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Thesis Title: Post-Project Sustainability: A Case Study of the Agricultural Investments and Services Project in the Kyrgyz Republic

Abstract (400-600 words, within A4 1page):

New social projects in agriculture are realized in Central Asia every year. Despite being necessary for local development, these projects remain unsustainable throughout their short life. Development literature posits that sustaining effectiveness of the project over time is crucial in development interventions.

A vast majority of literature acknowledges importance of sustainability of development activities for development theorists, donors and recipient countries. The literature also suggests that sustainable development should equally integrate economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainability and use these three to make development sustainable. Taking outcome-oriented criteria for evaluating sustainable rural development projects as an analytical base, this thesis evaluates sustainability of the Agricultural Investments and Services Project (AISP) implemented in the Kyrgyz Republic during 2008-2013. The AISP, with its ambitious objectives and outcomes, brought innovative community based natural resource management approaches in pasture management that drew academic interest throughout Central Asian region. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with project stakeholders and beneficiaries to evaluate the project's sustainability. In addition, discourse analysis of the past project documents were done to present well-grounded view of the project details.

The findings demonstrate that AISP has been able to establish community-based self-governing bodies (pasture committees) that continued functioning after the project has ended. More importantly, the research suggests that local ownership of the project, financial independence from local municipalities, participation in decision-making and support from local NGOs were key factors that affected achievement of sustainability of the project.