RECENT ECONOMIC AND SECTORAL DEVELOPMENTS

Growth and External Performance

Despite a generally subdued performance in the developing Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, Uzbekistan continues to grow strongly. In 2015, real GDP expanded by 8 percent, supported by a large fiscal stimulus that was prompted by the worsening external environment. Uzbekistan’s growth rate makes it one of the fastest-growing economies in the ECA region and among middle-income countries during this period.

Economic growth in 2015 reflected still buoyant domestic demand, driven by countercyclical government policies that largely offset the impact of the worsening external environment. These policies included a strong increase in investment of 9.6 percent year-on-year that drove growth as business taxes were cut, a new public investment program adopted for 2015–19, and the delivery of more credit to small firms. Personal consumption, however, hardly increased in 2015 in real terms due to the erosion of real wages, despite a nominal 10 percent increase in September 2015 of the minimum wage, pensions, and social allowances. Moreover, the sharp depreciation of the ruble, declining incomes in Russia, and slower growth in other source countries caused a decline in remittances to Uzbekistan by 40 percent in 2015, i.e., down to 4.9 percent of GDP from 8.6 percent in 2014. On the supply side, there was a dramatic expansion in construction (by 17.8 percent) and services (by 14 percent) in 2015, followed by agriculture (by 6.8 percent) and industry (by 5.8 percent).

GDP growth is expected to be modestly lower at 7.3 percent in 2016, due to a further weakening of the external outlook that reflects declining world commodity prices and lower demand from Uzbekistan’s main trading partners (China, Russia, and Kazakhstan). The twin shocks of even lower world prices for commodity exports and the continued recession in Russia are expected to adversely affect Uzbekistan’s exports in 2016. The Government plans to increase spending to maintain public investment and incomes and to create more jobs, including for labor migrants returning from Russia. However, a minor increase in minimum wages, pensions, and social allowances in line with inflation, together with tax cuts on small firms in 2016, will not be sufficient to offset the projected further decline in remittances and slowdown in exports, given the slower growth in China and the economic recession in Russia. Russia’s economy is projected to shrink further by 1 percent in 2016, in addition to the decline of 3.7 percent in 2015, while China’s growth will slow to 6.3 percent in 2016 from 6.9 percent in 2015.

Growth in the other main trading partners in 2016 is projected to be low—about 2 percent in Kazakhstan and about 3 percent in Turkey and Korea. Lower international prices in 2016 for natural gas (by 18 percent), copper (by 9 percent), ferrous metals (by 11 percent), and gold (by 7 percent) will weigh on export incomes, which, coupled with the decline in external demand from the main trading partners, will be reflected in Uzbekistan’s lower export, current account, and budget revenue surpluses. In 2016, growth in agriculture is expected to be stable, while industry and services growth is expected to slow down, driven by both external (lower demand of the trading partners) and domestic factors (e.g., electricity outages due to the slower-than-expected upgrading of infrastructure and domestic energy price increases that reflect a partial removal of energy subsidies to keep budget revenue from falling sharply).

Real incomes, including of the bottom 40 percent, are not projected to expand in 2016. This is due to the downside influences of lower remittances, higher unemployment because of returning migrants, and inflation pressure from the reduction in energy subsidies and higher prices on key imported consumer goods based on sharply devalued curb market exchange rates. Government consumption is projected to expand only moderately due to lower fiscal revenues from commodity exports and measures designed to keep external debt from rising sharply. Imports are expected to be subdued in 2016, reflecting the Government’s deliberate adjustment of imports through tighter controls over access to foreign exchange.

The Government’s drive for industrialization aims at changing the structure of the Uzbek economy. Although services continued to dominate, registering at 43 percent of GDP in 2015, the share of industry has expanded significantly in recent years and at 24.3 percent of GDP, exceeds agriculture’s current 16.7 percent (figure 1). However, some industrial state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have been so highly protected from foreign competition (via high import tariffs, non-tariff barriers to trade, including foreign exchange restrictions, and high energy subsidies) that their financial viability and ability to compete successfully in a more open trade environment are unknown. Uzbekistan can no longer be considered a predominantly rural economy, not only because 50.6 percent of the country’s population have been classified as urban residents since 2010, but also because the contribution of industry to GDP growth has exceeded that of agriculture in recent years.
During 2016, tougher external conditions will damage export earnings, and tight control over foreign exchange will undermine imports. Total exports fell by 5.3 percent in 2015 and are projected to decline by 2.8 percent in 2016. Increased exports of gold and services may not offset the reduction in exports of cars, other machinery, metals, and chemicals, as a result of the lower demand in Russia and other trading partners. Total Uzbek exports to Russia dropped significantly in 2015. However, exports of gas as well as some other items were redirected from Russia to China, and thus total Uzbek exports to China increased in 2015. Russia-bound cars were absorbed domestically. Total imports declined by 13.4 percent in 2015 and are projected to decline further by 6 percent in 2016. Net remittances declined by 40 percent in 2015 due to the (a) drop in incomes in Russia because of the economic recession and large rouble devaluations; and (b) return home of about 397,000 migrants in 2015, according to Russia’s Federal Migration Service. As a result, the external current account surplus declined from 1.7 percent of GDP in 2014 to 0.9 percent in 2015 (figure 2) and is projected to decline further to 0.8 percent in 2016. The foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows will remain low due to higher risks and the slow improvement of the business environment, which are projected to hold back overall private investment growth.

External debt is low and debt sustainability is not a concern. High GDP growth and budget and current account surpluses over the past decade have pushed down public and external indebtedness, with the latter plunging from 64 percent of GDP in 2001 to 13 percent in 2014 and 15.8 percent in 2015. External debt was serviced comfortably at 4.3 percent of exports in 2014 and 4.5 percent in 2015. The total external debt is projected to increase to around 19 percent in 2016–17.

The risk of debt distress is expected to remain low and not pose any serious problems for external sustainability.1 Uzbekistan remains a “net creditor” relative to the rest of the world despite its massive capital needs, with foreign assets at more than 17 months of imports of goods and services in 2015. To finance its 2015–19 public investment program, the Government is likely to continue borrowing externally, but the total Uzbek external debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to increase only slightly. Given the low debt level, Uzbekistan has enough room for external borrowing in support of growth and employment. However, to implement the newly adopted large public investment program, it is important to address absorptive constraints, i.e., to improve capacities for project planning, appraisal, selection, implementation, and procurement.

Fiscal Performance

In response to the worsening external environment, the Government of Uzbekistan used its significant fiscal buffers to introduce a more aggressive countercyclical response in 2015. The Government increased public investment, made further cuts in business and personal income taxes, increased the wages of civil servants and employees of SOEs, and paid down the entire domestic public debt in full in 2012–14. As a result, economic growth has been maintained at around 8 percent, but the fiscal balance has eroded, as can be expected with an increased reliance on buffers (figure 3). Uzbekistan’s consolidated fiscal balance and current account surpluses dropped significantly in 2014 and 2015, and total external public debt is estimated to have increased slightly from 8 percent of GDP in 2014 to 10 percent in 2015. The newly adopted public investment program, which amounts to US$41 billion over the next

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five years (2015–19) to upgrade industry and infrastructure with cofunding from the Fund for Reconstruction and Development of Uzbekistan (FRD), increased public capital spending to an estimated 5.8 percent of GDP in 2015. Public spending on health at around 3 percent of GDP in 2015 was far higher than the 1.7 percent average in other lower-middle-income countries. Spending on education at around 7.5 percent of GDP in was the highest in the Central Asia and Caucasus region and on par with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries; however, the return on this investment is unknown.

The Government has pursued a strategy to widen the tax base and reduce the tax burden, as total tax revenues have been falling as a share of GDP. Total tax revenues fell from 26.2 percent of GDP in 2000 to 21.5 percent in 2008 and 20.5 percent in 2012–13. Further tax reductions continued in 2015, reducing overall tax revenue to 20 percent of GDP in an attempt to increase compliance and sustain high economic growth. The Government has been gradually reducing marginal rates on a number of taxes. For the personal income tax, the top rate was reduced from 40 percent in 2000 to 23 percent in 2014–15, and the tax rate for incomes up to five times the minimum wage was reduced to 7.5 percent in 2014. Starting in 2015, the tax rate for incomes up to the minimum wage was reduced to zero. The corporate profit tax was reduced from 31 percent in 2000 to 7.5 percent in 2015, and the payroll tax was reduced from 40 to 25 percent over the same time period and to 15 percent for micro and small firms as well as for agriculture farms. Commercial banks are still subject to a 15 percent rate.

The large fiscal buffers enabled the Government to continue financing fiscal stimulus programs without increasing public debt until 2014. However, the Government seems to have increased external borrowing in 2015 and will continue to do so throughout 2016–17. Fiscal policy in 2016–17 is likely to remain unchanged, given the further reduction of direct taxes on firms and employees, the increase in indirect taxes on resources, the increasing public investment trend, and a continued focus on social spending.

**Table 1. Uzbekistan: Key Economic Indicators, 2012–16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>GDP growth, %</th>
<th>GDP per capita, current US$</th>
<th>Population (mid-year), million</th>
<th>Gross investment in fixed capital, % of GDP</th>
<th>Inflation (official CPI, end year), % change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>1,719</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>1,878</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>2,053</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>2,132</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Monetary Policy**

The Central Bank of Uzbekistan (CBU) has been supporting domestic demand. The CBU cut its key rate from 12 percent in 2013 to 9 percent in 2015 and 2016. Meanwhile, the CBU kept strict direct control over payment arrears and cash circulation and further promoted noncash payments in the population via debit cards. Growth in broad money (M2) is projected to increase from 18 percent in 2015 to 22 percent in 2016, and annual credit growth remains strong. Inflationary pressures were due to raises in public sector salaries, pensions, and social allowances, along with administered price increases for utilities aimed at cost recovery. In 2009–15, the CBU kept its reserve requirements at 15 percent on deposits of up to one year, 12 percent on deposits of one–two years, and 10.5 percent on deposits of over three years. Commercial banks were exposed to lower export revenues in industry in 2015 but will remain resilient and adequately capitalized.

Despite currency weakening across the region, the CBU in 2015 continued its policy of steady nominal exchange rate depreciation of the som against the U.S. dollar. The exchange rate of the som against the dollar and the euro is determined on the basis of interbank trading sessions; the exchange rate regime is a “managed float,” i.e., exchange rates fluctuate from day to day, but the CBU influences them by buying and selling currencies.
same period. This reduced the competitiveness of Uzbekistan’s exports. The Government has tried to contain the negative effect on the trade balance by reducing imports, including through tightening foreign exchange restrictions. Reflecting the higher demand for foreign exchange, the curb market rate of the som depreciated by 72 percent in December 2014–December 2015, i.e., in line with the weighted average depreciation of the ruble and the tenge. Foreign exchange restrictions have created a significant gap between the official and the parallel market rates that increased from 30 percent in December 2014 to 95 percent in December 2015. Rather than relying on market instruments, the Government receives foreign currency from mandatory surrender requirements on exports and adjusts the current account through restrictions on imports. Although Uzbekistan accepted the obligations of Article VIII of the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) Articles of Agreement in October 2003, the CBU has continued to provide only limited foreign exchange, sometimes with delays beyond the normal five–seven business days for current account transactions.

Despite price controls, moderate inflation persists. The official consumer price index (CPI) inflation rate was 6.1 percent in December 2014 and 5.6 percent in December 2015. However, the IMF-estimated CPI was around 9 percent year-on-year in December 2015 and is projected to be 9.5 percent year-on-year for December 2016. The main sources of consumer inflation include administrative price increases on utilities, transport services, and some foods; expectations of a future gradual depreciation of the national currency; the monopolization of the wholesale import trade; and the sizable liquidity injections generated from the mandatory surrender requirements on exports. In response to inflation pressures, the CBU continues monetary tightening by absorbing excess liquidity, exercising stricter controls over payments, promoting noncash payments via more debit cards issued to individuals, encouraging self-sufficiency in food by increasing food production, and improving rural infrastructure.

Financial Sector

3 CBU foreign exchange surrender requirements stipulate that 100 percent of cotton and gold exports and 50 percent of other export revenues should be exchanged for national currency at the official exchange rate.

4 According to IMF 2012 Article IV consultation report http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2013/cr13278.pdf, Uzbekistan is not meeting its obligations under Article VIII, sections 2(a), 3, and 4 of the IMF Articles of Agreement.


The banking sector has little exposure to global risks. Uzbek banks have limited exposure to foreign bank funding. Domestic funding accounts for the bulk of loans, which seems to reduce exposure to exchange rate fluctuations. Robust economic growth and large capital injections by the Government after the global financial crisis have made banks more resilient to shocks. In 2015, the total assets of Uzbekistan’s 26 commercial banks increased by 25 percent in nominal terms to 65.2 trillion som, or about US$2.5 billion by the official exchange rate. The banking sector is growing rapidly and enjoyed a reported capital adequacy ratio of 23.3 percent in December 2015 compared to 23.8 percent in December 2014, despite considerable loans to large government projects and state-directed lending often at below-market rates, which poses profitability and asset quality risks. As of January 1, 2016, the total capital of Uzbekistan’s commercial banks reached 7.8 trillion som, or about US$3.0 billion by the official exchange rate.

The outlook of Moody’s Investors Service for Uzbekistan’s banking system remains “stable” in 2015–16, unchanged since 2010, despite the worsening ratings of some Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. The banking system has been assessed as “stable” also by Standard & Poor’s and Fitch Ratings. This reflects Uzbekistan banks’ stable “problem loan” trends and solid earnings, although capital buffers require regular external injections to match the rapid loan growth. Moody’s notes that Uzbek banks are also affected by structural weaknesses and high borrower concentrations. According to a Moody’s report, banks have maintained a return on average assets of about 2 percent and a return on equity of 16–17 percent. Rapid loan growth (by 27.3 percent in 2015) is based on the rapid deposit growth (by 28 percent in the same period) and banks’ solid earnings, and not on a reduction in capital buffers in the system. Uzbekistan’s banking system continues to display structural weaknesses in corporate governance and a high degree of state intervention in bank loan and pricing policies. Uzbekistan is planning to gradually introduce the standards and recommendations of the Basel committee on banking supervision (Basel III standards) in 2015–19 and to improve the capitalization and liquidity of the banking sector.
The share of nonperforming loans in the total portfolio is low. The level of nonperforming loans (NPLs) was stable at less than 1 percent of total loans in 2014–15. However, the concentration and quality of banking assets continue to be a concern. Bank regulations do not fully meet international standards, particularly those related to capital adequacy, risk management, and corporate governance. Recently, the CBU has begun upgrading the regulatory framework, including standards for capital and liquidity. However, the CBU’s ratings of banks diverge significantly from those of the external rating agencies. Moody’s estimates that Uzbekistan’s NPLs are at 6–7 percent in 2014–15 and will not exceed that range in the next 12–18 months. However, loss provisions against loans have historically covered only around 60 percent of the problem loans. Under Moody’s main scenario, with more prudent provisioning charges and a 20 percent loan growth rate, banks’ Basel I capital adequacy ratio would fall to 13 percent over the next 12–18 months from a Moody’s estimated 17.4 percent in 2014. Therefore, for Uzbek banks to preserve their current robust capital buffers in line with the loan growth, external capital injections would be needed for many banks. The public sector dominance of the banking sector suggests that any systemic crisis is likely to be manageable, and the Government has sufficient reserves to support banks in case of a financial crisis.

Financial sector reforms are critical for sustained growth. The main challenges include the need to relax and eliminate restrictions on cash and foreign exchange transactions and to phase out the practice of directed lending. In the absence of these reforms, other measures (improved supervision, risk management, credit infrastructure, credit information systems, and non-bank financial institutions) may not produce the desired results, and the banking sector may not be able to efficiently intermediate and support economic activity and may be adversely affected by a larger economic shock. Similarly, banks’ prohibitive lending requirements (for example, 120 percent collateralization) further obstruct the growth potential of micro and small enterprises, which accounted for 56.5 percent of GDP in 2015, and curtail the effectiveness of support programs aimed at increasing access to finance in the country. With regard to development, the microfinance industry has the potential to expand in terms of both additional branches and slightly higher loan limits; non-banks, such as the insurance sector, leasing, and capital markets, though underdeveloped, also have some potential, provided their solvency is well regulated and the flexibility of the industry’s cost and profit parameters is increased.

Poverty and Social Protection

Poverty declined from 27.5 percent of the population in 2001 to 14.1 percent in 2013 and to an estimated 13.7 percent in 2014–15. This reflects rapid per capita economic growth, sustained annual increases in salaries, remittances, incomes from micro and small businesses, and the Government’s targeted support programs. Over the years, net remittances from labor migrants have helped many families in Uzbekistan to keep poverty at bay.

Despite the accelerated decline in poverty since 2005, the elasticity of poverty reduction to GDP growth is relatively low. A 1 percent increase in per capita GDP is associated with a 0.5 percent decrease on average in the poverty rate—less than the average for developing countries. There are several possible explanations for this: (1) the low growth of productivity in labor-intensive agriculture, which employs one-fourth of the population and most of the poor but is subject to numerous implicit taxes and restrictions on exports and economic activity; (2) the considerable informality in the labor market; (3) fewer working adults per family; and (4) regional divergences—richer regions grow faster. When the government endorsed the Millennium Development Goals for 2011–15, its main goal was to halve poverty from the 2001 level. This translates into a targeted reduction of the national poverty rate to 13.5 percent by 2015—only marginally below the current level, which seems realistic unless there is a further large exodus of Uzbek migrant workers from Russia.

introduce the Basel principles of effective corporate management.

As measured by the Uzbekistan official poverty line of minimum food consumption equivalent to 2,100 kilocalories per person per day. See: United Nations, “Uzbekistan: Millennium Development Goals Report” (Tashkent: United Nations, 2015), 19. The State Statistics Committee has conducted regular household budget surveys since 2000; however, the database is not made public.

See M. Ravallion, “Growth, Inequality and Poverty: Looking beyond Averages,” Policy Research Working Paper 2558 (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001). Ravallion found that a 1 percent rate of growth in average household income or consumption would bring anything from a modest drop in the annual poverty rate of 0.6 percent to a more dramatic 3.5 percent. For countries where inequality was high, a 1 percent increase had much less impact on poverty (0.6 percent) than in countries where inequality was low (4.3 percent). A 2005 World Bank report found that in countries that experienced economic growth between 1990 and 2003, a 1 percent increase in GDP per capita reduced poverty (as measured by the annual change in the poverty headcount) by 1.7 percent. See World Bank, “Pro-Poor Growth in the 90s: Lessons and Insights from 14 Countries” (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2005).

Inequality has declined. Income has been distributed more equitably over time, with the Gini coefficient falling from 0.39 in 2001 to 0.29 in 2013 according to official statistics. Another income inequality measure—the decile dispersion ratio of income difference—was 8.3 in 2011, 8.0 in 2012–13,¹⁰ and 7.7 in 2015. School enrollment and access to electricity and natural gas networks are universal nationwide, and access to safe water is universal in cities and available to 85 percent of the population in rural areas. However, with export prices for gas four times higher than domestic prices, deteriorating networks and regular disruptions of electricity (generated mainly by gas power stations), the rationing of gas in rural areas due to the reorientation of gas to exports, and little growth in productivity in labor-intensive agriculture, critical reforms are needed in these areas to ensure equality of opportunity in access to infrastructure and the generation of incomes anywhere in the country. Poverty is higher than average in about eight provinces of Uzbekistan, among them the mostly rural Karakalpakstan, Khorezm, Jizzakh, Namangan, and Surkhandarya provinces, where population density is sparse. They are located far from big cities and local people are mostly employed in agriculture, only a small fraction of whom receive remittances from abroad. Six provinces have poverty rates below the national average: Tashkent city and Tashkent, Fergana, Bukhara, Samarkand, and Andijan provinces. Those are high-density urbanized areas, with high informal employment and high number of households receiving remittances from abroad. The Government is aware of the problem and intends to reduce the urban bias in access to core public services in health and basic education.

The adoption of the Government’s Welfare Improvement Strategy for 2013–15 has helped to reduce poverty, but benefits need to be better targeted. The new national poverty reduction strategy embraces all means-tested public social programs. Allowances and benefits for targeted groups of the poor, vulnerable, and those lacking services are provided through local neighborhood communities (mahallas). Every year, the Government adopts new social programs targeted to particular vulnerable groups in line with thematic priorities, for example, the Year of the Healthy Mother and Child (2016), the Year of Support to Elders (2015), the Year of the Healthy Child (2014), and the Year of Prosperity (2013), etc. Additional pro-poor actions are taken every year, such as increases in wages, pensions, and benefits; cuts in the tax rates on lower incomes; better access to micro-lending, especially for women; the provision of housing for orphaned children; social assistance to single elder citizens in need; job creation in public works, construction, and services; the provision of free cows to the poor; and the outsourcing of some apparel production from large enterprises to households in rural areas. The Government is also providing more health care and basic education in rural areas by introducing per capita financing in rural primary health care, schools, and vocational colleges. However, in the local mahallas, there is considerable discretion and arbitrariness related to the distribution of social benefits to the poor, and monitoring and evaluation systems are not always applied effectively to guide policy.

THE WORLD BANK PROGRAM IN UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan joined the World Bank in 1992. Since then, the Bank has provided commitments for 27 projects financed by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA) and 30 grants provided under technical assistance programs. Of these, 16 projects and 28 grants had been completed as of September 2015. The Bank’s commitments as of September 2015 were close to US$2 billion, including large grants from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Figure 4. Sector Breakdown of the Active Portfolio (in mln of USD)

Impact on the Ground

The results of country program implementation show what client countries and the World Bank can achieve together as partners to improve people’s lives and make a difference. The list of ongoing projects is in table 2. Key accomplishments include:

- The World Bank has been helping Uzbekistan to establish a health care system that is accessible, affordable, and efficient. For example, a Bank project has helped improve the quality of primary

¹⁰Ibid., 137; also remarks by the President of Uzbekistan, January 16, 2016, on the results of socioeconomic development in 2015 and the main economic priorities for 2016. The decile dispersion ratio is the ratio of the average income of the richest 10 percent of the population divided by the average income of the bottom 10 percent.
health care in almost all regions of Uzbekistan. Also, the Bank has been financing the training of medical professionals and advising on health care finance.

- The Bank has been supporting Uzbekistan’s efforts to implement agricultural reforms under the Rural Enterprise Restructuring Project – Phase 2. The project is providing financial and technical support to improve irrigation and drainage on 95,500 hectares of land, and 503 farmers and food-processing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have obtained more than US$37 million in credit for machinery, poultry, fishery, tree crops, processing, and other rural development activities.

- Some 2 million rural people in the western part of Uzbekistan and about 650,000 people in Bukhara and Samarkand now have access to a reliable water supply due to the Bank’s water supply and sanitation projects. The citizens of Bukhara and Samarkand expect that the World Bank’s sewerage project will mitigate the environmental impact from wastewater pollution and improve the efficiency and sustainability of wastewater management in these cities.

- The Bank’s advice helped to create an adequate policy environment and to improve institutional capacity for corporate financial reporting in the banking sector in line with accepted international practice and based on the policy recommendations (Accounting and Auditing Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes [A&A ROSC]).

- Advisory services provided by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) helped to develop the leasing and housing finance sectors in line with international best practices, with the value of the lease portfolio increasing from US$144 million in 2006 to over US$720 million in 2013.

The Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for Uzbekistan FY12–15, approved in November 2011, has supported Uzbekistan’s development vision to reach high-middle-income status by mid-century by contributing to improve infrastructure efficiency, economic competitiveness, diversification, and social inclusion as part of the Government’s medium-term development strategy. Around US$1.5 billion of IBRD, IDA and grant funding was provided under this CPS to implement 12 projects in the areas of energy, transport, water resources, agriculture, water supply and sanitation, health, and education.

Technical assistance, advice, international expertise, and experience. A strong portfolio of sector-wide Advisory Services and Analytics (ASA) increased the knowledge behind and underpinned current and future investment activities (Uzbekistan: Modernizing Tertiary Education, Uzbekistan Power Sector Note, Sourcebook for Strategic Energy Efficiency Development in Industry, Transport Sector Policy Note, etc.).

The Bank also has a diversified technical assistance portfolio in areas such as procurement, information and communications technology (ICT), and operational capacity development. These efforts, along with regional technical assistance in the water, energy, irrigation, governance, and water supply areas, strengthened the World Bank Group’s positioning in Uzbekistan as a knowledge and global expertise-sharing institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Commitments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rural Enterprise Support Project, Phase 2 (IDA)</td>
<td>107.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Horticulture Development Project (IBRD)</td>
<td>150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. South Karakalpakstan Water Resource Management Improvement Project (DA/IBRD)</td>
<td>260.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fergana Water Resources Management Project (IDA)</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bukhara and Samarkand Sewerage Project (IDA) with Additional Financing</td>
<td>160.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Syrdarya Water Supply Project (IDA)</td>
<td>88.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Alat &amp; Karakul Water Supply Project (IDA)</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Energy Efficiency Facility for Industrial Enterprises Project (IDA)</td>
<td>125.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Talimarjan Transmission Project (IBRD)</td>
<td>110.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Advanced Electricity Metering Project (IBRD)</td>
<td>180.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Pap-Angren Railway Project (IBRD)</td>
<td>195.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Regional Roads Development Project</td>
<td>200.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Health System Improvement Project (IDA) – Health 3</td>
<td>186.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grant Funded</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change Mitigation Project (GEF)</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Improving Preschool and Secondary School Education Project (GPE)</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) with Uzbekistan for FY16–20 is currently under preparation to continue to support the Government’s broad objective of reaching upper-middle-income status by 2030 and stimulating the creation of new productive and sustainable jobs. This new CPF will focus on private sector growth and jobs creation, agricultural competitiveness and cotton sector modernization, and social and infrastructure service delivery. The primary target of investments will remain consistent with the Bank’s global objectives to reduce poverty and increase the well-being of the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution.

**Macroeconomics**

Through the Uzbekistan Vision 2030 activity, the World Bank Group is having a productive dialogue on the country’s long-term development agenda. Uzbekistan aspires to reach high-middle-income status by 2030, and the purpose of the Vision is to develop roadmaps to achieve this goal. This cross-sector activity is undertaken in close cooperation with the Uzbek authorities, think tanks, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The World Bank has completed its contribution to the Vision 2030 in the form of 12 background papers and a synthesis report. They were shared with the Government of Uzbekistan in July 2014. UNDP and two think tanks continue to work on their parts of the strategy.

The Bank is also actively monitoring economic developments in Uzbekistan. This includes preparation of the biannual economic report as well as periodic overviews and thematic assessments. In addition, the Bank team maintains a policy dialogue with the Government through the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment on a number of issues, including the business environment, the quality of budgetary and financial management, and so forth.

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

**Health**

Health outcomes in Uzbekistan are commensurate with its socioeconomic development level as a lower-middle-income country. The Government is in the midst of major health care reforms that focus on strengthening primary health care (PHC), modernizing the health service networks, and improving the efficiency of health spending. The ultimate goal is to improve the key health indicators of the population, and although important steps have been taken toward this goal, further progress is still needed.

Life expectancy at birth trended upward from 66 in 2003 to 67 for males and 72 years for females in 2013, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Despite this improvement, Uzbekistan’s health care system is struggling to catch up with the epidemiological changes in morbidity and mortality patterns in recent years. Also according to WHO 2012 data, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) accounted for approximately 79 percent of all deaths in Uzbekistan. Cardiovascular diseases were the most common cause of death, accounting for 54 percent of age-standardized mortality. Although NCDs are the greatest problem, Uzbekistan still has remaining challenges related to maternal and child health outcomes. Communicable diseases, maternal care, and inadequate nutrition were together the second most prevalent cause of deaths in 2012, accounting for 14 percent of deaths. In response, the Government has initiated several policies and programs, mobilizing both internal and external resources, with a resulting decline in infant mortality. According to WHO, under five and maternal mortality rates were 40 (as of 2012) and 36 (as of 2013), respectively.

Several important programs have been introduced in recent years. The state program “Year of the Healthy Mother and Child” was approved on February 9, 2016. The implementation of this program will draw 7.483 trillion soms (US$194 million). In addition, the program, “Concept and Complex Measures on Ensuring Healthy Nutrition of the Population of Uzbekistan for 2015–2020,” was approved on August 29, 2015, and an action plan developed accordingly.

The World Bank has been providing strong support for the health sector of Uzbekistan. Reforms in

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11 Total commitments do not account for cancellations under specific projects.
primary health care have been supported through two investment projects, *Health I* and *Health II*, which covered the years 1998–2011. These projects improved the quality and cost effectiveness of primary health care services; established 10-month doctor retraining courses on general practice and family medicine; and strengthened the capacity of the public health system.

The *Health III Project* was launched in 2012 and focuses on enhancing secondary health care services by: investing in diagnostic and treatment equipment in hospitals at the district level; improving clinical service management of priority NCDs; and improving hospital financing. The World Bank Board approved Additional Financing for US$93 million on March 7, 2013, and the Financing Agreement was signed on July 18, 2013. The Additional Financing is set to scale up the activities initiated under the *Health III Project* and ensure that all rayon (district) medical unions and selected city medical unions in the country are supported by the project in line with the Government’s hospital reform program.

**Education**

Uzbekistan’s education system outperforms peer countries in the lower-middle-income group. Public spending on education is high; pupil-teacher ratios in Uzbekistan are closer to those found in rich countries, and gender parity is nearly achieved in primary education. Currently, an estimated 35 percent of the national budget goes to education expenditures.

Nine-year general secondary education in Uzbekistan is compulsory and free. It is divided into primary (grades 1–4) and secondary (grades 5–9) education. Preschool education is provided to children until they are aged six–seven at state or private preschool educational establishments, and also within the family. In 2012, Uzbekistan took a substantial step forward in planning its education sector by preparing the Education Sector Plan (ESP) for 2013–17, which was part of the process of becoming a member of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The ESP derives from the Welfare Improvement Strategy (WIS) of 2013–15, which was the Government’s second national poverty reduction strategy and was aimed at supporting sustainable growth, employment, health, and education. The ESP identifies eight specific strategic areas that have relevance for all subsectors of the education system. The intended outcome for preschool education is to ensure that children’s health and personality develop properly in preparation for learning in school. For general secondary education, the ESP supports students in acquiring the general knowledge, independent thinking, and organizational skills needed for successful further progression in the education system.

**World Bank involvement in Uzbekistan’s education sector** started with the two-phased *Basic Education Project* that covered 2007–14. The project supported activities to improve learning and teaching conditions in general secondary schools and preschools located in poor rural areas and also improve the efficiency, management, and monitoring capacity of the sector. The project had significant achievements in the areas of assessing student learning, preparing for new teacher training, activating school boards, and especially implementing per capita financing. It has been proposed that experts from Uzbekistan could share their successful experience in implementing per capita financing with other governments.

In 2012, at the request of the Government of Uzbekistan, the World Bank started to explore options for a partnership in the higher education sector. In 2013, the Bank prepared an analytical study of the higher education sector in close cooperation with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education. The report, “Uzbekistan: Modernizing Tertiary Education,” was published in 2014. The analytical study focuses on measures to improve the quality and relevance of the higher education system to meet the needs of a rapidly modernizing economy. The Bank has prepared a project in close collaboration with the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education that will focus on improving quality assurance processes at higher education institutions and at system levels and on fostering linkages with industry and foreign universities.

In January 2015, the *Improving Pre-Primary and General Secondary Education Project* became effective. The development objectives of this project are to increase the access of children aged three–six to quality early childhood care and education in rural prereprimary institutions and to improve conditions for better learning outcomes for students in rural general educational secondary schools. This project, whose closing date is January 31, 2018, is financed by a GPE grant of US$49.9 million, plus US$4.2 million from the Government of Uzbekistan in the form of investment financing. The project is organized around three components that relate to the following key dimensions of investment: access to quality early childhood education opportunities and learning conditions for students in general secondary education. It finances technical assistance to support the development of flexible forms of early childhood care and education service provision, which would include a half-day, year-round school readiness program for children aged five–
Agriculture

A large area of land is used for agriculture in Uzbekistan, with natural pastures occupying 40 percent of the country and rain-fed and irrigated cropland accounting for an additional 12 percent (see figure 5). Due to the arid conditions, more than 85 percent of Uzbekistan’s cropland is irrigated, an area that comprises approximately 10 percent of the total land area of the country. The most important crops are cotton and wheat, and significant other products include fruits (apples, apricots, peaches, and berries), vegetables (cucumbers, tomatoes, and potatoes), milk, silk, and livestock.

Figure 5. Land Use in Uzbekistan

Agriculture remains a key sector for economic growth, shared prosperity, and poverty reduction in Uzbekistan. Given its land, water, and other natural endowments, strong agricultural tradition and human resource base, and favorable location to major markets, the sector has a huge potential to grow. There is considerable room for productivity growth, for instance in cotton, the most important crop by area. There are significant gains to be made from diversification into higher-value crops and livestock production. There is also a huge scope for post-production value creation through the development of agri-enterprises in processing, distribution, and marketing. Growth in the agriculture sector will have strong multiplier and poverty reduction effects.

Rural development and agriculture are national priorities for Uzbekistan’s economy, which include improvements in labor efficiency and income generation based on agrarian development, improved infrastructure, and the development of agro-processing activities. The sector already contributes to 27 percent of total employment. The switch to higher value added crops and livestock production and the integration of value chains will create substantial off-farm employment opportunities upstream in support services and downstream in agribusiness for post-harvest operations, processing, storage, and export. The jobs and incomes will be generated mainly in rural areas where most of the bottom 40 percent of the population live.

In order to achieve these strategic goals, the Bank and the Government joined efforts to implement the ongoing Rural Enterprise Support Project, Phase-II (US$107.96 million), the Ferghana Valley Water Resources Management Project, Phase-II (US$81.85 million), the GEF Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change Mitigation Project (US$12.7 million), the Horticulture Development Project (US$150 million), and the South Karakalpakstan Water Resources Management Improvement Project (US$260 million).

The proposed CPF for 2016–20 will provide technical assistance to design the required policy reforms and will deliver complementary investments to operationalize those policies on the ground and facilitate the transition to a market-led agro-food system. The CPF will also assist the Government in implementing the recently prepared “Action Plan for Improving Labor Conditions, Employment and Social Protection of Workers in Agricultural Sector in 2016–2018,” which recognizes the need to improve agriculture performance by modernizing the cotton value chain and by establishing the proper market-driven incentives. The proposed CPF includes four pipeline projects: the Ferghana Valley Water Resources Management Project, Phase II, the Livestock Sector Development Project, the Agriculture Modernization Project, and the Horticulture Development Project, Phase-II.

Energy

The country is rich in energy-producing resources. It has about 1.1 trillion cubic meters of proven natural gas reserves and 590 billion barrels of oil reserves, as well as 3 billion tons of coal reserves. The power sector of Uzbekistan is a vertically integrated monopoly. Uzbekenergo is the principal power sector utility, a state-owned holding consisting of 54 companies.
Uzbekenergo operates the power generation sector (seven thermal power plants, three heat and power plants, and 28 hydropower plants), the power transmission network, power distribution and supply (through 14 subsidiaries), and coal sector and auxiliary service companies (design institutes and service companies).

The Uzbek power network is part of the larger Central Asian Power System (CAPS), which is coordinated through a central dispatch coordination center located in Tashkent. In the past, the CAPS encompassed the five Central Asian countries, but it is currently operating with only three: the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. The Uzbekenergo-owned and operated power transmission network has 1,850 kilometers of 500 kilovolt (kV) lines, 6,200 kilometers of 220 kV lines, and 15,300 kilometers of 110 kV lines. The transmission network is interconnected with the neighboring countries through 220 kV and 500 kV transmission lines.

Uzbekistan ranks 145th among 189 countries on the getting electricity indicator, according to the Doing Business 2015 report prepared by the World Bank and IFC. This indicator assesses all the procedures required for a business to obtain a permanent electricity connection and supply for a standardized warehouse. Recognizing that reliable and stable access to a power supply is a key factor for business development, the Government has committed to achieving the following strategic objectives in the power sector: (a) expanding and modernizing the power system to provide a reliable electricity supply to end users; (b) ensuring Uzbekenergo’s financial sustainability through developing its institutional capacity; (c) improving efficiency through the entire chain of power delivery from generation to distribution, given the high energy intensity of the economy; (d) reducing the environmental footprint of the energy sector; and (e) developing opportunities for exporting power to other countries, both in the region and in South Asia.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the Government of Uzbekistan has undertaken several steps. These include: (a) approving an investment program that consists of 37 projects to modernize and expand the Uzbek power sector; (b) allowing periodic tariff revisions and support to Uzbekenergo for implementing the investment program and increasing its exposure to international financial institutions to help develop its institutional capacity; (c) mandating energy-intensive industries to improve procedural efficiency, using the most efficient technology; (d) assessing and developing renewable energy potential; and (e) maintaining a commitment to improve energy and revenue accountability as well as data and information on the power sector.

The Bank’s cooperation with Uzbekistan in the energy sector started in 2010 through the establishment of the US$25 million Energy Efficiency Facility for Industrial Enterprises Project, aiming to improve the energy efficiency of industrial enterprises and establish mechanisms to finance energy-efficiency projects; the US$110 million Talmarjan Transmission Project, aiming to improve the reliability of the electricity supply to residential and business consumers in southwest Uzbekistan and strengthen the power transmission network; and the US$180 million Advanced Electricity Metering Project, focused on reducing commercial losses in Uzbekenergo’s three regional power distribution companies, Tashkent city, and the oblasts (regions) of Tashkent and Syrdarya, by improving their metering and billing infrastructure and their commercial management systems. In 2013, the Bank provided Additional Financing to the Energy Efficiency Facility for Industrial Enterprises Project in the amount of US$100 million and started preparation of new operations, the District Heating Energy Efficiency Project, aiming to rehabilitate the heat supply in the cities of Andijan, Chirchik, and Tashkent, and the Modernization of the Electricity Distribution Systems Project in Tashkent city and the oblasts of Tashkent and Syrdarya.

Several ASA products were also prepared during the cooperation period. These include Uzbekistan Energy Sector Vulnerability to Climate Change (2012), Uzbekistan Power Sector Note (2012), and the Sourcebook for Strategic Energy Efficiency Development in Industry (2013). Ongoing studies include: “Energy Subsidies in Uzbekistan: Impact and the Way Forward,” “Energy Efficiency in the Building Sector,” and the “Power System Planning Study.”

Water Supply and Sanitation

The infrastructure situation in Uzbekistan is strongly influenced by the legacy of Soviet central planning. The Government of Uzbekistan has been steadfast in assigning priority to the water sector, and public capital investments in the sector have never dropped. The portfolio of public borrowing for water supply and sanitation projects and grant funds during 1995–2014 amounted to US$34.1 million, the largest for any country in Central Asia.

There are 265 cities, towns and settlements in Uzbekistan, as well as 11,844 villages, including 903
that are small and barely accessible. Water ducts and water supply pipelines to the country’s cities and settlements are made out of steel pipes and have been in operation for the past 20–25 years, resulting in a wear-and-tear rate of 50 percent. The same state of affairs is found in the centralized sanitation systems that exist mostly in the major cities. Sewage is piped from the city to the sewage treatment plants, and the city’s sewage water is delivered to the existing treatment plants for further mechanical and biological cleaning.

The improvement of water supply and sanitation services by expanding coverage in underserved, low-income areas will result in significant productivity gains at the household level by freeing time, reducing the incidence of water borne diseases, and avoiding the costs associated with the current scarce service delivery. This will directly support the Government’s sustainable development goal (SDG) of achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene for all by 2030 and the World Bank’s twin goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity. Increased water and sanitation coverage rates are objective indicators in the CPF.

The World Bank has been active in the sector since the early 1990s. Until 2015, the portfolio was predominantly in the water supply and sanitation sector, with financing of US$340 million that included the following activities: the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project for Khorezm oblast and the Republic of Karakalpakstan (US$75 million) and the Bukhara and Samarkand Water Supply Project (US$40 million), which have been completed; and the Bukhara and Samarkand Seawage Project (US$55 million), the Syrdarya Water Supply Project (US$88 million), and the Alat and Karakul Water Supply Project (US$82 million), which are ongoing. In addition, on June 23, 2015, the Board approved Additional Financing to the Bukhara and Samarkand Seawage Project.

The proposed new CPF for 2016–20 includes the following four pipeline projects: Reconstruction of Water Supply and Sanitation Systems in Nukus, Takhiatash, Pitnak, and Namangan towns; Improving Water Supply in Djizakh Region and Construction of Khanabad-Andijan Water Main, the Andijan, Karshi, and Bukhara Solid Waste Management Project, and Improving Water Supply in Syrdarya, Gulistan, and Suyburn Districts and in Kattakurgan Town.

Transport

Uzbekistan’s dynamic economy requires a reliable transportation system. The transport sector accounted for 9 percent of GDP and 4 percent of employment in Uzbekistan in 2013. As much as 47 percent more freight and 73 percent more passengers were transported in 2011 compared to 2005. To support this growth, Uzbekistan seeks to develop a transport system both in scope and quality to facilitate the development of the economy while ensuring that the improvements are undertaken in a sustainable manner.

Roads are the dominant mode of transportation in Uzbekistan, accounting for about 90 percent of total market share, and are critical to achieving these objectives. Currently, the road network carries around 60,000 tons-kilometer per square kilometer, which is four and two times higher than Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, respectively. Major transport corridors connect Uzbekistan to the Russian Federation in the north, the Middle East and South Asia in the south, the Caucasus and Europe in the west, and China in the east. The total length of the roads network reaches 185,000 kilometers, out of which 42,530 are classified as primary roads and consist of international (3,626 kilometers), national (16,909 kilometers), and regional or local (21,995 kilometers) roads.

Railways play an important role in freight transport and retain a large share of the long-distance passenger transport market in Uzbekistan. The railway network is comprised of 4,227.2 kilometers of railway lines, of which 392 kilometers (9 percent of the network) are double lines and 674 kilometers (16 percent of the network) are electrified. It handles 120 kilometers per hour (kph) trains on most sections. The network is an important link in the transport corridors between west and east and between north and south connecting Europe to Asia. The Transport Corridor Europe–Caucasus–Asia (TRACECA) and three of the six Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) corridors cross through Uzbekistan.

Following the issuance of a Transport Sector Policy Note in 2011, World Bank involvement in Uzbekistan’s transport sector began in 2013, launching two projects in 2015:

1. The US$1,709 million Pap-Angren Railway Project, supporting Uzbekistan in building a single 124 kilometer track rail link between Angren and Pap, including a 19.1 kilometer rail tunnel through the Kamchik Pass. (The Kamchik pass is of vital importance to Uzbekistan, as it represents an archetypal transport link and is the only route connecting the Ferghana valley to the capital Tashkent and the rest of Uzbekistan). The project will also support Uzbekenergo in the reconstruction of the Obihayot power station and the construction of a new power distribution line so that the new railway will have a reliable power supply.

2. The US$240 million Regional Roads Development Project to rehabilitate around 400 kilometers of regional roads in the Tashkent, Andijan, Ferghana, and
Namangan regions of Uzbekistan. The project aims to develop a framework program for regional road asset management, reduce road user costs, and improve road safety on the project roads.

Private and Financial Sector Development

The collaboration with the Government of Uzbekistan on private and financial sector development is transitioning to a more integrated, strategic, and programmatic dialogue on the identification of existing barriers to a conducive business environment. Over the past year, the World Bank has been collaborating with the authorities on the identification of bottlenecks in the business environment to inform policy options that support private sector growth and economic diversification. Leveraging the previous year’s discrete tasks with multiple government agencies, the Bank is aiming to expand the scope of the dialogue with the authorities to include the broad identification of impediments to private sector growth beyond Doing Business and the development of a supportive financial sector.

The World Bank is aiming to engage the authorities in the preparation of a long-term development strategy. In support of the Government’s Vision 2030 initiative, the World Bank will be providing broad policy recommendations to remove obstacles in the business environment, ranging from licensing and permits reform to improving access to finance for enterprises. This work aims to enhance the scope and depth of results-oriented reforms in a programmatic manner. The program for FY13 included specific recommendations for the development, on a pilot basis, of one of the priority sectors identified by the Government (i.e., the tourism sector).

The World Bank has developed a good dialogue with the CBU through technical assistance on strengthening bank supervision and regulation and financial reporting and auditing. The Bank, through its budget and FIRST Initiative funding, has supported two areas of focus: (i) the improvement and implementation of select elements of the bank regulatory framework; and (ii) the revision and implementation of a more risk-oriented bank assessment and a prompt remedial action framework. At the same time, the Bank implemented a FIRST Initiative project on financial reporting and auditing, with its main goal to create an adequate policy environment and improve institutional capacity for financial reporting in the banking sector, in line with accepted international practice.

International Finance Corporation

The IFC in Uzbekistan operates in line with the World Bank Group CPS and is mainly focused on private sector development through a combined investment and advisory approach. To date, IFC has provided US$132 million in long-term finance and supported over US$43 million in import/export transactions through its global trade finance program. IFC’s current committed portfolio is US$53 million, which includes, inter alia, equity investments and SME credit lines, a Trade Finance Facility in a leading regional private bank (Hamkorbank) and in the second largest bank in the country (Asaka Bank), and a senior loan to the leading textile factory, Indorama Kokand Textile. During the first two years of the previous CPS period, the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) loan portfolio of IFC client banks grew from about US$120 million to US$209 million, reaching nearly 10,300 MSMEs. Two new Mandate Letters have been signed with investment. IFC is planning to lend about US$260 million to Lukoil for the development of the second phase of the Kandym project and about US$5 million to Uzbekleasing International to finance leasing operations for SMEs.

In addition to investments, IFC continues to implement the Financial Infrastructure Advisory Services Project (ACAFI), which is a part of the regional program of financial infrastructure development in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) and Azerbaijan. The ACAFI project is being implemented in partnership with the Government of Switzerland, which, in October 2015, approved Phase III as part of the Financial Infrastructure Global Project. ACAFI III will be implemented in three years, starting in January 2016. In this regard, ACAFI III will continue to provide additional support to the government to strengthen credit reporting and secured transaction systems and help secure their sustainability. In Uzbekistan, the project provided assistance in the development and adoption of the Law on the Sharing of Credit Information and subsequent legislation. As a result of the adoption of this law, 30 Uzbek banks and the Uzbekistan Banking Association established a credit bureau in March 2012 with a total charter capital of US$673,000. A year later, the project signed a Project Services Agreement with the credit bureau to attract a strategic foreign technical partner to boost the bureau’s effectiveness and, with support from the World Bank, to develop the bureau’s long-term business model. One week later, the credit bureau’s shareholders approved Phase III as part of the Financial Infrastructure Global Project. ACAFI III will be implemented in three years, starting in January 2016. In this regard, ACAFI III will continue to provide additional support to the government to strengthen credit reporting and secured transaction systems and help secure their sustainability. In Uzbekistan, the project provided assistance in the development and adoption of the Law on the Sharing of Credit Information and subsequent legislation. As a result of the adoption of this law, 30 Uzbek banks and the Uzbekistan Banking Association established a credit bureau in March 2012 with a total charter capital of US$673,000. A year later, the project signed a Project Services Agreement with the credit bureau to attract a strategic foreign technical partner to boost the bureau’s effectiveness and, with support from the World Bank, to develop the bureau’s long-term business model. One week later, the credit bureau’s shareholders

12 The FIRST Initiative refers to the Financial Sector Reform and Strengthening Initiative.
discussed an Action Plan on the private partner’s involvement.

Under the secured transaction reform objective, the ACAFI project has also provided assistance in the development of the Law on a Collateral Registry, which was successfully adopted on October 23, 2013. The registry was launched on July 1, 2014, with around 270,000 registrations after a year of operation. Currently, the project team is working on further improving the collateral registry software, building its capacity and the capacity of financial institutions to provide movable assets-based lending. This work is in line with the Government’s request to the World Bank Group for assistance in further improving the investment climate in Uzbekistan and in increasing its Doing Business rating. As a result of the project team’s work on secured transactions reforms, a modern collateral registry (CoR) was created, and Uzbekistan’s getting credit rating in Doing Business 2015 jumped 63 points to 42nd worldwide.

The project also started a Financial Literacy Program to increase the level of financial literacy in the country, thus increasing access to finance for SMEs and individuals. In March 2015, the project concluded a Project Services Agreement with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan (CCI) to boost public awareness of financial literacy among the target audience. Training modules on financial literacy have been developed. A series of training programs for CCI staff in Tashkent and rural areas are planned for delivery in 2016.

Under the Central Asia Agri-Finance Project, IFC offered advisory services to Hamkorbank and helped to develop agri-lending tools and procedures to expand the bank’s portfolio into new segments by providing financing to medium and large farmers with diversified crop production who needed loans of up to US$250,000. In 2015, the IFC team entered into a new agreement with the Hamkorbank to provide additional training in agri-leasing and long-term lending for agricultural machinery and equipment. This collaboration helped Hamkorbank to increase its agricultural loan portfolio to US$29 million by December 2015, with 6,447 new clients. The project continued delivering advisory services to JV LLC Nestlé Agro through an assessment of the existing veterinary services for farmers and a training program for veterinarians servicing Nestlé’s suppliers. More than 133 farmers and their veterinary technicians attended several training events in Ferghana and Andijan provinces, followed by two field practice days aimed at upgrading their knowledge and skills in modern veterinary practices and animal feeding. The IFC trained 27 trainers selected jointly with the client who will be providing advice and training to other farms in Nestlé’s supply chain. In addition, a detailed manual on animal health was developed, based on the results of the initial assessment of a group of selected farms, and more than 100 copies were distributed to Nestlé.

In another direction, IFC is providing fee-based advisory services to help leading beverage producer International Beverages Tashkent LLC (IBT) develop and implement a food safety management system aligned with international quality standards, which will ultimately enhance its competitiveness and export potential and generate a demonstration effect for other private companies in this sector. The company significantly improved its operational performance and compliance with international Pepsi standards, from 53 percent in 2012 to 79 percent in 2013. The client also reported a 5 percent increase in sales and borrowed US$4.5 million from a local bank to invest in system implementation. IFC also delivered two trainings for food safety consultants and food producers, which served as the launch of the regional rollout of its Food Safety Toolkit. At present, IFC completed its food safety engagement with IBT, which resulted in a successful Food Safety System Certification (FSSC) 22000 certification, allowing the company to maintain its Pepsi franchise, boost production, and increase market share in the soft drinks segment.

At the same time, IFC continues to work together with the State Tax Committee (STC) of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the development and implementation of IT solutions for a risk-based approach in tax administration. During the first two years, a risk-based audit system (RBA) for a taxpayer risk assessment in the simplified and general tax regimes was developed, piloted, and implemented. The STC uses the RBA system to detect indications of tax underreporting or fraud to focus inspectors’ attention on the most risky taxpayers. The introduction of the RBA system will help the STC to improve the performance of tax auditing and the collection of budget revenue and also to reduce the compliance burden on businesses, including the majority of SMEs. Currently, a new value added tax (VAT) risk analysis system based on matching invoices is being developed with IFC support. STC and IFC are now working on testing and piloting this solution, which then will be an integral part of the STC’s RBA IT tool.

IFC provides advisory support to private companies in implementing resource efficiency improvements. Under the trilateral agreement with the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the CCI, IFC conducted a resource-efficiency assessment of three SMEs in Uzbekistan, with a focus on low-cost improvement measures and viable investment projects aimed at saving energy, water, and other resources. This exercise also helped build the
CCI’s capacity to provide similar resource-efficiency services to its member companies.

From 2001 to 2011, IFC also provided Advisory Services on leasing, microfinance development, mortgages, the investment climate, water efficiency in agriculture, and the implementation of the public-private partnership mechanism in the public health sector in Uzbekistan.

MIGA Program

The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) program in Uzbekistan is limited to one project to cover a non-shareholder loan to LUKOIL Overseas Uzbekistan Ltd. This is a US$119.5 million guarantee for a period of up to seven years against the risks of transfer restriction, expropriation, breach of contract, and war and civil disturbance issued under the Khauzak-Shady Block and Kandym Field Group Project.

This project represents one of the largest foreign investments in Uzbekistan and is expected to be a major source of foreign exchange and government revenue. Benefits include significant direct and indirect employment. The local procurement of materials is also expected to be substantial.
MAP OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
UZBEKISTAN: HEALTH SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (HEALTH III)
Project P113349 & P133187

Key Dates:
Approved: April 7, 2011 (Health-3); March 7, 2013 (AF)
Effective: November 2, 2011 (Health-3); September 19, 2013 (AF)
Closing: December 31, 2018

Financing in million US Dollars*:

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*As of March 2016

Note: Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement.

Challenges:

Population health outcomes in Uzbekistan are commensurate with its socioeconomic development level as a lower-middle-income country. Over the past several years, the greatest burden of disease in Uzbekistan has been attributed to noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and other chronic diseases, with cardiovascular diseases and neuropsychiatric conditions among the highest causes of morbidity for both males and females.

The current configuration for the provision of inpatient services is unproductive. Uzbekistan has a large, inefficient, and fragmented network of hospitals and specialized clinics, characterized by multiple vertical programs and many single-specialty facilities. There is a lack of clarity regarding the specific roles and linkages between the numerous hospitals and specialized care facilities. In addition, the organization of buildings and departments within each hospital is usually also very inefficient; there are multiple buildings on a hospital site, with a poor functional layout and poor connections. The management system is also unproductive, due to the many disconnected vertical chains of command and the reliance on vertical technical routes for oversight.

The overall revised Project Development Objective is to (a) improve access to quality health care at the primary level and at Rayon Medical Unions (RMUs) and selected City Medical Unions (CMUs); and (b) strengthen the Government’s public health response to the rise in NCDs.

Results achieved:

- 49 RMUs and four CMUs have been rehabilitated as part of the National Investment Program. An additional 75 hospitals are in the process of rehabilitation as part of the program. Their rehabilitation will be completed in 2016–17.
- 201 medical facilities have received medical equipment.
- 22 new treatment standards for NCDs have been developed and approved by the Ministry of Health (target: 20 by the end of 2018);
- 2,511 doctors have completed 10-month general practitioner (GP) training; 579 are currently enrolled in the training program (target is 3,000 by the end of 2018).
- 7,756 GPs and 21,557 nurses have completed continuous professional development courses.
- The STEP survey on NCD risk factors, the first in the country, was conducted.

Key Partners: Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan; Cabinet of Ministries; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Economy; and Central Project Implementation Bureau. Key Development Partners: Asian Development Bank (ADB), UK’s Department for International Development (DfID), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
UZBEKISTAN: IMPROVING PRE-PRIMARY AND GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION PROJECT
Project P144856

Key Dates:
Approved: June 28, 2014
Effective: January 26, 2015
Closing: January 31, 2018

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<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
<td>54.11</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As of March 2016

Note: Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement.

Challenges:
Early childhood development (ECD) and early childhood care and education (ECCE) are increasingly priority areas for the Government of Uzbekistan. Although Uzbekistan has nearly universal coverage of essential health and nutrition interventions for young children, the national enrollment rate in ECCE for children aged three–six is low by international standards at 23.3 percent nationally in 2012. Demand for available ECCE services is also low in Uzbekistan. As of 2010, for every 100 preschool seats available, just 78 children are enrolled, indicating that the current number of available seats in preschools exceeds enrollment levels by 22 percent, a trend that has been consistent for the past decade. This means that there are extra classrooms in many existing pre-primary schools, especially in rural areas.

Access to general secondary education is nearly universal. Learning outcomes and the quality of education, however, vary by region. Schools located in rural areas fare worse in most aspects compared to urban schools; the availability of teaching and learning materials, the status of infrastructure, and student outcomes all tend to be lower in more remote areas. Only 37 percent of remote rural schools have a sufficient number of teaching materials compared to 64 percent in urban areas.

The Project Development Objectives are to increase the access of children aged three–six to quality ECCE in rural pre-primary institutions and to improve conditions for better learning outcomes for students of rural general educational secondary schools.

Expected results:
- Increased percentage of children aged three–six enrolled in ECCE in rural areas of Uzbekistan
- Increased percentage of rural general educational secondary schools that meet minimum school standards
- Results of student assessments in mathematics and native language for grade 4 analyzed and publicly disseminated
- Results of student assessments in mathematics and native language for grade 9 analyzed and publicly disseminated
- Increased number of children aged three–six benefiting from early reading activities in the home
- Increased number of children aged five–six enrolled in the project half-day model
- Increased number of teachers and school managers trained in advanced areas of teaching and education management developed by the project

Key Partners: Ministry of Public Education of Uzbekistan; Ministry of Finance; Republican Institute for Teacher Training and Retraining named after A. Avloniy; and Republican Institute for Preschool Teacher Training.

Key Development Partners: UNICEF, UNESCO.
UZBEKISTAN: RURAL ENTERPRISE SUPPORT PROJECT, PHASE II

Project P109126

Approved: June 12, 2008
Effective: December 30, 2008
Closing: December 31, 2016

Financing in million US Dollars*:

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</tbody>
</table>

*As of March 2016

Note: Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement.

Challenges:
The project responds directly to the Welfare Improvement Strategy of Uzbekistan in several areas: (a) supporting the further development of private sector farming; (b) strengthening the infrastructure and services required by private farmers; (c) increasing and encouraging commercial banking sector lending to agriculture; (d) developing an integrated sustainable water management system for the supply of irrigation water; and (e) addressing land quality problems associated with irrigation and drainage. The availability of financial services for rural areas remains an acute issue, as access is more limited than in urban areas, while rural demand is increasing dramatically (partly as a factor of the privatization of farmers). The provision of adequate financial services to the general agribusiness sector remains constrained.

The Project Development Objective is to increase the productivity and financial and environmental sustainability of agriculture and the profitability of agribusiness in the project area. This will be achieved through the provision of (i) financial and capacity-building support to farmers and agribusinesses in seven regions of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and (ii) improved irrigation service delivery through the rehabilitation of the irrigation and drainage infrastructure and the strengthening of Water Users Associations (WUAs) in the project area.

Results achieved:

- 533 agribusinesses have received financing for the procurement of agricultural machinery, processing equipment, packaging equipment and materials, and investments in tree-crops, poultry and fishery, and livestock production.
- 61,426 farmers have been trained under the Rural Training and Advisory Component on the following subjects (a) principles of crop protection and pest control; (b) development of livestock production; (c) poultry production; (d) fish production; (e) preparation of business plans; (f) accountancy; (g) agricultural law and taxation; (h) water resource management; (i) orchard and vineyard production; (j) processing and marketing of products; and (k) products for domestic and export markets. Also, farmers’ awareness has been raised on national laws and regulations and International Labour Organization (ILO)–ratified conventions on the prevention of child labor.
- 843 lending officers of the participating financial institutions (PFIs) have been trained in investment lending in agriculture and rural development.
- 63 new WUAs have been established to improve water management in the seven project districts; 11,841 water management specialists trained at 446 workshops within the training program for all new WUAs, Administration of Irrigation Systems (AIS), and Basin Administration of Irrigation Systems (BAIS).

Key Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources; Rural Restructuring Agency; local commercial banks.
Key Development Partners: ADB, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).
Key Dates:
Approved: September 24, 2009
Effective: March 3, 2010
Closing: July 31, 2016

Financing from all co-financiers, million US Dollars*:

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*As of March 2016

Note: Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement.

Challenges:
Primary agriculture is highly important for Uzbekistan. The sector constitutes 17.5 percent of GDP and is Uzbekistan’s major source of employment and income. Because of the country’s arid climate, almost all agriculture depends on the irrigation and drainage infrastructure. The irrigated areas are located in the valleys and plateaus near the Amudarya and Syrdarya Rivers and cover about 4 million hectares. Of this, more than 25 percent is within the Ferghana Valley, a region shared by Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan. The Ferghana Valley has the most fertile soils in Central Asia and its highest population density. As a whole, the Ferghana Valley has an irrigated area covering about 1.4 million hectares, of which the Uzbek share is roughly two-thirds. The total population of the Ferghana Valley is about 10 million, 70 percent of whom reside in the Uzbek area, comprising about 28 percent of the population of Uzbekistan.

The Project Development Objective is to improve agricultural production in areas affected by waterlogging and to reduce damage to housing and infrastructure from rising groundwater levels and salinity in the project districts.

The project finances improvements in the subsurface drainage network and irrigation systems and the rehabilitation and installation of vertical drainage networks. The project also provides support for the institutional strengthening of the public and private organizations involved in the enhancement of water resource management and agriculture production in the project area. Finally, the project supports operational expenditures for project management, consultancy services for auditing project expenditures, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of project impacts, and preparation for a future project.

Results achieved:
- The project became effective in March 2010. All necessary contracts have been awarded and signed.
- Project staff has been recruited, and the M&E services under the project have been started.
- Project activities have been demonstrated in the nine selected demonstration plots in the three districts.
- Water Users Associations have been reorganized and staff have received training.
- 552.59 kilometers of irrigation canals and drains have been rehabilitated and made functional.

Key Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.
Key Development Partners: ADB, SDC, and the Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia (SIC-IWRC).
UZBEKISTAN: SOUTH KARAKALPKSTAN WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Project P127764

Key Dates:
Approved: June 12, 2014
Effective: April 7, 2015
Closing: September 30, 2021

Financing from all co-financiers, million US Dollars*:

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*As of March 2016

Note: Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement

Challenges:
With a poverty rate of 32 percent and a food poverty rate of 26.4 percent, the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan—where the project will be operating—is one of the poorest regions of Uzbekistan. The economy of the region, formerly largely dependent on fisheries, is now supported by cotton, livestock, and melons and relies heavily on extensive irrigation development, much of which is poorly managed. Wasteful water use has led to soil degradation and high operation and maintenance (O&M) costs, as much of the irrigated area depends on pumps, which erodes sustainability. Improving irrigation performance will reduce operation costs, help people move out of poverty, and build their assets.

The **Project Development Objective (PDO)** is to restore irrigation and improve water management in the project area in a sustainable and financially efficient manner.

Almost the entire drainage system of the project area (100,000 hectares) has been rehabilitated under the Drainage, Irrigation and Wetlands Improvement Project. The South Karakalpakstan Water Resources Management Improvement Project (SKWRMIP) will remove the dependence of irrigation on pumping by developing a gravity off-take from the Tuyamuyun reservoir and dismantling all lower Amudarya pumping stations serving the project area. To achieve this, a new 68 kilometer Bustan Canal will be constructed and the Right Bank Canal (RBC) will be reprofiled. In addition, secondary canals will also be reprofiled, and deteriorated and damaged structures will be refurbished or replaced. The project will also strengthen institutions and capacities, introduce more efficient irrigation management that is more accountable to stakeholders to help ensure sustainability, and promote crop diversification and intensification, including the production of a third non-cotton/non-wheat crop after winter wheat. Finally, the project will establish third-party monitoring and mechanize the cotton harvest in support of the elimination of child and forced labor in the project area.

Results to be achieved:
- 41,000 water users in the South Karakalpakstan project area will be provided with new or improved irrigation and drainage services;
- Cotton ginneries in the project area will benefit from the provision of cotton cleaning equipment;
- Women in the project area will benefit from targeted outreach and participation in the Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) and other training provided by the project;
- Water Users Associations in the project area will benefit through training, provision of O&M equipment, lower costs for water delivery, and more accountable and transparent water management.

Key Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources
Key Development Partners: International Labour Organization and Better Cotton Initiative.
UZBEKISTAN: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF) GRANT FOR A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION PROJECT
Project P127486

Approved: January 29, 2013
Effective: 
Closing: December 31, 2016
Financing in million US Dollars*:

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*As of March 2016

Challenges:
The proposed project responds directly to the strategic goals of the GEF-5 Strategy in the Climate Change Mitigation focal area, namely, promoting the use of renewable energy for the provision of rural energy services and supporting new low greenhouse gas (GHG)-emitting energy technologies. The project also responds to GEF Objective 1 in the Land Degradation focal area to “maintain or improve flows of agro-ecosystem services to sustain livelihoods of local communities.” The project is aligned with the 2012–15 Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) objectives of (i) increasing the efficiency of infrastructure; (ii) enhancing the economy’s competitiveness; and (iii) diversifying the economy. Activities under the proposed GEF project will, in part, provide incremental support to activities under the Second Rural Enterprise Support Project (RESP-2) to provide financial and technical support in achieving the milestones of the CPS.

The Project Development Objective is to: (i) promote the introduction of selected renewable energy and energy-efficiency technologies of relevance to agribusinesses and farms; and (ii) strengthen the capacity for improving degraded irrigated land and water conversation in the project area.

Expected results:
- Number of hectares of irrigated land where degradation has been reversed: 900 hectares
- Number of areas in which renewable energy technology has been demonstrated: 55 areas
- Generation capacity of renewable energy constructed – Biogas: 1,070 megawatts
- Support for the formulation of a regulatory framework to assist the integration of renewable energy into the rural energy system: draft regulatory framework revised and consulted
- GHG emissions avoided by the project (in tons CO₂ equivalent): 3.5 million tons CO₂ equivalent avoided over the lifetime of investments

Key Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and water resources; Rural Restructuring Agency; UzHydromet.
UZBEKISTAN: HORTICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
Project PI33703

Approved: June 12, 2015
Effective: October 5, 2015
Closing: June 30, 2021

Financing in million US Dollars*:

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</table>

*As of March 2016

Note: Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement.

Challenges:
The project will contribute to the World Bank’s twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. The project will also contribute to poverty reduction in the country by assisting horticulture farmers, many of whom have small farms and are among the poorest in the population, to increase their farm productivity and incomes and by fostering greater and better rural jobs through: (i) improving access to technologies, knowledge, and markets; (ii) strengthening technical and managerial capacity in the farming and agri-business sectors; and (iii) introducing new financial products in the financial sector. These will bring sustained benefits to project beneficiaries over the long term. At the same time, the project will promote shared prosperity by supporting the growth and development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the rural areas, creating more and better paying jobs in the agro-processing, trading, and export sectors, and increasing the value added of the agriculture sector.

The Project Development Objective is to enhance the productivity and profitability of the horticulture sector in the project area.

Expected results indicators:

- Increase in farmer productivity resulting from the adoption of modern horticulture practices supported by the project
- Increase in gross sales of farmers and agribusinesses due to horticulture improvements supported through the project
- Increase in aggregate portfolio lending in the horticulture sector by participating financial institutions

Key Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and water resources; Rural Restructuring Agency; UzHydromet.
Key Development Partners: ADB, SDC, Islamic Development Bank, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
UZBEKISTAN: ENERGY EFFICIENCY FACILITY FOR INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES  
Project P118737

Key Dates:
Approved: June 17, 2010
Effective: December 16, 2011
Closing: January 31, 2018

Financing in million US Dollars*:

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* As of March 2016, including Additional Financing in the amount of US$92.5 million that was approved in April 2013 and became effective in December 2013.

Note: Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement

Challenges:
Uzbekistan has a fast-growing economy and is a producer and exporter of natural gas to Russia and China. At the same time, the country has one of the most energy-intensive industries worldwide and is a major greenhouse gas emitter. Today, the country uses twice as much energy to produce one unit of GDP compared to neighboring Kazakhstan, and six times as much as Germany. The largest energy consumers in Uzbekistan are industrial enterprises, which generally operate outdated equipment and machinery. Recognizing this, the Government of Uzbekistan has declared improving the energy efficiency (EE) and competitiveness of industrial enterprises to be among its key economic priorities and has passed several relevant decrees that aim to incentivize energy savings. Uzbekistan has a relatively large number of banks that provide loans for certain types of industrial enterprises, but long-term funds for EE investments are currently not available. Improving EE and reducing energy consumption in the production process will improve Uzbek industries’ overall competitiveness, free up natural gas resources for exports, and reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions. Additional Financing in the amount of US$100 million was approved by the Board of Executive Directors in April 2013 and became effective in December 2013.

The Project Development Objective is to improve EE in industrial enterprises by designing and establishing a financing mechanism for energy saving investments.

Expected results:
- Annual energy consumption savings by at least 20 percent as a result of every subproject implementation, 227,000 megawatt hours cumulatively
- Cumulative CO₂ emissions reduction
- Development of an EE strategy for industrial enterprises
- Development of an EE communications strategy
- Establishment of the Permanent Energy Efficiency Improvement System in industrial associations

Key Partners: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, participating banks (Asaka, Hamkor, and Uzpromstroy), Association of Chemical Industry “Uzkhmimprom,” Food Industry Association, metallurgical plants, gas transportation company “Uztransgaz,” etc.
UZBEKISTAN: ADVANCE ELECTRICITY METERING PROJECT

Project 122773

Key Dates:
Approved: March 27, 2012
Effective: December 6, 2013
Closing: June 30, 2017

Financing in million US Dollars*:

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<td>246.1</td>
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*As of March 2016

Note: Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement.

Challenges:
Uzbekistan has a wide national power transmission and distribution network: 1,850 kilometers of 500 kilovolt lines, 6,200 kilometers of 220 kilovolt lines, 15,300 kilometers of 110 kilovolt lines, and more than 11,000 kilometers of 0.6–35 kilovolt lines.

Transmission and distribution system losses, both technical and commercial, are officially reported to be around 20 percent of electricity generated, around two–three times the losses experienced in advanced European power grids and some middle-income developing countries. Although the collection rates for power bills have improved in the past few years, there is still significant room for further improvement.

Currently, a major focus of the Government’s energy strategy is to rapidly improve the energy efficiency of both the energy supply industries and energy end users. A key action in the power sector is to implement a countrywide advanced electricity metering (AEM) program to improve the transparency and accountability of the sector. The program aims to implement modern technologies in electricity metering, billing, and payment collection to reduce commercial losses. It will also encourage electricity consumers to use electricity more efficiently by providing transparent and fair pricing signals and information on electricity consumption.

The Project Development Objective is to reduce commercial losses in Uzbekenergo’s three regional power distribution companies in Tashkent City and the oblasts of Tashkent and Syrdarya by improving their metering and billing infrastructure and the commercial management systems.

Expected results:
- Improvement of energy balance management and power supply reliability
- Improvement of the billing system and collection rate in project areas, from 80 to 88 percent in the billing rate and from 78 to 98 percent in the collection rate
- Improvement of the capacity of Uzbekenergo and the staff of the distribution companies

Key Partners: State Joint Stock Company Uzbekenergo; Ministry of Finance.
Key Development Partners: ADB, IsDB.
**UZBEKISTAN: TALIMARJAN TRANSMISSION PROJECT**

*Project PI19939*

**Key Dates:**
- **Approved:** March 15, 2011
- **Effective:** November 11, 2011
- **Closing:** December 31, 2015

**Financing in million US Dollars***:

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*As of March 2016

**Note:** Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement.

**Challenges:**

Uzbekistan has a fast-growing economy and is a producer and exporter of natural gas to Russia and China. With more than 12 gigawatts of installed power generation capacity, Uzbekistan is the second-largest producer of electricity in the Central Asia region.

Given the growth of demand, with its associated increase in overloading and an aging infrastructure, the transmission system has been experiencing high losses and frequent, long power outages. In winter, outages are from two to six hours a day in the southern and western regions, creating serious bottlenecks for economic and social development. In the south, congestion in power transmission is acute, where electricity consumption during the winter peak increased by nearly 40 percent from 2,318 megawatts in 1999 to almost 3,000 megawatts in 2008. There are also constraints to frequency regulation due to the predominant thermal mix. Large investments are needed to improve the transmission network required to meet the growth in load demand, reduce losses, and increase the electricity trade.

The **Project Development Objective** is to improve the reliability of the electricity supply to residential and business consumers in southwest Uzbekistan. The project supports changes in utility governance and renewable energy development. The project was restructured in July 2013, due to the “savings in the investment” component, i.e., purchasing the equipment for the transmission line and the open switchyard, in the amount of US$48 million. The savings were allocated to further upgrading and strengthening the transmission network in southwest Uzbekistan. The 500 kV Talimarjan–Sogdiana transmission line and the open switchyard at Talimarjan Thermal Power Plant were built and put on trial load in February 2014.

**Expected results:**
- Reduced number/duration of electricity outages in the project area from 92 to 48 hours per year
- Increased electricity supplied to consumers in the southwestern parts of Uzbekistan from 16,333 to 22,200 gigawatts annually
- Reduced voltage variation range from 10 to 5 percent
- Transition from Soviet-era GOST standards to International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standards
- Enhanced capacity of Internal Audit Departments
- Identification of areas with wind power potential

**Key Partners:** State Joint Stock Company Uzbekenergo; Ministry of Finance.

**Key Development Partners:** ADB, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the Uzbekistan Fund for Reconstruction and Development (FRD).
**UZBEKISTAN: BUKHARA AND SAMARKAND SEWERAGE PROJECT**

*Project 112719*

**Key Dates:**
- **Approved:** August 4, 2009
- **Effective:** April 1, 2010
- **Closing:** December 31, 2015

**Financing in million US Dollars***:

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<td><strong>Total Project Cost</strong></td>
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*As of March 2016

**Additional Financing for BSSP have been approved in June 23, 2015 by the Board. AF is not effective yet.**

**Note:** Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement.

**Challenges:**
Since independence in 1991, Uzbekistan’s municipal services have been largely decentralized to local governments. However, insufficient investment and deferred maintenance have badly affected the infrastructure, which is older than 20 years, has severely deteriorated, and is often energy inefficient. The decline in service reliability has reduced the public’s quality of life and constrained economic growth. The sewerage systems in Bukhara and Samarkand are more than 40 years old and will soon need to be replaced. Deferred maintenance must now be addressed through a combination of crash preventive maintenance and rehabilitation.

The **Project Development Objectives** are to mitigate the environmental impact from wastewater pollution and improve the efficiency and sustainability of wastewater management in Bukhara and Samarkand. This will be achieved through:
- (a) rehabilitating select sections of the sewerage system that have deteriorated;
- (b) expanding (to a limited extent) the sewerage system into currently unconnected central historical areas;
- (c) installing more energy-efficient equipment such as wastewater pumps and aeration systems at the wastewater treatment plants and pumping stations; and
- (d) improving the capacity of the water utilities (vodokanals) in the areas of management, communications, and public outreach.

**Additional Financing** will support a range of institutional strengthening activities to be implemented at the vodokanal and national levels. It will strengthen the capacity and performance of the Bukhara vodokanal (BVK) and the Samarkand vodokanal (SVK) to operate, plan, and manage their systems and social accountability mechanisms. In addition, it will finance the provision of goods, works, and consultant services in Bukhara and Samarkand: (a) rehabilitation/construction and upgrade of wastewater treatment plants, including effluent quality-monitoring laboratories and reuse facilities; (b) replacement and construction of new wastewater collection systems (about 110 kilometers in both cities); and (c) rehabilitation and construction of sewage pumping stations.

**Results achieved:**
- In Bukhara, roughly 11 kilometers of sewers have been rehabilitated, 1.2 kilometers of new sewer lines constructed, and 680 new connections to the sewerage system established; in addition, two new pumping stations have been constructed and 12 pumping stations rehabilitated. In Samarkand, 28.4 kilometers of sewers have been rehabilitated, 5.2 kilometers of new sewer lines constructed, and 4,047 new connections to the sewerage system established; also one new pumping station constructed and seven pumping stations rehabilitated. The remaining two civil works contracts for the rehabilitation of wastewater treatment plants in Bukhara and Samarkand are now under implementation.
- Operation and maintenance equipment has been procured for vodokanals of both Bukhara and Samarkand. A number of packages for rehabilitation/construction of the rest of the sewers are being procured for Bukhara.
- Training of vodokanals’ staff on sewerage operation was completed in Bukhara and Samarkand.

**Key Partners:** Uzkommunkhizmat (State Agency for Public Utilities); Bukhara Regional Governor’s office and Water Utility; and Samarkand Regional Governor’s office and Water Utility.
UZBEKISTAN: SYRDARYA WATER SUPPLY PROJECT  
Project 111760

Key Dates:
Approved: March 1, 2011  
Effective: January 14, 2012  
Closing: December 31, 2017

Financial in million US Dollars*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financier</th>
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<th>Disbursed</th>
<th>Undisbursed</th>
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<tr>
<td>Government of Uzbekistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
<td>85.0</td>
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</table>

*As of March 2016

Note: Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement.

Challenges:
Soon after independence in 1991, the Government of Uzbekistan launched an ambitious program to reform municipal services and rehabilitate decaying public service infrastructure. These assets had long been neglected by centralized service providers, who relied on central government funds to pay for operations and maintenance and capital programs. Since then, the responsibility for municipal services has been largely decentralized to local governments, and policies have been enacted in pursuit of better availability, quality, and sustainability of services. An estimated 82 percent of Uzbekistan’s population has access to potable water, but with great disparities between urban and rural areas. The Government asked for Bank assistance to improve water supply services in small towns and villages in five districts in the Syrdarya oblast (region). The beneficiaries reside in about 1,100 small towns and villages over an area of about 4,000 kilometers. Currently, 2.25 percent of the project towns receive no piped water at all and have to rely on water tankers, another 55 percent receive piped water less than six hours daily and 10 percent between six and 24 hours daily; and only about 10 percent have 24-hour service.

The Project Development Objective is to improve the availability, quality, and sustainability of the public water supply service in selected districts of the Syrdarya region. The objective is to be achieved through the rehabilitation, replacement, and limited expansion of the water supply infrastructure and through the institutional capacity building of the Syrdarya Regional Suvokova (SVK) utility. Capacity building will in particular aim at improved operations and maintenance and at the systematic billing and collection of user charges, to cover annual cash operating expenses (including repairs and maintenance) and a marginal share of annual debt service as agreed with the Government.

Results achieved:
- Five civil works contracts have been contracted and completed successfully, four more large works contracts (with an approximate value of US$50 million) are in the procurement process, and eight or nine works contracts are expected to be executed in 2016.
- Detailed designs for transmission mains in Sirgali-Okchangaal and civil works in the “Beshblik” pumping station’s distribution networks and service connections are being finalized, and various civil works contracts are being procured.
- The Project Implementation Consultant has prepared a report with an institutional assessment and recommendations for improved management and operations systems. The Project Implementing Unit has recently prepared a draft terms of reference for the installation of a management information system.
- Operation and maintenance equipment has been procured for the Syrdarya Vodokanal.

Key Partners: Uzcommunhuizmat (State Agency for Public Utilities); Syrdarya Regional Governor’s office and later Utility.
UZBEKISTAN: ALAT AND KARAKUL WATER SUPPLY PROJECT  
Project 118197

Key Dates:
Approved: December 13, 2012  
Effective: February 13, 2014  
Closing: December 31, 2017

Financing in million US Dollars*:

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*As of March, 2016

Note: Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement.

Challenges:
Straddling the Amudarya and Syrdarya international river basins, Uzbekistan has access to significant but unevenly distributed water resources. Both surface water and groundwater were intensively used under the Soviet Union for the needs of agriculture, industry, mining, and hydropower, within a broader regional context. Although the country has been proactive in attending to infrastructure needs during the economic transition, over time, the limited capacity of sector institutions to maintain, renew, and expand such assets has led to an effective degradation of access to water supply and sanitation services. The situation is particularly dire in rural areas, where previously served communities often cope with chronic service breakdown or no service at all. Piped water supply, where available, is of extremely low quality, with turbid unfiltered water reaching customers discontinuously in the two towns and a few peri-urban villages in their immediate vicinity. Nearly 80 percent of the districts’ population still lives in rural areas with no piped water supply, relying on unsafe water drawn from irrigation channels and saline wells or bought at high cost from tanker trucks.

The Project Development Objective is to improve the coverage, quality, and efficiency of the public water supply service in the districts of Alat and Karakul in the Bukhara region. The objective will be achieved through the rehabilitation and expansion of water production, transmission, and distribution infrastructure at the urban and rural levels. Efficiency is to be measured from a financial and operational perspective.

Results achieved:
- Project Coordination Unit branch is now functional.
- The Project Implementation Consultant has been contracted and has prepared the Project Inception Report and Project Implementation Plan.
- Procurement of the operation and maintenance equipment is now under way.

Key Partners: Uzakkumkhizmat (State Agency for Public Utilities); Bukhara Regional Governor’s office and Water Utility.
UZBEKISTAN: PAP-ANGREN RAILWAY PROJECT
Project P146328

Approved: February 13, 2015
Effective: September 15, 2015
Closing: December 31, 2017 (expected)

Financing in million US Dollars*:

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<td>China Export Import Bank</td>
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*As of March 2016

Challenges:
The project will address the transport connectivity issue for the Ferghana Valley, one of the main reasons for the valley’s lag in economic growth. The Ferghana Valley constitutes the eastern-most region of Uzbekistan, where almost one-third of the country’s population lives. Although the region has vast industrial and agricultural potential, its socioeconomic development lags behind other regions. GDP per capita in 2012 of the three provinces located in the Ferghana Valley (Ferghana, Andijan, and Namangan) was below the country average by 11 percent, 32 percent, and 52 percent, respectively. Poverty levels and poverty density are also very high across the region; for example, the region has one-fourth of the poor in Uzbekistan and 22 percent of the total population, compared to the city of Tashkent, which is home to 8.2 percent of the total population but only 2.1 percent of the country’s poor. Lack of connectivity is a significant obstacle to the development of the Ferghana Valley. The project is challenging technically, as it involves new construction passing through mountainous terrain and includes a 19.6 kilometer rail tunnel. The proposed rail line would also improve the rail linkage of the Uzbek part of the Fergana Valley to the Transport Corridor Europe–Caucasus–Asia (TRACECA) rail transport corridors running east-west through Turkmenistan/Caspian/Caucasus/Turkey and Kazakhstan/Russia, potentially adding traffic to these routes.

The proposed project supports three main strategies of the World Bank in Uzbekistan for FY12–15: (i) Improving the efficiency of infrastructure and specifically, transport infrastructure. Currently, goods and products exported from the Ferghana Valley bear three times the average transport costs. As the country intends to play a more important role as an international redistribution hub for manufactured products, the development of the new railway connection to the valley will improve logistical opportunities and enhance the transport capacity of the national rail network. (ii) Supporting diversification by improving infrastructure to increase economic productivity and competitiveness, including in the agricultural sector. The proposed project will reduce transport time and costs so that Ferghana Valley products could be more readily exported, which will create incentives for time-sensitive, high-value, and market-oriented agricultural and manufacturing outputs. (iii) Supporting, through increased transport connectivity of the Ferghana Valley, the facilitation of private sector-led diversification. By providing more opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to reach markets and retain a greater percentage of the delivered price of their goods, the project is expected to boost private sector activity, particularly benefiting SMEs and small-scale farmers.

Expected results indicators

- Decrease in transportation costs for railway transport users, commuting to/from Ferghana Valley
- Decrease in transportation costs for freight for products delivered to/from and produced in Ferghana Valley, including oil and oil products, fertilizers, automobiles, and others
- Aggregate increase in the reliability of rail services in the country

Key Partners: Ministry of Economy; State Joint Stock Railway company “Uzbekiston Temir Yollari,” and the local administration of the Tashkent and Namangan regions.

Key Development Partners: Fund for Reconstruction and Development of Uzbekistan, China Export Import Bank.
UZBEKISTAN: REGIONAL ROADS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Project P146334

Approved: June 23, 2015
Effective: 
Closing: September 30, 2021

Financing in million US Dollars*:

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*As of March 2016

**Note:**

**Challenges:**
The project will contribute to improving connectivity in the Tashkent region and in the Ferghana Valley. The region of Tashkent is a major economic center and improving the condition of feeder roads and their connection to national roads will provide better access to economic opportunities. Despite a vast industrial and agricultural potential, the development of the Ferghana region is impeded by poor intra-regional and local connectivity. This project will address this lack of intra-regional connectivity and will also complement the new Pap-Angren railway connection, which is expected to substantially reduce the physical and economic isolation of the Tashkent region from the rest of Uzbekistan.

The proposed **Project Development Objectives (PDOs)** are to reduce road user costs on the project roads and to develop a sustainable investment program for regional road asset management.

The project will: (i) support the Government in developing a robust priority regional road program, (ii) identify a road map to strengthen institutional capacity, and (iii) serve as a platform for future development support to regional roads by international financial institutions (IFIs). It will complement the Government’s recent efforts in expanding the capacity of the main national and international corridors and will improve the conditions of the regional road network, which connects the regions’ districts to the main road network. Around 1,000 kilometers of priority road sections located in 12 regions have been selected and will form the core of the priority regional road program. This project will finance a part of the program, namely the rehabilitation and improvement of around 300 kilometers in Tashkent and in the three regions of the Ferghana Valley (Namangan, Andijan, and Ferghana). The project will provide direct access to five districts in the Tashkent region and 145 villages in the Ferghana Valley. It will have an impact on around 420,000 households, totaling 2.3 million beneficiaries.

**Expected results indicators:**
The project will be measured through the following PDO indicators:

- (i) vehicle operating costs for cars per kilometers
- (ii) vehicle operating costs for trucks per kilometers
- (iii) travel time measured by a proxy variable—average vehicle speed, km/hour
- (iv) adoption of a regional road rehabilitation and maintenance program

**Key Partners:** Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy; local governments of Tashkent, Andijan, Fergana and Namangan regions.

**Key Development Partners:** Republican Road Fund, “Uaavtoyul” State Joint Stock Company.
UZBEKISTAN: IFC AZERBAIJAN AND CENTRAL ASIA FINANCIAL MARKETS INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY SERVICES PROJECT (Phase I, II and III)

Key Dates:
Project Launch: May 2009
Project Phase I Close: September 2012
Project Phase II Launch: October 2012
Project Phase II Close: September 2015
Project Phase III Launch: October 2015
Project Phase III Close: September 2018

Financing in million US Dollars for all Project's countries:

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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>OeEB</td>
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<td>IFC internal funding</td>
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<td>Anticipated client fee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
<td>11,318,951</td>
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Challenges:
Access to finance is one of the foundations of private sector growth. As such, supporting the development of the financial sector has been a priority of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in Azerbaijan and the Central Asia region (Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan). The current financial market in the region needs further strengthening in order to secure its financial stability and broader access to finance. The countries are lacking or have underdeveloped cornerstones of a sound financial infrastructure: a credit bureau and collateral registries. The region also lacks local financial staff trained and experienced in risk management practices.

The Project Development Objective is to expand secured access to finance for individual consumers and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) by improving the financial infrastructure in the four project countries. The project will continue with the development of credit bureaus and expand the collateral registries component through a programmatic approach, including:

- Improving legislation relevant to improved credit information sharing and secured transaction practices;
- Building the capacity of credit bureaus/public registries and movable collateral registries;
- Strengthening the capacity of financial intermediaries by providing new tools related to credit reporting and secured transactions and improving the risk management practices of local financial institutions;
- Raising public awareness and disseminating the financial literacy program.

The primary project objectives are to establish sustainable operational financial infrastructure systems in the four project countries and to facilitate an additional US$373.2 million of financing to 641,400 individual consumers and MSMEs over five years, including US$68 million of financing to 136,000 individual consumers and MSMEs in Uzbekistan.

Expected results:
Credit reporting: well-designed credit reporting legal framework with functioning private credit bureau; reformed public registry functional. Secured transaction: well-designed secured transition legal framework; movable collateral registry holder has been identified and works on its establishment have begun; key stakeholders are educated on how to use it.

Results achieved:
- The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Sharing Credit Information developed and adopted on October 4, 2011. In May 2013, IFC and the credit bureau “Credit Information and Analytical Center” signed an agreement to attract a foreign technical partner to boost the bureau’s effectiveness through best international practices and modern business methods. In March 2016, the Government supported an initiative to engage a strategic foreign technical partner to help further develop the credit bureau.
- The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on a Collateral Registry developed and adopted on October 23, 2013. The registry was launched on July 1, 2014, with around 270,000 registrations after a year of operation. A modern collateral registry has been created, and Uzbekistan’s getting credit rating in *Doing Business 2015* report jumped 63 points to 42nd worldwide.
- In March 2015, the project concluded a Project Services Agreement with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan to boost public awareness of financial literacy among the target audience. Training modules on financial literacy were developed. A series of trainings for CCI staff in Tashkent and rural areas will be conducted in 2016.
- A series of trainings and public relations events have been held to facilitate better understanding of the credit information-sharing system and collateral registry.

Key Partners: Central Bank of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan Banking Association, Credit Information and Analytical Center, Regional Banking Training Center, and Federation of Accountants, Auditors and Consultants of Uzbekistan, and Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan.
On May 16, 2012, MIGA issued a guarantee of US$119.5 million to BNP Paribas (Suisse) SA of Switzerland to cover a non-shareholder loan to LUKOIL Overseas Uzbekistan Ltd. for the Khauzak-Shady Block and Kandym Field Group project. The coverage is for a period of up to seven years against the risks of transfer restriction, expropriation, breach of contract, and war and civil disturbance.

This project furthers development begun in 2005 under a production-sharing agreement (PSA) between LUKOIL, the national holding company “Uzbekneftegaz,” and the Republic of Uzbekistan represented by the Ministry of Economy.

This project represents one of the largest foreign investments in Uzbekistan and involves one of the few foreign companies operating under a PSA together with Uzbekneftegaz.

MIGA’s involvement provides an external validation of the company’s efforts to meet international best practice when it comes to managing the governance, environmental, and social impacts of oil and gas projects. This is particularly important as Uzbekistan has begun to attract large-scale foreign investment into its upstream gas sector.

The project is expected to be a major source of foreign exchange and government revenue. Benefits include significant direct and indirect employment. The local procurement of materials is also expected to be significant.

At a broader level, MIGA is supporting an important investment in a developing economy that has been lagging behind its peers in the region in attracting foreign direct investment. MIGA’s role in this project complements the World Bank’s efforts to foster responsible and sustainable private sector-led growth in Uzbekistan. The project is also aligned with MIGA’s commitment to support more investments in complex deals in infrastructure as well as those in countries eligible for concessional lending from IDA. As beneficial ownership of the project accrues to LUKOIL of Russia, it also addresses MIGA’s commitment to support South-South investments.