

Kvesheti-Kobi Road Project

Supplementary Stakeholder Engagement Plan¹ – Consultation meetings related to the Historical Cultural Reference Plan (HCRP) and Khada Valley Development Plan (KVDP)

2021 - 2023

Project Description

The Regional Development Program of Georgia 2018-2021 was launched by the Government of Georgia with the intention of upgrading the country's major roads. The Program is being managed by the Roads Department of the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure and aims to improve the transportation of goods both within Georgia and to/from surrounding countries; to facilitate the transformation of Georgia into a transport, logistics and a trade hub connecting Europe and Asia.

Upgrading the Jinvali-Larsi section of the E117 (which crosses the Caucasus Mountains) is planned as part of the Regional Development Program, to improve connectivity and safety along Georgia's North-South Corridor by constructing of climate-resilient highway. This section of the E117 has been divided into three sub-sections, namely: Jinvali - Kvesheti, Kvesheti-Kobi and Kobi-Larsi. The Kvesheti-Kobi sub-section (hereafter the Project) is the first of the three to be developed.

The existing 35-km stretch of road is unsafe, experiences heavy traffic, and is difficult to maintain during the winter resulting in road closures for extended periods. A new 23-km bypass road from Kvesheti to Kobi is therefore being built to enable high volumes of traffic to travel more safely, and that can remain fully operational all year. This new by-pass road will also provide 5km of all-weather rural roads to serve roadside villages. The Kvesheti-Kobi section is the most challenging, as it includes a 9 km tunnel (the main tunnel) that will pass under the Caucasus ridge and bypass the existing road that connects Kvesheti to Kobi through the Gudauri area and the Jvari pass.

The Project Implementing Agency is the Roads Department of Georgia under the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, which has overall responsibility for the road sector and is responsible for the implementation of the Project. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are the Lenders.

From an administrative standpoint, the proposed Project is situated entirely in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti Region, across the Dusheti and Kazbegi municipalities. Specifically, the Project spans from the Kvesheti area and Khada Valley in the Dusheti Municipality to the Kobi area in the Kazbegi Municipality.

For construction and tendering purposes, the alignment has been split into two sections:

- Lot 1 – Tskere –Kobi (10 km), comprising of the main tunnel, and

¹ For the Project Stakeholder Engagement Plan please refer to the main document disclosed here: https://kveshetikobiroad.ge/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/KK-Stakeholder-engagement-plan_May-2023.pdf

- Lot 2 – Kvesheti-Tskere (12,7 km).

Key design features of Lot 1 and Lot 2 sections are summarized below, and an overview of the alignment location is presented in **Figure 1** below.

Lot 1 includes:

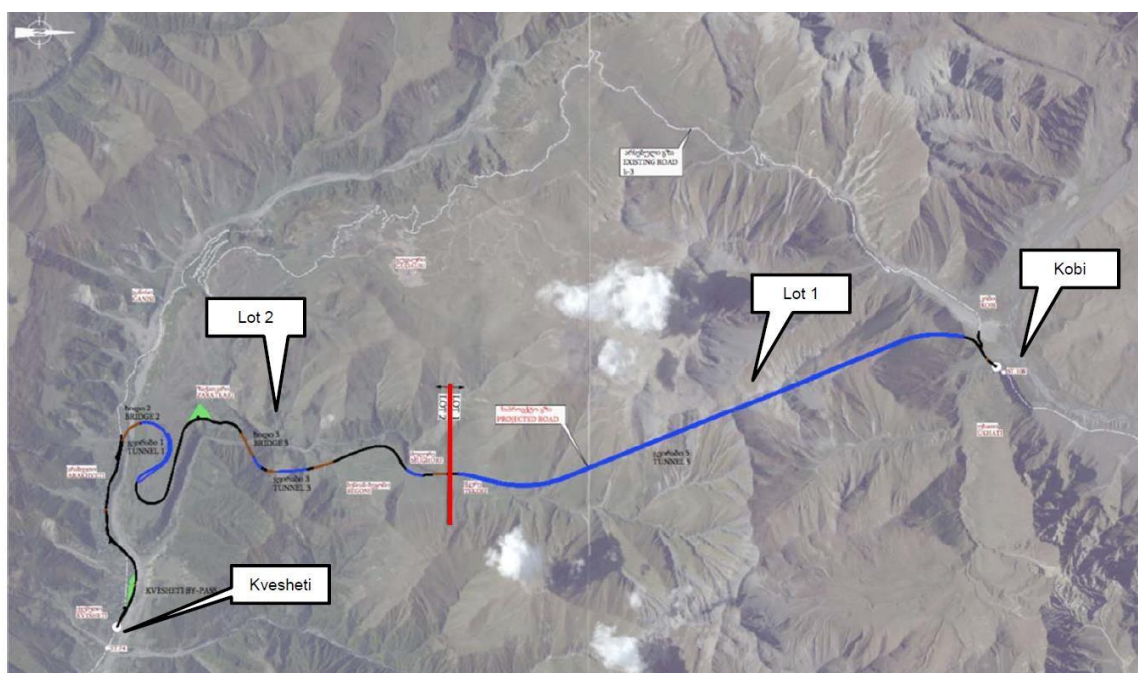
- 178m long section of the road from Tskere to the south portal of the tunnel
- 8.86km long bidirectional, 2 lane tunnel (max. gradient 2.35%)
- 9.062 km emergency gallery parallel to the tunnel and 17 connections to the main tunnel.
- Technical buildings next to the North and South portal; the buildings include facilities building, pumping station and ventilation room.
- Design speed 80 km/h.

Lot 2 starts near Kvesheti and continues to Tskere before reaching the village at chainage 12+720. The route includes 2.5 km of tunnels and 1.5 km of bridges. The main elements of this section are:

- Kvesheti bypass road
- 6 bridges
- 4 tunnels, two built with the drilling/blasting technique and two built with the cut and cover technique.
- 5 grade junctions and 3 service roads
- Design speed 80 km/h.

The construction of the tunnels will generate surplus spoil materials; landfilling will hence be required for these materials.

Figure 1: Lot 1 and Lot 2 alignment overview



Background

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been developed and implemented for the Project to meet the requirements of Georgian Legislation, EBRD's Environmental and Social Policy 2014 and Public Information Policy 2014, and ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement 2009 and Public Communication Policy 2011. The SEP outlines the stakeholder mapping exercise that has been conducted and the key persons or groups (i) who are affected or likely to be affected (directly or indirectly) by the Project (affected parties); or (ii) may have an interest in the Project (other interested parties) as well as the range of stakeholder engagement activities that are being employed on the Project. The SEP also includes details of extensive stakeholder engagement activities that have been conducted during the development and construction phases of the Project to date, including open consultation meetings, focus group discussions, individual in-depth interviews, events to keep local communities updated on the progress of civil works and employment opportunities, to undertake pre-construction building condition surveys, and to outline the Community Grievance Mechanism.

Considering the predicted scale of the cultural heritage impacts, the Project has adopted a comprehensive set of mitigation measures, also referred to as the 'Five-Phase Archaeological Strategy'. This Strategy specifically includes the following: (i) Phase 1, Review of Existing Data and Materials related to Cultural Heritage; (ii) Phase 2 Extensive and Intensive Surveys and Studies; (iii) Phase 3 Pre-Construction Excavations; (iv) Phase 4 Chance Finds During Construction; and (v) Phase 5 Reporting. A detailed report setting out all the mitigation measures that were implemented between 2019 and 2022 was prepared and disclosed publicly in June 2022 on the Project website:

<https://kveshetikobiroad.ge/en/public-information/>

Two documents, namely the Historic Cultural Reference Plan (HCRP), and Khada Valley Development Plan (KVDP), were developed under ABD's technical assistance, and KVDP is the responsibility of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and HCRP is the responsibility of NACHP. As such, they are not directly part of the Project.

Purpose of this Supplementary SEP

The purpose of this Supplementary SEP, which will be disclosed in parallel to the SEP, is to outline the specific stakeholder engagement activities that have been undertaken to date in relation to the HCRP and KVDP, which are not captured in the SEP because these 2 Plans do not form part of the Project.

This Plan is a living document and will be reviewed and updated in parallel with the SEP.

Documents Disclosed

During the Project Construction phase, the following have been disclosed for interested parties on the Project's web-page (www.kveshetikobi.ge):

- Preliminary draft of the HCRP
- Findings of the HCRP
- Draft concept of the KVDP
- Findings of the KVDP and plan of actions to implement KVDP

Stakeholder Engagement Completed to Date

To help enable cultural heritage and tourism stakeholders to provide timely feedback to the development of the Khada Valley including promoting the development of tourism-based income generating opportunities for local people, the specific stakeholder consultation activities summarised in Table 1 were conducted in relation to these 2 Plans between 2021 and 2023:

Table 1: Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Activities Conducted in relation to the HCRP and KVDP during the Construction Phase (October 2020 to present)

| ID | Engagement Activity | Participant Groups | Date and Location | Purpose of the Engagement |
|----|------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | Workshop | Local community residents from Project affected communities | 18.06.2021 Gudaure | To inform residents of the development and objectives of the Khada Valley Development Plan |
| 2 | Virtual Consultation Meeting | CSOs and Professional Organisations | 09.09.2021 | To provide a detailed update on the status of mitigation measures for cultural heritage impacts before the start of construction works, as well as to share an overview of the scope/expected results/timelines in relation to the HCRP and KVDP |
| 3 | Virtual Kick-Off Meeting | CSOs and Professional Organisations | 15.11.2021 | To present the draft concept of the HCRP, its expected contents/results, and timeline for its completion. |

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| 4 | Workshop | CSOs and Professional Organisations | 02.05.2022 | To present the preliminary findings of the HCRP and collect feedback from cultural heritage experts and NGOs |
| 5 | Workshop | Civil Society Organisations (Cultural Heritage and Environmental Issues) | 03.05.2022 Courtyard Marriott Hotel, Tbilisi | Presentation of the objectives, findings and recommendations of the Historic-Cultural Reference Plan for the Khada Valley. |
| 6 | Public Consultation Meeting | Local community residents from Project affected communities | 05.05.2022 | To present the preliminary findings of the HCRP and collect feedback from local communities from the Khada Valley – as well as present the concept of the KVDP and its proposed scope and gather local people's views, suggestions, concerns |
| 7 | Consultation Meeting | Cultural Heritage and Biodiversity NGO's, Tourist Associations, Cultural Heritage and Biodiversity Experts. | 01.11.2022 Hotel Marco Polo, Gudauri | To present the preliminary findings of the KVDP and collect feedback from key stakeholders. |
| 8 | Public Consultation Meeting | Local community Residents | 01.11.2022 Hotel Marco Polo, Gudauri. | Presentation of social survey work performed to inform the Khada Valley Development Plan. Presentation of Khada Valley Development Plan Concept. |
| 9 | Consultation Meeting | Governmental Organisations (from Project affected Municipality) | 24.01.2023 City Hall of Dusheti Municipality. | Presentation of the final draft findings of the Khada Valley Development Plan and gathering of feedback from key stakeholders Discussion of perspectives of future cooperation with the Municipality. |

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| 10 | Public Consultation Meeting | CSOs and Professional Organisations | 31.01.2023 Courtyard Marriot Hotel, Tbilisi | To present the final draft findings of the KVDP and collect feedback from key stakeholders. |
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On-going Stakeholder Engagement

Consultation meetings with key heritage and tourism-focused stakeholders will continue throughout 2023 and beyond, until the HCRP and KVDP are finalized.