Minutes
Of public hearing of the Georgia Secondary and Local Roads (GSLR) Project

Date: April 14, 2004
Place: Transport Reform and Rehabilitation Center (TRRC)
Agenda:
1. General information on the GSLR project (speakers: R. Dalaqishvili, Head of the Road Department of Georgia; G. Tsagareli, TRRC, Director);
2. The project related environmental and participatory management issues (speaker: T. Gogelia, TRRC, Technical Assistance Manager)
3. Discussion

The Chairman of the Meeting - Mr. Roman Dalaqishvili, Head of the Road Department of Georgia.

Attendees: 30 persons representing the following agencies and organizations

Construction Companies
“KAVKASAVTOMAGISTRALI”,
“SAQARTVELOS SAMXEDRO GZA” Ltd.,
“GZAMSHENI 4” Ltd.,

Design Companies
Design Institute “TRANSINVESTI”,
Design Institute “TRANSPROEQTI”
“TBILSAKHAVTOGZAPROEQTI”,
“IDC” Ltd.

Newspapers
“BANKEBI DA BIZNESI”,
“DILIS GAZETI”,
“MTAVARI GAZETI”,
“GEORGIA TODAY”

TV channels
“IMEDI”
I CHANNEL

Freight Forwarding Companies
ASOCIACION OF FRAEIGHT FORWARDERS OF GEORGIA

Consulting Companies
“GZEBS MODERNIZACIISA DA REKONSTRUQCIIS ZEDANXEDVELOBIS DIREQCIA”-Supervision Company,
LUIS BERGER GROUP

NGO
The Georgian Energy Transit Institutional Building Project (GETIBP)

Ministry of Environment and Natural Recourses (MENR) of Georgia

The WB resident mission
Ministry of Infrastructure and Development
Road Department of Georgia (SDRG)
Transport Reform and Rehabilitation Center (TRRC)

1) General information on the GSLR project.

Mr. R. Dalaqishvili, the chairman, opened the meeting. He briefly reminded the participants of the current situation on the road sector of Georgia. He pointed out that according to the local and international experts’ judgment Georgia is a country with absolutely sufficient Road network, though the network needs substantial renovation and adequate maintenance. He noted, that the WB ongoing Road Project is successfully implemented and will be finalized on schedule. Improvement of the main road network in frame of this project will positively effect development of the economy of Georgia in total and will possibly result increase of GDP on 40% in the future. The proposed project is follow up of the Transport Projects of the WB in Georgia and will cover the most deteriorated part of the road network of the country. He acquainted the meeting with the parameters of the WB Credit (amount, grant element, grace period, interest rate, etc.), its’ time frame and expected economic benefits of improvement of the Secondary and Rural roads. Mr. Dalaqishvili described all activities carried out during the Project Preparation period.

Mr. G. Tsagareli explained to the participants that the aim of this hearing is to make clear and transparent the objectives and goals, as well as the economic benefits of the proposed project to the public in wide. He pointed out that the philosophy of the proposed project would be an innovative approach, which means exploration and adoption of modern cost-effective technologies for road rehabilitation. Mr. Tsagareli noted that the proposed project will be a part of the Poverty Reduction Plan of the Government of Georgia and this event attaches even more importance to its implementation.

2) The project related environmental and participatory management

Mr. T. Gogelia stated that the Environmental Management Plan (EMP) is being prepared in compliance with the environmental legislation and regulations of Georgia and in compliance with the operational policies of the World Bank. According to the WB requirements the project has the Category B, which is close to the Category 2 according to the Georgian legislation. Since the GSLR Project addresses rehabilitation to existing roads without change in their alignments, the MENR has given permission for the execution of the rehabilitation under the proposed project without the requirement of further environmental assessment. However under the environmental policies of the World Bank such rehabilitation project needs Environmental Assessment. A workshop was held with the Design Consultants to ensure that all such issues were adequately addressed and included in the design to be given to individual contractors. Compliance with these regulations and the terms of the EMP will be monitored and verified in the monthly reports provided to TRRC by the Project Manager, based on consultations with individual contractors and site visits.
Mr. T. Gogelia also informed the attendees that a model of participatory local road management mechanism is being elaborated. Such model should strengthen the capacity of Roads Department at the local level, in terms of data collection, prioritization of road programs and monitoring of physical works. For example, community members, together with the local self-government, can identify the local roads important to the improvement of their livelihood and local socioeconomic development, so the Department can design physical works that have the greatest impacts. Community members can also help the Department update the current state of road conditions. Community members, if sufficiently consulted in the process of identifying priority roads, will have greater sense of ownership. Strengthening communication with community members will help increase their understanding of road programs.

3) Discussion

Mrs. Tabatadze (newspaper “BANKEBI DA FINANSEBI”): what is exact amount of the proposed credit, as there were mentioned different amounts.

Mr. Dalaqishvili: the exact amount will be defined during negotiations with the WB, currently there are several scenarios of the future lending program: optimistic, pessimistic and realistic, and this resulted indication of the different figures in presentations.

Mr. R. Chakhvashvili (Gzamsheni 4 Ltd., Director.): what measures are foreseen in the proposed project for ensuring safety during the works?

Mrs. S. Berishvili (Environmental Specialist): according to the labor legislation of Georgia, safety in this case is a responsibility of the construction companies.

Mr. Tsagareli (TRRC): all designs are subject to state expert appraisal, and if they are not in line with the state requirements of safety the design companies will be informed about the defects. It means that according to Georgian Legislation design companies are obliged to foresee in their designs all environmental and safety requirements.

Mr. Z. Shengelia (ASOCIACION OF FRAIGHTFORWARDERS OF GEORGIA): The proposed project will give a great benefit to the freight forwarders, as it will simplify delivery of the goods to the final recipient and its transportation from the rural regions.

Mr. A. Javelidze (TBILSAXAVTOGZAPROEQTI): Our Company is working on design for rehabilitation of one section of the road selected for the first year program of the proposed project. The road section is in a landslide area and it seems that all necessary environmental measures will be more expensive than the rehabilitation works itself.

Mr. G. Tsagareli (TRRC): You have to choose the cheapest way to solve all problems and try not to exceed the estimate.

Mr. T Gogelia: You have to use a “good engineering judgment” as it is specified in the TOR and give the best and cheapest way to solve the problem.

Mr. Jishiashvili “GZEBIS MODERNIZACIISA DA REKONSTRUQCIIS ZEDANXEDVELOBIS DIREQCIA”): What will be the fate of the quarries used during the construction and whose responsibility is to make their reclamation?

Mr. Javelidze (TBILSAXAVTOGZAPROEQTI): We will have to obtain license on quarries.
Mrs. S. Berishvili (Environmental Specialist): Company can contract local licensed quarries and these licensed organizations will be responsible to make reclamation, or obtain license on quarries and the legal procedure for it will take at least 3-4 months.

Mr. T. Gogelia: Please note that such issues addressed in requirements for contractors, which is supposed to be supervised by the Project Manager.

After the meeting Mr. Dalakishvili gave several interviews to the various TV channels and newspapers.