

**TRANSBOUNDARY RIVERS OF UZBEKISTAN: WATER POLICY AND REGIONAL COOPERATION***Cho'liboyev Islom Ilhom o'g'li**Termiz State Pedagogical Institute**Faculty of Natural and Exact Sciences, 3rd-year student of**Geography and Basics of Economic Knowledge, Group 303*

**Abstract:** This article provides an in-depth analysis of Uzbekistan's main water sources—the transboundary Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers— and the mechanisms of regional water management and cooperation. It discusses Uzbekistan's approach within the context of water diplomacy, international legal norms, the Aral Sea crisis, and water-energy balance. The current state and prospects of cooperation among Central Asian states for equitable water use, as well as the role of modern technologies, are also examined.

**Keywords:** transboundary waters, Amu Darya, Syr Darya, Uzbekistan water policy, water diplomacy, Aral Sea region, regional cooperation, water-energy balance.

The Central Asian region is one of the most water-stressed areas globally. Uzbekistan, in particular, is highly dependent on upstream rivers due to its geopolitical and ecological circumstances. The Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers serve as the backbone of Uzbekistan's water system and originate in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, classifying them as transboundary water resources. This situation requires constant coordination among Central Asian countries to maintain a water-energy balance.

After the collapse of the centralized water management system that existed during the Soviet era, each state began pursuing water use based on its national interests. This shift led to increasing conflicts over water resources. Mountainous countries prefer to use more water in winter for hydroelectric energy generation, while downstream countries— especially Uzbekistan— require more water during summer for irrigation.

Since the late 1990s, Uzbekistan has sought to protect its water resources, mitigate the ecological disaster surrounding the Aral Sea, and establish a sustainable management system through regional agreements. In this context, regional institutions such as IFAS (International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea) and ICWC (Interstate Commission for Water Coordination) have played a significant role. However, the effectiveness of these structures has been limited due to insufficient political will and financial resources.

Nevertheless, in recent years— especially since 2017— Uzbekistan has demonstrated a clear shift towards openness and cooperation in its water policy. Strategies include negotiating water-energy exchanges with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, demanding environmental assessments for hydropower projects, and implementing new water infrastructure projects to enhance regional stability.

Another important factor is the adoption of modern technologies, such as satellite monitoring, digital hydro-monitoring, and water-saving irrigation systems. These tools help improve the efficiency of water use and reduce waste. The use of digital technologies—especially artificial intelligence (AI)—for optimizing water distribution also presents a promising direction.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan's transboundary water policy is a strategic element that supports both socio-economic stability and regional peace. In this regard, sustained dialogue, equitable water allocation, technological solutions ensuring ecological safety, and international cooperation remain key priorities.

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