

CONCEPT NOTE

International Student Olympiad 2025

"Sustainable Development Goals in Central Asia, Mongolia and the South Caucasus"

Registration link: <https://forms.gle/fWezpwxs46qVmFJ7>. The deadline for applications is May 27, 2025.

Background:

For the past nine years, the Kazakh-German University (DKU), with the support of partners, has been organizing annual Olympiads among students from Central Asian countries. During this time more than 2000 students have participated in these Olympiads.

Initially, the thematic focus of the Olympiads was built around "Integrated Water Resources Management" (IWRM), contributing to capacity building of future specialists in the field of water resources management. Starting from 2020, the University has expanded the Olympiad's theme to be organized within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the United Nations. In 2015, 17 goals were formulated by all Member States as a universal call to action to eradicate poverty, protect our planet, improve the quality of life and prospects for all people around the world.

This year's Olympiad is supported by SLUN partners, the Interregional Network of Sustainable Lifestyle Universities of Central Asia and the South Caucasus, which aims to promote sustainable lifestyles and circular economy on campus and beyond.

Olympiad Goal:

To foster professional dialog among young professionals from Central Asia, Mongolia and the South Caucasus in the context of the global sustainable development agenda, expanding knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and modern mechanisms for their implementation.

Olympiad Objectives:

- 1) To expand students' knowledge of modern UN approaches and tools in the field of sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles.
- 2) To create an educational platform for exchange of experience and interaction of students of the region at the professional level.
- 3) To help participants broaden their horizons and consciously approach the choice of career trajectory in the field of sustainable development.
- 4) To strengthen interregional ties and promote awareness of shared responsibility for the future of Central Asia, Mongolia and the South Caucasus.
- 5) Stimulate the aspiration of young people to become active participants of sustainable transformation at the local and international level.

Thematic Sections of the 2025 Olympiad:

The 2025 Olympiad will address the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): №4 (Качественное образование для всех), №6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), №7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), №9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), №11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), №12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), №13 (Climate Action), №15 (Life on Land), and №17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

The Olympiad will consist of 4 thematic sections incorporating the aforementioned Sustainable Development Goals:

1. "Responsible production and consumption, innovation and infrastructure",
2. "Adaptation and mitigation of climate change",
3. "Sustainable water and land management"
4. "Conservation of ecosystems"

Partners of the Olympiad 2025:

Universities (to be confirmed):

- 1) *Republic of Kazakhstan*: Kazakh-German University (DKU)
- 2) *Kyrgyz Republic*: Kyrgyz National Agrarian University named after K.I. Skryabin
- 3) *Republic of Uzbekistan*: National Research University "Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers"
- 4) *Republic of Tajikistan*: Tajik Agrarian University named after Shirinsho Shotemur
- 5) *Republic of Turkmenistan*: Turkmen Agricultural University (to be confirmed)
- 6) *Mongolia*: German-Mongolian Institute for Resources and Technology
- 7) *Georgia*: Business and Technology University (BTU)
- 8) *Republic of Armenia*: American University of Armenia (AUA)
- 9) *Republic of Azerbaijan*: Azerbaijan Technical University

International partners:

- IHE Delft Institute for Water Education (IHE Delft)
- German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ GmbH)

Potential partners and stakeholders:

- Universities of Central Asia, Mongolia and South Caucasus countries training specialists in the spheres similar to the topics of the Olympiad;
- Sectoral national ministries authorized to make decisions in the sphere of national and transboundary water resources management, in the sphere of ecology and natural resources, energy, industry and innovation, sustainability of cities and settlements, and partnership for sustainable development.

Expected participants of the Olympiad:

Students from all countries of Central Asia, Mongolia and South Caucasus studying or interested in SDG topics are invited to participate in the Olympiad, including university students studying integrated water resources management, ecology, energy, meteorology, technical and engineering specialties related to industry, logistics, innovation, architecture and related areas, as well as international relations (with a focus on water law and international cooperation) and environmental impact assessment.

Stages of the Olympiad 2025:

- **April 28, 2025 - Distribution of the announcement** of the Olympiad at the regional level, as well as distribution of test preparation topics and literature sources by the Kazakh-German University (DKU) to the partner universities of the Olympiad with notification of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Ministries of Education in each country of CA, Mongolia and South Caucasus.
- **April 30 - May 29, 2025 - Registration of the Olympiad participants** - wide distribution of the Olympiad announcement and thematic questions for preparation for tests and individual projects by partner universities among students in the respective participating countries.

- **June 5-6, 2025 - Conducting the regional Olympiad** for two days (in online format):

Day 1.

- Introductory educational lectures and testing (3 hours) - based on the results of testing the best 18 students will be selected for the second round of the Olympiad (2 students from each of the nine participating countries).
- Practical skills training for the participants of the second round based on the test results (2.5 - 3 hours).

Day 2.

- Presentations of individual projects (4 hours) and award ceremony of winners - 3 prizes.

Individual projects

The participants of the Olympiad will have to write a description of the idea of an environmental project/solution on one of the SDGs (up to 200 words), which will be sustainable and feasible for implementation at the university level, and then present it to the jury members in the form of a presentation (within 3-5 minutes).

The project idea should: a) address a real problem in one of the four thematic areas of this Olympiad (responsible production and consumption, climate change adaptation and mitigation, sustainable water and land management, ecosystem conservation), b) contain a research component (point to an existing research base and clearly reflect follow-up research needs), c) have an applied nature and should be sustainable and replicable.

Prize Fund:

The winners of the Regional Olympiad 2025 will receive prizes in the form of an opportunity to participate free of charge in one of the events and training programs of the Kazakh-German University, such as:

- 1) an offsite Summer School on the Aral Sea in Kazakhstan to be held from August 14-25, 2025 with the support of IHE DELFT (<https://crs.dku.kz/en/osnovnye-napravleniya/programma-po-vodnym-resursam-i-klimatu/letnyaya-shkola-na-aralskom-more/>);
- 2) a unique online training "Climate Change Adaptation and Water Management in Central Asia: from Research to Sustainable Solutions" to be held in September-October 2025 with the support of GIZ with the prospect of further participation in the Youth Symposium and new PhD programs from DKU;
- 3) Free participation in the Online Course on Writing Scientific and Review Articles (<https://water-ca.org/online-course-on-writing-scientific-articles>)

Registration link: <https://forms.gle/fWezpwxs46qVmFI7>. **The deadline for applications is May 27, 2025.**

Contacts:

For any further questions regarding the Olympiad, please contact:

Mariya Genina, genina@dku.kz, Project Manager for Sustainable Universities and Green Business, Center for Natural Resources and Sustainable Development, DKU

Karina Ibragimova, eml@dku.kz, Environmental Management Laboratory Specialist, Center for Natural Resources and Sustainable Development, DKU