

## **Notes from meeting 2024-01-30 with the aim to plan the 2024 Sustainable Development and Sustainability Science (SDSS) course in cooperation between Central Asian universities and the Swedish Aral Sea Society (SASS)**

### **Participants**

#### **From Uzbek universities**

- Rustam Eshnijazov, Karakalpak State University.
- Farkhod Akhrorov, Samarkand Branch of the Tashkent Economic University.
- Zavqiddin Mirtoshev, Deputy Director of Engineering Physics Institute of the Samarkand State University
- Akmal Sulonov, Jizzakh Politechnical Institute
- Pardaev Khusniddin, Samarkand Institute of agro innovations and research
- Mansur Rajabov, Urgench State University
- Kalilaeva Ulbosin, Nukus Branch of Uzbekistan State University of Physical Education and Sport
- Xojalepesov Polat (with his students), Nukus Branch of the Samarkand State University of Veterinary Medicine, Livestock and Biotechnologies
- Azamov Anvar, (Bektosheva Durdona as a translator) Nukus Innovation Institute

#### **From Kyrgyz universities**

Karimov Tashmukhamed Halmukhamedovich, Kyrgyz State Technical University

#### **From SASS**

Lars Rydén, Bo Libert and Björn Frostell

### **Meeting agenda**

1. Introduction by SASS chairman Bo Libert and the Uzbek Ambassador to Sweden Nodir Ganiev
2. Plans for the course in 2024.
3. Short interventions from the universities on their preparedness to participate in 2024 and with how many students.
4. Presentation and discussion of the Course schedule spring 2024.
5. Establishment of a coordination group on the Uzbek side.
6. Other issues

#### **1. Introduction by SASS chairman Bo Libert and the Uzbek Ambassador to Sweden Nodir Ganiev**

Bo Libert welcomed participants and noted with pleasure that many new faces were present in the meeting. After this, he introduced the Uzbek Ambassador to Sweden Nodir Ganiev for an introductory presentation. Representatives from the SASS board met Nodir Ganiev on 10 January 2024 to present SASS and its work in Uzbekistan and Central Asia. Ambassador Ganiev started his presentation by expressing his pleasure when learning about the work carried out by the SASS over the years and in different projects. He emphasized the importance and urgency of mitigating the ecological threats in Uzbekistan and in Central Asia. Especially important are water

scarcity, air pollution, loss of biodiversity and impact from the climate crisis. As threatening examples of the climate crisis, he mentioned that 2/3 of glaciers in Central Asia have disappeared and average temperature has increased by 2 degrees Centigrade in recent years. Strong efforts have been devoted to implement ambitious plans to counteract the on-going ecologic degradation: As an example, one billion trees have been planted on 2 million ha on the shores of the former Aral Sea and a 600 000 ha ecologic green space has been established on land that earlier was covered by the Aral Sea. Ambassador Ganiev stressed the importance of turning the ecological disaster in the Aral Sea basin into something positive and in this development, he sees cooperation of the type established between Uzbek universities and SASS as something of great importance. He closed his presentation with mentioning that he has sent the course PM for the Sustainable Development and Sustainability Science to the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change for their evaluation and expects a reply shortly.

## **2. Plans for the course in 2024**

Bo Libert presented the actual situation for the spring 2024 course. SASS has devoted considerable effort during fall 2024 to officially contact universities in Uzbekistan and neighbouring countries and involve them in the further development of the course activities. This is since SASS is eager to get formal commitments of participation from the participating universities and gradually transfer the ownership of the course to Central Asian universities. Bo Libert mentioned that the efforts so far have resulted in the following:

- Seven universities have answered and confirmed their participation;
- A few universities have not yet answered to the invitation;
- For another few identified universities, SASS has not received contact information.

The efforts will continue and the initiative to formally contact the universities are regarded as a step forward in order to get a strong Uzbek and Central Asian commitment for the course.

After Bo Libert's presentation of the state-of-the-day situation regarding participating universities, Lars Rydén gave a short general presentation of the SDSS course and its content. He accompanied his presentation with 8 slides. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> year the course will be implemented and a new component this year is 2 student conferences that will be organized in April between students at the Uppsala University in Sweden and students taking part in the SDSS course. As in previous years, the course will take place on Wednesdays between Mid-February and the end of May. A detailed course PM is available on the SASS homepage (<http://www.aralsjon.nu/sv/>).

## **3. Short interventions from the universities on their preparedness to participate in 2024 and with how many students**

Representatives from the different Central Asian universities that are preliminarily interested in participating in 2024 year's course were given the chance to present themselves and give an indication of the number of students they plan to enrol in the course. In Table 1 there is a list established about the existing situation as per the day of the meeting.

Table 1. Universities that plan to participate in the course Sustainable Development and Sustainability Science spring 2024 and number of expected students per university per the day of the meeting.

No	University	Presenter	M.Sc. students	B.Sc. students	PhD students
1	Karakalpak State University	Rustam Eshnijazov	11	2	4
2	Samarkand State Architectural and Civil Engineering Institute	No one present	?	?	?
3	Samarkand State University	Zavqiddin Mirtoshev	5		2
4	Samarkand branch of Tashkent Economic University	Farhod Akhrorov	2		
5	Jizzakh Politechnical institute	Sultonov Akmal	4		
6	Samarkand Institute of Agro-innovation and Research	Khusniddin Pardaev	5		
7	Urgench State University	Mansur Rajabov	6	1	
8	Nukus Branch of Uzbekistan State University of Physical Education and Sport	Kalilaeva Ulbosin		?	
9	Nukus Branch of Samarkand Medical Veterenary University	Polat Khojageldiev		6	
10	Kyrgyz State Technical University, Bishkek	Karimov Tashmukhamed	5	60	
11	Nukus Innovation Institute	Azamov Anvar, Bektosheva Durdona		5	

#### 4. Presentation and discussion of the Course schedule spring 2024.

Lars Rydén presented the preliminary schedule for the 2024 SDSS course. It is shown in Table 2.

Lars Rydén informed the meeting that there is a strong desire from SASS that each of the lectures 2-14 should involve one Swedish and one Uzbek teacher. This is not yet confirmed and Lars Rydén urged Uzbek and Kyrgyz participants to devote a strong effort to organize this until course start.

Björn Frostell mentioned that in the Course PM it is stated that the course would represent 5 credits ECTS (European Credit Transfer System; a European standard for valuing study efforts at European universities) for both the lecture part and the Seminar part. All levels of students, M.Sc. level, B.Sc. level and PhD level are welcome to listen to the lecture part of the course and this part should be valued to 2 credits. The Student Seminar part of the course is planned for M.Sc. students only due to the limited possibilities to organize Seminars at a distance. For further information about the course, reference is made to the course PM.

#### 5. Establishment of a coordination group on the Uzbek side.

Bo Libert presented a suggestion from SASS to organize an Uzbek coordination group of 3-4 representatives from participating universities and with joint responsibility to finalize remaining organizational issues on the Uzbek/Central Asian side such as

Table 2. Preliminary schedule for the 2024 SDSS course as per 2024-02-04.

Lecture No	Title	Date	First half responsible	Second half responsible
<b>Part 1 – Basics of Sustainability Science</b>				
1	Intro Sustainable Development	14 Feb	Lars Rydén	
2	Resource flows	21 Feb	Björn Frostell	
3	Energy	28 Feb	Lars Rydén	
4	Climate change	6 March	Lars Rydén	<i>Urgench State Uni. ?</i>
	<b>Int. student Conference</b>	<b>11 March</b>	<b>Uppsala Univ.</b>	
5	Ecosystems, land use, agriculture, forestry, biodiversity	13 March	Lars Rydén	<i>Farkhod Akhrorov</i>
<b>Part 2 – Water and Sustainability</b>				
6	Water use and management - Cleaner production	27 March	Björn Frostell	<i>Abror Gadaev ?</i>
7	Global water policies - Water and water cooperation in Central Asia	3 April	Bo Libert	
8	The Aral Sea	10 April	Bo Libert	<i>Rustam Eshnijazov</i>
	<b>Int. student Conference</b>	<b>15 April</b>	<b>Uppsala Univ.</b>	
9	Water use and management - Agriculture and Sanitation	17 April	Lars Hylander	
<b>Part 3 – Society and Sustainability</b>				
10	Urbanization; The sustainable city	24 April	Lars Rydén	<i>Rustam Eshnijazov</i>
11	A culture of mobility; Means of mobility; Energy of mobility	1 May	Björn Frostell	<i>Jizzakh Politech. Univ.?</i>
12	Sustainable lifestyles and the dilemma of economic growth	8 May	Lars Rydén	
13	Quantification of sustainability; Measuring resource flows	15 May	Björn Frostell	<i>Pardaev Khusniddin</i>
14	The process of individual change	22 May	Lars Rydén	
<b>Course finalisation</b>				
15	Discussion and Conclusion	29 May	<i>Rustam Eshnijazov</i>	<i>All universities</i>

- having each university name a course responsible person (teacher/researcher);
- find teachers/researchers on the Uzbek/Central Asian side willing to assume responsibility for presenting a 30 min lecture on those topics that only have a Swedish lecturer at this moment.

Rustam Eshnijazov assumed the responsibility to try organize such a coordination group.

## 6. Other issues

Rustam Eshnijazov expressed concerns about the large number of students that are reported as interested in the course (cf. Table 1). Lars Rydén meant that since there seem to be appr. 30 M.Sc. students that will take part in the full course (lectures plus student seminars), it should be possible to handle this in line with the course format and requirements. This issue is also something that the Uzbek/Central Asian coordination group could keep an eye on.

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Bo Libert finally expressed his satisfaction about the broad participation in the meeting and hoped that the universities would further spread information about the course and if possible contact the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change and request support to spread the initiative. He also directed a strong thank you to the Uzbek ambassador in Stockholm for his participation.

Notes were drafted by Björn Frostell 2024-02-03 and after circulation for comments to Rustam Eshnijazov, Lars Rydén and Bo Libert they were finalized 2024-02-07.