



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(**ESRS Concept Stage**)

Date Prepared/Updated: 05/16/2024 | Report No: ESRSC04089



I. BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Operation Data

Operation ID	Product	Operation Acronym	Approval Fiscal Year
P178486	Investment Project Financing (IPF)	TJ Refugees and Host Communities Project	2024
Operation Name	Supporting Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Integration of Vulnerable Groups in Tajikistan		
Country/Region Code	Beneficiary country/countries (borrower, recipient)	Region	Practice Area (Lead)
Tajikistan	Tajikistan	EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	Other
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Republic of Tajikistan	National Social Investment Fund of Tajikistan (NSIFT)		30-Apr-2024
Estimated Concept Review Date	Total Project Cost		
28-Mar-2024	3,000,000.00		

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Proposed Development Objective

To promote social cohesion through improvement of livelihood opportunities and social infrastructure in the city of Vahdat for refugee youth and host communities

B. Is the operation being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?

No

C. Summary Description of Proposed Project Activities

[Description imported from the Concept Data Sheet in the Portal providing information about the key aspects and components/sub-components of the project]

This is the first Government of Tajikistan and World Bank project for Afghan refugees and host communities of Tajikistan with a focus on socio-economic integration. It will finance livelihoods and community-driven development interventions with the aim of providing meaningful opportunity for socio-economic integration of refugee and host communities in Vahdat. The project will build on the lessons learnt from the WB financed Socio-Economic Resilience



Strengthening Program (SERSP) (P168062) currently under implementation: The key lessons include: (i) ensuring community members are fully aware of the available budget for social infrastructure investments from the onset to enable realistic prioritization/selection process, (ii) ensuring strong involvement of women in project activities from the onset and to organize special platforms/places for them to gather and organize meetings, (iii) ensuring livelihoods should respond to multi-dimensional local needs, through both investments in public infrastructure and the inclusion of the marginalized and (iv) conducting specialized outreach activities to reach Afghan women, delivered by women who speak Dari/Pashto and who have gained the trust of the refugee community. The proposed project will also build on the experience of World Bank's Social Development Operations in Europe and Central Asia region with similar scope and target beneficiaries. This includes, for example other JSDF funded projects such as Kosovo Youth Development Project (also funded by JSDF), Municipalities for Youth in Kosovo Project, Social Entrepreneurship, Empowerment and Social Cohesion for Refugees and Host Communities in Turkey amongst others. The proposed project will pilot livelihood approaches developed under SERSP for different vulnerable groups (refugees and host communities) in a new location (Vahdat City where refugees have permission to stay). It is innovative in several ways. It jointly implements project activities for both host communities and refugee through joint consultation processes. This design will ensure that the social infrastructure investments reflect the needs of both refugees and host communities. The project pilots geo-enabling initiative for monitoring and supervision (GEMS) tools for the monitoring of project activities. The project will train and empower youth from the refugee and host communities in the GEMS tools; and it will build the long-term capacity of the government (via NSIFT) to support refugee and host community projects in close collaboration with UNHCR; the project will provide a platform to the Government to learn from the pilot and capture lessons that can inform discussions on refugee policies and programs in Tajikistan. Through the engagement of target beneficiaries, the project is designed to enhance accountability, empower women and youth from the refugee and host communities in decision-making roles, and ensure investments meet community needs. The project may also contribute to greater social cohesion between refugees and host community members in the longer-term. Component 1: Inclusive Livelihood Opportunities (\$600,000) Component 2. Support for Local Infrastructure and Services (\$1,785,000) Component 3. Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Communications (\$370,000).

D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1 Overview of Environmental and Social Project Settings

[Description of key features relevant to the operation's environmental and social risks and opportunities (e.g., whether the project is nationwide or regional in scope, urban/rural, in an FCV context, presence of Indigenous Peoples or other minorities, involves associated facilities, high-biodiversity settings, etc.) – Max. character limit 2,000]

Tajikistan is a small landlocked country in the heart of Central Asia, bordering Afghanistan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Uzbekistan. Mountains cover more than 90% of the country rendering accessibility difficult. The project's location – Vahdat- is a city in western Tajikistan, on the bank of Kofarnihon river. Vahdat is located 20 km east of the capital city, Dushanbe. In 2020, its population was 43,200 people inside city boundaries and 342,700 people together with the outlying communities. The main population is comprised of Tajiks and Uzbeks, also Russians and Tatars, and Afghans (the refugee community). Vahdat hosts three quarters of refugees in the country, and the Tajik government reported in 2021 that social infrastructure facilities (including education, healthcare, community roads, sanitation) is inadequate to provide services for the refugee population, while “[they] have extraordinary potential” (UNHCR Commissioner Mr. Grandi's visit to Vahdat in 2022). In accordance with Tajikistan's National Law on Refugees (2002), Government of Tajikistan designated Vahdat as one of the settlement areas for Afghan refugees. According to UNHCR, as of June 2023, Vahdat hosts 78% of the registered Afghan refugees in Tajikistan (1,590 households). Vahdat has a high concentration



of vulnerable population, including inactive jobless returning migrants and young women who are not in education, employment, or training (NEETs). According to World Bank’s Strengthening Youth Resilience to Radicalization Study (World Bank 2020), Vahdat is also a vulnerable to the risk of radicalization affecting young people.

Vahdat district is located in Hissar valley at an altitude of 800 to 3,500 meters above sea level. Most of the territory is occupied by mountains which are located mainly in the northern part of the district.

The city’s economy is mainly shaped by the surrounding district’s agricultural activities: cotton, cattle, grains and vegetable production, and viticulture with

D.2 Overview of Borrower’s Institutional Capacity for Managing Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

[Description of Borrower’s capacity (i.e., prior performance under the Safeguard Policies or ESF, experience applying E&S policies of IFIs, Environmental and social unit/staff already in place) and willingness to manage risks and impacts and of provisions planned or required to have capabilities in place, along with the needs for enhanced support to the Borrower – Max. character limit 2,000]

The National Social Investment Fund of Tajikistan (NSIFT) is a designated agency by the Government of Tajikistan to work on socio-economic integration and livelihood issues. It has a track record of implementing small-scale local-level projects and has a mandate to work with communities over the long term on a broad range of social investments, including poverty reduction and livelihood programs. Launched in 1997 by order of the government and established in 2002, NSIFT has functioned for 20 years as an implementing agency for local-level development projects funded by donors. NSIFT is currently responsible for the implementation of two projects financed by the WBG, viz. the Socio-Economic Resilience Strengthening Project (SERSP) and CASA 1000 Community Support Project. NSIFT has an organizational charter; and it has permanent staff at its Dushanbe central office and at two local offices in Khatlon (Kushoniyon and Kulob), including an environmental and social specialist in the central office, and in Khatlon and GBAO.

Since 2003, the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) and Government of Tajikistan have a Country Agreement in place which outlines the scope of UNHCR engagement on the refugee protection and management. NSIFT will implement the project in close collaboration with UNHCR, on Components 1 and 2. However, there will be no financial transactions between the two entities. UNHCRs support will focus on advising on beneficiaries’ selection, the inclusivity of the outreach process, receipt of tools and equipment, facilitation of discussions, etc. NSIFT and UNHCR will sign an agreement that clarifies roles and responsibilities, workplans, timelines and data sharing agreement.

II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate

A.1 Environmental Risk Rating

Moderate

[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating, in accordance with the ES Directive and the Technical Note on Screening and Risk Classification under the ESF – Max. character limit 2,000]

The environmental risk rating is "Moderate", physical works envisaged under Component 2 are expected to be small to medium scale (from construction and/or renovation of local infrastructure) and the associated environmental impacts, such as noise, dust, air, soil, water pollution, construction debris, occupational hazards for workers and

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community are expected to be temporary, predictable, and mitigable with typical measures. The largest known construction impact is expected from building a 3-floor new annex building within the existing community center for refugees and host community members (Center for Children and Youth Creativity of Vahdat). Other construction activities will be from building or procuring for local social infrastructure, such as playgrounds, medical facilities, classroom equipment, community roads, etc. After the commission of infrastructure, risks during the operational phase will include waste production, waste water pollution, potentially air pollution and also risks to health and safety. Types of infrastructure investment will be determined by the inclusive selection process by host communities and refugees.

A.2 Social Risk Rating

Moderate

[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating, in accordance with the ES Directive and the Technical Note on Screening and Risk Classification under the ESF – Max. character limit 2,000]

The social risk is rated as Moderate. The investments will provide livelihoods opportunities in kind and cash, community grants to improve local infrastructure and services for refugees and host communities and improving the conditions of social infrastructure in the city of Vahdat. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the city of Vahdat hosts 80 percent of all refugees in Tajikistan. The overall social risks are assessed as moderate at the concept stage. While the project’s direct investments are not envisaged to result in adverse social impacts, the contexts where the project will be implemented are complex and if the project is not well designed and implemented, there could be potential social implications. The project will work with vulnerable Afghan refugees particularly women and children who have been displaced from their home. Social implications considered under this project include: i) potential tension between the host communities and the refugees due to inequitable access to project benefits and perception of exclusions; ii) safety risks if personal identifying information and data, especially amongst refugees, are not protected with potential misuse of such information for other purposes. Lack of transparency in benefit distribution and support may result in exclusion risks amongst the most vulnerable groups, which may defeat the overall project's objective. Under component 2, relevant risks associated with small to medium-scale civil works, such as occupational health and safety, and to some extent, community health and safety are anticipated and can be mitigated with implementation of good construction practices and oversight. The project will exclude investments with potential impacts on land, assets and livelihoods envisaged under the ESS5.

A.3 Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) Risk Rating

Moderate

[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating. This attribute is only for the internal version of the download document and not a part of the disclosable version – Max. character limit 2,000]

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) risk is rated moderate due to national legislation exist, gender norms of rural residents, based on respect for local rules and traditions and mainly construction and rehabilitation works civil works will be implemented in the vicinity of health facilities or fenced territories. However, the contractors will be contractually obligated to include provisions against the use of any violence, and the Code of Conduct (COC) to be signed by project workers should clearly state that the contractor and its staff must respect and observe local customs and traditions, respect local women, women involved in rehabilitation activities of the Project and their privacy.

B. Relevance of Standards and Policies at Concept Stage

B.1 Relevance of Environmental and Social Standards



ESS1 - Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

Overview of the relevance of the Standard for the Project: the following standards are deemed relevant for the project at this stage: ESS1, ESS2, ESS3, ESS4, ESS8 and ESS10. The environmental and social risks are rated as “Moderate” for both environment and social, with the overall risk rating as “Moderate”. Project’s environmental risks include noise, dust, soil, water pollution, construction debris, occupational hazards from the construction of a new annex building to the existing community center and construction and/or renovation of other local infrastructure such as community roads, playgrounds, medical facilities, etc in the city of Vakhdat. Risks for the operational phase will come from waste, wastewater management, emissions, dust issued from the usage of the facilities, as well as health&safety hazards for the users of facilities. Social risks include inequitable access to the funds and the perception of exclusion, personal data management safety risks. The project will exc

ESS10 - Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

The NSIFT will engage in meaningful consultations with all stakeholders as per ESS10 requirements. Mapping of project affected parties, vulnerable groups and other interested parties and their interest will be completed by the project appraisal. Key stakeholders will include the NSIFT, local governments, community representatives, refugees, organizations which supporting refugees, NGOs and civil society organizations dealing with community, social activities. An inclusive stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) and the summary of the abbreviated ES management guideline will be disclosed and consulted upon before Appraisal. The SEP will define a program for stakeholder engagement, including public information disclosure and consultation about PDO, components, eligibility criteria, requirements and project timelines throughout the project cycle. The SEP will also outline how the NSIFT will communicate with the local partners and stakeholder communities if needed and will include a grievance me

ESS2 - Labor and Working Conditions

Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

ESS 2 is relevant. The abbreviated version of ESMF will include sections on Environment Health and Safety (EHS) including specific instruments, if relevant, that will need to be prepared either by the client or the contractor prior to commencement of works (i.e. EHS checklists and plans; worker codes of conduct; safety training regimens; etc.). The Project is not expected to employ large numbers of contract workers. Provisions will be made to train and hire as many as possible from local communities. The expectation is that the majority of labor will be locally hired with the possible exception of a few skilled workers. The LMP will help in determining whether a specific labor management plan is required or ESMP can include labor related clauses and preventive health measures. As part of the LMP, the client’s capacity to manage labor, working conditions and community health and safety will be assessed. Civil works contracts will incorporate social and environmental mitigation measures

ESS3 - Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

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ESS3 is relevant, and the ES management guideline document will include section on resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management. The assessment of risks, impacts and proposed mitigation measures related to raw materials, water use, air pollution, hazardous materials and hazardous waste will be in the guideline document to be included in site-specific ESMPs, ESMP checklists, as relevant. The risks are expected to be predictable, and mitigable with using good practice construction management practices.

ESS4 - Community Health and Safety

Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

ESS4 is relevant. Community health and safety risks, such as regarding works and road safety, access restrictions, community safety are expected to be manageable and foreseeable, as the local communities will be in the forefront of decision making as well as in implementing the activities. Communities will carry out participatory needs assessment and engage in participatory decision-making processes to prepare subprojects that address their needs. The Project will ensure that Jamoat and Mahalla committees are accountable for resource management and responsive to the preferences and needs of community members, including vulnerable groups, such as youth and women. Thus, issues around labor influx, labor camps and security force are not relevant. The abbreviated ES guideline document includes assessment of work-related health risks; works and road safety; excessive noise and dust levels, site safety awareness and access restrictions. Fencing will be installed around all construction sites

ESS5 - Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

ESS5 is not relevant as no involuntary acquisition of land is expected. There will be no restrictions on land use and accesses.

ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

ESS6 is not relevant as it is expected that activities will take place in an already urbanized area, inside the city of Vahdat.

ESS7 - Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

ESS 7 is considered not relevant since the project is not envisaged to work and/or result in impacts on communities considered as Indigenous Peoples under the standard.

ESS8 - Cultural Heritage

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

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ESS8 is relevant as a pre-cautionary measure in anticipation of chance finds. No impacts on intangible cultural heritage are envisaged under the project. The ES Management Guideline includes a section on protection of Cultural Heritage as well as proper "chance find" procedures to be included in site specific ESMPs and checklists.

ESS9 - Financial Intermediaries

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

ESS9 is not relevant

B.2 Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Operations on International Waterways

No

OP 7.60 Operations in Disputed Areas

No

B.3 Other Salient Features

Use of Borrower Framework

No

[Optional explanation – Max. character limit 1,000]

N/A

Use of Common Approach

No

[Optional Explanation including list of possible financing partners – Max. character limit 1,000]

N/A

B.4 Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

[Description provided will not be disclosed but will flow as a one time flow to the Concept Stage PID – Max. character limit 5,000]

The following standards are deemed relevant for the project at this stage: ESS1, ESS2, ESS3, ESS4, ESS8 and ESS10.

The environmental and social risks are rated as “Moderate” for both environment and social, with the overall risk rating as “Moderate”.

Project’s environmental risks include noise, dust, soil, water pollution, construction debris, occupational hazards from the construction of a new annex building to the existing community center and construction and/or renovation of other local infrastructure such as community roads, playgrounds, medical facilities, etc in the city of Vahdat. Risks for the operational phase will come from waste, wastewater management, emissions, dust issued from the usage of the facilities, as well as health&safety hazards for the users of facilities. Social risks include inequitable access to the funds and the

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perception of exclusion, personal data management safety risks. The project will exclude investments with potential impacts on land, assets and livelihoods envisaged under the ESS5.

Towards addressing the risks, the following instruments will be prepared: (i) an abbreviated Environmental and Social Risk Management Framework; (ii) Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP); and (iii) Labor Management Procedures (LMP). The Labor Management Procedure (LMP) will be prepared for inclusion in the POM, which is due by Project effectiveness. Draft abbreviated ESMF, SEP and ESCP shall be prepared and disclosed and consulted by Decision Review Meeting, finalized and adopted by Project Effectiveness.

A fit-for-purpose ESMF proposed due to the small budget, limited activity and geographical scope for this Recipient Executed Grant. The guideline will be an abbreviated version of the ESMF in-use for the SRESP project, adapted especially for component 2 and geography of this project. SEP can be used as an instrument to ensure consultation disclosure of information (eligibility, access, GMs) – which need to be incorporated in the POM.

C. Overview of Required Environmental and Social Risk Management Activities

C.1 What Borrower environmental and social analyses, instruments, plans and/or frameworks are planned or required by Appraisal?

[Description of expectations in terms of documents to be prepared to assess and manage the project’s environmental and social risks and by when (i.e., prior to Effectiveness, or during implementation), highlighted features of ESA documents, other project documents where environmental and social measures are to be included, and the related due diligence process planned to be carried out by the World Bank, including sources of information for the due diligence - Max. character limit 3,000]

Actions to be completed prior to Bank Board Approval:

1. Prepare, disclose and consult an abbreviated Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF) acceptable to the Bank by project Decision Review Meeting;
2. Develop, disclose and consult a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) by project Decision Review Meeting and implement at the earliest;
3. Prepare, disclose and consult Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) by project Decision Review Meeting;
4. Develop Labor Management Procedures (LMP) as part of POM by project Effectiveness and implement during project implementation.

III. CONTACT POINT

Contact Point

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IV. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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V. APPROVAL

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