



CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND COOPERATION
CECI TAJIKISTAN

FACILITATING AGRICULTURAL REFORM AND MARKETING
(FARMS) PROJECT

FARMS project, Dehkan Farms and Irrigation Water Resources¹

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CECI IN brief:

CECI's experience comes from more than 45 years of development co-operation in Africa and the Americas, 20 years in Asia and 5 years in the Balkans. CECI has extensive experience in community development in Southeast and South Asia with an emphasis on improved and sustainable livelihoods for rural and mountainous communities.

CECI's strategy is basically of income generation and livelihood improvement for the poor through high value cash crops, savings and credit and micro-enterprise promotion, environmental planning and natural resource management, irrigation and infrastructure improvement, community-based preventative health initiatives and addressing women's practical and strategic needs. All of these activities involve community-based planning and review to ensure that beneficiaries are actively involved in decision-making that affects their lives.

CECI has been working in the cotton sector since 1984. In Ivory Coast, it has supported the development of a large-scale national level umbrella federation of co-operatives within the framework of the World Bank/ Government of Ivory Coast-promoted global cotton sector liberalization-privatization program. It has also completed several other international assignments related to the cotton sector in Nigeria, Chad, and very recently in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Eastern Africa.

In Tajikistan CECI has its activities from January 2005, and, has been supporting the local governments of Sugd province in facilitating agriculture reform and marketing through the FARMS project.

It is noteworthy that the government of Tajikistan has identified reform in the agricultural sector as a key strategy for poverty reduction. Providing assistance to the rural population in understanding and capitalising on the agricultural reform process currently underway is essential to ensuring that Tajikistan's transition towards a market economy provides sustainable livelihood opportunities for the majority of the population and promotes social cohesion, equity, peace and stability.

The FARMS project focuses on improvement of economic performance of newly emerging farm enterprises and their voluntary associations and supports rural women

¹ Paper presented at Advanced Research Workshop on "Socio-Economic Stability and Water Productivity: Implications of Food and Water Security in the Central Asian Region:

and men in understanding and exercising their legal rights and obligations as independent farmers. It fills in a programming gap that is recognized by most donors and development agencies working in Tajikistan.

The project's long term impact is to sustain broad based economic growth and improved livelihoods for rural households, with equitable benefits to male and female household members, by improving economic performance from cotton and other non-cotton-high value crop. The primary beneficiaries of the project are members/ owners of independent Dehkan farms of varied sizes and status.

The FARMS project believes that improvements in performance and governance will be achieved through:

- improving the management capacity of independent Dehkan farms (business planning and financial management, input procurement and marketing);
- adopting market-responsive, higher efficiency and gender-sensitive technologies of cotton and other high value crops;
- improving efficiency of the organisations of shared services for extension, irrigation, procurement of inputs, equipment, and marketing through voluntary Dehkan farms associations;
- Enhancing gender-sensitive and participatory management, transparency, legal awareness and accountability within the governance structure of Dehkan Farms and their voluntary associations and;
- Increasing the advocacy and negotiation skills of Dehkan farm members and leaders.

The economic results are sought to be achieved through capacity building interventions to improve production and marketing of both cotton and other fresh high value crops, mostly fresh vegetable products. It is to mention here that women represent more than half of the labour force employed in agriculture, especially in cotton. So the FARMS project focuses on increasing productivity while reducing work burden for women, improving profitability of Dehkan farms, and ensuring transparent distribution of benefits to all members.

Based on multiyear experience in development co-operation in Africa, the Americas, Asia and in the Balkans, CECI transfers its extensive experience in community economic development through market-responsive and small-farm enterprise development, to local partners in Tajikistan. Presently the FARMS project has been partnering with 20 local NGOs to implement the project activities.

The Sugd Oblast targeted by the FARMS project is one of the two major cotton centres of the country (Khatlon being the other). Sugd grows approximately 88 000 ha of irrigated cotton every year, representing 157 000 tons or roughly 25% of the national production.

According to the district survey results, 60% of the Dehkan Farms found in the Oblast are growing cotton. These cotton growing Dehkan Farms are scattered in the seven districts but mostly concentrated (in a proportion of 80%) in two of them: Matscha and Zafarobod.

Major cotton-growing project target districts in Sugd, 2007

Districts	Population '000	Irrigated land (ha)	Total Cotton area (ha)	Cotton area / Irrigated land (%)	Gross Cotton harvest (t/ha)	Cotton productivity (t/ha)
Zafarabad	53.8	26,603	15,390	58	23,793	1.55
Matscha	92.8	24,760	14,992	61	28,722	1.92
Spitamen	105.5	14,030	7,249	52	11,438	1.58
Kanibadam	169.6	11,340	6,977	62	13,355	1.91
J. Rasulov	150.0	15,870	9,366	59	17,230	1.84
Total	571,7	92,603	53,974		94,538	

Source: Synthesis of District and Oblast data

Irrigation management:

Effectiveness of irrigation water management can be (at least partly) assessed based on the actual timing of irrigation intervals and the criteria that DFs use to determine when to irrigate.

Three possibilities were considered for assessing irrigation intervals:

- 1) Water availability i.e., indicating a lack of control and effectiveness by the DF;
- 2) The use of regular intervals notwithstanding the status of the plant; and
- 3) Based on actual crop requirements.

CECI had conducted farm survey. The survey data suggests that more than 32% of DFs irrigate their crop depending on water availability which indicates that they have little if no control over irrigation intervals. Survey also had identified that the condition of the irrigation infrastructure is little poor. Comparisons between the types of DFs (i.e. Collective, family and individual) suggest that irrigation management is slightly better in individual DFs.

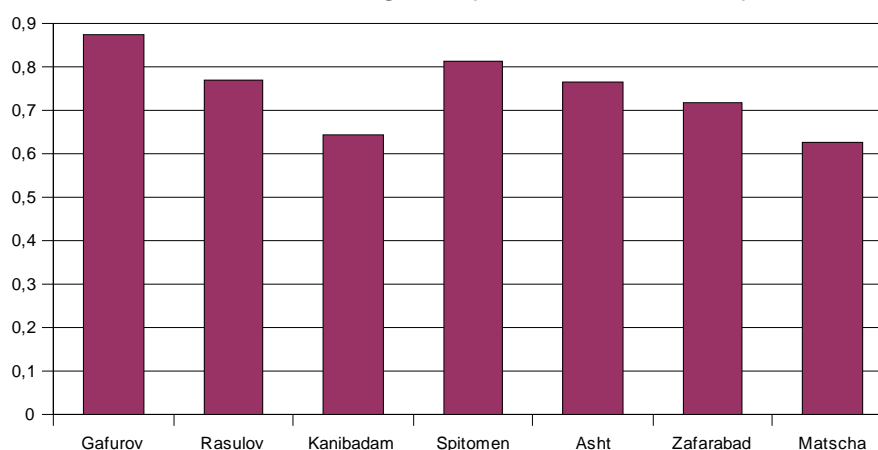
In the survey, the effectiveness of irrigation has been assessed using three sets of indicators:

- Delays in water delivery;
- Proportion of irrigation canals that are in poor condition;
- Proportion of fields that have sufficient irrigation throughout the season.

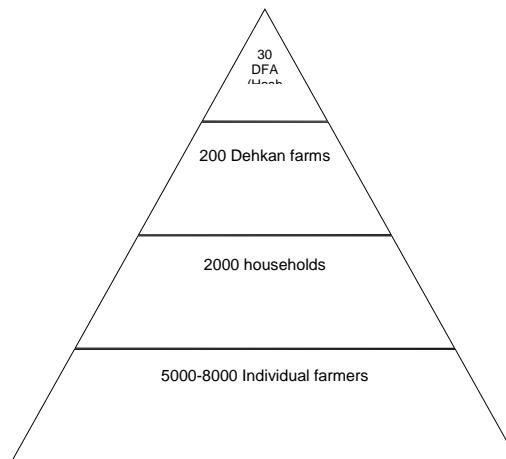
Survey conducted in the cotton growing areas reveals that on average, 70% of DFs are facing regular or occasional delays in the delivery of irrigation water, the following table breaks down water delivery problems according to the geographical distribution of farms and the farm type.

Irrigation water delivery:

% of DFs facing delays in water delivery



PROJECT'S PLANNED OUTREACH FOR 2008-2009



Project activities for improving Irrigation management in DFs:

The overall activity is to create and strengthen Water Users' Associations (WUA) so that farmers can operate, manage, and make the investment decision needed to maintain and improve irrigation management in their farms. The major program objective is developing the capacity of WUAs to manage local water delivery systems, using sound business practices, and democratic principles.

Also project focuses on establishment and strengthening of farmers' irrigation management that receives and pays for water by volume. For this project is supporting Dehkan farms with installation of water measurement devises and train irrigation specialist from among Dehkan farms members. Project officials are training the farmers in the rational use of water and promote new management technology.

Challenges:

- Lack of irrigation water resources for cotton as well as for other crops.
- Engaging local government authorities to practice the principles of democratic, transparent and accountable procedures in working with the dehkan farms, specifically in participatory decision making in using the water resources.
- Building trust between local Government officials and local communities in the planning and implementation of local development initiative.
- Increased representation and participation of women in all the activities of the Dehkan farms.
- Lack of adequate resources on part of local authorities to provide support to dehkan farms.

Conclusion:

All the sectors need to join hands in improving management of water resources and thereby allocating water for irrigation sufficiently when necessary. We also need to practice the concept of good governance.

“Good governance means a broad array of practices which maximize the common or public good. It emphasizes the following elements within both civil society and government: transparency, effectiveness, openness, responsiveness and accountability; the rule of law and acceptance of diversity and pluralism and practices that benefit poor and excluded groups” (Manor 1999).

Geographical coverage

