

TAJIKISTAN

BASIC FACTS ABOUT PEI TAJIKISTAN

Timescale: Phase I (May 2010–2012); Phase II (2014-2017).

Partners: Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT), Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, Ministry of Finance, Ecological Commission of Parliament, Committee on Environmental Protection, Committee for Women's and Family Affairs, Committee on Local Development, Statistical Agency, regional and district authorities, civil society, and UNDP Tajikistan.

Focus: Enhance capacity of the Government and other stakeholders to integrate poverty-environment (P-E) linkages and sustainable pro-poor development objectives into planning and budgeting at regional and national level planning processes.

MAINSTREAMING CONTEXT

In Tajikistan almost half of the population lives below the national poverty line; agriculture is the main employer with 60% of the total workforce directly employed and a further 20% dependent on the sector. Land degradation is a key factor leading to low agricultural productivity and low economic returns and incomes.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Review and evaluate existing P-E indicators and develop a set of indicators for national and subnational planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes, with the National Statistical Agency.

Build capacity of national and district authorities on environmental sustainability, and improve participation of the Ecological Commission of the Parliament in the budgeting processes.

Provide guidance and training on how to integrate P-E linkages in planning processes and mechanisms at different levels and institutionalize P-E as a component in the National Institute of Civil Servants Training.

Integrate environmental sustainability in the elaboration and implementation of the District Development Plans (DDPs); Demonstrating benefits of environmentally sustainable socio-economic and micro lending activities defined in DDP by providing 'green' loans, and raising awareness on environmentally sustainable agricultural practices and extension.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The PEI Phase I was successful in supporting the mainstreaming of P-E and sustainability agenda as a cross-cutting topic in the third mid-term development strategy, Living Standards Improvement Strategy (LSIS) of Tajikistan for 2013-2015, as well as the inclusion of a separate section on environmental protection.

Enhanced knowledge on the economic cost of land degradation associated with foregone production on degraded and unused agricultural land in terms of GDP and rural households' unrealized benefits.

For the first time, representatives from the country's Committee for Environmental Protection were given a place at the table to inform the regional economic plans. As a result of the work, the Sughd regional development plan and all fourteen district plans address P-E issues. Almost 60% of the plans have fully

integrated P-E recommendations for relevant sectors and 40% have a separate chapter on environment.

Thanks to the inclusion of poverty-environment tools in the national civil servant training curriculum government staff in other provinces planners around the country can now learn from the experiences in the Sughd region via a handbook that details in practical terms how to bring P-E into the planning process.

Environment and climate sustainability criteria were integrated into the design and application of the district Trust Funds/Rural Growth Programmes financial mechanism for DDP's implementation. Local communities in Tajikistan were supported to identify 'green' products and services, which were then evaluated by representatives from the Committee for Environmental Protection. Today over 65 enterprises are supported by the regional trust fund mechanism (funded by DFID) that answer both environmental and poverty reduction criteria. For example, through supporting microloan foundations that include P-E criteria for microlending and the provision that at least 50% of the loans be targeted towards women-led initiatives. For the first time, women are taking an active role in local economic activity rather than relying exclusively on remittances from abroad.

Demonstrating improved capacity, the MEDT independently replicated the P-E mainstreaming approach in a further six districts and four municipalities. The national Statistical Agency has also now incorporated the indicators developed at the regional level into its database in order to continually track and monitor the new objectives.

LESSONS LEARNED

A lack of systematic analysis of the allocation, disbursement and execution of budget to the environmental sector remains the key challenge and limited experience of P-E mainstreaming requires capacity-building efforts at all levels of government, including the legislature.

Lack of interaction within the government both vertically – from district to regional and national levels – and horizontally across ministries, regional and district departments, requires increased and sustained efforts to communicate P-E issues.

The process of working alongside communities proved an important means of engaging and building the capacity of local people to understand environmental considerations of different business ideas.

There is a need to strengthen exchange of best practices, experiences and technologies on designing and implementing policies integrating P-E issues in a more systematic way by facilitating partnerships at the regional level.

WAY FORWARD

Gender dimensions of the P-E nexus and gender-disaggregated data collection should be promoted for better strategic programming and advocating equal access to development resources for women and men.

Contribute to Tajikistan's efforts to implement Rio+20 recommendations regarding sustainable development, in particular support to the MEDT and other stakeholders in the implementation of the Mid-Term Development Strategy 2013-2015.