

Regional Green School Platform (RGSP)

High-Level Roundtable on Children, Youth and Climate at the Regional Ecological Summit

APRIL 2026



Background and rationale

Children across Central Asia face high risks from multiple climate and environmental hazards and shocks, including droughts, heatwaves, air pollution and water scarcity. Around 23 million children are exposed to at least three of these challenges.¹

Climate and environmental change pose direct and indirect threats to children's health, wellbeing and education. Extreme weather events, for example, damage and destroy school infrastructure and disrupt children's safe and continuous access to quality education. Air pollution, as well as extreme heat and cold, can deny children a safe, healthy, and conducive learning environment, undermining their concentration, attendance and learning outcomes. A combination of climate change and ageing infrastructure means that many school buildings constructed decades ago can no longer provide a safe and environmentally sound learning environment for all children.

Recent years have, however, seen emerging commitments and initiatives led by national governments, supported by their development

partners, to ensure that education systems become more resilient to climate, environmental and disaster impacts while harnessing their potential to contribute to climate and environmental action. The governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have signed up to *the International Declaration of Children, Youth, and Climate Action*, while the governments of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have joined *the Greening Education Partnership (GEP)*, a global initiative to tackle the climate crisis by transforming education. In 2024, the Ministries of Education from all five Central Asian countries endorsed *the Ministerial Declaration on Comprehensive School Safety in Central Asian Countries*, expressing their commitment to implement integrated and holistic school safety policies and programmes. Most recently, the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have made ambitious commitments by incorporating climate change education and youth participation into the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) 3.0 submitted to the UNFCCC.

Despite this progress, the education sector is not yet reaching its full potential to address escalating climate and environmental crises through effective adaptation and mitigation solutions. More comprehensive and contextualized education sector approaches to the climate crisis are needed, together with effective coordination and collaboration mechanisms.²

The Regional Green School Platform (RGSP)

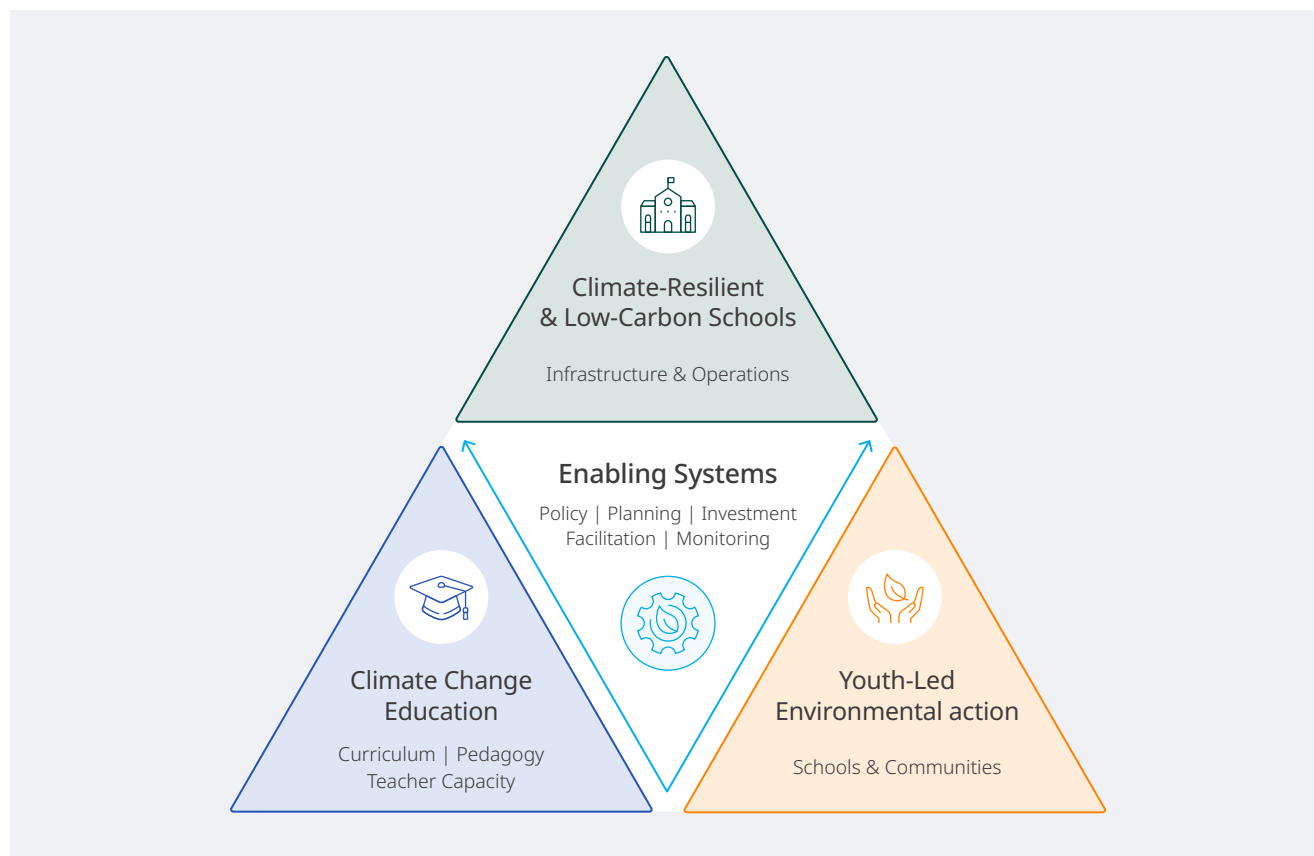
The Regional Green School Platform (RGSP) is a regionally coordinated platform to accelerate the greening of education systems across Central Asia. It brings together governments, development partners, and, where relevant, engages multilateral and bilateral financial institutions and the private sector to advance climate change education, climate-resilient school infrastructure, youth-led climate action, and enable governance and financing systems in the education sector. The platform, envisaged to be endorsed at the Regional Ecological Summit (RES) in April 2026 in Astana, is a cooperative and voluntary mechanism to promote national green school concepts and expedite the greening of education systems throughout Central Asia through an approach that is centred on children and youth. The RGSP links regional knowledge exchange with national policy processes and existing financing frameworks for climate-responsive education systems, including NDCs 3.0 implementation. It aims to operationalize the commitments made by Central Asian countries to climate

change education, green skills, and climate-resilient social infrastructure, as outlined in their NDCs 3.0, through coordinated regional dialogue and national-level action.

The RGSP is a cooperation and coordination platform that:

- facilitates knowledge exchange, peer learning, and policy dialogue, coordination, and voluntary collaboration among ministries of education, ecology/ environment, youth and, where relevant, finance
- provides shared technical guidance and standards to embed climate action across **three interconnected pillars**. These pillars are aligned with national green school concepts and the Regional Strategy for Promoting the Culture of Sustainable Development and Engaging Children and Youth in the Climate Agenda (2024-2030).³

Regional Green School Platform



Pillar 1

Climate change education through the curriculum, pedagogy and teacher capacity development

This pillar focuses on the systematic and comprehensive integration of climate change-related themes, topics and issues both horizontally across all subjects and vertically

through all educational grades as part of ongoing national curriculum reform. The climate change education curriculum aims to ensure sufficient space and attention for:



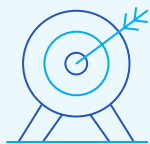
Physical mechanisms behind climate change



Key drivers of human-caused climate change



Climate change justice and injustice



Social economic, environmental and cultural impacts of climate change



Responses to climate change including climate change mitigation and adaptation



Student climate change action

Knowledge, skills, and the attitudinal learning outcomes of climate change education are to be integrated in the curriculum, aiming to generate the best possible cumulative learning impact.

This pillar also emphasizes in-service and pre-service teacher capacity development. It aims to enhance pre-service and in-service teacher capacities, using

interactive and action-oriented pedagogical approaches that foster proactive engagement with students – a key enabler for the delivery of an optimal climate change-related curriculum. It increases their confidence in employing a wide-range of interactive pedagogies in a contextually appropriate manner and helps them to become adept at linking students' climate-change learning, both inside and outside the classroom.



Pillar 2

Climate resilient, low-carbon and energy-efficient schools: Infrastructure and operations

This pillar focuses on transforming schools into safe, healthy, climate-resilient, low-carbon, and energy-efficient learning environments through a systematic and evidence-based approach, while linking infrastructure improvements to learning and health benefits. It supports countries in assessing school infrastructure conditions and identifying priority investment needs, followed by the implementation of integrated intervention packages tailored to local climatic and hazard contexts.

These packages include improvements to building envelopes, insulation, heating, cooling and ventilation systems, indoor air quality, water and sanitation services, and the integration of renewable energy and climate adaptation measures. By combining these measures, the pillar aims to reduce energy

consumption, emissions, and operating costs while improving thermal comfort, health, safety, and the continuity of learning.

To ensure sustainability and scale, the pillar promotes the adoption of technical standards, the use of school assessment data to guide investment planning, and the replication of proven models within national school rehabilitation and construction programmes. It also aims to strengthen climate-smart operations and maintenance practices, including energy and water management, preventive maintenance, and performance monitoring. Taken together, these measures can enable countries to sustain infrastructure performance over time and develop nationally driven, investment-ready pipelines for resilient and low-carbon education infrastructure.

Above: © UNICEF/Muhammet Kadyrov/ Turkmenistan, 2025

Participants of Youth Climate Summer School 2025 present their projects in the framework of sessions on heatwaves, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, June 2025

Pillar 3

Youth-led climate and environmental action: Schools and communities

This pillar focuses on empowering children and youth as active agents of climate and environmental action by strengthening their engagement within schools and local communities. It promotes the integration of non-formal climate change education alongside formal learning, enabling young people to translate their knowledge into practical action through school- and community-based initiatives. These may include activities such as water conservation, land restoration, biodiversity protection, waste management, and climate awareness campaigns, tailored to local environmental priorities and challenges.

By linking youth-led initiatives with community structures, including local authorities, civil society,

and traditional leadership, the pillar fosters context-specific solutions that combine modern environmental knowledge with local practices. It also supports the development of youth leadership, innovation, and participation in climate-related decision-making processes, ensuring that young people contribute to shaping sustainable and resilient communities.

Through regional cooperation under the RGSP, countries will be able to exchange approaches for youth engagement, strengthen youth networks, and scale up effective models that connect education, community action and climate resilience.

Below: © UNICEF/UNI811363/Usmanov, 2025

Great to meet these bright young women innovators in the #STEM4Girls project, where UNICEF Kyrgyzstan supports initiatives to combat climate change. Inspiring to see girls leading the way in protecting their communities and our planet's future.



Enablers for the Regional Green Schools Platform

Policies and planning, monitoring systems, to support implementation across these pillars

Climate change adaptation and mitigation considerations need to be integrated into key national education sector policies and strategies (such as the education sector plan). At the same time, the needs and contributions of the education sector need to be embedded into national climate change, disaster risk reduction, energy and environmental policies and strategies (such as NDC 3.0, its Implementation Plan and National Adaptation Plan).

Finance

Policy and strategy documents are to be supported by budget allocations from government as well as financial commitment by relevant government partners. Financial resources need to be mobilized and deployed

in line with commitments in updated NDC 3.0 to support climate change mitigation and adaptation activities across national education systems.

Monitoring

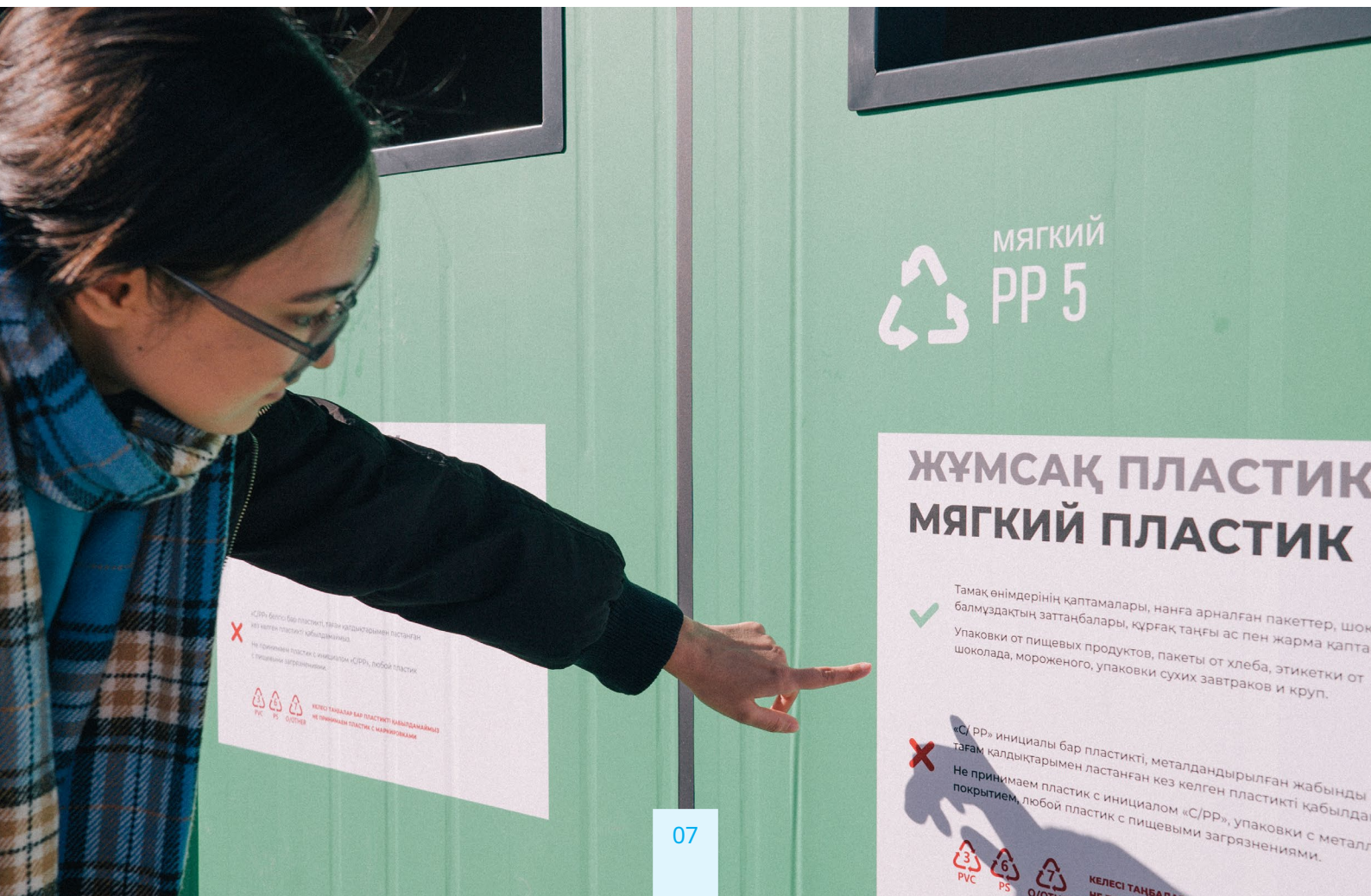
Functional monitoring systems are critical. Within a clear framework, mechanisms need to be established and operationalized to collect, manage and analyze data on climate change and education, with channels opened to enable evidence-based policy formulation and planning. This may include the use of existing monitoring systems, such as educational management information systems (EMIS) as appropriate.

Below: © UNICEF/UN0699702/Kazakhstan, 2022

Photographer: Bauyrzhan Sabitov

Altynay Segizbay and container for a soft plastic.

Almaty, Kazakhstan.



Expected regional impact

The RGSP will strengthen cooperation across the five Central Asian countries by providing a conduit for knowledge exchange that will enhance their policy processes and financing frameworks for climate-responsive education systems (including NDCs implementation). It is, for example, expected to support efforts to engage with multilateral development banks (MDBs) and climate funds for education-sector investments.

The platform will pioneer a regional approach to climate-responsive education, demonstrating how education systems can contribute to climate action at scale across Central Asia. By 2035, the Regional Green School Platform is expected to promote and showcase results across participating countries.

Over the medium- to long-term, the RGSP is expected to achieve the following:

- Enable all five Central Asian countries to integrate climate and sustainability education across their curricula and teacher training systems.
- Support the greening and climate-proofing of education facilities across Central Asia, drawing on national NDC 3.0 priorities, and contribute to the identification of potential green education investment opportunities at regional and national levels to reach 24.4 million children, support 24,170 social infrastructures, reduce energy use by around 682,500 Gcal of heat and 836,700 MWh of electricity annually.

Enable children and youth across Central Asia to engage in climate and environmental action through strengthened, climate-responsive education systems.

Image: © UNICEF/UNI613423/Daler Dodojonov/Tajikistan
Little Muhsin stays cool during a family visit to the Rudaki Park along with his little brother and mom in mid-July on a hot sunny day.



Endnotes

1. UNICEF (2021) *The climate crisis is a child rights crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index*
2. UNICEF (2025) *Learning for a green future A programme guide to climateresponsive education for UNICEF Country Offices.* UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
3. 'International strategy to promote a culture of sustainable development and involvement of children and youth in the climate agenda for 2024-2030'. Available at: <https://youthcan.uz/en/custom/startegiya-chapter>

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