

Community Based Agriculture Support Programme “Plus” (CASP+)

Annex 29. Evolution of IFAD portfolio in Tajikistan and lessons learned

A. IFAD investment in Tajikistan

1. Since 2008, IFAD has been investing in Tajikistan targeting rural poor and socio-economically vulnerable populations, providing financing worth US\$77.3 million to a total of four loan-financed projects/programmes with an overall cost of US\$91.6 million. SEPMU has been implementing all IFAD-funded projects in Tajikistan as a centralized management unit. IFAD-funded interventions include four investment projects (excluding CASP+), namely:

- **KLSP** - Khatlon Livelihoods Support Project (2008-2015, US\$12.3m)^{1,2};
- **LPDP-I** - the Livestock and Pasture Development Project³ phase I (2011-2018, US\$15)
- **LPDP-II** - the Livestock and Pasture Development Project phase II 8m; (2015-2021, US\$24.2m)
- **CASP** - the Community-Based Agriculture Support Programme⁴ (2017-2024, US\$40.6m).

2. All projects had a complementary geographic targeting. Whilst in some cases the targeted districts coincide (with highest poverty levels), villages with previous/ongoing relevant intervention providing the community with similar community investments are systematically excluded (this is also the case for **CASP+** as per **Annex 21**).

3. The initial IFAD-funded investment projects **KLSP** and **LPDP-I** and **LPDP-II** have focused on predominantly livestock producing districts in the Khatlon Region, gradually expanding the geographic coverage (see synoptic table of Target Districts in **Annex 30**). In the sequence of IFAD investment, **CASP** represents a temporary shift of focus towards agricultural productivity and mechanization services (see synoptic table of project objectives in **Annex 30**), while CASP+ refocuses on remote vulnerable mountainous areas with higher presence of livestock-based livelihoods (**Annex 2.1**, climate scenario, and geographic targeting).

¹ The KLSP was the first IFAD-funded project in the country, and promoted an innovative, community-driven approach to poverty reduction.

² IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation has conducted an evaluation of KLSP, published in 2021 – available here https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714182/42864434/tajikistan_1100001408_ppe.pdf/ec8d562b-9646-a384-00c7-bb3d2429c649?t=1623402705705.

Annex 18 includes also the Project Completion Report of the LPDP, and the evaluation of LPDP II.

³ LPDP is an IFAD-funded project whose rangeland improvement efforts in Tajikistan focused on improved grazing management for 130,000 ha of rangeland in order to increase sustainable livestock production, using rotational grazing as the principal tool.

⁴ Compared to other IFAD portfolio, the CASP 2017-2024 has a higher emphasis on crop-related livelihoods, aiming to stimulate inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction in poor rural communities by improving access to productive infrastructure and services.

IFAD financing in Tajikistan 2008-2024

First phase

- **KLSP** (2008-2015) has pioneered IFAD interventions, focusing on increasing incomes and improving livelihoods of poor farmers in rural areas, building on a piloted community-based approach experimented by the Agha Khan Foundation project Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP), delivering community investment through participatory Community Action Plans (CAPs).

Consolidation phase

- Subsequently, considering the importance of livestock for the livelihoods of rural population, the IFAD-funded **LPDP-I** (2011-2018) has introduced a specific focus on smallholder livestock herders in remote mountainous areas, supporting also the improvement of the Pasture Law, which allowed the management of rangeland and pasture to the pasture communities, organized around Pasture User Unions at Village Level. A critical part of LPDP investment was thus dedicated to establishing and strengthening the PUUs, while the community investments provided by the Community Action Plans (CAPs) were building strong economic foundation and sustainability of the PUUs.
- The second phase of LPDP, or **LPDP-II** (2015-2021) expanded the geographic coverage to additional districts, focusing on enhancing livestock productivity and resilience to climate change. LPDP-II contributed to the implementation of an additional 197 CAPs. The community investment generated a real impact on pasture productivity (+15 percent in average) and degradation, contributing to improve about 74,592 ha of pasture, leaving substantial lessons for additional similar interventions. These results, documented in Annex 18d (link) and Annex 18e (link), represented the foundation to the design of CASP+.

Shift towards agriculture productivity

- With **CASP** (2018-2024), the focus of IFAD-funded investment shifted towards **improving agricultural communities' access to productive infrastructure and services, to ensure agriculture productivity** and equitable returns. As such, the focus shifted from pastoral communities in mountainous areas to still poor agricultural communities, with investment in agricultural mechanization and related services in rural areas with high agricultural potential.

Refocus on climate vulnerable mountainous areas

- Recent analytical work in the country for the **Nationally Determined Contributions** (2021) and subsequently the **Fourth national Communication** to UNFCCC (2022) have repeatedly highlighted the importance of investing in climate change adaptation and mitigation, including via the agricultural sector. Those demands and needs led to the identification of an investment project with a specific focus on climate-vulnerability and potential low carbon emission livelihoods patterns (**CASP+**).

B. CASP+ focus on climate vulnerability and low carbon emission potential

4. Recent analysis of the agriculture sector for the update of the NDCs (2021) and confirmed in the fourth National Communication (2022) noted that adaptation and mitigation were not sufficiently integrated into agriculture sector planning in Tajikistan.⁵ These findings, complemented by the dedicated Climate Vulnerability Analysis (produced for

⁵ Analysis of the agricultural sector for the NDC revision in Tajikistan. Draft Report. GIZ.UNIQUE forestry and land use GmbH. February, 2021.

this project, documented in Annex 2.1), informed the design of the **Community Based Agriculture Support Programme “plus” (CASP+)**.

5. **CASP+ is designed to integrate climate change risks, vulnerabilities and adaptation and mitigation** measures in policies and programmes at the national and local level, and to enhance resilience and carbon sequestration through tailored investment in the climate-vulnerable mountainous areas, targeting regions and production systems where they are most relevant.

6. **The most relevant experiences for CASP+ emerged from the LPDP-I and LPDP-II experience.** These projects, operating in remote mountainous areas of Khatlon region, were particularly appreciated for their high participatory approach and inclusion of local communities as a means to empowering them on the decision-making process on natural resources, and for their positive economic results on livelihoods, agriculture productivity and rangeland restoration⁶.

7. A recent assessment (IFAD, 2022) showed also that LPDP II approachⁱ helped increasing beneficiaries income by 15 percent, improve conditions of rangeland (through improved infrastructure and rotational grazing), and reduce the livestock inventories by 29 percent.

8. Thanks to the experiences accrued in the various Project financed by IFAD in the country, CASP+ builds on a number of lessons and evidence, including on the improved livelihoods and role of women in their communities and institutions.

9. Specifically on gender, the LPDP II experience (documented in **Annex 18e**) reports a significant improvement for women headed households' agricultural income (from crop, milk, and value of livestock sales).

10. CASP+ has placed significant emphasis on women inclusion, including at community level, to improve women empowerment and their participation in institutions decision making processes. The proposed investment under CASP+ represent a step up in further building climate resilience with significant carbon sequestration potential. CASP+ is expected to add significant value by institutional capacity building at the national level for implementation and monitoring, incorporating climate diagnostics in the planning framework at the district and village level and making investments that will build the resilience of local communities to growing climate risks at the community and household level (**Annex 29** provides further details on relevant lessons learned).

C. Lessons Learned

11. The recent assessment of **LPDP-II**⁷ provided a very pertinent and diverse set of lessons learned (e.g., from the development of the Pasture Users' Union and Pasture User's Association model, with high effectiveness on women's inclusion via creation of specific women interest groups under the PUUs). These are considered very useful for the region (Central Asia) and countries that face similar social and economic challenges. The Community Action Plan (**CAPs**) methodology (expanded by **CASP+** as a Climate Sensitive community action plan - **CsCAP**) introduced by IFAD-funded **KLSP** and **LPDP-I** and **LPDP-II** projects involves a participatory process by which village organizations identify their priorities for economic and social collective investments, and subsequently implement the

⁶ Documented in the recently issued "Management of Livestock using rotational grazing. A Critical Intervention to Promote Food Security and Environmental Sustainability in Rural Tajikistan. Brien Norton, IFAD, 2022. Available at: <https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/46450319/management-livestock-using-rotational-grazing.pdf/19aae904-771c-f261-e187-4c87d808e839?t=1666781751627>.

⁷ LPDP Project Completion Report Validation, IFAD (2021).

investments with shared project and village organization funds. Under **KLSP**, these interventions led to a 40 percent increase in the household asset index; an average income increase of 41 percent; and a 44 percent increase in the number of households with improved food security. A successful approach at the village level has been the formation of broad based Village Organizations which can organize local households and help identify village priorities and participate in the implementation of a range of investments at the village level (a model tested successfully by the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP). According to the **KLSP** evaluation (**annex 18c**),⁸ the success of the approach was to establish and strengthen village organizations as agents for rural development and governance. Such approach as assessed in the **KLSP's** evaluation (**annex 18c**) showed that the village level institutions are likely to continue playing a role as rural agents of change. Building on these, **CASP+** will complement the successes of community mobilization for a transformative climate-sensitive management of natural resources and landscape.

12. **LPDP-I** supported the establishment of 203 **Pasture User Unions** (PUUs) and the preparation and implementation of their CAPs. The second phase (**LPDP-II**, 2016-2021) was a geographical expansion of **LPDP-I** and contributed to the implementation of an additional 197 CAPs (exceeding its target of 180). Through these plans and related sub-projects, the project had a real impact on pasture productivity (+15 percent in average) and degradation, contributing to improve about 74,592 ha of pasture, leaving substantial lessons for additional similar interventions. The PUUs have been a remarkable success: within a very short time the introduction they have laid the basis for sustainable village capacity for managing collective resource endowments. The success was also noted in past assessment of IFAD's portfolio in the country, noting that village organizations were able to maintain the community equipment and machineries in order, and to cover operation and maintenance costs from the revenues collected from users (village residents). Its success is attested by replication by government and other donors (including the World Bank-funded Tajikistan Resilient Landscapes Restoration Project - USD 80 m, due for board approval in 2021). The PUUs are embedded in a wider institutional network created by the project comprising the Pasture Law, the Pasture Management Trust for central management, and Pasture User Associations at district level. This new operating model was instrumental in ensuring a fairer participation of men and women in decision-making processes at the community level while strengthening their role in controlling the village natural resources (pasture lands).

13. **The CAPs methodology and results were highly welcomed by the GoT and the communities**, and have been providing IFAD with a platform for knowledge generation and policy dialogue of use also within **CASP+**. For example, previous results will allow **CASP+** to support an amendment to the Pasture Law, creating a body within MoA responsible for Pasture and a trust fund for pasture-development investments.

14. **LPDP-II results showed remarkable increases in women headed households' welfare**. Specifically, it has significantly increased women headed households' livestock income, crop income, annual milk production and productivity, and total annual value of livestock sale. Building on this, **CASP+** has placed significant emphasis on women inclusion, including at community level, to improve women empowerment and their participation in institutions decision making processes.

15. Concerning **crop production**, key lesson concern the importance of provision of ad hoc technical assistance to farmers and agribusinesses, especially to inform their choices of climate-resilient technologies, to ensure efficient use of technologies and minimization of

⁸ IFAD, 2021 - https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714182/42864434/tajikistan_1100001408_ppe.pdf/ec8d562b-9646-a384-00c7-bb3d2429c649?t=1623402705705, reported in Annex 18c.

food loss and waste. Where livestock production is concerned, enhancing access to equipment and managerial capacities is also critical (e.g., in dairy value chain).

16. The projects that have provided the most significant support on **livestock productivity improvement** were **LPDP-I** and **LPDP-II**, which also worked on improving animal husbandry and health on top of pasture development, and Enhanced Competitiveness of Tajik Agribusiness Project (ECTAP),⁹ which supported livestock value chains. These projects demonstrated that there is strong demand and interest from smallholder farmers for techniques that contribute to intensify production systems, including in particular breeding, fodder production, and animal health.

17. On **animal health services**, the provision of veterinary kit and mobility equipment provided as start-up package to local veterinarians has proven to be a significant incentive to increase of quality and outreach of animal health services, including in the most remote villages. However, the needs outnumber the current availability of private veterinaries, and adequate coverage will be provided only by replicating this approach, ensuring also that it is undertaken as a sustainable entrepreneurial private sector activity. The private licenses are granted by the Food Security Committee (FSC, public body overseeing the animal health sector). To avoid that animal health services are provided without relevant registration, partnership with the FSC is critical and accompanying private vets through the process is essential, in addition to the incentive packages.

18. **The Farmer Field School approach** has been implemented for Livestock by Oxfam in Khatlon, and several organizations, including FAO, on crops. These experiences have confirmed the relevance of the approach in the Tajik context, including for livestock related issues. One of the lessons generated by Oxfam was that opting for farmers as facilitators was preferable, in particular for sustainability purposes.

19. As part of its engagement in the country, IFAD has also contributed to mobilizing **public-private producers partnerships** in support of women-led small business in collaboration with the Aga Khan Foundation, especially in support of women's groups.

20. **Ecosystem-based approaches to NRM** have been undertaken through donor-funded projects, as well as Climate Smart Agriculture and Sustainable Land Management approaches. Water Sector Reform has established "new" hydrological boundaries; created governing institutions for ensuring Integrated Water Resources Management, responsible for the development of River Basin Plans. The establishment of hydrological-based governance institutions can be an opportunity to consolidate NRM (including climate change) efforts and go beyond just water, considering the ecosystemic aspect of river basins. While at the national policy level the management strategy of individual natural resources is defined with CEP, MoA and State Forest Agency (SFA), what is lacking is an integration element to better guide investments on the ground so that outcomes are managed holistically at the catchment level and whatever trade-offs that may be required are managed in an evidence-based, consultative and transparent way. Moreover, the country's vulnerability to natural and climate disasters demands strategies for climate change adaptation. As noted in the assessment of previous IFAD portfolio, the climate angle needs to be addressed more explicitly. Building on the districts climate resilience diagnostics and other activities, there are opportunities to climate-proof IFAD funded interventions, which CASP+ has envisaged to ensure throughout its investments in component 2 and 3 at community and individual level (CsCAPs, productive alliances and common interest groups investment).

⁹ ECTAP (Enhanced Competitiveness of Tajik Agribusiness Project, 2014-2019) was an EU-funded project implemented in close cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

21. **Joint Forest Management (JFM)** was piloted at first by the GIZ (GTZ at the time) project on “Sustainable Rehabilitation and Development of Flood Plain Forests in Gorno-Badakhshan”. Since then, it has been implemented successfully under KfW financing (CAFT project)¹⁰ in many areas over a number of years, was adapted to the needs of communities with different forest types, and is now ready for upscaling to the national level. Local communities and forest enterprises have been rating JFM as an effective and helpful approach. In these projects the JFM approach, upscaled and tested in different climatic zones in Tajikistan, has proven its advantage as a forest management tool.

22. **Additional lessons on approaches and project governance** from IFAD’s operations in the country and other key partners (FAO, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and the European Union) include the following:

- (i) As democratically constituted and legally endorsed entities, village organizations are effective partners in community-based public actions, service provision and agriculture-based livelihood development.
- (ii) The participation of beneficiaries in planning, implementation, cost sharing, operation and maintenance is a critical driver of the successes of CAPs.
- (iii) The CAP approach with a climate and environment driven focus provides an excellent platform for wide and inclusive policy dialogue and reform, as attested by the drafting and reforms to the Pasture Law and related institutions that sprung from LPDP I and II.
- (iv) Awareness-raising at the village organisation level is a crucial part of creating a proper participatory process in prioritisation of investments.
- (v) Poor people can be best reached through geographical targeting by selecting the poorest regions and villages, along with village-level targeting using self-assessments and village-level wealth rankings.
- (vi) Projects can ensure the inclusion of smallholders and mitigate against their elite capture through equitable representation of rural poor people and women in community-based organizations.
- (vii) Rural Finance is a difficult sector to operate in, in view of the low stability of the banking sector and the high cost of communications.
- (viii) Investments in the value chain at echelons higher than production level requires significant local knowledge and presence in view of the opaque regulations and practices governing the business environment.
- (ix) Smallholders need technical knowledge and business skills to organize – both individually and through community-based organizations. This will enable them to become profitable customers for local service providers and input suppliers, and to negotiate favourable prices and business terms.

¹ In 2013, during LPDP implementation, the country approved the Pasture Law that decentralized rangeland and livestock management. It authorized the creation of Pasture Users’ Unions (PUUs) with an elected Board, giving them authority to manage common rangeland and to exercise fiscal responsibility for improvement of rangeland pastures and fodder crop production. LPDP supported the PUUs’ purchase of agricultural equipment and the cost of local infrastructure development efforts.

¹⁰ **CAFT project** – KfW financed project “Climate adaptation through sustainable forestry in important river catchment areas in Tajikistan”.