



UNIVERSITY
OF CENTRAL ASIA

Building a University Town in Khorog





"The University of Central Asia in Khorog is opening a new page in our country's education system... I am convinced that the operation of this newly established facility will benefit not only our country, but it will also strengthen the multifaceted cooperation between the countries of the region in the field of education."

His Excellency Emomali Rahmon
Founder of Peace and National Unity - Leader of the Nation, President of the Republic of
Tajikistan and Founding Patron of UCA.
UCA's Khorog Campus Inauguration, 14 September 2018, Khorog, Tajikistan.

"By creating intellectual space and resources, the University of Central Asia will bring the power of education and human ingenuity to the economic and social challenges of mountain societies in Central Asia and elsewhere."

His Highness the Aga Khan,
Chancellor, University of Central Asia.
UCA Khorog Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony, 6 July 2004, Khorog, Tajikistan.



Building a state of the art facility and a campus with modern academic infrastructure, the University of Central Asia in Khorog is the product of cooperation of the Tajik Government and Aga Khan Development Network, and has become a place for obtaining quality education for the young generation of Tajikistan and other countries.

It is the result of these co-operations that the intellectual space which is being operated in line with international standards in Khorog involves the youth of our country getting an education of international standard. Also, the design of UCA gives our town a new and attractive image.

It was a matter of great pride when UCA was inaugurated in 2018 by the Founder of peace and national unity – Leader of the nation, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, and Representatives of Aga Khan Development Network. It led to increasing the number of visitors from foreign countries to our town. The University of Central Asia contributed to the Khorog town in the amount of \$95 million in construction expenses. More than 700 jobs were created during the construction phase, and currently 90% of the faculty and staff on campus are local residents.

The Executive Body of Khorog collaborates with UCA in conducting cultural and educational events, and highly appreciates the contribution of UCA in educating the youth, particularly their language learning, and preparing specialists who meet the labor market needs and demands.

We look forward to further cooperation of the Government of Tajikistan with the Aga Khan Development Network, under the leadership of President Emomali Rahmon and His Highness Aga Khan. The upcoming expansion of UCA will transform Khorog into a vibrant city and a desirable destination for tourists and foreign guests.

For decades, the collaboration between the Government of Tajikistan and the Aga Khan Development Network has been based on mutual trust and common purpose. The cordial relations and constructive policies of the Founder of Peace and National Unity, Leader of the Nation, President of Tajikistan, His Excellency Emomali Rahmon, with His Highness the Aga Khan has led to strengthening this partnership and setting up an enabling environment for the successful implementation of various development projects and programmes. AKDN's mission to improve the quality of life, and provide resources and opportunities to accomplish it, has been recognized by the highest leadership of the country. In addition, the favourable political climate of peace and unity that we have achieved through the tireless efforts of the Founder of Peace and National Unity, Leader of the Nation, President of Tajikistan, His Excellency Emomali Rahmon has played a vital role in the successful operation of AKDN programmes. It is worthy of note that without official support, generous contributions of individual donors, public servants, and AKDN agencies' programs and beneficiaries, it would not have been possible to reach these goals.

With deep respect,

Kishvar Shamiri,
Mayor of Khorog



History of Khorog

Khorog town is located in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), and has a population of approximately 32,000. It is situated at 2,200 metres above sea level in the Pamir mountains, and has been the administrative centre of the Gorno-Badakhshan region since 1925.

Khorog lies at the junction of the Ghund and Shakh dara rivers which divide the town into two sections. The rivers merge with the Wakhan river where the Panj river forms. Besides Khorog, the Oblast (Province) consists of seven districts. The Pamir Highway links GBAO with the rest of the country and runs through the middle of Khorog town. There is also a trade route from China through Central Asia, which is an important spot for all tourists who visit the Pamirs. Khorog is lined with green poplar trees, and features picturesque traditional Pamiri houses. It is approximately 600 km East of Tajikistan's capital, Dushanbe, and 700 km South from Osh in Kyrgyzstan.

Khorog is home to the world's second-highest botanical garden in elevation, which was established in 1940. It holds thousands of high-mountain species and a variety of flora that have great value to scientists. Khorog's hydroelectric power station is the second main electricity generating plant in Tajikistan and was constructed on the Ghund river.

Khorog Master Plan

For several years, the University of Central Asia (UCA), an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), has been supporting its undergraduate campus towns in Khorog (Tajikistan) and Naryn (Kyrgyzstan) to transform the areas into university towns. Since 2009, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) has been assisting the Khorog Municipality to develop Phase I of the Khorog town master plan. This included a strategic plan for managing growth and land use, following the rehabilitation of the Khorog Park in 2007. In 2010 AKTC updated its planning materials including more details on urban planning controls, and issued Phase I of a Strategic City Plan and Zoning Proposal in February 2010. UCA in conjunction with AKTC and Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) plans to hold joint discussions with the Khorog Municipality on the next steps for Phase II of the master plan, refocusing attention on key nodes within Khorog and creating a hub linking the centre with UCA's Khorog campus.

Building a University Town in Khorog

Economic development is at the heart of the University of Central Asia's development strategy, which strengthens existing enterprises and promotes the establishment of new ones.

UCA was founded in 2000 as a private, not for profit, secular university through an International Treaty signed by the Presidents of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, and His Highness the Aga Khan; ratified by their respective parliaments and registered with the United Nations.

The Presidents are the Patrons of the University and His Highness is the Chancellor. UCA's mission is to promote the social and economic development of Central Asia, particularly its mountain communities, by offering an internationally recognised standard of higher education, and enabling the peoples of the region to preserve their rich cultural heritage as assets for the future. UCA brings with it the broader commitment and partnership of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

UCA's undergraduate programmes are located at its residential campuses in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan (launched in 2016), and Khorog, Tajikistan (2018). The Tekeli campus in Kazakhstan is expected to start classes in 2023. UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Tajikistan also has learning centres in Khorog, Dushanbe and Bohktar.

Campus Construction

Phase I construction of the UCA Khorog campus was completed in 2017, and includes an academic block, laboratory building, student life building, and residences. During the campus construction, UCA created over 800 jobs, of which 95% were local residents. Currently, over 100 Khorog residents hold full time jobs at the Khorog campus. These include important positions in academics, facilities management, catering, mechanical and electrical systems, maintenance, security, cleaning, gardening, materials supply, laundry, transportation, leisure and sport facilities, and medical services.

When all phases of construction in Naryn, Khorog and Tekeli are completed, UCA is expected to generate over 350,000 days of employment, with an economic impact of over US\$750 million.

Drawing of Khorog Campus Masterplan.



Town Development

In addition to offering undergraduate students an international standard of academic experience and facilities, the University of Central Asia is partnering with the Government of Tajikistan and other Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) agencies to develop the Khorog town into a vibrant university community and give a much-needed boost to the local economies.

This framework includes AKDN initiatives for social sector development in education, health, hospitality, tourism, enterprise and rural development. Included are the economic and social benefits derived from UCA's campus operations, and opportunities offered by its various development programmes.



Launched in Tajikistan



2020



Khorog Park



University of Central Asia
Campus in Khorog (Phase I)



Pamir Eco-Cultural
Tourism Association



Aga Khan Medical Centre



Aga Khan Health
Services

Khorog Diagnostic
Centre

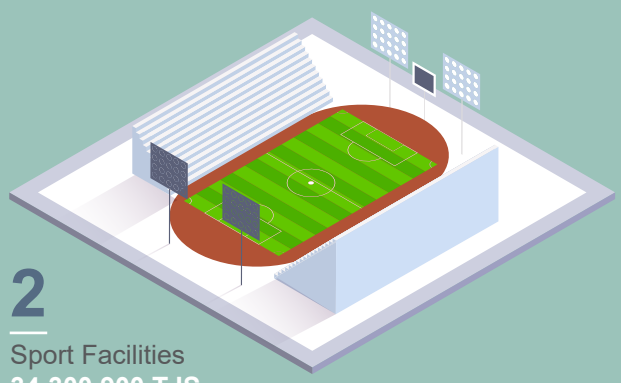
The Government of Tajikistan's Investment in Khorog for the past 28 Years



10
Residential Buildings
81,820,500 TJS

9
Hospitals and Health Centers
33,830,300 TJS

3
Dormitory
18,419,300 TJS



2
Sport Facilities
34,300,900 TJS

4
Schools, presidential gymnasium, medical college and kindergarten
37,069,300 TJS

29
Government Buildings
130,007,700 TJS



2
Statue
335,100 TJS

9
Refurbishment
5,663,100 TJS

3
Retrofitting
806,500 TJS

4
Bridge and water - pipeline
5,233,400 TJS



3
Road Paving
2,476,500 TJS

11
Reconstruction
25,928,600 TJS



Presidential School in Khorog, Tajikistan



AKDN investment in Khorog for the past 28 years

428,317,000 TJS

University and Dormitory

578,003 TJS

Hotel and Tourism Services

46,498,008 TJS

Schools and ECD (Early Childhood Development Centre)

4,041,523 TJS

Cross Border Bridge and Market in Khorog

127,340,055 TJS

Hospitals and Diagnostic Center

2,209,845 TJS

Emergency Management and Preparedness

1,239,401 TJS

Sport Facilities

2,728,689 TJS

Natural Hazards Mitigation Project

67,629,000 TJS

Cultural Centre

9,293,776 TJS

Water Supply and Other Infrastructure Projects

20,288,700 TJS

Recreational Centres

9,549,300 TJS

Energy Facility Refurbishment

1,275,934 TJS

Business Support Centres

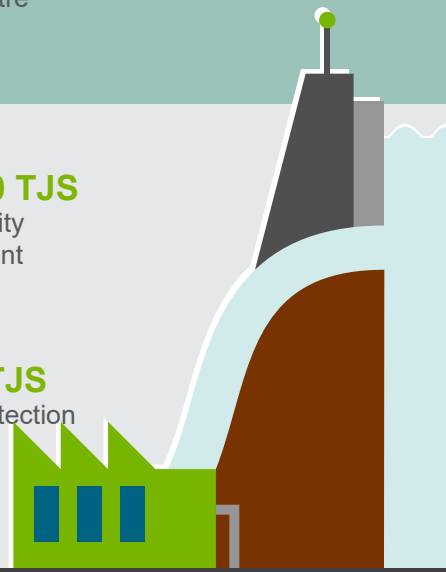
974,060 TJS

Bank services, CBSG

2,953,034 TJS

River Bank Protection

The Khorog Campus (Phase 1) includes an Academic Block, Laboratory Building, Student Life Building, and Dormitories.





Education

UCA students and faculty are engaged with the Khorog community and have organised several initiatives to promote education of youth and adults in Khorog.

UCA students launched a Teen Book Club, which meets every Saturday during the school year at the Khorog Campus. It is held for students from different schools in Khorog to improve their English through reading and presentations. Another group of UCA students lead storytelling sessions at the campus for 3 to 7 year olds with their parents.

In Khorog town, some undergraduate students are assisting in the teaching of math, science and English to Aga Khan Lycee and Khorog School #9 students. During the 2017-2018 academic year, UCA students were involved in seven weekly educational projects, and spent over 100 hours supporting youth from the Khorog community, and neighbouring areas of the Rushon district.

UCA students also work with local educators to explore ways of assisting and inspiring disengaged youth in Khorog. They launched a Youth Engagement Project, and organised a photo-voice project in four schools to help start conversations on how to build positive relationships with youth, and conducted focus groups with students to gather ideas from Khorog teens about their life experiences as youth in Khorog.

Faculty members at UCA launched English and math workshops for Khorog State University (KSU) students in November 2018, as part of the Heptagon project aimed at improving the quality of math and English teaching in the rural areas of GBAO. Targeting junior level KSU students, the project aims at developing future teachers in Khorog and its surrounding districts and villages, including potential UCA faculty members. The project curriculum includes an educational internship where students will observe and practice teaching, develop lesson plans, and learn about teaching methodology and activities.

UCA's English faculty also organised a series of workshops for over 40 English language teachers in Khorog from November 2018 to May 2019 as part of a community service initiative. It provided professional development to teachers and teacher trainers from secondary schools and educational centres in Khorog. It included workshops on Communicative Language Teaching, practical ways to implement it within English classrooms, the importance of critical thinking skills, and exploring strategies to incorporate them into teaching. The project allowed Khorog English Teachers to gain professional experience at the local TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) level (an accredited professional qualification for teaching English to speakers of other languages), encouraging them to pursue further training internationally.



Environment

UCA has a wide variety of extracurricular activities including UCA's student-run Green Community, which has left its mark on the community in many ways. The UCA Green community is especially active in early childhood development, teaching local children the importance of recycling and sustainability, as well as organising community clean-ups in Khorog town. The club has also implemented many campus initiatives including setting up recycling boxes, and encouraging involvement from the student body through competitions, events and challenges on campus.



Health Fair

UCA's Student Health Council regularly organizes "Healthy Living" festival which is attended by a large number of Khorog residents aimed at increasing awareness about healthy lifestyles. Doctors from the Khorog Health Centre provided health screenings on nutrition, optometry, diabetes, dentistry, oncology, and traditional medicine to the visitors. The Health festival also offers guests an opportunity to buy fruit, healthy juices, and play games and other activities related to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.



Sports

The Khorog campus features international standard football and tennis facilities, as well as a sports dome. UCA's undergraduate students host community football and volleyball games with Khorog residents and participate in the Pamir League football.



Festival of Togetherness

UCA's student-run Diversity Club aims to showcase diversity and educate the community about tolerance and pluralism. UCA students regularly organizes "Togetherness" festivals for large number of community members to promote and share different cultures. Participants are flown around the world by visiting various tables that represent different countries, engaging in trivia, and watching performances by UCA, American Space and Khorog State University performers.

Short-cycle Professional Education

The University of Central Asia's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) provides post-secondary, short cycle professional education in Khorog, covering a broad range of skills such as entrepreneurship, English, mental math for children, business planning, and Information Technology. These are provided in a flexible learning format that improves graduates employment and income generating opportunities and opens pathways for lifelong learning.

SPCE in Khorog opened in October 2006. The current facility is equipped with state-of-the-art learning technologies, two computer laboratories, six classrooms and a well-stocked library. The School has become a leading provider of adult and continuing education, reaching over 75,000 learners in Tajikistan, and over 10,000 learners in Afghanistan through its cross-border programmes since April 2019.

Following over a decade of neglect in promoting tertiary education, SPCE has provided new opportunities for residents to enroll in short-term courses and programmes. Now, with over 40,000 SPCE learners in Khorog since 2006, the School has already engaged 12% of the Oblast population, and it is well known in the region and beyond. Additionally, more than 50,000 visitors have participated in events, seminars and workshops hosted by SPCE.

In 2017, SPCE conducted an independent external evaluation showing that 90% of learners obtained skills for employment and admission to higher education; 75% improved their chances of finding new or better jobs – among them 12% started or expanded a business; 88% obtained job skills to remain in Khorog; and 77% of learners increased their civic engagement following enrollment in SPCE courses.

SPCE graduates are gaining admission to universities abroad, participating in international competitions, as well as studying at Aga Khan Development Network institutions, including the Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa (Kenya), and UCA's undergraduate programme. SPCE entrepreneurship programme graduates are also bringing change to Khorog town, with over 60 new businesses created in the past 3 years, the majority of which are in Khorog and the surrounding region.

SPCE Building in Khorog, Tajikistan.





Dr. Olga Saifulloeva (left), Vice Rector at Khorog State University with Dr. Bohdan Krawchenko, Dean of the Graduate School of Development at UCA.

Mountain University Partnerships

Mountain Universities Partnership (MUP) is an initiative of AKDN's University Improvement Programme. MUP programme is centred at University of Central Asia (UCA) and aims to support mountain universities – Naryn State University (NSU) in Kyrgyzstan, Khorog State University (KSU) in Tajikistan, Karakorum International University (KIU) in Pakistan and Badakhshan University (BU) in Afghanistan. The overriding goal of MUP is to help the four mountain universities improve their quality of education, while contributing to socio-economic development of the mountain regions in the long run. These universities are serving the bulk of population in the mountainous areas and thus playing an indispensable role in the development of the mountain regions.

Within MUP programme, English language courses have been organised for more than 50 faculty members from KSU. To improve KSU's Economic Faculty, training on qualitative and quantitative research methods have been arranged through UCA's IPPA, which led to the research project on Micro, Small, Medium and Enterprises in GBAO conducted by KSU. In addition, development of a new bachelor's degree programme in Tourism and Entrepreneurship is in the pipeline, which will be a unique programme to Tajikistan context, as it will be delivered in English and it will equip students with updated knowledge and best practices both in Tourism and Entrepreneurship, as well as reflecting the context of economic and tourism challenges in GBAO, Tajikistan.

MUP has also facilitated partnership between the Russian State Geological Prospecting University (RSGPU) and KSU. Prof. Victor Dyakonov from RSGPU conducted expert assessment of Geology programmes at KSU and developed expert recommendations, including laboratory equipment, required for the long-term development of KSU Geology programme. Based on the expert guidance, MUP set up four types of Geology laboratories at KSU, which are due to be officially inaugurated within 2020. In addition, RSGPU has donated books to KSU, addressing the shortage of books and learning materials at KSU's Geology Department. Further concerted efforts are planned, through engagement with RSGPU and UCA's Earth and Environmental Sciences, to develop Geology programme at KSU into one of the best in Central Asia.



UCA - Education Improvement Programme

The University of Central Asia's Education Improvement Programme (UCA-EIP) engages 60 selected secondary schools in the three Founding States of the University: Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

Working with education ministries, district education officers, and school staff within the framework of the national curricula, EIP aims to improve student learning outcomes in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), Information Communication Technology, and English. It also aims to develop competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication, required for full participation in economic, social, and cultural life in the 21st Century. A situational analysis was conducted to identify the status of schools, teacher's needs, and to frame a strategy for education improvement with an emphasis on the professional development of school leaders and teachers. As part of this strategy, EIP conducts ongoing professional development programmes for school directors and teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Aga Khan Development Network Initiatives



Health

In December 2018, the Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS) opened a Medical Centre for outpatient services in Khorog, and expanded to inpatient services in April 2019. It offers polyclinical, dental, physiotherapy, surgery, and gynecology services to Khorog residents, and UCA students, faculty and staff. Over 130 new staff are employed at the centre.

A wide range of interventions in health promotion, facility rehabilitation and equipping, pharmaceutical procurement, distribution and sales, and training in new clinical and managerial practices have been provided with support from the Aga Khan Foundation, international donor agencies, as well as partnerships with the Department of Health of Gorno-Badakhshan.

AKHS also provides support in training and courses, learning materials, medical equipment, infrastructure, e-health development, pharmacies, health screenings, and teleconsultation sessions at several institutions in Khorog including the Family Medicine Training Centre, Khorog Oblast Family Centre, Polyclinic, Khorog Central Hospital and Diagnostic Centre, Dental Clinic and pharmacies. Clinical excellence centres have also been established by AKHS for information support to doctors and nurses in the community.



Rural Development

The Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP) is a leading rural development organisation of the Aga Khan Foundation, working in four regions of Tajikistan covering over 1,600 villages. MSDSP is aimed at fostering effective participatory governance through civil society institutional development. It promotes sustainable agricultural intensification and land management, improves and expands public services, and enhances private services for socio-economic and environmental development.

MSDSP has made several contributions to the development of Khorog and GBAO, including the construction of a cross-border bridge to Afghanistan, cross-border market, sports centre in Tem (photo above), renovation of 12 sports fields and two gyms in Khorog. In addition, the establishment of the Pamirs Eco-Cultural Tourism Association (PECTA) promotes tourism, provides services for national and international tourists, and runs a handicraft shop.



Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Response

Operating across Tajikistan for over 20 years, the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) has been implementing a diverse portfolio of projects and initiatives. AKAH's areas of work include disaster preparedness, housing and habitat, water and sanitation, emergency response, and environmental stewardship.

Some of those initiatives include but are not limited to i) disaster risk reduction through structural and non-structural mitigation, ii) skills enhancement and trainings, iii) community emergency management through community response teams, emergency stockpiles, emergency communications, and awareness raising and planning, iv) habitat assessment through hazard risk assessments, integrated habitat assessments, v) municipal services through provision of rural and urban water supplies, and vi) resilient facilities through public facilities construction.

In 2016, AKAH conducted a Hazard and Vulnerability Risk Assessment (HVRA) of the Khorog town to evaluate natural hazards and human-induced phenomena in Khorog and adjacent areas to enhance the resiliency of facilities to natural disasters and natural processes. AKAH implemented several projects in response to this study, including avalanche slope terracing, as well as rehabilitation and repair of a hydro post and collapsed section of the Temur canal. It was part of an "Urban Assessment" project by AKAH, previously conducted in Khujand and Dushanbe in 2013, and in Naryn (Kyrgyzstan) in 2014.

In response to critical needs for access to clean drinking water in Khorog, AKAH and the Aga Khan Foundation

Tajikistan, with the financial support of Government of Switzerland, are upgrading the Municipal Water Supply System in Khorog. The intervention is focusing on addressing the acute shortage of drinking water supply in the central part of Khorog town, by extending and connecting the water pipeline from the source to the city mains. The project also aims to increase access to quality water services and improving knowledge on hygiene, sustainable use, management and maintenance of water services in Khorog.

AKAH engages strengthening the resiliency of remote and isolated at-risk communities across the region through social, economic and structural interventions. In order to promote disaster preparedness, AKAH has established 16 Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), 4 Avalanche Village Preparedness Teams (AVPTs), as well as Search and Rescue Response Teams (SARTs) in Khorog.

AKAH has also established regional hub-stockpiles in Khorog to cover about 300 families during the times of emergency, ensuring that people are provided with adequate shelter (tents) along with sleeping mats, hygiene kits, kitchen sets and household supplies during an emergency.

As part of its capacity building effort, AKAH is constantly providing technical support to emergency services in Khorog in terms of provision of software, hardware, equipment and vehicles, which enables them to perform the routine work more efficiently. The Agency also conducts earthquake preparedness drills, as part of a global campaign engaging over 50 million people annually.



Early Childhood Development

The Early Childhood Development programme (ECD) at AKL currently enrolls over 80 children ages 3 to 5 years, in a half-day programme. ECD Resource Centre adjacent to Khorog Park enrolls 100 children of 3-6 years olds and plans to extend its programme from half day to full day provision from February 2020.

The Aga Khan Lycée and AKES work closely with its sister AKDN agencies, such as the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and the Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS), and partners with the regional government of GBAO, to support pre-primary quality education access from birth to six years, through various direct and indirect provision models.

These include AKES pre-primary to Grade 11 schools, AKES standalone Pre-primary units, as well as government-based ECD centres within Government Schools, government kindergartens, remote rural Government ECD programmes, and Care for Child Development Programme.

Indirect support includes, ECD teacher training, working with pre-natal and post-natal maternal health programmes, providing learning resources, and renovating classrooms.



Aga Khan Lycée

The Aga Khan Lycée (AKL) is dedicated to providing quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education for children. Established in 1998, the Aga Khan Lycée (AKL) is the first privately operated school in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO). It is part of the Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) in Tajikistan. Each year, the Lycée educates over 1000 students from pre-school to grade 11 with a graduation rate above 95 percent.

It aims to provide students with a high quality education and prepare them for further studies at higher education institutions of quality international universities. It also tests and develops new teaching and learning approaches that can serve as models of best practice for other educational institutions in Tajikistan and throughout the region.

The curriculum at the Lycée is offered in three language streams – English, Tajik and Russian in order to encourage students to develop fluency in more than one language. Special attention is placed on learning the Tajik language and cultivating a knowledge and appreciation of the country's rich history, literature and heritage.

The curriculum focuses on balanced teacher-student centred approaches that foster critical thinking skills while also developing collaboration, creativity and problem-solving abilities. The Aga Khan Lycée supplements the Tajik National State Curriculum with international content and practical skills, including Information Communications Technology (ICT) subjects, to ensure that graduates are competitive at a global level.



Pamir Energy

Since its inception in 2002, Pamir Energy (PE) has been investing heavily in the improvement of access to sustainable electricity through the rehabilitation of Soviet era infrastructure, improvements in customer services, and upgrading technologies. During the last decade, the company has spent 20'544'784 Tajik Somoni to contribute to the quality of services for the residents of the city. As well, PE operate a 9 MW hydropower plant (HPP) in the town of Khorog, the second largest in the region, and a landmark in Khorog with its two blue penstocks standing out against the backdrop of the town. These investments ensure that Khorog has access to uninterrupted electricity throughout the year and have created a platform for the implementation of large scale projects such as the University of Central Asia, the Khorog Ismaili Centre and Jamatkhana, and the Khorog Medical Center, all key institutions involved in accelerating socio-economic development for the region.

Within its social corporate responsibility framework, from 2017 to 2019 the company invested around TJS 538'640'000 into various socio-cultural activities in Khorog. As well, through PE sponsorship, over 2'000 students across 16 schools over 8 years have attended chess competitions. Moreover, PE has provided over TJS 67'500 in financial assistance to families in need and has contributed over TJS 200'000 to building small fields in Khorog. In addition, economically disadvantaged families are receiving financial and material support.



Khorog Central Park

The town of Khorog has few dedicated recreational areas, but they are vital to the lives of the inhabitants as spaces to socialise and places to play. The land for Khorog Park has been the focus of a rehabilitation project designed to offer visitors the possibility to reflect, relax and enjoy nature.

The design inspiration for the Park came as a direct response to the dramatic climate and landscape of the region and the common need for a public garden for both refuge and recreation. The design intent was to preserve the best of what existed and then work creatively with the ordinary, stone, water, flowers and shade trees in an extraordinary way. Khorog Park, with its café, teahouse, open-air theatre and pond provides an enhanced park facility for the entire city.

The development of Khorog Park contributes a significant public green space and has become an integral part of the circulation through the city. Its revival represents a substantial step towards the revitalisation of Khorog as a whole.



Khorog Serena Inn

The Khorog Serena Inn is located by the rugged, mountainous border region of Afghanistan and Tajikistan, and features majestic views of the Panj River and the Pamir Mountains. The hotel's interiors and rooms are designed in the manner of traditional Pamiri homes.

Elements of local heritage and culture can be found in design touches like wood ceilings, graceful antiques and furnishings and richly patterned fabrics. Social areas include an elegant Tajik-style lobby and an indoor/outdoor restaurant with river views. Every year, hundreds of guests and tourists use the services of the Serena Hotel in Khorog.

Serena Hotels has established itself as one of the world's leading hospitality brands offering quality accommodation, unique holiday and conference solutions, cultural heritage and adventure tourism. Its collection of 35 unique hotels, resorts, safari lodges and camps, palaces and forts are in some of the world's most interesting, enchanting, historic, and exotic settings.

The common operating philosophy at all Serena properties is attention to even the smallest details, exceptional personal service and a continuous effort to anticipate and surpass customer requirements. In addition, each property celebrates and reflects its area's artistic idioms and cultural expressions with a view to giving clients a unique experience in every Serena. These values are central to Serena's ethos and are the key elements that contribute to the strength and uniqueness of the brand.



Accelerate Prosperity in Khorog

Accelerate Prosperity (AP) is a new global initiative of the Aga Khan Development Network in Central and South Asia. In areas where there are few economic opportunities for small businesses, Accelerate Prosperity provides a formal structure to support and catalyze enterprises by providing capital and tailored business advice to startups and existing businesses. Accelerate Prosperity seeks to inspire grassroots-level entrepreneurship—offering lean startup incubation, facilitating mentorship from industry leaders, and creating links to seed and growth financing.

Since 2016, AP has been implemented in GBAO, Tajikistan. AP is gaining business expertise in these geographies and has built a network of mentors in the most promising industries, including commercial services, agri-business, tourism, ICT and textiles. AP works with partners - like the University of Central Asia's School of Professional and Continuing Education entrepreneurship programme - to link graduates to mentors and provide prospective facilitation or provision of financing. For example, in Khorog a construction firm with 5 employees was supported to expand the materials it produces, using new equipment acquired and adding 8 new jobs.

Since 2017, Accelerate Prosperity invested 645,000 dollars in GBAO, from which 283,000 dollars invested in 22 business projects in Khorog town.

Khorog Resiliency Initiative

The project helps to create the framework (capacity, information, tools) to make infrastructure investments resilient. Through this, it supports the provision of sustainable, reliable and resilient basic public services, as a basis for the realization of the development potential of the region.

The Khorog Resiliency Programme is a multi-sectoral development initiative, which aims to build long term and holistic resilience for Khorog Town and for the Republic of Tajikistan. The initiative will support the Government of Tajikistan and provide national, oblast (province) and municipal authorities with the systems, tools and capacity to ensure that planning for and investments in Khorog and the region are resilient and inclusive. With support from the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network, this initiative will make resilience central to policy making and planning, enabling investment in Khorog as a resilient city for the future.

The Republic of Tajikistan is vulnerable to natural hazards, which are increasing in frequency and intensity with global climate change. Cities and settlements, particularly in mountain areas are prone to multiple hazards, which impact health and livelihoods, development trajectories and economic growth. Building resilience enables cities, countries and communities to survive, adapt and thrive when faced with hazards, stresses and shocks. The Republic of Tajikistan has adopted a resilience agenda as part of the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and has appointed the Deputy Prime Minister as the DRR Focal Point. Tajikistan's commitment to resilience is also reflected in the aspiration of the local authorities and the country to reflect Khorog as the first Resilient City in the country, meeting the UNDRR guidelines for resilient cities, and building on Tajikistan's international commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement on Climate and the Dushanbe Declaration for the International Decade on Water Action.

Located in the Pamir Mountains of Tajikistan, the city of Khorog is at a critical stage in its economic development process. As the economic and social hub for the oblast (province), Khorog is facing the challenges of increasing natural hazards from climate change and demographic pressures, including increasing urbanization. Exacerbating these pressures are the degradation of critical infrastructure in Khorog, a significant proportion of which was established 50 years ago for a population a quarter of the existing size. Supporting the city of Khorog in investing for the future is a priority for the Government of Tajikistan, for the Aga Khan Development Network and for the international community. While Khorog has the potential for economic growth, and expanded investments, ensuring that the investments are resilient to natural, social and economic hazards and risks, is a key priority.

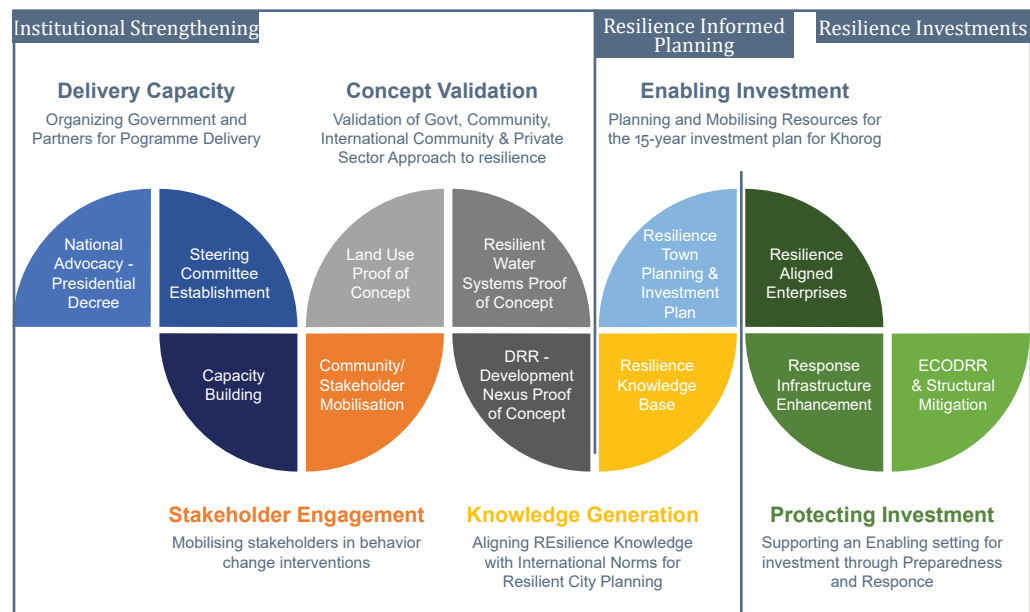
Development Objectives

The development objectives for the project is to ensure that planning and investments for Khorog City meets resilience criteria and support the Government of Tajikistan. It provides national, oblast and municipal level authorities with the systems and tools and capacity with which to ensure that town planning and investment happen in an integrated, inclusive and resilient manner. The intended impact of the initiative will be enhanced economic growth in Khorog through the objective of the Government of Tajikistan having the capacity to implement a long-term resiliency investment programme.

Approach and Theory of Change

This initiative will follow a comprehensive approach, focusing on institutional strengthening, resilience informed planning and investments in resilience. The theory of change that underpins this initiative reflects that when communities, donors, delivery partners, the private sector and Government are aligned with a clear understanding of risks and opportunities for settlements, and when they are enabled through practical capacity building and experiential learning, they have the capacity and confidence to put in place sustainable, resilient and enabling investments to support economic growth.

The key outcomes that will drive this objective include:



Institutional Strengthening: The strengthened capacity of public, private, community and civil society institutions that are supporting Khorog’s Resiliency. This will include advocacy with National leadership to establish Khorog as a model for resiliency, establishing a steering committee to support the rollout of the 15 year programme, and building the capacity of stakeholders in Khorog to deliver resiliency proofs of concepts that demonstrate the value of using resilience tools in project selection and delivery. An advisory committee will also be created in partnership with leading research institutions in the region, which will provide technical oversight and policy advice.

Resilience Informed Planning: The utilization of an understanding of the climatic, social, demographic and natural hazard risk that Khorog will face. This will include disaster loss estimations, resiliency baseline surveys, flood modelling and migration surveys. This information will provide an underpinning for the development of a resilient Town Plan and Investment Plan for Khorog.

Investments in Resilience: Increased economic growth in Khorog through decreased risk to key foundational infrastructure from natural hazards and environmental degradation. This will include the establishment of small resiliency enterprises, supporting the existing emergency response infrastructure and ECO-DRR and structural mitigation projects to protect lives and assets.

The planning and proof of concept initiatives are reflected below and structured around the following workstreams:



Key Stakeholders

The Khorog Urban Resiliency Initiative engages stakeholders at multiple levels. At the national level, the project will work with the Deputy Prime Minister (the DRR Focal Point) and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence, Main Department of Geology and the Committee of Architecture and Construction. At the regional level, the project will engage the Governor of GBAO, as well as the Mayor of Khorog and the municipal authorities. The project will also engage with community and civil stakeholders, working through female-led village organisations (SUDVOs) and Mahalla Committees.

Finance

This project will include national and regional components. Funding and technical assistance for this initiative is provided by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, with further support coming from the European Commission, the Embassy of Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects, and the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network. A total of \$26 million USD will be invested over the next five years. The initiative is designed to be long term and comprehensive, intended to build capacity and provide the national, oblast and municipal authorities with the capacity and support to mobilise resilient investments for the region.

Scalability and Replicability

Designed in line with the targets and indicators under Sustainable Development Goal 11, and the UNDRR Resilient Cities criteria, this intervention is intended to serve as model for Tajikistan and other countries in Central Asia to replicate in bringing resilience to cities and settlements in similar settings. By conducting proof of concept projects on resilient water systems and resilient land use proof of concept projects, the Khorog Resiliency Initiative can provide insights and understanding in building resilience in mountain settlements and will serve as a platform for mobilising investments and technical assistance.

Institutional Partners



AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



accelerate
prosperity



AKAH



AKES



AKF



AKFED



AKHS



AKTC



FMFB



MSDSP
An Initiative of Aga Khan Foundation



PAMIRENERGY
HVP gap Eoanv 4axov



SERENA HOTELS

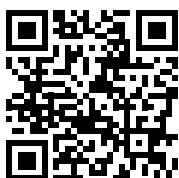


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UCA

- Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)
- Arcadia Foundation (AF)
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Australian Embassy in Moscow
- British Embassy to Tajikistan
- Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD)
- Embassy of Japan in Tajikistan
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- European Commission (EC)
- European Commission Humanitarian Organisation (ECHO)
- European Union (EU)
- German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO)
- German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF)
- German Federal Office of Agriculture and Food (BLE)
- German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ/GTZ)
- Global Affairs of Canada (GAC)
- Government of India
- Government of Japan
- Government of Tajikistan
- Government of the Swiss Confederation (SECO)
- International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
- International Development Agency (IDA)
- International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- International Finance Corporation (IFC)
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF)
- Kreditanstalt für Weideraufbau Bankengruppe (KfW)
- Mastercard Foundation
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
- Netherlands Organisation for International Development (NOVIB)
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)
- Oxfam GB
- Pakistan Afghanistan Tajikistan Regional Integration Programme (PATRIP)
- Swedish International Development Agency (Sida)
- Swiss Agency for International Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)
- Technical Assistance for Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS)
- The Christensen Fund (TCF)
- The OPEC Fund for International Development (OPEC)
- United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID)
- United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- United States Embassy in Tajikistan
- World Bank (WB)
- World Health Organization (WHO)




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