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Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 03-May-2025 | Report No: PIDIA00902

Public Disclosure Authorized

BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Project Beneficiary(ies)	Region	Operation ID	Operation Name
Malawi	EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA	P500625	Resilient and Strategic Transport Operational Enhancement Project in Malawi
Financing Instrument	**Estimated Appraisal Date**	**Estimated Approval Date**	**Practice Area (Lead)**
Investment Project Financing (IPF)	05-May-2025	17-Jul-2025	Transport
Borrower(s)	**Implementing Agency**		
Ministry of Finance	Roads Authority, Ministry of Transport and Public Works		

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Malawi Resilient and Strategic Transport Operational Enhancement Project (RESTORE) aims to provide safe and climate-resilient transport connectivity in the Lower Shire.

Components

Climate-resilient and Safe Transport Infrastructure Improvement
Climate-resilient Transport Asset Management
Project Management
Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

Maximizing Finance for Development

Is this an MFD-Enabling Project (MFD-EP)?	No
Is this project Private Capital Enabling (PCE)?	Yes

SUMMARY

Total Operation Cost	**100.00**
Total Financing	**100.00**

of which IBRD/IDA	**100.00**
Financing Gap	**0.00**

DETAILS

World Bank Group Financing

International Development Association (IDA)	100.00
IDA Grant	100.00

Environmental And Social Risk Classification

Substantial

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. **Malawi faces several challenges that impede sustained economic growth.** Between 2010 to 2023 the compound annual GDP per capita growth averaged less than 1 percent, and poverty remained persistently high (about 70 percent). A combination of factors contributes to the low levels of economic growth and social wellbeing such as heavy dependency on natural resources, low productivity rainfed agriculture, weak institutions and governance systems, and high transportation costs due to its landlocked position and severe infrastructure deficits.[1]
2. **Malawi is highly vulnerable to climate change.** Since 2010, the country has faced several climate-related disasters, including floods, storms, and droughts. The 2022-2023 climate shocks caused significant damage, food insecurity[2], economic losses, and isolated communities where bridges/road sections were washed away. Malawi is projected to experience more frequent extreme weather events, potentially leading to up to 20 percent annual GDP losses and pushing an additional 4 million people into poverty by 2040 if no action is taken.[3]

[1] World Bank Malawi CCDR Report (2022)
[2] World Food Program (2023)
[3] World Bank Malawi CCDR Report (2022)

3. **Malawi needs climate-resilient transport to drive economic growth and improve welfare**, given the rapidly growing population[4] and high unemployment. Malawi has tremendous growth opportunities with the "ATM" sectors (Agricultural, Tourism and Mining)", this potential can only be unlocked with climate resilient transport connectivity. Also, the country is marked by a large informal sector and significant gender disparities in the labor market. Investing in resilient transport can assist unlocking job opportunities (direct and indirect job and access to jobs) and influence employment decisions.[5] Studies show that improved transport access eliminates mobility barriers, allowing people to explore job opportunities over a larger area, and where transport is designed with women's needs in mind, can increase women in employment, leading to higher incomes and poverty reduction.

4. **The Lower Shire, Malawi's food basket region, has poor and limited road connectivity**. The region has one main road, the M1, and two feeder roads, S152 and S151. The S152 road links the region's most populous area to the M1, while the S151 road connects S152 to M1 near the border with Mozambique. S136 connecting Chikwawa the sugar production hub with Mwanza in Tanzania and also provides access to Majete game reserve. These roads, built decades ago, are in a state of disrepair. Road safety is also a concern along these roads, largely due to settlement patterns and markets located near the roads.

5. **This project aims to upgrade the M1 road and priority sections of the S152 road to a safe and climate-resilient standard,** ensuring year-round connectivity to job opportunities and essential social services. It also supports road safety in the region through training, community sensitization, and integrating safety features in road and market improvements. In addition, the project aims to enhance employment opportunities. At project level, it prioritizes local hiring in construction and improves accessibility to better jobs. At the national level, training and internship programs on climate resilient transport asset management will be offered to various stakeholders, with a focus on women.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

6. **The transport sector in Malawi is underdeveloped**. Malawi being landlocked, requires a good transport network to access domestic and international markets. However, the country's infrastructure gap is substantial, ranking 129 out of 140 countries in the 2019 Global Competitiveness Index, and 97 out of 160 in the Logistics Performance Index (2018).

7. **In Malawi, roads are the primary mode of transportation and are vulnerable to climate shocks.** Roads transport 99 percent of passengers, 70 percent of domestic freight, and 90 percent of international freight. However, only 17 percent of the 25,000km classified roads are paved, of which only a third are in good condition. Also, 17 precent (4,350km) of the roads are at risk of floods, of which 83 percent are likely to be disrupted.[6] Cyclone Freddy in 2023 highlighted the vulnerability of infrastructure to climate change, with the transport sector suffering the most damage, 62 percent of total infrastructure losses.[7] The vulnerability of road network could be attributed to the lack of maintenance of the network. For example, the 2016/17 budget allocation for road maintenance was US$ 29 million (US$ 18 million for national roads and US$ 11 million for Urban roads), adding an additional road maintenance resource of US$ 33 million from fuel levy, this still fa short of maintenance needs averaging at US$ 222 million per year. Without actions taken, climate-related damage to roads and bridges can result in annual GDP losses of as high as 12 percent in Malawi.[8]

8. **The M1 corridor is critical for Malawi's international trade, but its condition has been deteriorating.** The 3,900km North-South Corridor connecting Dar-es-Salaam to Durban passes through Malawi as the 1,145km M1 corridor. The

[4] Projected to double by 2038 (from 20.4 million in 2022) and with over 80 percent of the population living in rural areas.
[5] World Bank Report: Employment, Wages, and Gender: The Role of Efficient and Reliable Transportation in AFE (2024, unpublished)
[6] Malawi's Country Climate Development Report (CCDR, 2022),
[7] Malawi 2023 Tropical Cyclone Freddy Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (2023).
[8] Malawi's Country Climate Development Report (CCDR, 2022)

M1 road is Malawi's transport backbone, crucial for local and international connectivity. However, lack of consistent maintenance and exposure to extreme weather events have led to its deterioration.

9. **The M1 road connects the Lower Shire to markets and is vulnerable to floods and landslides.** More than half a million people reside in the Lower Shire areas adjacent to the river, hence, are exposed to various climate risks including hydrometric shocks.[9] The improvement of roads in the region will promote agriculture productivity and provide safe and reliable access to several tourist destinations such as the Majete Wildlife Reserve, Lengwe National Park, Mwabvi Game Reserve, and the Elephant marsh.

10. **The S152 road is the main feeder road connecting communities to markets and services.** Located at the foot of the mountain, S152 is the only route connecting the farming communities to M1. This road is in poor condition, passable at low speeds (under 20 km/h) in the dry season, making the 60 km journey to M1 3 hours long. The road is impassable during the rainy season. Deforestation exacerbates this as it increases the intensity of surface water flows from upstream.

11. **Road safety is a major concern in Malawi.** Malawi's road accident statistics are among the highest globally. The road traffic mortality is about 31 persons per 100,000 population, with road injuries being the fifth leading cause of loss of disability-adjusted life years (cite WHO). Road crash deaths and injuries cost Malawi about 10.8 percent of GDP yearly. In 2021, the Directorate of Road Traffic and Safety Services (DRTSS) reported a total of 1,226 fatal road traffic crashes, with 25 percent on the M1 road (Lilongwe-Blantyre section). Informal roadside markets are also a road safety risk. Vendors encroach roadways which in turn create hazards for both motorists and pedestrians. This situation is worsened by the absence of pedestrian walkways and inadequate enforcement of traffic regulations.

12. **There are gender gaps in the transport sector in terms of employment and mobility.** According to data from International Labor Organization, of the people employed in the transport and the construction sectors, 6.5 percent and 21 percent are women, respectively.[10] A World Bank-led analytical work[11] identified barriers that women face to be employed in the road transport sector at the different stages of the career cycle: Barriers exist at the phases of attraction (e.g., gender disparities in access to education, informational failures, institutional failures and concerns over university/workplace environment), selection (e.g. gender bias in hiring, lack of access to productive inputs, concerns over work-life balance, low quality of jobs, and husband's discouragement), and retention and realization (e.g., difficult workplace environment, work-family challenges and lack of opportunities for promotion and continuous learning). There is already a gender gap, with only 35 percent of those enrolled in science at the University of Malawi being women. Furthermore, when it comes to professional engineering registration, only 5.1 percent are women of the people registered with the Malawi Registration Board. Barriers such as lack of financial resources, lack of mentors, balancing family and work responsibilities, lack of motivation, **limited** networking opportunities, and lack of clarity about career paths and opportunities[12] limit the number of women registering in the Malawi Engineering Institution which is a requirement for them to practice the engineering profession.[13]

13. In addition, qualitative evidence shows that women's time poverty, remoteness, safety concerns, and the necessity of a long walk or journey to services and opportunities, may similarly prevent women's timely access to health care, markets and economic opportunities. In Malawi, gender gaps in the transport sector impact women more. Women make up nearly three-quarters of fresh food traders but face economic disparities in infrastructure, resources, and

[9] Caruso and Sosa, 2022: Poverty Persistence in Malawi: Climate Shocks, Low Agricultural Productivity and Slow Structural Transformation. Malawi Poverty Assessment. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

[10] ILOSTAT. (2024): https://rshiny.ilo.org/dataexplorer13/?lang=en

[11] https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/976371556890275822/pdf/Making-Inroads-for-Women-A-Qualitative-Study-on-Constraints-and-Opportunities-of-Women-s-Equal-Participation-in-the-Roads-Sector-in-Malawi.pdf

[12] Interview with the Malawi Acting Chair for the Women's Chapter of Engineers within the Malawi Engineering Institution.

[13] To register to the MEI, engineers have to pay an annual fee, have three years of experience after graduation, and a mentor assigned for guidance and completion of two reports demonstrating understanding of the engineering principals and technical knowledge.

post-harvest management. Poor road networks increase transport costs and reduce the quality of goods. Lack of storage leads to post-harvest losses, reducing women's income and control over produce. Public safety and lack of sanitation facilities also affect their health and product quality.

14. **In Malawi, government agencies overseeing road development face significant capacity constraints and inadequate funding.** The Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MoTPW) is responsible for sectoral policy and strategy formulation. The Roads Authority (RA) manages public road construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation. The Roads Fund Administration (RFA) implements the annual road sector budget and reports to the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (MoFEPD). The Directorate of Road Traffic and Safety Services (DRTSS) regulates road passenger transport and safety. These institutions face key challenges, including limited data management capabilities, capacity constraints, and funding shortages. Overall, there is a shortage of skilled engineers and planners. The road inventory database and the design standards are outdated with some of them dated 2-3 decades ago hence need urgent updating.[14]

15. **The Government of Malawi prioritizes climate change response, but implementation is lagging.** The National Transport Master Plan (2017- 2037) outlines actions for climate change management and disaster risk in the transport sector and estimates US$437 million to US$1.75 billion as the needed investment. Malawi's Vision 2063 lists quick-win interventions for the road sector with targets including 50 percent of roads paved by 2030, systematic road maintenance, and enforcing high technical standards for better infrastructure quality. However, implementation of plans above is hindered by policy, financing, and capacity challenges.

16. **The proposed Resilient and Strategic Transport Operational Enhancement Project (RESTORE) addresses climate resilient transport challenges both downstream and upstream.** Downstream, the project will improve the southern section of M1 in Lower Shire and priority sections of S152 to be safe and climate-resilient while supporting the improvement of strategic markets along M1. Upstream, the project will strengthen institutional and sector capacity on climate resilient transport management. Training will be provided to enhance climate resilience skills of transport professionals and young professionals, with a special focus on gender. In collaboration with the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA), a systematic capacity building program will be developed.

17. **The project complements existing sector engagement.** The Government of Malawi has adopted a phased investment approach to in the M1 upgrading due to funding constraints. Upgrading the southern section of M1 under the project complements ongoing improvements in the northern and central sections supported by the World Bank, European Investment Bank (EIB), African Development Bank (AfDB), European Union (EU), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the Chinese government. This project also complements the World Bank's resilience initiatives (analytical, policy, investment in other sectors) in Malawi such as the Regional Climate Resilience Program for AFE SOP (RCRP-2, P181308), Malawi Resilience and Disaster Risk Management Project (MRDRMP, P161392), the Shire Valley Transformation Project (SVTR, P158805), the First Malawi Growth and Resilience DPO with a Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option (P175072), and the P-ASA Developing Climate Resilient Infrastructure Systems in AFE (P500630).

18. **The project operationalizes recommendations of the 2021 Nationally Determined Contributions, transport InfraSAP (2022) and the CCDR (2022).** Key recommendations from these documents include (i) integrating climate vulnerability assessments in transport projects; (ii) developing a road asset management system; (iii) assessing Malawi's road and bridge infrastructure inventory and condition; and (iv) adapting technical and design standards to Malawi's climate context. The project incorporates all these recommendations in its design (See components section).

19. **The project supports achievement of objectives in the World Bank's Country Partnership Framework for Malawi (FY21-25)** under focus area two, objective 2.1 of supporting Medium and Small Enterprises' access to finance and

[14] Structural design standards used are SATCC Design for Road Bridges and Culverts, which was released in September 1998 and BS5400 code released in 1988 while geometric design standards are dated 2020 but it's urban road design and NMT guidelines are not sufficient, and it is lacking a standardized method of traffic count.

services and expanding markets during COVID-19 and beyond; and objective 2.2 of increasing resilience in urban and rural hotspots. The rehabilitation of M1 will strengthen community resilience as monitored through the World Bank Corporate Scorecard indicator, "connected communities" and the "number of people benefiting from climate-resilient infrastructure" and the CPF indicators. The project is also relevant to the cross-cutting issues of women's empowerment as rehabilitation of M1 and markets along the road will consider women needs.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

The project aims to provide safe and climate-resilient transport connectivity in the Lower Shire.

Key Results

20. **The project is designed to offer a comprehensive approach to tackling some of the most pressing challenges in the Lower Shire.** In this region, roads become impassable in the rainy season, disconnecting communities from social services and economic opportunities for prolonged periods. Poor road conditions also inflate transport costs, lowering agricultural productivity and incomes, perpetuating entrenched poverty. Road safety interventions are also lacking, resulting in increasing road crashes. To overcome the above, the project is applying a holistic approach to mainstream climate resilience in the transport sector and improve road safety. At the project level, a detailed climate vulnerability assessment is completed to identify road sections vulnerable to climate shocks (floods, sedimentation, etc.), to ensure the application of appropriate adaptation interventions. This will be complemented by a road safety assessment of project roads and targeted market areas along M1. At the national level, the project will support the development of a climate resilient transport asset management system, including institutional and sectoral capacity building to ensure that climate resilience is mainstreamed throughout the lifecycle of transport asset management.

21. **Overall, the project is expected to contribute to food security and growth through the delivery of a broad spectrum of benefits** such as lower transportation costs, high agricultural productivity, job creation, increased access to markets, and economic opportunities leading to increased incomes and poverty reduction

22. **The PDO level indicators are:**
    a. Inferred beneficiaries of improved access to sustainable transport infrastructure and services (Number of people)
        i. Inferred beneficiaries of improved access to sustainable transport infrastructure and services - Youth (Number of people).[15]
        ii. Inferred beneficiaries that benefit from improved access to sustainable transport infrastructure and services - Female (Number of people).
    b. Travel time of local communities to markets using the project roads
    c. Fatality rate along the M1 project section (rate as measured by number of fatalities/road crashes)

23. **The intermediate indicators are:**
    a. Project road improved with climate resilient and safe features (kilometers).
    b. Markets improved along M1 (Number).
    c. Percentage of improved market storage facilities allocated to female vendors.

[15] World Bank Databank Glossary: People aged between 15 to 24

d. Number of beneficiaries employed (Number of people)
    i. Number of direct jobs created from the rehabilitation of M1 and S152, and improvement of markets - Female (Number)
e. Number of stakeholders trained on climate-resilient road asset management practices(Number)
    i. Number of stakeholders trained on climate-resilient road asset management practices- Female (Number)
f. Number of young engineers trained on climate resilient transport sector development (Number)
    i. Number of young engineers trained on climate resilient transport sector development - Female (Number)
    ii. Percentage of women from internship programs registered in the engineering registration board.

g. Road Asset Management System functional (Y/N).

D. Project Description

24. The project will focus on (i) the rehabilitation of S152 and the upgrade of M1 in the Lower Shire including improving selected markets on M1; and (ii) the establishment of the climate-resilient road asset management system including strengthening the institutional capacity. At project preparation stage, a detailed vulnerability assessment (VA) of both M1 and S152 was conducted to examine the road's susceptibility to climate hazards of floods and landslides (sedimentation) to identify critical points of failure, based on which detailed adaptation measures have been recommended. In parallel, a road safety assessment was carried out, based on which road safety interventions were proposed. Overall, the project encompasses 5 primary climate resilience interventions on the project roads: (i) road repaving, (ii) reconstruction of the most vulnerable bridges and repair the rest, (iii) increasing the quantity and size of culverts and pipes, (iv) sedimentation removal and river training, and, (v) nature-based solutions (NBS).

25. **Component 1: Resilient and Safe Transport Infrastructure Improvement (estimated cost: US$85 million).** Activities in this component involve upgrading M1, S152, markets improvement along M1, road safety interventions in project roads and project areas, and conducting feasibility studies for S136 and S151 .

26. **Component 2: Climate Resilient Transport Asset Management (cost US$10 million).** Activities in this component focus on enhancing road asset management practice and procedure and building the capacity of the sector on climate resilient road transport asset management. The Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) is providing technical assistance (TA) to support the preparation of this component.

a) **Component 3: Project Management (estimated cost US$5 million).** This component will support project implementation by establishing and operating a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) under RA in collaboration with the MoTPW and RFA**.** A PPA was established to finance the hiring of dedicated specialists for the project preparation who will continue to support project implementation including procurement, financial management and safeguards. In addition, the PIU office equipment needed for project preparation were also financed by the PPA. At implementation stage, this component will continue to support: The PIU office rental and equipment, PIU staff, Daily project implementation and Project monitoring and evaluation**.**

27. **Component 4: Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) (US$0 million)**. The CERC is designed to mitigate situations of urgent need or capacity constraints and allows for the rapid reallocation of funding in the event of a natural disaster or crisis that has caused, or is likely to imminently cause, a major adverse economic and/or social impact. Activation of the CERC (and financing to be provided) will require the World Bank's no-objection upon: (a) declaration of an emergency by the GoM; (b) a request letter for CERC activation and the evidence required to determine the eligibility of the emergency as defined in the CERC Manual; (c) an Emergency Action Plan, including the emergency expenditures to be financed; and (d) meeting the environmental and social requirements as agreed in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan and CERC Manual.

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Area OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The project proposes to rehabilitate an existing road along an existing path (which is not as complex as a greenfield project) and it has a large to medium scale (100 km along the existing M1 road and additional 100 km split into two existing feeder roads).Environmentally, the project will have some significant risks and impacts mainly related to the construction phase including (i) potential impacts to the biodiversity given the proximity of protected areas, (ii) occupational health and safety risks especially for rehabilitation and construction of bridges, (iii) impacts from quarries and rock disposal. In addition, during the operational phase the key risks are related to (iv) biodiversity, (v) road safety, (vi) flooding and landslides. The project locations are not crossing with protected areas, although some sections are located in their proximity. In particular, the Chikwawa – Chapananga feeder road passes across the buffer zone of Majete Wildlife Reserve, which is fully fenced, and it will need a Biodiversity Management Plan to mitigate biodiversity impacts. The expected risks and impacts are mostly temporary, predictable and reversible, which mitigation measures include known and reliable mechanisms to prevent or minimize. A Scoping report was developed to define the ESIA scope, analyze the key risks and outline possible mitigations as well as describing the initial screening and analysis of alternatives at initial stages of project design including considerations to avoid significant impacts whenever practicable. Risks and impacts will be assessed through the development of an ESIA and mitigated through an ESMP, to be developed in line with ESF requirements, national laws and regulatons and relevant WB EHS Guidelines (including the General EHS Guidelines, relevant elements of and EHS Guidelines for Toll Roads and EHS Guidelines for Construction Materials Extraction). On the social front, the project is expected to cause involuntary displacement of households with structures near the road, and economic displacement of traders or vendors along the road, all of which would need to be thoroughly assessed by a RAP and get compensated at full replacement cost, accordingly. This will also include utilities (e.g. water and powerlines) to be relocated from the wayleave. Adequate stakeholder consultations and engagement will be carried out and grievance mechanism established at national, district and community levels to handle and resolve any issues, including those related to RAP and workers, as and when they occur. Furthermore, construction projects of this nature attract migrant workers, which increases the risk of transmission of communicable diseases in the area, but also safety related risks due to civil works. The ESMP will have to clearly outline measures for mitigating these risks. Additional risks relate to labour and working conditions, and SEA/SH, for which Labour Management Procedures (LMP) and SEA/SH Action Plan will be prepared, respectively.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

28. The Republic of Malawi represented by the Ministry of Finance bears the overall responsibility of the borrower for this project. The RA and MoTPW will be responsible for project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Specifically, RA will focus on the implementation of component one activities while MoTPW will focus on setting up a climate resilient transport assets management system and overall project monitoring and evaluation, and RFA is responsible for project finance management.

29. **The Project Implementation Unit (PIU):** The PIU has already been established during project preparation using the PPA resources. The PIU is leading the project preparation and will manage daily implementation of the project after the project is approved. The recruitment of PIU specialists is underway. These specialists cover all aspects of project implementation. The PIU will be led by a full-time project coordinator (PC) from RA and housed in RA, the PC will be the focal point of connecting the PIU with all key stakeholders and the PIU will work closely with relevant departments in RA, MoTPW and RFA.

30. **The Project Steering Committee (PSC):** The Project Steering Committee has been established to provide strategic oversight on the project. The PSC is composed of the secretaries for the MoTPW, the Treasury, the Department of Economic Planning and Development-Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Local Government Unity and Culture, Natural Resources and Climate Change, Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, the Commissioner of Disaster Management Affairs and the RA and RFA. PSC will hold meetings quarterly, with additional ad hoc meetings as required.

31. **Project Technical Committee (PTC):** The PTC was already established under the PSC to monitor project impact and ensure dialogue with stakeholders. The PTC will report to the PSC and consists of the Project Coordinator, the Director of Major Projects at RA, the Director of Planning at RA, the Head of Finance at RFA, the Director of Transport Policy and Planning at RA, the Director of Roads in the MoTPW (Chairperson), the Director of Road Traffic and Safety Services, the Director for Debt and Aid Management, the Director of Gender Affairs; the Director of Development Planning Division in MOFEA; the Director of Climate Change, Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change; the Director of Water Resources in MOW&S; the Director of Disaster Preparedness; the Director of Rural Development; the Director of Lands; the Director of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change; and the Director of Economic Planning and Development.

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APPROVAL

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