Caspian week Platform for global ideas

3 November 2026 · Beijing

China Overseas Investment Fair (COIF 2026)

Energy security, critical minerals and connectivity between China and the Greater Caspian

Caspian Week Forum Organised by:

Greater Caspian ASSOCIATION

Event Report by Intelligence Partner:

GLOBAL STRATALOGUES



Hosted by:

中国产业海外发展协会
China Overseas Development Association

AT A GLANCE

One afternoon, three corridors of cooperation

3

panel discussions: energy, critical minerals, Belt and Road connectivity

16

speakers, moderators and opening voices from China, Central Asia, the Gulf and Europe

18

economies in the Greater Caspian region, from the Black Sea to Central Asia

$106bn

China–Central Asia goods trade in 2025, a record and up 12% year on year



The Caspian Week Forum ran as a side event of COIF 2026, China's flagship outbound-investment fair, on Tuesday 3 November from 14:00 to 17:30. It brought Chinese policy, finance and industry voices together with investors and operators from the Greater Caspian.

Sources: Conference brochure (COIF 2026); China–Central Asia trade per Xinhua via The Times of Central Asia, 19 Jan 2026.

Five messages from Beijing

1. **Energy security now means storage, not only supply.**
Batteries, and cold-tolerant sodium-ion in particular, make the region's wind, solar and hydro bankable and its grids resilient.

2. **Capital, not resources, is the binding constraint.**
Long-dated, tranched and currency-aware finance is missing. Stable, predictable policy is the signal every lender waits for.

3. **Host countries want value chains, not ore exports.**
Local processing lowers transport costs and earns the social licence that keeps a mine running for decades.

4. **The Middle Corridor's bottleneck is the hand-off, not the track.**
Transfer points on the Caspian, one-way flows and paperwork cost days. Fixing both shores together matters most.

5. **From transit route to economic corridor.**
Infrastructure should follow economic activity. Regional trade, free zones, shared data and climate resilience turn a route into a hub.





China Overseas Development Association (CODA)

中国产业海外发展协会
China Overseas Development Association

2004
Founded 10 Dec 2004; national non-profit registered with the Ministry of Civil Affairs, administered by the NDRC

2009
Co-founded the China Overseas Investment Fair (COIF) with China Development Bank

110+
Countries and regions sending participants to COIF each year

1,000+
Chinese SOEs and private firms that use the COIF platform

WHAT CODA DOES

- Acts as a bridge between government and enterprises on outbound investment under NDRC guidance.
- Runs COIF, investment policy seminars by country, project promotion meetings and training.
- Supports "Going Global" and Belt and Road projects, with strength in power and finance.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR THE CASPIAN

- By co-hosting Caspian Week inside COIF 2026, CODA put the region in front of China's outbound investors.
- COIF has grown from about 800 delegates from 85 countries (2020) to more than 2,200 expected participants (2024).
- CODA is a natural channel for the follow-ups on the Next steps slide, such as project pipelines and an energy fund pilot.



CODA President He Zhenwei at the Caspian Week Forum, 3 Nov 2026

Sources: investmentplattformchina.de CODA profile; China Daily, 13 Aug 2021; Global Times, 27 May 2024; chinaservicesinfo.com, 17 Apr 2020; ciodpa.org.cn/english.

Tuesday 3 November, Room 2A

14:00 — **Opening**
Ambassador Dr David Fernández Puyana, University for Peace (UN Geneva)

14:05 — **Opening remarks**
He Zhenwei (CODA), Murat Seitnepesov (GCA), Dr Claude Béglé

14:20 — **Panel I · Energy**
Energy security over land: pipelines, power and the transition

15:05 — **Panel II · Critical minerals**
Processing, value chains and responsible investment

15:50 — **Panel III · Connectivity**
Scaling the Middle Corridor and new China–Central Asia rail links

16:35 — **Investment showcase**
Greater Caspian regional investment showcase and round-table close







Sources: Conference brochure, COIF 2026 Caspian Week Forum agenda.

Setting the stage



He Zhenwei

President, China Overseas Development Association

Opened for the co-host. CODA organises COIF, China's main platform for outbound investment.



Murat Seitnepesov

President, Greater Caspian Association; Chairman, ICC Tajikistan

Founder of Integral Group, a leading regional exporter and logistics provider of crude, products, fertiliser, sulphur and polymers.



Dr Claude Béglé

Chairman and CEO, Swiss NeWater Holding

Former Chairman of Swiss Post, ex-CEO of DHL Express (Germany, Central Europe, Alps), former Swiss National Councillor.

WHAT THE OPENING ESTABLISHED

- The Greater Caspian as one investable region rather than a set of transit states.
- Momentum on the ground: the president of the host noted that the China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan railway is moving ahead faster than planned.
- Dr Béglé's historical framing of East–West trade, which he returned to in Panel III.

A region of 680 million people



$12.8T

combined GDP (PPP) across 18 economies

680M+

people, and a population that keeps growing

10M km²

of territory from the Black Sea to Central Asia

4.5%

average yearly growth 2016–2025, against 3.1% for the world

8.5×

growth in Middle Corridor container traffic, 2017–2025

1 in 6

barrels of EU crude imports in 2025 came from Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan

Sources: Greater Caspian Association presentation by Murat Seitnepesov at the forum (figures as shown on screen).

Central Asia, east to west along the Silk Road

Tajikistan

~10M people · 93% mountains

- Opened up in the last 2–3 years: booms in real estate, mining and infrastructure; all Dushanbe taxis are electric
- Under-explored critical minerals and rare earths
- About 60% of the region's water starts here; Rogun hydropower at full capacity by 2028 points to data centres and AI, with a UN-backed regional AI centre planned
- Investment protection and double-tax treaties in place

Kyrgyzstan

'The Switzerland of Central Asia'

- Five years of stability after repeated changes of government
- Hydropower, tourism and ski resorts around Issyk-Kul
- The new China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan railway will boost connectivity
- Soviet-era metals and microelectronics base to rebuild

Uzbekistan

~40M people · 'the rising star'

- Ten years of reform with no step back; now 'crowded' with investors
- Diaspora returning; booms in real estate, industry, oil and gas, renewables
- Agriculture and food processing, a natural fit for Chinese equipment makers

Kazakhstan

Long the regional front-runner

- Oil and gas giants developed since the 1990s
- Stable again after the January 2022 unrest
- Legacy oil and gas contract arbitrations make investors cautious; Murat urges amicable settlement
- Mineral blocks now offered in open tenders

Turkmenistan

Murat's home country

- Kept national wealth under state control rather than 'wild privatisation'
- World's fourth-largest natural gas reserves
- More open-minded than many expect, and opening up

Sources: Murat Seitnepesov's presentation at the forum (Otter.ai transcript). Figures are as stated by the speaker.

South Caucasus, neighbours and the case for China



> *Let's focus on these eight countries, not on geopolitics but on developing the economies and investment potential.*
>
> MURAT SEITNEPESOV

SOUTH CAUCASUS

- The Azerbaijan–Armenia conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is over, and a peace agreement is expected.
- Azerbaijan is bringing new technology and innovation to develop the recovered territories.
- Georgia completes the eight-country focus.

AT THE EDGES OF THE REGION

- **Afghanistan:** unexpected stability under one central government. Afghan business voices say investors can now trust the country.
- **Afghanistan–Pakistan:** a border conflict he expects to be resolved soon.
- **Iran:** two rounds of military action closed airspace and twice postponed Caspian Week in Baku.

HIS INVITATION TO CHINESE INVESTORS

- Mining, critical minerals and rare earths
- Hydropower-backed data centres and AI
- Food processing and sustainable agriculture equipment
- Real estate and industrial construction
- Rail-led logistics, starting with the China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan railway
- Young, educated populations: Tajik volunteers studying in China helped run the forum

Sources: Murat Seitnepesov's presentation at the forum (Otter.ai transcript).

PANEL I · ENERGY

Energy security over land

Pipelines, power and the transition between China and the Greater Caspian

Moderator: Oscar Wendel, Global Stratalogues



The panel



Oscar Wendel

Founder and Chairman, Global Stratalogues

Independent forum and think tank convening off-the-record dialogue at Davos, the House of Lords and beyond.



Yang Lei

Vice Dean, Institute of Energy, Peking University

Energy strategy and policy: China's new energy system, storage, hydrogen and zero-carbon industrial parks.



Linar Yakupov

CEO, Naseeh Invest; ex-Head, Tatarstan Investment Development Agency

Riyadh-based investor; investment promotion, PPPs and Islamic finance.



Laila Tang

Partner and Deputy GM, Guangdong MegaRely New Energy Technology

Sodium-ion battery maker and supplier of modular storage systems.

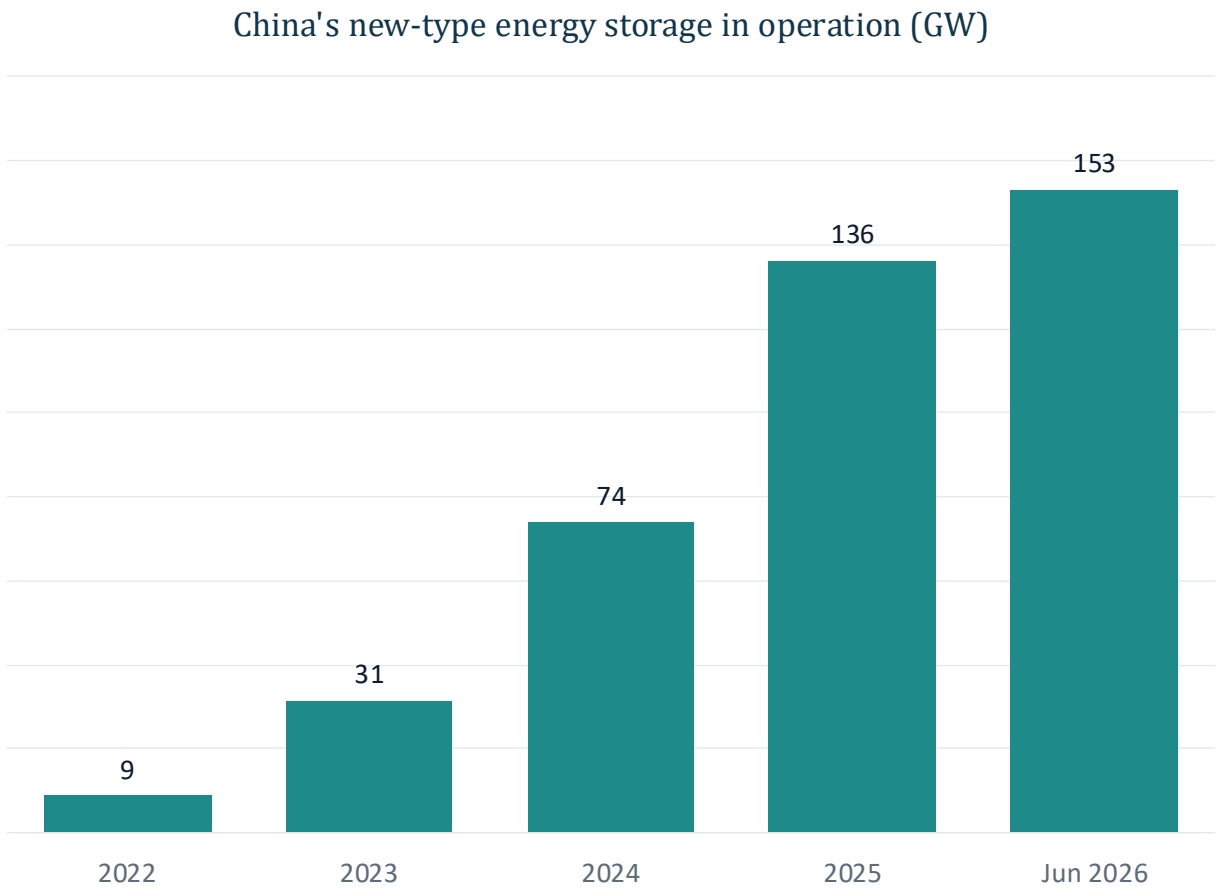


Wu Zhengzhang

Vice Chairman, Zhongjing Group

Ex-State Council Development Research Center (FDI, cross-border M&A), then banking and private equity.

Storage has become a security asset



61% year-on-year growth in China's operating new-type storage to mid-2026 (NEA).

298 GWh overseas storage orders signed by Chinese firms in H1 2026, up 83% (CNESA).

2.4 GW of renewables and storage agreed by Azerbaijan with Chinese firms in April 2025, incl. a 2 GW Caspian offshore wind MoU.

Sources: NEA via SMM news.metal.com (30 Jul 2026); NEA year-end data for 2022–2024; sxcoal (end-2025); CNESA via ESS News (28 Aug 2026); Enerdata (25 Apr 2025).

From projects to synergy



Yang Lei, Institute of Energy, Peking University

40% of China's gas is imported

70% of China's oil is imported

2,000 GW of wind and solar installed in China: about half the world's capacity, but about a quarter of China's generation

- **Security still starts with partners.** Greater Caspian countries are important oil and gas partners for China, in trade and in investment.
- **Transition is the theme of the 15th Five-Year Plan.** Solar is now the cheapest generation anywhere, thanks to Chinese manufacturing.
- **A shared opening.** Caspian countries rich in sun and wind can use the same technology, with storage alongside.
- **Alignment comes next.** Projects and trade already work. His institute's initiative, released for the APEC energy ministers, asks for shared policies, standards and vision. Without them lenders cannot price credit.

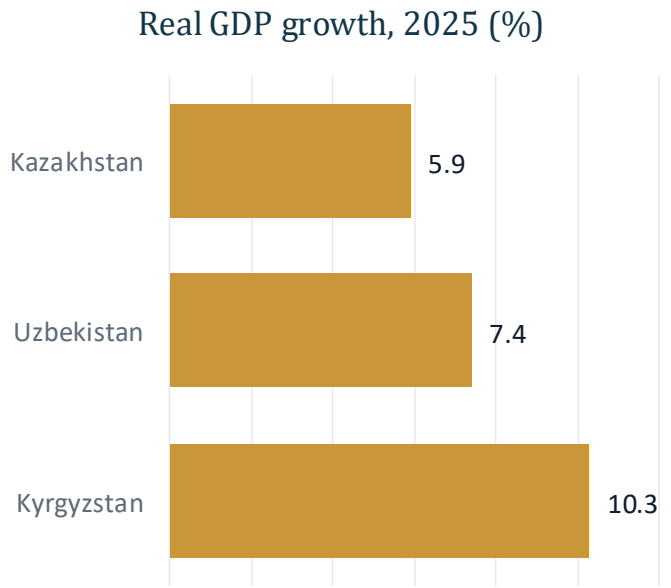
Source: Panel transcript (machine transcription, not checked against the audio). Figures are as stated by the speaker.

Central Asia's investment moment



Linar Yakupov, CEO, Naseeh Invest

- **Not one energy story.** Turkmenistan has supplied gas to China for decades by pipeline. Mountainous Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are 'latecomers' whose hydropower is only now bankable.
- **Gulf capital is arriving.** He cited Saudi investment in Uzbekistan of over $20bn, mostly in energy and often built with Chinese partners.
- **Islamic finance mobilises domestic savings.** Kazakhstan's 2009 Islamic banking law, the AIFC and Tashkent IFC under English common law, and Uzbekistan's first Islamic bank.
- **PPP is now replicable.** Uzbekistan's early PPP deals are being copied across the region.
- **Beyond cheap power.** Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are legislating for AI and courting hyperscale data centres to add value to power exports.



Saudi–Uzbek joint project portfolio exceeds $30bn; ACWA Power alone had invested about $15bn by mid-2025.

Sources: EDB estimates via Euronews (30 Jan 2026); Interfax; Arab News (11 Jun 2025)

Sodium-ion: the stabiliser for cold, remote grids



Laila Tang, MegaRely

	Sodium-ion	Lithium-ion (LFP)
Raw material	Abundant, low and falling cost	Scarce, volatile price
Cold climate	>80% capacity at −40°C (speaker)	Sharp capacity loss below about −20°C
Safety	Easier thermal management, lower fire risk	Needs tighter thermal control
Cost	Cell parity with LFP expected by end-2026 (CATL)	Benchmark today
Energy density	About 175 Wh/kg, lower	Higher; better for long-range EVs
Chemistry	Sodium ions, hard-carbon anode	Lithium ions, graphite anode
Cycle life	Varies by design; often on par with LFP in newer cells	LFP is very long-lived; NMC generally less
Maturity	Emerging, now commercialising	Highly mature

> *Sodium battery is like a stabiliser and regulator of the renewables.*
>
> LAILA TANG

Use cases she highlighted: remote mining camps, off-grid communities, two-wheelers, grid last-mile regulation and back-up for data centres, which today rely on diesel that runs short in long winters.

Sources: Panel transcript; CATL via CarNewsChina (9 Jun 2026); ChinaEVHome (12 May 2026). Cold-climate and cost claims are the speaker's company view.

Capital is the missing link



Wu Zhengzhang, Zhongjing Group

WENT FIRST

Industrial capital

CNPC and CNOOC oil and gas positions in Kazakhstan; Datang in wind and power.

FOLLOWED

Financial institutions

China Development Bank, the export bank and Construction Bank have followed with policy loans.

MISSING

Private equity

Apart from the Silk Road Fund, market-based RMB and US-dollar funds are essentially absent.

WHY PE STAYS AWAY

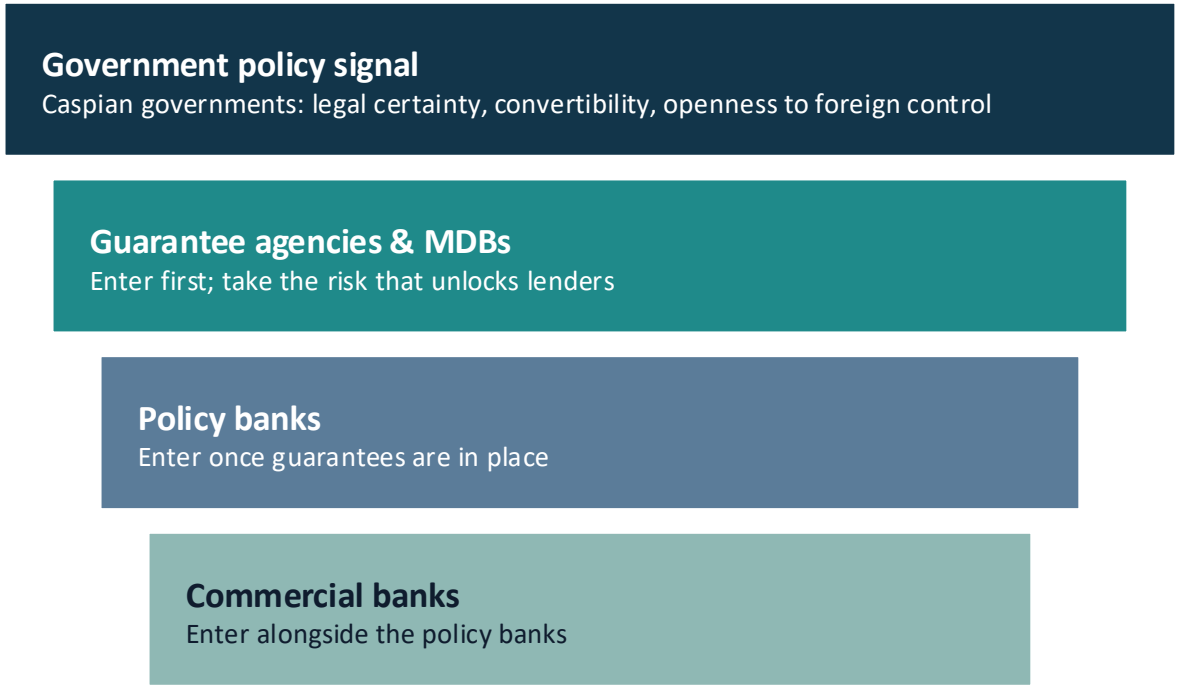
Maturity mismatch
A PE fund runs for about six years; energy projects take 10+ years to build.

Convertibility
Returns must come home in RMB or USD, but local currencies do not convert freely.

Risk perception
Unclear national policy, mineral laws and JV rules that bar foreign control. His warning: capital has no preferences, but it does feel fear.

"The Caspian region does not lack resources, buyers, investors or capital. What is missing is a stable, predictable policy environment and flexible currency conversion."

A pilot Caspian Energy Fund in 12 months



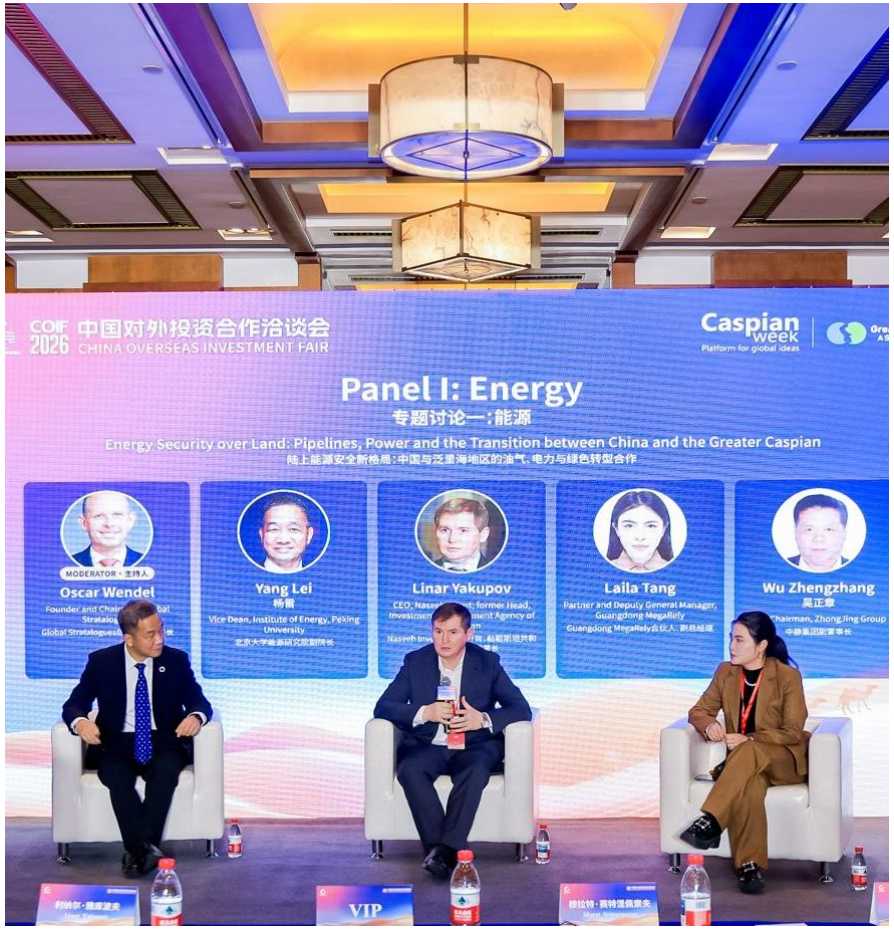
Split by risk: guarantors take the first layer

1. One pilot: a gas field or a cross-border power line
2. Finance it first, until it has cash flow
3. Package into a financial product
4. Scale the model

China's precedents: opening to FDI through law, an industry catalogue and national treatment; and letting Newbridge (later TPG) take control of Shenzhen Development Bank in 2004. By 2010 the bank's assets had grown from 210bn to 800bn, Wu said.

Sources: Mandarin transcript (machine translation). SDB: TPG invested about $300–350m and sold its 17% controlling stake to Ping An for about $1.68bn (WSJ, Jun 2009); the speaker's $2.4bn figure could not be verified.

What it means for investors



1 **Security is broader.**
Not only supply, but storage, flexibility and resilience. In cold, long-distance grids, storage is the precondition for renewables at scale.

2 **Policy, finance and innovation travel together.**
Technology is ready; bankability depends on rules, currency and tenor. Islamic finance and PPPs widen the investor base.

3 **China moves from supplier to partner.**
Technology, standards and capital packaged together, with Gulf co-investors increasingly in the mix.

Watch-points Fuel shortages and maritime disruption raised the value of overland energy in 2026, but speakers warned against building for short-lived price spikes. Projects that pair renewables, storage and an anchor load (mines, data centres) look most bankable.

PANEL II · CRITICAL MINERALS

Beyond raw materials

Processing, value chains and responsible investment in Greater Caspian critical minerals

Moderator:
Oscar Wendel, Global Stratalogues



The panel



Oscar Wendel

Founder and Chairman, Global Stratalogues

Moderated Panels I and II.



Zhai Mingguo

Academician, Chinese Academy of Sciences; Chief Research Professor, IGG-CAS

TWAS member; proposed and guides the NSFC major research plan on critical metals.



Gavin Yang

Senior Partner, Beijing Dacheng Law Offices

Geologist turned lawyer: 7 years at CNNC, 28 years in practice; adviser to the Ministry of Natural Resources.



Konstantin Belotelkin

Director of Development and Investments, Overbest Group

Gold-mining group built in Russia since 2024, now scouting the Greater Caspian.

NOTE

Prof. Wu Sanmang, Dean of the School of Economics and Management at China University of Geosciences (Beijing), was listed in the programme but does not appear on the stage backdrop or in the recordings.

Why the minerals conversation matters now



~40%

of world uranium came from Kazakhstan in 2025 (25,839 tU)

$4.2bn

Uzbekistan critical-minerals plan, 120 projects 2026–2030: tungsten, molybdenum, rhenium, selenium, tellurium

6

priority areas in the 2025 Astana Declaration of the China–Central Asia Summit, green minerals among them

15 of 34

EU critical raw materials are mined in the Greater Caspian region (GCA)

Sources: World Nuclear Association (Oct 2026); Caspian Post on Uzbekistan's 2026–2030 plan; China Daily / Xinhua (18 Jun 2025); GCA presentation.

Where two great metallogenic belts meet



Academician Zhai Mingguo, CAS

Central Asian Orogenic Belt
N. China → Mongolia → Kazakhstan → Urals

Greater Caspian

Tethyan domain
Tibet → Arabian–Eurasian collision zone → Alps

THREE MINERAL GROUPS

- Orogenic copper–gold, 'Asia's golden belt', plus rare metals he called 'space minerals' (lithium, tungsten, tin)
- Sandstone-hosted uranium, with very large reserves in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan
- South Caspian evaporites: brine lithium and potash

- **Potential far exceeds activity.** Interest is high, but exploration and investment are limited, so the region is quieter than Africa or Brazil. His main reason: too little discussion of common interests.
- **Timelines run longer abroad.** Exploration to investment takes 3–5 years in China, and longer where research bases, environmental conditions and national demands differ.
- **Science first.** Joint geoscience and better technology, such as assessing CO_2-based alternatives to sulphuric-acid in-situ leaching of uranium. ESG, he said, is also a scientific question.
- **Equal partnership.** Consultation as equals and mutual gain. Appeals to friendship, history and culture will not get there, he said.

Balancing investor and host is not a zero-sum game



Gavin Yang, Dacheng Law Offices

Chinese investor needs
Secure bulk supply, profit, access to international markets

Host country needs
Jobs, tax revenue, protected environment, long-term development

Meeting point: process near the mine. Gold ore runs a few to a dozen grams per tonne. Shipping concentrate or metal cuts transport costs and wins local support, where local power, transport and labour allow.

DEAL DISCIPLINE

1 **Technical:** is it a good deposit?
2 **Financial:** profitable under local conditions?
3 **Legal:** a localised structure, judged by host-country conditions

COMPLIANCE MAP

- **Environment:** no mine has zero impact, open pits most of all
- **Safety:** blasting, haulage, roads
- **Labour:** host law and ILO norms; local hiring against bringing Chinese staff
- **Capital and equipment:** flows in and out, imports
- **Chain:** offtake, supply security and confidentiality

At least two jurisdictions plus frameworks such as the SCO. A mine runs five to eight years at least, often more than ten.

An explorer's view of the region



Konstantin Belotelkin (right) speaking in Panel II

OPPORTUNITY

- Copper, lead, zinc, tungsten and rare metals
- Large areas still under-explored
- Rising economies, young populations, governments open to dialogue
- Early access and value-chain building for Chinese partners

FRICTION

- Logistics and energy infrastructure gaps
- A weak drilling and subcontractor market makes early stages slow and costly
- Governments importing best practice from Canada and elsewhere

Muruntau, Uzbekistan One of the world's largest gold mines: reserves of about 2,020 t, output 61 t in 2014. The speaker put resources near 4,500 t and output near 60 t a year.

Why China has the edge here: proximity, connected economies, easier control of finance and easier mobilisation of staff than in more distant regions such as Africa.

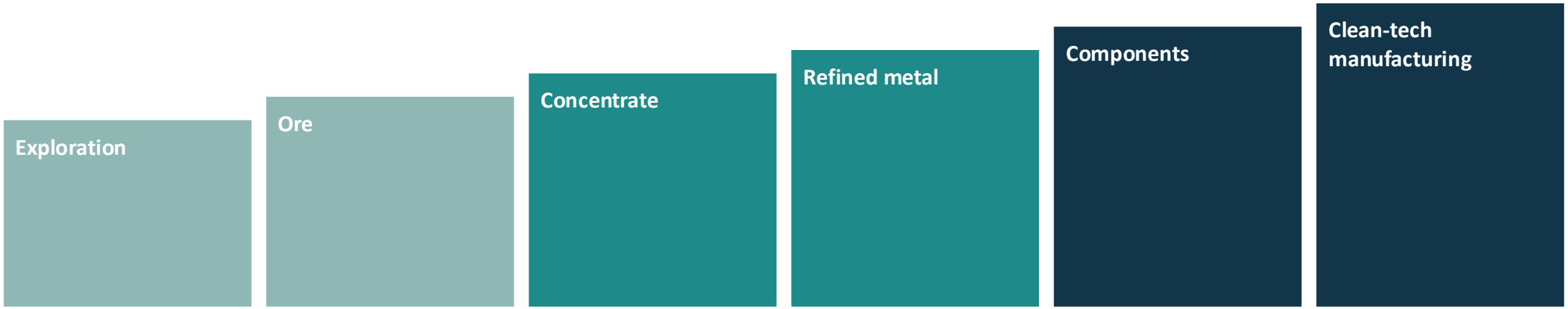
Sources: Panel transcript; Wikipedia, 'Muruntau mine' (reserves, 2014 output).

Climbing the value ladder together

OSCAR WENDEL'S CLOSE: THREE MESSAGES

- Science is critical, and so are finance and investment.
- Timelines are long, so partnerships must be long-term and mutually beneficial.
- Deal structures must be well thought out from the outset.

Our read The winning model pairs Chinese processing know-how and capital with host-country ownership of the middle steps (concentrate and metal), joint geoscience, and ESG designed in from day one rather than bolted on.



Value added and local jobs rise with each step →

PANEL III ·
BELT AND ROAD CONNECTIVITY

From transit route to trade hub

Scaling the Middle Corridor and new China–Central Asia rail links

Moderator: Franz J. Marty, Swiss Institute for Global Affairs



The panel



Franz J. Marty

Business Advisor, Swiss Institute for Global Affairs (SIGA)

Bishkek-based; ten years in Eurasia; has published on the Middle Corridor.



Dr Claude Béglé

Chairman and CEO, Swiss NeWater Holding

Ex-Chairman Swiss Post; ex-CEO DHL Express Germany, Central Europe and Alps.



Eugene Seah

Director, PAKA Group; ex-COO, Baku International Sea Trade Port

About ten years running Baku port; earlier Jurong Port and PSA in Singapore.



Li Jinying

President, Planning and Research Institute, CFLP

Led the New Western Land–Sea Corridor Development Index; MOFCOM and ADB logistics expert.

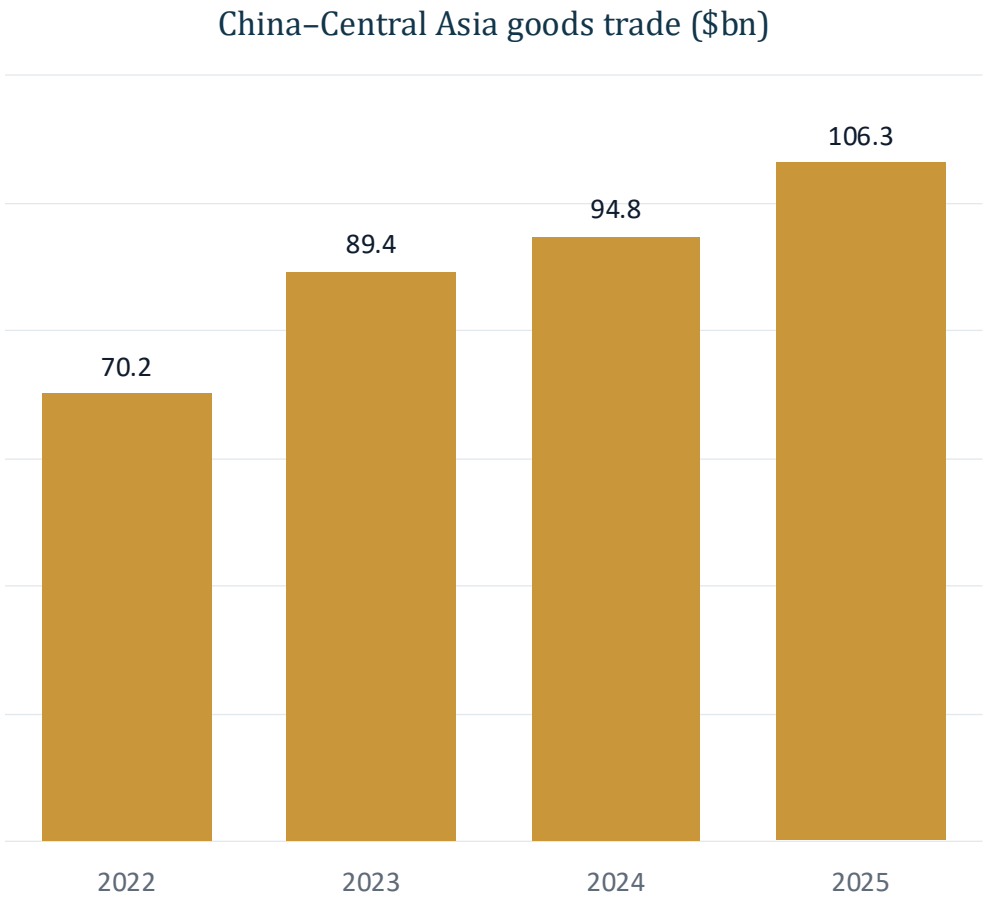


Anzheng Wei

Senior Investment Officer, AIIB Public Sector Clients

Transport and urban infrastructure; at AIIB since 2016, formerly China–Africa Development Fund.

Trade is growing faster than the route



76,900 TEU

moved on the Trans-Caspian route in 2025, up 36%; 400 container trains ran westbound against 33 eastbound

500+ km

China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan railway, 304.84 km in Kyrgyzstan: 27 tunnels and 43 bridges under way; first tunnel holed through Sep 2026

$71.7bn

Central Asian transport pipeline across 114 projects, $42.8bn of it on the TRACECA / Middle Corridor axis (EDB)

$25.1bn

for 16 World Bank priority projects on the Trans-Caspian corridor; operations, not steel, is the main constraint

Sources: China customs via Xinhua / Times of Central Asia; TITR Association via bm.ge (17 Feb 2026); CGTN (5 Sep 2026); EDB via Trend (17 Aug 2026); World Bank via Trend (28 Sep 2026).

The problem is the hand-off, not the track

Middle Corridor transfer points named by Eugene Seah (red: change of gauge or mode)



11 vs 16

days Xi'an–Baku: fastest train in January against the average; the gap is lost at transfer points

4 : 1

westbound to eastbound boxes: about 43,000 TEU west against 11,000 east in the first eight months

4×

times a container is handled between ship and wagon at today's ports



"A transit hub earns a transit fee. A trade hub earns from production along the route, and keeps earning."

– Eugene Seah

FIXES HE PROPOSED

- Dedicated berths where one crane lifts ship-to-wagon, on both shores
- A 'super ferry' carrying two 60-wagon block trains
- Empty-container depots beside the berth
- Free zones at Alat and Aktau that create cargo both ways

Build for resilience, not just efficiency



Dr Claude Béglé

Think in every direction
China to Central Asia for local consumption, Central Asia to Europe, west to east, and north–south to the sea for a landlocked region.

Petrochemicals as cargo
War-driven prices made Central Asian urea, polymers and sulphur competitive, and China needs sulphur. Do not build for a 2–3 year spike.

Infrastructure is more than rail
Power lines, fibre, solar, wind and sodium batteries also move value across borders.

Alternatives over the lowest cost
Single streamlined routes collapse, as the Gulf showed. Compatible alternatives keep investments useful for 10–20 years.

Common, stable rules
ASEAN shares rules but not implementation. Central Asia needs stringent yet accessible rules that do not change.

> *The infrastructure is like a skeleton, something dead. We need to give life to it. Start with the economy, and only then put the infrastructure.*
>
> DR CLAUDE BÉGLÉ

Data and development finance



Li Jinying
CFLP Planning and Research Institute

- Corridor efficiency is set by the weakest link, not any single node.
- China–Europe Railway Express: over 20,000 trains in 2025 and 140,000 in total by October 2026, carrying $560bn of goods to 237 cities in 26 European countries.
- Its high-quality development index reached 140.5 in Sep 2026 (June 2020 = 100).
- **Tools CFLP already runs:** an index of the New Western Land–Sea Corridor since 2019, price indices for three routes and a new supply-chain pressure index.
- **Offer:** build a Middle Corridor Index with the GCA, covering cost, transit time, reliability and resilience.



Anzheng Wei
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

14
corridor-related projects

$5.3bn
invested to date

$1bn+
a year planned to 2030–31

- The debate has moved from a transport corridor to an economic corridor: local growth, jobs and integration.
- Four pillars: critical infrastructure; enabling assets (dry ports, logistics platforms, industrial parks, feeders); SOE capacity and reform; cross-government coordination.

Sources: Panel transcript, machine-translated from Mandarin (Li; figures as she stated them); panel transcript (Wei). Wei noted about half of AIIB's financing in the region counts as climate finance.

The Caspian is falling, and ports must adapt



>2 m — fall in Caspian sea level between 2006 and 2024

4.5 m — average depth at Aktau, against 6.5–7 m needed for full operations; dredging to 7.7 m began in 2025

9–18 m — further fall projected by 2100 in published studies

Panel view: build climate-resilient roads, rail and ports (AIIB), and modular, adjustable berths that can follow the water (Seah), drawing on Chinese engineering.

Sources: Astana Times (10 Jan 2026); APA (24 Apr 2025); Ports Europe. Mr Seah's own sea-level figures were garbled in the transcript and are not quoted.

If you could remove one bottleneck…

> *Decide projects by what they do for local economies, not only east–west transit. That is what makes the corridor resilient to uncertain demand.*

ANZHENG WEI · AIIB



> *Coordination across countries, agencies and transport modes. A shared Middle Corridor index is the way in: it shows every party where the delays are.*

LI JINYING · CFLP



> *The Caspian transfer at Aktau and Alat: one crane from ship to train. It must be built on both shores, or the whole corridor stays slow.*

EUGENE SEAH · PAKA GROUP



> *Paperwork, country to country. But the real answer: treat the corridor as a vein for economic development, not as infrastructure.*

DR CLAUDE BÉGLÉ



Paraphrased from the transcript.

SYNTHESIS

Five threads ran through all three panels

Theme	Energy	Critical minerals	Connectivity
Value addition at home	Data centres and AI on cheap clean power	Process near the mine: concentrate and metal	Free zones turn transit into trade
Capital and risk	PE missing; tranched Caspian Energy Fund	Long mine lives need patient capital	AIIB $1bn+ a year; $25bn priority list
Rules and stability	Policy signals unlock MDBs and banks	Compliance across two or more legal systems	Harmonised, stable cross-border rules
Resilience	Storage for cold, remote grids	ESG and community from day one	Alternatives, both shores, falling sea
China's role	Technology partner, not just buyer	Science, processing and finance	Lessons from China–Europe rail and indices

NEXT STEPS

Six practical moves for the next 12 months

1 Pilot a Caspian Energy Fund

One gas or cross-border grid project; guarantee agencies first, then banks, split by risk.

Policy banks, MDBs, AIIB

2 Storage-plus-renewables pilots

Sodium-ion with solar or wind at remote mines and cold-climate grids, building on Azerbaijan's 2.4 GW pipeline.

Battery makers, utilities

3 Mine-to-metal compacts

Agree local processing, jobs and ESG at the outset; pair with joint geoscience programmes.

Miners, host governments, CAS

4 A Middle Corridor Index

Shared data on cost, time, reliability and resilience, modelled on China's corridor indices.

CFLP and GCA

5 Twin-shore transfer upgrade

Ship-to-wagon berths and empty-box depots at Aktau/Kuryk and Alat together.

Ports, railways, IFIs

6 Stable rules and convertibility

Harmonised transit paperwork and FX tools that let long-term investors repatriate returns.

Governments, central banks

GALLERY

Conversations around the room











On stage


Greater Caspian ASSOCIATION
THE GREATER CASPIAN REGION
Eighteen economies
680M+
10M km²
8.5×
1 in 6
15 of 34


COIF 2026
中国对外投资合作洽谈会
CHINA OVERSEAS INVESTMENT FAIR




MODERATOR
J. Marty
Affairs (SIGA)
研究所 (SIGA) 商业顾问


Panel III: Belt and Road Connectivity

GALLERY

A full house at COIF 2026











GALLERY

Speakers and guests at the table



He Zhenwei

President, CODA



Dr Claude Béglé

Swiss NeWater Holding



Franz J. Marty

SIGA, Panel III moderator



Eugene Seah

PAKA Group



Li Jinying

CFLP Planning and Research Institute



Wang Yaxiong

Guest

The forum in session

















WHO CONVENED

The organisers and the platform

ORGANISED BY:

Greater Caspian ASSOCIATION

Founded in 2019 under Murat Seitnepesov, who has chaired the Caspian Week Forum since 2017. Caspian Week has met alongside the WEF in Davos and in Dubai, and frames the region as 18 economies from the Black Sea to Central Asia.

HOST

中国产业海外发展协会
China Overseas Development Association

National industry association for Chinese outbound investment and the organiser of the China Overseas Investment Fair (COIF). President He Zhenwei gave opening remarks.

INTELLIGENCE PARTNER

GLOBAL STRATALOGUES

Independent forum and think tank launched in 2024. Organises roundtables at venues including the UK Parliament's House of Lords, French Ministry of Economy, alongside WEF in Davos and the Qatar Economic Forum.

The organisers and the platform



COIF 2026 awards ceremony



Registration team at the sign-in desk



COIF 2026 main plenary



Delegates queue at the COIF 2026 sign-in desk

Data sources

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Thank you

To the Greater Caspian Association, the China Overseas Development Association, our speakers and every delegate who made Caspian Week Beijing 2026 a working conversation.