

Technical Assistance to sector policy support programme in the social protection sector - Social targeting component, Tajikistan

Assignment	The objective of the project is to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population in the Republic of Tajikistan to reform the system of social benefits and privileges.
Client	Government of Tajikistan
Financing Agency	European Union (DCI)
Partners	BMB, ECO, Silk Road (TJ)
Composition of Team	<i>BMB Mott MacDonald</i> : Team Leader, Economist, Research Economist <i>Partner(s)</i> : Deputy Team Leader, 2 Junior Long-Term Consultants
Period of Assignment	From October 2009 to June 2011 Staff months: BMB Mott MacDonald: 33; Partner(s): 2.0
Contract value	BMB Mott MacDonald: € 600,100 Partner(s): € 299,000
Background	The Tajik social protection system has not undergone any significant changes since Tajikistan gained independence. The current system is costly, while it does not provide support to all that are in need. In other words, there is too much leakage in the system. A visible legacy from the Soviet past is the system of privileges aimed at specific categories of employees and specific categories of citizens. The Government of Tajikistan has thus concluded that it needs to increase the effectiveness of the social assistance system and limit the scope of those who benefit from the system to the poorest and most vulnerable of the population.
Description of project	The project will focus on the improvement of targeting and effectiveness of the social benefits and privileges system in the Republic of Tajikistan. Under the first component, the project will support MLSP in the development and testing of a new, more targeted and effective design of a social benefit system for the poor. In the second component, the project will advise MLSP on reducing the number of poorly targeted social privileges and on increasing transparency and effectiveness of remaining privileges.
Services provided	The consultants will work with an Inter-Ministerial Working Group to design a new unified Social Assistance Benefit Scheme that targets poor and vulnerable households. The advisory work will recommend how the system can be financed, what targeting techniques need to be deployed, and how the system can be implemented and administered. Pilot tests in several districts of the country will be organised before the new system is to be rolled out over the entire country. The consultants will also address the system of subsidies and privileges with recommendations on how the system can be overhauled, how certain

subsidies and privileges can be eliminated and converted into monetary form. The project strives to introduce one unified benefit that targets poor and vulnerable households, but is dependent on political support to carry through the reform.

Lessons Learned