



**Tajikistan: Understanding the Nexus of Migration,
Gender, Climate Change and Agriculture
2019-2023**

IOM Tajikistan

Brief Background

Climate change is already impacting the lives and livelihoods of people in the Republic of Tajikistan and is projected to increasingly do so in the future. Warming climatic conditions are expected to significantly alter Tajikistan's hydrodynamic parameters, and the frequency of major droughts is forecast to increase. These changes will adversely affect various activities associated with the agricultural sector, which provides livelihoods for much of the rural population. It is expected that people will respond to climate change impacts with a combination of *in-situ* and *ex-situ* strategies, including migration. At the same time, outmigration (both internal and international) is a defining characteristic of Tajikistan's society, and the remittances sent by migrants is important to the national economy and many families staying behind. While a considerable share of remittances is used on food, consumer goods, healthcare and education, only a limited amount is spent on climate change adaptation measures. As more men from rural areas of this region seek employment opportunities away from home, women will need to manage new challenges, including adverse impacts of climate change. There is limited understanding of how women staying behind respond to the challenges arising from out-migration of male family members and their ability to adapt to climate change.

Project Summary

Tajikistan's southern Khatlon region is a predominantly rural society vulnerable to slow-onset hazards, particularly droughts and severe water shortages. The region is semi-arid, and 80 per cent of the land is prone to erosion¹. Moreover, climate change impacts are likely to be exacerbated by underlying factors of vulnerability. For example, vulnerability to climatic and environmental stressors is shaped by gender roles and responsibilities. Recognizing that women staying behind are powerful agents of change and leaders in their families and communities, the project aims to, first, ensure the climate change adaptation needs of women staying behind in the Khatlon region are met. Second, the project aims to ensure migration is mainstreamed in the Government of Tajikistan's climate change policy and programming. This will be achieved by first generating evidence on the role of capacity development interventions for women staying behind in enhancing adaptation in remittance recipient households through an action research.

At the same time, the action research will allow the project to begin raising awareness amongst government stakeholders on the importance of migration in the context of climate change adaptation. These activities will engage academics, government, international agencies, and civil society stakeholders to position migration challenges and opportunities within the climate change discourse and equip the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) and the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Population (MoLMEP) to engage in the global policy discussions.

¹ Bann C., Shukurov R., Boziev L., Rakhmatova D. UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative Final Report: The Economics of Land Degradation for the Agricultural Sector in Tajikistan – A Scoping Study. 2012. Available at [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/tajikistan/docs/projects/PEI/Economics%20of%20Land%20Degradation%20Report%20ENG%20pre-final%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/tajikistan/docs/projects/PEI/Economics%20of%20Land%20Degradation%20Report%20ENG%20pre-final%20(2).pdf)

Synergies



- 1) "Tajikistan: Understanding the Nexus of Migration, Gender, Climate Change and Agriculture" contributes directly towards SDG 5 on gender equality (targets 5.4), SDG 13 on climate action (targets 13.1, 13.3) and SDG 17 (target 17.14).
- 2) The project contributes towards IOM's Migration Governance Framework Principles 1, 2 and 3.
- 3) The project is aligned with the objectives of IOM's Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021-2030, IOM's Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia 2020-2024 and IOM's Central Asia Regional for Strategy 2021-2025.

Major Partnerships

Government entities

IOM coordinates with the Republic of Tajikistan's Agency for Hydrometeorology of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP), Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Population (MoLMEP), the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), and the Committee on Women and Family Affairs (CoWFA).

National partners

IOM works with a national research agency for the research activities and with Shifo, a local NGO partner in the Shahrituz district for the community and household-level activities and the monitoring of project sites. Two national consultants have contributed to the curricula on financial literacy and climate change adaptation capacity building.

External collaboration

IOM is a participant in the Development Coordination Council (DCC) on climate change, where it promotes project objectives with other major stakeholders active in the climate change sector. IOM will continue to engage with key climate change projects being implemented during the same period to ensure that research design takes into account ongoing activities by other actors.

The Action Research Component

The action research (AR) is conducted in a collaborative manner that creates and measures change in an iterative manner with the intention of not just solving a problem, but also to identify ways to improve skills, practices, and strategies to do things better. The AR aims to address the following research question: *How do capacity development interventions shape behavioural change among women staying behind to support climate change adaptation in remittance-recipient households in drought prone areas?* The project established action research sites in selected jamoats of Khatlon region where water scarcity is a growing problem. In absence of their spouses, the women staying behind manage their household resources and risks from environmental hazards, including the adverse impacts of climate change. The participants in the research sites are receiving practical support (e.g. financial literacy and climate change adaptation trainings and in-person and phone text message-based extension services) to manage drought risks.

A baseline survey was conducted in spring 2021. The findings from this survey indicate that while over half of the respondents save money, they do so primarily to deal with medical emergencies, to purchase food and to pay for utilities. There is little investment of the savings on measures to address drought risks. The action research has an experimental design. One group of women participate in the village-level trainings on financial literacy and climate change adaptation and will have access to in-person advisory services. A second group of women participate in the village-level trainings on financial literacy and climate change adaptation and will be receiving phone text-based advisory. Based on the capacity development, each participant will be developing a household-level climate change adaptation plan and a plan to finance their short-term, medium-term and long-term adaptation needs. Changes in beneficiaries' behaviour will be compared with that of a control group.

The Policy Component

To ensure national, district and local government representatives engage with the issues, are aware of, and support the research; the project has convened a steering committee and briefed stakeholders to raise awareness of the project and its outcomes. The project has been conducting MECC briefing sessions for mid-to-senior level officials in the MoLMEP, MoA, CEP, and CoWFA, and will be organizing a stakeholder study visit to the research sites. The project will also organize a migration, environment and climate change (MECC) capacity development workshop for mid-level government officials from relevant ministries to sensitize them to the interlinkages of the MECC nexus.

The project has undertaken a mapping and analysis to better understand the extent to which the migration, environment and climate change nexus is integrated into existing laws, policies and strategies related to environmental degradation, climate change, disaster risk reduction, sustainable development, agriculture, rural development, urban development, gender and human mobility in Tajikistan. For example, the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy recognized migration as a cross-cutting theme². The provides a basis for mainstreaming the migration, environment and climate change nexus into the national planning processes related to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (SFDRR 2015-2030), 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

² Government of Tajikistan (2019/482). National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030. Dushanbe: GoT.

Main Project Activities

Project outcome: Enhanced evidence-based knowledge and capacities address the nexus of migration, gender, climate change and agriculture in Tajikistan.

Output 1.1: Research on the nexus of migration, gender, climate change, and agriculture is available to guide policy development.



Conduct meetings with district and jamoat-level government representatives to share project objectives and ensure cooperation.



Conduct baseline and endline surveys in the research sites in the Khatlon district to assess the impacts of capacity development Interventions.



Conduct village-level financial literacy and climate change adaptation trainings for women beneficiaries.



Provide women beneficiaries with in-person and phone text message-based advisory service on financial literacy and climate change adaptation.

Output 1.2: National stakeholders have an increased understanding of migration, environment and climate change with a special focus on gender issues.



Conduct a mapping and analysis of relevant policies, laws and strategies in Tajikistan.



Conduct MECC briefing sessions for mid-to-senior MoLMEP, MoA, CEP and CoWFA representatives.



Three-day MECC training for mid-level government stakeholders to sensitize them to the MECC nexus.



Conduct a sustainability and exit plan meeting with relevant project stakeholders to discuss forwards steps post-project.

Interested to know more?

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