



Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 10-May-2019 | Report No: PIDA26679



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Tajikistan	Project ID P168326	Project Name Rural Economy Development Project	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	Estimated Appraisal Date 22-Apr-2019	Estimated Board Date 20-Jun-2019	Practice Area (Lead) Finance, Competitiveness and Innovation
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) The Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Tajikistan	Implementing Agency The Tourism Development Committee under the Government of Tajikistan, The MoF of the RT State Institution "PIU for Access to Green and Rural Development Finance"	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

Project Development Objective is to improve the sources of livelihood for local populations in GBAO and Khatlon through tourism and agribusiness.

Components

- Component 1 - Improve public infrastructure for development of tourism, agribusiness and related sectors
- Component 2 - Support to MSMEs and entrepreneurs in the tourism, agribusiness, and related services
- Component 3 - Capacity building and business development services in tourism, agribusiness and related sectors
- Component 4 - Project coordination and implementation, and grant management

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	30.00
Total Financing	30.00
of which IBRD/IDA	30.00
Financing Gap	0.00



DETAILS

World Bank Group Financing

International Development Association (IDA)	30.00
IDA Grant	30.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Substantial

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

1. **Tajikistan—a transition country with a per-capita gross national income oscillating between low- and lower-middle-income—is one of the poorest countries in Central Asia.** The country’s economic outcomes reflect: (i) the legacy of the 1992–97 civil war; (ii) a centralized, state-led approach to economic management; (iii) low domestic productivity, with wages that leave most households exposed to seasonal poverty risks; and (iv) the “low-level equilibrium” of a remittance-financed, import-reliant, indirect tax-based economic model that has provided little space for and support to the private sector. The post-conflict decline in poverty has been impressive, albeit at declining rates in recent years. Extreme poverty, measured by the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day, fell markedly from 54 percent in 1999 to 5 percent in 2015. According to the government’s own calculations, using a national poverty line, poverty declined over the same time horizon, from 82 percent to 31 percent and further to 29.5 percent in 2017. There is substantial spatial and seasonal variation in poverty. Most rural areas are poorer than urban ones,¹ and poverty and income insecurity are higher during winter and spring. Non-monetary aspects of poverty contribute to the hardship experienced by poor populations.

2. **Employment in Tajikistan is low, and the country lacks economic opportunities, especially for youth, women, and returning migrants.** The working-age population (those aged 15 to 64) rose from 3.3 million in 2000 to 5.2 million in 2015, of which only 43 percent are part of the labor force. More than one in three young people and almost nine in ten female youths are not in employment, education, or training (NEET): in 2013, the female labor force participation rate was just 27 percent compared to 63 percent among males. Considerable segments of the population, such as returning and deported migrants or abandoned wives, are largely excluded from local communities.² Lack of employment is often reported as an impetus in joining extremist organizations; in fact, a positive relationship can be identified between entrepreneurial activity and the absence of terrorism.³ The Government of Tajikistan estimates that, in

¹ According to official poverty estimates for 2015, Dushanbe has the lowest poverty rate in Tajikistan (20.4 percent) followed by Sughd (22.3 percent). In other regions, the share of the poor population is much higher—35.8 percent in Khatlon, 37.3 percent in the Districts of Republican Subordination (DRS), and 39.4 percent in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO).

² World Bank Group. 2019. Tajikistan Country Partnership Framework 2019–23.

³ Anton, S. G., and I. Bostan. 2017. “The Role of Access to Finance in Explaining Cross-National Variation in Entrepreneurial



the last few years, more than 1,000 Tajik citizens have fled to join the Islamic State. A large and growing number of unemployed and idle youth—including a rising share of returning and deported migrants—may be susceptible to violent extremism absent alternative opportunities.

3. **Risks related to fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) constrain Tajikistan’s development progress.** Most cross-national indicators of fragility and conflict categorize Tajikistan’s risk as elevated.⁴ Risks include: (i) *economic risks*, such as: (a) high rates of un(der)employment, (b) the predominance of insecure, low-quality, low-wage jobs in the informal sector, and (c) numerous barriers to private sector development; (ii) *socioeconomic exclusion* of youth and women; (iii) *regional and cross-border challenges*, such as: (a) the existence of lagging regions, (b) heightened vulnerability in certain regions (reflecting the legacy of conflict and/or proximity to zones of insecurity), and (c) exposure to international, high-volume illicit drug trafficking routes; and (iv) *cross-cutting political and governance challenges*, including a centralized system of governance that limits the scope for citizen participation, reduces the effectiveness of service delivery, and potentially reinforces inequities in public resource allocation. Youth radicalization is gaining ground in parts of Central Asia, including in Tajikistan. Empirical evidence appears to indicate the coexistence of external and domestic drivers of radicalization, including: (i) the presence of a large cohort of young men with limited socioeconomic opportunities, rudimentary religious knowledge of Hanafi Central Asian Islam, and a lack of critical thinking skills; (ii) an increasing number of Tajik migrants deported from or banned from (re-)entering Russia, leaving them without livelihood options; and (iii) the vulnerability of young women to radicalization and recruitment through male relatives, prospective spouses, and/or the desire to protect an existing marriage. Against this backdrop, Tajikistan is one of four beneficiary countries under the IDA18 Risk Mitigation Regime (RMR).

4. **Agriculture and tourism are critical sectors for Tajikistan’s economic development.** Agriculture accounts for a large share of the economy, and tourism has the potential to grow significantly in the future. Agriculture accounts for about 21 percent of GDP and 51 percent of total employment in Tajikistan. Agriculture development is therefore critical to improving the livelihoods of the rural population, whose other major source of income is remittances from labor migrants. Sustainable, community-based tourism could provide another income-generation opportunity for households in rural areas, enhancing their resilience to economic shocks. Community-based tourism is already showing an impact in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), where the 15,000 yearly tourist arrivals represent a significant source of income for the 223,000 inhabitants.

5. **Agriculture and tourism are synergistic.** When they are developed in tandem, economic benefits multiply, including for the most vulnerable segments of the population—women, youth, and migrants. Given the importance of agriculture in Khatlon and GBAO, there are several channels through which tourism and agriculture can reinforce each other to retain more tourist spending locally and contribute to development in rural areas. Exploiting the links between the two sectors will have a positive impact on job creation and increase the incomes of local populations. Improving the quality of agricultural products and processing them would provide an additional attraction for tourists (for example, through “farm-to-table” dining experiences in tourism itineraries). Tourism offerings could also be diversified into agritourism, generating additional income opportunities for farmers.

Activity: A Panel Data Approach,” *Sustainability* 9(11), 1947.

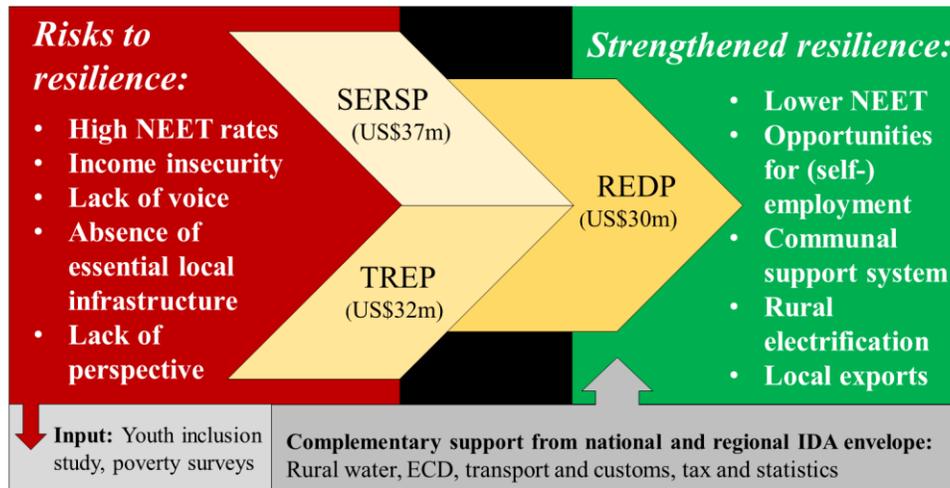
⁴ Tajikistan is one of 56 countries classified as “fragile” or “extremely fragile” in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s *States of Fragility 2018* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264302075-en>.



6. **Benefitting from top-up IDA financing for Tajikistan under the IDA18 RMR, the proposed Rural Economy Development Project (REDP) would contribute to Focus Area 1 (Human Capital and Resilience) and Focus Area 3 (Private-Sector Growth and Market Creation) of the World Bank Group Country Partnership Framework for the Republic of Tajikistan for the period of FY2019–23.** An RMR allocation of US\$98.7 million will finance activities under a preventative approach, the Resilience Strengthening Program (RSP), which will address FCV risks and constraints on private sector development that limit overall development in Tajikistan. The RMR implementation note—integrated into the Country Partnership Framework—describes the RSP.

7. **The RMR will be implemented in Tajikistan through three complementary investment lending projects that contribute to the World Bank Group’s twin goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity.** The three projects are: (1) the Socio-Economic Resilience Strengthening Project (SERSP), (2) the Rural Electrification Project (TREP), and (3) the REDP (Figure 1) The three projects contribute to the twin goals by: (1) providing access to social infrastructure and communal support systems, increasing basic life skills, and reducing NEETs (SERSP); (2) providing access to reliable electricity, which increases opportunities for (self-)employment and local exports (TREP); and (3) increasing economic opportunities, income, local exports, and (self-)employment in critical sectors of the Tajik economy (such as agriculture, tourism, and related services) (REDP). Complementarities among the three projects include SESRP youth beneficiaries receiving matching grants under REDP to become entrepreneurs in the agricultural or tourism sectors or—if they already have a business—to expand it and to better integrate into local value chains, such as tourism. In addition, households in communities that benefit from electrification under the TREP can access REDP matching grants to improve basic sanitation and kitchen services to transform their houses into bed and breakfasts for tourists. All three projects will have a special focus on women, youth, and migrants.

Figure 1. The RMR-Financed Resilience Strengthening Program



Source: World Bank. 2019. Tajikistan Country Partnership Framework 2019–23.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)



PDO Statement

8. The Project Development Objective is to improve the sources of livelihood for local populations in GBAO and Khatlon through tourism and agribusiness.

PDO Level Indicators

- Increased number of tourists in GBAO and Khatlon
- Increased tourism spending in GBAO and Khatlon
- Increased volume of processed agrifood products in GBAO and Khatlon
- Number of jobs created through project interventions in GBAO and Khatlon, of which 50 percent for women and youth
- Decreased NEET rate of 15- to 24-year-old men
- Decreased NEET rate of 15- to 24-year-old women

D. Project Description

9. **The proposed REDP has four components, three of which finance activities to support agribusiness, community-based tourism, and related services, and one that finances project implementation.** Component 1 funds public investment in infrastructure at cultural sites and grants to communities to improve small local agribusiness and tourism infrastructure. Component 2 funds matching grants to farmers and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in tourism, agribusiness, and related sectors. Component 3 funds technical assistance to public agencies, service providers, and operators in tourism, agriculture, and related sectors. Component 4 funds the project implementation unit (PIU) and a grant management company that will design and implement all grants and matching grants funded by the project.

10. **Component 1—Improve public infrastructure for development of tourism, agribusiness, and related services (US\$11,700,000)— aims to improve public infrastructure to support the development of tourism and agribusiness.** Component 1 includes three subcomponents:

- **Subcomponent 1.1: Public investments in historical and cultural tourism sites (US\$9,000,000):** This subcomponent will finance the rehabilitation, beautification, landscaping, and general improvement of four cultural and historical sites, one in GBAO (the Yamchun Fortress) and three in Khatlon (Hulbuk Castle, Khoja Mashad Madrassa, and Chiluchorchashma). The project will finance investments as well as the technical design and commercialization plans, the associated social and environmental assessments, and supervision of the works. The investments will help to: (i) attract more visitors; (ii) encourage new economic activity at and around the sites; (iii) enhance the experience of visitors to the sites, thereby increasing their spending; and (iv) preserve local cultural assets. The construction works under this subcomponent will give jobs to youth and returning migrants,⁵ and will help to upskill them in preparation for more specialized occupations in the construction industry in the future (see Figure 2).
- **Subcomponent 1.2: Grants to communities, municipalities, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to improve tourism and agribusiness infrastructure and develop local tourism attractions (US\$2,400,000).** This subcomponent will finance grants for communities,

⁵ Contractors to be selected for such works will be required during the tender process to fulfill targets for specific groups.



municipalities, and NGOs to develop local tourism attractions and improve infrastructure in public agricultural markets. The objective of this subcomponent is to solicit local communities' proposals to develop tourism and agribusiness in Khatlon and GBAO and to involve citizens in designing and implementing these proposals, ultimately increasing citizen engagement and opportunities for productive employment. Proposals that involve vulnerable citizens—youth, women, and returning migrants—will have priority. Grant enablers (“enablers”), hired under subcomponent 3.2, will help applicants prepare proposals and implement those that are selected. The Grant Management Company (GMC), financed under subcomponent 4.2, will administer the grants according to the principles and rules in the Grants Manual. The GMC will collect proposals and prepare submissions to the Grant Committee, which will be composed of public stakeholders and NGOs. Beneficiaries that submit winning proposals will receive grant money to achieve the objectives in their proposals. Grants under this subcomponent will include:

- a) **Grants for communities, municipalities, or NGOs to improve tourism infrastructure or develop local tourism attractions (US\$1,400,000).** The GMC, PIU, and enablers will advertise the availability of grants in all districts in GBAO and Khatlon. The grants will be open to NGOs, communities, or municipalities that are interested in promoting tourism. For example, the grants might fund the rehabilitation of local recreational sites (such as theaters, parks, and museums), the improvement of hiking or cultural trails, or the organization of local fairs.
 - b) **Grants for communities or municipalities to improve infrastructure in public agricultural markets (bazaars) (US\$1,000,000).** The GMC, PIU, and enablers will advertise the availability of grants in all districts in GBAO and Khatlon. The grants will be open to communities or municipalities that are interested in improving local bazaars by, for example: (i) building or improving trading areas (such as fixing the roofs of the bazaars); (ii) building or improving sanitary facilities (such as building public toilets); (iii) building or improving (cold) storage facilities; and (iv) repairing facilities or buying equipment for food safety control labs in the bazaars. In addition, any other needs identified during project implementation that pertain to public goods for the bazaars can be addressed and financed under this subcomponent.
- **Subcomponent 1.3: Public investments in touristic signage (US\$300,000).** This subcomponent will fund the preparation, purchase, and installation of tourist signs across major travel routes and for key tourism sites in Khatlon and GBAO, including road signage, entrance signage, and interpretative signage. These interventions can cover—but will not be limited to—the sites financed under subcomponents 1.1 and 1.2.

11. **Component 2—Support to MSMEs and entrepreneurs in tourism, agribusiness, and related services (US\$8,200,000)—aims to facilitate entrepreneurial activities and increase the growth of MSMEs and employment in tourism, agribusiness, and related sectors.** This component will finance matching grants to private sector actors (individual entrepreneurs, farmers or groups of farmers, and MSMEs) in agribusiness, tourism, and related sectors. The objective of this subcomponent is to facilitate investment in tangible and intangible assets (for example, quality certification) that would improve their productivity, expand their offerings, and produce opportunities to create jobs and add value. Proposals from vulnerable citizens—youth, women, and returning migrants—and proposals that involve vulnerable citizens will have priority in the selection process. Grant enablers, hired under subcomponent 3.2, will help applicants



prepare proposals and implement selected ones. The GMC will administer the grants according to the principles and rules in the Grants Manual. The GMC will collect proposals and prepare submissions to the Grant Committee. Those who submit a winning proposal will receive and be entitled to spend grant money to achieve the objectives spelled out in their proposals.

- **Subcomponent 2.1: Matching grants to farmers and agribusiness MSMEs to support post-harvest storage and processing (US\$2,600,000).** Matching grants will be provided to formally registered individual farmers, farmers' groups, or associations and MSMEs to finance goods (equipment) and services to facilitate small-scale post-harvesting activities. The matching grants can finance, for example: (i) drying or packaging machines, (ii) (cold) storage facilities, (iii) equipment for producing small, uniquely packaged products that can be sold on the local market or bought by tourists as souvenirs, or (iv) changes to production processes to obtain food safety and quality certifications such as HACCP and ISO 22000. The equipment financed by matching grants will contribute to reducing product waste, extending product life, adding value, and improving access to markets, including exports. The equipment will increase incomes and generate new jobs, particularly for smallholder farmers, women, and youth. Priority will be given to goods and services that reduce the country's vulnerability to climate change, such as energy-efficient processing technologies and storage facilities, or environmental certifications of MSMEs' production processes. This will reduce carbon emissions and pressure on natural resources.
- **Subcomponent 2.2: Matching grants to farmers and processors in two agribusiness value chains (US\$2,600,000).** These matching grants will support the development of two value chains by removing demand and supply bottlenecks. For the first value chain—dairy—the project will provide:
 - a) **Matching grants to formally registered farmers or associations** to buy milking equipment, milk containers, improved fodder, and high-productivity cows to improve the quantity and quality of their milk.
 - b) **Matching grants to processors** to establish or acquire collection points, including equipment (such as milk tanker trucks and quality control equipment). While grants will be provided to processors, they will benefit farmers by increasing opportunities to continuously trade milk with processors. These grants could be offered through a reverse auction scheme, whereby the requirements would be predetermined by the project and processors would be invited to submit proposals. In awarding the matching grants, principles of inclusion and climate change considerations will be taken into account to the extent possible.
- **Subcomponent 2.3: Matching grants to tourism-related MSMEs to improve services and offerings (US\$3,000,000).** The project will provide matching grants to formally registered tourism entrepreneurs, MSMEs, and NGOs so that they can improve the quality of their products and services. The objective of this subcomponent is to attract more tourists and increase their spending, ultimately increasing employment and income opportunities for local populations. Homestays,⁶ restaurants, tour operators, activity and service providers, artists, and crafters could apply for the matching grants. The grants could fund a diverse set of initiatives, including: (i)

⁶ GBAO has an organized association of homestays (PECTA) financed by the Agha Khan Foundation. There is no similar association in Khatlon.



improving access to basic sanitation services, (ii) upgrading kitchens to meet health standards, (iii) purchasing equipment that tourists want (such as mountain bikes), and (iv) offering public services (such as public bathrooms, benches, first aid, maps, and tourism information) in rest areas. Matching grants to develop and promote agritourism will support farmers willing to diversify their income through tourism.

12. **Component 3—Capacity building and business development services in tourism, agribusiness, and related sectors (US\$7,200,000)—aims to: (a) improve the capacity of tourism and agribusiness public agencies, operators, and service providers; and (b) help beneficiaries apply for and implement the grants and matching grants funded by the project.** This component will finance capacity building and technical assistance to promote the tourism, agribusiness, and related sectors by improving the capacity of public institutions and enhancing individual skills, and to provide business support services for implementing the grant and matching grant programs. It includes two subcomponents:

- **Subcomponent 3.1: Technical assistance to public agencies, service providers, and operators in the tourism and agribusiness sectors (US\$4,800,000).** This subcomponent will finance three specific activities, among others. The first is training and advisory services on tourism and agribusiness development (for example, analysis of global trends, market analysis, and public-private partnerships to develop of the sectors). The training will be for stakeholders such as the Tourism Development Committee, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Culture, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), and other project participants. The second activity is promoting tourism and agribusiness by organizing and taking part in trade fairs, familiarization or learning tours (for tour operators and agribusinesses), and media and marketing activities. Targeted marketing activities include designing and disseminating online, in-print, and visual materials. The third activity is providing training, retraining, and certification programs for skilled professionals, semi-skilled workers, and relevant entrepreneurs.
- **Subcomponent 3.2: Technical assistance to help beneficiaries of grants and matching grants to design, submit, and implement grant proposals (US\$2,400,000).** To maximize the outreach and the impact of all grant and matching grant programs offered under the project (including Component 2 and subcomponent 1.2), the project will competitively select grant enablers. The enablers could be local nongovernmental organizations, consulting companies, DMOs, or other providers of professional and knowledge services. The project will recruit three to five enablers⁷ to: (i) identify and train beneficiaries, particularly vulnerable groups; (ii) help beneficiaries prepare grant and matching grant proposals; and (iii) provide implementation support. To encourage proposals with positive impacts on the environment, the enablers will conduct climate change awareness raising and knowledge sharing activities among beneficiaries.

13. **Component 4—Project coordination and implementation, and grant management (US\$2,900,000)—finances costs related to the overall implementation of the project.** These include:

- **Subcomponent 4.1: Project coordination and implementation (US\$900,000).** Implementation costs will cover: (i) staff and experts at the PIU within the Ministry of Finance (MoF), which will implement the entire project; (2) tourism experts for the project implementation group (PIG) at the Tourism Development Committee; and (3) regional coordinators in the governors' offices in

⁷ At a minimum, two to four enablers in total should ensure coverage of tourism and agribusiness beneficiaries in the 25 districts of Khatlon. Given the remoteness of GBAO, one facilitator should be dedicated to beneficiaries in those districts.



Khatlon and GBAO. Component 4 will also cover operational costs related to implementation, such as office equipment, travel, communication, printing, and transportation. Finally, the costs covered under Component 4 will include monitoring and evaluation and impact assessment activities to systematically track and measure the results of the project and rigorously assess the impact of some pilot initiatives on incomes and jobs, with a focus on youth, women and returning migrants.

- **Subcomponent 4.2: Grant Management Company (US\$2,000,000).** A dedicated company financed under this component will manage the grants and matching grants.

Legal Operational Policies

	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The social risk is rated Substantial. The project is expected to result in positive impacts on employment and livelihoods. On farm and value chain activities as well as community-based tourism could herald new vistas for communities in the fragile and conflict-ridden regions. However, variety of risks are evident, some are external and others internal to the project. Key social risks relate to 'exclusion' which may happen due to geographical setting, socio economic setting, gender differentials. Once factors that aid/constrain 'inclusion' are identified, mitigatory measures will be drawn. On securing lands, while project would make use of the existing buildings or unused public lands, as a backup measure, an RPF has been prepared.

The environmental risk is rated Substantial not because of the nature of proposed works and associated environmental risks, but because of remote and potentially fragile areas where the project activities are planned, the large number of expected small works (some involving culturally sensitive sites), and the limited capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade in the understanding and application of Bank's ESF, and relevant Standards. During preparation and implementation, planned activities in and around protected areas such as the Tajik National Park (UNESCO World Heritage Site) and other critical habitats or cultural landmarks will be carefully reviewed and the risk rating re-assessed as necessary.

Note: To view the Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, please refer to the Appraisal Stage ESRS Document.

E. Implementation

14. **To leverage implementation capacity within government, the existing PIU at the MoF will act as PIU for the REDP as well.** To remain cost-efficient, avoid duplicating roles in different agencies, and use capacity already available in the country, the project will be managed by a single PIU with fiduciary responsibilities at the MoF.



15. **The Tourism Development Committee will act as a project implementation group for tourism-related activities and endorse the PIU's procurement selections for tourism work.** The PIG will be responsible for technical work related to tourism under the REDP, but fiduciary, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguards responsibilities will rest with the PIU. The PIG will participate in preparing terms of reference and technical specifications; participate in tender committees on respective procurements; participate in contract negotiations; and take responsibility for contract execution as related to tourism activities under the project. A tourism specialist(s) will be hired, as needed, to sit at the PIG.

16. **Decentralized project coordination will be set up in Khatlon and GBAO.** The PIU will hire two regional Project Coordinators who will be located in the governors' offices in Khatlon and GBAO respectively. These specialists will coordinate with, and report directly to, the PIU and the PIG.

17. **Given the variety of grants and matching grant schemes envisaged under the project, a professional grant management company will be recruited to manage their rollout.** To ensure the successful implementation of grant and matching grant components, the GMC will be responsible for the management and administration of grants and matching grants. The GMC will need to be familiar with the country context and have experience with and a successful record of managing these kinds of programs. The GMC will be responsible for preparing the Grant Manual detailing implementation arrangements for each type of grant and beneficiary group. The GMC will not have decision-making authority, but will collect applications from enablers, review the applications to verify completeness and compliance with eligibility criteria, and perform all the steps needed to submit them to the Grant Committee—composed of various stakeholders and NGOs—which will have decision-making authority.

18. **The GMC will be selected competitively and report to the PIU.** The company will first be awarded a contract for the first two-and-a-half years, at which point the company's performance will be evaluated and either the contract will be extended⁸ or a new company will be selected.

19. **A steering committee will supervise overall project implementation.** The Government of Tajikistan will establish a national-level steering committee to oversee the three projects comprising the Tajikistan RSP within three months of projects' effectiveness. The steering committee will serve as the highest-level consultative and decision-making body, responsible for strategic guidance, coordination, implementation support, and links between the projects that form the World Bank's RSP and the Government of Tajikistan's strategic policy priorities and reforms. The steering committee will assist the Government of Tajikistan, the World Bank Group, and other stakeholders to effectively implement the IDA18 RMR and achieve envisaged results. The steering committee will meet regularly to review progress under the RMR program and will establish working groups to allow for more focused technical discussions on each individual RMR project, as needed.

⁸ The modalities of how this will work (that is, whether a new contract will be signed or the current one extended, and whether proposals will be requested for phase 1 or for the contract as a whole) will be determined and clarified through the procurement plan and the operations manual.



CONTACT POINT

World Bank

Andrea Mario Dall'Olio
Lead Financial Sector Economist

Talaibek Torokulovich Koshmatov
Sr Agricultural Spec.

Borrower/Client/Recipient

The Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Tajikistan
Faiziddin Sattor QAHHORZODA
Minister
minfin@tojikiston.com

Implementing Agencies

The Tourism Development Committee under the Government of Tajikistan
Numon Abdughafforzoda
Chairman
tourism.tajikistan@mail.ru

The MoF of the RT State Institution "PIU for Access to Green and Rural Development Finance"
Ilhomjon Nozimov
Acting Director
i.nozimov@greenfinance.tj

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433
Telephone: (202) 473-1000
Web: <http://www.worldbank.org/projects>



APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s):	Andrea Mario Dall'Olio Talaibek Torokulovich Koshmatov
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Approved By

Environmental and Social Standards Advisor:		
Practice Manager/Manager:		
Country Director:	Jan-Peter Olters	14-May-2019