

# Summary of DFID's work in Central Asia 2011-2015

May 2011

## Why we work in Central Asia

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are the poorest countries in Central Asia (Gross National Income per capita for Tajikistan is \$700, Kyrgyzstan is \$870)<sup>1</sup>. Both are widely considered to be economically and politically fragile. Central Asia also has one of the fastest growing HIV and AIDS epidemics in the world due to drug trafficking routes from Afghanistan passing through the region. Both countries rely heavily on external assistance.

Due to the global financial crisis, progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been slow on all fronts, with the risk that progress made in recent years will stall. Tajikistan is unlikely to achieve the MDGs, and education and health systems are deteriorating compared to the pre-1991 Soviet period. Kyrgyzstan has done better despite a challenging political, economic and social situation, with the national poverty rate falling from 35% to 32% between 2007 and 2009<sup>2</sup>, and the economy showing steady growth. However, progress in delivering the benefits of growth to the poor needs to be accelerated. Figures for child and maternal mortality, for example, remain unacceptably high. With many men working abroad, women make up the majority of agricultural workers in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, working in low paid, harsh and exploitative conditions. Women also bear increased responsibilities for childcare, elderly relations, and running the household; as well as facing constraints in exercising their legal rights to land, property and money.



Rural Water Supply Project. v.Maman, Kyrgyzstan



Malohat Jiyanova, a successful beneficiary of the Rural Growth Programme, Tajikistan.

## What we will achieve

- Ensure 12,000 individual entrepreneurs receive access to credit in Tajikistan by 2012.
- Provide services for the prevention of HIV and AIDS to 14,500 intravenous drug users and 5,200 sex workers in Central Asia by 2012.
- Create 13,750 new jobs in Tajikistan by 2013.
- The Governments of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will be equipped to assess their progress towards meeting international anti-corruption standards.
- In Kyrgyzstan the Government will be more accountable when handling public finances and citizens will be able to engage with the authorities on budget processes

<sup>1</sup> World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2009

<sup>2</sup> National Statistics Committee, The Living Standard of the Population of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2005-2009

## Who we will work with

To help ensure a coherent approach among donors and to reduce duplication of effort, most of the work undertaken by the small DFID presence in the region involves working with, or through, other donor partners. This helps to maintain a consistent and long term approach, allowing work to carry on even when individual donors cease their particular input. It allows sharing of good practice, and means that our partner governments can often work with donors in a group rather than more time consuming one to one meetings. DFID remains closely involved in project design and initiation, and benefits from the wider range of activity made possible through collaboration. We work closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on UK policy to the region generally.



*“Rural communities love the Village Investment Project (VIP) and call it – the People’s Project - because communities themselves evaluate and decide which projects to implement” – says Ainura, a leader of the “Transformer installation micro-project” in Naryn province, Kyrgyzstan. VIP project is co-funded by the World Bank, DFID and KFW.*

## How we will work

We will streamline our management arrangements, focussing on a small number of sectors as current projects come to an end. By working jointly with other donors, we ensure that the widest range of skills and expertise can be used, which helps ensure efficient and effective use of our resources. . We are seeking to reduce our use of international consultants and engage with local think tanks instead. We have also established a very close relationship with UN Women at country level and we maintain a good dialogue with the government and other donors on gender equality.

Some actions we will take on transparency include:

- Information about DFID projects will be high quality, clear and easy to understand;
- From 2011, local language translations of summary information on all new programmes will be published and widely disseminated;
- Our project on helping improve the management of public finances has one element that will help local civil society to understand and contribute to fair and transparent government budgeting, and will carry out independent analysis and communication of government budgets to make them more accessible;
- We will support efforts to address specific aspects of corruption, including the United Nations Development Programme’s work with the Anti-Corruption Agency in Tajikistan.

## More information

A more detailed breakdown of the Central Asia Operational Plan is available on the DFID website at: [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)

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