

SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

Country:	Afghanistan	Project Title:	Qaisar–Dari Bum Road Project
Lending/Financing Modality:	Project	Department/ Division:	Central and West Asia Department Transport and Communications Division

I. POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY
Poverty targeting: general intervention
A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth Strategy, and Country Partnership Strategy
<p>The project aligns with the new Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) for 2016–2021. The ANPDF is complemented by 12 national priority programs, including one for infrastructure. Asian Development Bank (ADB) investments in transport, as presented in the Interim Country Partnership Strategy 2017-2018 and Country Operations Business Plan 2017-2020, are consistent with the national priority program activities.</p> <p>The project supports land transport network development in Afghanistan by (i) completing the regional highway network of Afghanistan and improving other important national highways to foster trade and commerce with the neighboring countries; (ii) serving the country by creating thoroughfares with high economic potential and creating transport network links domestically and internationally; and (iii) contributing to social and economic development in the region by helping boost the mobility and accessibility of people and goods across the country.</p>
B. Results from the Poverty and Social Analysis during Project Preparation or Due Diligence
<p>1. Key poverty and social issues. The poverty rate in Afghanistan has not changed since 2007, with 36% of the population considered as poor. This stagnation despite of economic growth is explained by an increase in inequality—the Gini index rose from 29.7 in fiscal year 2008 to 31.6 in fiscal year 2012 (ended 20 December 2012). Afghanistan’s economic base remains narrow and heavily dependent on agriculture and international aid.¹ Improvement in labor market opportunities is not sufficient to benefit the poor, who rely mainly on informal day labor and agricultural activities. The project will contribute to poverty reduction by providing access to urban and international markets for agricultural products and by planning additional national transport network links to potential natural resource extraction sites. It will improve the rural population’s access to education and health facilities and contribute to employment creation and income generation for poor households, and will thus reduce the incidence of poverty in the project areas.</p> <p>2. Beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are the road users of the entire 151-kilometer (km) section of the national Ring Road between Qaisar and Dari Bum, including the transporters of people and of goods for local and international trade. Other beneficiaries are the 60 communities along the project road that will benefit from better connectivity with markets, employment, and basic social services. These communities rely mainly on livestock raising, irrigated and rainfed agriculture, small-scale trading, and manual labor for their livelihood.</p> <p>3. Impact channels. Direct impact channels for the poor and vulnerable groups include income generation opportunities through demand for unskilled labor during construction of the project road. Access by the poor to basic infrastructure facilities will also be improved through the project’s community development component. Indirectly, the improved road may also facilitate a shift from subsistence agriculture to increased market-based production, enabling farmers to grow perishable commercial products such as vegetables and fruits that can be transported to markets more quickly. Farmers in the provinces will be able to diversify their cropping patterns, cultivate high-value crops, and grow larger marketable surpluses to improve their income-earning capacity. More agricultural wage-based employment can be generated.</p> <p>4. Other social and poverty issues. While the project may support the construction or rehabilitation of basic community facilities prioritized by the communities and benefiting the poor, such as school buildings, health clinics, or wells, the operation and maintenance of these facilities will have to be handled by the local communities and other government units.</p> <p>5. Design features. In addition to improving the connectivity of communities by completing the main road, meeting the basic infrastructure needs of 60 local communities is expected to help boost access for the poor to basic services and community facilities.</p>
II. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR
<p>1. Participatory approaches and project activities. A 3-day consultation with village estate councils was conducted during project preparation to present the project components, discuss the potential impacts of project activities, and the entitlements of affected individuals. Further consultations with displaced persons (DPs) and key stakeholders will be conducted during the preparation of the final land acquisition and resettlement plan (LARP) by the design consultant, and with communities during the identification and finalization of activities to be supported under the community development component.</p>

2. **Civil society organizations.** The scope for civil society organizations (CSOs) to participate in the project is limited. However, during project implementation, inputs will be sought from CSOs and local village councils during the LARP finalization and implementation on aspects such as grievance redress or dispute resolution mechanism, identification of DPs, information dissemination, and monitoring. CSOs and local village councils will also be included in the consultation process for the community development component.

3. The following forms of CSO participation are envisaged during project implementation, rated as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):

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

4. Participation plan.

Yes. A participation plan will be included in the LARP preparation and implementation to ensure meaningful involvement of DPs and key stakeholders. For the community development plan, the project implementation unit will take the lead in mobilizing village councils and CSOs in the identification and prioritization of activities to be supported. The structure and process for community participation in the community development component will be described in the project administration manual.

III. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender mainstreaming category: some gender elements

A. Key issues. The mobility of women is traditionally and culturally restricted. While they can be carted, driven, or their ride led, they do not drive, ride, or even undertake a journey by themselves without being accompanied by a *mehram* (grandfather, father, uncle, brother, son). In the project area, traditional gender roles remain firm and unchanged. Women undertake all the household work, such as cooking, washing, cleaning, caring for the livestock, or weaving carpets, within the homestead. The irony is that women, despite all their duties, do not participate in community decision-making or public consultations related to common facilities like water supply, electrification, or mother and child health care, and can neither access education nor acquire home-based income skills. Neither a national-standard road nor the ambitions of project proponents can directly influence and even alter the traditional domestic role of women and the cultural restrictions to their mobility. The project could however open up opportunities that enable women and children to travel fast, easily, safely, and in a culturally appropriate manner to health and education facilities in neighboring major towns.

B. Key actions.

The demand-driven community development component of the project will include gender-sensitive and sex-segregated consultations, conducted in a culturally appropriate manner, to ascertain the needs and preferences. Approval of each subproject will require the elders of the village estate council to consult with the women of the community, by means of a checklist provided by the project, and certify the findings in an affidavit.

Gender action plan Other actions or measures No action or measure

IV. ADDRESSING SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES

A. Involuntary Resettlement

Safeguard Category: A B C FI

1. **Key impacts.** About 34.6 hectares of agricultural land, 8.96 hectares of residential or commercial land, and 14,701 m² of residential or commercial structures will be affected, displacing 3,437 people. Of these, 168 individuals are expected to experience significant impacts.

2. **Strategy to address the impacts.** Draft LARPs were prepared to compensate at replacement cost for unavoidable impacts and to assist vulnerable groups. The grievance redress mechanism developed from the ongoing ADB projects will be expanded to cover the project sections and capacity-building activities to be provided to the executing agency and relevant units. Consultations with DPs and information disclosure will be continued throughout project implementation.

3. Plan or other actions.

Resettlement plan

B. Indigenous Peoples

Safeguard Category: A B C FI

1. **Key impacts.** Settlements along the project road consist mainly of Pashtuns (95%) and other, smaller ethnic groups (Uzbeks or Turken, Balooch, and Aymaaq). None of these groups were identified as indigenous peoples in accordance with ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement (2009) (SPS).

Is broad community support triggered? No

2. Strategy to address the impacts – not applicable.

3. Plan or other actions.

No action

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, indicated as high (H), medium (M), and low or not significant (L).

(M) unemployment (L) underemployment (L) retrenchment (M) core labor standards

2. **Labor market impact.** The project will help provide local labor opportunities in the project area during construction. Bidding documents and contract obligations will be designed to ensure that civil works contractors comply with applicable labor laws and standards with a focus on not employing child labor in construction and maintenance activities, and eliminating any discrimination as regards employment.

B. Affordability

The project is not expected to have any impact on affordability since the use of the road will not be restricted and no toll fees will be charged for its use.

C. Communicable Diseases and Other Social Risks

1. The impact of the following risks are rated as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):

(L) Communicable diseases (M) Human trafficking

(M) Opium trafficking

2. **Risks to people in project area.** Afghanistan is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking.^b The improved road conditions may increase the risk of human trafficking. Reliable data on HIV prevalence in Afghanistan is sparse. UNAIDS and the World Health Organization estimate that between 2,000 and 3,000 Afghans are living with HIV. Afghanistan's emerging epidemic likely hinges on a combination of injecting drugs and unsafe paid sex.^c The extent of this risk within the project area is not known. Specific provisions in the bidding and contract documents will be included to mitigate such risks through awareness-raising campaigns targeting workers and the local population.

Balkh Province (particularly Dawlatab District) is a significant center for drug trafficking in northern Afghanistan. Opium is often brought into the province via the Ring Road. While most of the opium originates from Sari Pul and Baghlan, some comes from Faryab and Jawzjan.^d A separate program of the Government of Afghanistan is in place to handle this issue.

VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. **Targets and indicators.** Land acquisition and resettlement activities aim to ensure that affected people are compensated at replacement cost and assisted in restoring the livelihoods in compliance with the SPS. Local labor employment will be maximized and monitored as part of the environmental monitoring plan. Consultations on project concerns and awareness-raising campaigns on HIV/AIDS and other related issues are to be conducted regularly for construction workers and local populations.

2. **Required human resources.** The Ministry of Public Works, through its Program Management Office and assisted by a deputed official from Ministry of Public Health, will be responsible for overall monitoring of the project and will engage construction supervision consultants. The project team will monitor and evaluate compliance with the LARP and any impact identified during and/or after the project. The supervision consultants will maintain a record of contractors' compliance with the core labor standards and awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS and other social issues related to civil works.

3. **Information in the project administration manual.** The Program Management Office will submit biannual social safeguard monitoring reports to ADB during LARP and project implementation to present progress in social safeguard implementation, social or resettlement issues of concern, and actions required to ensure that project implementation is compliant with SPS provisions. Social monitoring reports will be disclosed on the websites of the Ministry of Public Works and ADB in line with the requirements of ADB's Public Communications Policy (2011).

4. **Monitoring tools.** Monitoring requirements are stipulated in the design and monitoring framework, project administration manual, and the LARP.

¹ World Bank and Ministry of Economy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. October 2015. Afghanistan: Poverty Status Update. Kabul.

^b United States Department of State. 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report. Office of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights.

^c World Bank. HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan. 2012. www.worldbank.org.

^d Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics. November 2013. Afghanistan Interprovincial Opiate Trafficking Dynamics. Kabul.