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AFGHANISTAN

September 5, 2012

Improving livelihoods and governance through natural resource management

This three-year project addresses biodiversity conservation issues and improves natural resource management in the Wakhan corridor in Badakhshan Province and the Hazarajat plateau in Bamiyan Province. The project goal is to build Afghanistan's capacity to conserve and sustainably manage its natural resources, to improve the livelihoods of the rural poor in northeast and central Afghanistan, and to strengthen linkages between local communities and regional and national government institutions. The objectives are to a) strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock to effectively deliver services by providing on-the-job training to national and provincial-level agricultural and natural resource management extension agents; b) initiate community livelihood development by securing sustainable sources of direct economic benefits to local communities; c) create and strengthen community governance institutions so that rural communities can sustainably manage and profit from their resources, and link those community governance institutions with the corresponding national government agencies responsible for resources management, thus expanding the government's reach into the countryside and extending the rule of law; d) provide legislative strengthening of laws, policies, and institutions to support resource management and ensure revenue sharing from resource development; and e) build capacity to manage the health interface among livestock, wildlife, and people. This three-year project conserves biodiversity and improves natural resource management in the Wakhan Corridor, in Badakhshan province in the north-east of Afghanistan; and the Band-e-Amir National Park and the Hazarajat Plateau, in Bamiyan province in central Afghanistan. Its goal is to build Afghanistan's capacity to conserve and sustainably manage its natural resources; , to boost rural livelihoods, and to strengthen the linkages between local communities and regional and national government institutions. The project will provide on-the-job training to national- and provincial-level agricultural and natural resource management extension officials, thereby strengthening the capacity of Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), and the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA). It will identify sustainable sources of employment and other economic opportunities for local communities. ; it creates new and strengthens existing local governance bodies institutions and links them with the corresponding national agencies responsible for natural resources management; it also strengthens Afghanistan's laws and institutions in ways that support natural resource management and ensures revenue sharing between government and local communities.

OBJECTIVES

Its goal is to build Afghanistan's capacity to conserve and sustainably manage its natural resources; , to boost rural livelihoods, and to strengthen the linkages between local communities and regional and national government institutions.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Build technical capacity for natural resource management at all levels (national, provincial, district, community)
- Facilitate community livelihood development by securing sustainable sources of direct monetary benefits to local communities (e.g. employment)
- Create and strengthen community governance institutions
- Strengthen laws, policies, and institutions affecting natural resource management
- Build capacity to manage the health interface between livestock, wildlife, and humans
- Support the Environment Education Program in both Wakhan and Band-e-Amir
- Support community rangers of Wakhan with equipment and training
- Recruit, train, and equip new community rangers in the northern plateau region of Bamyan
- Support Bamyan MAIL and National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA) at a provincial level regarding all activities in Band-e-Amir national park

RESULTS TO DATE

- Continuing support to the Environmental Education Program in both Wakhan and Band-e-Amir
- Continuing support to the community rangers of Wakhan and Pamir with equipment and training.
- Recruitment, training and equipping of 14 community rangers and recruitment of 4 new rangers from the local communities in the northern plateau region of Bamyan.
- Band-e-Amir national park management plan and the relevant collaborative management agreement approved and signed by BAPAC members.
- Completed construction of 6 predator-proof corrals in Wakhan to combat stock deaths caused by predators.
- Continue overseeing the development of the headquarters complex in Band-e-Amir.
- A facilities zone plan was completed for the main visitor area of Band-e-Amir National Park, translated to Dari and delivered to MAIL and NEPA.
- Continuing support to Bamyan MAIL and National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) at a provincial level regarding all activities in Band-e-Amir national park.
- Continuing the experimental livestock insurance program in Wakhan for predator related stock losses.
- Big Pamir Wildlife Reserve Management Plan drafted and approved by local communities in Wakhan district of Badakhshan.
- Total number of 3731 animals vaccinated and 1072 animals were blood tested in Big and Small Pamirs and the Wakhan Corridor as part of a our livestock health survey.
- Per community request, winter English and mathematics classes sat up in Band-e-Amir
- Biodiversity assessments made in Darwaz and Shar-e-Buzurg areas of Badakhshan.
- Environmentally themed Parents Day ceremonies were held at 18 schools of Band-e-Amir and Wakhan.
- The Noshaq conservation agreement has been signed and approved by the Qazi Deh community, the WPA and WCS.
- 550 Fuel-efficient stoves distributed to the local beneficiaries in Band-e-Amir and Wakhan villages and 920 women have been trained so far for installation and use of the stoves.
- Demarcation of the strict protection zone boundary around the Band-e-Amir lakes has been successfully completed by the Band-e-Amir Community Association (BACA)