
Armenia's Dam Safety Project Wins World Bank Competition

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Armenia's Dam Safety Project won one of the World Bank's first annual "Improving the Lives of People in Europe & Central Asia" award yesterday for its contribution to the development of the country.

"The World Bank's involvement in this sector was an immediate response to the Government's concern that the country's dam system was in physical neglect and facing the risk of failure," said Donna Dowsett-Coirolo, the World Bank Country Director for Armenia. "Technical investigations revealed that, by international standards, most dams in Armenia did not meet acceptable safety norms. The most important angle of this project therefore is that it has ensured the safety of people living downstream of dams - almost half a million residents across Armenia."

Under this Project 26 dams facing the highest risk of failure were rehabilitated, and 375,000 people living downstream of these dams are now protected. The ongoing rehabilitation of Marmarik dam will provide safety to an additional 162,000 people living downstream. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been developed for all sites, and Emergency Warning Systems have been installed for 156 villages. The Emergency Management Agency continues to conduct awareness-raising campaigns in the downstream located communities.

The World Bank event was held Tuesday in Washington. A World Bank panel of judges selected a total of 22 activities across the Europe and Central Asia Region. The winning entries showcase results and real impact, as well as the project's dedication to solid work in monitoring and evaluating those results. They illustrate the value of innovation, solid implementation, and sustainability.

"These winning activities from across Europe and Central Asia show the results that client countries and the World Bank can achieve together as partners in supporting countries' development efforts," said Shigeo Katsu, Europe and Central Asia Region Vice President, World Bank.

"Increasingly, governments and other stakeholders alike demand evidence to guide policy decisions. They want us to demonstrate that our support to programs and projects improves the outcomes for their citizens, and they want to see that capacity building and knowledge work help them deliver development. The World Bank teams have worked hard to improve results and the ability to measure them and these winning entries show that the effort is paying off for the people in the Region."

The projects reflect the World Bank's strategic themes laid out by World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick, including:

Helping overcome poverty and spur sustainable growth in the poorest countries
Fragile and post-conflict affected countries
Development solutions for middle income countries
An active role

in regional and global public goods â~@ç Fostering a knowledge and learning agenda

The ECA Results competition will be held annually to celebrate the impact of projects and programs in the Region.

Armenia's Programmatic Poverty Monitoring also won one of the World Bank's first annual "Improving the Lives of People in Europe & Central Asia" award yesterday for its contribution to the development of the country.

"The series of Armenia's Programmatic Poverty Assessments throughout the years, since mid 90s, has built the required capacity of the National Statistical Service to collect information on the status of the well-being of the population," said Donna Dowsett-Coirolo, the World Bank Country Director for Armenia. "Objective, factual information is so critical for monitoring well-being and for knowledge based policy making, in particular in health, education and social protection. The information provided by Statistical Service impacts the Government policies and, ultimately, people's life on the ground."

Comprehensive household surveys are conducted annually by the National Statistical Service, as an input to decision-making in social policy. For example, information provided by the surveys has been crucial for the design and budgeting of targeted social assistance and free access to health care.

Living standards indicators and Social Snapshot and Poverty Report are published annually in both Armenian and English, and are widely disseminated. The data is also available for analysis by others. The Statistical Service has become independent, and now it reports its findings to all clients at the same time.
