

Cooperation Fund for the Water Sector

Pilot Demonstration Activity

Activity Title: Creating an institutional framework for improving the water systems management in rural areas of Tajikistan

Proposer (Name, Div/Dept): COOPERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE – COOPI (Tajikistan branch)

Request Date: March 2nd, 2007

Country (DMC): Tajikistan **Region:** Central Asia

Activity Proposed Start Date: May 1st, 2007

Activity End Date: August 31st, 2007

Cost Estimate: 45.000 USD

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Short Description:

1. Background and Rational:

The management of Drinking Water Supply Systems (DWSS) in Tajikistan still lacks a unified legal framework, and several management schemes have been experimented locally. In some districts, a district-wide agency has been established by the local government; in others, several parallel agencies act at a smaller scale (jamoat¹ level) for the same purpose; still in others, multiple agencies (local or governmental) co-exist, with no clear hierarchical structure.

In most cases, such agencies perform poorly and they ascribe their failure to the lack of financial resources, in general, and in particular, to the discontinuity and unreliability of revenues from the water consumers. However, when water consumers are questioned on this issue, they declare their willingness to pay regularly provided that the service is good and reliable, but they have no trust in the management capacity of the governmental agencies. Therefore a vicious cycle is established, in which the service is poor, the consumers do not pay for it, and the service quality declines steadily.

In addition, no incentive exists for the DWSS managing agency, the service provider, to improve its performance, since there is no mechanism for sending feedbacks from the users side.

In order to reverse the above mentioned vicious cycle and to provide people with a good water supply service, **a new DWSS management scheme is needed**, in which the trust of the water users ensures the financial stability of the DWSS managing agency, which then back-supports the continuation of consumers' trust through a good quality service. This new DWSS management scheme should include

¹ The jamoat is the local administrative unit below the district government.

separation of the “service provider” and “quality controller” roles, and participation of the water users, two elements that are not present in the existing management schemes because of the traditional “top-down” approach.

As indicated in several studies, these two factors contribute significantly to improve the quality of service, to increase the “value for the beneficiary to cost” ratio, to assure financial sustainability and to promote social acceptance of the service fee.

2. Objectives:

The Pilot and Demonstration Activity (PDA) objective is to create a new institutional scheme in which Water Consumer Protection Committees (WCPC) are created at village level and are recognized by the existing governmental DWSS managing agency as a valuable resource and respectable counterpart in the design, expansion and maintenance of the water systems. The WCPC will be an independent body including about 5-7 members² selected by the village community which will assign them a small contribution in cash or in kind as recognition of the commitment for the community. The WCPC will be created in three villages of Jomi district, where a DWSS managing agency was created by the local government in 2005, but which did not take into account water users’ participation and therefore, the users have had no influence over the performance of such agency. At present, the DWSS managing agency reports only to the Hukumat³ but under the new scheme, it would report also to the WCPC which can, in turn, advocate to the Hukumat in case of inadequate performance of the agency.

Once established, the WCPC’s role will be as follows:

- Highlight to the DWSS managing agency the real needs of the community and prioritize them
- Draw the attention of the DWSS managing agency to the priority issues of the community
- Participate in the design of the solution for identified problems
- Negotiate on a stronger base the community contribution in the implementation of the solution identified
- Verify the performance of the DWSS managing agency, reporting to a higher level (i.e. local government) in case of decreased or poor quality of the service
- Suggest social-sensitive mechanisms for establishing the water fees
- Promote within the community a positive attitude toward the agency in order to maintain a constant and predictable revenue cash flow.

3. Scope and location of Work / Description of Activities:

WCPCs will be established through a participatory approach (village meetings) in the villages of Zaria Vostok, Chikalov and Komsomol (Ittifogh jamoat, Jomi district, Tajikistan), where the existing DWSSs are not performing and the governmental DWSS managing agency has no resources to rehabilitate them. Then, members of the WCPC will be trained by experts selected by COOPI on DWSS management, negotiation, leadership and other issues that may help them in their role as counterpart of the managing agency.

There will be 2 cycles of 3 seminars each. The 3 seminars of the first cycle will cover the following topics:

1. Water System management: technical aspects and quality issues.
2. Financial management of Water Utility: budgeting, general accounting, financial planning.
3. Advocacy and negotiations techniques: legal framework on water user rights, practices on leadership, community empowerment, conflict resolution.

Once the WCPCs have become confident of their role, **a periodical round-table with the agency will be established**, with the goal to identify urgent needs and solutions in the water sector. Both parties will be involved in the implementation of the identified solution. Lastly, the WCPCs will be in charge of validating the quality of the service provided by the DWSS managing agency, ensuring at the same time adequate cost recovery through collection of water fees.

The first 2 round tables with the agency will be an occasion for the WCPC to practice the acquired skills.

Then, the second cycle of seminars will review the above topics to improve the WCPC capacity especially in the areas where they showed most difficulties. Indicatively, the seminars will be held in the local Jamoat hall.

² The WCPC will include one member each 50-60 families possibly located in different village neighborhoods.

³ The district local authority

COOPI will facilitate all the above mentioned activities: COOPI will initiate the WCPCs creation process, will support the dialogue among the parties, and will help them in the implementation of the suggested infrastructural activities through the completion of small rehabilitation works and the provision of needed equipments and supplies. Our assessment revealed that the DWSS of the targeted villages is not performing due to some major equipment failure (main pipe leakages, burned pumps, etc.) whose rehabilitation is beyond the financial capacity of the managing agency. Already we received requests from the population for supporting the rehabilitation of such water systems at the same time as a new managing process is established. Lastly, based on the periodical reports on the performance of the DWSS managing agency produced by the WCPCs, COOPI will evaluate the efficacy of the scheme established in providing a reliable and durable water supply service.

4. Implementation Schedule, Institutional Management Arrangements, and Proponent Qualifications:

The PDA will be implemented during 4 months, from May to August 2007. Please see table below

The Hukumat of Jomi will be involved in all activities, and in particular in the official recognition of the role of the WCPCs.

COOPI can count on the experience gained after almost seven years of work in Tajikistan in the water sector, both on the infrastructural and on the institutional sides. During the implementation of the five projects realized up to now, COOPI has always been concerned about the sustainability of the rehabilitated DWSS and therefore has extensively been involved in the processes needed to make the management of such systems robust and reliable.

Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Village meetings																		
2. Creation of WCPCs																		
3. Training of WCPCs																		
4. Round-table with Agency																		
5. Implementation of actions agreed between WCPCs and the Agency																		
6. Preparation of final publication																		
7. Water systems rehabilitation work																		

5. Expected Results (outputs/outcomes):

Expected outputs:

- WCPC formed in 3 villages of Jomi district
- Working meetings between WCPC and the DWSS management agency
- Rehabilitation works in target villages undertaken within the timeframe of the PDA
- An agreed Plan of Action for improvement of water supply services and its timetable
- Tariff structure enhanced to cover full O&M costs and eventually to slowly move towards full cost recovery.

Expected outcomes:

- Improved performance of the DWSS managing agencies in terms of cost recovery, water availability, water quality
- Tariff at full O&M costs recovery implemented and eventual gradual move towards full cost recovery initiated
- Progressive enlargement of the scope of services provided
- Increased financial stability
- Transparency in the decision-making process
- Enhanced confidence of the population in dialoguing with the institutions
- As a result of system rehabilitation, the following outcomes shall have been achieved: (i) water supply service resumed at 5 hours supply daily, (ii) increased pressure from 0 to 2 BAR, (iii)

increased volume of water sales from 0 to 16 cubic meters per hour, and (iv) increased number of connections (additional taps installed).

6. Measurable Performance Indicators:

Two groups of indicators will be set up in order to evaluate the commitment of both WCPCs and the DWSS managing agency in the PDA.

The first group of indicators will target the WCPCs pro-activeness and will include:

- % of members present at each periodical internal meeting and at the round-table with the agency
- # of proposed initiatives to be considered by the agency to improve the water supply service
- % of population involved in the implementation of the designed solutions for water problems
- % of water fees paid on the expected total revenues

The second group of indicators will measure the responsiveness of the DWSS managing agency to the proposals and feedbacks of the WCPC, and will include:

- % of representatives of the agency present at each periodical round-table with the WCPC
- # of actions undertaken in response to WCPC proposals
- % of variation in the quality of the service (this indicator will actually be broken up into several quality indicators, to be agreed among the WCPC and the agency, such as quantity of water distributed daily, or # of hours of water available, or # of days required to have a leakage repaired, etc.).

7. Stakeholders Participation:

The proposed DWSS management scheme puts in contact on a peer basis the two main stakeholder involved, the "top" governmental agency and the "bottom" consumers community. Also the Humukat and other governmental and civil society groups could participate in the periodical round-table, and their contributions will be solicited by the two main actors according to the agenda of the meetings.

8. Scope for Replication/Use in Other DMCs:

The proposed scheme could be replicated virtually in all villages of Tajikistan. In prospective, with the increasing size of the services provided by the governmental agencies and their networking, also the WCPCs could create more stable links among themselves, up to the point of merging into a district-wide or even nation-wide organization, able to advocate for water users needs at a higher level and with stronger impact on the country water policy.

9. Cost Estimate:

Inputs / Expenditure category	Total Costs (in US\$)
1. Civil Works: general workers, supervision of constructions, water pumps (3 units), electric cable (500 m), pipes (150 m, diam. 100 mm and 80 mm), welding machine (1 unit), generator (1 unit),	15.000
2. Training, workshops, seminars, public campaigns: community mobilizers, venue rental, travel, food for participants, didactic material, publications, per diem for participants	14.000
3. Specialists Services: water engineer, technical and management training specialist, advocacy and awareness campaigns training specialist	7.000
4. Project Management: travel costs and per diem, stationery, rentals	5.000
5. Contingencies (0-10% of total estimated grant fund):	4.000
Total PDA grant financed	45.000