

Environmental Monitoring Report

Bi-annual Report

January-June 2013

ARM: Sustainable Urban Development Investment Program, Tranche 1

Project Number: 42417

Loan Number: L2752

July 2013

Prepared by the Yerevan Municipality

Yerevan Development Project Implementation Unit

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
DESC	detailed engineering and construction supervision consultant
EARF	environmental assessment and review framework
EIA	environmental impact assessment
EMP	environmental management and monitoring plan
ES	environmental specialist
ICB	international competitive biddings
IEE	initial environmental examination
MNP	Ministry of Nature Protection
MoC	Ministry of Culture
PMIC	project management and institutional strengthening consultant
RA	Republic of Armenia
SUDIP	Sustainable Urban Development Investment Program
Sweroad	Swedish National Road Consulting AB
YDPIU	Yerevan Development Project Implementation Unit
YM	Yerevan Municipality

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I. Introduction

A. Project Description

1. The Government of Armenia received a loan on 19 May 2011 from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to finance the Sustainable Urban Development Investment Program (SUDIP), Tranche 1. The main objective of the Project is to build a new highway to expressway standards that links the existing Shirak Street and Arshakuniats Avenue to the Artashat Highway.

2. The Project comprises the following main components:

- (i) the construction of a new 6-lane divided road;
- (ii) the construction of a new bridge over the River Hrazdan;
- (iii) the construction of an interchange at Argavand highway;
- (iv) the construction of a round-about at Shirak street; and
- (v) the construction of road links.

The Project locations are shown in Figure 1.

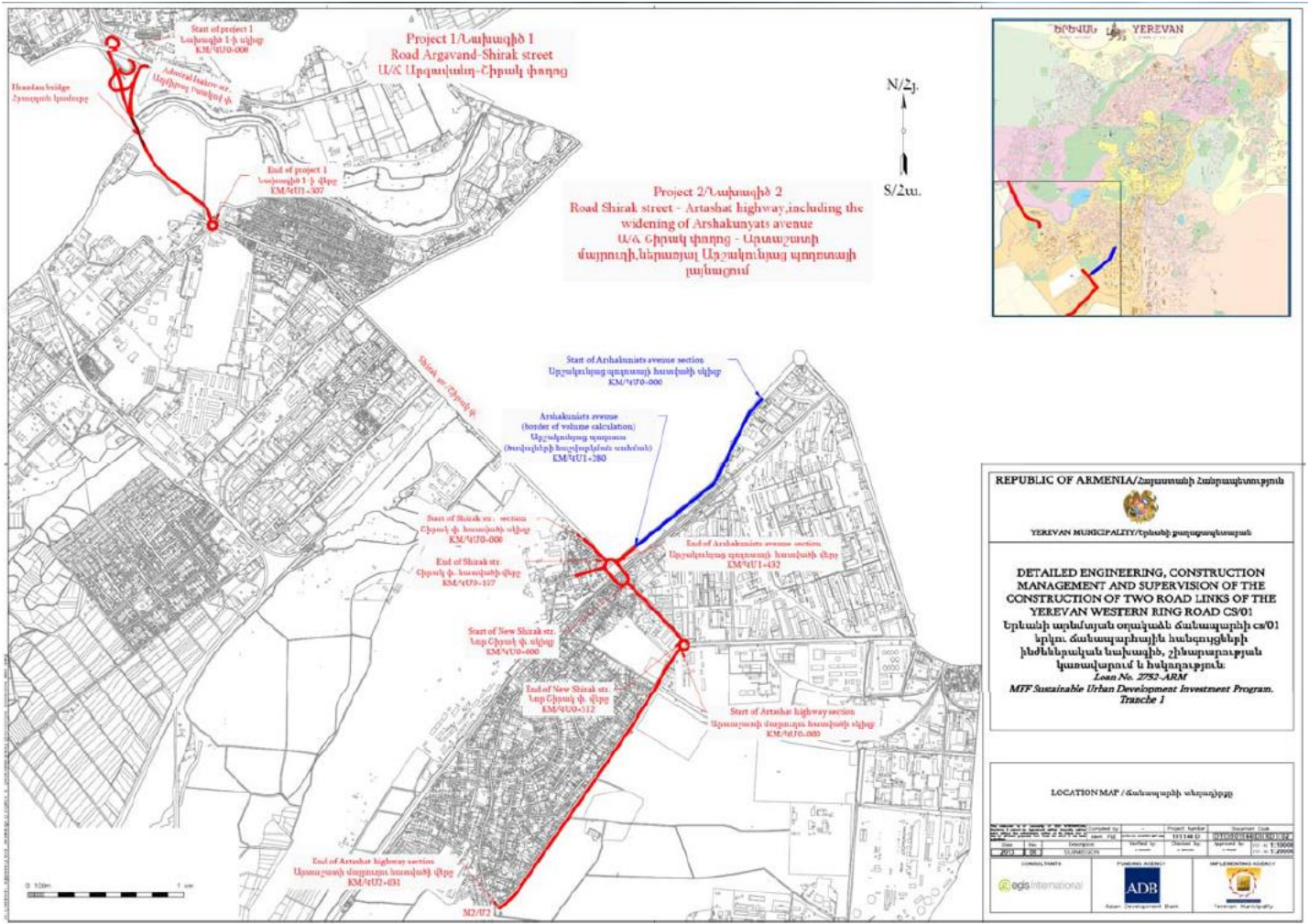


Figure 1: Map showing the Project locations

3. In addition to the construction of the road links a part of the loan proceeds will finance project management and capacity building, as well as institutional strengthening. Another part will finance the preparation of the Tranche 2 projects.

B. Implementation Progress

4. This bi-annual environmental monitoring report covers the time period of January-June 2013. No civil works have been implemented during that time period.

5. Swedish National Road Consulting AB (Sweroad) commenced the services on 11 February 2013. The environmental staff of the project management and institutional strengthening consultant (PMIC) started carrying out environmental assessment and management activities from March 2013.

6. Detailed engineering and construction supervision consultant (DESC) started reviewing and updating the initial environmental examination (IEE) and environmental management and monitoring plan (EMP) in the end of January and submitted the report on 30 April 2013. Yerevan Development Project Implementation Unit (YDPIU) and PMIC have already revised and sent comments to DESC for revision.

7. During the reporting period it was decided to have two international competitive biddings (ICB) for civil works: Tender 1 - Arshakuniats Avenue and Tender 2 - Argavand-Shirak, New Shirak and Artashat road sections. Although the ADB safeguards policy requires IEE for category B project, the YDPIU and the Consultants decided to develop two EIAs for the road subsections covered by the two ICB procedures. The decision was made because of two reasons: (i) to comply with the Armenian legislation which requires EIA regardless of the project category; and (ii) to have the environmental documents ready to go for the Tender 1, which is simpler and does not trigger the archaeological site in Karmir Blur (Red Hill). The DESC will prepare and submit the EIA draft reports for the Tender 1 in July 2013 and for the Tender 2 in September 2013 and the finalized reports will be submitted to ADB by YDPIU.

II. Environmental Management

A. Institutional Arrangements of the Project

8. YM through the YDPIU additional staff recruited in December 2012 handles day-to-day implementation of the project. The YDPIU Safeguards Unit consists of one resettlement specialist and one environmental specialist.

9. The major tasks of YDPIU ES are to carry out the overall environmental management ensuring full compliance of Project implementation with Armenian legislation and ADB Safeguard Policy Statement (2009). The ES serves as liaison between the safeguard team of PMIC and DESC, YM, the executing agency, MNP and MoC of the RA, project affected people, ADB and develops and maintains direct relationships with government authorities. With the help of DESC and PMIC the ES organizes and conducts public consultations, etc.

10. DESC's environmental management team is comprised of one international and one local ESs who update the environmental assessment documents during the reporting period, as well as local archaeologist working on archaeological survey.

11. PMIC environment management team is comprised of one international and one national ESs. The international ES has mobilized from 4 March 2013 and left the Project by the end of May 2013 after fulfilling his duties and now the national ES is managing the environmental safeguards of the Project. The archaeological specialist will join the team in August 2013 to monitor archaeological survey process.

12. No major changes in the institutional arrangements occurred during the reporting period.

B. Environmental Safeguards Program

13. Implementation of the Environmental Safeguards Program started in January 2013.

14. During the reporting period YDPIU and PMIC reviewed the IEE (included EMP) report updated and submitted by DESC on 30 April 2013. During the review it turned out that the report should be significantly revised so provided with numerous comments it was sent to DESC for revision.

C. Archeological Works Program

15. A number of meetings took place to discuss the archaeological issues of the project. Particularly, a joint meeting took place with representatives of Urban Construction Council of YM, MoC of the RA, YM, Erebuni historical museum, YDPIU, PMIC and DESC in Karmir Blur area on 9 April 2013. Other meetings were arranged with above mentioned parties in YM. It was not possible to estimate the risk of findings of archaeological remains in Karmir Blur area based on the archaeological report produced by DESC. Last version of above mentioned report was delivered to YDPIU's office on 18 May 2013. This report was too far to cover all archaeological issues. At that period real archaeological survey was already delayed by DESC and based on the above-mentioned reasons, it was decided to proceed with survey with help of specialized company.

16. Two archaeological entities: the “Scientific Research Center of Cultural Heritage” SNCO and “Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography” SONP were considered by DESC for archaeological survey. YDPIU approved “Scientific Research Center of Cultural Heritage” SNCO for implementation of archaeological survey proposed by DECS based on respective procurement regulations.

17. By the end of reporting period respective contract was not signed between DESC and “Scientific Research Center of Cultural Heritage” SNCO. It is an intention to sign a contract by the end of July 2013. As proposed by the DESC, survey will be implemented within three months which will include also preparation of appropriate report. The tentative start is foreseen in beginning of August 2013 and date of completion is the end of October 2013.

D. Grievance Redress Mechanism

18. During the reporting period no grievance redress mechanism has been developed. A grievance redress mechanism addressing the comments and complaints on environmental issues as a part of EMPs will be developed by DESC, reviewed by PMIC, approved by YDPIU and ADB for Tender 1 and for Tender 2 in the third quarter of 2013.

E. Meetings and Communication

19. During the reporting period environmental safeguards issues were regularly discussed during the joint meetings with YM, ADB, YDPIU, PMIC and DESC, as well as YDPIU weekly meetings and joint meetings with PMIC. Particularly the following issues were repeatedly discussed:

a. EIA (including EMPs) instead of IEE

After discussion during the meeting in YM on May 2013 the decision was made to have two EIA instead of IEE for category B project. The respective decision was made based on the reasons mentioned in point 7.

b. archaeological issues

Series of meetings took place to discuss the archaeological issues of the project. The respective decision was made based on the reasons mentioned in the points 15 and 16.

F. Public Consultation and Complaints

20. Public consultation devoted to the discussion of environmental impacts of the Project was held on 19 March 2010 as a part of preparation of IEE according to ADB Safeguard Policy Statement (2009).

21. During the reporting period of January-June 2013 no public consultation was conducted and no complaints were registered. The public consultation will be held on in the scope of the environmental expertise procedure according to the Armenian legislation after EIA reports are finalized. The tentative dates for the public consultations are scheduled: for the Tender 1 in August 2013, for Tender 2 in October 2013.

G. Awareness Raising

22. No awareness raising program is implemented during the reporting period. An awareness raising program will be developed to carry out a series of trainings for YDPIU, the YM environmental department staff, as well as other interested parties on Environmental Safeguards of ADB Safeguard Policy Statement (2009) and Armenian environmental and archaeological legislation as needed.

III. Environmental Monitoring

H. Environmental Monitoring Program

23. No environmental monitoring program is developed and implemented during the reporting period. Also no on-site monitoring was needed since no construction activities were implemented during the reporting period.

24. The monitoring program will be developed with the construction contractor as a part of contractor's EMP prior to the start of construction activities and will include:

- (1) Monitoring scheme with indication of all monitoring functions of responsible units
- (2) Check list for monitoring of Project construction activities
- (3) Monitoring site visits to check compliance of Project activities with EMP requirements and ADB Safeguards

(4) Regular reports on monitoring visits

25. The Program is subject to amendments and update upon the need during the implementation of the Project.

I. Non-compliance Notices

26. N/A for the reporting period

J. Corrective Action Plans

27. N/A for the reporting period

IV. Findings and Recommendations

28. Under the Project two separate EIA reports for Tender 1 and Tender 2 will be developed instead of an IEE report. According to ADB Safeguard Policy Statement (2009) YDPIU assumed that the EIA reports prepared for a category B project could be considered as an equivalent process. Since ESs find that more detailed assessment is needed and proper mitigation measures are to be envisaged in the EMP as well as the reports should undergo the procedure of environmental expertise for the positive conclusion of the MNP of the RA according to Armenian legislation YDPIU will submit EIA reports instead of IEE to ADB (agreed with ADB).