April 2004 and ended in August 2009. The project addressed four major education challenges: (i) modernising the structure, contents, and processes of education; (ii) improving sector sustainability and efficiency; (iii) reforming governance of education; and (iv) providing protection for the poor"¹¹⁹. The executing agency was the Ministry of Finance and total project costs were US\$167,1 million.

¹¹⁵ Country Partnership Framework for Uzbekistan for the Period FY16-FY20, 2016

¹¹⁶ <http://projects.worldbank.org/P128516?lang=en>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.adb.org/documents/uzbekistan-country-operations-business-plan-2017-2019>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.adb.org/projects/50025-001/main#project-overview>

¹¹⁹ Uzbekistan: Education Sector Development Program, 2008

2.6.4 GIZ

GIZ has implemented its projects in Uzbekistan since the 1990's on behalf of German federal institutions. Support of GIZ is focused on reforms of economy, health and education sectors, as well as sustainable development of country's environment¹²⁰.

The most recent project financed by GIZ in Uzbekistan is the **Vocational Education and Training in the Construction Sector** with duration from December 2006 to July 2015. The objective of the project was "to strengthen the quality and capacity of initial and further education in the field of building sector professions"¹²¹. The project focused on the standards and curriculum development, capacity building and further education of teaching staff and management. The total project budget was €1 074 700.

¹²⁰ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/364.html>

¹²¹ <http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/vocational-education-and-training-in-the-construction-sector/>

3 Success Stories

Education System Reforms in the Countries of Central Asia: Focus on Quality and Innovation (GIZ)¹²² – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan

The project was implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan during the period 2009 – 2016. The purpose of this programme was to support efforts of involved countries and their education ministries to improve the quality of their education system, to introduce necessary reforms and to monitor their impact. The target group represented children and young people from age 6 to 18 who struggled from a lack of quality education. The programme was focused on retraining and reskilling teachers teaching applied subjects such as technology, biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, as well as those providing elementary school teaching. An additional purpose was to support the regional exchange of experiences and process of collaborative learning within the CA region.

Since 2009, the initial year of programme implementation, more than 2 000 teachers of secondary schools and educational colleges have gained new professional and methodical-didactic knowledge. They also started implemented new methods of teaching, oriented towards practical experiences through experiments done by the students. This led to increased motivation on both sides – among students and among teachers.

The education ministries of involved CA countries have successfully integrated these new methods into the curricula for building programs for teachers. A significant number of teachers who undergone these training programs became trainers and currently train their colleagues.

German-style dual training system in Kazakhstan¹²³

In 2012, following the meeting between the President of Kazakhstan and German Federal Chancellor, there has been announced an initiative to implement the principles of the German dual vocational education system in Kazakhstan. The project has been launched in 2014, under an agreement between the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science, the Kazakhstan Chamber of Industry, and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ).

The dual education represents a combination of theoretical training at professional colleges with practical training at companies or business. The practical training often represents half time of the study time.

Higher Education Admission Reforms to Provide Greater Opportunity and Equity for Tajikistan's Youth¹²⁴

In Tajikistan, more than half of its citizens is in an age under 24 years. This population group is struggling with lack of opportunities for quality and equitable education. In the past, the education system in Tajikistan has faced issues of corruption, inadequate testing and lack of transparency. These problems led to establishing the country's National Testing Center (NTC) in 2008 and new

¹²² <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/14383.html>

¹²³ <http://www.heidelbergcement.com/en/dual-training-system-kazakhstan>

¹²⁴ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2015/05/04/higher-education-admission-reforms-to-provide-greater-opportunity-and-equity-for-tajikistans-youth>

Unified Entrance Examination (UEE) in 2014 which standardizes testing practices, reduces corruption and make higher education more equitable for Tajik students.

The World Bank, the Russian Government (through the READ project) and the Open Society Institute have supported the establishment and capacity building of NTC, and have assisted in designing and implementing the UEE. These reforms allowed more than 50 000 applicants, including 17 500 females, to register for the UEE exam in 2014, which was 30 % more than in 2013.

Central Asia Education Platform 1, 2

This DG DEVCO sponsored project aims to enhance both cooperation between the European Union and Central Asia, and also regional cooperation between the countries of Central Asia, in order to strengthen education reforms in the region. It also enables better co-ordination of donors' actions in the education sector while enhancing ownership by Central Asian countries. Various activities of the project contributed to education reforms in Central Asia, for example:

- In Uzbekistan, CAEP has provided expertise for an appraisal of the Education Sector Plan in Uzbekistan, which was well received by the state authorities and the donor community.
- In Kyrgyzstan, the Project supported a one-day Tempus Seminar on Human Resource Management in Public Higher Education Institutions in Kyrgyzstan, in Bishkek on 24 October 2013. In total 40 participants representing officials and representatives of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education, HEIs and national HEREs participated. As a result of the seminar, and under the guidance of the HEREs, the participants developed a set of recommendations for developing a National Strategy and Human Resource Development Support for HEIs in Kyrgyzstan.
- The project contributed to more intense bilateral cooperation between Poland, Latvia and CA countries, particularly Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.
- As a contribution to evidence-based policy making, CAEP developed a database of education projects implemented in Central Asia by various donors.

4 Potential Fields for Synergies

Potential fields for synergies are actively sought by the **Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC) in Kyrgyzstan**. DPCC has been established in 2004 with the purpose of improving the multi-way flow of relevant information among donors, government agencies, and civil society institutions. This facilitates networking and broader collaboration within the donor community, a more constructive dialogue and shared a vision with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on country's priorities, and serves to strengthen overall aid coordination and management¹²⁵. A formalized donor coordination structure includes the DPCC, three Co-chairs (heads of 3 development agencies) and Donor Coordination Secretariat (currently hosted by ADB resident mission).

In 2010, donors have established a **Donor Coordination Council (DCC) in Tajikistan** as a forum for regular donor coordination. The chair of the DCC is a spokesperson for development partners at formal Government/partner meetings and is the official point of contact on general coordination matters. The DCC usually meets once a month. DCC office has been financed by participating donors¹²⁶.

With regard to education, the EU may explore following potential synergies:

- Any project idea on VET in Kazakhstan shall be consulted with the World Bank and GIZ who have longstanding experience in this country.
- In Kyrgyzstan, VET projects need to be coordinated with ADB and GIZ. Higher education initiatives require alignment with the World Bank's efforts.
- In Tajikistan, EU recently became a new bilateral development partner in the field of VET. Synergies should be sought in cooperation with ADB and GIZ who have longer experience in this sector of Tajik education system.
- EU is the leading development cooperation partner in Turkmenistan's education. Ongoing VET project may build on synergies with the results of GIZ' Reform to Educational Systems in Central Asia (2009 – 2016),
- Uzbekistan currently implements a large WB project on higher education and benefits from ADB's technical assistance in VET sector. Any new projects should be coordinated with one or the other Bank.

¹²⁵ http://www.donors.kg/en/about-us#.WKwYen_pGCK

¹²⁶ <http://www.untj.org/dcc/>

5 Recommendations

Information and expert opinions collected in this report allow formulating several recommendations for stakeholders and decision makers in Europe and Central Asia:

- **The highest risk of overlaps** with other development partner's initiatives represent the projects in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan where major donors actively engage in both HE and VET. Any new initiatives shall be thoroughly coordinated at the Development Partners Forums or at bilateral meetings with ADB, WB, and GIZ.
- **EU has a prominent position among development partners in Turkmenistan's educational sector.** This position should be further developed for upcoming cooperation in post-DCI era (starting presumably in 2018).
- In the whole region, EU is highly appreciated for its **TEMPUS and Erasmus+** support to higher education. This 'core business' of the EU should be further supported and – to the extent possible – customised to the needs of Central Asian partners.
- **Uzbekistan's VET sector** currently stands aside from the attention of major European donors. EU/ETF in cooperation with GIZ might try to identify project ideas in this field
- EU might consider initiating the **establishment of a donor coordination council in Uzbekistan.** A good example of its design might be the Development Partners Coordination Council in Kyrgyzstan.