

Asia – Pacific Forest Policy Think Tank

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*'Snatching success from the jaws of failure'*

**A COMMUNITY FORESTRY**

**COMPONENT IN A**

**RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN**

**TAJIKISTAN**

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# Background

- The forestry sector in Tajikistan is tiny and is characterized by recent and significant loss of natural forest over most of the country.
- Severe and continuing degradation of remaining forests and soil erosion of sloping land is widespread. Fuelwood cutting and overgrazing contribute greatly to the degradation of soils and forests.
- Most rural communities rely heavily on trees and forests for fuelwood and on forestland / rangeland for livestock grazing, also for various non-wood forest products.



A treeless mountain landscape in Tajikistan



Livestock grazing a mostly treeless slope



A semi-arid and mostly treeless mountain landscape

## Vision:

- Ecologically sustainable mountain lands through the restoration of a biologically diverse plant cover and improved pasture and livestock management.

## A strategy for developing forestry in the community:

- Enduring community cooperation in land use and business-oriented investment in agroforestry that will gradually increase financial incomes for farmers.

***A strategy for  
developing  
forestry in the  
community***

1. Increased  
community  
awareness  
about  
agroforestry

2. Clarify  
legal rights of  
farmers about  
forestry land

3. Long-term  
land tenure to  
farmers for  
forestry  
investment

4. Formation  
& operation of  
Pasture User  
Groups

5. Training  
officials &  
farmers about  
agroforestry

6. Promote  
agroforestry  
to support  
better fodder  
production

7. Financial  
support for  
forestry in the  
community

8. Mountain  
closure for  
land  
rehabilitation

9. Multiple  
use tree  
planting by  
farmers

# Apparently successful components of the forestry development strategy

- Increasing *community awareness and knowledge about agroforestry* concepts and practices was achieved through training activities, community discussions and the formation of pilot-scale demonstrations of various agroforestry models.
- *Legal rights* of farmers about forestry land was clarified.

- ◆ *Promotion of agroforestry to support better fodder production for livestock* based on demonstrations of various models considered to be ecologically and socially relevant.
- ◆ *Multiple-use of trees was demonstrated* by the establishment of small-scale orchards.

A small agroforestry demonstration incorporating trees for shelter & NWFP, linked to grass/hay production



# Unsuccessful elements of the community forestry development strategy - 1

- *No long-term land tenure to farmers* for investment in and the development of agroforestry activities.
- The *forestry / agroforestry component was overlooked, or avoided*, in the operation of Pasture User Groups; grazing continues to be the dominant land use interest of farmers.

# Unsuccessful elements of the community forestry development strategy - 2

- Only *limited financial support* was provided for *forestry and agroforestry in local communities*. Funding was insufficient to really “make a difference” to the wider acceptance of agroforestry as a mainstream component of rural land use.
- *Mountain closure for land rehabilitation* was not *successful* through a lack of commitment by officials and local communities.

# Main lessons learned - 1

- *All components in a sustainable land management project are important.* In particular, forestry / agroforestry, however small, needs to be considered in a balanced manner with respect to larger agricultural components.
- *Policies and programmes focusing on pastoral agriculture alone are unlikely to succeed in combating mountain land degradation.*

# Main lessons learned - 2

- *Forestry advisers need to contribute to the design and implementation of projects that are primarily agricultural in purpose.*
- *An agroforestry component in a predominantly agricultural land use pattern is desirable (or is necessary, depending on local circumstances) to*
  - increase land productivity within an ecologically sustainable management framework, or
  - to reverse land degradation and to conserve biodiversity.

# Main lessons learned - 3

- *Discussions by the agroforestry expert with local officials and farmers have had 'training value' leading to wider understanding of the meaning and benefits of forestry / agroforestry in rural land use.*
- *Training events such as workshops and small-scale field demonstrations of agroforestry practices have been positive and beneficial for increasing the knowledge and confidence of farmers and officials about agroforestry in the community.*

# Main lessons learned - 4

- The *forestry / agroforestry impact in this project could have been greater if more expert advisory time and funding had been provided in the project design for training and field demonstrations,*
  - to provide follow-up support in the management of practical field work, including reporting and extension of results , and
  - to make a stronger contribution in policy formulation concerning forestry in the community.