SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

Country: Republic of Tajikistan  Project Title: Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Corridors 3 and 5 Enhancement Program
Lending/Financing Modality: Grant  Department/ Division: Central and West Asia Department/ Transport and Communications Division

I. POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY

A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy

The government has adopted the Living Standards Improvement Strategy of Tajikistan for 2013–2015\(^1\) and the National Development Strategy to promote sustainable economic growth, improve public administration, and develop human resources. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) country partnership strategy, 2010–2014 for Tajikistan\(^2\) emphasizes improving physical transport infrastructure as a driver for increased trade, foreign investments, and poverty reduction. Tajikistan is a strong advocate of regional cooperation and is an active participant of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program. To support regional cooperation and inclusive economic growth, the project will improve CAREC Corridors 3 and 5 and their associated subnetwork by enhancing the 89 kilometer (km) Sayron–Karamyk section, rehabilitating the 88 km Vose–Khovaling road section, and strengthening road safety and maintenance. It will also extend access to local communities through improving rural access roads and public facilities, providing solar power solutions for villages with winter electricity deficiencies and conducting associated trainings. This will improve national road network connectivity and quality of service, promote trade and facilitate economic and social development, and contribute to reducing isolation. The project is included in the government’s Public Investment Program\(^3\) and fits with ADB’s Strategy 2020\(^4\) in two core operational areas (infrastructure and regional cooperation and integration).

B. Results from the Poverty and Social Analysis during PPTA or Due Diligence

1. Key poverty and social issues. Tajikistan is a small landlocked country, with its mountainous terrain, poor transport infrastructure, and general remoteness serving as natural barriers to investment and trade. Tajikistan ranks 127th in the human development index list with low life expectancy, educational attainment, and income. Though Tajikistan has maintained steady gross domestic product (GDP) growth equal to 7.1% on average for 2010–2012, an increasing inflow of remittances and an expanding services sector were the main growth factors. The poverty rate in Tajikistan remains highest among Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries.

2. Beneficiaries. Tajikistan has an area of 142.6 thousand square km. As of July 2012, it had a total population of 7.9 million; about 5.7 million reside in rural areas. Tajikistan depends on transport connectivity. Road improvement will benefit the poor by reducing isolation, increasing communication, and generating new opportunities. The project will contribute to expanding trade with neighboring countries. The poor will have better access to health services, schools, and markets. The project incorporates economic activity opportunities for women in local communities.

3. Impact channels. The investment program is a general intervention. However, it will provide some direct employment and income opportunities during construction, and improved transportation will promote access from rural settlements to places of employment, markets, and basic health and education services, thereby indirectly contributing to poverty reduction.

4. Other social and poverty issues. The project areas (and especially the Khatlon Province) is considered among the most populated regions of the country. About 250,000 population (60,000 along the Vose-Khovaling road section and 190,000 along the Sayron-Karamyk road section) of Vose, Khovaling, Jirgatol, Ratch and Tojikobod districts will directly benefit from the project. Many households in the project area are headed by women. Because of inadequate and unreliable power supply in the winter, the population uses mainly firewood, coal, and animal manure for heating and cooking. Poor road infrastructure constrains access to employment, markets, and basic social services like education and health.

5. Design features. For poverty alleviation and sustainable development, the government aims to ensure a reliable, safe, and fast transport corridor. Through the improvement of the Sayron–Karamyk and Vose–Khovaling road sections, the poor population in the project areas will have increased opportunities for easier and more comfortable travel to social services and workplaces, and thereby be more actively involved in economic activities to raise their incomes. This will improve network connectivity, reduce transport cost, and increase access to social services and markets for the local population.

II. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR

1. Summarize the participatory approaches and the proposed project activities that strengthen inclusiveness and empowerment of the poor and vulnerable in project implementation.

Public consultations in the project areas were conducted in May 2013 to introduce the project, provide details on possible social impacts and approaches to be applied for involuntary resettlement, as well as compensation entitlement. Participants of the consultations expressed their support for the project. Questions revolved around project implementation and scheduling, clarifying project benefits for local communities, possible employment, and project monitoring. The consultations were also aimed at obtaining feedback from stakeholders and the public on potential social impacts expected due to the proposed project.

2. If civil society has a specific role in the project, summarize the actions taken to ensure their participation.

Consultations with affected people will continue throughout the finalization and implementation of the resettlement plan. The
3. Explain how the project ensures adequate participation of civil society organizations in project implementation.

Regarding land acquisition and resettlement, consultations with affected groups were carried out in the early stages of development of the resettlement plan and covered the scope of the project, impacts, entitlement to compensation and assistance, the grievance procedure, schedule, and role of various agencies. Consultations with affected people will continue throughout preparation and implementation of the project. To ensure that affected people and stakeholders are informed of these consultations, the dates and venues of consultations will be announced in local newspapers and through local self-government bodies. Representatives of non-governmental and/or civil society organizations will be involved in the Grievance Redress Committee to ensure that discussions are free of intimidation and that affected people are allowed to speak.

4. What forms of civil society organization participation is envisaged during project implementation?

- Information gathering and sharing (M)
- Consultation (M)
- Collaboration
- Partnership

5. Will a project level participation plan be prepared to strengthen participation of civil society as interest holders for affected persons particularly the poor and vulnerable?

- Yes
- No

Measures will ensure that households with income below the poverty line, households headed by women, large families with five or more children below 18 years, and households with a disabled member are able to participate in public consultations and other activities related to involuntary resettlement. The project implementation unit (PIU) will identify these households to ensure they are informed of their rights, entitlements, assistance; and to learn their concerns and preferences.

### III. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender mainstreaming category: effective gender mainstreaming

#### A. Key issues

The law of Tajikistan guarantees equality between women and men, and gender mainstreaming is a feature of the national poverty reduction strategy. However, there is little capacity within government for implementation, and Tajikistan is ranked 89th out of 130 countries in the Gender Equality Index. The absence of so many men of working age (who migrate to overseas for employment) means that women are left having to manage family assets, engage in agricultural labor, and earn wages for daily needs, in addition to their responsibilities for the family, the sick, and the elderly. Households headed by women are more likely to fall below the poverty line than those headed by men. School dropout rates after grade 9 are higher for girls, with an estimated 60% leaving because of household-related work.

Particular issues for women in the project areas include very restricted employment opportunities, limited access to markets and to health and educational institutions for their children, lack of information about alternative livelihoods and sources of income, and access to micro-finance to support small enterprises. In relation to the roads, road safety and speeding motorists (even on bad roads) represent concerns frequently voiced by women. Some villages have never had electricity and the residents feel they are seen as backward because of this. The lack of electric power impacts on their health and livelihoods as well as the educational level of their children.

#### B. Key actions

The gender action plan (GAP) developed for the project is designed to ensure that women share fully in the benefits arising from the project, and to address priority concerns as expressed by local women themselves. It includes gender-sensitive road design and road safety features, as well as access roads to maximize benefits for those women living away from the main alignment. Street lighting, sidewalks, pedestrian crossing points, and improved signs (all requested by women) are included, as is road safety awareness training for women. Other issues addressed include rest areas, bus stops with seats and shelters, and improved sanitary facilities for women.

Improving women’s livelihoods is also a focus of the GAP. This will include providing facilities for women to sell produce and services at rest areas, and ensuring that a proportion of employment opportunities in construction and maintenance are allocated to women. Training will be offered to women in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, property rights, and on health issues (including combating the threat of HIV/AIDS) and safe migration. A further important benefit to women will be the provision of electricity to three villages for the first time, reducing women’s labor time and other costs as well as health risks, and opening up opportunities to process food and make other products for sale. Training in the maintenance of solar panels will be provided to women in these communities and in communities where solar-powered street lighting will be introduced. Public facilities such as schools and health centers adjacent to the road will also be provided with solar power.

Institutional strengthening under the project will include gender training of PIU and local authority staff, and funding of a gender specialist to work with the PIU and facilitate implementation of the GAP. In the context of resettlement, women will be encouraged to participate in monitoring and evaluation, and in addressing social and environmental impacts. Progress reports with socio-economic data disaggregated by gender will provide periodic updates on the effects of land acquisition and relocation on women. Monitoring actions and progress in addressing gender-related aspects of the project will be integrated into the internal and external monitoring of the resettlement plan.

- Gender action plan
- Other actions or measures
- No action or measure

### IV. ADDRESSING SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES

#### A. Involuntary Resettlement

1. Key impacts. Civil works in the Sayron–Karamyk section are not associated with land acquisition and resettlement impacts, while the works on the Vose–Khovaling section will require the acquisition of land and property. For the majority of the alignment, the impact is limited to the acquisition of land and minor structures (such as fences, walls, and wire meshes); however in some sections the major structures (houses and commercial structures) are also affected. A resettlement plan is
prepared in accordance with ADB’s Safeguard Policy Statement (SPS), 2009 and national laws, based on the data provided in the preliminary design documentation, survey results, and valuation reports. A total of 36 households and two legal entities will likely experience various impacts. About 3,537.4 square meters of land will be permanently taken for project purposes.

2. Strategy to address the impacts. The resettlement plan will be verified and finalized in accordance with the SPS and national laws after the final design is developed. Consultations will continue throughout project preparation and implementation. The grievance redress procedure is developed to allow affected parties to appeal any disagreeable decision or activity causing land use, social and environmental impacts.

3. Plan or other Actions. ☒ Resettlement plan

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V. ADDRESSING OTHER SOCIAL RISKS

A. Risks in the Labor Market

1. Relevance of the project for the country’s or region’s or sector’s labor market.
   - ☒ unemployment (M)   ☐ underemployment (NA)   ☐ retrenchment (NA)   ☒ core labor standards (L)

2. Labor market impact. The project will create temporary employment opportunities during implementation of civil works. Provisions will be included in the contract(s) for civil works requiring contractors to meet all labor law standards.

B. Affordability

No tolls will be charged on the project road. Overall, the project will improve transport infrastructure of the area, and lead to the reduction of vehicle operating costs and lower transport costs. In addition, the operation of the improved sections will contribute to reduced commercial risks during goods delivery and decreased transport costs and passenger travel times.

C. Communicable Diseases and Other Social Risks

1. Indicate the respective risks, if any, and rate the impact as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):
   - ☐ Communicable diseases (NA)   ☒ Human trafficking (L)   ☐ Others (please specify) ________________

2. Describe the related risks of the project on people in project area.

Limited risk of HIV-AIDS transmission and human trafficking increase during construction and operation. The project will include measures to mitigate the risks of sexually transmitted infections and/or human trafficking. Provisions on labor engagement, HIV/AIDS prevention, health and safety (including proper lighting of the construction sites, the presence of first-aid kits and fire-fighting equipment, proper delineation of construction sites), etc. will be included in civil work contracts to ensure that necessary measures are taken to mitigate such risks.

VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. Targets and indicators. Main indicators include (i) gender-disaggregated information on employment and pay; (ii) the number and type of activities; and (iii) gender-disaggregated information on people attending training, awareness, and capacity building activities. The monitoring report will include gender-disaggregated reporting on the involvement of affected people.

2. Required human resources. The PIU team shall include a resettlement specialist to ensure the proper implementation of land acquisition and resettlement activities. A gender specialist will be involved to facilitate the implementation of the GAP.

3. Information in PAM. Monitoring of project performance, covenants compliance, safeguards, and gender and social dimensions is included. This will be reflected in the monthly progress report and/or other relevant reports.

4. Monitoring tools. PIU, assisted by consultants, shall collect relevant baseline data and conduct regular follow ups (such as surveys and public consultations) over the entire project implementation.

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