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UZBEKISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Water Means Jobs for Villagers

Rehabilitated irrigation system brings cropland back into production, creates new jobs.



Today, farmer Azima Husenova is using all of her land for farming again, thanks to the USAID-funded Water Users Associations Support Program, implemented by Winrock International. For years, 10 hectares of Husenova's land in the Jondor Rayon, Bukhara Oblast was laying dormant due to waterlogging. Drainage ditches next to her lot were clogged, and the water used to drain into her field rendering it unusable.

In 2006, the USAID-funded program provided a grant for a backhoe to the Yurtim Istiqol Water User Association to which Husenova belonged. Using the new equipment, the association cleaned the drainage ditches next to Azima's farm. The improved drainage has enabled Azima increase her income from field crops from \$6,700 in 2005 to \$13,800 in 2006.

The cleaning of the drainage ditch next to Azima's farm was the first of several improvements to the irrigation system. The backhoe allowed the association to dig a new 2.5 kilometer-long canal that improved water deliveries at the end of the summer and allowed farmers to plant secondary high-value crops. "In the past, the land would be unused until next spring," says Azima. In 2006, she planted 2 hectares of watermelons and 5 hectares of beans after the wheat harvest was collected from the fields. "Thanks to improved irrigation I made an additional \$1,300 on watermelons and \$5,100 on beans," says the woman. Like Azima, 27 other farmers were able to plant crops after harvesting wheat and thus increased their farm incomes due to the new canal.

"USAID project helped me to plant more and increase my profits."

- Azima Khusenova, member of Yurtim Istiklol WUA in Buchara Oblast.

Improved farm productivity not only increases farmers' profits but also improved the local job market. Due to increased crop area and the ability to plant secondary crops, Azima was able to increase the number of her employees from nine in 2004, to 17 in 2007. Gulnara Kobilova, a farm worker in the Yurkim Istiqol WUA, says, "I am very happy to get job close to my home. Last year I had to go to big city to look for job. I left my family and missed my kids and home. Now I can stay with my family."