
REFORMS IN THE ACTIVITIES OF SPECIAL AUTHORIZED BODIES IN THE FIELD OF ECOLOGY IN UZBEKISTAN

Normatova Muharam Foziljanovna

Teacher Of Namangan State University, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT: This article delves into the comprehensive reforms undertaken by Uzbekistan in the field of ecology, specifically focusing on the activities of special authorized bodies such as the State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection (SCEEP). These reforms, initiated in response to significant environmental challenges, aim to strengthen institutional capacities, enhance legal and regulatory frameworks, and promote sustainable development practices. The article highlights the transition from Soviet-era environmental policies to a more decentralized, community-involved approach, emphasizing the role of new legislation, improved enforcement mechanisms, and increased public participation. Furthermore, it explores the impact of these reforms on environmental quality, public awareness, and regional cooperation, outlining the challenges and future directions for continuing progress. The analysis underscores Uzbekistan's commitment to integrating ecological sustainability with economic growth, setting a precedent for robust environmental governance in the Central Asian region.

KEYWORDS: Environmental reforms, Uzbekistan, special authorized bodies, State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection, institutional capacity, legal framework, sustainable development, public participation, environmental governance.

INTRODUCTION

Uzbekistan, a landlocked country in Central Asia, faces significant environmental challenges, including water scarcity, land degradation, and pollution. These issues have profound implications for the country's socio-economic development and the well-being of its citizens. To address these challenges, Uzbekistan has embarked on a series of reforms in the field of ecology, particularly focusing on the activities of special authorized bodies. This article explores the recent reforms undertaken to enhance the effectiveness of these bodies in managing and protecting the environment, highlighting the key changes and their implications.

Following independence in 1991, Uzbekistan inherited a legacy of environmental degradation and inadequate institutional frameworks for environmental protection. The initial years were marked by economic transition and stabilization efforts, with limited focus on ecological issues. However, the growing awareness of environmental problems and their impact on public health and economic sustainability has prompted the government to prioritize ecological reforms.[1]

The institutional framework for environmental protection in Uzbekistan includes several key bodies responsible for managing and regulating ecological issues. The primary agencies include:

- State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection (SCEEP): Established in 2017, SCEEP is the central body responsible for implementing environmental policies, monitoring compliance, and promoting sustainable practices.
- Ministry of Agriculture: Manages agricultural practices and their environmental impact, focusing on sustainable land use and water management.
- Ministry of Water Resources: Oversees water resource management, crucial for addressing water scarcity and quality issues.
- Hydrometeorological Service: Provides data and analysis on weather, climate, and environmental conditions to inform policy and management decisions.

One of the primary reforms has been the strengthening of the institutional capacities of special authorized bodies. This includes increasing the financial and human resources available to these agencies to enhance their ability to enforce environmental regulations and implement sustainable practices.[2]

- Capacity Building: Training programs and international partnerships have been established to build the technical expertise of staff in environmental monitoring, compliance, and enforcement.
- Budget Increases: The government has allocated additional funding to SCEEP and other agencies to support the implementation of comprehensive environmental programs and initiatives.

Uzbekistan has undertaken significant legal and regulatory reforms to provide a robust framework for environmental protection and management.

- New Environmental Laws: Recent legislation, such as the Law on Environmental Protection (2018) and the Law on the Protection and Use of Water Resources (2019), has been enacted to address key environmental issues. These laws provide a comprehensive framework for the management of natural resources, pollution control, and biodiversity conservation.[3]

- Strengthening Enforcement Mechanisms: The reforms have introduced stricter penalties for environmental violations and established clear procedures for monitoring and enforcement. This includes the use of environmental impact assessments (EIAs) for new projects and regular audits of existing activities. Public participation and transparency have been identified as crucial components of effective environmental governance. Reforms have focused on improving access to information and involving citizens in environmental decision-making processes.

- Public Access to Information: SCEEP and other agencies have developed online portals and platforms to provide easy access to environmental data and information. This includes details on air and water quality, waste management, and environmental policies.

- Community Engagement Programs: Initiatives have been launched to involve local communities in environmental protection efforts. These programs aim to raise awareness, encourage sustainable practices, and facilitate community input in policy development.[4]

Uzbekistan's environmental reforms are aligned with broader sustainable development goals, focusing on balancing economic growth with ecological sustainability.

- Green Economy Initiatives: The government has introduced policies to promote a green economy, including incentives for businesses to adopt sustainable practices and investments in renewable energy and green technologies.

- Sustainable Agriculture: Reforms in agricultural policies emphasize sustainable land use and water management, aiming to reduce the environmental impact of farming practices and improve food security.

Uzbekistan has strengthened its commitment to international environmental agreements and cooperation, recognizing the importance of addressing transboundary and global environmental issues.

CONCLUSION

The reforms in the activities of special authorized bodies in the field of ecology represent a significant step forward for Uzbekistan in addressing its environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development. By strengthening institutional capacities, enhancing legal frameworks, and fostering public participation and international cooperation, Uzbekistan is building a more resilient and sustainable future. The continued commitment to these reforms will be essential to ensuring long-term environmental quality and socio-economic prosperity for the country and its people.

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