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Regional: Enhancing Social Safeguards Capacity in the Central and West Asia Region

Project Name

Enhancing Social Safeguards Capacity in the Central and West Asia Region

Project Number

57149-001

Country / Economy

- Regional
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Georgia
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyz Republic
- Pakistan
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan

Project Status

Active

Project Type / Modality of Assistance

- Technical Assistance

Source of Funding / Amount

TA 10143-REG: Enhancing Social Safeguards Capacity in the Central and West Asia Region

Source

Amount

Technical Assistance Special Fund US\$ 1.00 million

Operational Priorities

- OP2: Accelerating progress in gender equality
- OP3: Tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability
- OP6: Strengthening governance and institutional capacity

Sector / Subsector

- **Agriculture, natural resources and rural development** / Water-based natural resources management
- **Education** / Pre-primary and primary
- **Energy** / Energy sector development and institutional reform

- **Public sector management** / Public administration
- **Transport** / Road transport (non-urban)
- **Water and other urban infrastructure and services** / Other urban services

Gender

Some gender elements

Description

This technical assistance (TA) will help developing member countries (DMCs) in central and west Asia enhance their social safeguards capacity by conducting capacity development activities and creating and disseminating knowledge products produced by such activities and studies. The TA will (i) support executing and implementing agencies in meeting the social safeguards requirements of ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement (2009) and its updates; (ii) support executing and implementing agencies in strengthening the participation and engagement of civil society organizations in project design and implementation; (iii) engage and deploy experienced international and national consultants to provide technical expertise to executing and implementing agencies in achieving high project readiness in safeguards and strengthening safeguards implementation; (iv) utilize and build on knowledge products and relationships developed under previous ADB TA operations; (v) identify gaps promptly between national practices and ADB safeguard policies, and develop a capacity development plan to bridge those gaps; (vi) provide capacity building to increase the understanding of executing and implementing agencies on the requirements of ADB's safeguard policies and international good practices; (vii) provide capacity building to strengthen grievance management processes within implementing agencies; (viii) develop guidance notes and/or manuals on key themes and challenges, and utilize the knowledge of national research institutes and national experts, where practicable; and; (ix) create knowledge products and share them within central and west Asia DMCs to enhance their knowledge and capacity.

Project Rationale and Linkage to Country/Regional Strategy

Gaps remain in social safeguards implementation. Implementation of social safeguards in central and west Asia DMCs is constrained by weak government capacity, inadequate legal frameworks, lack of coordination, deficient enforcement of regulations, limited availability of local experts, and the need for experienced consultants in social thematic areas. Gaps remain in country safeguard systems, compounded by shortages of comprehensive guidance products and implementing regulations. An ADB independent evaluation report on TA for Supporting Social Safeguards in the Central and West Asia Region highlighted those gaps, such as the inability of the executing and implementing agencies to undertake technical studies during processing or implementation to fully meet ADB's safeguard requirements. The differing safeguard requirements of development partners further complicates implementation and compliance. With the ongoing review and update of the Safeguard Policy Statement, executing and implementing agencies need to continue the deployment of consultants to strengthen their capacities to understand and respond to the new Safeguard Policy Statement and to assist in problem-solving during project preparation and implementation. The TA for Strengthening Safeguards Implementation in ADB Projects, which the Office of Safeguards (OSFG) is

implementing, also highlighted how more attention needs to be given to the (i) quality and focus of safeguard documentation, project readiness for safeguards implementation, and monitoring and supervision; and (ii) livelihood restoration and grievance redress.

Enhancing social safeguard capacity is critical for sustainable implementation of infrastructure projects. ADB has been supporting DMCs in central and west Asia in managing social safeguard concerns during project preparation and implementation through its TA for Mainstreaming Land Acquisition and Resettlement Safeguards in the Central and West Asia Region and Supporting Social Safeguards in the Central and West Asia Region. These TA operations helped DMCs solve administrative bottlenecks; improve coordination; and provide technical guidance, capacity building, and problem-solving during project preparation and implementation.

Knowledge creation and sharing among central and west Asia developing member countries are critical for further capacity building of the executing and implementing agencies. ADB's TA for Strengthening Safeguards Implementation in ADB Projects (footnote 10) provided knowledge-sharing opportunities among countries in central and west Asia. Workshops bringing together executing and implementing agency representatives from different ministries and countries were practical platforms for discussing social safeguard challenges and sharing views and experiences. The TA also highlighted the importance of engaging local institutions, such as nongovernment organizations, in knowledge creation and sharing. Collaboration with local institutions and national experts to study key themes will enhance and sustain a DMC's capacity to manage social safeguard challenges under rapidly changing national and local circumstances.

The TA is aligned with ADB's country partnership strategies for the central and west Asia DMCs and Strategy 2030 operational priorities (OPs) 2, 3, and 6. It will also contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 15, and 16.

Impact

Effective infrastructure development in central and west Asia compliant with ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement (2009) and its updates promoted.

Project Outcome

Description of Outcome

Social safeguard activities are properly implemented and social safeguard capacity of CWRD DMCs is enhanced

Progress Toward Outcome

Commenced activities for (i) review of LARP, CAP, LRP, SASMR, and SDDR; and (ii) capacity development for EAs/IAs, such as trainings and workshops on topics including ADB SPS (2009), ADB Core Labor Standards, LARP/SSMR requirements, GRM and livelihood restoration.

Implementation Progress

Description of Project Outputs

Quality and timeliness of social safeguards documents preparation improved

Safeguards capacity development plan for central and west Asia developing member countries and capacity development activities prepared and implemented

Knowledge products on social safeguards-related themes created and shared with central and west Asia developing member countries

Status of Implementation Progress (Outputs, Activities, and Issues)

Output 1: (i) Nine (9) individual national consultants had been engaged for the conduct of TA activities. One (1) International Mediation and Grievance Redress Mechanism Specialist had been engaged. Recruitment of a panel of international resettlement consultants through a framework agreement is ongoing; (ii) Implementation plan of a safeguards coaching program and on-the-job training program is being prepared; and (iii) Trainings/meetings had been conducted by ADB Staff and TA Consultants to PIUs, Project Consultants, and Contractors.

Output 2: (i) Consultation meetings and dialogue through Country Focals and TA Consultants had been undertaken; (ii) Conduct of Country Assessments to identify knowledge and capacity gaps is ongoing, and (iii) Capacity development activities (virtual and F2F) had been conducted among ADB Staff, TA Consultants, PIUs, Project Consultants, and Contractors.

Output 3: (i) Nine (9) individual national consultants had been engaged for the conduct of TA activities. One (1) International Mediation and Grievance Redress Mechanism Specialist had been engaged. Recruitment of a panel of international resettlement consultants through a framework agreement is ongoing; (ii) Key challenges and needs were identified through feedback forms gathered during capacity development activities; and (iii) On 5 April 2024, the TA launched the Uzbek and Russian versions of the Involuntary Resettlement Safeguard Requirements in eLearn, made available to both internal (ADB) and external users.

Geographical Location

Armenia - Nation-wide; Azerbaijan - Nation-wide; Georgia - Nation-wide; Kazakhstan - Nation-wide; Kyrgyz Republic - Nation-wide; Pakistan - Nation-wide; Tajikistan - Nation-wide; Turkmenistan - Nation-wide; Uzbekistan - Nation-wide

Summary of Environmental and Social Aspects

Environmental Aspects

Involuntary Resettlement

Indigenous Peoples

Stakeholder Communication, Participation, and Consultation

During Project Design

During Project Implementation

Business Opportunities

Consulting Services

ADB will engage consultants following the ADB Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time) and its associated staff instructions. International individual consultants will be recruited to support the design, implementation, and monitoring of the TA using individual consultant selection and framework agreements. Empaneled consultants under the framework agreements will be engaged as needed for the duration of the agreement to provide international expertise. National consultants will be recruited using the individual consultant selection method.

TA activities will be carried out using a mix of international and national consultants to be selected based on criteria including (i) country portfolios, (ii) country project pipelines, and (iii) availability of qualified consultants with relevant in-country experience. The consultants will be based at resident missions; national consultants may be required to operate in more than one DMC, as needed.

Procurement

Procurement will follow the ADB Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time) and the Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers (2017, as amended from time to time).

Contact

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Shibuya, Yukihiro
Responsible ADB Department
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Office of Safeguards
Executing Agencies
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Timetable

Concept Clearance
25 Jul 2023
Fact Finding
-
MRM
-
Approval
04 Sep 2023
Last Review Mission
-
Last PDS Update

11 Apr 2024

Funding

TA 10143-REG

Milestones

| Approval | Signing Date | Effectivity Date | Closing | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-------|
| | | | Original | Revised | Actual | |
| 04 Sep 2023 | - | 04 Sep 2023 | 30 Sep 2026 | - | - | |
| Financing Plan/TA Utilization | | | | | | |
| ADB | Cofinancing | Counterpart | | | | Total |
| | | Gov | Beneficiaries | Project Sponsor | Others | |
| 1,000,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1,000,000.00 | |
| Cumulative Disbursements | | | | | | |
| Date | Amount | | | | | |
| 10 Apr 2024 | 159,258.25 | | | | | |

Project Page <https://www.adb.org/projects/57149-001/main>

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