Republic of Tajikistan: Building Capacity for Climate Resilience

In the landlocked central Asian country of Tajikistan, Abt Associates is managing Building Capacity for Climate Resilience, a project funded by the Asian Development Bank to introduce and demonstrate ways to integrate climate risk and resilience into core development planning and implementation. This country-led project is raising the Tajik people’s awareness of and capacity to analyze climate variability and climate change and impacts on key economic sectors, including agriculture, water resources, transportation, health and hydropower.

Project Background

Building awareness and capacity to reduce and manage climate related risks and impacts

Tajikistan is 93% mountainous, which severely limits its arable and livable land. This topography, coupled with the country’s strong reliance on agriculture and hydropower (25% of GDP and 98% of total energy production, respectively) make it highly vulnerable to climate change. Extreme weather events already cause $600 million in damage annually, equaling 4.8% of GDP. People throughout Tajikistan, especially in rural areas that are home to 70% of the population, are relatively unfamiliar with the concept of climate change or how to adapt to climate impacts. This is particularly true for women, who generally bear greater responsibilities for agricultural and family management, especially as men migrate for jobs in Russia and Kazakhstan.

Building Capacity for Climate Resilience is part of the multi-donor supported Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR), which under the global Climate Investment Fund seeks to equip vulnerable countries with information and tools to prepare for climate change.

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Key Activities

Establish a climate modeling facility and curricula
To build local capacity to accurately predict and adapt to climate variability and change, the project is helping establish a state-of-the-art climate modeling facility in Tajikistan’s capital, Dushanbe. Once trained, personnel will project climate change impacts on sensitive sectors such as agriculture, water, energy, health, and transportation. Abt is also helping integrate climate science modules—including climate modeling—into higher educational curricula, with potential application for lower grade levels.

Develop national and local adaptation plans
To mainstream considerations related to climate risk and resilience into national and local government planning, Abt is helping Tajikistan develop a national adaptation plan and identify the country’s most vulnerable districts. The project will then support each priority district in developing local adaptation plans—funded by a small grant facility—piloting innovative options to meet present needs, sharing lessons learned, and scaling up successful efforts and approaches. Interventions could include sustainable home gardens, solar-powered water pumps, drip irrigation in drought-prone areas, soil and stone-faced embankments along hillsides, check dams, and micro-trenches in flood-prone areas. Abt will help disseminate information about adaptation options to vulnerable populations in these districts through farmer field schools and plot demonstrations that showcase innovative approaches.

Establish knowledge management systems
Tajikistan’s communities recognize the effects of a changing climate, but lack access to climate information and services to help them adapt to these changes. To address this need, Abt is working in partnership with government agencies, industry associations, nongovernmental organizations and community representatives to pioneer new systems and mechanisms to disseminate climate information, such as extension outposts in priority districts and campaigns leveraging mass media and mobile phones. Surveys in January 2015 and again in December 2016 will assess how well these initiatives are working to raise climate change awareness and build capacity for adaptation.

Form monitoring and evaluation standards
Tajikistan needs a tailored monitoring and evaluation system to track national and local adaptation capacity, as well as personnel trained to measure progress toward the country’s climate-resilient development goals. Abt is introducing metrics and building national and local capabilities for monitoring and evaluation to ensure sustainability and high-impact results.

Identify a national implementing entity to fund future climate change projects
To continue climate change initiatives and fund programs after the project ends, Abt is helping Tajikistan identify a locally-based organization to serve as a national implementing entity. Once the organization is selected, Abt will build its capacity to meet international accreditation criteria, enabling it to obtain direct assistance from the Climate Investment Fund and receive other funding needed to support and advance Tajikistan’s climate-resilient development.

Representatives of government agencies and private businesses work together at a 2014 knowledge management workshop in Dushanbe.

Abt Associates is a mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and one of the top 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and program offices in more than 40 countries.