



Afghanistan: Support to the Advisory Group on Railway Sector Development

Project Name	Support to the Advisory Group on Railway Sector Development
Project Number	51391-002
Country	Afghanistan
Project Status	Active
Project Type / Modality of Assistance	Technical Assistance
Source of Funding / Amount	TA: Support to the Advisory Group on Railway Sector Development Technical Assistance Special Fund US\$ 225,000.00
Strategic Agendas	Environmentally sustainable growth Inclusive economic growth Regional integration
Drivers of Change	Governance and capacity development Knowledge solutions Partnerships Private sector development
Sector / Subsector	Transport - Rail transport (non-urban)
Gender Equity and Mainstreaming	Some gender elements
Description	<p>The TA will have the following outcome: Roadmap for development of Afghanistan's railway subsector updated. The SSTA will deliver three outputs:</p> <p>Output 1: Meetings of the Advisory Group completed. The TA will support the conduct of at least 2 more meetings of the Advisory Group. Such meetings will help to ensure that donor coordination is upkept and a consistent approach is maintained toward the further development of the railway subsector in Afghanistan.</p> <p>Output 2: Project concepts prepared and prioritized. The TA will help the government and ARA to elaborate on project concepts which are line with principles outlined in para 6. One approach which could bring early benefits to Afghanistan, would be to construct multimodal hubs at Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif, so that transit freight could start flowing through Afghanistan via the Ring Road, financed by ADB and other donors. Transit fees from such multimodal transport operation could be collected into a dedicated fund, and proceeds used for the incremental construction of the railway line. Alternatives may include commissioning certain (shorter) parts of the MHR line such as Herat-Torghundi or Mazar-I-Sharif to Aquina in advance of other parts of the line. The TA will assist in examining these options, and prioritize them according to economic feasibility.</p> <p>14. Output 3: Institutional transition plan completed. ARA is currently at a crossroad in terms of its institutional development. To date, it has remained mainly a regulator of small branch lines into Afghanistan from Iran, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. As it prepares for the construction and subsequent operation and maintenance of larger stretches of railways, the institutional form and mandate of ARA also needs to evolve. Work has been conducted to date under the TNDIP Tranche 4 to elaborate on several options moving forward. Based on this work, the TA will prepare an institutional transition plan for ARA, to guide its future development in line with the future form of the network.</p> <p>These outputs will all contribute to a clearer consensus between the government and development partners on the roadmap for the further development of Afghanistan's railway subsector. The new roadmap will be developed by the Advisory Group and in turn guide its work post 2020.</p>

Project Rationale and Linkage to Country/Regional Strategy

Afghanistan is embarking on an ambitious program to develop a comprehensive railway network, in support of domestic and regional connectivity. The Afghanistan National Railway Plan (ANRP), prepared by the government with the support of the United States in 2013, envisions the construction of about 5,000km of railway track, 8 dry ports and 4 multimodal hubs. Railway sector development in Afghanistan is led by the Afghanistan Railway Authority (ARA), which was set up in 2012 under the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) with the objective to the development and management of railways in Afghanistan. In 2017, ARA became an autonomous government agency with an independent budget. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been a primary development partner for Afghanistan in railway sector development. In 2009, ADB approved a TA to conduct a study on railway development in Afghanistan. This led to the approval and implementation of a landmark project for the construction of the Mazar-i-Sharif to Hairatan railway line, which became operational in 2011. Furthermore, ADB extended support through Tranches 1 and 4 of the Multitranches Financing Facility (MFF) for Transport Network Development Investment Program (TNDIP), the former to undertake prefeasibility studies for railway lines in the northern part of Afghanistan, and the latter with the generous financial support of the European Union to provide capacity building to ARA for it to become fully functioning. As part of the ANRP, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) wishes to expedite the construction of the Mazar-i-Sharif to Herat railway line (the MHR), which would connect with the existing Mazar-i-Sharif to Hairatan railway line, and the Herat to Senghan line being constructed in phases, to form a continuous transit route between Central Asia and the Middle East/South Asia through Afghanistan. The line would also form part of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan (TAT) railway line, and the Five-Nations Railway Corridor being planned among the People's Republic of China, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran. The government has reached out to a number of development partners seeking their support to the MHR. High-level discussions and agreements have been undertaken between the Governments of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, the latter who sees this as a vital alternative corridor to access the deep-sea water ports on the Persian Sea. Uzbekistan is reported to have committed \$500 million equivalent to support the MHR project. Uzbekistan has initiated surveys and design work, focused primarily on engineering aspects. The realization of this ambitious MHR project requires extensive coordination and preparation.

Impact
 National trade in and through northwestern Afghanistan increased
 Expanded national railway developed and operated to support achievement of Afghanistan's strategic priorities
 Rail transport will be a mode of choice for trade: quick, efficient, accessible for customers, and easy to use throughout the region

Project Outcome

Description of Outcome: Roadmap for development of Afghanistan's railway subsector updated

Progress Toward Outcome

Implementation Progress

Description of Project Outputs: Meetings of the Advisory Group completed
 Project concepts prepared and prioritized
 Institutional transition plan completed

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

Geographical Location: 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

Responsible ADB Officer: Sakamoto, Ko

Responsible ADB Department: Central and West Asia Department

Responsible ADB Division: Transport and Communications Division, CWRD

Executing Agencies: Afghanistan Railway Authority
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 Kabul, Afghanistan

Timetable

Concept Clearance	-
Fact Finding	-
MRM	-
Approval	26 Oct 2018
Last Review Mission	-
Last PDS Update	26 Oct 2018

Project Page	https://www.adb.org/projects/51391-002/main
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