



DRAFT - Concept Note

Study Tour to Tajikistan: EPFL team

Background

Since 2003 the Switzerland is supporting [Tajikistan](#) in the field of [Disaster Risk Reduction](#). Over the past decade the cooperation evolved from response preparedness and risk management to reducing the root causes of the natural disasters. Since 2011 SDC is funding a [pilot initiative](#) on Integrated Watershed Management (IWSM) in Muminabad, where different natural resource management techniques (incl. sustainable land management) are applied to increase population's livelihoods and reduce the risk of flash floods by reversing the land erosion and degradation processed (more info on the project).

Based on the successful experience of the piloted initiatives, the SDC expanded application of IWSM to other areas through larger Swiss-funded projects on water resource management and livelihoods improvement. These include interventions in [Rasht Valley](#) and Sughd and [GBAO](#) Provinces of Tajikistan.

In 2014 representatives of the EPFL (Ecole Polytechnique de Lausanne) established contacts with the SCO – Tajikistan, exploring the option for the third-grade students to visit the country and get familiarized with the Swiss-funded projects in the field of environment protection, water resource management, agriculture and DRR. The SCO and EPFL agreed to have such a Study Tour in July 2015, having 17 representatives of the EPFL (15 students + 2 professors) visiting Tajikistan.

Objectives

The Study Tour will enable the EPFL students to get acquainted with the Swiss-funded development and humanitarian initiatives in Tajikistan and familiarize with practical implementation of a set of natural resource management techniques in developing/transition contexts.

List of possible topics for the Study Tour may include:

- Integrated Watershed Management as a DRR tool;
- Conservation Agriculture
- Basic energy efficiency solutions at household level;
- Improved pasture management and rotational grazing in the context of low-productive pastures;
- Flash floods risk reduction: structural mitigation measures to;
- Reforestation;
- Glacial Lakes Outburst Flooding (GLOF): Assessing the Risk and Early Warning;
- Management of natural resources in mountainous areas in the context of changing climate and reducing glaciers;
- Role of women in effective management of natural resources and watershed governance etc;

The knowledge gained is expected to be used by the students in their further studies, development of master thesis etc.

Implementation

The EPFL team is expected to arrive in the first week of July and stay in Tajikistan for 10 days. During this period the team will visit project sites of the SDC partners in Muminabad, South Khatlon (CARITAS project on IWSM, Oxfam project on Drinking Water, AKHS project on primary healthcare) and in GBAO (AKF/MSDSP/FOCUS, projects on drinking water supply and GLOF monitoring).

The **EPFL** will be responsible for arranging travel to and from Tajikistan, assuring funding coverage for food and accommodation of the visitors, **develop ToRs for the Study Tour** and related group works/training schedules for the students.

The **SCO** in Tajikistan will support the team with visa requests and in-country permits, develop a detailed visit programme and organize field visits to the project sites, provide the in-country transportation and provide personnel to accompany the visitors in the field.

Preliminary programme of the Study Tour

NOTE: Due to extended number of visitors the team most likely will be split in two groups and have parallel site visits in Muminabad and GBAO.

DAY	ACTIVITY
D1	Arrival to Dushanbe, welcome and briefing by SCO, sightseeing, dinner.
D2	Travel to Muminabad, Visit to project sites, Departure to GBAO.
D3	
D4	
D5	Travel to Khorog (GBAO)
D6	Project visits of AKF/MSDSP and Focus in GBAO. Possible trip to Murghab and Ishkashim.
D7	
D8	
D9	Travel from GBAO to Dushanbe
D10	Debriefing in SCO and sightseeing in Dushanbe
D11	Flight back to Switzerland

Resources required

The SCO will cover the costs related to the logistics in country via its Small Actions Grant Programme in the amount of CHF 1'500 (approx.. estimation, detailed budget will be developed at the later stage).

Locations to be visited during the field visits (marked with red)

