



Project: Poverty Alleviation by Mitigation of Integrated high mountain Risk

“PAMIR”

April (1) 2012

## Information bulletin #5

A **Regional Steering Committee (RSC)** meeting was conducted by Hilfswerk Austria International on 29-30th of March 2012 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The main goal of the RSC was to provide a platform, which supports to coordinate the project activities and enhance the cooperation with other projects/ initiatives in the target regions. In total, the RSC consists of 13 members, representatives from the Committee for Environmental Protection under the government of Tajikistan, Department of Geology under the government of Tajikistan, State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry of the Kyrgyz Republic, Ministry for Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic, European Delegation to Kyrgyzstan, National Environmental Protection Agency of Afghanistan, Badakhshan Provincial Disaster Management Committee, Afghanistan, PALM project and other PAMIR project partner organizations.



During the meeting, all project activities were screened and important issues such as national action plans, cross border meetings were discussed and made some practical decisions. In general, the RSC meeting was quite productive, as we could learn about the project achievements and gaps for further improvements. Furthermore, it was useful in terms of knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences among three different countries. Hence, it was agreed to hold the second RSC meeting in Bishkek at the end of October, 2012.



In order to disseminate the recent activities the PAMIR project and outcomes of RSC meeting, we organized a press café for the Tajik Media. The journalists from the national news programme “Jakhonnamo”, newspapers “Nigoh” and “Asia Plus” were attended and some articles and video clips were developed and distributed. Moreover, at the end of the meeting, a short excursion was organized to the Ismaili Center of the Aga-Khan Foundation.

A **Mid Term Expert Meeting** entitled “Linking Knowledge to Policy and Action: Gap analysis on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Environmental Protection and Poverty Alleviation” was organized between from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of April at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna, with the Hilfswerk Austria International, Austria/Tajikistan, Focus Humanitarian Assistance in Tajikistan/Afghanistan and the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP), Kyrgyzstan.



The main goal of this meeting was to explore and integrate the on-going activities of PAMIR project that how multi-disciplinary approaches are promoting the sustainable environmental management through investigation and mitigation of high mountain hazards and poverty alleviation and integrating such activities for formulating and developing national and a regional strategy plan in the regions. This initiated meeting included various presentations from 10 different countries, input presenters, key note speakers, stakeholders and experts in the field, which was form the basis for different thematic sessions by 37 participants.



The three days meeting was conducted in an interactive way including one day excursion to the Austrian natural hazards and Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) afforestation plots and two days workshop with plenary sessions and the world café. As a result, the participants shared and discussed their understanding and enhanced the knowledge in integrating DRR, poverty and environmental sustainability within the context of the PAMIR project.

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**Focus Humanitarian Assistance**, Afghanistan's PAMIR project team carried out a round table meeting for the stakeholders of Wakhan district on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2012. The stakeholders including the representatives from District Administration, District Council, 5 Village Development Councils of the project target villages, community elders and INGOs participated in the meeting. The main goal of this meeting was to share/transfer the information of the Village Disaster Management Plans (VDMP) of 5 targeted villages from the Wakhan District which was prepared based on Hazard and Social Vulnerability Risk Assessment (HSVRA) in 2011. The participants also discussed about the PAMIR project activities and the gaps and opportunities.



During the discussion some practical questions were raised to include other more vulnerable villages. For instance, why you would cover only 5 villages in Wakhan district while it's more vulnerable than Ishkashim where you are addressing 8 villages? Similarly, another question came up as how could communities safeguard themselves by plantation activities only especially in cases where there are big chances of huge rock falls?



At the end of the meeting all participants supported the approach to use plantation/forestation as mitigation measure and gave a list of recommendations. For example, the plantation initiatives should be intensified; it would be helpful to give small boats and ropes to trained communities to enhance their resource materials in their stockpiles. It was also recommended that FOCUS establish stockpiles in different locations rather than one to enhance the effective use of these stockpiles and speed up the response measures. The project was very much appreciated and welcomed. Further, the participants wished the project had also practical interventions for these structural mitigation measures.

**On February 16, 2012 Kyrgyzstan** Mountain Societies Development Support Program (MSDSP KG, an initiative of the Aga Khan Foundation) within the framework of the PAMIR project, signed a four-lateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ministry of Emergency Situation (MoES), Kyrgyz Institute of Geological Engineering Research (KIGER) and Kyrgyz Geological Expedition for Southern Region (KGESR). The signing of the Memorandum launched the close cooperation between these partners in the preparation and conduct of activities to strengthen preparedness for and reduce risks of natural disasters. The parties will work together on the assessment of geological hazards, socioeconomic vulnerability of communities and environmental sustainability in Chong-Alai and high altitude communities of Alai districts in Osh oblast, Kyrgyzstan.



On February 24, 2012, the PAMIR project team organized the meeting entitled "Improved coordination among PAMIR project partners" in Osh city, where representatives from MoES, KIGER and KGESR discussed the project assessment methodology and plans. In the meeting, the participants agreed to establish a Project Expert Group on the basis of the signed four-lateral MoU. As a result of this meeting, the Expert Group was created and the main objective of the Expert Group is to guide the PAMIR project assessments and improve the relevance and impact of the project activities.



From March 11 to 15, 2012, the international coordinator of the PAMIR project, Ms. Gulnaz Jalilova, and MSDSP KG PAMIR project team visited the target communities in Chong-Alai district. During this field trip MSDSP KG, Hilfswerk Austria (HWA), and the Chong-Alai Leshoz (Local Forestry Enterprise) discussed about the demonstrative plots (community based nursery and plantation with fruit tree species) and their implementation in Chon-Alay in 2012. The aim of these demonstrative plots is to promote afforestation activities among local communities in order improve their livelihoods and to sustain the local landscape.

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