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USAID Tajikistan Rural Water Supply Activity

Year I Work Plan

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Acronyms

AMELP	Activity Monitoring Evolution and Learning Plan
APEA	Applied Political Economy Analysis
APS	Annual Program Statement
CAB	Community Advisory Board
CBO	Community Based Organization
COP	Chief of Party
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CU	Consumers Union of Tajikistan (subcontractor)
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DRS	Districts of Republican Subordination (central region of Tajikistan)
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
FO/HO	Field Office/Home Office
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GoT	Government of Tajikistan
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes, Perceptions
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LOP	Life of project
LTTA	Long-term Technical Assistance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRW	Non-Revenue Water
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPP	Private Public Partnerships
PSP	Private Sector Participation
RWS	Rural Water Supply
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
SUE KMK	Khojagii Manziliyu Kommunalii (national water utility)
TBD	To be defined
TSA	Transportation Services Agreement

Background

The USAID Rural Water Supply (RWS) Activity will provide a range of long- and short-term technical assistance, along with funding for small-scale construction and rehabilitation of drinking water systems, to support the Government of Tajikistan (GoT), specifically local governments, in providing sustainable drinking water services in unserved and under-served rural areas. The key goal is to identify and document successful implementation models that ensure the viability of the water service delivery beyond the life of the project.

To contribute to more equitable access, the activity will focus on unserved and underserved rural and peri-urban areas and encourage women and youth to participate in all aspects of implementation. To ensure that access improvements are sustained, the activity will target three mutually reinforcing intermediate results:

- **Objective 1:** Increase access to safely managed drinking water in rural Tajikistan through the rehabilitation/construction of small-scale infrastructure projects.
- **Objective 2:** Establish reliable and commercially viable drinking water services through improved management and access to finance.
- **Objective 3:** Increase engagement of communities in oversight and accountability of drinking water service providers.

The Tajikistan RWS Activity will be implemented by Chemonics International, working with local government, drinking water providers, and target communities to ensure reliable and sustainable drinking water services through capacity-building and private-sector partnerships.

This initial work plan:

- Presents our mobilization and start-up process
- Defines our initial assessment activities, including engaging and selecting local government authorities
- Describes planned tasks/interventions under each of the three objectives
- Explains how cross-cutting activities will be undertaken
- Provides a timeline for the implementation of tasks and the achievement of outputs

It is complemented by our monitoring, evaluation and learning plan, which provides our results framework, intended indicators, and annual targets.

Executive Summary

In Year 1, RWS will undertake a safe and timely launch of the project, taking into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic, and pave the way for supporting rural drinking water service providers. RWS will closely monitor the COVID-19 situation in the country, develop and act according to a mitigation plan based on various health and logistical factors and considerations.

From launch, RWS will:

- Conduct administrative start-up tasks, notably onboard and hire administrative and technical staff, register the project and identify office space
- Prepare and submit the first contractual deliverables. Consider and monitor the COVID-19 conditions to ensure the safety of staff, counterparts, and beneficiaries.
- Carry out a range of initial technical tasks, chiefly assessments to narrow down its geographic areas of focus and better define the project interventions
- Select a minimum of 3 rural drinking water systems for rehabilitation/upgrading of structures or equipment to address critical needs and blockages
- Develop and deliver an initial range of technical, financial, administrative and managerial training activities to water providers and local government officials and employees
- Approach the private sector to assess its interests in and expectations from engaging in rural drinking water delivery, identifying opportunities to leverage private investments
- Develop and deliver an initial range of technical, financial, and communication training activities to target communities, establish Community Advisory Boards with water providers and served communities, and also manage a grants program to raise awareness on water services and better water use practices.

Important note: The COVID-19 pandemic creates an unprecedented situation whereby direct interactions are discouraged among staff, and between staff and counterparts, partners, and beneficiaries. Chemonics' main offices in Washington DC and London have been closed since March, and the recent surge of COVID-19 cases worldwide have further increased the need for safe practices. While modern conferencing and communications tools allow teams to operate at almost full productivity, such tools are of course not readily available to local governments and communities in Tajikistan. We will use phones and other communication means as available.

Chemonics adopts creative approaches to continue effectively implementing USAID-funded activities while ensuring the safety of all involved. But COVID-19 definitely has an impact on the pace of implementation, notably during the initial presentation and assessment stages.

Our Vision

The RWS Activity is not a typical Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project, first because it does not involve any sanitation or hygiene interventions, and second because it does not aim to expand drinking water access to large numbers of previously underserved populations. RWS focuses instead on improving and expanding existing drinking water supply, and making it more reliable and sustainable.

The intent is to first strengthen existing drinking water providers to allow both GoT and other donors to focus on unserved rural areas, and second to promote Private Sector Participation not as a better management model but to attract financing to bridge the gaps between funding needs for drinking water supply and actual investments from GoT and donors. Such investments keep falling short of the needs and will probably keep doing so in the future regardless of GoT priorities.

An additional goal is to promote the accountability and transparency of technical and financial operations of drinking water providers, be they community-based, public or private entities, and equip communities to supervise and constructively interact with their providers.

It is worth noting that as mentioned in the RWS contract, we understand the term “rural” not in the literary sense of countryside, low population density, and mostly undeveloped land. RWS will focus on large villages and peri-urban areas with underserved or unserved communities, but with sufficient population density and incomes to ensure financial sustainability and possibly attract private investment. Until further assessment, the target size is thus settled areas with a population of 2,000 to 10,000 inhabitants. It is also our initial understanding that these are the areas where SUE KMK, the national water utility, is currently struggling with providing drinking water due to the difficulty to simplify and scale down its operations.

Likewise we understand the intent to promote Private Sector Partnerships not as an end in itself under the assumption that private operators operate better, but as an alternative model worth experimenting with to attract technical and financial resources to increase water supply coverage. It is nowadays commonly acknowledged that improving the delivery of a public service such as drinking water is not about privatization but about accountability and transparency, and about proper supervision and regulation since water utilities operate in a quasi-monopoly situation which prevents competition from driving improvement.

Finally, it is our intent to use RWS to provide Tajikistan with a legacy of technical and administrative professionals. We aim to staff RWS with a combination of seasoned and more junior personnel, confirm the former, empower the latter and most importantly encourage teamwork across ages and gender. We will encourage similar values of equity, inclusion and collaboration among partners, subcontractors, grantees, counterpart agencies and benefiting communities.

Guiding principles

In implementing tasks to achieve RWS' objectives, we will:

- Coordinate with other USAID and donor projects operating with similar or parallel goals in the target areas (see project list page 24)
- Ensure complementarity and synergy between RWS' three components (see list of Year I tasks hereafter)
- Focus resources and staffing at the local level, working in rural and peri-urban districts, and engaging jamoat authorities, local organizations, mahalla committees and local private operators
- Seek sustainability by catalyzing change instead of directly addressing all needs
- Achieve measurable impacts and scalable results
- Streamline Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (see also page 23)
- Practice adaptive management and facilitate collaborative learning, which is why one of our start-up tasks is to conduct an Applied Political Economy Analysis of the rural drinking water sector in Tajikistan

Start-up administrative tasks

Project registration. Chemonics has a representative office in Tajikistan as it has been operating in Tajikistan for many years. The RWS Activity is coordinating closely with its country representative and local Registration Specialist to identify a project office and register the RWS program with local authorities. The RWS Activity is coordinating closely with the USAID Read With Me program and Learn Together Activity to ensure Chemonics' country representative office registration is up to date, and is working with USAID and the tax authorities to secure VAT exemption.

Staff hiring and onboarding. Within one month of project start-up, RWS hired and onboarded the key staff approved by contract.

- RWS has also onboarded key operational staff. Other staff, both administrative and technical specialists, will be identified, hired and onboarded by end of the quarter.

Office identification and setup. RWS is investigating the availability and cost of renting appropriate office space. The actual leasing, furnishing, and opening of a project office will depend on the COVID-19 situation. Staff is initially working remotely and the actual convening of staff within a project office will only happen based on improving health conditions and on meeting the criteria set in the office opening plan that was prepared for RWS.

Systems setup. Within the first quarter, Chemonics will ensure that all staff are trained and well-versed on our internal policies and on abiding by USAID regulations. Staff will be trained on the use of Chemonics' specific software and of file sharing folders for project work.

Communications and branding. As part of onboarding, RWS ensures that each staff is familiar with communications protocol and branding and marking requirements.

Transportation Service Agreement (TSA). RWS will solicit quotes and competitively select a transportation firm to provide car rental services on a long-term basis to support RWS staff going to meetings and field visits, COVID-19 conditions allowing.

COVID-19 specific considerations. COVID-19 restrictions in the United States and Tajikistan related to travel and in-person gatherings are being taken into consideration and will be continuously monitored when planning, designing, implementing, monitoring, and reporting RWS interventions and operational mobilization. RWS has designed and continues to update an internal, project-specific procedures and office opening plan to ensure the safety of staff, counterparts, and beneficiaries.

Cross-sectoral deliverables and activities. As part of start-up activities, RWS will also produce the following plans and strategies to guide technical implementation:

- An Activity Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP) which complements the present Year I work plan
- An Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) to inspect all project interventions, scope their potential environmental and health impacts, define mitigating measures and ensure proper monitoring
- A Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) integration strategy to review the current biases based on gender, age, ethnic and/or religious differences, and propose actions to alleviate these throughout project intervention design and implementation while promoting GESI among counterparts, beneficiaries and partners.
- A Construction Implementation plan to define the process for designing, reviewing, awarding, and supervising rehabilitation interventions
- A grants manual to guide the advertising, award, and supervision of grants to NGOs and CBOs (under Objective 3)

Start-up administrative tasks	
Task Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Registration of project with local authorities • Staff hiring and onboarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Job advertising, CV review & pre-selection, interviews ○ Reference checks, salary negotiations & job offers ○ Onboarding, general (e.g. code of ethics) & specific training • Office identification and setup <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Office space identification & visits ○ Selection, lease negotiation & signing ○ Utilities setup, wiring & furnishing, equipment procurement • Systems setup <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff trained on USAID regulations and Chemonics policies ○ Finance systems set up • Communications and branding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff trained on communications rules and branding/marketing requirements • Transportation services agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TSA provider competitively selected • COVID -19 considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Office opening plan
Counterparts/Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Energy and Water Resources for project registration • Local tax authorities for VAT Exemption • Project office in Dushanbe
Task Leaders	RWS start-up efforts will be led by the COP and Operations Director with support from Chemonics PMU team and start-up

	specialist, as well as Chemonics' practice teams for communications, gender, and MEL
<p>Allocated Resources/Budget</p> <p><i>(Internal = FO LT staff, external = subcontracts, STTAs, HO, etc.)</i></p>	<p><u>Internal resources:</u> full-time of administrative team, ¼ time of COP</p> <p><u>External Resources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STTAs: local registration specialist, HO start-up specialist, MEL and EMMP specialists • PMU Director and Manager STTA
Milestones, Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project registered • All long-term staff onboarded • Deliverables and plans submitted on time • Office and systems setup
Expected Timeline	October 2020 to January 2021

Initial Technical Tasks

In preamble to the range of interventions that RWS will deploy to improve drinking water supply in Tajikistan, initial technical tasks focus on engaging counterpart organizations, selecting target water system and operators to be supported, and conducting various assessments on past Public Private Partnership (PPP) experiences and on political economy of the rural water supply sector in Tajikistan. Most of these tasks will be completed by Quarter 1 or beginning of Quarter 2.

Task 0.1 Engaging counterparts and other donors. RWS will engage a range of counterpart organizations, including but not limited to:

- Ministry of Energy and Water Resources
- SUE KMK
- Regional authorities in Khatlon, Sughd, and DRS (Districts of Republican Subordination),
- PPP center under the Committee of Investment and State Property Management
- District and jamoat authorities

RWS staff will introduce the project, explain its scope and objectives, gauge the willingness to collaborate and set up MOUs as appropriate to define coordination terms. In the following year, RWS will engage staff from these counterpart entities as trainers or trainees as appropriate and regularly meet to provide updates on RWS progress.

RWS will also approach other donors active in the water sector, including AKF, EBRD, JICA, SDC, UNDP. RWS staff will again introduce the project, explain its scope and objectives, and confirm the water sector activities of these other donors, seeking to avoid overlaps and to identify synergies for collaboration. RWS will also attend the quarterly water donor coordination meetings.

Task 0.2 Site selection. RWS is meant to work on a minimum of twelve water systems spread over a minimum of 5 districts. Upon start-up, RWS staff will review the initial selection of nine districts and concert with regional (oblast) authorities in Khatlon, Sughd, and DRS to define six target districts based on considerations such as demography, economic situation, current water supply coverage, potential for financial viability, interest/willingness of counterpart agencies, and potential for private sector engagement. We will then engage jamoat authorities to assess their willingness to collaborate and to inventory existing rural water systems (serving between 2,000 and 10,000 people). RWS will present and justify the district selection and the water system selection methodology in a Site Selection Plan which is due 90 days after award.

RWS will assess the capacity of existing rural water systems to choose 15-20 possible target systems that RWS will support over the course of the project. The capacity assessment process

will use a questionnaire to survey a wide range of topics: general information such as ownership and registration, technical information on infrastructure and equipment, operational procedures and efficiency (including non-revenue water), water treatment and monitoring, financial management, computerization and use of specific tools, communications and customer relationships, HR management, business planning, asset management, source protection and safety planning, etc. The mWater platform will be used to conduct the survey, compile and analyze its results.

Task 0.3 Applied Political Economy Analysis (APEA). In the initial quarter, RWS will conduct an APEA to better understand the current situation of rural drinking water supply in Tajikistan through:

- An inventory of relevant groups/actors (including women, youth and other marginalized groups), with their priorities, interests, and agendas
- An assessment of formal and informal “rules of the game.”, i.e. laws bylaws and policies along with socio-cultural customs that guide or restrain actors
- An analysis of power and the bargaining processes among relevant/involved groups
- An exploration of how these interactions and interests may impact intended development outcomes.

The goal of the APEA is to help RWS successfully navigate a complex political economy environment, that is to develop and implement interventions that will account for that environment, mobilize actors, address potential obstacles and leverage opportunities to achieve the project objectives. After an initial desk study, the actual process of the APEA requires to define interview questions, identify informants, conduct individual and group interviews and analyze results to draw guidance for design implementation and monitoring of project interventions.

Task 0.4 Assessment of existing private drinking water providers and past water PPP attempts. In the initial quarter, RWS will review past water PPP attempts (starting with the one piloted under the Local Governance project in Ghafurov) and assess their current situation, in terms of performance, profitability, sustainability, and potential to expand. RWS will also identify existing private operators (as part of the 0.2 inventory) and engage them to assess also their performance and perspective.

Task 0.5 Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey. In the initial quarter, RWS will conduct a KAP survey in target districts to collect baseline information and better understand water users’ knowledge, awareness and opinion regarding water supply services, covering notably water quality, water treatment, use and saving practices, possible participation in local water actions to improve water supply, and willingness to pay for drinking water.

This survey will help in the design of training and awareness raising interventions in target communities to change behaviors and build a dialogue and trusting relationship with water

supply providers. The actual process entails defining the survey questionnaire, choosing a representative sample, conducting the survey, and analyzing the results.

Task 0.6 Updating of Community Advisory Boards process. The Consumer Union of Tajikistan (CU) has been piloting the establishment of Community Advisory Boards (CABs) as a dialogue platform between drinking water providers and served communities. As a RWS partner, CU will assess the existing CABs to review and update its establishment and strengthening process for further dissemination under RWS.

Initial technical tasks	
Task Description	<p>0.1 Engaging counterparts and other donors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present project, explain scope and objectives, gauge willingness to collaborate • Set up MOUs with local authorities to define coordination terms • Identify donor synergies for collaboration • Regularly meet to report progress and coordinate <p>0.2 Site selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define criteria and select six target districts for intervention over life of project • Sign MOUs and coordinate with target districts • Convene jamoats, inventory and assess rural water systems • Select 15-20 possible target water systems <p>0.3 Applied Political Economy Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform desk study • Define interview questions, identify informants • Conduct interviews and focus groups • Analysis results and provide guidance for design implementation and monitoring of project interventions <p>0.4 Assessment of existing private drinking water providers and past water PPP attempts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review past PPP attempts • Identify and assess existing private operators <p>0.5 KAP survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define questionnaire, choose representative sample • Conduct survey • Analyze results and provide guidance <p>0.6 Updating of CAB process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess existing CABs • Update establishment and support process
Counterparts/ Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Energy and Water Resources • SUE KMK

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional authorities in DRS (Districts of Republican Subordination), Khatlon, and Sughd • District and jamoat authorities
Task Leaders	RWS technical team supported by partners and specific subcontractors as needed
Allocated Resources/Budget <i>(Internal = FO LT staff, external = subcontracts, STTAs, HO, etc.)</i>	<p><u>Internal Resources:</u> Full-time of technical team, ½ time of COP for first 3 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>External Resources:</u> Subcontracts with mWater, CU, PPP advisor firm, local survey firm • APEA consultant
Milestones, Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular coordination meetings with key counterparts and donors • MOUs with target districts/jamoats • Site selection plan • Recommendations from APEA • Findings from KAP survey • Improved CAB process
Expected Timeline	October 2020 to January 2021, see also timeline as Gantt Chart in Annex B

Activities by Objective

Objective 1: Increase access to safely managed drinking water in rural Tajikistan through the rehabilitation/construction of small-scale infrastructure projects

Interventions under Objective 1 aim to achieve the following results:

- Result 1.1¹: At least 35,000 people (approximately 5,000 households) gain new or improved access to safe drinking water as a result of USG assistance (USAID Standard F Indicators HL.8.1-1, HL.8.1-2 or HL.8.1-3)
- Result 1.2: At least 12 new or rehabilitated infrastructure handed over to local governments, with improved quality of drinking water service (measured by hours per day, reduction in non-revenue water, extension of piped network to serve additional customers, etc.)
- Result 1.3: At least 10 institutional settings (ex: schools, hospitals, primary health care facilities) gain access to a basic drinking water services as a result of USG assistance (HL.8.1-4)

During Year 1, RWS will select a minimum of 3 rural drinking water systems for rehabilitation/upgrading of structures or equipment to address critical needs/blockages and as an incentive to collaborate and seek to improve operational and management processes.

Task 1.1¹ Rehabilitate/upgrade three drinking water systems. As part of the initial capacity assessment of water systems (Task 0.2 Site Selection), RWS will assess the needs of possible target water systems. Within the target water systems eventually selected for capacity-building under Objective 2, RWS will short-list those whose operations can be easily improved through equipment replacement, refurbishing or structural rehabilitation. We will prioritize systems that have the most potential for improved operations, for expanded coverage (notably ensuring water supply to schools and health facilities), and with opportunities for private sector participation.

Under this task 1.1, RWS will select a minimum of three such systems in year 1, co-define the needed upgrading, ensure both environmental compliance and the proper authorizations to tender, award, and supervise the equipment procurement and installation or the rehabilitation/construction works. In preparation for these interventions, RWS will develop an Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (mentioned earlier) to identify and prevent or lessen possible environmental impacts, along with a simplified construction quality control plan.

In our discussions with other donor-funded projects and with potential private operators we will also seek to leverage funding to further repairs, refurbishing and rehabilitation works.

¹ Note that the numbering of tasks (per objective) is unrelated to the numbering of results. Moreover, a task may contribute to several results while a result may require several tasks.

Objective I Tasks	
Task Description	<p>I.1 Rehabilitate/upgrade three drinking water systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select minimum of three collaborating water systems • Co-define needed upgrading • Ensure both environmental compliance and proper work authorizations • Tender, award, and supervise equipment procurement and installation or rehabilitation/construction works
Implementation Notes	Objective I tasks will be carried out by RWS staff, while equipment procurement/installation and rehabilitation works will be done by local vendors and contractors
Counterparts/ Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District and jamoat authorities in target areas • 3 selected water systems
Task Leader(s)	RWS engineer and Procurement Officer, with support from Chemonics construction procurement specialists
Allocated Resources/Budget <i>(Internal = FO LT staff, external = subcontracts, STTAs, HO, etc.)</i>	<p><u>Internal Resources:</u> Full-time of RWS engineer, ¼ time of COP</p> <p><u>External Resources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcontracts with local firms/vendors for construction/ rehabilitation works and equipment procurement and installation • Home office Construction Specialist STTA
Milestones, Outputs and Outcomes	Three water systems rehabilitated, refurbished or upgraded
Expected Timeline	February 2021 to September 2021,

Objective 2: Establish reliable and commercially viable drinking water services through improved management and access to finance

Interventions under Objective 2 aim to achieve the following results:

- Result 2.1: Value of new funding mobilized resulting at least 10 percent annual increase in financial resources accessed by service providers from public and private sources for the expansion of improved drinking water services as a result of USG assistance (Standard Indicator HL 8.4-1)
- Result: 2.2 At least 5 convening events conducted to identify and incentivize private sector to engage in water service delivery
- Result 2.3: At least 12 water institutions strengthened to manage water resources or improve water supply services, their asset management through testing different models, including public private partnership models, and improved credit worthiness as a result of USG assistance. (Standard indicator HL 8.3-3)
- Result: 2.4 At least 10 innovations supported through USG assistance (Standard Indicator STIR- 10) This includes water operators working under leases or Public Private Partnership agreement with jamoat or district governments
- Result 2.6 Water fee collection rate in each water service sites increased to 80 percent and above

During Year 1, RWS will develop and deliver an initial range of training activities to both water providers and local government officials and employees and also approach the private sector to assess its interests in and expectations from engaging in rural drinking water delivery.

Task 2.1 Develop and deliver training activities to water system managers and staff.

As part of the initial capacity assessment of water systems (Task 0.2 Site Selection), RWS will identify the technical, managerial, and financial weaknesses of target water systems. Based on these findings, RWS will develop and deliver training activities meant to improve drinking water delivery through a variety of topics such as:

- Legal framework for drinking water supply
- Water metering and monitoring (quantity and quality)
- Operational efficiency (including physical NRW losses)
- Financial efficiency (including administrative NRW losses)
- Project management and planning
- Human capital management and leadership (including GESI)
- Customer data management and communications
- Water resource management and safety planning

These training activities will be delivered by RWS staff assisted by selected trainers and local subcontractors, starting with Consumers Union of Tajikistan (CU). We will introduce mWater data-driven management tools, starting notably with a simple dashboard for performance

monitoring (both technical and financial parameters). As part of the initial water assessment, we will evaluate the capacity of target water systems to generate and use technical, operational, administrative, and financing data. As we build such capacity through various training activities, we will deploy the mWater dashboard to store, analyze and display the data (through tables, graphics, maps). This dashboard will be an online platform

We envision the dashboard being enriched over time with more capacity and functions as more data is collected.

Moreover, we will ensure that the water systems we support are properly registered with local authorities and teach them to operate within the legal framework.

Task 2.2 Develop and deliver training activities to local government staff. As part of our initial engagement of local government authorities (Task 0.1), RWS will evaluate the supervision and monitoring capacity of the technical staff. Based on these findings, RWS will then develop and deliver training activities to district, jamoat, and mahalla officials to improve water service supervision and regulation through a variety of topics:

- Legal framework for drinking water supply
- Performance monitoring (key performance indicators)
- Financial efficiency and tariff optimization
- Contracts and negotiation
- Water resource management and safety planning
- Community mobilization and communications (including GESI)

We will also introduce the principles of Private Sector Partnerships, and the different kinds of PSP contracts, along with the principles for effective regulation.

Task 2.3 Define principles for Private Sector Participation. Building on the initial assessment of past water PPP attempts (task 0.4), RWS will also evaluate and interview the few existing private water operators to understand their perspectives. Based on these findings, we will identify the most suitable types of PPPs for drinking water supply in Tajikistan, and define criteria for the identification of suitable PPP situations, looking at technical, financial and institutional feasibility. We will also set down principles for tendering, awarding, regulating drinking water supply PPPs through initial and regular consultations with the PPP center (under State Committee on Investments and State Property Management, SCISPM) and the Anti-Monopoly Agency. Through these consultations, RWS will also understand their perspectives on PSP and engage them on improving the environment for PSP.

Task 2.4 Promote Private Sector Participation. During year 1, we will convene at least two events to discuss the current situation of the rural drinking water sector and the potential for private entrepreneurs to invest. These events will be roundtables where we will get businesspersons to interact with both rural water utility representatives and local government

officials. The objective is to bridge the gap and facilitate a constructive dialogue between the public sector perspective of delivering reliable services, and the private sector perspective of turning profits while mitigating risks. RWS will also consider the possibility of organizing a field trip or study tour to visit an existing PPP or privately operated water systems.

Objective 2 Tasks	
Task Description	<p>2.1 Develop and deliver training activities to water systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and implement technical, operational, administrative and financial training activities meant to improve drinking water delivery <p>2.2 Develop and deliver training activities to local governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and implement monitoring, supervision, and contracting training activities meant to improve drinking water performance Present principles of Private Sector Partnerships, and different kinds of PSP contracts, along with principles for effective regulation <p>2.3 Define Principles for Private Sector Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set criteria for PSP Define principles for PSP process Hold consultations with PPP center (under SCISPM) and anti-monopoly agency <p>2.4 Promote Private Sector Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene at least 2 events/roundtables to discuss potential for private entrepreneurs to invest in rural water supply
Implementation Notes	Objective 2 tasks will be carried out by RWS staff, with some of the training activities delivered by subcontractors (mWater, CU and others to be defined)
Counterparts/ Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District and jamoat authorities in target areas Selected water systems
Task Leader(s)	Technical team led by DCOP
Allocated Resources/Budget <i>(Internal = FO LT staff, external = subcontracts, STTAs, HO, etc.)</i>	<p><u>Internal resources:</u> ½ time of capacity-building specialist, ½ time of local government coordinators, ½ time of DCOP, ¼ time of COP</p> <p><u>External resources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subcontracts with mWater, CU, and local specialized firms and NGOs Local and international specialists and trainers as needed
Milestones, Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training activities delivered to at least 50 staff from 10 water systems (at least 2 different topics)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training activities delivered to at least 50 local government officials (at least 2 different topics) • Two convening events/roundtables with at least 50 local government officials, rural water utility representatives and businesspersons
Expected Timeline	February 2021 to September 2021

Objective 3: Increase engagement of communities in oversight and accountability of drinking water service providers

Interventions under Objective 3 aim to achieve the following results:

- Result 3.1: 12 district-based feedback hotline services with customer service skills developed and institutionalized
- Result 3.2: Increased percentage of consumers approaching water operators (through hotline, town hall meetings or visits to water operators' offices), disaggregated by sex.

During Year 1, RWS will develop and deliver an initial range of awareness raising and training activities to communities served by the target water systems. Some of the activities will be supported by the RWS Grants program.

Task 3.1 Develop and deliver training and awareness raising activities to target communities. From the initial KAP survey of water consumers (task 0.4), RWS will identify the current knowledge, attitudes, perceptions of target communities. Based on these findings, RWS will develop and deliver awareness raising and training activities meant to improve community oversight over water systems and their accountability as customers to pay for services through a variety of topics:

- Legal framework for drinking water supply (explaining basic regulations as well as rights and duties of consumers)
- Performance monitoring (key performance indicators)
- Communications and leadership (including GESI)
- Water resource management and safety planning

We will also build on past capacity-building activities delivered to water served communities by Consumers Union of Tajikistan (CU).

Task 3.2 Establish and Strengthen Community Advisory Boards (CABs). In each area served by a target water system, RWS will follow the process already piloted by the Consumer Union of Tajikistan and form a CAB involving representatives from both community and drinking water provider as a permanent platform for dialogue. RWS intends to form an initial batch of 5 CABs during Year 1. We will strengthen these CABs as hubs and hotlines for receiving customer feedback and complaints, while also conveying information from water service providers to the consumers.

Task 3.3 Launch and manage grants program. To support objective 3, RWS will post an Annual Program Statement during Quarter 2, and encourage applications to support target communities. The range of actions to be supported could involve:

- Innovative approaches and community engagement initiatives to supervise or improve drinking water services delivery
- Awareness raising on water use and conservation practices

- Relevant vocational and skill training for women and youth

Objective 3 tasks	
Sub-Task Description	<p>3.1 Develop and deliver awareness raising and training activities to target communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and implement monitoring, supervision, and communications training activities meant to educate communities <p>3.2 Establish and Strengthen Community Advisory Boards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select representatives from both community and provider • Facilitate initial meetings <p>3.3 Launch and manage grants program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft and post Annual Program Statement • Review and select applications • Award and monitor implementation
Implementation Notes	Objective 3 tasks will be carried out by RWS staff, with some of the training activities delivered by subcontractors (CU and others to be defined)
Counterparts/ Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities served by target water systems supported under objective 1 and/or 2 by RWS • Local NGOs (Non-governmental Organizations), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and CBOs (Community Based Organizations) as recipients of grants
Task Leader(s)	Technical Team led by DCOP, GESI specialist
Allocated Resources/Budget <i>(Internal = FO LT staff, external = subcontracts, STTAs, HO, etc.)</i>	<p><u>Internal resources:</u> ½ time of capacity-building specialist, ½ time of local government coordinators, ¼ time of COP, ½ time of DCOP, ½ time of GESI specialist</p> <p><u>External resources:</u> (total estimated budget: \$100k*)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcontract with CU • Initial batch of grants to CBOs/CSOs
Milestones, Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training activities delivered to at least 100 community leaders from 10 different communities • At least 5 Community Advisory Boards formed • At least 3 community initiatives supported by RWS grants
Expected Timeline	February 2021 to September 2021, see also timeline as Gantt Chart in Annex B

Cross-cutting Themes

Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI)

The RWS Activity is committed to advancing GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) and will fully integrate the results of evidence-based gender analysis into all tasks and interventions to ensure greater inclusion of women and youth, as well as members of Tajikistan's minority communities, as both participants and beneficiaries.

In line with USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment policy, in Year I, Quarter I, we will conduct a GESI analysis and develop a RWS-specific GESI integration strategy. The GESI analysis will compile the existing knowledge on biases and constraints that affect women, youth, and other social groups in the local Tajik context and specifically identify vulnerabilities associated with these underrepresented groups in their access to drinking water, and in their voice and agency within the rural water supply sector.

The GESI integration strategy will provide guidance and recommendations to ensure that:

- RWS staff is sensitized to GESI considerations, which are also promoted with counterparts, partners and beneficiaries
- GESI is streamlined throughout the design, implementation, and monitoring of all project interventions to address existing biases
- Specific GESI interventions, notably training and awareness raising activities, are designed and implemented to strengthen the adaptive and transformative capacities of women, youth, and other groups to participate fully and meaningfully in the supervision and management of rural drinking water systems

Monitoring Evaluation & Learning

Concomitantly with the submittal of this initial annual work plan, RWS is submitting an initial draft Activity Monitoring Evaluation & Learning Plan (AMELP) for review by USAID.

The AMELP describes how RWS will monitor, evaluate, and learn from using a robust set of indicators and targets to measure short and medium outcomes and long-term impacts of the Activity. It explains data collection, assessment, and quality control mechanisms, and how RWS' collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) approach informs adaptive management.

Environmental Compliance

RWS plans to prepare and submitting an EMMP for review by USAID. The EMMP will guide RWS in mitigating and monitoring the environmental impacts of all project interventions and notably complying with both 22 CFR Regulation 216 and the environmental requirements of Tajikistan.

Communications

Beyond the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan, RWS will develop a communication strategy that will support all capacity-building, demonstration, awareness raising, and dissemination interventions, and will consider both written (blogs, success stories, articles, etc.) audio (phone messaging, radios) as well as audiovisual (videos, webinars, etc.) types of communication.

Collaboration with other donors

Several donor projects aim to improve drinking water systems in Tajikistan. RWS has started and will continue to reach out to and seek to collaborate with donor and government programs to achieve leverage and avoid duplication. An initial list of relevant projects include:

Project	Year I Project Collaboration
World Bank Group (WB) Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (RWSSP)	WB is open to collaboration in non-served villages in Khatlon. RWSSP will support capacity building for communities, KMK, and system operators, and develop electronic billing systems.
Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) Comprehensive Water and Sanitation in the North	Initiating rehabilitation projects in Sughd. Site assessments are ongoing; will share a final list of villages. Working with CU on community accountability and capacity building; happy to coordinate.
SDC / United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) / Oxfam Tajik Water Supply and Sanitation Project, Phase III; and Rural Water Supply and Sanitation	Rehabilitating water systems in Sughd, DRS, and Khatlon. Projects include household meters and are community operated by WUCs post-construction. Have developed training, standards, and modules for CABs and WUCs/operators with CU, which can be shared with RWS, in addition to lessons on community engagement and metering.
USAID / Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Thrive Tajikistan	Rehabilitating drinking water in 18 locations across Khatlon. Interested in collaborating with RWS on vocation/technical/capacity building training programs for youth, women, and WUC members.
Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Drinking Water Activities – Kushoniyon, Panyj, Hamadoni	Welcomes collaboration on Kushoniyon rehabilitation. Also interested in whether mWater technologies could be adopted for their rehabilitation programs.
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	Funded rehabilitation of urban water in 23 cities. Conducted an institutional assessment and drafted recommendations to reorganize KMK into one central and eight regional management bodies.

Special Activities Fund

Grants Management

RWS intends to provide demand-driven small grants to incentivize CSOs, CBOS or local communities that demonstrate initiative, leadership, and willingness to improve drinking water services..

RWS will first develop a grants manual that will detail the small grants program process, covering how grants program will be announced, what training will be provided, how applications will be received, reviewed and selected, how grants will be disbursed, monitored, and documented.

Tentatively the selection process will consider criteria such as:

- Local leadership/willingness
- Cost-share from applicants
- Impact of proposed interventions
- Contribution to RWS objectives
- Local capacity-building
- Technical and environmental soundness using an Environmental Screening Form/Environmental Review Report (ESF/ERR)
- Cost efficiency
- Equity and GESI considerations
- Potential for replication or scale-up

Construction Fund

RWS will provide construction/rehabilitation design and support to rural water systems that demonstrate initiative, leadership and willingness to act.

RWS will first develop a construction implementation plan that will detail the engineering design and construction implementation supervision and monitoring process.

The selection of appropriate construction interventions will consider criteria similar to those used for the grants program.

Critical Assumptions and Anticipated Risks

Risk factors and critical assumptions include the following:

- That district and jamoat authorities will collaborate with RWS and welcome the involvement of communities in supervising drinking water services
- That the GoT will continue to consider PSP as a viable approach for delivering rural drinking water services and improve the regulatory framework to that end
- That the security and COVID-19 situation will not exceed WRSs ability to implement while maintaining safety of staff and participants
- That private sector entities will engage and invest in the rural drinking water sector.

Using USAID's CLA approach, RWS will reassess these critical assumptions both on an ongoing basis during implementation and explicitly during annual work planning processes. During work planning processes, RWS will also identify additional risk factors and critical assumptions that may affect project implementation and define mitigation strategies.

The specific impact from COVID-19 on project interventions and results has been examined and response/mitigation measures identified (see Annex A).

Annex A. Analysis of risks related to COVID-19 pandemic

The table below summarizes the best information available and our working assumptions concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on RWSS work in the coming months. We considered the last quarter of 2020, October – December 2020, and the first two calendar quarters of 2021. This information describes the situation in Tajikistan and not in the United States and abroad, where the widespread incidence of COVID-19 is also affecting project operations, such as the ability to safely mobilize international STTA.

Timeframe	September – December 2020	January – March 2021	April – June 2021
Scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Tajikistan, cases peaked in July, but the incidence of disease remains high, with continued need for public health measures and restrictions (masks, physical distancing, no large public gatherings allowed). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A steady decline in COVID-19 cases through June 2021, but incidence of the disease remains high, requiring continuation of public health measures and restrictions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public health measures and restrictions steadily reduce the number of COVID-19 cases. Vaccine available in June 2021
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Necessary public health measures and restrictions (wearing masks, physical distancing, no large public gatherings), complicating implementation of Activity workplan Contact tracing and quarantine around emerging cases Not all cases are detected, allowing periodic upsurge in cases Potential for further peaks International travel restrictions remain, continued in-country travel restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases peak in summer 2020, with a decline as population immunity levels increase, but incidence of disease remains high with continued need for public health measures that complicate implementation of Activity workplan. Contact tracing and population distancing allow containment and prevent a rapid growth in cases with periodic upsurge in cases. International travel restrictions largely remain, in-country travel increasingly possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact tracing and population distancing controls have some effect, limiting the impact of the disease Continued need for public health measures that complicate implementation of Activity workplan. Potential for further peaks Vaccine available in June 2021 International travel restrictions gradually lifted but remain a factor in project implementation Increased risk of economic recession

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing uncertainty has longer term impact on markets, businesses reluctant to invest • Increased risk of economic recession • Increased food insecurity due to production slowdown • Significant impact on health systems • Major social disruption, widespread stay-at-home or working from home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased food insecurity due to production slowdown; • Significant impact on health systems with resources stretched; • Working from home remains a preferred option for those who can work from home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued food insecurity due to production slowdown; • Significant impact on health systems; • Working from home remains a preferred option for those who can work from home
<p>Impact</p>	<p>Increased risk of postponement of some activities and underachievement of some targets. Interventions and results and activities which are likely to be affected by lingering effects of COVID-19 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial technical activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interactions with potential target districts, jamoats and water systems - Collection of field information • Objective 1 (increase access through rehabilitation/construction): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination with target water systems - Supervision of work activities • Objective 2 (establish reliable and commercially viable drinking water services): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training, education, mentoring, and other activities for water system managers and staff - Training, education, mentoring, and other activities for local government officials and staff • Objective 3 (Increase engagement of communities): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training, education, mentoring, and other activities for communities - Developing and supervising community activities <p>It is foreseen that COVID-19 related concerns and precautions will impact the effective delivery of project activities and inputs as well as actual outputs, results, and outcomes.</p>		
<p>Response/ Mitigation measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and adapt the processes/systems that are needed to implement critical activities effectively; identify opportunities for labor, logistics, cost, service and flexibility improvements • Proactively anticipate where disruption is most likely to impact the project and refine responses accordingly • Communicate regularly with stakeholders and USAID 		

