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Sovereignty Settled Once, Use Rights Carved Out by Object: How the 2025 Kyrgyzstan–Tajikistan Border Package Combined Territory, Movement, Water and Resettlement

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Abstract

Background. On 13 March 2025 Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed sixteen documents settling their last contested boundary sections, usually discussed as one treaty. Main body. Object by object, this article asks what the package did to territorial title, road passage, shared water infrastructure and transferred settlements' residents, across 29 arrangements in six classes, on material published before 1 May 2026. Title moved once for the whole line, a net 793.0 hectares to Kyrgyzstan across six transfer entries, yet none of the fourteen territorial objects has an object-level transfer record. Two crossing points reopened on the day of signature, two air links within three days; one of three roads is under construction. A bilateral water commission met once, on 9 October 2025; neither water facility has a documented act. A domestic programme built 257 houses at three sites: 181 families were reported moved into the new Chet-Bulak village, where the same report saw empty houses, and by 29 November all Leilek families due to relocate were in the 76 Razzakov and Maksat houses. Dostuk households received 20 sotka, four times the 5-sotka quota announced there, the other five settlements 10 sotka with no quota located for them. Crop compensation at Zhany-Dostuk was unpaid. Conclusion. Six of the 29 arrangements had a documented act of the kind their class admits, eighteen a legal act only. Separating land sovereignty from facility use is established regional practice, the third case strictly and the sixth broadly; the commission statute omits the individual water use right its closest precedent reportedly states.

Keywords: border delimitation; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; transboundary water infrastructure; resettlement; Ferghana Valley

1. Introduction

The 2025 settlement is described in the analytical literature as the resolution of the final Kyrgyz–Tajik border dispute (Pannier, 2025). Before it, fighting over water and access points in 2021 and 2022 killed people on both sides, and reported death tolls still differ by source and by counting rule. For the September 2022 clashes, an analytical account reports more than one hundred dead, while a rights organisation's own investigation found at least thirty-seven civilians killed and up to 121 injured in at least eight incidents (Human Rights Watch, 2025; Pannier, 2025). For April 2021 the same organisation reports at least forty-one people killed, while a water-sector study reports fifty-five fatalities for an incident at a water facility

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on the Isfara tributary on 28 April 2021, attributing that figure onward to an earlier paper (Holmatov et al., 2026; Human Rights Watch, 2025). These are different events counted on different rules, and they are kept apart throughout this article.

On 13 March 2025 the two presidents signed in Bishkek. The event is generally described as the signature of a border treaty. That description loses the fact that matters most for understanding what changed: the settlement is a bundle. Sixteen bilateral documents were signed that day (Economist.kg, 2025a; Vecherniy Bishkek, 2025a). Four of them bear on the relations examined here — the state border treaty, an agreement on the construction and use of roads and on the arrangement and use of a road intersection, an agreement on access to water-management and energy facilities, and a joint statement. The three treaty-level instruments went to each parliament separately and were ratified in a single sitting on each side, Tajikistan's lower chamber on 18 March and Kyrgyzstan's chamber on 19 March 2025 (Economist.kg, 2025b; Vecherniy Bishkek, 2025c). Calling the result "the border agreement" conceals an institutional fact: territory, movement and water were handled with three different legal tools, each with its own ratification act and, in the water case, its own executive organ.

This article asks how those tools were combined and what the combination changed, concretely, in the rights and obligations held at the interstate level and at the local level. The question is answerable because the record names objects: villages and plots with hectare figures, road segments with lengths and widths, a head dam with a countable number of sluice gates, a resettlement site with a household count and a per-family plot size. It is answerable in a second sense as well. The record distinguishes signature, ratification, exchange of instruments and acts of implementation, so the state of each arrangement at a fixed date can be recorded rather than assumed — provided the kind of act appropriate to each kind of object is not confused with the kind appropriate to another. Holding those apart turns out to do most of the analytical work here.

The article does not ask whether the settlement created risks for border communities. A forecast of that kind cannot be tested against material published before the cutoff. It asks what arrangements exist and what had demonstrably happened by 1 May 2026.

2. Prior work and what this article adds

Two strands of existing work bear on the case, and they have largely not been brought together.

The first is commentary on the 2025 settlement itself. Analytical treatments establish that the negotiations were conducted in near-total secrecy and that residents of Batken protested insufficient consultation (Pannier, 2025). That secrecy applied to the process rather than to the result: on 27 February 2025 the chairman of the Kyrgyz State Committee for National Security presented a plot-by-plot account to six parliamentary committees and announced that the material was being released from restricted circulation (Azattyq Asia, 2025a). A rights organisation, writing two weeks after signature, named the transfer of Dostuk village to Tajikistan against an equal area of land and called on both governments to ensure the agreement respects local residents' rights to property, education, housing and access to water (Human Rights Watch, 2025). Both treat the settlement as a single treaty and describe the local dimension as not yet clear.

The second is the regional literature on shared water infrastructure. Ziganshina (2023) catalogues the multilateral and bilateral arrangements through which Central Asian states operate facilities of interstate significance, including several in which ownership of a facility and sovereignty over the land beneath it are deliberately held by different states. Abdullaev and Rakhmatullaev (2016) examine the Isfara basin — the same catchment as Vorukh and Batken — and conclude that state water bureaucracies are unable or unwilling to admit outside actors into basin planning, so that reform has changed the names of water agencies more than their powers. Holmatov et al. (2026), interviewing twenty water specialists, ten Kyrgyz

and ten Uzbek, about small transboundary tributaries of the Ferghana Valley, identify border demarcation as a present-day barrier to formal water cooperation and recommend that non-water issues such as border delineation be resolved before water discussions begin.

This article adds four things.

First, it restores the package to its parts and shows what each part does to a pre-existing relation, rather than describing the settlement as one act (Section 4, Figure 1).

Second, it moves the local dimension from ”information not found” to counted parameters, and then from announced parameters to delivered ones. Earlier records of this case noted an absence of compensation information. Hectare figures, household counts, per-family plot sizes, the names of the resettlement sites and the officials who announced each were located in material published before the cutoff — and so, for part of the programme, was what was actually delivered a year later, which differs from what was announced in both directions (Sections 5.4 and 6).

Third, it separates the layers that public discussion tends to merge — signature, ratification, exchange of instruments and acts of implementation — and records where each of 29 arrangements stood at a fixed date, within six classes of unit that are not interchangeable (Section 6, Figure 3).

Fourth, it places the settlement in a regional comparison series and states the criterion under which each comparative claim holds, since the series supports different counts under different criteria (Section 7, Table 3).

Reading Ziganshina (2023) established that the separation of sovereignty from use rights is not a device introduced in 2025. The interest of the case lies in the scope of the extension and in a specific omission, not in the invention of a mechanism, and the argument here is built on that footing.

3. Sources and method

3.1. What could and could not be obtained

The texts of the three treaty-level instruments of 13 March 2025 are not publicly available, and this study did not obtain them. The consequence is stated plainly and carried through the whole article: except where a primary text is cited, what is described below is **the content of the instruments as stated in the parties' own public accounts**, not treaty wording checked against an authentic text. Queries to the Kyrgyz Ministry of Justice legal database returned no usable result from this working location; the search was then redirected to official gazette-type publications and to a regional legal repository, which is how the one primary instrument text in this study was obtained.

Material is graded in four tiers, and claims are never lifted from a lower tier to a higher one.

Tier 1 — primary instrument text. Two documents. The Statute of the Joint Tajik–Kyrgyz Water Commission, signed in Dushanbe on 9 October 2025 and approved as Annex 2 to Resolution No. 534 of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan of 18 October 2025, obtained in full in Russian (Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2025). It is a *Polozhenie* — a statute or regulation — organised in six sections containing twenty-nine numbered points; it contains no articles, and the single occurrence of the word *statya* in it refers to Article 10 of the agreement under which the commission was created. And the Water Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Law No. 128 of 27 June 2025, adopted by the Jogorku Kenesh on 30 April 2025, in ninety-six articles (Kyrgyz Republic, 2025). The copy used here is a forty-seven-page printout of the record in the Ministry of Justice's centralised legal database, which is the source element given in the reference list; a page-for-page archived copy of the same text, carrying that database's name in its running head, is held in the FAOLEX database, and the two agree character for character once the running head is removed.

Tier 2 — official documents and notices. The joint statement of 13 March 2025 in full, as published by Tajikistan's state news agency (Khovar, 2025a); the Tajik Ministry of Foreign Affairs page on the

signature and international reactions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, n.d.); the Uzbek ratification law for the 2022 reservoir agreement (Republic of Uzbekistan, 2022); parliamentary and presidential ratification notices.

Tier 3 — official briefings reported in the press. The object-by-object exchange list announced by the chairman of the Kyrgyz State Committee for National Security on 27 February 2025 (24.kg, 2025a; Azattyq Asia, 2025a), the road parameters he gave to a joint sitting of parliamentary committees on 19 March 2025 (24.kg, 2025d), the resettlement parameters announced by the presidential representative in Batken oblast on 6 March 2025 (Azattyq Asia, 2025b), and the implementation accounts given by the head of Batken district in November 2025, by the head of Leilek district in December 2025 and by the presidential representative in April 2026 (24.kg, 2025g, 2025h, 2026b). These carry the hectare figures, road dimensions, household counts and site names. They are attributed to the official who gave them and marked as briefings reported in the press, never as treaty text.

Tier 4 — independent analysis and advocacy. Used for background, for contested points, for regional precedents and for third-party positions; not used for the content of any provision of the 2025 instruments.

3.2. Construction of the ledger and the matrix

Each factual statement carrying the argument was entered in an evidence ledger with nineteen fields: claim identifier, dimension, wording, claim type, source key, source title, publisher, publication date, source type, **access level**, locator, the supporting passage in the original language, counter-evidence or variant readings, cutoff check, verification status, the strength of claim the entry permits, local file, and what changed at each revision of the ledger. Verification status takes four values — supported as stated, supported once narrowed, unresolved, refuted. The ledger holds 49 entries: 23 supported as stated, 23 supported once narrowed, 3 unresolved, none refuted. Access level is recorded because it varies: 46 entries rest on a full-text read, two on a search summary only, and one on a paywalled article of which a single sentence is visible. Those three are named in Section 9.

Separately, each named object was entered in an arrangement matrix recording its prior relation, the instrument acting on it, the type of operation performed, the change at interstate level, the change at local level, what had happened by the cutoff, and the evidence entries supporting the row. The matrix holds 31 rows.

The matrix also records, for every row, a **class of unit**, because the rows are not commensurable and a single denominator across them would mislead. The six classes are: *territorial objects*, whose title moved; *passage objects* — road segments, crossing points and air links; *water facilities*, meaning the physical structures themselves; the *bilateral body* created to govern them; *domestic programme outputs* — houses, land allocations, buildings and money owed to households; and *demarcation works*. Two further rows are marked as context and excluded from the implementation denominator: an agreement of 2018 that is not part of the package, and the bilateral trade statistic, which is an outcome indicator rather than an arrangement. That leaves 29 arrangements created or acted on by the 2025 package.

Implementation is coded in four states: a legal act only; under construction or budgeted; a documented act of the kind the class admits; and announced with no delivery evidence located. The first state covers ratification together with the exchange of instruments of ratification, because that exchange took place once, at Khujand on 31 March 2025, for the treaty as a whole, and therefore applies identically to every row founded on the treaty. It cannot distinguish one territorial object from another, and it is not recorded as though it could.

The third state is deliberately relative to the class, and the criterion is stated for each class rather than left to the reader:

- for a **road**, that the road was built;

- for a **crossing point**, that it reopened;
- for an **air link**, that a service was flown;
- for a **water facility**, that an act of operation, abstraction, maintenance or modernisation was performed at that facility;
- for the **standing body**, that the body convened;
- for a **house**, that it was handed to and occupied by a household;
- for a **territorial object**, that the object entered the receiving state's possession or administration, on a record that names that object.

The last of these does the most work in Section 6 and so its boundaries are worth stating. The departure of a settlement's residents is not the criterion: it is a performance of the domestic resettlement programme, counted once in that class, and a population can be moved before, after or independently of the transfer of the ground. Nor is an official statement that property in "the exchanged villages" has been transferred, if it names no village: a class-level statement cannot be entered against a row without deciding, unevidenced, which rows it covers. These are not equivalent achievements across classes and are never summed as if they were.

3.3. Rules applied to numbers

Where two sources report different figures for the same item, both are reported with their sources. Figures are never averaged, never reconciled by choosing the more plausible, and never used to derive a further quantity that would conceal the disagreement. Where a total is given, the rows excluded from it are listed. Where an official aggregate and an itemised account do not reconcile, both are shown and neither is adjusted to fit the other. Arithmetic checks are recorded in the accompanying recomputation note.

One rule governs what enters a total in the first place. Before a figure is added to a subtotal, the sentence it comes from is re-read to establish what object it attaches to and what it asserts about that object. A figure that records what remained with a party is not a figure for an area that moved, and the two are not summed; a figure given for two objects jointly is not a figure for either of them alone. Table 1 applies both limbs.

4. What the package did: the architecture

The four instruments act on distinct classes of object and perform distinct operations, summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1 note. Row codes identify entries in the arrangement matrix. The four instruments were signed on one day and the three treaty-level instruments were ratified separately. Column 3 states each operation as the parties' own public accounts describe it, because the treaty texts were not obtained. The resettlement programme is administered domestically: it appears in no paragraph of the joint statement, the only one of the four instruments obtained in full, and in no public account of the three treaty-level instruments located for this study. The figure covers the 25 arrangements attributable to these four instruments; the two crossing points and the air links, the demarcation works and the two context rows lie outside it.

The border treaty performs a single operation on territorial title and performs it once, for the whole line. The road agreement and the water agreement perform a different operation: they detach a function from the territory beneath it. The resettlement programme performs a third operation, converting an extinguished set of local entitlements into per-household quotas of land, housing and money.

The central term in the second of these operations needs defining, because the sources supply only one description of it. What the public record calls neutral status is described in a single passage of the February 2025 briefing: safety strips of fifteen metres are to be marked on each side of the roads, and forty metres of carriageway is to be a neutral zone "which does not belong to either of the countries, and

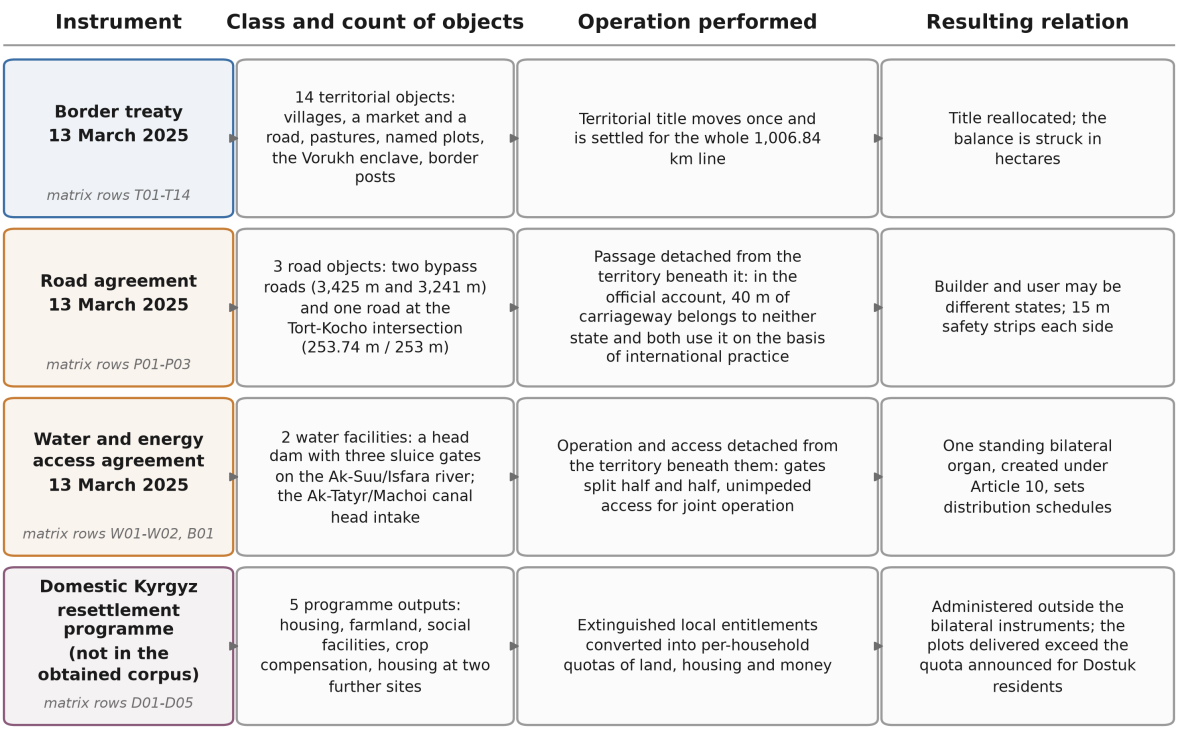


Figure 1. Instruments, classes of object, operations and resulting relations in the 2025 package.

both will use the road on the basis of international practice" (Azattyq Asia, 2025a). That is the whole of the available content. It describes a use relation, not a transfer of title: the border treaty settles title for the entire line, and the road agreement is a separate instrument operating on top of that settlement. So the arrangement is closer in form to a reciprocal right of passage or a state servitude over a defined strip than to a cession, and it resembles a neutralised zone only in the label. But the available description says nothing about sovereignty over the subsoil, about the duration of the arrangement, about which state's law applies to an accident or an offence committed on the strip, or about how a dispute over its use would be settled — and those are the questions on which the classification would turn. This article therefore uses "neutral status" as the parties' own term, records what they say it contains, and leaves its classification in public international law open pending the treaty text. The same reservation applies to the description of the water facilities: what is detached there is operation and access, not title.

The joint statement is informative for what it does and does not contain. Its twenty-one numbered paragraphs note the historic significance of the border treaty (paragraph 2), decide to transform the existing intergovernmental commission into a Tajik–Kyrgyz Intergovernmental Council chaired by the two heads of government (paragraph 4), welcome the road and road-intersection agreement (paragraph 8), welcome the water and energy access agreement and record the decision to establish the joint water commission (paragraph 9), commit both states to conditions for ethnic Tajiks living in Kyrgyzstan and ethnic Kyrgyz living in Tajikistan in respect of language, culture, tradition and custom (paragraph 10), and record the historic results of the state visit (paragraph 19) (Khovar, 2025a). Property, housing and compensation appear nowhere in the text; a scan of all twenty-one paragraphs for the Russian stems covering property,

housing, compensation, resettlement, land allotment, plots and the name Dostuk returns no occurrence. The local dimension enters the joint statement only as ethnic and linguistic identity.

5. Object-level findings

5.1. Territory: title settled in hectares

Fourteen matrix rows concern territorial objects. The pattern is consistent: a transfer is paired with a compensating grant expressed in hectares, and in two cases with an additional grant expressed as compensation for something other than land — infrastructure left behind, and control of a water structure given up.

Dostuk village, 91 hectares in Batken district, passed in its entirety to Tajikistan; Kyrgyzstan received an equal 91 hectares plus 30 hectares of irrigated land at Lakkon, the latter publicly described as compensation for houses and administrative buildings recently built in the village (24.kg, 2025a; Azattyq Asia, 2025a). The Khujand–Arka–Kanibadam road and the Dostuk market passed together to Tajikistan against 25 hectares of irrigated land at Lakkon; the two sources reporting the same briefing give the combined transferred area as 12 hectares and as 3.5 hectares respectively, a disagreement this study could not resolve (24.kg, 2025a; Azattyq Asia, 2025a). Pasture around Vorukh, 1,000 hectares, passed to Tajikistan, at the Tajik side's request and so that the enclave's residents could graze livestock, against 1,000 hectares at Karagan-Sai in Chon-Alai district. Tajikistan transferred the Kairagach plot of 155 hectares and an enclave of 35 hectares, together 190 hectares, and received in return an equal 190 hectares in Leilek district made up of parcels in named settlements. The Kara-Bak, Lakkon and Kuruk-Sai plots were exchanged at 200 hectares each way, the Kyrgyz side consisting of 130 hectares at Lakkon and 70 at Kuruk-Sai. The two states also exchanged border posts, Kyrgyzstan taking one at Kairagach and Tajikistan a facility near Dostuk, with no area reported (Azattyq Asia, 2025a).

One further entry in the same briefing is of a different kind and is kept apart from the transfers. In the interlocking settlements of Batken and Isfara districts, the single source reporting it states what stayed where: 142.7 hectares remained with Kyrgyzstan and 142 with Tajikistan (Azattyq Asia, 2025a). Neither figure is an area that moved, so neither is added to a transfer subtotal; the row is shown in Table 1 below the subtotal and in Figure 2 as a hatched bar. Including it would add about 142 hectares to each gross figure and move the net by 0.7 hectares.

Table 1 and Figure 2 present the hectare entries. One entry is disputed and both reported values are shown.

Table 1. Named land entries in public reporting, in hectares.

Object	Tajik side	Kyrgyz side	Evidence basis
Dostuk village: transfer, equal-area return and infrastructure compensation	91	121	Two sources, consistent
Khujand–Arka–Kanibadam road and Dostuk market combined, and compensation land	12 (second source: 3.5)	25	**Transferred area unresolved**; compensation consistent across two sources
Vorukh-area pasture / Karagan-Sai pasture	1,000	1,000	Two sources, consistent; both report both legs
Kairagach plot and enclave / equivalent plots in Leilek district	190	190	Two sources agree on each total; their itemisations of the Leilek side differ
Kara-Bak / Lakkon / Kuruk-Sai	200	200	Two sources, consistent
Compensation for the sluice-gate split: Unzhu-Bulak 500, Katta-Tuz 150, Karool-Don / Suluktu area 100	0	750	Two sources, consistent; both list the same three parcels

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Object	Tajik side	Kyrgyz side	Evidence basis
Subtotal, six transfer entries	**1,493**	**2,286**	Net +793.0 ha to Kyrgyzstan; +801.5 ha on the second reading of the road-and-market entry
Batken–Isfara interlocking settlements: area that **remained** with each side, not transferred [a]	142	142.7	Single source; excluded from the subtotal

Table 1 note. [a] The source reads *"142.7 hectares remained with the Kyrgyz Republic and 142 with the Tajik side"*. This records a retention, not a transfer in either direction, and it is therefore kept out of the subtotal; entering it as two transfers would put about 142 hectares that never moved into each gross figure.

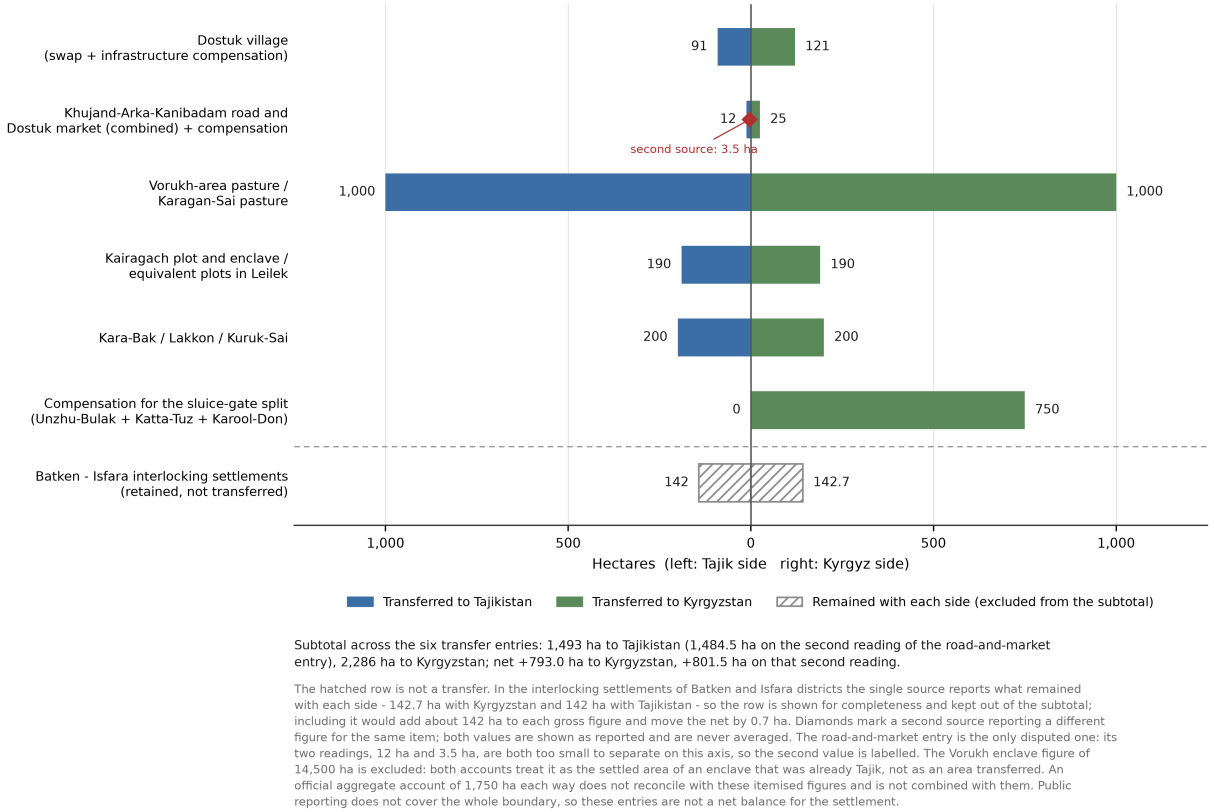


Figure 2. The hectare ledger, with transfers separated from the retention entry and the disputed entry shown as reported.

Figure 2 note. The hatched row is not a transfer: it records what remained with each side in the interlocking settlements of Batken and Isfara districts, and it is excluded from the subtotal. Diamonds mark a second source reporting a different figure for the same item; both values are shown as reported and are never averaged. The road-and-market entry is the only disputed one, and both of its readings are too small to separate on this axis, so the second value is labelled. Four of the six transfer entries are reported consistently by two sources; the Kairagach–Leilek entry has two sources agreeing on both totals but itemising the Leilek side differently. Public reporting does not name every plot along the line, so these entries are not a net balance for the settlement.

Across the six named transfer entries, the net transfer to Kyrgyzstan is 793.0 hectares, or 801.5 hectares on the second reading of the road-and-market entry. Three things bound that figure and must be read with it.

First, the Vorukh enclave figure of 14,500 hectares is excluded entirely. Both accounts of the briefing treat Vorukh as an existing Tajik enclave and describe the settlement as a reduction: one says the enclave's area "was previously 19,000 hectares and has now been reduced to 14,500"; the other says the population had been using almost 19,000 hectares and that 14,500 hectares of the enclave go to Tajikistan (24.kg, 2025a; Azattyq Asia, 2025a). On either reading the figure is the settled area of an enclave that was already Tajik territory before 2025, not an area this package transferred. What remains unresolved is what the 19,000 figure denoted, and that question does not affect the ledger.

Second, an official aggregate does not reconcile with the itemised accounts. In November 2025 the head of Batken district stated that Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan had each transferred 1,750 hectares to the other (24.kg, 2025g). The itemised briefings give 1,493 to Tajikistan and 2,286 to Kyrgyzstan. Part of the gap is explicable, since 750 hectares of compensation for the sluice-gate split and 30 hectares of infrastructure compensation sit on top of otherwise equal-area swaps, and $2{,}286 - 780 = 1{,}506$; but 1,506 is not 1,750, and the residual is not explained by any source located here. Both accounts are reported and neither is adjusted to fit the other.

Third, segments of the line that public reporting does not name are absent from the table. The Kyrgyz security chief put the boundary at 1,006.84 kilometres, of which 519.9 kilometres had been agreed before 2011 and the remaining 486.94 kilometres in the preceding three years (Azattyq Asia, 2025a). Other public figures for the boundary's length differ, at roughly 984 and 987 kilometres for other dates and measurements; this article uses the February 2025 briefing figure and attributes it.

The treaty was ratified by both parliaments in March 2025 and instruments of ratification were exchanged by the two presidents at Khujand on 31 March 2025 (24.kg, 2025e). This study did not obtain a text stating the treaty's date of entry into force, and does not treat the exchange date as that date.

5.2. Movement: function detached from territory

Three road objects were to receive neutral status. Dacha–Kapchygai, known on the Tajik side as Khoja-i A'lo–Vorukh, is 3,425 metres long and 40 metres wide and bypasses Kapchygai village on its eastern side; Tajikistan builds it and Tajikistan uses it, and it gives Vorukh a route that does not pass through the Kyrgyz settlement of Ak-Sai. Min-Oruk–Samarkandek, on the Tajik side Oriyono–Shuriston, is 3,241 metres by 40 metres, bypasses Surkh village on its northern side, and is built and used by Kyrgyzstan; the Kyrgyz side describes it as the condition it attached to granting the first road. The third is a short road at Tort-Kocho, where the Osh–Razzakov road crosses the Isfara–Vorukh road, and it is covered by the separate limb of the agreement dealing with a road intersection. Its length is reported as 253.74 metres in February 2025 and as 253 metres in March, the latter account explaining that the figure was negotiated down from the 275 metres Tajikistan had proposed, and that a bridge Kyrgyzstan had built on the section remained on the Kyrgyz side (24.kg, 2025d; Azattyq Asia, 2025a).

Two features of this arrangement are unusual enough to state precisely. The builder and the user need not be the same state. And the carriageway itself is placed outside both states' ownership, on the parties' own account, with 15-metre safety strips on each side of the roads. In the official account the purpose is unimpeded movement of citizens, vehicles and goods, and the intersection is to be jointly built and used by both states on equal terms (Economist.kg, 2025c). That formulation comes from press reporting of the agreement and is not verifiable against treaty wording here.

Movement changed at the crossing points and in the air, and has not yet changed on the roads. The Kyzyl-Bel and Kairagach crossing points reopened on 13 March 2025 in a video ceremony in which the Kyrgyz president gave the order and the barriers were raised on the Kyrgyz side, after which the Tajik president gave the corresponding order; the border had been closed since spring 2021 (24.kg, 2025b; Vecherniy Bishkek, 2025b). Air links followed within three days, though not on a single date: Somon Air resumed Dushanbe–Bishkek on 14 March, and the first direct Bishkek–Khujand–Bishkek flight was

operated by the Kyrgyz carrier Asman Airlines on 16 March (Avesta, 2025; Khovar, 2025b). Of the three road objects, construction of Min-Oruk–Samarkandek began in August 2025 under a three-year contract and was in progress at the cutoff, with rock blasting and bridge-pier work under way and the 266-metre viaduct, the 10-metre asphalt width and the night lighting all still in the future tense; for the other two, no construction act was located, though the two transport ministries had agreed the design for Dacha–Kapchygai by March 2025 (24.kg, 2025d, 2026b).

One further movement instrument entered the record inside the cutoff window without belonging to the 2025 package. An agreement on the mutual stay of citizens, permitting stays of up to 60 days without registration and consisting of ten articles, was signed in Dushanbe on 1 February 2018 and ratified by Tajikistan's lower chamber in January 2026; Kyrgyz ratification was not reported at that time (Ritm Evrazii, 2026). This article records the sequence and declines to assert that the border settlement caused the ratification; no source examined states a connection.

5.3. Water: gates halved, a commission created and convened, residents absent from its statute

The water and energy access agreement provides unimpeded access to facilities situated on the other party's territory for their joint operation. The objects named in the public account are a head dam with three sluice gates and the head intake structure of the Ak-Tatyr/Machoi canal (24.kg, 2025c; Economist.kg, 2025d). A separate account describes the divided structure as the head intake on the Ak-Suu river, known in Tajik as the Isfara; this study could not establish whether the two names denote the same structure and does not assert that they do (Azattyq Asia, 2025a).

The three gates were divided half and half — reported as one and a half gates each and as a fifty-fifty split, which are the same arrangement — in exchange for a compensation package of 750 hectares in three parcels: 500 hectares at Unzhu-Bulak in Chon-Alai district, 150 at Katta-Tuz, and 100 more, placed at the approach to Suluktu in one account and named Karool-Don in the other. Both accounts list the same three parcels and the same total (24.kg, 2025a; Azattyq Asia, 2025a). The same briefing added that use of the intake and the distribution of water would be carried out under bilateral agreements between the two states' specialised agencies, which is to say that the agreement allocated control and deferred operation.

The one instrument text obtained in this study governs the executive organ. The Joint Tajik–Kyrgyz Water Commission was created pursuant to Article 10 of the 13 March 2025 agreement; its statute was signed in Dushanbe on 9 October 2025 and approved on the Tajik side as Annex 2 to Government Resolution No. 534 of 18 October 2025. On the Kyrgyz side the Cabinet had agreed the *draft* statute by instruction No. 860-т of 4 October 2025, five days before signature (Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2025; Tazabek, 2025b).

The statute establishes a body on strictly intergovernmental lines. It operates on a parity basis under two co-chairs (point 7), is composed on the principle of equal representation of the parties (point 8), and takes decisions by consensus (point 10). Its meetings are to be held at least twice a year, at the start of the vegetation and inter-vegetation periods (point 11), alternately on each party's territory (point 12). Russian is the working language of meetings and correspondence (point 19), and each meeting produces a protocol in two Russian copies, one for each party (point 20). Point 6 fixes the commission's tasks at five: agreeing water-distribution schedules at hydraulic structures; organising the exchange of data from gauging stations at those structures; coordinating prevention and remediation of emergencies at those structures; attracting investment for their modernisation; and considering other water-management questions. The commission may engage experts from specialised, research, design and operating organisations (point 23).

Read through, the statute's twenty-nine points contain no seat for residents or water users and no procedure by which an individual may bring a water complaint. The scope of that observation is the text itself. It says nothing about the content of the water agreement, which this study did not obtain, and nothing about remedies either state's domestic law may provide. On the Kyrgyz side something can

now be said about the latter, and it sharpens rather than softens the point. The Water Code adopted by the Jogorku Kenesh on 30 April 2025 and signed as Law No. 128 on 27 June 2025 makes participation by all interested persons in planning and decision-making one of its principles of water management (Article 6(1)); establishes basin councils that include representatives of local state administration and non-governmental organisations (Article 11(2)); allows an application for water use that infringes the rights of other legal or natural persons to be challenged before the authorised body within thirty days of the application's publication (Article 32(4)); and gives members of the public access to the unified information system (Article 90) (Kyrgyz Republic, 2025). So domestic Kyrgyz water law was being rebuilt in the same period with participatory and objection channels, while the bilateral organ that is to set distribution schedules at these two structures has neither. Three limits belong with that observation. The Code's basin councils seat institutions and non-governmental organisations, not water users, and the Code provides for no water-user associations. Article 32(4)'s objection runs against a permit application in the domestic licensing system, not against a schedule agreed between two states. And the Code's commencement is fixed at six months after the official publication of Law No. 129 of 27 June 2025, a publication date this study did not obtain, so whether the Code was in force during the observation window is not established here.

The commission has met once. On 9 October 2025 it held its first session in Dushanbe, the Kyrgyz delegation led by Almaz Zheenaliyev, Deputy Minister of Water Resources, Agriculture and Processing Industry, and the Tajik delegation by Z. Davlatzoda, Director of the Amelioration and Irrigation Agency; the session discussed the commission's statute and the attraction of investment for modernising and restoring hydraulic structures critical to the border regions (Tazabek, 2025a; Vesti.kg, 2025). The statute's own point 29 provides that it is considered and approved by the heads of the parties' authorised bodies *at a meeting of the Commission*, and the statute's execution line records that it was done in Dushanbe on 9 October 2025. The internal and the external record agree: the body convened and adopted its statute in the manner the statute prescribes.

That is a real institutional act and Section 6 counts it as one. It is also worth noting what it implies about sequence. A session held on 9 October took place before either government had approved the statute in final form — the Kyrgyz Cabinet had agreed only a draft, and the Tajik resolution came nine days later. Point 29 anticipates this, since a statute adopted at a meeting cannot govern the meeting that adopts it; whether such a session counts towards the twice-yearly requirement of point 11 is a question the available material does not answer.

What the meeting does not establish is equally specific. Neither report records a distribution schedule agreed at either named structure, the start of gauging-station data exchange, the application of any emergency mechanism, or any investment secured as opposed to discussed; neither announces a date for a further session. No record of a second meeting before 1 May 2026 was located — searches in Russian returned only sessions of the multilateral Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, a different body — so the twice-yearly requirement cannot be shown to have been performed, and that is an absence of evidence rather than a finding that no second meeting occurred. And at the level of the two physical structures, the record is empty: no act of operation, abstraction, maintenance or modernisation at the head dam or the canal intake was located at all.

5.4. Resettlement: entitlements converted into per-household quotas, and then delivered differently

The residents of Dostuk were to move, with their consent, to the Chet-Bulak site attached to Buzhum village in Suu-Bashy rural district, Batken district, on the outskirts of Batken town; an earlier statement had named Kara-Bak as the destination. The parameters announced on 6 March 2025 were 71 houses, each family receiving 5 sotka — 0.05 hectares — for housing, with houses built with full amenities and works expected to finish within three to four months. Nine hectares of agricultural land at Kyzyl-Bel

village were allocated to those moving from Dostuk, and the same passage states that residents holding state title documents to their plots would receive the 5-sotka housing plots (Azattyq Asia, 2025b). That announcement is addressed, in its headline and throughout, to the residents of Dostuk; no announced plot quota for any other settlement was located for this study.

The title sentence carries a condition, and it attaches to housing rather than to farmland. The same article also states that every resettled family would receive 5 sotka, and the relation between the two statements is not resolved in the source. What happens to residents without state title documents is therefore not addressed in any source located for this study, which is recorded as an absence in the public record rather than as an absence of provision.

What was delivered differs from what was announced in both directions, and the difference is documented. By November 2025, 181 families — more than a thousand people in all — had moved into the new village of Zhany-Dostuk. They came from Dostuk and from five further settlements affected by the delimitation — Teskei, Mazeyit, Tash-Tumshuk, Kok-Terek and Uch-Dobo — which is why 181 houses stand where 71 were announced. Plots were larger than announced and unequal between groups: residents of Dostuk received 20 sotka, 0.2 hectares, four times the quota announced for them in March, and residents of the other five settlements 10 sotka, with additional plots for the latter said to be under consideration elsewhere. Because no quota was announced for those five settlements, their allocation is reported as it stands and no multiple is computed for it. The houses have running water, sanitation and heating inside; the village around them was still bare, and the reporting journalist observed that not every house yet had occupants (24.kg, 2025g).

A second site completed in the same period is in Leilek district, at the other end of the oblast. On 2 December 2025 the head of Leilek district stated that the relocation there was finished: 76 houses had been built by the state, 60 in a new settlement at Razzakov and 16 in the upper part of Maksat village, and by 29 November every family due to move had been accommodated in them. The households came from the border streets of Razzakov and from Maksat; a further 48 families who had held plots but no house received land allotments. The 55.24 hectares used for the housing had been converted to settlement land by Cabinet Resolution No. 558 of 3 September 2025. Compensation there was reported as settled and disbursed, at 1 million som for a household that had also lost a garden and outbuildings and 500,000 for one that had not, with 90 to 95 per cent receiving the higher figure, alongside ten sacks of coal per household; water supply and sewerage were still being laid at the time of the report (24.kg, 2025h).

Against that, one promised element had not arrived. Compensation for standing crops at Zhany-Dostuk was set at 100,000 to 400,000 som per household, calculated on a single year's yield. Residents objected that an apricot tree takes ten to fifteen years to come into bearing, so a single year's yield does not cover what was invested, and reported that the money had still not been paid eight months after signature; the district head said at the same time that losses were still being assessed (24.kg, 2025g). The nine hectares of farmland at Kyzyl-Bel are not mentioned in that account, and no delivery record for them was located. The Leilek payments described above are a different payment, to different households, in a different district, and they are not evidence that the Zhany-Dostuk crop compensation was made.

Three features of this arrangement belong in the record. It is a domestic Kyrgyz measure: it appears in no paragraph of the joint statement, the only one of the four instruments obtained in full, and in no public account of the three treaty-level instruments located for this study. Its housing element is a per-household quota rather than a restoration of previously held areas — a family's new plot is 0.2 or 0.1 hectares whatever it held before — and the quota announced for Dostuk residents was revised upward fourfold between announcement and delivery without any published account of the revision. And the element that was still outstanding at the cutoff is one of the two monetary elements, the Zhany-Dostuk crop compensation, while the monetary element in the other district was reported paid.

6. Implementation at the cutoff date

Distinguishing signature, ratification, exchange of instruments and acts of implementation produces a picture that a summary description of the settlement does not convey — provided the acts are matched to the kind of object that can perform them.

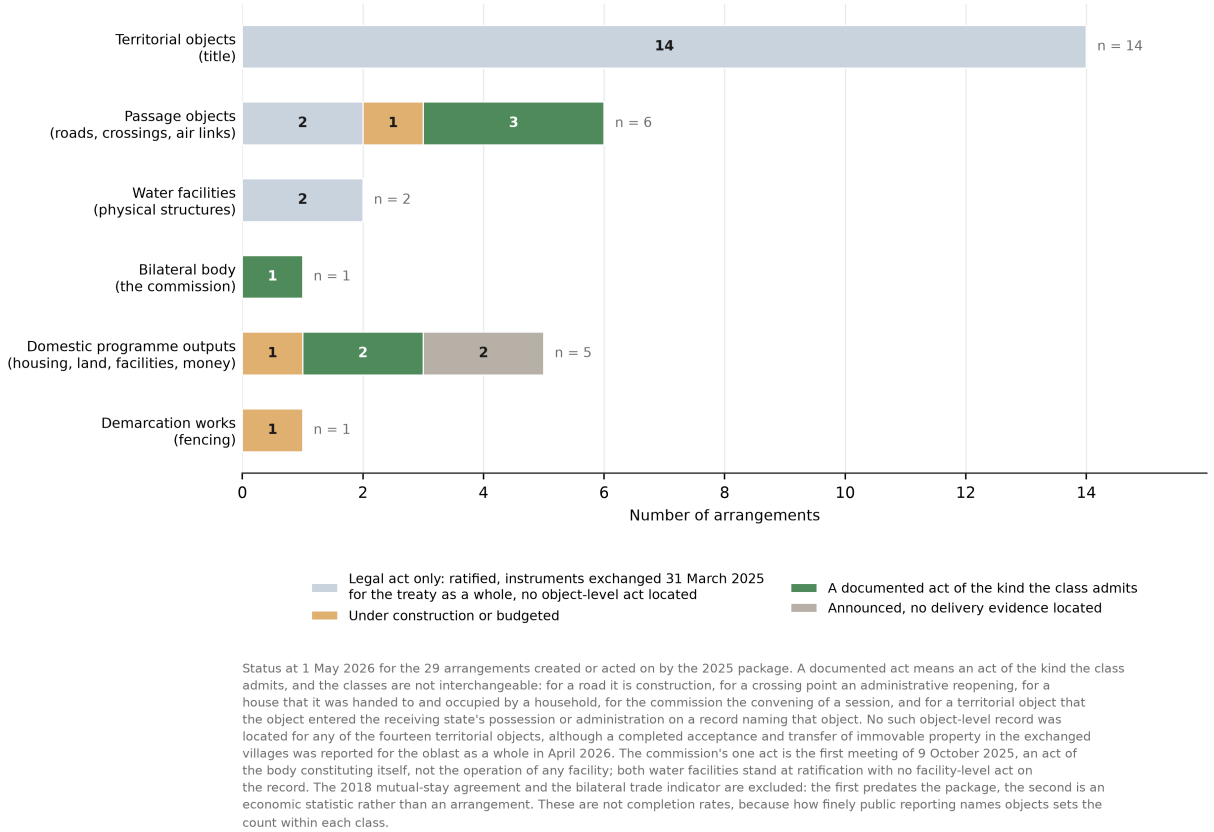


Figure 3. Status of the 29 recorded arrangements at 1 May 2026, by class of unit.

Figure 3 note. A documented act means an act of the kind the class admits, and the classes are not interchangeable: for a road it is construction, for a crossing point an administrative reopening, for a house that it was handed to and occupied by a household, for the commission the convening of a session, and for a territorial object that the object entered the receiving state's possession or administration on a record naming that object. The first column covers ratification together with the exchange of instruments of ratification, which took place once, for the treaty as a whole. These are not completion rates, because how finely public reporting names objects sets the count within each class. The 2018 mutual-stay agreement and the bilateral trade indicator are excluded from the denominator, the first because it predates the package and the second because it is an economic statistic rather than an arrangement.

Table 2. Implementation status at 1 May 2026, counts of arrangements by class of unit.

Class of unit	Legal act only	Under construction or budgeted	Documented act of the class	Announced, no delivery evidence	Total
Territorial objects (title)	14	0	0	0	14
Passage objects (roads, crossings, air links)	2	1	3	0	6
Water facilities (physical structures)	2	0	0	0	2

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Class of unit	Legal act only	Under construction or budgeted	Documented act of the class	Announced, no delivery evidence	Total
Bilateral body (the commission)	0	0	1	0	1
Domestic programme outputs	0	1	2	2	5
Demarcation works (fencing)	0	1	0	0	1
Total	**18**	**3**	**6**	**2**	**29**

Six of the twenty-nine arrangements, 21%, had a documented act of the kind their class admits. Eighteen, 62%, stood at a legal act — ratified, with instruments of ratification exchanged for the treaty as a whole — and nothing further located. Three were under construction or budgeted, and two had been announced with no delivery evidence located.

The six documented acts are specific, dated, and not of one kind. Two crossing points reopened on 13 March 2025. Two air routes resumed on 14 and 16 March 2025. The joint water commission convened for the first time on 9 October 2025. At Zhany-Dostuk 181 houses were built and 181 families had moved in by 13 November 2025. In Leilek district 76 houses were built and every family due to move was accommodated in them by 29 November 2025 (24.kg, 2025g, 2025h, 2026b).

Read down the classes, the objects still without a documented act at the cutoff are of several kinds, and they do not reduce to one rule. One road is under construction under a three-year term and two roads have no construction act on the record. Neither water facility has any facility-level act of operation, abstraction, maintenance or modernisation; the single act recorded in the water dimension is the commission's own first session, which is an act of the body rather than of any facility. The social facilities at Zhany-Dostuk are in progress or budgeted, and border fencing stood at 44.58 kilometres in the oblast as at 9 April 2026 after nearly 150 kilometres during 2025, against a 2026 target of 200 kilometres split 65 in Batken district and 135 in Leilek (24.kg, 2026b). The crop compensation at Zhany-Dostuk is a payment, and it was unpaid. And no record naming an individual object was located for the transfer and acceptance of any of the fourteen territorial objects — the class whose operative act needs neither construction nor disbursement.

That last line is why the pattern cannot be read as "physical works are slow and decisions are fast". The largest built object delivered inside the period is the housing: 257 houses at three sites, built and occupied within about eight months. The class with no object-level act at all is the one that required no building.

Two pieces of evidence bear on the territorial class without attaching to any row, and they are recorded here so that a count of zero is not read as an absence of activity. In April 2026 the presidential representative in Batken oblast stated that, following delimitation, the acceptance and transfer of immovable property in the exchanged villages had been completed, and that farmland received from Tajikistan was being distributed among local residents (24.kg, 2026b). In March 2026 the Kyrgyz Cabinet adopted a resolution taking the immovable objects received from Tajikistan into state ownership, directing the state property agency to inventory them and accept them under acts of acceptance and transfer, the land agency to register title, and the construction ministry to draw up master plans for the transferred settlements (24.kg, 2026a). Both statements are about the exchanged villages, or the received objects, as a whole. Neither names an object, an area or a date, and the second directs work rather than reporting it done, so neither can be entered against a matrix row without deciding unevidenced which rows it covers.

That distinction is the point of the class column. Combining the commission's meeting with the two structures to report "one of three water arrangements implemented" would put an institutional act and a facility-level act on one scale; adding the compensation parcel, which is land, would make the mixture

worse. The commission's convening is counted once, in its own class, and both water facilities are recorded as having produced no facility-level act.

Two cautions attach to the numbers on the domestic side. The 181 houses exceed the 71 announced in March 2025 by a factor of about 2.5 because the programme covered five further settlements, so the figure cannot be read as showing that the original Dostuk households were resettled on the promised terms and schedule. And the 10-metre asphalt width planned for Min-Oruk–Samarkandek is not inconsistent with the 40-metre figure in the road agreement: the latter is the neutral strip, the former the paved carriageway.

One outcome indicator is available, and it must be read against a baseline. Tajik–Kyrgyz goods trade in 2025 exceeded USD 33.1 million, against USD 12.2 million the previous year, a 2.7-fold increase on the Tajik statistical agency's figures reported a year after the crossings reopened (Asia-Plus, 2026). On the same agency's figures, bilateral trade had fallen from about USD 37 million in 2020 to about USD 12 million in 2023, with USD 9.1 million recorded for the first nine months of 2024 (Economist.kg, 2024). So the 2025 figure recovers most of the ground lost since the closure but remains about 11% below the 2020 level, and 2020 was itself a pandemic year. A second Tajik official series is not commensurable with the first: the customs service reports USD 405,100 for January–May 2024 against USD 6.35 million for the same months of 2025, an order of magnitude below the statistical agency's figures for overlapping periods (24.kg, 2025f). This study did not obtain either underlying statistical table and cannot state whether the series include re-exports or services. The increase is reported as an observation alongside the reopening, not as its measured effect.

7. The regional comparison

Separating sovereignty over land from the right to use a facility standing on it is an established Central Asian technique. Table 3 sets the 2025 package against five earlier instruments described by Ziganshina (2023).

Table 3. Instruments separating land sovereignty from facility use in Central Asia.

	1996 TM–UZ	2000 KZ–KG	2017 KG–UZ	2018 TJ–UZ	2022 KG–UZ	2025 KG–TJ
Object	Karshi and Amu-Bukhara canals, Tuya-muyun reservoir	Orto-Tokoy reservoir on the Chu, Chu canals, Chumysh hydrosystem, Kirov reservoir	Orto-Tokoy / Kasansai reservoir, Ala-Buka district [a]	Farkhad dam	Andijan / Kempir-Abad reservoir	Head dam with three gates; Ak-Tatyr/Machoi intake; two bypass roads and one road at an intersection
Land sovereignty	Turkmenistan retains the land in exclusive property	Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan [b]	4,957 ha + 19.5 ha to Uzbekistan	Unchanged by the water instrument; set separately by the border treaty
Facility control	Uzbekistan owns facilities on Turkmen land	Kyrgyzstan owns and operates; intergovernmental status	Kyrgyzstan operates and releases within agreed limits; Uzbekistan had funded it until 2017	Uzbekistan owns; Tajikistan guarantees access and security	Uzbekistan operates and releases within limits agreed with Kyrgyzstan	Gates split half and half; unimpeded access for joint operation; carriageway belongs to neither state in the official account

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

	1996 TM–UZ	2000 KZ–KG	2017 KG–UZ	2018 TJ–UZ	2022 KG–UZ	2025 KG–TJ
Facility held by a non-territorial state	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Compensation currency	Cash, USD 11 million a year	Cost sharing by volume received	Cost sharing by volume received	Not monetised in the reviewed account	Land: 1,019 ha pasture + 12,849 ha Govasoy	Land: 750 ha in three parcels
Standing body	No	Yes, Chu-Talas Water Commission	Working group only	No; a 49-year term instead	Yes, 24-person joint commission	Yes; parity, two co-chairs, consensus, at least two meetings a year
Individual use right named	Not stated in the reviewed account	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	**Yes** — access and use by Kyrgyz citizens for animal watering, irrigation and fishing [c]	**Not provided in the commission statute** [c]
Bundled with a border settlement	No	No	No	Yes, across two instruments	Yes	Yes
Signed the same day as the border instrument	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Table 3 notes. [a] A different facility from the Chu-basin Orto-Tokoy reservoir in the 2000 column, despite the shared Kyrgyz name. [b] Settled not by the 9 March 2018 agreement, which left ownership of the facility and of the land undefined, but by an exchange of diplomatic notes of 17 August 2018 reported in the press. [c] The two cells are not instrument-equivalent. The 2022 cell comes from Article 5 of the water-management agreement, known here through Ziganshina's summary; that agreement's text was not obtained, and the Uzbek legal database publishes only the ratification law (Republic of Uzbekistan, 2022). The 2025 cell comes from the commission statute, obtained in full; the underlying 2025 water agreement was not obtained. For 2022 the agreement is known and the commission's own statute is not; for 2025 the reverse.

Four readings follow, and their evidential weight differs.

The mechanism is not novel, and the count depends on the criterion. Under a strict criterion — the facility is owned or operated by a state other than the territorial sovereign — Ziganshina's own taxonomy names two cases and no others: the lower Amudarya facilities under the 1996 arrangement, and the Farkhad dam. It places the Chu, Talas and Kasansai facilities in the opposite category, owned and operated by the country of location, and the 2017 agreement in fact ended the previous Uzbek operation of Kasansai. In 2022 Uzbekistan took both the reservoir land and the operation. So on the strict criterion 2025 is the third case. Under a broad criterion — an enforceable use entitlement over a facility, held by a state that is not the territorial sovereign — all five earlier instruments qualify and 2025 is the sixth. It belongs to the technique on either reading; what it is not is an innovation.

The same-day bundling has one precedent, and a close one. On 3 November 2022 Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement settling remaining sections of their border and an agreement on reservoir management on the same day, compensating Kyrgyzstan in land — 1,019 hectares of pasture and 12,849 hectares at Govasoy — and creating a 24-person joint commission. The 2025 package repeats this structure almost item for item: same-day signature, land as the compensation currency drawn from the same territorial ledger, a standing joint commission. Bundling with a border settlement in the looser sense has two precedents, since the Farkhad dispute was also settled together with a border question, but across two instruments five months apart rather than in one act.

The extension to movement and resettlement is not new in the region, though the specific road device appears to be. The comparison set is drawn entirely from a review of water infrastructure of interstate use, so finding no road or resettlement arrangement in it is a property of the sampling frame rather than a finding about regional practice. Outside the frame, both elements have Kyrgyz–Uzbek precedents. On 1 April 2021 the road connecting the Uzbek Sokh enclave to Uzbekistan's mainland reopened as part of a broader border normalisation in which the two sides also agreed to exchange territory to complete delimitation (Tolipov, 2021). In April 2024 the 208-hectare Kyrgyz exclave of Barak was absorbed by Uzbekistan under a bilateral border agreement, Kyrgyzstan receiving an equivalent parcel of Andijon Province in exchange, and its residents were relocated to Kara-Suu district in Osh Province, with nearly a hundred houses dismantled and 270 million som committed — though from the Kyrgyz president's personal fund rather than from a budgeted programme, which is not the financing route used at Zhany-Dostuk (Rickleton, 2024). Bundling road access for an enclave with a border settlement, and bundling an equal-area exchange with the relocation of a transferred settlement's population, are therefore both established regional practice. What the retrieved record does not evidence anywhere else is the specific device of the 2025 road agreement: a defined strip of carriageway described as belonging to neither state, with construction and use allocated to named and sometimes different states. That is a narrow claim, and it is as much as the evidence supports.

One protective element present in the closest precedent is absent here. The 2022 agreement obliges Uzbekistan to ensure free access and use of the reservoir's water by Kyrgyz citizens for animal watering, irrigation and fishing, and not to install structures around the reservoir. The 2025 commission statute, whose full text this study obtained, contains no individual-level water use right, no seat for residents or water users, and no individual complaint procedure. Its five statutory tasks are technical and intergovernmental throughout.

This comparison carries limitations that bear directly on its strength. Rows for 1996 through 2022 are drawn from a single peer-reviewed review article; this study did not return to the five underlying agreements. The asymmetry is greatest precisely where the finding is sharpest: the 2022 individual use right is known here through Ziganshina's summary of Article 5, not through the article itself. One independent line of reporting corroborates the substance without proving the wording. Writing eighteen months before the agreement was signed, an analyst recorded that during the Kyrgyz president's March 2021 visit to Uzbekistan the two sides agreed that "the Uzbek side will provide Kyrgyzstan's citizens free and unrestricted access to water from this reservoir for drinking, watering, fishing, etc." (Tolipov, 2021). That establishes that the term was negotiated and publicly described before the instrument existed; it cannot establish what the adopted Article 5 says, because it neither quotes nor identifies that later text. The finding should be read as well founded on the review article's summary, corroborated in substance by an earlier and independent report, and open to correction against the 2022 text.

A further caution concerns comparability. The 2022 object is a reservoir on which downstream populations depend directly for watering, irrigation and fishing; the 2025 objects are a head dam and a canal intake. Whether the absence of an individual use clause reflects a different protective choice or a different physical relationship between residents and the structure cannot be settled from the material obtained here.

Holmatov et al. (2026) recommend, on the basis of interviews about Kyrgyz–Uzbek tributaries, that border delineation be resolved before water cooperation is attempted. The 2025 package did not sequence the two; it concluded both on one day and ratified them in one sitting. Whether that simultaneity produces the durable cooperation the sequencing recommendation aims at is not observable in the period covered. What can be observed is that fourteen months after signature the water institution existed and had met once, while neither water facility had a documented act of operation.

8. What changed, at which level

At the interstate level the changes are decisive and, for the most part, complete as legal acts. Territorial title along the whole line is settled and the instruments of ratification have been exchanged. Two functions have been detached from the territory beneath them, on the parties' own public accounts: passage along three named road objects, and operation of and access to two named water structures. A standing bilateral organ with defined competence, decision rule and meeting frequency now exists for water infrastructure where none specific to these two states' facilities existed before, and it has convened. A further institution was created alongside it: the joint statement records the decision to transform the existing intergovernmental commission into a Tajik–Kyrgyz Intergovernmental Council chaired by the two heads of government. A dormant 2018 mobility agreement was ratified on one side during the period.

At the local level the changes are real, countable and uneven. Residents of transferred settlements received housing and land: by the end of November 2025 a new village of 181 houses stood at Chet-Bulak with 181 families in it, and 76 houses at Razzakov and Maksat held every Leilek household due to move, 257 houses in all across the oblast, alongside partly built social facilities and one road under construction. The plots delivered to Dostuk residents were four times the quota announced for them in March 2025; for the five other settlements whose residents also moved to Zhany-Dostuk, no announced quota was located, and their 10-sotka plots are reported without a comparison. Of the two monetary elements, the Leilek payments were reported settled and disbursed, while compensation for standing crops at Zhany-Dostuk, promised at 100,000 to 400,000 som per household on a single year's yield, was still unpaid when the residents were interviewed eight months after signature.

At the same time the local level enters the treaty instruments barely at all. The joint statement reaches local populations only through ethnic and linguistic identity. Compensation for residents rests on a domestic programme that appears in no paragraph of that statement and in no public account of the three treaties located here, and it was revised in its terms without a published account of the revision. A documentary-title condition appears in the announcement of the housing allocation, and what becomes of residents without title documents is not addressed in any source located here. And the one bilateral organ created to run the shared water facilities is composed, empowered and procedurally designed without any channel for the people whose irrigation depends on those facilities — in contrast to the 2022 precedent, which named such a channel. That contrast holds at the level of the commission statute, which is the only 2025 water text this study obtained.

These features fit together. The package converts a dispute over sovereignty into an exchange of countable objects, then manages the functional interdependence that remains through intergovernmental machinery. Local entitlements are handled in the same currency of hectares, plots and houses, but by a different authority, and they are not written into the bilateral instruments that will govern the relationship going forward. What the record then shows at fourteen months is not a single gradient from easy to hard. The crossings and the air links changed on the day of signature and within three days of it; the commission convened at seven months; the housing was built and filled at about eight. Two roads have no construction act located, one is two years from completion, neither water structure has a facility-level act, one of the

two monetary elements is unpaid, and the fourteen territorial objects — which need no construction and no disbursement — have no object-level record of transfer and acceptance either.

9. Limitations

The treaty texts were not obtained. Most provisions described here are the parties' public accounts of their own instruments. Where those accounts disagree, both readings are recorded, and three ledger entries remain unresolved: the combined area of the Khujand–Arka–Kanibadam road and the Dostuk market, what the documentary-title condition in the resettlement announcement attaches to, and the death tolls of the 2021 and 2022 clashes.

Three ledger entries rest on degraded access and are named here rather than left in the file. Entry A2, supporting the date of the Kyrgyz parliamentary ratification, rests on a search summary; the Tajik ratification date is separately sourced to a full-text read. Entry C5, the 2025 and 2024 trade figures, also rests on a search summary: two direct fetches of the cited article failed, the second returning HTTP 525. Entry D6, the Kyrgyz Cabinet instruction number, rests on a single visible sentence of an otherwise paywalled article. The bibliography does not claim that every cited source was read in full.

Hectare figures, household counts and site names rest largely on official briefings reported in the press, with the attributing official named. They are not independently verified against cadastral or administrative records. Where the two briefing reports itemise differently — the Leilek parcels are the clearest case — the itemisations are shown as differing rather than reconciled.

Implementation reporting for Batken oblast comes from four articles relaying statements by officials, of 13 November 2025, 2 December 2025, 27 March 2026 and 14 April 2026. All are within the cutoff and specific, but each is a single relayed official account, and the November article is the only source located for the resettled residents' own view. The negative finding on the territorial objects is bounded by that coverage: it records that no object-level act was located in these sources or in Russian-language searching, not that no such act exists or was published.

The comparison rows for 1996–2022 rest on one review article, as set out in Section 7, and the comparison set is a water-infrastructure catalogue, which is why the road and resettlement precedents had to be sought outside it.

Absence of evidence is recorded as such throughout. No record of a second commission meeting was located; that is not a finding that no second meeting occurred. No provision for residents without documentary title was located; that is not a finding that none exists. No act of operation at either water facility was located; that is not a finding that neither structure is operating. No object-level transfer and acceptance record was located for any territorial object; that is not a finding that the ground did not change hands.

Finally, the period observed is about fourteen months from signature. Arrangements standing at a legal act with no further act at the cutoff may well have been implemented afterwards, and the three-year construction term for Min-Oruk–Samarkandek runs well past it. Nothing here supports a judgment about the settlement's durability.

10. Conclusion

The 2025 Kyrgyzstan–Tajikistan settlement combined territory, movement, water and resettlement by settling sovereignty once and in hectares, then detaching two functions — road passage and water operation — from the territory beneath them, and converting local losses into per-household quotas of land, housing and money administered domestically.

What each of the four objects received is now specific. Territorial title was settled for the whole line and the balance struck object by object; across the six named transfer entries Kyrgyzstan received a

net 793.0 hectares, or 801.5 on the second reading of the one disputed entry, with a seventh entry recording only what remained with each side, the Vorukh enclave settled at 14,500 hectares as a confirmation rather than a transfer, and an official aggregate of 1,750 hectares each way that does not reconcile with the itemised accounts. Passage changed at the crossings and in the air, where two crossing points reopened on the day of signature and two air routes within three days, and has not yet changed on the roads, one of three being under construction at the cutoff under a three-year term. Water governance acquired an institution rather than an operation: a parity commission with consensus decision-making and five technical tasks, which convened once, in Dushanbe on 9 October 2025, and adopted its own statute there in the manner point 29 prescribes, while neither of the two named structures has any documented act of operation, abstraction, maintenance or modernisation on the record. Resettlement delivered more housing than it announced and to more households — 257 houses at three sites, with 181 families in the new village at Chet-Bulak and every relocating Leilek household in the 76 houses at Razzakov and Maksat — on plots four times the quota announced for Dostuk residents, and left the Zhany-Dostuk crop compensation unpaid.

Six of twenty-nine arrangements had a documented act of their class by 1 May 2026 and eighteen stood at a legal act with nothing further located. The six are the two crossings, the two air links, the commission's first session and the two housing sites. The objects still waiting are of several kinds and do not reduce to one rule: two roads without a construction act and one under a three-year term, two water structures without any facility-level act, one unpaid money payment, and all fourteen territorial objects — for which no record naming an individual object was located, even though their operative act requires neither building nor payment. What the class column shows is that implementation has to be read against the act each kind of object admits, not aggregated into a rate.

The technique of separating sovereignty from use rights is a standard Central Asian instrument: the third case since 1996 on a strict reading of what separation means, the sixth on a broad one, and the second to be signed on the same day as the border instrument it accompanies. Placing road access and population resettlement inside a border package is also established regional practice, as the 2021 Sokh road reopening and the 2024 Barak transfer show. What the retrieved record does not evidence elsewhere is the particular device of treating the carriageway itself as belonging to neither state, with construction and use allocated separately — and that device, on the material available, is described only in a briefing, not in a text.

The 2022 precedent shows that an individual-level use right was available as a drafting option in exactly this context. The 2025 commission statute does not contain one, and contains no seat for residents and no individual complaint procedure; domestic Kyrgyz water law was in the same period creating participation and objection channels of its own, though at the level of permit applications and basin planning rather than at the level of the bilateral organ that will set schedules at these structures.

The single most consequential fact still missing is the authentic text of the three instruments of 13 March 2025, and specifically whether the water and energy access agreement itself — as distinct from its commission statute — contains any provision on use by residents. Until that text is available, the finding stated here holds at the level of the commission statute, which contains no such provision.

11. Author contribution

Asel Sarsenova designed the study, collected and verified the sources, built the evidence ledger, arrangement matrix, comparison table and figures, and wrote the manuscript and its Chinese companion.

12. Data and materials

The evidence ledger, arrangement matrix, hectare ledger, instrument timeline, regional comparison table, figure input data, editable figure sources in SVG and the scripts that build the data files and generate

the figures are retained with this manuscript as the files named in the text. The arithmetic checks are recorded in an accompanying recomputation note, and the source checks performed for this version in an accompanying source-verification record. The supporting materials are retained by APPE in the research record for this article.

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