The leading areas for cooperation between Tajikistan and the NATO SPS Programme include Environmental Security and Disaster Forecast & Prevention. Below are some examples of completed activities led by scientists and experts from Tajikistan and NATO member countries under the framework of the SPS Programme.

### Cooperative Activities

**SPS INFORMATION DAY IN DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN ON 9 DECEMBER 2015**

An SPS Information Day – the first event of its kind in Tajikistan – took place on 9 December 2015 in Dushanbe. The event helped foster new opportunities for further development of SPS initiatives through contacts established with the delegates from Tajik institutions and non-governmental organisations active in the region.

Central to the discussion were security challenges in Central Asia, such as the fight against terrorism and border security issues with Afghanistan. Participants identified promising new project ideas in both fields that are of strategic importance. Additionally, participants discussed possibilities for deepening cooperation on issues of environmental and energy security.

**Developing Practical Cooperation through Science**

Tajikistan has been actively engaged within the framework of the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme since 1996.

The NATO SPS Programme enables close collaboration on issues of common interest to enhance the security of NATO and partner nations by facilitating international efforts to meet emerging security challenges, supporting NATO-led operations and missions, and advancing early warning and forecast for the prevention of disasters and crises.

The current SPS Key Priorities include:

- **Counter-Terrorism**;
- **Energy Security**;
- **Cyber Defence**;
- **Defence against CBRN Agents**;
- **Environmental Security**;
- **Security-related Advanced Technology**;
- **Border and Port Security**;
- **Human and Social Aspects of Security**.

Additionally, the SPS Programme helps to promote regional security through scientific cooperation among partners. The programme also helps to prepare interested eligible nations for NATO membership. SPS activities often have a high public diplomacy value.
ASSESSING TRANSBOUNDARY WATER POLLUTION IN CENTRAL ASIA

The Republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan jointly utilise the Syr-Darya river basin and its divides. They share common issues with regards to industrial, agricultural and municipal river pollution. The problem is further complicated by the poor maintenance of closed or still operating industrial plants as well as by cities along the river basin. As a result, joint monitoring and managing water pollution in the transboundary area is of crucial importance. Towards this goal, this multi-year research project, concluded at the end of 2013, brought together these Central Asian republics to conduct an in-depth study of contaminants in the basin of Syr-Darya river. Ultimately, the aim was to establish a continuous and self-sustainable monitoring activity to be used as a basis for stronger regional cooperation to tackle water pollution. [ref. 983945]. This project was led by scientists and experts from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Norway.

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF TOXIC POLLUTANTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

The 2011 initiated multi-year project brought together a set of scientists and experts to partake in a regional study to examine the major sources of contamination along with associated environmental consequences. One of the goals of the project was to establish a sustainable regional infrastructure for high quality environmental monitoring for the sustainable control and management of toxic pollutants. [ref. 983931]. This project was led by scientists and experts from Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Germany and Turkey.

VIRTUAL SILK HIGHWAY

Since 2002, Tajikistan, along with the rest of the countries of Central Asia, has benefited from internet connectivity for academic institutions and universities, provided through the SPS “Virtual Silk Highway” initiative. The connectivity was initially delivered by satellite and has been switched to a system based on optic fibre since mid-2010. [ref. 978777]. The SILK Project was a high-visibility SPS project.

CENTRAL ASIA’S STRATEGIES AND PERCEPTIONS ON AFGHANISTAN

This advanced research workshop, conducted 17-18 May 2012, aimed to provide a lively forum for exchange of knowledge between Western and Central Asian experts on Afghanistan and the region on the topic of the security perceptions and strategies of Central Asian countries concerning Afghanistan’s future in relation to the region’s security. The workshop provided an excellent opportunity to benefit from the competencies of Central Asian scholars and foster dialogue between them and Western experts. The workshop’s goal of better incorporating strategic expertise is based on the notion that the future security and stability of Afghanistan, as the central goal of NATO’s ISAF mission, cannot be ensured without understanding the strategies and perceptions of the neighbouring Central Asian states. [ref. 984416]. This workshop was led by scientists and experts from Tajikistan and the United States.

THE SPS PROGRAMME IS OPEN TO ACTIVITIES WITH TAJIKISTAN

The SPS Programme is open to all projects with Tajikistan, in line with the political guidance from Allies in the form of the 2012 SPS Key Priorities and the 2013 Overarching Guidelines, as well as Tajikistan’s national priorities.