

Project on Resilient, Green and Transformative Development in Asian Belt and Road Countries

Integrated Policy Strategies for a Sustainable Future of Malaysia

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Speaker bios

Rafis Abazov is a seasoned academic and strategic leader with a distinguished career spanning research, education, and international cooperation. As the Director of the International Institute for Green & Sustainable Development and a Vice-Rector at Kazakh National Agrarian Research University, he oversees a dynamic portfolio of initiatives focused on sustainable development, digital transformation, and AI in education. Abazov's expertise is grounded in his extensive research on development studies, sustainable and green development, e-governance, public policy, higher education management, UN studies, and the intersection of digital transformation and education. His scholarly contributions have been recognized through his ten books on Central Asia and the Middle East and ten reports for various UN agencies, as well as his regular contributions to esteemed publications such as the New York Times, QS Top Universities, and Forbes Magazine. A visionary educator, Abazov has played a pivotal role in establishing innovative academic programs, including the MBA/EMBA program in Agroentrepreneurship, agrobusiness, and Green Economy and the regional Model UN New Silk Way program. His commitment to sustainable development is evident in his ongoing research and education projects on Smart Green Cities, green campuses, and Education for Sustainable Development. Abazov's academic achievements are reflected in his Scopus Index H-11 and Google Scholar H-21. He has also been a valuable contributor to UNECE studies on innovation performance and public policies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Aidyn Bakdolotov is a MSc in Nuclear Engineering (Purdue University, USA, 2013). He is an experienced energy sector modelling expert with research interests in energy policy, climate change and the economic development of Kazakhstan and the Central Asian region. During his professional career, he worked in many different areas such as power industry (combined power plant at Almaty CHP-2), academia (Nazarbayev University), think tanks such as Economic Research Institute and Zhasyl Damu. He participated in many projects related to mitigation issues of the region, including preparation of nationally determined contributions (NDC), National communications, Biennial reports, Low carbon decarbonization strategy and pathways and many others. In these projects, he mainly took part in analysis, modelling and preparation of the scenarios of energy, climate policies with focus on GHG emissions, energy intensity of GDP, energy efficiency improvements and many others issues. In economic modelling he participated in research related to income, taxes, budget and many other macroeconomic parameters. Currently, he works as the Director of Climate change Center at the Economic research institute. He took direct part in the development of the Strategy of achievement of carbon neutrality of Kazakhstan till 2060 year. He has publications in national and international journals.

Stephanie Blankenburg leads the Economic Cooperation and Integration amongst Developing countries (ECIDC) Branch at UNCTAD. She joined UNCTAD in 2015, previously heading its Debt and Development Finance Branch. Prior to joining UNCTAD, Stephanie was Senior Lecturer in Economics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London (UK) for 15 years and a research fellow at the ESRC Business Centre in the Department of Applied Economics at Cambridge University (UK) prior to her move to SOAS. She has also worked as a government advisor in Venezuela (2007-2008) and is an Associate Editor of the Cambridge Journal of Economics, following over a decade as a full member of the editorial board until 2015. She is co-author of two monographs on the theory and practice of neoliberalism. Other areas of research and publication include issues in development finance, the political economy of industrial policy in developing countries, the evolution of multinational corporations and the history of economic thought. She holds a PhD in Economics from Cambridge University.

Jesus Felipe is a Distinguished Professor at the De La Salle University Carlos L. Tiu School of Economics. He leads an international team of researchers working on a program called “The Future of the Philippine Economy.” Professor Felipe has published extensively on Asia’s development, productivity, and structural transformation. His work highlights the historical relevance of industrialization for development and the problems that today’s developing nations face in attaining high shares of manufacturing employment. He has also published extensively on growth constraints, the estimation of potential growth, and the estimation of production functions and the aggregation problem. Prior to joining De La Salle, Professor Felipe worked for the Asian Development Bank, and held academic positions with the Georgia Institute of Technology and the Hong

Kong University of Science and Technology. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.

Rustem Kabzhanov has many years of experience in the field of environmental initiatives, as well as in the oil and gas and energy industries, including the governmental sector. He held senior positions in such large organizations as KAZENERGY and JSC NC KazMunayGas. His professional activities include coordinating the work of enterprises in the oil and gas and energy complex, improving production processes, developing and implementing legislative initiatives, as well as interacting with government agencies and public organizations. Since 2020, Rustem has held the position of General Director of the Kazakhstan Association of Regional Environmental Initiatives "ECOJER", where he continues to actively develop projects in the field of sustainable development and environmental protection.

Ramin Kazymov is currently the Deputy Director at the World Economy Research Centre of the Economic Research Institute (ERI). He holds a bachelor's degree in economics from the Middle East Technical University (Turkey) and an MA in economics from Nazarbayev University (Kazakhstan). Previously, he worked as an expert at the Macroeconomic Research and Forecasting Centre of the ERI for over three years. Ramin has extensive experience in macroeconomic analysis and modelling and has completed several IMF courses in Vienna and Washington, D.C., including Macroeconomic Diagnostics and Climate Change Economics. Additionally, he coordinates a working subgroup on climate change adaptation as part of the Roadmap development for the Strategy on Achieving Carbon Neutrality by 2060.

Aliya Tskhay is a Research Associate at the School of International Relations and Centre for Energy Ethics at the University of St Andrews, United Kingdom. She holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of St Andrews. Dr Tskhay is an expert on energy policies in Eurasia, energy transition and the implementation of carbon-negative technologies. She is a consultant and expert for international organisations and governments on energy security, geoeconomics, and sustainability.

Dawei Wang is an economic affairs officer at the UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), where he works on issues of South-South economic cooperation and integration, trade-investment-industrial strategies, and global economic governance. Prior to joining the UNCTAD, he served in the Ministry of Commerce of China for over a decade with the portfolio focused on multilateral economic and development policy dialogue and negotiations. He holds advanced degrees in political science and development studies from Peking University, Harvard Kennedy School and the Graduate Institute Geneva (IHEID).

Ramazan Zhanpeisov has an extensive experience in decarbonization and development of corporate low-carbon strategies, including among national companies in Kazakhstan.

He headed the Low Carbon Development Department of the national oil&gas company “KazMunayGas”, the International Center for Green Technologies and Investment Projects, as well as the Sustainable Development Unit of the UNDP office in Kazakhstan. He was an expert of ADB, UNECE, Energy Charter and other international organizations.