From Adaptation to Transformation:
Initial Experience from ADB

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Outline

• Our understanding of transformation

• Two cases that may have potential for transformational potential

• Challenges to understanding of transformational adaptation
What We understand as Transformation

• Shift with long-lasting impact
  • An example: switching from cash to debit and credit card

• IPCC Definition
  • Transformational adaptation is adaptation that changes the fundamental attributes of a system in response to climate and its effects

• Triggered by a forcing factor or induced by a recognized need
National Transformation: Tajikistan

- Triggering factor: high level of vulnerability

- Initial $48 million allocation from the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (CIFs): where to start?
  - Starting a conversation with stakeholders
  - Developing knowledge and evidence-base
  - Consultative process for identifying priorities

- Outcome:
  - 18 month planning phase, over $130 million investments, 5 priorities (Water resources management, land-use management, hydropower, hydrometeorological services and capacity building)
  - 3 MDBs (ADB, EBRD, WB), 10 government agencies, over 1000 stakeholders from NGOs and communities
  - New institutional mechanism for coordination
One of the projects: The Pyanj River Basin

• $22 million multi-sector project:
  • 22 subprojects in the Pyanj river basin, from the lowlands of Khatlon to the mountains of GBAO

• Infrastructure resilient to current climate variability and future climate change
  • 1,800 ha of arable land protected from floods
  • 1,450 ha of arable land serviced by irrigation
  • 4,1250 households serviced by water supply

• Provision of knowledge, finance and technology for innovation
  • 1,000 people serviced by microfinance - affordable credits for climate resilient water and farming practices, and economic diversification
Is the Tajikistan Case Transformational?

• Yes in principle
  • Shift from ad-hoc interventions to programmatic approach to climate resilience and sustainable development, integrating knowledge, technology and finance
  • Supported by capacity building, national adaptation plan, and creation of a National Implementing Entity

• But will it lead to transformational adaptation?
  • Is it big enough?
  • Still early stage of implementation
Institutional Transformation: The ADB Case

• Triggering factor
  • it is irresponsible to fund development projects without taking into account climate change risks

• ADB Climate Risk Management
  • All projects are screened for climate change risk
  • Climate risks are assessed and adaptation measures evaluated and incorporated in projects at-risk
  • Technical helpdesk, tools and guidance available to all project teams
  • Financial resources available to support climate risk assessment
Is ADB’s Climate Risk Management Framework a transformation?

- Yes in principle
  - Challenges some of the assumptions that underlie business-as-usual approaches
  - Brings innovation in investments that contribute to systemic changes
  - Stimulates alternative options and new behaviors

- But
  - Will it make ADB into an agent for transformational adaptation in Asia-Pacific?
Challenges to Transformation

- When do we really need transformation?
  - What are the tipping points to shift from incremental to transformational adaptation?

- Understanding of the scale
  - How big does an adaptation measure need to be?
  - Should scale focus on financial resources, geographical scale or the number of people?

- Understanding of time
  - How long is long enough for an intervention to qualify as transformational?

- How do we know an intervention is truly transformational?
  - How do we measure transformation?
  - Where does it start and where does it end?