Early Warning System

WB-P168233

Rural Infrastructure Development Project (Previously Uzbekistan Prosperous Villages)

Early Warning System

WB-P168233

Rural Infrastructure Development Project (Previously Uzbekistan Prosperous Villages)

Quick Facts

Countries	Uzbekistan
Specific Location	Ferghana, Andijan and Namangan provinces
Financial Institutions	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), World Bank (WB)
Status	Approved
Bank Risk Rating	B
Voting Date	2019-11-14
Borrower	Ministry of Finance
Sectors	Construction, Energy, Infrastructure, Law and Government, Transport, Water and Sanitation
Potential Rights Impacts	Housing & Property, Labor & Livelihood
Investment Type(s)	Loan
Investment Amount (USD)	$ 100.00 million
Project Cost (USD)	$ 183.60 million

Project Description

This project supports the Government of Uzbekistan's *Obod Qishloq* program, with the stated aim of empowering citizens and local communities to play a greater role in local development. This includes increasing access to essential basic infrastructure and services, and improved local governance processes in targeted rural communities and districts.

According to Bank documents, the results of this project will be measured through indicators such as:

- Percentage of sampled community respondents reporting improved access to transport, drinking water, electricity or irrigation
- Percentage of sampled community respondents reporting that investments financed are in-line with their priority needs
- Number of *malhalla* committees or district *khokimiyats* able to plan and maintain their own development projects
- Percentage of residents reporting improved performance of *malhalla* committees or district *khokimiyats*

Early Warning System Project Analysis

Although this project endeavours to deliver needed infrastructure and ensure this development is community-based, the continued prevalence of forced labour under the larger *Obod Qishloq* programme, the restricted environment for communities to voice their opinions free from coercion, and the current capacity of civil society to meaningfully participate in these processes is concerning.

Despite government reforms, since the launch of the programme in May 2018, Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights (UGF) has documented numerous reports and complaints from residents of Uzbekistan that local authorities are forcing employees of state-funded organisations to work without pay and carry out unskilled, and often dangerous, tasks.

There is an ongoing and high risk of abuses, including evidence of state-organized mass forced labour, directly related to the *Obod Qishloq* programme, which this project supports. Given the plans and mitigation measures currently outlined in the World Bank's project documents, there are challenges with the:

- focus and dependence on regional and district *hokomiyats* in promoting and implementing participatory community-based development, including discretion over land use, given evidence of widespread current complicity in enabling forced labour and other violations when carrying out the *Obod Qishloq* programme;
- lack of attention to capacity building for Uzbek civil society in order to enable their meaningful participation and leadership, as envisioned;
- lack of penalties or repercussions outlined for contractors found to use forced labour under this project;
- lack of preventive measures to address the proven inadequacy of traditional grievance reporting frameworks, such as hotlines, in reporting forced labour for fear of lack of anonymity and of reprisals; and
- lack of specific provisions outlining how the World Bank and the AIIB will proactively create and safeguard space for community members and civil society to safely express their opinions and priorities to create *qishloq* development plans for sub-investments under this project, including in instances where there is disagreement with authorities, and if intimidation, threats and reprisals are reported.

For additional details and civil society recommendations, see: https://ews.rightsindevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Letter-to-WB-AIIB-Board-re_-Obod-Qishloq.pdf

Investment Description

- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
- World Bank (WB)

Contact Information

World Bank
Robert Wrobel
Senior Social Development Specialist

Implementing Agency
State Investment Committee of Uzbekistan
Shukrat Vafaev
Deputy Chairman
info@invest.gov.uz

ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM OF WORLD BANK

The World Bank Inspection Panel is the independent complaint mechanism and fact-finding body for people who believe they are likely to be, or have been, adversely affected by a World Bank-financed project. If you submit a complaint to the Inspection Panel, they may investigate to assess whether the World Bank is following its own policies and procedures for preventing harm to people or the environment. You can contact the Inspection Panel or submit a complaint by emailing ipanel@worldbank.org. You can learn more about the Inspection Panel and how to file a complaint at: http://ewebapps.worldbank.org/apps/ip/Pages/Home.aspx.

Bank Documents

- Audit Report [Original Source]
- Combined Project Information Documents / Integrated Safeguards Datasheet (PID/ISDS) [Original Source]
- Concept Project Information Document-Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet - Uzbekistan Prosperous Villag [Original Source]
- Disbursement and Financial Information Letter [Original Source]
- Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) [Original Source]
- Environmental Assessment (Russian) [Original Source]
- Financing Agreement [Original Source]
- Implementation Status and Results Report [Original Source]
- Implementation Status and Results Report - Aug 2020 [Original Source]
- Procurement Plan - October 2019 [Original Source]
- Project Appraisal Document [Original Source]
- Resettlement Plan (Russian) [Original Source]
- Resettlement Policy Framework [Original Source]
- Restructuring Paper [Original Source]

Campaign Documents

- Can communities lead their own development in places where civil society is severely restricted?
- Letter to AIIB - Concerns About Proposed Investments in Prosperous Villages Project [Original Source]
- Letter to World Bank - Concerns About Proposed Investments in Prosperous Villages Project [Original Source]
- There is No Work We Haven't Done: Forced Labor of Public-Sector Employees in Uzbekistan [Original Source]

Other Related Projects

- AIIB-00328 Uzbekistan: Rural Infrastructure Development Project (Previously: Prosperous Villages Project)
- AIIB-001157 Uzbekistan: Rural Infrastructure Development Project - 2 (RIDP-2)