

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: CWER

TA 6357-REG: Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management Multicountry Partnership Framework Support Project			Amount Approved: \$4,025,000	
Executing Agency:	Source of Funding:		Amount Undisbursed:	Amount Utilized:
Asian Development Bank	ADB TA funding program Global Environment Facility International Fund for Agricultural Development		\$580,676.22	\$3,444,323.78
TA Approval Date:	TA Signing Date:	Fielding of First Consultants:	TA Completion Date Original: 31 Dec 2008	Actual: 30 June 2010
24 November 2006	6 December 2006	15 January 2007	Account Closing Date Original: 31 Dec 2008	Actual: 18 May 2011

Description

Land degradation is one of the greatest challenges facing all the five Central Asian Countries (CACs). Irrigated agriculture has been practiced in these countries for a long time. Various food crops continue to be grown under rainfed and irrigated conditions. In irrigated lands, poor practices have resulted in water logging and salinization, as well as loss of soil nutrient, and soil erosion. The root causes of these problems are inappropriate land, agricultural and water policies, regulations, and incentives; the inability of Governments to adopt and implement Sustainable Land Management (SLM) due to their relatively weak capacity; and a host of environmental problems arising in part from inadequate, inconsistent, and weakly implemented environmental laws as well as those arising from natural and anthropogenic causes. The Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM) is a partnership of CACs and development cooperation partners¹ dedicated to combating land degradation and improving rural livelihoods. ADB is responsible for leading the CACILM partnership, coordinating programs at the multi-country and national levels, and supporting activities at the multicountry level. This TA covers CACILM Phase I: Inception, focusing on capacity building, from 24 November 2006 to 31 December 2008.

Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs

The expected impact of the TA is the restoration, maintenance and enhancement of the productivity of land and improvement of rural livelihoods in the five CACs. The outcome of the TA is an improved capacity of institutions in Central Asia to adopt integrated land-use planning and management. The outputs of the TA include: (i) efficient and effective coordination of the implementation of CACILM Multi-country Partnership Framework, (ii) efficient and effective coordination of the implementation of National Programming Frameworks (NPFs) in the CACs, (iii) Sustainable Land Management Information System (SLMIS) designed, developed, operated, (iv) sustainable land management research designed and Implemented, and (v) knowledge management system established.

Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities

This TA was highly relevant and well formulated with a detailed design and monitoring framework. There were 242 person-months of individual consulting services inputs envisaged with comprehensive terms of reference. The consultants performed well. Requisite inputs from consultants and contractors and conduct of activities and their utilization were efficient. The SLM research package was carried out by International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) through a partnership agreement. ICARDA delivered their work efficiently with only two CACs reporting that their main SLM concerns were not addressed by ICARDA. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) carried out the capacity building of SLMIS through a Partnership Agreement. FAO delivered the outputs and trained specialists except in Tajikistan which declined participation. The TA was extended four times to 30 June 2010 for (i) revisions to the implementation schedule due to the delays in Global Environment Facility (GEF) cofinancing, (ii) provide time for transition to full implementation phase, and (iii) provide time for the publication of the Central Asia Atlas of Natural Resources. A minor change in implementation arrangements was done to provide additional consultants, equipment, agreements with national level institutions, FAO and International Fund for Agricultural Development to facilitate implementation of SLM-KM and SLM-IS. ADB supervised the TA satisfactorily.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

Output (1) Efficient and effective coordination of the implementation of CACILM Framework. (a) The Multicountry Secretariat (MSEC) was staffed by experienced consultants who performed well and in line with their TORs. MSEC provided training and support to the Staff of the five National Secretariats (NSECs). (b) The five NSECs were staffed by competent professionals who performed well in being the technical secretariats for the respective Governments through the National Coordination Councils (NCCs) on land and water issues. The selection of the staff and particularly the head for their administrative capabilities and experience as well as networks in Government and the civil administration was very appropriate except in Tajikistan where an academic was the head which led to poor Tajikistan NSEC performance. (c) The CACILM NCCs in each

¹ The main partners from countries are the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Working Groups on Partnership Development for UNCCD Implementation and the UNCCD national focal points. The development cooperation partners are the members of the Strategic Partnership Agreement for UNCCD Implementation in the Central Asian Countries (SPA): Global Mechanism (GM), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), CCD Project of German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), International Center for Agricultural Research on Dry Areas (ICARDA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and World Bank.

CAC performed well. (d) The CACILM Steering Committee (SC). The SC is the governing agency for CACILM with membership of senior representatives of each of the five CACs and the key funding and implementing agencies. The SC held four meetings in Phase I, and reviewed the progress of CACILM up to date and provided guidance on the planning and implementation of CACILM activities in the immediate short term future. Project monitoring and evaluation systems were designed, developed and implemented.

Output (2) A favorable environment for land management investment created and the effective coordination and implementation of NPFs in the CACs. NPFs were prepared in each of the five CACs with the assistance of the respective NSEC and oversight by MSEC. The partnership generated projects funded by GEF, ADB and other funding institutions. ADB funded projects included Loan-2245/2246 UZB: Land Improvement Project and Loan-2313 TAJ: Rural Development Project. The NPF of each CAC has taken into consideration country specific as well as broader contexts and includes natural as well as anthropogenic causes for land degradation and has come up with appropriate prioritized programs of projects and technical assistance.

Output (3) SLM-IS (Information System) designed, developed and operated. SLM-IS has been a very successful component of the CACILM initiative and will continue to provide excellent support for all its activities for the long term. SLM-IS has been able to collect hitherto difficult to obtain key data from each of the countries in the form of physical maps and even hand-drawn cartographic and topographical maps in the range of 1:750,000 and 1:2.5 million. Much of this primary data and mapping has now been digitized and forms a strong part of the SLM-IS data base. Maps and other GIS data for land, water and climate resources have been collected for CACILM priority areas (Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and four oblasts in Kazakhstan) from a wide range of sources. Analysis and an inventory of existing national cartographic data and maps have been executed. The main data base of SLM-IS is located in the MSEC and is accessible to all the five CACs through their NSECs.

Output (4) SLM-R (Research) Sustainable land management research designed and implemented. ICARDA carried out work on seven areas of research for this component in all five CACs. One observation is that the length of time available in Phase I is simply not adequate to provide sound results and longer term guidance and as such this component should be continued through Phase II. Another observation is that due to the largely bureaucratic set up of ICARDA, it was difficult for the NSECs to receive test results at working level.

Output (5) SLM-KM (Knowledge Management) system established. This has been successful in knowledge creation and capture but has failed in knowledge sharing, retrieval and dissemination, as per original TA design. The membership of the Community of Practice (COP) is limited and therefore defeats the purpose of widespread dissemination, which can be achieved through arranging an easily accessible internet site.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA was rated as successful. The participating institutions now have the capacity to adopt integrated land use planning and management. It has also laid a sound foundation for the successful implementation of the whole CACILM Multicountry Partnership Framework (CMPF) program.² The assessment of the CMPF can be made upon completion of the 10 year period which follows this TA.

Major Lessons

(1) There is a lack of exchange of information at most levels between all CACILM Partners as there is no clear information sharing policy. (2) The co-funding agencies (GTZ and UNDP) were not performing as well as would have been expected as a result of a lack of an accountability mechanism. (3) It is counterproductive to develop an extensive data base through SLM-IS and not make it easily available to all users via the internet. (4) There is no identified mechanism for the transfer of knowledge/research results to farmers in the rural areas in each CAC.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

(1) CACILM should (i) have a clear policy for sharing all information at all levels between CACILM Partners and all stakeholders, and (ii) have in place clear mechanisms and rules on accountability for deliverables from contractors, whether they are international agencies or small contractors. When co-funding agencies are also contractors, normal accountability rules should apply.
 (2) The databases and material developed in SLM-IS should be made easily accessible to all users, particularly in the CACs with proper gate keeping as necessary.
 (3) Identify pathways/mechanisms in each CAC for the transfer of SLM-KM from National/NSEC level to their respective farmers in each of the CACs.
 (4) Applied SLM-R should have a longer time frame of at least five years.

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² CMPF 6 programmatic outcomes: (i) favorable environment for SLM investments in CACs, (ii) improved institutional capacity in the CACs to adopt integrated land use planning and meeting, (iii) rehabilitation and improved productivity of selected land leading to improved livelihoods, (iv) enhanced protection of ecosystem integrity and landscape, (v) broader involvement of civil society and other stakeholders in SLM, and (vi) long-term, sustained, and harmonized commitments of financial and human resources by mainstreaming SLM in development cooperation partners.