

In accordance with the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-330 dated October 10, 2023, “On measures for further improvement of the road sector,” and the General Procurement Notice published by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) on September 27, 2019, the project “Restoration of the Local Road Network in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Khorezm Region” is being implemented.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan (RUz) is preparing to receive a proposed investment loan from the AIIB to finance the “Reconstruction of the Local Road Network in Karakalpakstan and Khorezm” project.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) was prepared as part of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) for the project in Karakalpakstan and Khorezm.

The project is planned for 3 years of construction (2025–2027) and a subsequent 22 years of operation (2028–2049).

The project consists of three components. The planned activities under the AIIB-financed project include investments in the reconstruction of 516 km of local roads in the Republic of Karakalpakstan (23 road sections totaling 328 km across 11 districts) and the Khorezm region (16 road sections totaling 188 km across 9 districts). Additionally, the project includes capacity building for the PIU, development of a digital geospatial platform, and a Women and Youth Empowerment Program.

The Road Committee (RC) is the Implementing Agency (IA) responsible for overall project coordination with government agencies and high-level decision-making bodies to ensure timely implementation, and for liaison with AIIB and other project partners.

The Avtoylinvest Agency (AIA), a department under the RC, is responsible for the overall management and implementation of the project, including monitoring progress, overseeing procurement, and reviewing work plans.

The RC has established a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) within AIA. So far, the Project Coordinator, Procurement Specialist, and Environmental & Social (E&S) Specialist have been hired. The executing agency is the Avtoylinvest Agency under the RC.

The PIU will collaborate with project stakeholders to implement this SEP and the project's Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) during the construction and operational phases.

The project is classified as Category “B” under AIIB's Environmental and Social Policy due to limited potential adverse environmental and social (E&S) impacts, which are localized and can be managed through conventional E&S risk mitigation measures.

The project area currently includes twenty districts. In Karakalpakstan: Kanlykul, Kegeyli, Takhtakupyr, Shumanay, Daukara-Dfh-Borshetov, Amudarya, Beruni, Nukus, Karauzak, Kungrad, and Muynak districts. In Khorezm: Bagat, Gurlan, Koshkupir, Urgench, Khiva, Khazarasp, Shavat, Yangiarik, and Yangibazar districts. Therefore, the number of stakeholders is significant and includes all settlements and organizations affected by the project.

The objective of the SEP is to ensure effective management of stakeholder engagement activities throughout the project lifecycle. The SEP was developed based on national laws and AIIB's international standards.

The Consultant held a series of meetings with identified stakeholders at the project area level. In August and September 2024, regional and district RC offices and road service operators were consulted, along with 11 public consultations and focus group discussions in project-affected districts. Project objectives and planned activities were presented, and key issues raised included implementation timelines, project design, and covered road sections.

Stakeholder identification was based on primary and secondary data, project documentation, consultant input, and site visits. A total of 13 stakeholder groups were identified as part of the ESMP.

The ESMP and SEP will be publicly disclosed, including through local NGOs and the internet. Summaries will be published in English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak languages.

The PIU's E&S Specialist will monitor feedback from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and, if necessary, propose alternative engagement methods. Project information and feedback forms will be available online to engage youth with internet access.

The PIU will establish a Project-Level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) in line with AIIB policy and national law. The GRM will address complaints from individuals who believe they are or may be negatively impacted by the project's social and environmental impacts and/or its consultation and disclosure processes.

Subcomponent 3.1 of the project TOR includes the development of a digital geospatial platform aimed at providing an advanced GIS web platform for various uses, including complaint registration and monitoring. This will help the PIU, supervision consultants, and RC to manage, track, and respond to complaints in real time.

A Central Grievance Review Committee (GRC) will be formed at the PIU within AIA in Q1 2025, comprising:

- Project Coordinator, PIU – Chair;
- E&S Specialist, PIU – Member;
- Chief Specialist of the Government of Karakalpakstan and Khorezm Region – Member;
- Head of Land Acquisition and Compensation Coordination Department – Member;
- Information Service Staff of the Main Roads Directorate of Karakalpakstan and Khorezm.

AIIB has a mechanism for project-affected people. Two or more affected individuals whose concerns are not resolved through the project-level GRM or AIIB management may submit a complaint to the AIIB Project-Affected People's Mechanism (PPM). The PIU will disclose information on the AIIB PPM via its website and stakeholder platform.

The PIU will publish the GRM on its website, including contact details of local and PIU-level GRCs, submission channels, and a list of GRC members.

The PIU E&S Specialist will update the SEP regularly before, during, and after construction, to:

- Adjust engagement and disclosure methods for different stakeholders;
- Revise consultation frequency;

- Evaluate adequacy of grievance handling;
- Reassess stakeholder relevance and the need to modify planned activities.