



ESG Digest #43 January 2026



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Regional

Astana to Host Regional Ecological Summit 2026

Astana will host the Regional Ecological Summit (RES) 2026 from 22 to 24 April, bringing together around 1,500 participants from governments, international organizations, business, and civil society. Supported by the Government of Kazakhstan and the United Nations, the summit will focus on regional environmental and climate challenges, including green finance, climate adaptation, and sustainable resource management. The event is intended to strengthen cooperation and coordinated action across Central Asia.

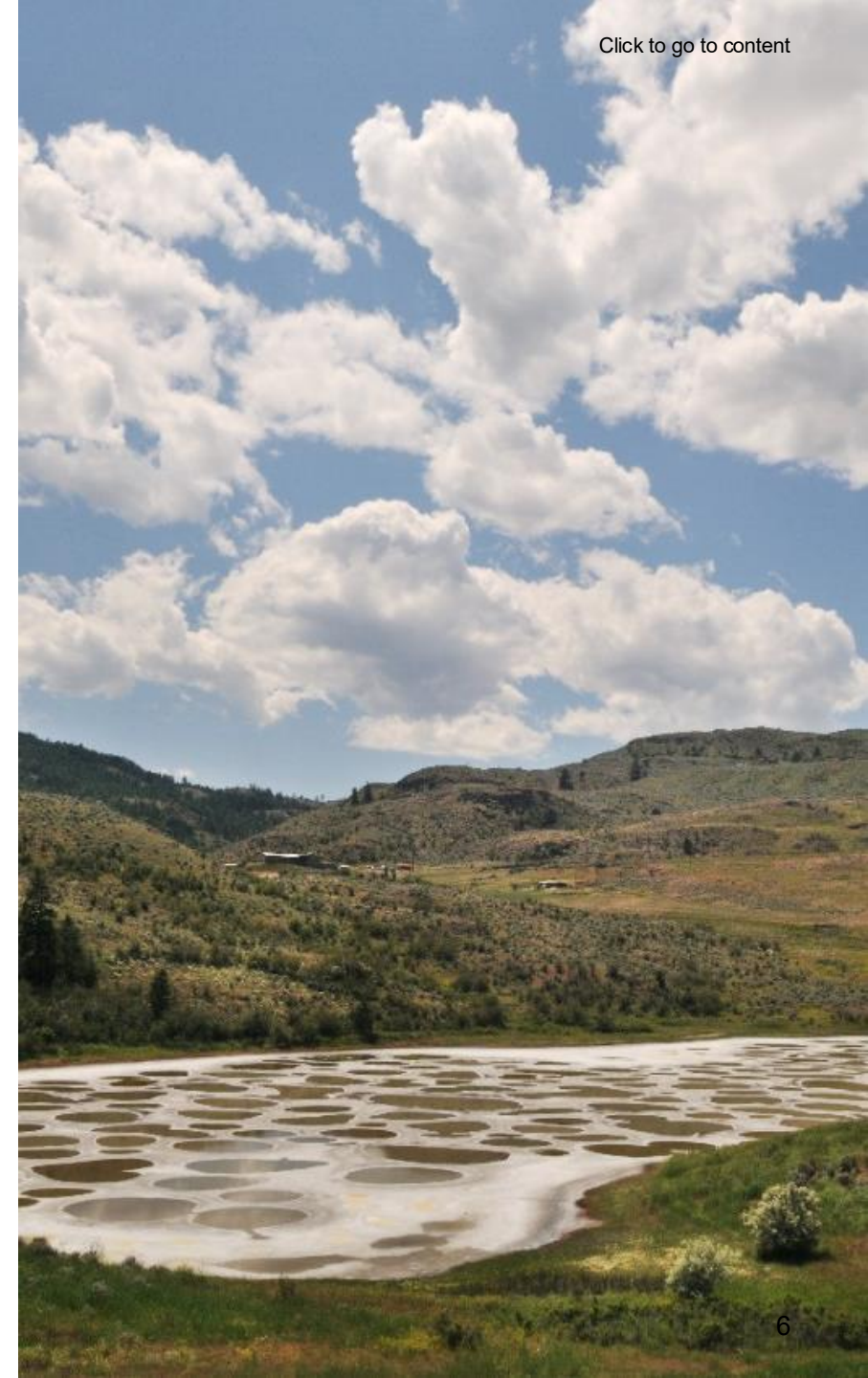
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Kazakhstan Becomes 30th Country to Join UN Water and Health Protocol

Kazakhstan has become the 30th country to join the Protocol on Water and Health, a legally binding treaty under the UNECE (UN Economic Commission for Europe) and the World Health Organization (WHO) aimed at improving access to safe water, sanitation, hygiene and preventing water-related diseases. The accession supports integrated water management and public health objectives, contributing to Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being). The Protocol will enter into force for Kazakhstan on 5 April 2026.

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Tajikistan and United Nations to Host Global Water Conference in Dushanbe in 2026

The Government of Tajikistan, in partnership with the United Nations, announced the dates of the Fourth High-Level International Conference dedicated to the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development” 2018–2028. The conference will take place in Dushanbe from 25 to 28 May 2026 and will convene governments, international organizations, experts, and development partners. Discussions will focus on sustainable water management, climate resilience, transboundary water cooperation, and progress under the UN Water Action Agenda.

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Kazakhstan and Germany Launch Regional Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Central Asia



Kazakhstan and Germany will establish a Regional Center for Sustainable Agriculture for Central Asia at the Kazakh Research Institute of Agriculture and Plant Growing, following discussions at the 18th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture in Berlin. The center is designed to support knowledge transfer, technology development, professional training and sustainable farming practices tailored to the region's climate challenges.

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Uzbekistan Sets New Standards for Publicly Significant Companies to Boost Transparency

The Government of Uzbekistan adopted detailed criteria defining “publicly significant organizations” to enhance corporate governance and financial transparency. The document, created by the Ministry of Economy and Finance with the Central Bank, establishes thresholds for asset size, revenue, and employee numbers that classify companies as critically important to the national economy. Entities meeting these criteria will face heightened supervision and must adopt International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). From 2027, such companies will also be required to disclose sustainability information in line with global ESG reporting trends.

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ADB Approves USD 1mln Support for Floating Solar Development in Tajikistan

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 1mln technical assistance grant to support the Government of Tajikistan in developing floating solar photovoltaic (FPV) systems across the country's reservoirs. The initiative aims to leverage Tajikistan's abundant sun and water resources to expand clean energy generation where flat land is scarce. Under the assistance program, up to five reservoirs will be evaluated for FPV potential, and a detailed feasibility study will be prepared for a utility-scale floating solar plant.

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Kyrgyzstan Commissions Its First Solar Power Plant, Boosting Renewable Energy Capacity

The Kyrgyz Republic commissioned its first solar power plant. The 100-megawatt facility is expected to generate around 210 million kWh of clean electricity annually and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 120,000 tonnes per year. The project, with a total investment of USD 56mln, marks a significant step toward strengthening energy independence and expanding renewable energy capacity in the country. Officials noted that the plant's output will help meet local electricity demand while supporting socioeconomic development and attracting foreign investment to the renewable sector.

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Global

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) Enters into Force

The European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) successfully entered into force on 1 January 2026, following coordinated deployment across all Member States and integration with national customs systems. Under the definitive regime, customs authorities verify CBAM authorizations before releasing goods for free circulation, ensuring importers comply with reporting and carbon cost obligations. More than 12,000 economic operators applied for authorization, with over 4,100 obtaining CBAM authorized declarant status in the first week of operation.

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China Introduces New Corporate Climate Reporting Standard to Enhance Transparency

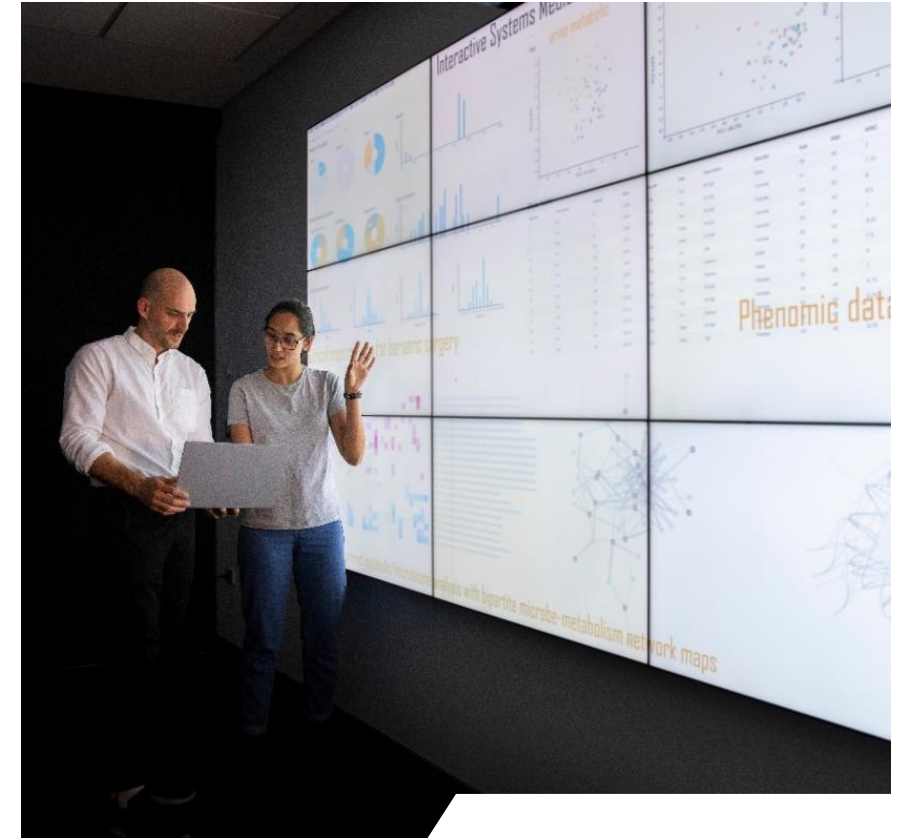
China has released a new corporate climate reporting standard based on IFRS SDS. The standard aims to improve the quality and comparability of climate-related disclosures. The framework sets out reporting approaches for greenhouse gas emissions, climate risks and mitigation measures, and is currently being introduced as a voluntary, trial standard. Authorities indicated that the pilot phase will be used to refine the scope, methodologies and requirements before any mandatory implementation is specified.

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EU Financial Regulators Issue Guidance on Integrating ESG Risks into Stress Testing

Europe's three major financial regulators (ESMA, EBA, and EIOPA) published joint guidelines requiring national authorities to integrate environmental, social and governance risks into supervisory stress tests. The guidelines set common standards for methodology and execution, include climate and environmental risk assessments, and recommend risk-based approaches with materiality analysis. They do not create new legal obligations but apply on a “comply or explain” basis for national competent authorities.

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New EU Measures Aim to Strengthen Plastic Waste Regulation and Compliance

The European Union plans to tighten controls on plastic imports starting in 2026, aiming to reduce plastic waste and enhance environmental sustainability. New measures are expected to reinforce enforcement of existing regulations, ensure imported plastics meet EU standards, and align external trade practices with the bloc's circular economy objectives. Enhanced controls form part of the broader EU strategy to limit pollution and improve resource efficiency.

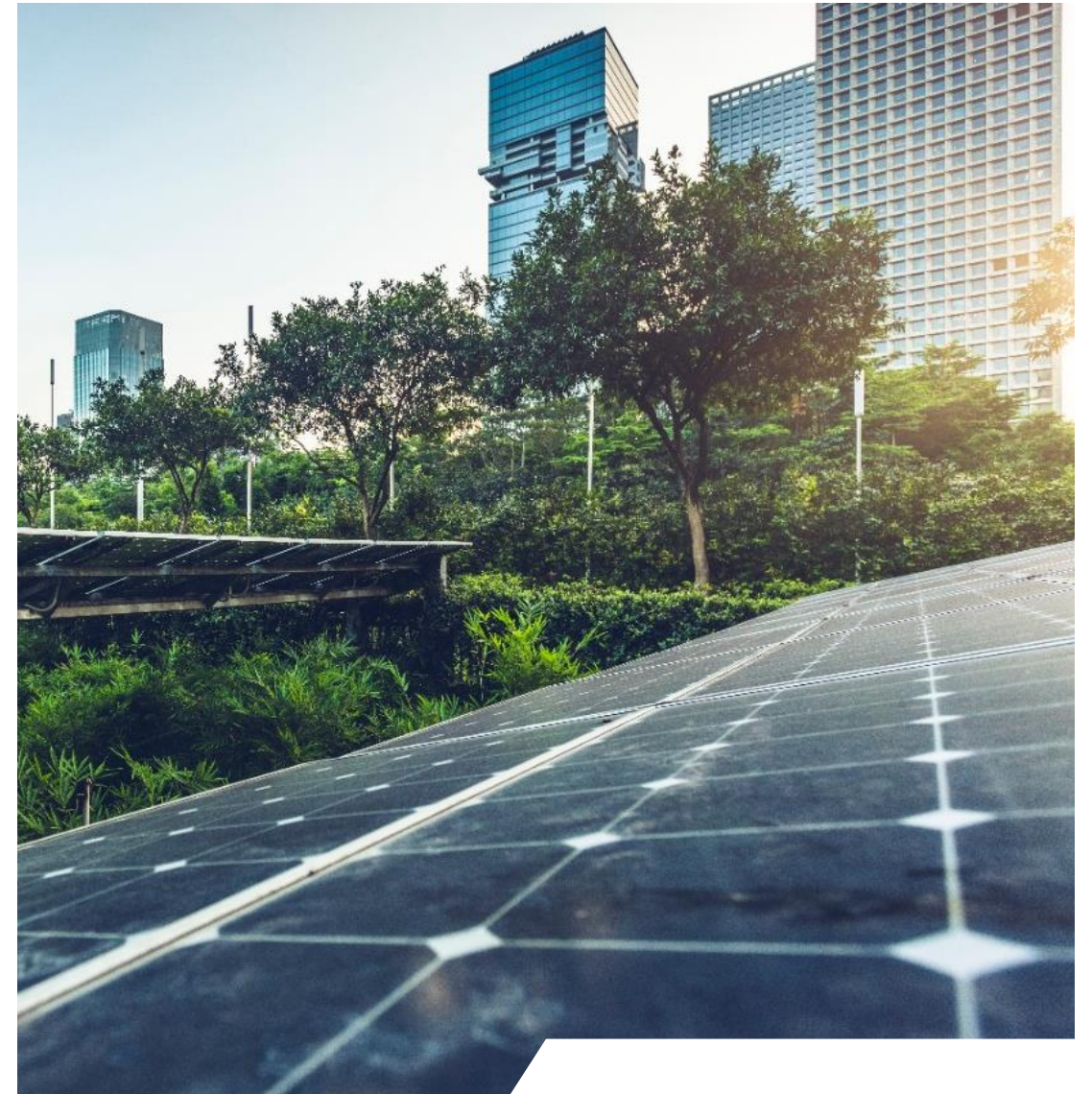
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ESMA Issues Guidance to Enhance Transparency in ESG Communications

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) has published its second thematic note on sustainability-related claims, focusing specifically on ESG strategies. The note addresses ESG integration and ESG exclusion approaches, which are widely referenced in marketing communications to retail investors but often lack clear and consistent definitions. ESMA highlights that insufficient transparency around these terms creates a significant risk of greenwashing.

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IMO Announces Entry into Force of the High Seas Treaty, Strengthening Protection of Marine Biodiversity in International Waters

The High Seas Treaty, officially known as the Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), entered into force on 17 January. The agreement designates at least 30% of international waters as marine protected areas and strengthens global rules for conserving marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions.

It also seeks to address harmful practices such as bottom trawling and improve governance of marine resources. The treaty takes effect amid ongoing debates on deep-sea mining, with more than 40 countries supporting a moratorium.

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SBTi Marks Milestone with Over 10,000 Companies Validated on Science-Based Climate Targets

The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) announced that it has reached a major milestone, with over 10,000 companies worldwide now having validated science-based climate targets aligned with pathways to net-zero emissions by 2050. This milestone reflects significant growth in corporate climate action, with thousands of new companies validated in 2025 alone. The validated companies represent more than 40 % of global market capitalization and span more than 90 countries across diverse sectors.

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