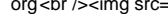




World Bank Supports Food Security in Tajikistan

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More than 770,000 people in twelve districts of the Khatlon region to benefit from higher yields, additional employment opportunities, and better incomes
Dushanbe, Tajikistan, June 3, 2013 -The Government of Tajikistan and the World Bank have launched a project today valued at US \$45.9 million that aims to improve agricultural production and create temporary employment in twelve districts of Tajikistan. The Second Tajikistan Public Employment for Sustainable Agriculture and Water Resources Management Project will allow scaling up of a successfully completed first project, which benefitted over 43,000 households through public works and improved access to irrigation. "We are glad to be able to finance the scaling up of a successful pilot to advance restructuring of the agriculture sector, said Marsha Olive, World Bank Country Manager for Tajikistan. "The project will help farmers make additional income for their families, buy inputs for their land, and access irrigation services to achieve higher yields and food security. At the same time, it will promote essential reforms in land and water use. Agriculture is the largest sector in the World Bank's overall portfolio in Tajikistan, because it is critical for economic growth and the wellbeing of people. "This new project is being financed through a US\$18 million grant from the International Development Association (IDA) and a US\$27.9 million grant from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Multi-Donor Trust Fund Program that were approved in November 2012 by the World Bank Board of Executive Directors. The project aims to benefit over 770,000 people residing in twelve districts of the southern Khatlon region of Tajikistan through temporary public employment opportunities and rehabilitation of important irrigation and drainage infrastructure. "The target districts under the new project are characterized by high levels of food insecurity, but demonstrate good agricultural potential. As such, the following districts will be the focus of irrigation and drainage infrastructure rehabilitation activities under the project: Jilikul, Jomi, Rumi, Rudaki, Yavan, Hamadoni, Vose, Bokhtar, Pyanj, Hissor, Khuroson, and Nosiri Khusrav. It is expected that the project will directly benefit an estimated 22,000 people through the provision of temporary work only. The rehabilitation of irrigation and drainage infrastructure will improve access to irrigation for about 190,000 hectares of land to the benefit of 750,000 residents in all target districts. Based on the pilot, 10 percent increase in crop yields is expected as a result of the project. "The project will also support ongoing institutional and policy reform in water resources management. Around 20 new Water User Associations (WUA) will be established and capacity building will be provided to these and existing 33 WUAs in the project areas. In addition, technical assistance to the Ministry of Amelioration and Water Resources and other relevant institutions will be provided to support their efforts in water sector reform, which include: i) the separation of water resources management and water service delivery; ii) the associated separation of policy making and planning from operational management of the sector; and iii) the introduction of Integrated Water Resources Management mechanisms. Combined, these principles will help strengthen the policy, legal, and strategic basis for improved water management practices in the country. "The Public Employment for Sustainable Agriculture and Water Resources Management Project is one of four active projects in agriculture sector in the World Bank portfolio for Tajikistan, which are aimed to address food insecurity and improve agricultural productivity. As the World Bank commemorates its 20 years of partnership with Tajikistan in June 2013, the agricultural sector stands out as the largest recipient of World Bank overall financing, with over US\$280 million estimated to date. Given that agriculture contributes 21 percent of GDP, and accounts for 64 percent of employment, it will continue to be a priority area of the World Bank's mission in Tajikistan. "The active portfolio of the World Bank in Tajikistan currently consists of 15 projects with net commitments of US\$ 271 million. The largest share of the portfolio is in agriculture and rural development (40 percent), followed water and sanitation (15 percent), human development (14 percent), energy (13 percent), the public sector (12 percent) and the private sector (6 percent). "Media Contacts
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