**Annex B. Highlights of GAFSP CSO consultation workshop**

July 19, 2012 / 9:00 am- 3:00 pm.

Kayon Hotel, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

1. The consultation was co-chaired by Mr. Azizbek Sharipov of the National Association of Dekhan Farms (NADF) and Dr. Kokul Kasirov of the Association of Forest and Land Users in Tajikistan (AFLUT). A round of introductions was done. The Mission Team noted the presence of Mr. Bobojon Yatimov of the World Bank, Mr. Arorov Ahad, Director of the PIU of the current WB project Public Employment for Sustainable Agriculture and Water Management Project (PAMP), government representatives from the Ministry of Education and Water Resource Management, representatives from the agricultural science institute and agrarian university, and leaders of farmers associations in 6 districts who are members of NADF, local NGOs who are participating in the current PAMP project.

2. Mr. Azizbek set the tone of the consultation workshop by saying that the country has over 97,000 farmers, and that “we come here today to discuss solutions and mechanisms to address the challenges of food security in Tajikistan,” and how the GAFSP project can be designed and implemented to contribute to the benefit of the farmers and to the implementation of the agriculture strategy. He said that most of the participants in this consultation were involved in the development of this agriculture development strategy.

3. Co-organizers of the consultation workshop, NADF, AFLUT and AFA took turns in briefly introducing their organizations. Ms. Esther Penunia from AFA presented a video report of the GAFSP-CSO Asia representative Dr. Sang Yaing Koma from Cambodia, highlighting AFA’s work with CSOs in relation to GAFSP. She said that the GAFSP-CSO Asia representative, with the administrative, logistical and technical support from AFA, would like to facilitate information flow among CSOs in the country, between CSOs and government in the country about GAFSP processes, and in so doing, facilitate the meaningful engagement of FOs and CSOs in the GAFSP project.

4. Mr. Ahrorov Ahad, Director of PAMP’s PIU, gave a presentation on the PAMP, highlighting its key activities and achievements, implementation processes, partnerships with local NGOs and local communities, and information campaign work.

5. Mr. Bobojon Yatimov then made a presentation of the second phase of the PAMP (PAMP II), which hopes to receive funding through the GAFSP window. He said that the current proposal has introduced amendments to the first PAMP, notably in the number of districts (addition of 7 districts).

The GAFSP project/PAMP 2 will have two components. Component 1 is on public works for irrigation and drainage infrastructure renovation with a budget of US$22.5M, and will have three sub-components. The first sub component, with a budget of %5.6M, will involve cleaning of 4,100 kms of on-farm and minor low-order inter-farm irrigation canals, involving 18,000 beneficiaries, representing about 70% of the needed on-farm irrigation system rehabilitation work volume in the project area. The second sub-component, with a budget of USD13.9M, will involve mechanized works for cleaning of drains and larger higher-order inter-farm canals of about 990 kms of canals, as well as civil and electromechanical works for rehabilitation and restoration. The third sub component is on flood channel emergency works of the Tebalia River, with a budget of USD3M.

Component 2 is on Institutional Strengthening in Water Sector, with a budget of USD3.5M, aimed to support the government’s efforts in implementing the water sector reform at all levels. At national, the support will be on further development of the legal basis for the water reforms and supporting the development of a new functional WRM system. At the river basin level, it will pilot a river basin management approach in Kafernigan river basin. At the local level, it will support the establishment of 20 new WUAs (plus 40 by complementary USAID project), and support to 33 existing WUAs.

6. After these presentations, a lively discussion followed.

7. There was a lively discussion on who are the CSOs who should be involved in this project. One participant suggested engaging only those local NGOs who took part in the first PAMP, because they will already have the experience and the expertise to implement the project and work with the farmer beneficiaries. The project can be challenging especially when farmers do not have identification cards or passports, when they do not show in the workplace, when they do not have bank accounts.   
  
Some participants disagreed with the suggestion, and suggested to engage NGOs and organized farmers’ groups working directly in the target areas, including association of dekhan farmers, saying that they are more familiar with the situation and the farmers in the area, and that they will be more accessible to the farmer beneficiaries, especially because many of the farmers come to these local farmers’ groups when there are water shortages.

Another participant said that local authorities should be given a role in the project too as they have a significant role to play. Natural resources can be misused or underused. That is why all the efforts should be coordinated with local authorities. While the role of NGOs are significant, and while there are laws on local governance and local councils that gives many rights to local communities, there are only a few mature local communities and thus local authorities have to be involved.

A participant from an agrarian university who is also an NGO said that NGOs play an important role linking local authorities and local producers. NGOs are much closer to the dekhan farmers and water user associations. Another participant added that NGOs handle their own finances and participate in biddings/contests, thus the main role at the local level can be played by NGOs.

At the end of the discussion on this matter, everyone hoped that all stakeholders (local NGOs, dekhan farmers’ groups and associations, universities and research institutes, and local authorities) would be involved in this project, based on their own potentials and capacities. One participant said that if this were a World Bank project, there would be a call for bidding, so anyone can take part in the bidding.   
  
8. On food security: One participant said that the government could achieve food security if 90% of the farms in Tajikistan will grow diverse crops and plants, and not only cotton. Farmers should be made more aware of and be trained on what to grow and how to grow. The government should promote crop diversity and also ensure that the country has sufficient food reserves. There was a suggestion to have experimentation sites, and study and compare the different techniques, and increase experience sharing. A database can be made accessible to the farmers. Information centers can be established at the regional level, which can cover several districts.

9. On women farmers: One-woman farmer leader of a dekhan farmer district association said that women farmers comprise not only 50, but also 60-70% of the work in agriculture. The work of cleaning the canals was difficult, as this has to be done manually and physically and one had to walk 1-2 kilometers to get to the work sites. It was hard work and was very difficult especially during winter, as there were canals that were not cleaned for 20 years. Many of the women farmers were not involved because they had to take care of the children. The men who were involved in the project were migrants who returned. To be able to involve more women, there must be social facilities, kindergartens, and schools.

10. Another woman dekhan farmer leader of a district dekhan farmer association said that her area has problems with underground water level. She said that she disagrees with the opinion that water user associations are just for fee collection. There are farmers who are members of farmers associations and water user associations at the same time. At the local level, roles and responsibilities between farmers groups and water user groups can be defined, and the the farmers can be involved in addressing the problems with underground water level and at the same time be remunerated for their work. Strengthening of relationships between farmers and other stakeholders both from government and non-government should be done to be able to resolve conflicts on water use.

11.On capacity building with farmers: Two participants suggested that the dekhan farmer groups should be able to have access to machineries and equipment for cleaning, and be trained to use and maintain these. One participant emphasized the severity of the current situation: no canals were cleaned for about 20-25 years, there is no real ownership nor responsibility in cleaning and taking care of the canals, every farmers gets water wherever s/he can, and even if there is shortage of water, farmer is burdened to pay the water fee. Thus, the farmer should have knowledge on how the canals should be cleaned, how to comply with all sanitary requirements, and how to maintain the canals. Mr. Tsai and Dr. Kuo, who are members of the Mission Team, said that for the water user association, it is important for farmers to be trained to be able to make decisions to allocate water to the farm, to understand how to irrigate, how to make cropping pattern, how to produce the crop. As a farmer we should empower ourselves to make decisions on the farm and act on these decisions.   
  
12. There was a question on the sustainability of the project after it is completed.

13. In closing, the co-organizers NADF, AFLUT and AFA took turns in thanking all the participants for their active contributions to the discussion. Everyone agreed that the project is very important and will be very helpful for agriculture in general and for farmers in the target areas in particular, and that all stakeholders represented here hopes to get involved in the Project.



