PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)
CONCEPT STAGE

Report No.: PIDC22068

Project Name	Center South Road Corridor Project (P153501)
Region	EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA
Country	Kazakhstan
Sector(s)	Rural and Inter-Urban Roads and Highways (80%), General transportation sector (10%), Other domestic and international trade (10%)
Theme(s)	Infrastructure services for private sector development (25%), Rural services and infrastructure (25%), Export development and compet itiveness (25%), Regional integration (25%)
Lending Instrument	Investment Project Financing
Project ID	P153501
Borrower(s)	Ministry of Finance
Implementing Agency	Committee for Roads
Environmental Category	A-Full Assessment
Date PID Prepared/ Updated	26-Mar-2015
Date PID Approved/ Disclosed	26-Mar-2015
Estimated Date of Appraisal Completion	30-Sep-2015
Estimated Date of Board Approval	11-Feb-2016
Concept Review Decision	Track II - The review did authorize the preparation to continue

I. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. Kazakhstan is an upper middle-income resource-rich economy. Its main natural resource assets are in the mineral (oil, gas, ferrous and non-ferrous metals) and agricultural sectors, all of which are to some extent dependent on an efficient level of road transport. It is the ninth largest country in the world, with a land area equal to that of Western Europe. With a population of about 17 million and a population density of 6.1 persons per square kilometer, it is sparsely populated, which makes maintaining connectivity important, both socially and economically.

2. Over the past decade, Kazakhstan has maintained strong macroeconomic management through a rules-driven fiscal framework. The country has enjoyed robust Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth since 2000, averaging 8 percent, which has contributed to a sharp rise in per capita

income. Between 2001 and 2013, Kazakhstan more than doubled its GDP per capita, while economic growth was largely pro-poor. The share of the Kazakhstan population living in poverty went down from 47 percent in 2001 to about 3 percent in 2013, as measured by the national poverty line.

3. However, poverty is high by standards of other higher income countries, and regional and rural-urban disparities are large. Against a benchmark of a poverty line at the PPP-corrected US$5 per capita per day, about 35 percent of Kazakhstan's population were living in poverty in 2010, although down from almost 80 percent in 2001. The share of people with income below the national poverty line varies widely across regions, from 1.7 percent in Astana to over 10 percent in South Kazakhstan. The majority of migrants choose to live in southern and western regions of the country, however these regions suffer from an over-supply of labor, while the population of the northern regions is shrinking.

4. Kazakhstan has introduced strong policy reforms over the last ten years, and absorbed large natural resource-based earnings responsibly, through a rules-driven fiscal framework. To sustain growth, improve social services and critical infrastructure, it is improving public management, reforming its business environment, and increasing resource allocations. Diversification remains a challenge, with minerals, oil, and natural gas accounting for 80 percent of exports and 37 percent of GDP.

5. A currency devaluation in February 2014 and the current oil price shock, is affecting economic growth and the labor market. GDP grew at 4.2 percent in Q3-2014 and the unemployment rate rose slightly from 5 percent to 5.1 percent. To mitigate negative implications of the 2014 devaluation, the Government of Kazakhstan (GoK) announced a US$5.5 billion economic support program in February 2014 and in the wake of the oil price fall, announced a second support package of about US$18 billion in November 2014. Both packages aim to support domestic demand and employment through reform of the banking sector, and a large, medium-term investment program, to which the present project contributes.

6. Despite short-term vulnerabilities, the medium-term prospects for Kazakhstan are positive with strong growth potential from the oil sector and structural reforms. This is envisioned in the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, which seeks to guide the country's transition to a knowledge economy within 10 to 15 years, and to join the top 30 most developed countries by 2050. Structural reforms described in the 2050 Strategy indicate a strong commitment to building a knowledge economy, and driving growth, diversification, and global competitiveness, through improvements in human capital, institutions, and infrastructure.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

7. The economic and geographic features of Kazakhstan while presenting significant transport challenges, also provide opportunities. The country is vast and land-locked, and the population and natural resources are unevenly distributed, resulting in a high dependence on the efficient movement of people and goods. Travel distances within the region are substantial (e.g. 2,500 km from Astana to Aktau, and 1,200 km from Astana to Almaty). But Kazakhstan is also strategically located between western China and Europe, and accessible to the middle East via the Caspian Sea. Routes to and from dynamic growth poles such as Turkey, Russia, India and China (accounting for more than half of world economic and trade growth) transit the country. Responding to the issue of regional connectivity within Central Asia, by improving internal road links is crucial for

Kazakhstan's development, in order to interact with and benefit from the economic growth adjacent to its borders.

8. The GoK through its Committee for Roads (CR), has a strong track record in delivering large road transport projects, which provides an effective foundation for advancing the Center South Project (CSP). In recent years, the World Bank along with other development partners, has provided assistance to support an extensive program to develop Kazakhstan's highways. The World Bank has two ongoing projects, the South West Roads Project (SWRP) and the East West Roads Project (EWRP), encompassing reconstruction of about 1,600 km of roads along the Western Europe – Western China corridor, which are progressing well. In addition, GoK along with other partners, have financed a further 900 km of roads along the same corridor, effectively linking southern and western parts of Kazakhstan to China, Uzbekistan and Russia. A number of important institutional changes have been implemented under SWRP and EWRP including a separation of operational aspects from policy and planning functions. In addition, work has commenced on a safety strategy, developing a tolling strategy and introduction of a Quality Charter that will provide the basis for establishing a service level agreement between the key road agencies and developing performance based maintenance contracting. CSP will continue these reforms, with a focus on sustainable road maintenance and safe road operations, through targeted technical assistance (refer Section III, Project Context section).

9. The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) has identified six CAREC corridors which link the region's key economic hubs to each other, and connect the landlocked CAREC countries to other Eurasian and global markets. As people and goods move faster and more efficiently through the corridors, significant improvements will be seen in trade between the CAREC countries, with other regions, and in transit trade. Increased trade, in turn, supports business development, creates jobs, and brings a better quality of life to the people of the region. The CSP forms part of two of the six CAREC corridors (corridors 1 and 2). As provided for in the CAREC corridor strategy, improvements achieved through CSP will enhance the flow of freight from China and Kyrgyzstan via Almaty and through the Eastern part of Kazakhstan to Astana, North East Kazakhstan and Russia. The CSP will also connect with the proposed new Center West corridor at Astana. As the primary road connection between Almaty and Astana, CSP will improve connectivity between the two main urban agglomerations and promote productivity through lower transport costs.

10. The importance of developing transport infrastructure, was emphasized in the President's address to the nation in November 2014, when Kazakhstan's New Economic Policy Nyrly Zhol was released. In this address, the development of transport and logistics infrastructure, connecting through Astana, was specifically mentioned, including Western China to Western Europe; Astana to Almaty; and Astana to Aktobe and Atyrau.

11. The GoK has embarked on a reform path to develop Kazakhstan as the preferred international and Central Asian regional trade, logistics and business hub by 2016. Although current trade interactions are relatively low with Europe, China, Central Asia and South Asia, they are increasing, and this is in addition to growing trade with the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. The materialization of this reform, which will drive a reduction in the costs of imported goods, is dependent on the efficiency of the trade supply chain to and from Kazakhstan or transiting through the country. Reflecting this objective, the amount of freight transported within Kazakhstan increased over the period 2005-2012, except during the peak of the global financial crisis in 2009.

The average growth rate of freight transported by road over this period was 8.6% per year. In this context, the development of transport infrastructure, combined with efforts to increase efficiencies in managing the sector, are considered by the GoK as key elements of the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy.

12. The Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, which extends the Kazakhstan 2030 Strategy released in 1997, sets the overall direction for the country to achieve strong long-term economic growth. It includes two main themes to guide infrastructure development: (a) economic growth should be supported by good transport infrastructure and an efficient logistics sector; and (b) there should be greater focus on regional infrastructure, to improve basic accessibility and regional connectivity.

13. In response to these general strategies, the World Bank helped GoK to develop the State Program for the Development and Integration of Transport Infrastructure to 2020 (SPDITI) that was adopted in January 2014. SPDITI takes its key directions from the Strategy, whilst also ensuring consistency with existing mid-term and short-term development programs. SPDITI sees the development of transport and communication infrastructure as an important driving force for the long-term social and economic development of Kazakhstan, by integrating the country into the global system while meeting modern quality and safety criteria. Key policy directions relevant to the proposed project, include: (a) increasing the flow of freight through the country by properly integrating and linking land, sea and air transport systems; (b) providing connectivity between regional cities and towns, and (c) creating infrastructure centers within regions.

14. SPDITI also builds on the Kazakhstan Program for Regional Development (PRD). The PRD is a mechanism for predictive spatial development of Kazakhstan to be implemented over the period to 2020. This program aims to create development centers that improve both the economic potential of the country and the living conditions in regional Kazakhstan. The main planning feature of the PRD is the emergence of “urban agglomerations”, in which about a third of the total population will be concentrated. Type 1 urban agglomerations include both Almaty and Astana, and the CSP will enhance the link between these cities. The PRD also anticipates the development of fourteen "second tier" cities, one of which is Karaganda, also connected under the CSP. An identified challenge for the PRD is the development of critical engineering infrastructure, including that required for transport connectivity.

15. The Government’s aims, as deliberated in the SPDITI and RDP, to increase the flow of freight through the country; properly link all land, sea and air transport systems; and provide connectivity between and within the urban agglomerations and the second tier cites; are likely to be met at least partially, through the completion of the Center South road corridor.

16. Opportunities exist within the framework of the proposed project to increase the role of the private sector, although it is unlikely that there is sufficient existing traffic to concession the road under design-build-operate arrangements. Opportunities include: (a) Engaging the private sector to design, build and operate e-tolling infrastructure and ITS technology to monitor road operations and collect condition data; (b) Continuing the foundation work to eventually allow for road maintenance to be performed by the private sector under performance based contracting approaches.

17. Road safety is a serious and growing problem in Kazakhstan. Road crashes in 2010 resulted in 3514 deaths and 35,140 serious injuries. In economic terms, road crashes are estimated to cost the country around 5.4% of its annual GDP. The fatality rate is about 25 per 100,000 population, five

times higherthan the average fatality rates in Europe, and significantly higher than in many other ex-Soviet countries. According to the traffic police data, road conditions are a contributory factor in around 60% of road crashes. Improvements are being made to road safety under SWRP, and the proposed project would build on this through additional reforms, including processes and manuals that will “design-in” safety; implementation of advocacy and media campaigns; and assessment and procurement of enforcement equipment.

18. The Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy sets clear guidelines for building a sustainable and efficient economic model based on a transition to green development. Transition to a green economy will enable Kazakhstan achieve the proclaimed goal of entering the group of top 30 developed countries. High levels of air pollution have been observed in the cities, and the solid particle concentration is ten times higher than in European Union (EU) countries. According to estimates, air pollution results in up to 6,000 premature deaths per year. In part, these emissions have been attributed to: (a) poor fuel quality in comparison to European levels, caused by sub-standard production in local refineries and a lack of adherence to quality standards in fuel retail; (b) undeveloped gas transportation infrastructure, which limits penetration of gas fuel; and (c) road infrastructure that does not encourage the use of public transportation, electric cars, walking, and biking. The project may address this (TBC with the client) through various reforms, including (a) provision of footpaths within urban sections; (b) promoting the enforcement of air emission standards for road transportation vehicles compliant with EU norms; and (c) promoting the enforcement of annual inspection of motor vehicles to ensure compliance of exhaust quality.

Relationship to CAS

19. The Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for the period FY 2012 - 2017 identifies improvements to transport connectivity and lowering costs, as a key output. This is aimed at the country realizing its potential as a regional logistics center, through continued engagement in capital investments along the major east-west and north-south corridors linking Central Asia to China and Russia with Western Europe; and a strengthened institutional structure to manage the growing road network. The proposed Project is consistent with and contributes to the objectives of the CPS, as it will provide financing to (a) upgrade a section of the north-south corridor between Astana and Almaty; and (b) reinforce reforms initiated under the preceding on-going Bank projects, to further improve road asset management and delivery of service to road users.

20. Closely aligned to the CPS, a Partnership Framework Arrangement (PFA) was agreed between the GoK, World Bank, International Finance Corporation, and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency in May 2014. The PFA supports the Government’s efforts towards sustainable development, economic diversification, and inclusive growth. The CSP, along with the proposed new Center West Project (CWP), fall within the umbrella objectives for “Attracting Investment into the Economy and Development of Public-Private Partnerships”, and specifically includes the reconstruction of Center-South corridor, between Karagandy and Burylbaital, including physical investments, purchase of equipment; improving institutional capacity and road sector reforms. CSP and CWP both form part of the skeleton of CAREC corridors (refer paragraph 9), providing important transit routes through Kazakhstan from neighbouring countries. As they are both CAREC priorities, the corridors are complementary in nature. The two corridors intersect at Astana and provide improved connectivity from the nation’s center, radiating west to Aktau and the Caspian Sea, south to Almaty, Kygyzstan and China, and north to Russia. However, CWP passes through remote regional areas and hence has a different nature to CSP, which links the two main urban agglomerations of Astana and Almaty.

21. The proposed Project will contribute to the Bank's twin goals to reduce poverty and improve the prosperity of the bottom 40 percent of the population. It is proposed to improve transport connectivity by reducing travel times and vehicle operating costs for freight chains and passenger vehicles on a key logistics corridor. Improved transport connectivity may raise prosperity through more efficient trade and production sharing, developing larger regional value chains, and tapping into economies of scale. The Bank's second objective to foster income and consumption growth of the bottom 40 percent of the population, will be partly addressed by providing direct employment opportunities during constructions, and by realizing GoK's objectives to upgrade the transport corridor between Astana and Almaty that (a) increases productivity through enhanced flow of freight through the country, (b) improves connectivity between regional cities and towns, and (c) allows for the creation of infrastructure centers within regions. The new road will promote mobility, and mobility is a precondition for development. A dynamic economy depends on the movement of goods and services, and people rely on roads to access employment, education and health facilities. For people in regional areas, accessibility provided through the upgraded road, will create the opportunity to improve their social and economic well-being. Currently, the bulk of the population lives and works in the regions, and Kazakhstan faces a particular challenge to provide the regional population with comprehensive improvements in their living conditions through improvements in the provision of education, health, water and sanitation services, as well as establishing a framework for the emergence of new industries which will create new jobs in the regions. Achievement of these objectives depends on availability of quality regional transport infrastructure.

22. The changes brought about by CSP will lower transport costs through an expansion of the capacity of the road and through safe increases in traffic speed Such changes will provide for improved market access and connectivity. The Center South corridor as an important trade and transit route is reflected by the steady traffic volumes. Currently traffic volumes average about 10,000 vehicles per day (vpd) over most of the route, but dropping back to about 4,700 vpd on southern sections. Over the 20 year design life of the road, these volumes are expected to increase to more than 7,000 vpd and 39,000 vpd respectively. Jobs will be created through direct engagement in the construction phase, the volume of which will be appraised further during the preparation of the project. Improvements in road asset management, road-user services and maintenance operations, will also yield opportunities for ongoing employment in the region where the road is located.

II. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s) (From PCN)

To improve the transport and freight connectivity and productivity between the growth poles of Almaty and Astana through the second-tier city of Karaganda, and improve road operations and road asset management.

Key Results (From PCN)

Results and Indicators for PDO:

Improved connectivity:- Measured by (a) the staged completion of the Center South road link (688 km) and (b) connectivity measures between the two main urban agglomerations, to border crossings, and to intermodal and railway terminals.
Improved productivity:- Measured by reduced travel time and vehicle operating costs on CSP.

Improved usage and access:- Measured by an increase in traffic (refer HDM4 generated traffic model assumptions as the target values).
Improved freight connection:- Measured by an increase in volume of the tonnage of national road freight volumes. Baseline tbd.
Improved road operations and asset management:- Service Level Agreement executed between CR and KAZ, based on outcomes of the "Quality Charter" (Yes / No).

Intermediate Results and Indicators:

Service Level Agreement (leads on from Quality Charter under SWRP):- Yes / No
Length of road constructed:- 688 km
Reduction in road traffic fatalities (number) on CSP corridor (per 100,000 vehicles):- Tbd
Number of jobs created (disaggregated by gender):- Tbd
STS implemented and in use, with monthly reports prepared (trends and feedback disaggregated by gender):- Number of Monthly reports prepared
Road Planning, Design and Construction Manual prepared with Industry training:- Yes / No
Technical Audits annually:- Number of technical audits

III. Preliminary Description

Concept Description

23. The project road consists of a 688 km section of road from Karagandy to Burylbaital, an essential link in the corridor between Almaty and Astana. The corridor will provide an all-weather divided highway connecting Kazakhstan toWestern China and Russia. It will be constructed along the existing road alignment, and will accommodate a duplicated carriageway, i.e., the new road will improve the existing 2-lane single carriageway road to 4-lane dual carriageway road and consist of 4 x 3.75m lanes, 3.75m shoulders, and a 3 to 6m median strip. It will be designed for a traffic speed of 120 kilometres / hour (km/hr) and axle loads up to 13 tonnes. Bridges, overpasses, and pedestrian and animal passes will be included where required and informed by social impact assessments.

24. The section proposed for financing comprises a main link along the Astana to Almaty corridor. The 213km section from Astana to Karagandy is complete. The 143km section from Burylbaital to Togyz will be financed by other donor partners, and the 85km section from Togyz to Kurty will be financed through a proposed re-structuring of the SWRP. The treatment for the remaining section from Kurty to Almaty is under review by GoK and Almaty provincial Government.

25. Project Impacts will be assessed by comparing base-line information against ex-post impacts. Whilst it is unlikely that the impacts will be apparent during the project period, having baseline data will enable impacts to be assessed at some subsequent stage. Qualitative and quantitative information, at both an oblast and national level will be collected, and will focus on those variables that are important to measuring shared prosperity, such as, for example: per capita income; access to education facilities, healthcare and commercial centers; unsatisfied basic needs; consumption allocation; years of education; land prices; Gini co-efficient and number of SME's.

26. Evidence from other projects indicates that the juxtaposition of social and transport activities that occurs during road construction is a vector for transmission of HIV/AIDS. During project preparation, and drawing upon international best practice, consideration will be given to

developing an extension program aimed at informing and preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS during the road construction activities, above and beyond the existing requirements in the Bank's sample Bidding Documents for International Competitive Bidding.

27. The project will be gender-informed through both citizen engagement and by strategies aimed at ensuring equal opportunity. In order to decrease inequality, gender analysis will be addressed by: (a) Ensuring that the consultations that will be conducted as part of the RAP, EMP and design stage, specifically engage with both men and women, in different fora if necessary, cognizant of their differing needs. (b) Ensuring that specific actions are developed to address the needs identified during the consultations. The outcomes of the consultations will be documented in the safeguards and feasibility assessment, and will be used to inform the design of the road and ancillary features (eg footpaths, road crossing, road-side facilities, security features). (c) A grievance redressal mechanism will be developed and implemented, and this will specifically monitor feedback on a gender disaggregated basis. To ensure that the issues raised as part of the grievance redressal mechanism (GRM) are appropriately addressed and closed-out, it is proposed that proper use of the GRM (as evidenced by monthly reports and action lists) will be one of the project indicators. (d) Ensuring that women are provided equal opportunities to gain employment as part of the project financed activities, which is mainly expected within the construction and technical assistance components. The capacity of women to engage in paid employment, along with identification of any issues that may constrain the participation of women in these activities, will be assessed as part of the ESIA. Ensuring that women are given equal opportunity to gain employment will be done through appropriate clauses within the ToR and Bidding documents for each sub-project. The participation of women in the construction activities will be monitored and the statistics for job creation will be disaggregated by gender.

28. To promote governance and transparency, the project will enhance the existing CR web-sites and make use of Intelligent Transport System (ITS) platforms, to publicly disclose operational data and budgets, contract procurement information a nd road conditions. Such mechanisms will also promote citizen engagement.

29. Under EWRP, a tolling strategy is being developed, and the project will draw upon this to ensure that the Government is in a position to introduce tolling, along with mechanisms to lessen the occurrence of driving while fatigued and overloaded heavy vehicles. An innovative approach is to use the private sector to design, build and operate e-tolling infrastructure and use ITS technology to monitor road operations and collect condition data, as well as collect tolls for road-use, overloading and fatigued driving. The feasibility of introducing this approach will be further assessed during project preparation.

Component 1 - Road Construction (US$ 2,133m)

30. Comprises the main activities associated with works construction, and is proposed to include:

o Construction of 688 km of roadworks, in a number of separate contract packages. Design will include provisions for road safety and tolling. The number of packages will be confirmed during project preparation, and drawing upon experience gained during implementation of SWRP and EWRP. However, procurement strategies will be adopted that will encourage qualified national contractors to bid for ICB contracts, in order to stimulate domestic job creation.

o Construction supervision services. Consulting firms will be recruited to provide supervision services across all construction sites. The number of firms to be procured will be confirmed during project preparation. The services will be procured in advance of finalizing the Bidding Documents (BD) for the works components, and will include (a) construction supervision services; (b) a design stage road safety audit which will include recommendations to modify the designs to address any identified unsafe issues; and (c) development of a Social Transparency System (STS), which will combine citizen engagement with a grievance redressal mechanism (GRM) that will be used during the implementation period to closely monitor, address and report on issues raised by road-users and people affected by the road construction activities. The STS will link to the existing web-site being used by CR as a tool to receive and disseminate corridor information.

Component 2 – Institutional Reforms (US$ 20m):

31. This component will build on reforms introduced under the SWRP and EWRP and through other donor partners, and may include:

o Planning, Design and Construction Manual. Envisioned to become the primary and mandatory reference for the planning, design and construction of roads, to ensure that all republican road projects are designed and constructed in accordance with an agreed set of functional and affordable standards. It would also provide a system to maintain and review technical specifications, standards, drawings and guidelines; and provide a methodology for incorporating relevant standards and the outcomes of recent technical assistances on designing for road safety, road tolling, traffic management, site safety management, environmental management, management of climate change vulnerabilities, road-side services, quality control, ITS, etc.

o Road Safety Measures such as: (a) public relations, education, advocacy and outreach, particularly in relation to speed, fatigue and trucking controls; (b) equipment to enforce road safety legislation and axle-load controls.

o Operational aspects which may include analysis of the use of tolling, weigh-in-motion technology and ITS platforms, to collect toll revenues and to monitor and deter overloaded vehicles and fatigued drivers. The project may also assess the feasibility of using the private sector to develop, install and operate various e-tolling systems.

o Review of Road Maintenance methodologies.

Component 3 - Job and SME Strategies. (US$ 20m)

32. This component is proposed to review and implement strategies that can increase private sector participation and job creation.

Component 4 - Project Management and Impact Assessment (US$ 10m)

33. To provide assistance to CR in implementing the project, such as (a) to support the project management functions of the Project Management Team (PMT); (b) for an incremental operating budget; (c) for annual Technical audits; (d) for a base-line analysis to enable project impacts to be subsequently monitored, including an initial poverty assessment (disaggregated by gender) and

citizen engagement discussions; (e) for project completion and Beneficiary Impact assessments; and (f) to support development of future IFI financed projects.

IV. Safeguard Policies that might apply

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No	TBD
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	×		
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04			×
Forests OP/BP 4.36		×	
Pest Management OP 4.09		×	
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11			×
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10		×	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	×		
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		×	
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		×	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		×	

V. Financing (in USD Million)

Total Project Cost:	2563.00	Total Bank Financing:	2183.00
Financing Gap:	0.00		

Financing Source	Amount
Borrower	380.00
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	2183.00
Total	2563.00

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