



UNDP-UNEP POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE
PNUD-PNUE Initiative Pauvreté-Environnement
PNUD-PNUMA Iniciativa Pobreza-Medio Ambiente



Tajikistan

Basic facts of the PEI in Tajikistan

- In response to the request of the Government of Tajikistan PEI Phase I was started in May 2010 following the official signature of the project document by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Republic of Tajikistan (MEDT) and UN Resident Coordinator Tajikistan.
- During its inception workshop in September 2010 key national and subnational partners and other stakeholders agreed on the next key priorities and actions.
- The main objective of the PEI Tajikistan is to enhance capacity of government and other national and subnational stakeholders to integrate poverty-environment linkages into sustainable, pro-poor development planning and budgeting.
- Key entry points for poverty-environment mainstreaming are the region and district development planning and budgeting process in the *Sughd oblast* (province) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) monitoring and evaluation framework.
- PEI has been integrated into the UNDP Tajikistan umbrella multi-focus Communities Programme. This programme brings together projects and specialists in the areas of poverty reduction, environment, disaster management and democratic governance, among others.
- One of the key issues PEI aims to address in support to mainstreaming is land degradation, especially in relation to the fact that agriculture is the key sector in terms of income generation and employment.
- PEI Tajikistan is executed jointly by the MEDT and UNDP Tajikistan. The PEI country team is formed by a national project manager, an international technical adviser and an administrative assistant and is coordinated by the joint UNDP-UNEPPEI regional team, composed of both environment and poverty reduction specialists.
- Other key PEI partners include the Committee on Environment Protection under the Government of Tajikistan, Ministry of Agriculture, State Agency for Statistics, Civil Servants Training Institute under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Sughd regional and district authorities.
- In addition, PEI works with the Sughd Regional Working group on development, composed of regional authorities, civil society and the private sector. PEI also works with 14 district-level working groups on the elaboration of District Development Programmes (DDP). These district working groups include authorities, civil society and the private sector— covering the whole Sughd region as a pilot.
- In the Sughd region, PEI closely collaborates with UNDP, GIZ and DFID's Rural Growth Programme promoting sustainable economic rural development via DDPs elaboration and implementation.
- The PEI Phase 1 (2010–2012) project budget amounts to USD 900,000.

The context of poverty-environment mainstreaming in Tajikistan

- Tajikistan is the poorest country in Central Asia, with 53 per cent of the population living below the poverty line and 17 per cent living in absolute poverty (PRS 3). More than 70 per cent of the

population lives in rural areas. While poverty reduction in rural areas is proceeding at a faster pace than in urban areas, poverty continues to be a predominantly rural phenomenon. Development assistance efforts, economic stabilization in key sectors, and massive flow of cash from remittances of labour migrants partly contribute to relieve the extreme poverty situation.

- The main environmental problems in Tajikistan include unsustainable agriculture practices leading to land degradation, lack of reliable energy supply, high vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change, and water and food insecurity.
- While only 7 per cent of the territory is considered to be suitable for economic land use, about two-thirds of Tajikistan's population lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture for their livelihoods. The agriculture sector accounted for more than one-third of the overall economic growth between 1998 and 2004, and it provides 24 per cent of GDP, 66 per cent of employment, 26 per cent of exports, and 39 per cent of tax revenues. However, agricultural productivity is decreasing due to the poor agricultural practices and services, environmental degradation and outdated equipment.
- Other key poverty–environment issues are energy supply problems and vulnerability to natural disasters. Over 1 million people in Tajikistan, primarily in rural areas, have little or no access to an adequate energy supply, particularly during the winter. The absence of a reliable electricity supply has forced large parts of the rural population to turn increasingly to the burning of conventional biomass and fossil fuels. The country suffers on average nearly 500 disasters per year. It is estimated that environmental damages are responsible for an economic cost of 4.8 per cent of annual GDP, primarily affecting the poor. In addition, Tajikistan is one of the climate change "hot spots" in the wider Eastern Europe and CIS region.
- At the national level, Tajikistan's principal strategic document, the National Development Strategy 2007–2015 (NDS) focuses on addressing the MDGs and defines the country priorities as achieving sustainable economic growth, expanding the public's access to basic social services and reducing poverty. The country has recently adopted the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2010–2012 (PRS 3). Both documents call for: increasing institutional capacity to promote environmental sustainability; preventing and coping with natural disasters; sustainable use of natural resources; and managing biodiversity and ecosystems. Both strategies already identify the promotion of environmental sustainability as one of the country's development priorities, but weak implementation capacities have thus far hampered serious progress.
- While Tajikistan has an advanced legislative framework for environmental protection in place, compliance is, however, unsatisfactory due to inadequate implementation mechanisms, lack of financial resources, and insufficient interagency coordination.
- At the subnational level, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade is leading the process of elaborating District Development Programmes based on development priorities and measures identified for the next four years. UNDP provides support to the Ministry in the framework of the Rural Growth Programme, jointly implemented by UNDP and GIZ. The overall aim is to institutionalize subnational planning and to improve coordination with the key country development strategies mentioned above.
- This process of elaborating district development programmes, together with the on-going capacity development for better PRS monitoring and evaluation, provide great opportunities (i.e., entry points) for poverty–environment mainstreaming.

Main activities

- Conducting an economic study to present - in monetary and non-monetary terms - the value and benefits of sustainable land management for overall economic development, income generation and poverty reduction

- Developing and implementing a communications strategy to build awareness of country stakeholders on poverty-environment concept, objectives, activities and results
- Reviewing and evaluating existing poverty-environment indicators and developing a set of adequate indicators for national and subnational planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation processes, in cooperation with the National Statistical Agency (GosKomStat)
- Based on the above, improving capacity of key stakeholders in applying poverty-environment indicators in PRS monitoring, implementation and evaluation. This will be done in coordination with the UNDP project “Improvement of the National Development Strategy/PRS implementation, management and its monitoring and evaluation and support to effective national aid coordination and investment promotion”
- Developing guidance and training packages to build the capacity of the planners to integrate poverty-environment linkages in Tajikistan’s planning processes and mechanisms at different levels
- Providing technical assistance to district authorities and other stakeholders in integrating poverty-environment linkages in the Sughd region planning processes. This includes 14 district development programmes and related implementation measures
- Identifying environmental sustainability criteria to be applied by the district development Trust Funds (to be established by the UNDP–GIZ-DFID Rural Growth Programme) and by the Micro-Loan Foundations. These provide the financial mechanisms to support implementation of the district development programmes.

What has been achieved to date?

Information and Knowledge Base for Poverty-Environment Mainstreaming Developed

- **The thematic focus of the economic study identified:** Considering the national context and magnitude of the problem, as reflected in the PRS 3, it has been agreed that agricultural land degradation and its impact on economic growth will be the focus of such study.
- **Initial review of the poverty-environment indicators used in the country planning completed:** The existing poverty-environment indicators being used by GosKomStat, and their effectiveness, have been reviewed. Measurable indicators for which data can be collected at District and *Jamoat* (municipality) levels to facilitate evidence-based decision-making have been proposed in the Poverty-Environment Mainstreaming section of the methodology for district development planning. Discussion on the feasibility and mechanism of refining the existing and introducing new poverty-environment indicators under the PRS monitoring framework has also taken place with the PRS 3 monitoring team at MEDT.

Poverty-Environment Linkages Integrated in District Development Programmes

- **The Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP), the main country environmental authority, has been included in the multi-stakeholder and inter-ministerial national Steering Committee of the UNDP Communities Programme (established seven years ago), and into the regional Steering Committee of the Rural Growth Programme:** Since both steering committees present the key platform for UNDP and government cooperation at national and subnational levels, this can be considered the first PEI result in terms of strengthening the role of CEP in pro-poor socio-economic development planning. **PEI and the UNDP-GIZ-DFID Rural Growth Programme have elaborated and continue to provide support to the joint action plan and coordination mechanism for the 14 districts’ development planning processes.**

- **Guidance on poverty-environment mainstreaming fully integrated in the draft of the methodology for District Development planning:** The original methodology of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) did not refer to environmental sustainability at all. In response to this, PEI elaborated the guidance on integrating poverty–environment in district development programmes. The guidance became an integral part of the district planning methodology of the MEDT and will be approved in June 2011.
- **Training handbook on poverty-environment mainstreaming has been elaborated and applied** in January 2011 to train national- and district-level authorities, planners and other stakeholders in addressing the poverty-environment nexus in district development plans. Some 145 copies of the handbook were distributed on national and subnational levels. The handbook and the guidance above will be revised after lessons learned from their pilot application in the 14 selected district planning processes.

Lessons learned

- In view of the lack of systematic analysis of the allocation, disbursement and execution of the budget to the environmental sector it is a key task of the PEI to define the best approach to mainstream poverty-environment into budgeting from the beginning of the programme.
- Low capacity in poverty-environment mainstreaming requires capacity building efforts at all levels of government.
- Lack of interaction between government departments at different levels requires intense efforts on communication of poverty-environment linkages. This includes vertically – from district to regional and national levels– and horizontally – across ministries, regional and district departments related to poverty-environment issues.
- Advocate PEI with the Ministry of Finance through the Ministry of Economic Development. The on-going collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development as the main PEI partner is expected to facilitate the buy-in of the Ministry of Finance.

Way forward

- Continued focus on capacity building at the national, regional and district levels, through elaboration of general poverty-environment mainstreaming guidance and implementation of related capacity building programme for national and local stakeholders.
- In line with sustainability of the PEI interventions, the training on how to plan for sustainable local development will be included as one of the modules of the Civil Servants Training Institute under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan curriculum.
- At national level, poverty-environment linkages will be included in the development of the PRS monitoring and evaluation system, and potentially in the new PRS.
- Elaborate the PEI communications strategy, focusing on raising awareness on the importance of poverty-environment linkages and PEI achievements throughout the country.
- Support the integration of poverty–environment issues in the revision of the Sughd Region Development Strategy (2010–2015).
- Economic analysis to provide evidence base on poverty-environment linkages. Main findings will be used to advocate for poverty-environment mainstreaming.