

# Evaluation

## Final Report

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### Sustainable Poverty Reduction and Food Security through Climate Change-Adapted Potato Production in Zerafshan Valley *Tajikistan*

PN: 2011.5556.31 / TJK 1078-11

Project duration: 01.10.2011-31.12.14

#### Project Holder



#### Potato Association of Kuhistoni Mastchoh (PAKM)

Kuhistoni Mastchoh / Sughd  
735800, Tajikistan



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BMZ



Bundesministerium für  
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit  
und Entwicklung

#### Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)

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## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany
cbm	Cubic Metres
CO	Country Office Welthungerhilfe
DAC	Development Assistance Committee -OECD-
DeGEval	Gesellschaft für Evaluation e.V.
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUR	Euros
FFG	First Field Generation
GAA	Welthungerhilfe e.V. / German Agro Action
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
K.M.	Kuhistoni Mastchoh
HDI	Human Development Index
HH	Household
HQ	Headquarters
Hukumat	District government
I-NGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
Jamoat	Lowest administrative tier, corresponds to municipality in most countries
LL	Lesson Learnt
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium development goals
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
Oblast	Province
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAKM	Potato Association of Kuhistoni Mastchoh
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPM	Project Planning Matrix
PPR	Project Progress Report
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REC	Recommendation
sm, m <sup>2</sup>	square meters
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
TG	Target Group
TJS	Tajik Somoni (national currency): 1€ = 6.4 TJS (October 2014)
ToR	Terms of Reference
VA	Village advisors
SM	Seed multipliers
SVG	Small Village Group
WHH	Welthungerhilfe / German Agro Action

## 1 Brief description of the project and framework conditions

The BMZ-funded project "*Sustainable Poverty Reduction and Food Security through Climate Change-Adapted Potato Production in Zerafshan Valley (TJK-1078)*" implemented by PAKM, a local NGO and a partner organisation of Welthungerhilfe in the Sughd province, aims to sustainably reduce poverty and increase food security through climate change-adapted potato production in the Zerafshan Valley.

To reach this overall aim, this project aims to ensure and to increase the productivity of small-scale potato farms and to improve the seed production in 20 villages of the Zerafshan Valley.

The implementation in the period from October 01, 2011 to December 31, 2014 (39 months) had a budget of EUR 564,508.

Direct beneficiaries are 20 villages in the Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh Districts; including 100 small-scale farmer plant propagators; 1,000 local potato producers; 40 village advisers (VA) and 100 seed multipliers (SM); and one association (PAKM/AKKM).

Indirect beneficiaries: small-scale local potato producers in 35 villages in the Zerafshan valley and other regions in northern Tajikistan.

## 2 Relevance

The objective of this project is relevant to the needs of the vulnerable groups in the traditional potato growing area of Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts in that it aims to improve the potato production sector to sustain and strengthen the rural livelihoods.

The project is in line with the general policies of Tajikistan and has a high relevance for the country with respect to the MDGs, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and of the National Development Strategy.

The project is in line with the aim of the BMZ strategy which outlines the framework for Germany's development cooperation with global development partners for the period 2010-2015.

## 3 Effectiveness

The program was implemented by the partner organisation Potato Association of Kuhistoni Mastchoh (PAKM). The Project Management Unit (PMU) – an advisory unit from Welthungerhilfe – was integrated within the PAKM organisation structure.

The selection of the target region and target groups was based on the prior project with emphasis on villages at the altitude above sea level most beneficial to potato growing, availability of irrigated plots, and experience in potato growing.

A total 26 villages (target: 20) are supported in the project region (21 villages district of Kuhistoni Mastchoh; 5 villages district of Ayni). Numerous villages are too far away to be effectively supervised and supported by the PAKM association operationally. General dissatisfaction with PAKM could be detected, especially in these villages. The distances from the PAKM-association office to its various remote target villages are detrimental to a transparent exchange of information between PAKM and their members.

The project activities and especially those implemented by the PMU are very much appreciated by the representatives of the target group, local authorities and international donor

organizations. Some grassroots dissatisfaction with the PAKM project performance could be observed within the target region.

Poor project planning led to an inefficient operational setup of the project (PMU/PAKM). The top-down approach is not effective and the association's grassroots (individual beneficiaries, SVG) were not well integrated in the project planning nor in later stages (e.g. support of SVGs towards association). A reduction of project commitment from the beneficiaries could already be detected particularly in areas where Welthungerhilfe projects have already been supporting people for a long time.

Cooperation between Welthungerhilfe and PAKM was supported by a established Welthungerhilfe Project Management Unit (PMU) which was integrated within the PAKM organisation structure with an advisory function only. The double role in the project management was unclear and created some confusion and friction in project implementation. However, the PMU ensures professional and good project advisory to PAKM.

In spite of many years of project experiences with the inefficient partner structure of PAKM, this history was not given sufficient consideration in the design of this project. The members are relatively uninformed, unaware, politically passive and self-interested.

The distribution and propagation of improved seed-potatoes (imported or in-vitro produced) into the target region was successful.

#### **4 Efficiency**

More than 40% of funds are directly available for the target group (trainings, facilities, and potato seed) and about 35% are used for personnel costs.

The dissemination of storage facilities for potatoes is very well implemented. Numerous households (HH) in both the target and non-target areas have implemented several units and increasing numbers of people are becoming more and more interested in construction of improved storage facilities.

The costs for producing one ton of *elite seed-potatoes* by micro-tuber are about ≈536 Euro per ton. This corresponds to the price which was paid for import of elite seed-potatoes from Europe. In consideration of the hurdles and organizational requirements for an import of seed-potatoes into the country it can be concluded that the propagation strategy for the future should be based on local micro-tuber propagation production.

#### **5 Outcomes and impacts**

It is too early to make reliable statements about the outcomes and impacts of this project. The potato growing circle finalized the second phase in October '14 and more reliable data to assess the output of the upcoming harvest season will be available then to confirm the previous findings of project outputs and outcomes. However, some positive evidences in this regard can be derived from the data available, from the Endline Survey and from some statements made by beneficiaries during this evaluation.

PAKM management board members have already participated in various trainings especially in the previous project of TJK-1065 to strengthen the organisation. However, these efforts have not achieved the expected results and PAKM does not seem to be able to implement what they have learned into practice.

The interest on the construction of compost bunkers was low in the community and not appropriated to fertilize potato fields as intended. The distribution and application of green-

manure seeds have a much higher impact in this regard and location-wise already known alternative approach to increase the soil fertility.

The project decreased storage losses of potatoes by the construction of 50 improved storehouses (a=5 t) for seed-potatoes and 200 improved storage facilities (a=3 t) for table potatoes. The beneficiaries own contribution was 50% and more.

Until now, the association PAKM remains as a weak organization, rely constantly on ongoing external funding's and expects an enduring support after this project concludes. The Revision Committee and the General Assemblies lacking on power and do not comply their role or do not realize their rights and opportunities as members to form and control this association. The top-down approach once started by the project is not very effective and the grassroots of the association (SVG, individuals) have not been considered sufficiently within the project planning right from the beginning. Association based on user initiative and created "bottom-up" in rural areas have a most probably a better chance of proving to be viable.

## **6 Sustainability**

The propagation of high quality seed-potatoes by either import of elite seed-potatoes and national micro propagation by in-vitro-cultivation have been elaborated by the project.

The import of new varieties of seed-potatoes is a demanding administrative task for the required application. Also the certification procedure for new varieties and granting of an approval by the Ministry for national seed distribution within Tajikistan requires permission. Before a new seed variety can be disseminated in the country, the new variety has to be three years tested and monitored by the Seed Protection and Test Varieties of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Unfortunately PAKM were not introduced by the PMU in this application procedure and execution of the potato import with all the administrative requirements for imports.

The strategy for sustainable seed-potato production by PAKM should be based on local elite seed production by micro-tuber propagation. It is technically possible and economically more suitable than importing elite seed-potatoes from overseas.

The importance of a grassroots organisation at village level in form of *Small Villages Groups* (SVG's) as members to the association was underestimated by the project. SVG's should work towards decentralization of the association and should foster the democratic process of PAKM. Few SVGs take over some coordination tasks of PAKM such as the distribution and collection of potato seeds in villages. However, most of the SVGs are not adequately integrated in the decision making structure of PAKM.

SVG-groups and especially individual PAKM-members are poorly informed about PAKM activities. The young SVGs need much more capacity building support in organisation management also in context to the association and they are still very much dependent on external support in this regard. The sustainability of most SVGs is rather questionable after the project concludes.

An association with an appropriate organisational structure furnished with qualified, engaged and motivated management staffs that are ready to define a mission for its association which reflects clearly their member desires does not exist with PAKM.

It is very doubtful whether PAKM is capable to take over the project approach for further sustainable actions in this respect even after PAKM received already a long term support in organisational capacity building for its association.

## **7 Most important recommendations**

- ⇒ More value should have been placed on the strengthening of the intertwining organizational structures on vertical and horizontal levels within this network to ensure the active participation and the closer ownership of associated members.
- ⇒ A PMU, integrated under the umbrella of the Welthungerhilfe-Country-Office-Management, would have been most probably a more positive impact of PAKM's project implementations.
- ⇒ The membership in the association should be subject to certain rules. A short-term membership, which apparently only seeks for short-term benefits, should be difficult or impossible.
- ⇒ The extensions of decentralized storage capacities can save transport costs and resources.
- ⇒ Future potato seed-production should be based on local micro-tuber propagation.
- ⇒ Efforts should be undertaken to improve the active participation of association members in decision-making at all levels of the association.
- ⇒ Hold elections of association officers at least biennial.
- ⇒ The concentration of target villages in the immediate environment of the young association can ensure more transparency, increase of efficiency and can improve the effectiveness of program execution in such undeveloped location

## **8 General conclusions and "Lessons Learnt"**

- ⇒ Young associations should be created "bottom-up" and farmers need guidance and specific trainings on how to create such institutions.

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