

Mid Term Evaluation

Final Report

Support to the Land Reform in Northern Tajikistan through Local Extension and Support Services

Chkalowsk / Tajikistan

PROJECT NUMBER

AS 1247 TJK 1039-04

Project duration: 08.07.2005-07.07.2007

Project Holder

Charity Public Organization CPO-JOVID

Oplantschuk 1 a
Chkalowsk / Sughd Region, Tajikistan

Project Donor



German Agro Action (GAA) / Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (DWHH)

Friedrich-Ebert-Straße 1
D- 53113 Bonn, Germany
Tel.: (+49) (0) 228-2288-0
Fax: (+49) (0) 228-2207-10
<http://www.welthungerhilfe.de>



European Commission

EuropeAid Co-operation Office
B-1049 Brussels

Carried out for:

**German Agro Action /
Deutsche Welthungerhilfe**

By:

Dirk G. Zerhusen
D-37085 Goettingen, Germany

November 2006

1 Summary of Main Results and Recommendations

The project "*Support to the land reform in the North Tajikistan through local extension and support services*" (TJK 1039) aims at supporting land reform in Northern Tajikistan by facilitating rural economical growth and the process of political transformation.

CPO-JOVID, as a national partner NGO of DWHH/GAA, provides assistance to 400 newly emerging private farmers and 1,500 households with kitchen gardens through the establishment of a consultation and training service, strengthening community-based forms of cooperation, and improving the production of food and the income situation of the target group.

The project, financially supported by the TACIS Programme of the European Commission (46,8%), is located in the Chkalowsk, Sughd Province in northern Tajikistan.

This evaluation of the project was conducted from August 21 to September 9th, 2006. The DWHH/GAA (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe/German Agro Action) commissioned this evaluation to Mr. DIRK G. ZERHUSEN.

1.1 Project holder analysis

DWHH/GAA has been registered in Tajikistan since September 1994 and has implemented a series of projects in Northern Tajikistan focussed on rural and agricultural development. The major donor for the DWHH/GAA activities in Tajikistan is the European Community (EC). All DWHH/GAA projects are operated through the DWHH/GAA-Regional-Office in Dushanbe, which has professional staff headed by the Regional-Coordinator.

The *Charity Public Organization JOVID (CPO-JOVID)* as a national partner NGO of DWHH/GAA implements this project and continues to manage the seed revolving fund established in the previous EU funded project¹. The personnel employed by CPO-JOVID continue to broaden their experience in the field of agricultural extension, consultation and organisation management.

CPO-JOVID, registered since August 2002, has already gained a good reputation with the Target Group (TG) in the Districts of Ganchi and of Shahrستان. Other donor agencies (UNDP, GTZ, ACTED) cooperate with CPO-JOVID as one of the most important national NGOs in Tajikistan.

1.2 Analysis of situation and Target Group (TG)

The project is active within the geographical location of North Tajikistan in the two Districts of Shahrستان and Ganchi.

The following criteria outline the TG:

Dekhan Farmers

These are private farmers and their associations who obtained land titles in the project region for agriculture farming. Some are organized in different associations. They have the potential to produce agricultural products for the local market and comprise about 400 households.

Small scale farmers

¹ Consultations in agriculture, seed-multiplication, micro finances, and organizational building-up (TJK-1025)

These are farmers or households who have received small plots of about 0.2 to 0.3 hectares (kitchen gardens) from the so called “presidential plots” in nineties years. These groups are more subsidiary orientated and comprise about 1,500 households.

In addition the project started to conduct monitoring of Land Reform fulfilment with respect to gender since about 30% of the households are headed by women who are uninformed regarding their rights.

1.3 Analysis and assessment of project preparation

The CPO-JOVID submitted a two -year proposal to GAA at the end of 2004. The project supports the land reform process in Tajikistan and the strengthening of the agricultural and legal know-how of the 400 newly emerging private farmers and 1.600 households with kitchen gardens. This project is active in the district in Ganchi and Shahristan and follows the project of TJK-1025 (micro credits, seed-multiplication) which was concluded in May 2005.

During the project planning the gender situation was not considered adequately. Women and female-headed households numbering around 30% are an important part of the TG. However, the project made some amendments to the project action plan, including a monitoring of Land Reform fulfilment from the perspective of gender perspective.

1.4 Analysis and assessment of planning /project planning matrix

The planning for the project personal is assessed to be suitable. The staffs are trained to undertake the project goals.

A Project Planning Matrix (PPM), which will serve as general reference for a project Monitoring & Evaluation system (M&E) has been formulated, and an operation plan has been established. Weekly staff meetings are conducted on the basis of a work plan. The Monitoring Department of CPO-JOVID frequently analyses the situation in the TG region and provides the project with valuable information. However, a time line monitoring system to verify the progress of the income of the TG was not properly implemented in the beginning, hence a statement about the Overall Objectives of the project--" *The income of targeted private farmers has increased by 5 %* "--could not be made.

Recommendation 1.4: Analysis and assessment of planning /project planning matrix

1	Before project commencement, CPO-JOVID should establish an appropriate monitoring system to regularly assess progress of projects according to the PPM.
2	The M+E Department of CPO-JOVID should establish questionnaires for the TG in cooperation with other departments to ensure the collection of useful information.

1.5 Analysis and assessment of project implementation

The project facilitates rural economical growth and supports the increase of food production, aiming at an improved income for the TG through information campaigns on land reform and agricultural promotion.

1.5.1 Agricultural extension and consultation service

Because of the absence of a functioning agricultural extension service in the project region, the project established an Information Consulting Centre (ICC) in each district of the target

region. These institutions are very valuable for the TG and have an important positive impact on the TG. Governmental authorities (Hukumat) provided the project with office premises. The project renovated these facilities and furnished the offices with essential equipment. Each ICC has two to three rooms, including a conference room (for seminars and training) for about 30 people.

Every ICC provides the TG with consultation services and numerous informational materials (e.g. land reform, agriculture, horticulture, market analysis) to all interested farmers.

In each ICC, two consultants have been employed, each receiving training in computer skills, agronomy, marketing, and business accountancy. Unfortunately, the training on land reform was conducted only 12 months after the project commenced, and in the beginning the ICC consultants could not advise the TG on issues of Land reform..

To ensure the long-term provision of sustainable ICC consultancy services to the TG, the project should inform the TG that information and consulting services will in future be strictly on basis of payment.

Recommendation 1.5.2: Agricultural extension and consultation service

1	The project should strongly inform the TG that ICC services will in future be strictly on basis of payment.
---	---

1.5.2 Demonstration plots and Innovative Farms

The project established two demonstration plots in the district of Ganchi and Shahrstan to visually demonstrate appropriate agricultural varieties through scientific experiment and to familiarize the farmers with suitable cultivation technology.

Despite the extreme dry weather conditions of this year, in both regions the crops in the Demo Plots can still be irrigated, since the plots are only placed in favourable areas within this target region. However, at the present time more than 85% of the TG farmers² have reported that they do not have sufficient water to irrigate their cultivations. Therefore, the Demo Plots, especially in the Ganchi District, do not really reflect the growing conditions which an average farmer can find on his land.

In both Demo Plots the project started to set up different agriculture trials to discover the most appropriate varieties for farming application. However, because of the different growing conditions (as mentioned before) the project can reach false conclusions. For instance, a more stress tolerant variety can perform under drought conditions much better than varieties under more favourable growing conditions (irrigated). Some farmers have already realized this and in June 2006 project monitoring revealed that farmers are more interested in wheat varieties that perform best on dry land conditions.

In case CPO-JOVID wants to maintain Demo Plots only to conduct scientific research on plant varieties, it should pay serious attention to trials that correspond with scientific research standards.

² Interview of TG (n=17) during MAPP-Survey in Ganchi (30/08/2006)

The project supports *Innovative Farms* to introduce improved farming methods to selected TG-farmers, and it supports local *Initiative Groups* through the distribution of seeds, fertilizers and new management implementation. These farms (*Innovative Farms, Initiative Groups*) reflect farmers' common cultivation conditions much better and can better encourage the TG in new cultivation techniques in comparison to the Demo plots. Therefore the project should promote crop diversification within the TG on the basis of practical field trials.

The TG is not aware of other important aspects of agriculture farming. Soil protection and conservation, as well as fodder production in context of livestock, are fundamental elements of appropriate sustainable agriculture farming. The project should find a more holistic approach to imparting a more coherent knowledge of agricultural farming.

Recommendation 1.5.3: Demonstration plots and Innovative Farms

1	Establish Innovative Farms with greater emphasis on common growing conditions.
2	The project should impart a more coherent knowledge of agricultural and include other integral elements of appropriate, sustainable agricultural farming.
3	In case to conduct scientific research trials on Demo Plots, set up trials that correspond to scientific research standards.
4	Recommend plant varieties which promise equal performance under more unfavourable growing conditions (scarcity of water for irrigation).

1.5.3 Information material and training on agricultural methods

The project used different media (newspaper, TV, radio, flyer, and handouts) to distribute all important information to the TG. The greatest impact has been material distributed during the different project information campaigns (training, seminar and workshop) and through the ICCs. The TG consists of Tajik and Uzbek speaking people. To ensure a greater efficiency of training, the project should consider conducting TG training in the required languages (Tajik, Uzbek).

Recommendation 1.5.3: Information material and training on agricultural methods

1	Conduct TG trainings in the required languages (Tajik, Uzbek).
---	--

1.5.4 Sustainable systems for seed multiplication, marketing and organisation of farmers

The activities on sustainable systems for seed multiplication, marketing and organisation of farmers will start in the second project phase.

1.6 Impact with regard of development

The new land owners (Dekhan Farm Holders) and small farmers within the project region demonstrably increased their standard of living.

Some gender aspects have been included and very successfully integrated into the project activities after the project commenced. Most of the TG's are engaged in broadening their skills in agriculture cultivation techniques and marketing.

The unfavourable living conditions (drought, lack of irrigation water, soil degradation, access to markets) and the low accessibility of agricultural inputs (certified seeds, fertilizer) are very much limiting the agricultural sector.

Since 2003, CPO-JOVID has been cooperating with the people in the project area and gained a good reputation among the political and civil societies. Within the project area there is a high demand for legal advice and advocacy, training and experience sharing, and for organisational support.

1.7 Project management

A Monitoring & Evaluation system was implemented and corresponds to the annual plan of operation. The weekly staff meetings serve as a platform for internal monitoring and evaluation of project activities. Each department elaborates its own work plan on a bi-monthly basis. The CPO-JOVID General-Manager keeps track of the fulfilment of these plans and checks the department reports.

Despite the good performance of CPO-JOVID during recent years, the organisation still needs support and expertise in organisation development. The CPO-JOVID General-Manager is quite overloaded with work and the management capacity within the organisation and his departments has potential for improvement. A permanent GDS-Specialist successfully supports CPO-JOVID in the field of organisation development.

Unfortunately, the evaluation maintains that this finding does not give a reliable measure of the effect of the program on the improvement of income. This is because a time line income monitoring system for the households was neither established during the period of the earlier programs (TJK-1025) nor at the beginning of this program. Moreover it is quite impossible to attribute the increase of income solely to project intervention. Also, other impacts (continuous provision of credits by CPO-JOVID, lasting effects due to TJK-1025) can have significant influences for this development.

Recommendation 1.7: Project management

1	Conduct training-need assessment within the organisation of CPO-JOVID
2	The capacity building of CPO-JOVID can be improved through appropriate training programs for the staff.
3	Support CPO-JOVID in the organisation development and extend the advisory activity of one GDS-Specialist.

1.8 General conclusions

As regards to the quantitative targets, the project is assessed to be satisfactory in respect to the main project components (except Result 5; a special DWHH/GAA-financed measure which has not started yet: "*Sustainable systems for seed multiplication, marketing and organisation of farmers are identified*").

The project should find a more holistic approach to imparting a more coherent knowledge of agricultural farming. Appropriate agriculture cultivation techniques (e.g. erosion and soil protection) as well as livestock and fodder production are also essential elements of agricultural sustainability and should also be part of all training programmes of agricultural projects.

The Overall Objective of this project (The income of targeted private farmers has increased by 5 %) could not be assessed since an adequate monitoring system was not implemented .
