



CASE STUDY

Sturdier Dam Leads to Better Harvests

Rehabilitated diversion dam improved irrigation of land, reduced conflicts over water.



The rehabilitated diversion dam safely delivers water to 550 hectares of rice plantations in Burgondu Village, Kadamjai District. Photo: Winrock

“The assistance from the American people helped us to resolve one of our biggest irrigation issues. Before the repair of the dam we could not count on receiving a good yield.”

- Nazar Satybaldiev, WUA Burgondu-Suu Council Chairperson

Challenge

One of the biggest rice plantations in Burgondu Village, Kadamjai Region is irrigated by Otukchu On-Farm Canal that draws water from Soh River. Despite its high banks, the river has low level of water far from sufficient to feed Otukchu at the levels that are needed to irrigate more than 500 hectares of land adjacent rice fields. To divert more water into the canal, each year, the Burgondu-Suu Water Users Association, which manages the Otukchu canal, built a primitive dam using wood and clay. This kind of construction cost the community about 300,000 soms, but was usually washed off by the floods. The community tried to raise funds from the local administrations, but the amounts they were able to obtain were not sufficient for a permanent dam. To make the matters worse, the farmers did not feel that the water in the canal was fairly shared between the water users, and the community was suffering from endless conflicts.

Initiative

To solve this acute problem for its members, the Burgondu-Suu Water Users Association requested the USAID Water Users Associations Support Program (WUASP) to assist in constructing a diversion dam. USAID granted nearly \$57,000 for construction materials (stone, gravel, sand, cement) and transportation. The community committed to contribute labor, estimated at more than \$46,000; the province, district, and village administrations also pitched in with contributions. Soon, the association had erected a 250-meter long diversion dam that stood 6 meters high and 4 meters wide. With a capacity of 1,000 liters per second, the new diversion dam is able to provide sufficient amounts of water to irrigate 550 hectares of land and benefit 1,800 residents in the community.

Results

With the newly constructed diversion dam supplying enough water for irrigation, the farmers in Burgondu are able to grow a much better harvest. If in 2007 and 2008, the yields averaged 25-30 tons per hectare, in 2009, the farmers harvested 40 tons of rice per hectare. With assistance from the USAID project, the association improved the water distribution processes for its members, thus eliminating the cause for disputes over water. *“The benefits of the USAID program became obvious this fall. The average rice productivity was increased to 62%,”* said Nazar Satybaldiev, Chairperson of the Burgondu-Suu Association’s Council.

The association also received an additional grant from the USAID-funded project, which the community will use for repairing an irrigation canal. Once the renovation is complete, it will return into production 400 hectares of abandoned land and give 900 people an opportunity to increase their incomes.