

RURAL HOUSING SCHEME: CONSTRUCTION QUALITY ASSURANCE

1. Under the Rural Housing Scheme (RHS), quality assurance of new house construction is mandated to a number of agencies to ensure value for money and timely completion of properly designed and soundly constructed houses built in full compliance with national building and construction standards. Qishloq Qurilish Invest (QQI) is mandated¹ to act as an agent of local governments (*hokimiyats*), and homebuyers to carry out supervision of housing construction activities in accordance with modern design specifications and in compliance with state building and construction standards. In addition to QQI, Qishloq Qurilish Loyiha (QQL), the State Committee for Architecture and Construction (SCAC), and district *hokimiyats*, among others, each has mandated roles (detailed in supplementary document 14) for construction inspection and for certifying state building and construction standards are met.

2. **“Planned” design approach.** The RHS is strategically designed to implement a “planned” approach to developing rural communities and building rural houses nationwide. QQL, a national design institute, is mandated² to develop a structured design approach to “planned” rural community development, and is responsible for development of rural community master plans, as well as a range of national architectural design standards, for rural housing and rural social and community facilities. National design standards, developed by QQL, incorporate modern architectural design, construction technology and materials; and address the full range of regional terrain and climatic conditions and socio-demographic characteristics across the country. National design standards are reviewed by regional design institutes, who then prepare detailed designs that incorporate site-specific requirements and advantage locally source materials. All rural design standards are reviewed and approved by SCAC, as well as by a number of oversight/regulatory agencies,³ to ensure compliance with national building and construction standards⁴ prior to their adoption.

3. **Public consultation on RHS house designs.** As an integral part of the RHS public awareness campaign held at the provincial and district level nationwide, the rural public is regularly consulted on national house designs that will be featured in the coming year. National designs are annually reviewed and revised to take into account the public consultation process, feedback from new owners, and to incorporate design improvements. Design improvements include better use of locally sourced materials, cost-saving improvements, and cost-effective technical advancements.

¹ With the residential construction sector in Uzbekistan at an early stage of development and without a private sector option that offers sufficient capacity or coverage, QQI has been specifically mandated to provide technical support and construction supervision for the RHS nationwide. See Presidential Resolution No. 1167, “On Additional Measures to Expand the Scope of Housing Construction in Rural Areas”, 3 August 2009.

² Presidential Resolution PP-1049, “On Establishing Qishloq Qurilish Loyiha Design Research Institute” (LLC), 27 January, 2009.

³ Including Fire Inspection Department (assess design for location of doors and windows for evacuation purposes, choice of building materials for flame retardant features, and mapping of access roads and location of fire hydrants for firefighting purposes); Nature Protection Agency (to assess residential housing site for environmental issues, construction approach for environmental impact of construction process including waste storage and/or treatment and/or removal, and solid waste removal arrangements following handover of houses to rural residents); and Ministry of Emergency (ensure design compliance with seismic building standards and evacuation requirements).

⁴ National Standard SH NK 1.03.01-03 under State Committee for Architecture and Construction Order No. 89, 29 December 2003 (*On Approval of Project Design for Construction of Buildings*), and National Standard SH NK 2.01.02-04 under State Committee for Architecture and Construction Order No. 82, 28 December 2004 (*On Fire Safety of Buildings*).

4. **Construction materials.** The SCAC requires that product certificates are provided by all companies producing or selling or otherwise dealing with construction materials to provide certificates for the products. Construction quality control standards for all construction materials in Uzbekistan are established and monitored by the State Agency for Standardization, Metrology, and Certification (Uzstandart) in coordination with SCAC. Uzstandart certifies⁵ the construction materials, issues certificates to the production companies, and periodically inspects the production sites. There are 28 companies authorized to certify various construction materials and there are 53 accredited testing laboratories (including 10 private laboratories) for testing different types of construction materials.

5. **Site selection.** Land for the RHS is limited to state-reserved land and land managed or administered by government agencies and that has been approved for residential use. Land to be used for the RHS will not involve acquisition of land that is owned by or leased to individuals or private entities. Site-selection criteria and procedures have been developed to ensure that none of the sites involve land acquisition and resettlement. Site selection and approval are the responsibility of the district *hokimiyat*, with endorsement from the district Architecture and Construction Committee, the district Geology and Hydrology Committee, the district Cadastre and Cartography Committee and the district/regional Nature Protection Committee. All site selection will be undertaken in accordance with Uzbek laws and regulations that govern environmental and involuntary resettlement safeguards. All participating commercial banks⁶ will be required to adopt and implement environment and safeguard procedures that will clearly outline the bank's (i) environmental and social management policy and applicable requirements, (ii) environmental and social management procedures, and (iii) organizational responsibility, resources, and capacity.

6. **Construction supervision of RHS new houses.** QQI, as an agent of the provincial *hokimiyats* (the developer) and homebuyers, supervises the construction of new rural housing. QQI is responsible for liaising with all relevant regulatory agencies, and supervising overall construction quality of new houses to ensure adherence to design and building specifications and national building and construction standards.

7. **Stage 1: Site preparation, mapping of house sites, and preparation of foundations.** QQI closely supervises and regularly interacts with the contractor, particularly during the critical stages of: site preparation (including analysis of soil samples by UzGIITI laboratories, and soil compaction), mapping of housing sites, mapping of utility and infrastructure access, and preparation and sealing of foundations (prepared in accordance with applicable seismic standards). As prescribed by regulation, QQI also closely coordinates the approval of site designs, and inspection by oversight agencies at each critical stage of construction. Compliance of national building and construction standards and norms must be certified, at each predefined stage of construction, prior to the start of the next stage of construction.

8. **Stage 2: Erection of walls, roofing, installation of windows, doors, wiring and electrical and plumbing works.** Within 7 days following the initiation of construction and installation works, QQI is required to finalize an agreement with QQL or the regional design institution on the process and the schedule for the design inspection, to be undertaken by QQL or the regional design institute, during construction and until the house is commissioned. QQI

⁵ In accordance with Uzstandart Regulation No. 59 "Rule for Product Certification", Ministry of Justice Registration No. 1458, 18 March 2005.

⁶ Qishloq Qurilish Bank (QQB), the sole participating commercial bank at this time, has prepared and adopted an Environmental and Social Management System for the RHS.

and QQL or the regional design institute are required to undertake design and technical inspection of residential housing construction in accordance with KMK 1.03.07-96 “Regulation on Design and Technical Inspection of Construction”. As outlined by this regulation, it is mandatory for each step of the inspection process to be documented in a “Journal for Design and Technical Inspection of Construction”, with any deviations detected during the inspection and follow-up steps needed to be taken, appropriately recorded. Duplicate copies of the journals are maintained, with one copy secured on site and a second copy held in safekeeping at QQL or the regional design institute. A QQI lead specialist is assigned responsibility for supervising a specific contractor or site, and is accountable for maintaining the journal and ensuring timely entry of all observations, and all notes on any discrepancies identified during routine construction supervision and the quality inspection process. The QQI lead specialist is responsible for supervising the contractor, and undertaking quality checks, to ensure construction works are being implemented on time, and in accordance with the contractor’s workplan. It is the QQI lead specialist’s responsibility to identify problems or complications, find constructive solutions, follow up on corrective actions, and maintain all required reports on construction progress and construction quality.

9. **Stage 3: Installation of flooring, ceilings, and other finishings, installation of equipment and fixtures, connection to utilities,⁷ and landscaping.** The supervision of the construction of each individual house is managed by QQI to ensure contractor compliance with the detailed designs and with national building and construction standards. All changes to original plans/designs, including those requested by the individual homebuyer, must be in accordance with national design/building/construction standards and norms, and preapproved by QQL/regional design firm. Upgrades of finishings, equipment, or fixtures, if preapproved, may be considered if additional costs are fully borne by the homebuyer.

10. **Facilitation of handover of completed new rural houses to homebuyers.** QQI organizes and facilitates commissioning⁸ of all new houses constructed under the RHS. Within five days of receiving the Contractor’s Notice of Completion, QQI invites the homebuyer to join the Working Group for Commissioning to inspect the house and sign off the Working Group’s Document of Acceptance. The Working Group is comprised of QQI, the Contractor, and relevant representatives of regulatory and oversight agencies. Inspection by the Working Group includes inspection of the quality of construction, installations (plumbing, electrical, heating, and ventilation), equipment and fixtures, finishings, and exterior works (walkways, driveways, fences, landscaping, etc.). Upon completion of final inspection, the Working Group’s Document of Acceptance is signed by all members of the Working Group. A final commissioning certificate is then issued by the State Building Inspection Commission to the homebuyer.⁹

⁷ Inspection by utility agencies, i.e., district offices of the electricity company (to inspect connection to network and installation of wiring, installation of the electricity meter, etc.), the water company (to inspect connection to network and confirm available supply capacity [250 to 300 lpcd], and capacity for piped wastewater disposal or septic tank), and the natural gas company (to inspect connection to the network and inspect gas-fired appliances—gas water heaters, gas stoves, etc.).

⁸ Commissioning is undertaken in accordance with National Standard SH NK 3.01.04-04 under State Committee for Architecture and Construction Order No. 59, 25 July 2007 (*On Commissioning of Newly Constructed Buildings*).

⁹ The Commissioning Certificate is signed by the homebuyer and all members of the State Building Inspection Commission (Chairman of the State Building Inspection Commission [*hokimiyat*] and respective representatives of QQI, the General Contractor, the Subcontractors, QQL/the regional design institute, the Inspection Unit of the State Committee of Architectural and Construction, the *hokimiyat* Sanitary Office, the *hokimiyat* Fire Inspection Department, the Nature Protection Agency, the Ministry of Emergency, the Chief Technical State Labor Inspector, the Uzbek Society of Disabled Persons (if applicable), the Society for the Protection of Consumer Rights, the relevant Council of Federation of Trade Unions, and the financing bank (QQB or other participating commercial bank).

11. **Homebuyer recourse and new house construction warranty.** Homebuyers have recourse rights against QQL, the contractor, and QQI for any subsequent issues regarding quality of design and construction. QQI is in the process of revising the homebuyer's purchase agreement to improve and outline the RHS grievance and complaint process, and provide details of the one-year new house construction warranty.