



Combined Project Information Documents / Integrated Safeguards Datasheet (PID/ISDS)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 31-Oct-2017 | Report No: PIDISDSA23437



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Tajikistan	Project ID P165831	Project Name Targeted Social Assistance Rollout	Parent Project ID (if any) P122039
Parent Project Name Social Safety Net Strengthening Project	Region EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	Estimated Appraisal Date 07-Nov-2017	Estimated Board Date 20-Dec-2017
Practice Area (Lead) Social Protection & Labor	Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Finance, Republic of Tajikistan	Implementing Agency State Agency for Social Protection (SASP)

Proposed Development Objective(s) Parent

The development objective of the Project is to improve the capacity of the Government of Tajikistan to plan, monitor, and manage social assistance for the poor through the development of a national registry of social protection and the provision of training, equipment and related items for improving said capacity.

Proposed Development Objective(s) Additional Financing

To achieve national geographic coverage of the Targeted Social Assistance program, ensuring integrated delivery of services.

Components

- Component 2: Capacity building for Launching and Initiating the Rollout of the Targeted Social Assistance Program
- Component 3: Project Management
- Component 1: Establishing the National Registry for Social Protection and Supporting Development of the Targeted Social Assistance Program
- Component 4: Supporting national roll-out of the Targeted Social Assistance Program, including the National Registry of Social Protection

Financing (in US\$, millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	1.80
Total Financing	1.80
Financing Gap	0.00



DETAILS

Total World Bank Group Financing	1.80
World Bank Lending	1.80

Environmental Assessment Category

Not Required (C)

Decision

The review did authorize the preparation to continue

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

Tajikistan maintains a strong economic growth during 2014-2016 at an average growth rate of 6.5 percent, driven mainly by foreign-financed investments. The poverty rate fell from 32 percent in 2015 to an estimated 30.3 percent in 2016. These achievements showcase the Government’s efforts and commitments to reforms through adoption of a number of interventions; such as the expansionary fiscal policies, including a considerable increase in foreign-financed capital investment in the energy sector and road infrastructure; an accommodative monetary policy supporting a heightened demand for local currency; and a raise of public sector wages and social transfers. However, the economy is still facing considerable challenges caused by the growing domestic vulnerabilities and risks in the financial sector, business climate, and state-owned enterprises.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

In the context of these economic challenges and vulnerabilities, the Government of Tajikistan has been working to reform its social assistance system. The on-going reform has focused on: (i) consolidating legacy cash social assistance schemes (old programs of energy subsidies and conditional school allowances) and replacing them with a new Targeted Social Assistance (TSA), which is a poverty related unconditional cash transfer program; (ii) strengthening a new targeting mechanism of TSA based on Proxy-Means Testing (PMT); (iii) improving administration of the system, including establishing a National Registry of Social Protection (NRSP) and putting it in use by electronically registering all the TSA beneficiaries and payments; and (iv) building capacity at all levels of administration (center, regions, districts, and Jamoats).

From a pilot covering two districts in 2011, the new TSA program was expanded to 10 districts in 2013. Subsequently, the Government approved expansion of the program to 15 more districts in mid-2014, and to another 15 districts in 2016. In February 2017, the TSA bill was signed into the law by the President, laying a solid foundation for the national TSA rollout in 2018.



To date, the project has registered the following achievements:

- The TSA program is fully rolled out in 40 districts, or close to 60 percent of the country, covering over 400 thousand beneficiaries.
- The new information system and National Registry for Social Protection (NRSP) have been developed and are operational. All operations of the TSA are fully automated and all records digitized. Correspondingly, the capacity of Government to plan, monitor, and manage the social assistance has been considerably strengthened. This provides a strong foundation for the planned national roll-out.
- A comprehensive national household survey covering 50 districts and close to 3000 households was conducted to inform improvements in the PMT formula.
- Strategy for national TSA roll-out has been developed and costed. A full allocation required for the national roll-out is in the state budget.
- Two new regional Program Coordination Centers (formerly known as Data Processing Centers) have been established to facilitate the work of the program in remote areas, to streamline program related services, and facilitate integration with other public benefits and services.

The success of the new TSA program is indication of a strong commitment and capacity of the Government to act on ambitious plans of a national roll-out in 2018, as mandated in the new Law. To sustain the current success of the reform, however, additional investments are required. The State Agency of Social Protection (SASP), which is in charge of administering the new system, has been in existence for only three years. The Regional Centers under SASP were just established in early 2017 on a pilot basis. The plans are to establish at least three more such Centers across the country as data processing and TSA service hubs to facilitate implementation work at the district level and communications between the center and the districts. The offices of district and Jamoat level staff in the remaining districts of the country, where the new TSA program is not yet operational, will need investment in infrastructure and extensive training. At the central level, the new NRSP and the information system need to be fully institutionalized by ensuring proper long-term maintenance arrangements and by developing synergies with other programs, including the disability certification and benefits.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Original PDO

The development objective of the Project is to improve the capacity of the Government of Tajikistan to plan, monitor, and manage social assistance for the poor through the development of a national registry of social protection and the provision of training, equipment and related items for improving said capacity.

Current PDO

To achieve national geographic coverage of the Targeted Social Assistance program, ensuring integrated delivery of services.



The original Project Development Objective (PDO), including all indicators, have been achieved. The project will now build on those achievements to bring the TSA program to full national scale and to build synergies, both in policy and in administration, with other social interventions, ensuring holistic integrated approach to managing the social sector (see below). The Project Paper will provide further details after the appraisal.

Key Results

Proposed PDO indicators:

- Coverage of the Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) Program (number of districts)
- Beneficiaries of social safety net programs, TSA (number, core indicator)
- Beneficiaries of Safety Nets programs, TSA – Female (number, core indicator)
- Beneficiaries of Safety Nets programs, TSA – Unconditional cash transfers (number, core indicator)
- TSA Beneficiaries who are elderly women living alone (number)
- TSA Beneficiaries who are women and heads of households (number)
- Number of non-TSA beneficiaries of social assistance and services who are registered in NRSP (number)

The indicators will be further reviewed as part of the project appraisal to ensure full alignment with the new Project Development Objective.

D. Project Description

The current project has fully disbursed, having performed at or above the targets. Most of the original and substantive activities were conducted under components 1 and 2. The original components 1 and 2 will remain the same but with no new activities and no additional funding allocations to them. Additional financing will be provided to Component 3 (Project Management) to enable continued management and fiduciary support. A new Component 4 will be added as follows:

Component 4: Supporting national roll-out of the Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) Program, including the National Registry of Social Protection. Under this component, the proposed AF would extend activities that already constitute the core of the original project design and supplement them with some new but closely linked activities, specifically:

- i) Establishing additional Regional Coordination Centers under State Agency for Social Protection (SASP) with a broad range of service functions for clients of the TSA program and other programs managed by SASP. The activities will include minor renovations, establishing connectivity and stable electricity supply, transportation and office infrastructure, etc.
- ii) Minor renovation, furniture, and equipment to provide upgraded work places for district and Jamoat level social workers, connectivity and stable electricity supply, and office logistics.
- iii) Public awareness and information campaigns around TSA, including design and printing of information materials for general population.
- iv) Securing long-term maintenance arrangements for the National Registry of Social Protection (NRSP) and the management information system.



- v) Introducing improvements in mechanisms of TSA selection and delivery, specifically: establishing limits on duration of receipt of benefits, introducing stratification of the PMT scores, and establishing differentiation in TSA benefits levels, depending on family size and other conditions. It is also proposed that the TSA selection threshold be dynamically set, depending on availability of funds and the program performance.
- vi) Conducting gender analysis of the TSA program to inform potential required policy and administrative changes.
- vii) Strengthening citizen engagement aspects, including improvements to the current grievance redress mechanisms.
- viii) Strengthening controls and monitoring of programs managed by SASP.
- ix) Conducting impact and/or targeting efficiency evaluation of the TSA program and capturing beneficiary perception of the program.
- x) Revisions in the TSA Operations Manual as result of introduction of the proposed changes, including training staff in new procedures at all levels of administration.

The project will also support development of an integrated model of public service delivery by SASP, specifically in establishing or strengthening synergies between various government interventions:

- *Institutionally*, investments in establishing the NRSP under the current project will be further capitalized, whereby the NRSP will be used as a single registry of beneficiaries of various programs;
- *On the policy side*, the uses of the TSA targeting mechanism, as a unified method of eligibility assessment for programs other than TSA will be further elaborated and incorporated into design of other programs to the extent possible. The on-going dialogue about improvements in the TSA targeting mechanisms as well as the planned evaluation campaign for the TSA impact will guide that effort. The priority arrears for policy developments and coordination will include energy tariff compensation scheme, nutrition services, and disaster response mechanisms.

Finally, building on achievements of NRSP, this component will also help streamline and modernize the process of disability certification of the State Medico-Social Expertise Service (SMSES). There are around 144,000 registered disabled citizens of all ages in various categories and 34 offices of SMSES that support that function. The project would design a blueprint of the new mechanism of electronic registration of all disability cases, as a sub-module of NRSP, help establish a data exchange with agencies providing benefits and services to those citizens, and invest in the capacity of SMSES. This effort will contribute to the agenda of integrating the provision of various social benefits and services.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

The implementation arrangements will change to the extent that State Agency for Social Protection (SASP), that has been in charge of implementing the new TSA program, will now assume the role of the primary implementing agency in charge of the project. The Head of SASP will be designated as ex-officio Project Director. While the SASP has been a project implementation agency, all fiduciary responsibilities under the parent project have been reserved to Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population (MHSPP). Under thus AF, the SASP will take direct charge of managing fiduciary functions. A group of dedicated consultants will operate under supervision of the Project Director to ensure



smooth implementation and prudent fiduciary function. The MHSP, following its institutional mandate, will perform general supervisory functions over SASP. The team will conduct the necessary fiduciary assessment of SASP as part of project appraisal.

F. Project location and Salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

The Project supports a national reform of social assistance. The Project may support some light rehabilitation in the central office of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, and the State Agency for Social Protection, as well as regional and district offices responsible for delivery of the social assistance.

G. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

- Kristine Schwebach, Social Safeguards Specialist
- Svetlana K. Sharipova, Social Safeguards Specialist
- Satoshi Ishihara, Social Safeguards Specialist
- Rustam Arstanov, Environmental Safeguards Specialist

SAFEGUARD POLICIES THAT MIGHT APPLY

Safeguard Policies	Triggered?	Explanation (Optional)
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	No	while minor repairs in the office buildings might be financed under the project, none of the works will include activities that could be categorized as Category "B"
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04	No	No natural habitats will be impacted
Forests OP/BP 4.36	No	No forests or forestry is involved
Pest Management OP 4.09	No	no pesticides purchase or use is foreseen
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11	No	No physical cultural resources are involved
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	No	not applicable for Central Asia
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	No	no relocation or resettlement is foreseen
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37	No	no dams safety is involved
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50	No	no activities in the vicinity of water sites



Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60 No not applicable

KEY SAFEGUARD POLICY ISSUES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

A. Summary of Key Safeguard Issues

1. Describe any safeguard issues and impacts associated with the proposed project. Identify and describe any potential large scale, significant and/or irreversible impacts:

No environmental impacts are expected under the project. Minor renovations including plastering, installation of air conditioners, replacement of furniture will be permitted. However, none of the renovation activities that could be assigned a Safeguards Category "B" will be allowed. The Project Operations Manual will include environmental guidelines relating to the minor repairs to offices.

2. Describe any potential indirect and/or long term impacts due to anticipated future activities in the project area:

n/a

3. Describe any project alternatives (if relevant) considered to help avoid or minimize adverse impacts.

n/a

4. Describe measures taken by the borrower to address safeguard policy issues. Provide an assessment of borrower capacity to plan and implement the measures described.

n/a

5. Identify the key stakeholders and describe the mechanisms for consultation and disclosure on safeguard policies, with an emphasis on potentially affected people.

n/a

B. Disclosure Requirements (N.B. The sections below appear only if corresponding safeguard policy is triggered)

C. Compliance Monitoring Indicators at the Corporate Level (to be filled in when the ISDS is finalized by the project decision meeting) (N.B. The sections below appear only if corresponding safeguard policy is triggered)

The World Bank Policy on Disclosure of Information

Have relevant safeguard policies documents been sent to the World Bank for disclosure?

NA

Have relevant documents been disclosed in-country in a public place in a form and language that are understandable and accessible to project-affected groups and local NGOs?



NA

All Safeguard Policies

Have satisfactory calendar, budget and clear institutional responsibilities been prepared for the implementation of measures related to safeguard policies?

NA

Have costs related to safeguard policy measures been included in the project cost?

NA

Does the Monitoring and Evaluation system of the project include the monitoring of safeguard impacts and measures related to safeguard policies?

Yes

Have satisfactory implementation arrangements been agreed with the borrower and the same been adequately reflected in the project legal documents?

Yes

CONTACT POINT

World Bank

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APPROVAL

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