

Joint Statement

In March 2024, CEE Bankwatch Network filed a complaint with the Office of the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO) regarding certain aspects of the activities of Shamol Zarafshan Energy Foreign Enterprise LLC in relation to the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Performance Standards. In May 2024, CAO determined that the complaint met its eligibility criteria and began an assessment of the complaint. In July 2024, during the assessment process, Shamol Zarafshan Energy submitted a comprehensive response demonstrating the company's commitment to IFC Performance Standards and clarifying the company's position. In September 2024, both Bankwatch and Project Zarafshan (hereinafter "the parties") expressed an interest in engaging in a collaborative discussion facilitated by CAO and the case was transferred to CAO's Dispute Resolution function.

In April 2025, the parties finalized and signed the Agreement on Ground Rules and Framework for Engagement. This Agreement outlined guiding principles, representation, roles of advisors, experts and observers, key issues to discuss, language, and meeting protocols. The parties agreed to set a soft timeline for CAO's dispute resolution process of 12 months from 30 September 2024, which was later extended by one month until the end of October 2025.

During the CAO's dispute resolution process, the parties engaged in a series of constructive interactions, including bilateral meetings, joint sessions and a joint fact-finding field visits in Zarafshan, Uzbekistan. These engagements provided opportunities for open dialogue and fostered a shared understanding of the environmental and biodiversity matters discussed during the CAO process. The engagements also showcased Shamol Zarafshan Energy's proactive measures, including completed actions, planned initiatives, and ongoing on-site conservation efforts.

As a result of these discussions, the parties agreed on a mutually acceptable Action Plan outlining coordinated steps to work collaboratively with each other and with other relevant stakeholders to enhance the conservation of key species present in the Important Bird Area (IBA) and Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) of the Aktau-Tamdy Mountain area.

Following a series of negotiations and consensus building efforts, the parties reached a set of mutually satisfactory solutions and formally signed an agreement on 31 October 2025. The parties agreed to maintain the confidentiality of the agreement's contents in order to respect the privacy of the process, protect commercially sensitive information, and honor the mutual understanding between them. The Agreement sets out eight actions including four to be undertaken by the Shamol Zarafshan Energy Foreign Enterprise LLC.

In accordance with the CAO policy, CAO will monitor the implementation of the agreement including the execution of the Action Plan. The parties agreed that the monitoring process will continue for a period of two years, concluding at the end of December 2027. The parties also agreed to request that the CAO engage the IFC team on the ground to provide technical support and assistance in monitoring and implementation of the agreed actions.

During the signing of the agreement, both parties affirmed their full commitment to implementing the agreement with its Action Plan in a timely manner, while continuing to engage constructively and act in good faith.

31 October 2025