

What kind of monetary assistance from foreign organizations did the Central Asian countries receive in the fight against COVID-19 and its consequences?

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, when economic indicators are declining, lending and financial support from global development banks and other foreign organizations can significantly increase the resilience of government institutions in confronting the pandemic and in overcoming its consequences.

This article examines aid from international organizations exclusively in the form of cash financing, which include concessional loans, grants, investments, and other forms of financial receipts in favor of these countries.

Based on the collected open data (*possibly partially incomplete - ed.*), it should be noted that in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the largest lenders providing financing to overcome the challenges of the pandemic are the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the largest loan was provided by the International Monetary Fund.

KAZAKHSTAN

ADB, together with AIIB, have committed a total of 1 billion USD to support the Kazakh government's efforts in health care, social protection, employment, and support to the country's economy in general.

In addition, on August 28, ADB approved a 3 million USD grant. This grant is funded by the government of Japan and is intended to purchase medicine and essential medical equipment to combat COVID-19.

The second large loan in the amount of 500 million USD was provided by the World Bank,

but this time for the development of the livestock sector, or more precisely, for the production of high-tech, export-oriented beef. Thus, it is assumed that this program will help create additional jobs, improve the living standards in rural areas and, by increasing the export of expensive beef, stimulate the country's economy during the coronavirus crisis.

The European Union has allocated 3.5 million USD to the World Health Organization (WHO) for WHO to support Kazakhstan in the field of public health.

Two American organizations at once - the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC / CAR) - are actively involved in providing assistance to the countries of Central Asia. For example, USAID has allocated 800,000 USD to prepare laboratory systems for large-scale testing and to educate the public about measures to protect against COVID-19. This organization helped all five countries of Central Asia, without exception, and in early April sent a humanitarian cargo with personal protective equipment for the medical staff of the countries of the region.

CDC / CAR has allocated 1.6 million USD to purchase laboratory supplies and equipment for testing for COVID-19, and to organize training for health workers.

Interestingly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bypassed Kazakhstan, as it turned out that the government of Kazakhstan did not apply to this organization with a request for concessional financing during the pandemic.

UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan is the only country in the region to which ADB together with AIIB allocated funds four times in 2020, totaling more than 701.5 million USD.

The first grant from ADB was allocated in March in the amount of 200,000 USD, and the second grant in the amount of 1.36 million USD was allocated in May. Both were intended for the purchase of medical equipment and protective materials for medical staff.

An ADB loan of 100 million USD is intended to modernize 38 laboratories throughout Uzbekistan, expand the capacity of 16 COVID-19 treatment centers, purchase ambulances, purchase medical equipment and train medical personnel. In addition to this, in early May,

19.5 million USD of saved loans from existing ADB projects were reallocated for the purchase of 800 artificial respirating unit. Moreover, to finance anti-crisis measures taken by the government of Uzbekistan, ADB allocated a loan in the amount of 500 million USD.

AIIB has provided the country with a 100 million USD loan to fight the pandemic and improve health care.

The International Monetary Fund, within the framework of a quick lending mechanism and a quick financing instrument, approved a loan in the amount of 375 million USD to meet the need for urgent financing of the state budget of Uzbekistan.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has allocated 150 million USD to three banks in Uzbekistan to support local exporters and importers to rebuild the country's trade and supply chain.

The World Bank has approved a five-year grace period loan of 95 million USD to support health and social protection.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) provided a loan of 59.2 million USD to support investment in healthcare in Uzbekistan. This project is designed for 4 years.

USAID has allocated 850,000 USD, of which 400,000 USD is intended for the purchase of laboratory systems, and 388,000 USD for informing the public about COVID-19.

At the end of May, USAID allocated an additional 3 million USD for the procurement of laboratory equipment and consumables.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has committed 2.07 million USD to purchase COVID-19 testing laboratory supplies and equipment, train medical staff, and implement guidelines for treating patients with COVID-19.

As a result, Uzbekistan received 1,386,692,000 USD from foreign organizations to overcome the pandemic and its consequences.

KYRGYZSTAN

Since the start of the pandemic, on March 26, the IMF has allocated a loan to Kyrgyzstan

(the very first loan in the world from the IMF to fight coronavirus) in the amount of 120 million USD. This amount is intended to finance the budget deficit, while giving priority to health-related spending, and secondly to cushion the economic shock caused by the pandemic.

ADB has allocated 50 million USD, of which 25 million USD in the form of a concessional loan and 25 million USD in the form of a grant to support health care system, provide social protection to those in need, support for small and medium-sized businesses in the industry, services in which 70% of the population of Kyrgyzstan is employed, and to stimulate the country's economy as a whole.

In addition, in April, ADB financed the purchase of medicines and medical equipment for a total of 200,000 USD through UNICEF.

The European Union has provided a 29 million USD grant to pay salaries for July for medical staff involved in the fight against COVID-19 and educators, payments of benefits and pensions for July, as well as for the purchase of medicines, personal protective equipment and food.

The World Bank has allocated a loan of 12 million USD for the purchase of medical equipment and personal protective equipment, the purchase of 20 fully equipped ambulances. In addition, 9 million USD has been reallocated from an ongoing project to the Emergency Response Fund.

USAID has donated 913,000 USD to three organizations such as the World Health Organization, Abt Associates and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies that will track contacts and identify cases of infection in Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, these funds will be used to prepare laboratories for mass testing and to inform the public about COVID-19. It should be noted that, in early March, USAID sent to Kyrgyzstan, like other countries of Central Asia, a humanitarian cargo with personal protective equipment for medical personnel.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC / CAR) has committed 1.38 million USD to procure laboratory supplies, training for medical personnel, provide technical assistance for border health screening, and develop and implement clinical protocols.

TAJIKISTAN

The IMF has allocated 189.5 million USD to finance basic medical and social expenditures, and to implement anti-crisis measures taken by the government of Tajikistan.

The Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development (EFSD) has allocated a 50 million USD concessional loan to support the social sphere and the economy as a whole.

The Asian Development Bank has allocated 50 million USD for the implementation of government measures aimed at supporting the vulnerable part of population of the country.

The World Bank has approved a 11.3 million USD loan to support health and social protection during the pandemic.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has allocated 2.7 million USD to meet the medical and socio-economic needs associated with the COVID-19 crisis. In addition, this amount will be used to establish a process for the safe disposal of medical waste.

The German Development Bank (KfW) has allocated about 1.1 million USD to purchase protective equipment for medical personnel, necessary medical equipment and to finance trainings on the use of medical devices.

USAID has allocated 866,000 USD to help prepare laboratory systems, enhance case searches, and support epidemiological surveillance in general.

CDC / CAR provided 1.69 million USD for the procurement of laboratory supplies, training of medical staff, technical assistance for border health screening, and the development and implementation of clinical protocols.

TURKMENISTAN

Since according to official data, not a single case of coronavirus infection has yet been detected in Turkmenistan, international organizations do not see the need to organize assistance to overcome the pandemic. However, USAID has allocated 920,000 USD to support health care system, prepare laboratory systems, intensify case searches, and support epidemiological surveillance in Turkmenistan.

As noted at the beginning of the article, the data was taken from open sources, it is possible that not all financial assistance was reflected in this material. The above-mentioned information can be found in the attached document (PDF).

[Statistics: Foreign monetary assistance to CA](#)

This material has been prepared as part of the Giving Voice, Driving Change – from the Borderland to the Steppes Project. The opinions expressed in the article do not reflect the position of the editorial board or donor.



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