Financing Agreement

(Additional Financing for Health Services Improvement Project)

between

REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

and

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Dated August 7, 2015
FINANCING AGREEMENT

Agreement dated August 7, 2015, entered into between the REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN ("Recipient") and the INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION ("Association") for the purpose of providing additional financing for activities related to the Original Project (as defined in the Appendix to this Agreement). The Recipient and the Association hereby agree as follows:

ARTICLE I — GENERAL CONDITIONS; DEFINITIONS

1.01. The General Conditions (as defined in the Appendix to this Agreement) constitute an integral part of this Agreement.

1.02. Unless the context requires otherwise, the capitalized terms used in this Agreement have the meanings ascribed to them in the General Conditions or in the Appendix to this Agreement.

ARTICLE II — FINANCING

2.01. The Association agrees to extend to the Recipient, on the terms and conditions set forth or referred to in this Agreement, a credit ("Financing") in an amount equivalent to four million Special Drawing Rights (SDR 4,000,000) to assist in financing the project described in Schedule 1 to this Agreement ("Project").

2.02. The Recipient may withdraw the proceeds of the Financing in accordance with Section IV of Schedule 2 to this Agreement.

2.03. The Maximum Commitment Charge Rate payable by the Recipient on the Unwithdrawn Financing Balance shall be one-half of one percent (1/2 of 1%) per annum.

2.04. The Service Charge payable by the Recipient on the Withdrawn Credit Balance shall be equal to three-fourths of one percent (3/4 of 1%) per annum.

2.05. The Payment Dates are April 15 and October 15 in each year.

2.06. The principal amount of the Credit shall be repaid in accordance with the repayment schedule set forth in Schedule 3 to this Agreement.
2.07. The Payment Currency is United States Dollars.

ARTICLE III — PROJECT

3.01. The Recipient declares its commitment to the objectives of the Project. To this end, the Recipient shall, through the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (“MoHSP”), carry out the Project in accordance with the provisions of Article IV of the General Conditions.

3.02. Without limitation upon the provisions of Section 3.01 of this Agreement, and except as the Recipient and the Association shall otherwise agree, the Recipient shall ensure that the Project is carried out in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 2 to this Agreement.

ARTICLE IV — EFFECTIVENESS; TERMINATION

4.01. The Additional Conditions of Effectiveness consist of the following:

(a) The execution and delivery of the Financing Agreement (“Grant”) on behalf of the Recipient has been duly authorized or ratified by all necessary governmental action and all conditions precedent to its effectiveness or to the right of the Recipient to make withdrawals under it (other than the effectiveness of this Agreement) have been fulfilled.

(b) The Recipient shall have signed the contract for updating the existing 1C accounting software for project accounting, budgeting and reporting.

(c) The Project Operational Manual has been updated and amended by the Recipient in a manner acceptable to the Association.

4.03. The Effectiveness Deadline is the date one hundred and twenty (120) days after the date of this Agreement.

4.04. For purposes of Section 8.05 (b) of the General Conditions, the date on which the obligations of the Recipient under this Agreement (other than those providing for payment obligations) shall terminate is twenty (20) years after the date of this Agreement.
ARTICLE V — REPRESENTATIVE; ADDRESSES

5.01. The Recipient’s Representative is the Minister of Finance.

5.02. The Recipient’s Address is:

    Ministry of Finance
    3, Akademic Rajobovkho Street
    Dushanbe, 734025
    Republic of Tajikistan

    Facsimile:

    (992-372) 213329

5.03. The Association’s Address is:

    International Development Association
    1818 H Street, N.W.
    Washington, D.C. 20433
    United States of America

    Cable: Telex: Facsimile:

    INDEVAS 248423 (MCI) 1-202-477-6391
    Washington, D.C.
AGREED at Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, as of the day and year first above written.

REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

By

Authorized Representative

Name: Abdusalam Ashurov
Title: Minister of Finance

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

By

Authorized Representative

Name: Patricia Vevers-Carter
Title: Country Manager
SCHEDULE 1

Project Description

The objective of the Project is to contribute to the improvement of the coverage and quality of basic primary health care ("PHC") services in selected districts.

The Project consists of the Original Project, as amended by the Financing Agreement ("Grant"), and the following parts:

Component 1. Performance-Based Financing

(a) Implementation of the PBF Scheme for maternal and child health and non-communicable disease services, by providing quarterly performance-based payments to Eligible PHC Facilities in districts identified in the PBF Manual, based on their performance on a set of criteria agreed upon in writing by the MoHSP and the PHCs and specified in the PBF Manual acceptable to the Association.

(b) Support of the PBF Scheme Costs of the first level verification and independent verification of the PBF Scheme.

(c) Provision of technical assistance to support implementation of comprehensive PHC financing reforms, including refining the model for implementing PBF in central rayon health centers and city PHC facilities.

(d) Support of community-service provider discussions based on the results of citizen scorecards.

Component 2: Primary Health Care Strengthening

Sub-component 2.1 Quality Improvement

Training of primary health care doctors and nurses from the districts participating in the PBF Scheme and other selected comparison districts in the six month family medicine training program and providing them with continuous medical education on clinical treatment protocols for maternal and child health care and selected non-communicable diseases.

Sub-component 2.2 Physical Infrastructure Improvements

Supporting the improvement of PHC infrastructure in the Project districts by providing basic medical equipment and supplies, and performing rehabilitation and reconstruction works for selected PHC facilities.
Component 3: Project Management, Coordination, and Monitoring and Evaluation

Support for Project implementation and management at the central, regional and district levels, including provisions for Training and Incremental Operating Costs.
SCHEDULE 2

Project Execution

Section I. Implementation Arrangements

A. Institutional Arrangements

1. The Recipient shall ensure that the MoHSP carries out the Project in accordance with the PBF Manual and the Project Operations Manual.

2. The Recipient shall operate and maintain, until the completion of the Project, the Coordination Group established within the MoHSP, responsible for the overall coordination of the Project ("CG"). Such unit shall be maintained with staff in adequate numbers and with qualifications and experience acceptable to the Association including, inter alia, a Project Coordinator, a Project Officer, a monitoring and evaluation coordinator, procurement specialists, a financial management specialist, and other personnel needed for the effective implementation of the Project, all as set forth in the Project Operational Manual.

3. For purposes of implementing Sub-component 2.2 of the Project, the Recipient shall maintain a construction coordinator and an environmental consultant, who under the oversight of the head of Construction Department of the MoHSP will be responsible for:
   (a) quality assurance of the site environmental control measures and their effectiveness;
   (b) coordination and reporting of the same to MoHSP and the Association; and
   (c) ensuring a third-party independent assessment is carried out eight months prior to the end of the Project life as specified in the EMF.

4. The Recipient shall:
   (a) Maintain the Oversight Committee, established under the Original Financing Agreement, responsible for overseeing and implementation of Component I of the Project. Such Oversight Committee shall include staff from the MoHSP, the Ministry of Finance, and other relevant members in adequate numbers and with qualifications and experience acceptable to the Association, and as needed for the effective implementation of Component 1 of the Project, all as set forth in the PBF Manual.
   (b) Maintain District- PBF Verification Teams, established under the Original Financing Agreement, comprising of members specified in the PBF Manual, in adequate numbers and with qualifications and experience acceptable to the Association, which are responsible for carrying out verification of the Eligible PHC Facilities meeting the criteria referenced in the PBF Manual.
(c) Cause the District PBF Verification Teams to carry out the verification of quantity and quality of primary care services prior to the release of the PBF payments on a quarterly basis, and in accordance with the criteria referenced in the PBF Manual, and thereafter report the findings to the CG.

(d) Ensure that, not later than six (6) months from the Effective Date, the MoHSP enters into a contractual relationship, on the terms acceptable to the Association, with an independent verification organization or firm, acceptable to the Association, to implement independent verification in a sample of PBF health facilities and beneficiaries, on a semi-annual basis, for Eligible PHC Facilities located in the additional districts, which are financially supported under this Financing. The semi-annual independent verification criteria shall be specified in the PBF Manual.

B. Eligible PHC Facility PHC Performance Agreements

1. To facilitate the carrying out of Component I of the Project, the Recipient shall enter into an agreement with each of the Eligible PHC Facilities ("PHC Performance Agreements"), under terms and conditions approved by the Association and set forth in the PBF Manual, setting forth the technical, administrative and fiduciary aspects of their participation in the implementation and use of funds under Component I of the Project. Each PHC Performance Agreement shall include, without limitation, the following requirements:

   (a) that in carrying out its activities under the PHC Performance Agreements, the Eligible PHC Facility adheres to the Anti-Corruption Guidelines and the PBF Manual;

   (b) that the MoHSP provide quarterly incentive payments to the Eligible PHC Facility based on its score determined under the PBF Manual;

   (c) that the Eligible PHC Facility use funds made available under the PHC Performance Agreement for Eligible Expenditures pursuant to this Agreement;

   (d) that the Eligible PHC Facility maintain adequate records and accounts to reflect, in accordance with sound accounting practices, the resources, operations and expenditures received pursuant to its PHC Performance Agreement;

   (e) that the Eligible PHC Facility permit the Association, the Recipient and the organization or firm performing the semi-annual independent verification to inspect its facilities, operations and any records and documents relevant to the PHC Performance Agreement; and prepare and
furnish to the Association and Recipient all such information as either shall reasonably request relating to the PHC Performance Agreement; and

(f) that the eligible PHC Facility conduct its procurement under the PHC Performance Agreement in accordance with this Agreement, and the Procurement Manual for Health Facilities prepared by the MoHSP as part of the Project Operational Manual.

2. The Recipient shall exercise its rights under the PHC Performance Agreement in such manner as to protect the interests of the Recipient and the Association and to accomplish the purposes of the Financing. Except as the Association shall otherwise agree, the Recipient shall not assign, amend, abrogate or waive the PHC Performance Agreement or any of its provisions.

C. Anti-Corruption

The Recipient shall ensure that the Project is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Anti-Corruption Guidelines.

D. Environmental and Social Safeguards

1. The Recipient, through the MoHSP: (i) shall prepare, prior to the commencement of any works under Sub-component 2.2 of the Project, the site-specific EMPs, in accordance with the EMF (including the requirement of consultation and disclosure), which shall be subject to prior review by the Association; (ii) shall carry out Sub-component 2.2. of the Project in accordance with the respective EAs and associated EMPs; and (iii) shall not amend, suspend, abrogate or waive any provisions of the respective EAs and associated EMPs without the prior approval of the Association.

2. The Recipient shall not undertake any Project activities that involve: (a) the involuntary taking of land resulting in the: (i) relocation or loss of shelter; (ii) loss of assets or access to assets; or (iii) loss of income sources or means of livelihood, whether or not the affected persons must move to another location; or (b) the involuntary restriction of access to legally designated parks and protected areas resulting in adverse impacts on the livelihoods of the affected persons.

Section II. Project Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

A. Project Reports

The Recipient shall monitor and evaluate the progress of the Project and prepare Project Reports in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.08 of the General Conditions and on the basis of indicators acceptable to the Association. Each Project Report shall cover the period of one calendar semester, and shall be furnished to the Association not later than one month after the end of the period covered by such report.
B. Financial Management, Financial Reports and Audits

1. The Recipient shall maintain or cause to be maintained a financial management system in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.09 of the General Conditions.

2. Without limitation on the provisions of Part A of this Section, the Recipient shall prepare and furnish to the Association not later than 45 days after the end of each calendar quarter, interim unaudited financial reports for the Project covering the quarter, in form and substance acceptable to the Association.

3. The Recipient shall have its Financial Statements audited in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.09 (b) of the General Conditions. Each audit of the Financial Statements shall cover the period of one fiscal year of the Recipient. The audited Financial Statements for each such period shall be furnished to the Association not later than six (6) months after the end of such period.

Section III. Procurement

A. General

1. Goods, Works and Non-consulting Services. All goods, works and non-consulting services required for the Project and to be financed out of the proceeds of the Financing shall be procured in accordance with the requirements set forth or referred to in Section I of the Procurement Guidelines, and with the provisions of this Section.

2. Consultants’ Services. All consultants’ services required for the Project and to be financed out of the proceeds of the Financing shall be procured in accordance with the requirements set forth or referred to in Sections I and IV of the Consultant Guidelines, and with the provisions of this Section.

3. Definitions. The capitalized terms used below in this Section to describe particular procurement methods or methods of review by the Association of particular contracts, refer to the corresponding method described in the Procurement Guidelines, or Consultant Guidelines, as the case may be.

B. Particular Methods of Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-consulting Services

1. International Competitive Bidding. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph 2 below, goods, works and non-consulting services shall be procured under contracts awarded on the basis of International Competitive Bidding.

2. Other Methods of Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-consulting Services. The following methods of procurement, other than International Competitive Bidding, may be used for goods, works and non-consulting services for those contracts specified in the Procurement Plan:
(a) National Competitive Bidding, subject to the additional provisions set forth in Appendix B to this Schedule 2;

(b) Shopping;

(c) Direct contracting; and

(d) Procurement from United Nations Agencies.

C. Particular Methods of Procurement of Consultants' Services

1. Quality- and Cost-based Selection. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph 2 below, consultants' services shall be procured under contracts awarded on the basis of Quality and Cost-based Selection.

2. Other Methods of Procurement of Consultants' Services. The following methods, other than Quality and Cost-based Selection, may be used for procurement of consultants' services for those contracts which are specified in the Procurement Plan: (a) Quality-based Selection; (b) Least Cost Selection; (c) Selection based on Consultants' Qualifications; (d) Selection under a Fixed Budget; (e) Single-source Selection; and (f) Selection of Individual Consultants; and (g) Selection of UN Agencies following Para 3.15 of Consultant Guidelines.

D. Review by the Association of Procurement Decisions

The Procurement Plan shall set forth those contracts which shall be subject to the Association's Prior Review. All other contracts shall be subject to Post Review by the Association.

Section IV. Withdrawal of the Proceeds of the Financing

A. General

1. The Recipient may withdraw the proceeds of the Financing in accordance with the provisions of Article II of the General Conditions, this Section, and such additional instructions as the Association shall specify by notice to the Recipient (including the “World Bank Disbursement Guidelines for Projects” dated May 2006, as revised from time to time by the Association and as made applicable to this Agreement pursuant to such instructions), to finance Eligible Expenditures as set forth in the table in paragraph 2 below.

2. The following table specifies the categories of Eligible Expenditures that may be financed out of the proceeds of the Financing (“Category”), the allocations of the amounts of the Financing to each Category, and the percentage of expenditures to be financed for Eligible Expenditures in each Category:
### Table: Amount of the Percentage of Expenditures Credit Financing to be Financed Allocated (exclusive of VAT and customs taxes and fees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount of the Credit Financing Allocated (expressed in SDR)</th>
<th>Percentage of Expenditures to be Financed (exclusive of VAT and customs taxes and fees)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL AMOUNT</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Withdrawal Conditions; Withdrawal Period

1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Part A of this Section, no withdrawal shall be made for payments made prior to the date of this Agreement.

2. The Closing Date is December 31, 2019.
SCHEDULE 3
Repayment Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Payment Due</th>
<th>Principal Amount of the Credit repayable (expressed as a percentage)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On each April 15 and October 15</td>
<td>1.5625%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commencing October 15, 2021 to and including April 15, 2053</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The percentages represent the percentage of the principal amount of the Credit to be repaid, except as the Association may otherwise specify pursuant to Section 3.03 (b) of the General Conditions.
APPENDIX A

Definitions


2. “Category” means a category set forth in the table in Section IV of Schedule 2 to this Agreement.


5. “Coordination Group” or “CG” means the Coordination Group established within MoHSP assigned to work on implementation of the Project, comprising of civil servants including the Project Coordinator, and other specialized staff, and consultants that may be specifically retained to work on Project implementation.

6. “District PBF Verification Team” means a team established to conduct the first level of verification of the Eligible PHC Facilities as provided in Section I.A.4 (b) of Schedule 2, and comprising of the members specified in the PBF Manual.


8. “EAs” means the site-specific environmental assessments, including associated site-specific EMPs, to be prepared and adopted by the Recipient pursuant to the EMF and Schedule 2, Section I(D) of this Agreement, and acceptable to the Association, in respect of works to be undertaken by an Eligible PHC Facility under Subcomponent 2.2 of the Project defining details of measures to manage potential environmental risks and mitigate, reduce and/or offset adverse environmental impacts associated with the implementation of activities under the Project, together with an environmental and social baseline for each site, details of the relevant environmental legislative framework, adequate institutional, monitoring and reporting arrangements capable of ensuring proper implementation of, and regular feedback on compliance with, its terms, as the same may be amended and supplemented from time to time with the Association’s prior written approval; and “EA” refers to one of the above-referenced EAs.
9. "EMF" means the environmental management framework, dated May 10, 2013 prepared and adopted by the Recipient, published in Tajikistan on April 26, 2013, and re-published on May 28, 2013, and disclosed in the World Bank's Infoshop on May 10, 2013, and re-disclosed on May 28, 2013 referred to in Schedule 2, Section I(D) of this Agreement, and re-published in Tajikistan on March 19, 2015 and re-disclosed in the World Bank's Infoshop on March 25, 2015 and acceptable to the Association, describing the rules, guidelines and procedures to assess environmental impacts of the Project's activities and defining measures to reduce, mitigate or offset adverse environmental impacts and enhance the positive impacts of the Project's activities, as the same shall be amended from time to time with the prior approval of the Association.

10. "Environmental Management Plans" or "EMPs" means the site-specific documents, contained in each site-specific EA, prepared and adopted by the Recipient pursuant to the EMF and Schedule 2, Section I(D) of this Agreement, and acceptable to the Association, in respect of works to be undertaken by the Recipient under the Project defining details of measures to manage potential environmental risks, as the same may be amended and supplemented from time to time with the Association's prior written approval; and "EMP" refers to one of the above-referenced EMPs.

11. "Financing Agreement (Grant)" means the Financing Agreement of even date between the Recipient and IDA provided for the Project by IDA in an amount of three million three hundred thousand Special Drawing Rights (SDR 3,300,000).


15. "Original Project" means the Project described in the Original Financing Agreement.


17. "PBF Manual" means the performance-based financing manual, as amended, acceptable to the Association, which includes the definition of Eligible Expenditures under PBF Financing, rules, methods, guidelines and procedures for carrying out the PBF Scheme of the Project, and sets forth the details of the PHC
Performance Agreement, the criteria to be met before incentive payments can be made, and the accountability mechanism for the PBF Component of the Project.

18. “PBF Scheme” means the Recipient’s program for payments to be made to the Eligible PHC Facilities, based on evaluation of their performance against the standards set forth in the PBF Manual. Such payments are to be made exclusive of the social security fund assessments.

19. “PBF Scheme Costs” means costs incurred by the District PBF Verification Teams and the independent verification provider, as appropriate, on account of verification and independent verification of Eligible PHC Facilities’ performance, including cost of supplies, vehicle operation (including fuel costs), local travel, communication, costs for capacity building for key stakeholders at the central, regional, and district levels and strengthening of the health management information system to allow for the reporting and verification of the PBF indicators, all incurred under Component 1, and all based on periodic budgets acceptable to the Association.

20. “PHC” means Primary Health Care, essential health care entities based on practical, scientifically sound, and socially acceptable methods and technology, made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community through their full participation and at an affordable cost. PHC includes any type of public healthcare facility, whether rural or urban.


23. “Procurement Plan” means the Recipient’s procurement plan for the Project, dated April 17, 2015 and referred to in paragraph 1.18 of the Procurement Guidelines and paragraph 1.25 of the Consultant Guidelines, as the same shall be updated from time to time in accordance with the provisions of said paragraphs.

24. “Project Operational Manual” or “POM” means the manual, adopted by the Recipient, pursuant to Article IV, Section 4.01(c) of this Agreement, and acceptable to the Association, setting forth the operational and administrative responsibilities, procedures and rules for the implementation of the Project, including a manual of financial procedures, consistent with the provisions of this Agreement and with the national laws and regulations of the Recipient, as the same may be amended and supplemented from time to time with the Association’s prior written approval.
APPENDIX B

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

The procurement procedure to be followed for National Competitive Bidding shall be the tendering with unlimited participation procurement method set forth in Law #168, the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on “Public Procurement of Goods, Works and Services,” dated March 3, 2006 (as amended by Law #815, the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on “Introduction of Amendments and Additions to the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on ‘Public Procurement of Goods, Works and Services’” dated April 16, 2012) (“the PPL”); provided, however, that such procedure shall be subject to: (a) the provisions of Section 1 and paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 of the Procurement Guidelines (as required by paragraph 3.3 of the Guidelines); and (b) the following paragraphs:

Participation in bidding

1. **Eligibility:** Eligibility of bidders to participate in a procurement process and to be awarded a World Bank financed contract shall be as defined under Section 1 of the Procurement Guidelines; accordingly, no bidder or potential bidder shall be declared ineligible for contracts financed by the World Bank for reasons other than those provided in Section 1 of the Procurement Guidelines.

2. **Domestic Preference:** No domestic preference may be applied in bid evaluation on the basis of bidder nationality, the origin of goods, services or labor, and/or preferential programs.

3. **Bidding Documents:** Procuring entities shall use the appropriate standard bidding documents acceptable to the World Bank, which documents shall be prepared so as to ensure economy, efficiency, transparency, and broad consistency with the provisions of Section 1 of the Procurement Guidelines. Until a modified version of the Recipient’s standard bidding documents has been approved by the World Bank, the World Bank’s sample NCB bidding documents for the Europe and Central Asia Region shall be used.

4. **Bid Validity:** The bid validity period required by the bidding documents shall be sufficient to account for any period that may be required for the approval and registration of the contract as contemplated in the PPL. An extension of bid validity, if justified by exceptional circumstances, may be requested in writing from all bidders before the original bid validity expiration date, provided that such extension shall cover only the minimum period required to complete the evaluation, award a contract, and/or complete the registration process. No further extensions shall be requested without the prior written concurrence of the World Bank.
5. **Qualification**: Qualification criteria shall be clearly specified in the bidding documents. All criteria so specified, and only such specified criteria, shall be used to determine whether a bidder is qualified. Qualification shall be assessed on a "pass or fail" basis, and merit points shall not be used. Such assessment shall be based entirely upon the bidder's or prospective bidder's capability and resources to effectively perform the contract, taking into account objective and measurable factors, including: (i) relevant general and specific experience, and satisfactory past performance and successful completion of similar contracts over a given period; (ii) financial position; and where relevant (iii) capability of construction and/or manufacturing facilities.

Prequalification procedures and documents acceptable to the World Bank shall be used for large, complex and/or specialized works contracts. Verification of the information upon which a bidder was prequalified, including current commitments and the bidder's capability with respect to personnel and equipment, shall be carried out at the time of contract award. In the procurement of goods and works where prequalification is not used, the qualification of the bidder who is recommended for award of contract shall be assessed by post-qualification, applying the qualification criteria stated in the bidding documents.

6. **Guarantees**: Guarantees shall be in the format specified in the bidding documents. The bid guarantee shall be valid for twenty-eight days (28) beyond the original validity period of the bid, or beyond any period of extension if requested.

7. **Bid Submission and Bid Opening**: Prospective bidders shall be given at least thirty (30) days from the date of publication of the invitation to bid or the date of availability of the bidding documents, whichever is later, to prepare and submit bids. Bids may be delivered by mail or by hand. Bids shall be opened in public immediately after the deadline for their submission. The minutes of bid opening shall be signed by the members of the bidding committee immediately after bid opening. A copy of the bid opening minutes shall be promptly provided to all bidders who submitted bids, and to the World Bank with respect to contracts subject to the World Bank's prior review. No bids shall be rejected at bid opening.

8. **Bid Evaluation and Award of Contracts**: Bidders shall not be allowed to be present during bid evaluation, and no information relating to the evaluation of bids shall be disclosed to bidders until the bidders are notified of the contract award.

Evaluation criteria shall be clearly specified in the bidding documents. Evaluation of bids shall be made in strict adherence to the criteria specified in the bidding documents. All bid evaluation criteria other than price shall be quantifiable in monetary terms. Merit points shall not be used, and no minimum point or percentage value shall be assigned to the significance of price, in bid evaluation. Bidders shall not be eliminated on the basis of minor, nonmaterial deviations. Contracts shall be awarded to the qualified bidder whose bid has been determined:
(i) to be substantially responsive to the bidding documents; and (ii) to offer the lowest-evaluated cost.

A bidder shall not be required, as a condition for award, to undertake obligations not specified in the bidding documents or otherwise to modify the bid as originally submitted.

9. **Cost Estimates:** Cost estimates shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed to prospective bidders. No bids shall be rejected on the basis of comparison with the cost estimates and/or budget ceiling without the World Bank’s prior written concurrence.

10. **Rejection of Bids and Re-bidding:** No bids shall be rejected solely because they fall outside a pre-determined margin or “bracket” of prices. All bids (or the sole bid if only one bid is received) shall not be rejected, the procurement process shall not be cancelled, and new bids shall not be solicited without the World Bank’s prior written concurrence.

11. **Contract Modifications:** With respect to contracts subject to the World Bank’s prior review, the Recipient shall obtain the World Bank’s no objection before agreeing to: (i) a material extension of the stipulated time for performance of a contract; (ii) any substantial modification of the contract scope of services or other significant changes to the terms and conditions of the contract; (iii) any variation order or amendment (except in cases of extreme urgency) which, singly or combined with all variation orders or amendments previously issued, increases the original contract amount by more than fifteen percent (15%); or (iv) the proposed termination of the contract. A copy of all contract amendments shall be provided to the World Bank.

12. **Fraud and Corruption:** The bidding documents and contract as deemed acceptable by the World Bank shall include provisions stating the World Bank’s policy to sanction firms or individuals, found to have engaged in fraud and corruption as defined in the Procurement Guidelines.

13. **Inspection and Audit Rights:** In accordance with the Procurement Guidelines, each bidding document and contract financed out of the proceeds of the Financing shall provide that bidders, suppliers and contractors, and their subcontractors, agents, personnel, consultants, service providers, or suppliers, shall permit the World Bank to inspect all accounts, records, and other documents relating to the submission of bids and contract performance, and to have them audited by auditors appointed by the World Bank. Acts intended to materially impede the exercise of the World Bank’s inspection and audit rights provided for in the Procurement Guidelines constitute an obstructive practice as defined in the Procurement Guidelines.