

## **Terms of reference: Independent Mid-Term Review**

### **Rural Growth Programme Tajikistan**

ARIES Code: 114115-101

#### **Background**

The RGP is a three year multi-partner programme that supports the development of business in Sughd Oblast<sup>1</sup> of Northern Tajikistan through the supply of business advice and credit. It also provides targeted support to local government, building its capacity to support the private sector and to improve the business environment.

RGP is funded by DFID, GIZ and UNDP as follows:

DFID contribution of £7.5m (\$12), GIZ contribution of £2.29m (\$3.67m)<sup>2</sup>, UNDP contribution of £1.87m (\$3m).

The programme is implemented by UNDP and GIZ in partnership with Local Government authorities, and a number of other sub-contracted international and civil society organisations.

The **Goal** of the programme is to enhance more inclusive economic development in rural areas of Tajikistan in support of the Government's National Development Strategy (NDS) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). The **Purpose** of the programme is to improve the local environment for income generation and employment creation in Sughd Oblast, including for women and poor.

RGP addresses four critical development constraints to rural growth:

- a) The need to build capacity in local government to fulfil their mandate, particularly to support local economic development and to implement national level initiatives to address the constraints to private sector development and the business environment.
- b) Insufficient credit and inadequate financial products for a range of business (especially in the agriculture sector);
- c) The need for improved support services for business (technical and business)
- d) The need to add value to rural businesses by developing value chains;

The programme will achieve its Purpose through 5 outputs<sup>3</sup>. The outputs cover a wide range of technical areas including; sub national government planning and budgeting; improving the local business enabling environment; strengthening business associations and their dialogue with government, business and agricultural advisory services; improving adult skills to match the requirements of the Tajik economy and to prepare would-be migrants for migration; and extending and strengthening access to finance.

An independent review of progress is scheduled to take place in October 2011. This review will have a dual purpose:

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<sup>1</sup> Sughd Oblast is the northern Province of Tajikistan bordering Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan

<sup>2</sup> Exchange rate used 1 USD=0.625 GBP

<sup>3</sup> RGP was designed with 6 outputs. Output 1 was specifically for the inception of the programme and has now been completed. Five outputs remain.

- a) The mission team will review progress to date and assess the approaches and strategies developed to meet programme objectives.
- b) Inform the design process that is currently underway to extend DFID's wealth creation and rural growth activities up until 2015 and to new geographical regions. This requires a mixed set of skills within the review team. Gender, climate change, sustainability and value for money will be cross cutting themes throughout the review.

The outcome of this study should also be of interest to DFID's programme supporting Business Environment Reform at the national level.

RGP operates in a challenging environment characterised by weak state structures so a key task for the review team will be to assess the risks and assumptions around the programme. For example; although Tajikistan continues to make progress in the international doing business rankings, the constraints to investment and private sector development continue to be considerable. Legal reform whilst encouraging, is not translating into practical implementation at the local level. The review team will need to reflect on the extent to which the theories and assumptions underpinning the different programme components still hold true, and whether RGP's mitigation efforts are sufficient to address the risks or if more could be done. This will be particularly important as DFID starts to explore how to take future work forward.

RGP completed a six month inception phase in July 2010 (Output 1) during which a number of key studies, stakeholder consultations and the development of approaches were carried out. These documents will be made available to the team along with a range of other relevant studies carried out by the programme and other actors working in relevant sectors. Full implementation started in August 2010. A technical field review was carried out by DFID with the participation of GoT, UNDP and GIZ in January 2011 leading in to an annual review in June 2011.

It is expected that the independent review team will follow up on the recommendations made during the technical and annual reviews and examine the extent to which these issues are being addressed.

The programme is guided by a steering committee mechanism comprising representatives from relevant government departments, implementing partners, donors and civil society organisations providing oversight to the programme and meeting formally every six months. The Committee has met four times since the start of the programme and engages actively in programme issues. Additionally bi-monthly coordination and progress review meetings are held with the Provincial Government Working Group set up to work towards achieving the Programme objectives. The independent evaluation team will be invited to present findings to the Steering Committee as well as to DFID and the Programme team.

The team will report to the DFID Livelihoods Adviser and Wealth Creation Team Programme Officer in DFID Tajikistan.

### **Objectives and scope of the review**

Assess RGP's achievements to-date, in particular:

- the extent to which project outputs and purpose are being achieved,
- identify good practice for inclusion in our knowledge products, and areas for improvement,
- suggestions for consideration in the design of a second phase.

More specifically, the Review team will undertake the following tasks:

- a) Assess the programme's impact so far and overall progress against the outputs in the logframe, assessing coherence across the outputs and their combined contribution to achieving the purpose. What is the programme well, and what is it doing less well? Are there any unintended side effects?
- b) Review of the context (legal, policy, recent developments etc) within which the programme operates and assess whether risks and assumptions remain relevant.
- c) Review the theories and assumptions that underpin the changes we anticipate in RGP, in particular aiming to answer the following specific questions:
  - i. What improvements in the relationship between the PS and local government have occurred as a result of the programmes interventions? Are we increasing the capacity of local government to understand and partner with the Private Sector?<sup>4</sup>
  - ii. Do we have the right project design to influence improvements in the local business enabling environment?
  - iii. Is the District Trust Fund mechanism achieving/or likely to achieve its stated objective of motivating local government to do more to support the local private sector?
  - iv. What impact has the mahalla (village) level organisational work had so far?
  - v. Has the programme selected the right value chains to support? Are there others that the programme could/should consider?
  - vi. Is the targeted Support to women micro entrepreneurs (so called nucleus approach) impacting positively on women's economic empowerment and is it the best approach to take? What more should the programme be doing to promote women's economic empowerment?
  - vii. To what extent are AMFOT and MFI members making progress in developing financial products that target the small/medium business community? What more could the programme do to make finance available for entrepreneurs?
  - viii. How effective and efficient are the various approaches to the provision of advisory services? Are they good value for money?
  - ix. To what extent is the programme's support to vocational training likely to meet the needs of the private sector/economic development in the province?

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<sup>4</sup> RGP will be carrying out a routine survey on Sughd Private Sector perceptions of the BEE around the same time as this review. The review team should make use of any preliminary findings if available

- d) Throughout the review, the team should be assessing RGP in terms of: how effectively the programme addresses/ mainstreams gender issues and the needs of the poor, climate change, the potential sustainability of the approaches and activities initiated, and whether the approaches taken provide value for money.
- e) Based on the learning from this review, identify good practice and areas which are going less well, and why. Make recommendations for adjustment to current work and for consideration in the design of a second phase. In particular, what good practice could be scaled-up, what activities need to be reconsidered, what new ideas should be considered?

Since adjustments have been made to the logical framework during and since the inception phase, the mission, using the DFID format, will review progress of the programme against outputs and purpose as set out in the latest available version of the logframe dated June 2011.

### **Recipients of the review:**

Steering Committee of the Rural Growth Programme (led by Government of Tajikistan, including DFID and RGP implementing partners) are the primary recipients

Other donors engaged in rural development will also be interested in the report

### **Existing Information Sources**

RGP Inception report and technical annexes  
RGP progress report January 2011  
RGP annual review field report February 2011  
RGP annual review report June 2011  
RGP Annual Progress Report for DFID, June 2011  
Minutes of the RGP Steering Committee meetings

Etc...

### **Methodology**

The review team will be briefed by DFID Head of Office and DFID Tajikistan. They will work closely with implementing partners in the programme to ensure that all major areas of programme work are covered by the review. This will include field visits. Management of the consultancy will be led by the Programme Manager, DFID Tajikistan, and advisory support will be led by the Rural Growth Adviser, DFID Tajikistan.

The team will provide an initial feedback to DFID Tajikistan, then to the RGP team, and finally to the programme Steering Committee

Since a wide range of stakeholders will be interested in the outcome of the review, the consultants are encouraged to document case studies of particular interest

which can be presented as stand alone examples of lessons learnt, both of positive and negative experience.

Timetable:

The review will be of up to 21 days duration, starting on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011

Date	No of days	Activity	Key people to meet
	1	Pre departure literature review	
2-3 <sup>rd</sup> October		Travel to Dushanbe	
3 <sup>rd</sup> October (pm)	0.5	Meeting with local consultant	
4 <sup>th</sup> October	0.5	Initial meeting with DFID Tajikistan	Bill Kilby, Gaia Allison, Shuhrat Rajabov, Sobir Kurbanov, Shahlo Rahimova
4 <sup>th</sup> october	0.5	Meeting with RGP senior team and submission of work and travel plan	Pascale Bonzom, Gulbahor Nematova, yusuf Kurbonkhojaev, Manuchehr Rahmonov Bernd Benning, Zarina Kasimova, Uwe Munzert, Beate Schoreit, Zohir Navjavonov
5 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> October	2	Other Initial meetings Dushanbe, further documents etc	Umed Davlatzod, Olimov, Nurinisso Rustamova, Farhod (AMFOT)
	8	Field Visits	Suyunkhon Rustamov, Heads of the two MLFs, DDPs, BACs, VTIs, Service providers, Agro-processors, farmers, women entrepreneurs, Business Associations
	2	Dushanbe Meetings	Alisher Faromuzov, Temur Tabarov
25 <sup>th</sup> october	1	Initial pulling together of findings and recommendations and consultation with DFID	
26 <sup>th</sup> october	1	Feedback to DFID (adjustments)	
27 <sup>th</sup> October	1	Feedback to RGP (adjustments)	
28 <sup>th</sup> October	1	Feedback to Steering Committee and a short summary document	
		Return travel from Dushanbe	

	2	Post departure full report	
No later than November 12th		Final Report submission to DFID	
Total in-country days	17		
Total pre/post departure days	3		

### **Skills and qualifications**

The review team will comprise two experts. The International Team Leader will be responsible for pulling together the final report and submitting it to DFID:

#### ***International Team Leader:***

- Extensive experience of undertaking multi-donor evaluations and reviews (essential)
- Technical background in markets for the poor, agriculture led growth, private sector; financial services (essential);
- Ability to make recommendations focused on results and impact, with a strong understanding of value for money concepts (essential)
- Knowledge of CIS, preferably Central Asia region (desirable)
- Effective communicator and report writer (essential)
- Russian language (desirable)

#### ***National Consultant:***

- Extensive experience of undertaking multi-donor evaluations and reviews (essential)
- Technical expertise in local governance, local private sector issues. (essential)
- A good understanding of relevant legislation ( e.g. microfinance law, land reform and code, tax and business reform)
- Knowledge of financial services sector in Tajikistan, particularly microfinance (desirable)
- Ability to communicate effectively in English (desirable)

Both team members should have skills and experience in handling qualitative and quantitative data.

### **Logistics**

The team will be responsible for arranging and managing their logistics independently (transport, translation etc).

Programme implementation partners will compile all relevant documentation for the team

Field work should be for at least 8 days, and should ensure that visits are made to Zarafshan and other parts of Sughd Province

### **Outputs**

- A detailed work plan – by end of day 2 in-country.
- A draft report – by end of day 15 highlighting key findings and recommendations.
- A power point presentation, highlighting key findings and recommendations, for partners (e.g. GoT, UNDP, GIZ, AKF, IOM), which will be delivered in a Steering Committee Meeting, to communicate results to donor and government partners –by end of day 15.
- A review report in DFID format, illustrating progress towards targets of the logframe revised in June 2011- by end of day 20.
- A final narrative report by no later than 12<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The report should be no more than 30 pages (excluding annexes) in MSOffice format. It should include an executive summary (no more than 2 pages) and a table summarising all recommendations referenced to the main text by paragraph and/or page number for ease of reference. Recommendations should be prioritised and clearly differentiated between recommendations for adjustment/improvement to the existing programme, and recommendations for consideration in future design.

### **Reporting and contracting arrangements**

Contracting Lead: Gulnora Mukhamadieva, DFID Tajikistan

Advisory Lead: Gaia Allison, DFID Tajikistan

Management Lead: Shuhrat Rajabov, DFID Tajikistan

### **Budget (for DFID purposes only)**

Up to £25,000 available