

BRI in Central Asia: Rail and Road Connectivity Projects

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ABSTRACT

This data article shows that most of the rail and road projects in which the Chinese are involved in Central Asia are implemented within the territories of individual countries and thus are still poorly linked with each other. However, these internal transport routes are expected to eventually form the basis of a new cross-regional network within the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Smaller scale road construction and rehabilitation projects create linkages connecting China across Central Asia to South Asia, Turkey, Europe, and the Middle East.

Keywords: BRI, rail and road infrastructure, China, Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Background and data collection

The purpose of BRI in Central Asia is to open trade routes for China across its vast continental hinterland. This data article shows how China is making multi-billion-dollar investments in rail and road links to and across Central Asia within the following two corridors:

- The New Eurasia Land Bridge Economic Corridor, linking China with Europe via Kazakhstan.
- The China–Central Asia–West Asia Economic Corridor, which links Xinjiang with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, bypassing Russia.

This data article provides a detailed description of both the bilateral Chinese and BRI projects in Central Asia. Data collection was carried out between September 2018 and January 2019 by one

CADGAT researcher from each Central Asian country. Data were harvested from official statistics, local and international media news, government press releases, interviews and reports. These sources formed the basis for the collection of news clippings about BRI projects in the main table below.

The results do not constitute an exhaustive list of Chinese projects in the region, but they give an overview of the situation. These data are also available in a unified Excel database at the following address:

<http://osce-academy.net/en/research/cadgat/>

Key findings

In an attempt to mobilize support from the Central Asian states in the BRI area, Beijing is trying to align its initiatives with their development strategies.

Infrastructure projects vary greatly in terms of cost, ranging from a few million to several billion US dollars. Construction is being carried out mainly by Chinese contractors. One of Beijing's goals is to find external markets for Chinese companies that are active in construction and infrastructure development.

Most of the projects are limited to the territories of individual countries. Yet, they are all elements of the broader road and railroad plans and fit with BRI.

Almost all the rail and road infrastructure investments are long-term projects. Even though they were launched before BRI was officially announced in 2013, they are being implemented during the BRI period (i.e. from 2013 onwards).

implementation is signed by three or more parties, including the Chinese or Central Asian governments, multilateral financial institutions (AIIB, China Development Bank, Export-Import Bank of China or New Silk Road Fund) and private enterprises.

Number of rail and road projects and total funding by country

	Projects	Total funding (mln USD)
Tajikistan	16	4 515.9
Kazakhstan	14	14 539.3
Kyrgyzstan	11	1 773.04
Turkmenistan	5	1 402.5
Uzbekistan	5	1 269

Definitions

Financing – Sources of funding for each project are identified and presented.

Commercial interests – A project is classified as “commercial”, if the parties promoting it primarily pursue commercial goals.

Strategic interests – A project is classified as “strategic”, if it fits one of the broader categories, particularly strengthening connectivity.

Connection to BRI – If a project is announced publicly as part of BRI, then it is classified as a “BRI project”.

Local project – A project is classified as “local”, if the infrastructure or facility constructed and services provided, are limited to a specific country.

Regional project – A project is classified as “regional”, if it is part of the bigger regional initiative, which includes more than one country.

Bilateral – A project is classified as “bilateral”, if an agreement for project implementation is signed by the Chinese government or a Chinese company, as one party, and one of the Central Asian governments or companies as the other.

Multilateral – A project is classified as “multilateral”, if an agreement for project

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
TAJIKISTAN					
Planned	Silk Road Economic Belt railway, Tajikistan section.	Information not available.	Strategic. Branded as a BRI project.	Regional	Multilateral
Planned	Railway connecting Xinjiang with the Persian Gulf: Vakhdat station east of Dushanbe–Karomik at the Tajik–Kyrgyz border.	Estimated cost of the project: 2.5 bln USD.	Strategic: Railway from Xinjiang to the Persian Gulf would require the construction of a rather long section through Tajikistan to connect the Vakhdat station east of Dushanbe with Karomik at the Tajik–Kyrgyz border. One of the main criticisms of this project is the high cost of the railway network connecting Xinjiang with the Persian Gulf Railway network. Planned: Tajikistan, as well as other Central Asian countries, is a transit territory. Branded as a BRI project.	Regional	Multilateral
Planned	Second phase of project for construction and renovation of Kalai Khumb-Khorog section of automobile road Dushanbe-Khorugh-Kulma-China	Estimated total cost of the project: 568 mln USD to rehabilitate a 395-km section of this highway.	Strategic: The Ministry of Transport of Tajikistan is considering over 30 road projects, the implementation of which will cost more than 2.7 billion USD. The most expensive project is the rehabilitation of Khorog-Kulma section of Dushanbe-Kulma highway. Due to its significance for connecting regions, once implemented this project will most likely be labelled as BRI. Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation and the Ministry of Transport.	Regional	Bilateral
Planned	Construction of the railway China - Kyrgyzstan: Tajikistan – Afghanistan–Iran (Karamyk–Vakhdat–Kurgan Tyube–Kalkhazabad–Nizhny Pyanj).	Information not available.	Strategic: Once constructed, it will be an important section of the Silk Road Economic Belt connecting China with Central Asian and South Asian countries. Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation and the Ministry of Transport.	Regional	Multilateral

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2016–2020	Dushanbe-Uzbekistan Border Road Improvement Project.	Total cost of the project: 105.9 mln USD. Source of financing: • Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) – 27.5 mln USD; • European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) – 62.5 mln USD.	Strategic: The project will rehabilitate a 5-km section of the road within Dushanbe, which is part of a stretch of road connecting Dushanbe to the border with Uzbekistan. The project targets the last missing section of the Asian Highway Network; the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program (CAREC) Corridor 3 was built 30 years ago and is in poor condition. In June 2016, the EBRD and the recently established AIIB agreed to divide the costs to renovate the road. Branded as a BRI project. This is one of the first projects to receive funding from one of the newly established financial institutions that are intended to serve the BRI's strategic goals: the AIIB.	Regional	Multilateral
2016–2020	Second Phase of the Central Asia Road Links Program (CARs-2).	Total cost of the project: 54.0 mln USD. Source of financing: • Tajikistan – 9 mln USD; • International Development Association (IDA) (World Bank) – 38.25 mln USD; • IDA (World Bank) – 6.75 mln USD.	Strategic: This project aims to increase transport connectivity between Tajikistan and neighbouring countries and support improvements in road operations. The sections of road to be financed under CARs-2 prioritize connectivity between Sugd Oblast in Tajikistan with Batken and Osh Oblasts in Kyrgyzstan and Ferghana Oblast in Uzbekistan. Announced as a BRI project. Contractor: China Railway Group.	Regional	Multilateral
2014–2016	Dushanbe–Kurgantube railway, Vahdat–Yovon section.	Total cost of the project: 72.0 mln USD. Source of financing: • The Export-Import (Exim) Bank of China – 69 mln USD; • Tajikistan – 3 mln USD.	Strategic: This link, which is a vital connection between the northern and southern railway networks in Tajikistan, was financed by the Exim Bank of China. The project involves the construction of a railway along with five bridges and three tunnels. The route aims at improving bulk cargo transport capacity from the south of Dushanbe to the capital. The Vahdat–Yovon railway, which links Tajikistan's centre to the southern provinces of Khatlon and enhance the overall transportation capacity of the country, was financed by concessional loans provided by the Chinese government. Branded as a BRI project. Media and some officials highlighted that this new rail link is one of the first projects under the BRI in Tajikistan. Contractor: China Railway No. 19 Bureau Group Co., Ltd.	Local	Bilateral
August 2014–July 2015	Vanj River Bridge Project.	Information not available.	Strategic: The 145-meter bridge across Tajikistan's Vanj River is a key link along the Tajikistan–China Highway. This project promotes trade contacts between China and Tajikistan and enhances interconnectivity in Central Asia. Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation.	Local	Bilateral

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2013	Baldzhuvan–Sari Khosor–Guldara road infrastructure.	Total cost of the project: 58 mln USD.	Commercial: China has partnered with Tajik authorities on the construction of the 55-km-long Baldzhuvan–Sari Khosor–Guldara road. The people of Baljuvan district are mainly engaged in agriculture. Due to the lack of convenient roads to the Kulob, Kurgan-Tube and Dushanbe markets, the majority of the agricultural products they produce are consumed locally or thrown away. Once construction of the road is completed, local fruit and vegetables can be transported to markets that will allow for the economic and living standards of the villagers to improve. Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation.	Local	Bilateral
2013–2019	Tajikistan has received a number of smaller Chinese credits and investments into the construction of road and canal systems in the towns of Qurghonteppa and Kulob.	Information not available.	Commercial. Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation.	Local	Bilateral
2013–2018	Pakistan access to Tajikistan from Gilgit-Baltistan via China using the Karakorum Highway.	Information not available.	Strategic: The development of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the larger BRI provides Pakistan access to Tajikistan from Gilgit-Baltistan via China using the Karakorum Highway. Pakistan is able to bypass Afghanistan to access Tajikistan. This also implies that Tajikistan is Pakistan’s nearest Central Asian neighbour and Pakistan’s gateway to Central Asia. It also highlights importance of Gilgit-Baltistan in ensuring Pakistan’s linkages with China and Central Asia, which is essential for the geo-economic future of Pakistan. Pakistan and Tajikistan share many historical, religious and cultural linkages besides geographical proximity. Branded as a BRI project. Part of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the larger BRI.	Regional	Multilateral

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2012–2016	Ayni–Uzbekistan Border Road Improvement Project.	Total cost of the project: 115.3 mln USD. Source of financing: • Asian Development Bank (ADB) – 100 mln USD; • OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) – 14 mln USD; • Tajikistan – 22 mln USD.	Strategic: The project calls for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of approximately 113 km of road between Ayni–Panjakent and the border with Uzbekistan, the improvement of road safety, the upgrading of Sarazm border post infrastructure and community development, including the improvement of feeder roads and public facilities and the provision of training for local communities. The route will improve north-south connectivity between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, aid economic development in the Sughd province, and improve connectivity between Tajikistan’s regions. Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor: Xinjiang Beixin Road and Bridge Construction Co., Ltd.	Regional	Multilateral
2011–2015	Dushanbe–Uzbekistan Border Improvement Project.	Total cost of the project: 186.0 mln USD. Source of financing: • ADB – 120 mln USD; • Tajikistan – 39 mln USD; • AIIB – 27.5 mln USD; • EBRD – 62.5 mln USD.	Strategic: The project covers about 57 km of CAREC Corridor 3 in Rudaki, Gissar, ShakhriNAV and Tursunzade districts. Due to the faster than average growth of traffic on this section and inadequate maintenance, the road cannot cope with the traffic volume. Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor - China Road and Bridge Corporation. Part of the Asian Highway Network.	Regional	Multilateral
August 2009–November 2014	Rehabilitation of the Dushanbe–Kulma–China border, section Dushanbe – Dangara with the construction of Khatlon tunnel	Total cost of the project: 256.3 mln USD. Source of financing: • Exim Bank of China – 243.5 mln USD; • Government of the Republic of Tajikistan – 12.8 mln USD.	Strategic: Total length of the road is 136 km. This project is part of the Dushanbe–Kulma–China road network. The length of the tunnel is 4,450 km. Not branded as a BRI project.	Regional	Bilateral
2006–2013	Rehabilitation of Dushanbe–Chanak (Uzbek border), including construction of the Shahristan and Dusty (Maikhura) tunnels.	Total cost of the project: 295.9 mln USD. Source of financing: • China – 281.1 mln USD; • Tajikistan – 14.8 mln USD.	Strategic: The primary goal of the project is to improve the road infrastructure between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It is now used for trade promotion within the Silk Road Economic Belt. Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation.	Regional	Bilateral

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2006–2013	Rehabilitation of the Dushanbe–Chanak road with the construction of the Shahristan tunnel.	The total cost of the project: 304.5 mln USD. Source of financing: • Exim Bank of China – 289.7 mln USD; • Government of the Republic of Tajikistan – 14.8 mln USD.	Strategic: Total length is 335,9 km. Important for road connectivity inside Tajikistan. In 2010, Tajikistan opened the Dushanbe–Chanak highway, which connects Tajikistan’s capital to Uzbekistan. This 345-km highway was upgraded by Chinese companies thanks to a 296 mln USD loan from Beijing. However, what was regarded as an investment in Tajikistan’s poor infrastructure seemed to become a source of income for the ruling elites. Not branded as a BRI project.	Regional	Bilateral
KAZAKHSTAN					
2018–2021	Reconstruction of the Centre–South corridor of the Astana–Karaganda–Balkhash–Kurdy–Kapshagai–Almaty (Karaganda–Burybaytal) road, Karaganda–Balkhash section.	The total cost of the project: 727 mln USD. Source of financing: • publicly guaranteed loan from Exim Bank of China.	Strategic. Branded as a BRI project under the Nurly Zhol programme.	Local	Bilateral
2017–2022	Karaganda–Balkhash section of the Centre–South road.	Total cost of the project: 852 mln USD. Source of financing: • public loan from AIIB: 852 mln USD.	Strategic. Branded as a BRI project under the Nurly Zhol programme.	Local	Bilateral
2017–2022	Centre–West road.	Total cost of the project: 1.111 bln USD. Source of financing: • public loan from AIIB.	Strategic. Branded as a BRI project under the Nurly Zhol programme.	Local	Bilateral
2017–2020	Reconstruction of the highway Taldykorgan–Kalbatau–Ust–Kamenogorsk; the section kms 287–1073.	Total cost of the project: 796 mln USD. Source of financing: • publicly guaranteed loan from Exim Bank of China.	Strategic. Branded as a BRI project under the Nurly Zhol programme.	Local	Bilateral
2017–2020	Reconstruction of the road Merke–Burybaytal; kms 7–273.	Total cost of the project: 253 mln USD. Source of financing: • publicly guaranteed loan from Exim Bank of China.	Strategic. Branded as a BRI project under the Nurly Zhol programme.	Local	Bilateral

Central Asia Regional Data Review 21 (2019) 1–18.

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2015–2018	Kuryk port in Mangistau region.	Total cost of the project: 280 mln USD. Source of financing: • National Fund of Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan Temir Joly.	Strategic: The port will significantly increase Kazakhstan’s marine transit capacity. Enabling direct reloading from trains and trucks to ferries, the port is expected to stimulate freight shipments to Europe and the Middle East via Azerbaijan and Iran. Branded as a BRI project under the Nurly Zhol programme. However, there is no financing from China.	Local	Bilateral
2015–2019	First phase of construction of the rail system in Astana by a Chinese consortium consisting of 3 companies: China Railway №2 Engineering Group Co., Ltd, Beijing State-Owned Assets Management Co., Ltd. and China Railway Asia–Europe Construction Investment Co., Ltd.	Total cost of the project: 1.887 bln USD. Source of financing: • 80% is financed by Publicly guaranteed loan from Chinese Development Bank. 20% is financed by the consortium.	Strategic: It solves the problem of public transportation in Astana. Although the project is expensive, the Chinese consortium claims that it is highly unlikely that they will get a return on investment anytime soon. Therefore, they claim that this project is more of a public relations move to attract future clients. Branded as a BRI project under the Nurly Zhol programme. The project was launched under the Loan Agreement between Astana LRT JSC and the State Development Bank of China in 2015.	Local	Bilateral
2015–2017	Almaty 1–Shu railway.	Total cost of the project: 110 mln USD. Source of financing: • National Fund of Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan Temir Zholy.	Commercial and strategic: To increase the efficiency of transportation by increasing travelling speed, reducing travel time by 1.5 and increasing freight capacity from 25 mln tonnes to 80 mln tonnes. Branded as a BRI project under the Nurly Zhol programme. However, there is no financing from China.	Local	Bilateral
2014–2017	Aktau port modernization.	Total cost of the project: 121 mln USD. Source of financing: • Loan from the JSC Development Bank of Kazakhstan.	Commercial and strategic: Commercial due to increasing the capacity of the port, which will allow transit to increase through Kazakhstan. Branded as a BRI project under the Nurly Zhol programme; however, there is no funding from China.	Local	Bilateral

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2014–2017	Dry port on the eastern border of Kazakhstan with China “Khorghos East Gate”.	Total cost of the project: 239 mln USD.	<p>Strategic: Coordination of the activities of the Khorghos hub with the Aktau seaport as the main Kazakhstan transport hub on the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA) and North–South international corridors will create an effective route for the movement of goods from the western and central regions of China to Iran, the countries of the Persian Gulf, Turkey and the countries of Europe. This is a strategic project that has great commercial potential. The port was fully financed by the government of Kazakhstan. However, after the project was launched, the Chinese company, Lianyungang Port Holding Group Co. Ltd., bought 49% of the port’s shares.</p> <p>Branded as a BRI project. In the media and in the profile of the project, it is highlighted that the project is well incorporated into BRI.</p>	Local	Bilateral
2013–2014	Kazakhstani terminal in Lianyungang seaport (National company: Kazakhstan Temir Zholy and Lianyungang Port Company Group LLC).	Total cost of the project: 99.3 mln USD.	<p>Strategic: For Kazakhstan, entry to Lianyungang reduces transport time to the Asia-Pacific markets by 3.5 times. Kazakhstan is planning to launch the second terminal in Lianyungang, mainly for the wheat export to Japan and Korea. 49% of shares are held by Kazakhstani KTZ Express and 51% are held by the Lianyungang Port Company Group.</p> <p>Branded as a BRI project. The logistics of a sea terminal in the coastal city of Lianyungang in eastern China is one of the joint Kazakh–Chinese projects that operates under the Nurly Zhol programme.</p>	Local	Bilateral
2012–present	Shalkar–Beineu railway.	Total cost of the project: 1.203 bln USD. Source of financing: • National Fund of Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan Temir Zholy.	<p>Strategic: The main objective of the project is the continuation of the shortest rail route from central Kazakhstan to the Persian Gulf countries, which will create new industries in the region, allow for tariffs for rail transportation to be reduced and reduce transport time of transported goods. The new road will significantly improve the socio-economic development of the Ulytaulgiz, Aral, Shalkar Bayganin and Beineu districts. By launching these lines, the cargo traffic route from the east to the west of the country will become 1,000 km shorter.</p> <p>Branded as a BRI project. The project is part of the national Nurly Zhol programme. However, there is no financing from China.</p>	Local	Bilateral
2012	Arkalyk–Shubarkol railway.	Total cost of the project: 261 mln USD. Source of financing: • National Fund of Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan Temir Zholy.	<p>Commercial: Provides access to the fields in the central part of Kazakhstan, especially to coal deposits in Shubarkol and ore deposits, and shortens the route in a northerly direction by 700 km.</p> <p>Branded as a BRI project. The project is part of the Nurly Zhol programme. However, there is no financing from China.</p>	Local	Bilateral

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2009–2016	East Europe–East China highway.	<p>Total cost of the Kazakhstani part: 6.6 bln USD.</p> <p>Source of financing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16% of the costs were financed from the public budget. The second source will be external loans from international financial institutions in the amount of 3.4 bln USD; • International Bank for Reconstruction and Development – 2.125 bln USD; <p>The third source will be private investment, which covers 32% of the total cost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Bank for Reconstruction and Development – 180 mln USD; • Islamic Development Bank – 398 mln USD; • ADB – 700 mln USD. 	<p>Strategic: Apart from its obvious contribution to international transport connectivity and to a potential burst in international trade (some research has projected that the volume of transit goods will double), the project is of great importance to the Kazakh economy. Significant regional development will occur in five major regions of the country (Aktyubinsk, Kyzylorda, South Kazakhstan, Zhambyl and Almaty), where a total of 7.5 million people live, or almost half of the country's population.</p> <p>Branded as a BRI project.</p>	Regional	Multilateral
KYRGYZSTAN					
Planned	Silk Road Economic Belt Railway, Kyrgyzstan section.	Information not available.	<p>Strategic.</p> <p>Branded as a BRI project.</p>	Regional	Multilateral
20 December 2017, Agreement signed	Development of the road network in Bishkek (2nd phase).	<p>Total cost of the project: 44 mln USD.</p> <p>Source of financing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant from the Government of the People's Republic of China. 	<p>Strategic: The second phase of this project has not yet begun. While only the amount of funding and work has been determined, the timeframe is still unknown. It provides for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of 60 road sections, with a length of about 74 km.</p> <p>Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation.</p>	Local	Bilateral

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2016–2021	Construction of an alternative North-South road, phase 2.	Total cost of the project: 297 mln USD. Source of financing: • Exim Bank of China – 185 mln USD; • The Government of the PRC – 112 mln, USD.	Strategic: An additional uninterrupted transport route will be established between the north and south of the country, which is geographically divided from the existing Bishkek–Osh route by mountain ranges. The connection of this road with the roads of Kazakhstan and Russia in the north and Tajikistan in the south will allow for the creation of a Russia–Kazakhstan–Kyrgyzstan–Tajikistan transit route, bypassing Uzbekistan. Phase 2 includes the 195–291 km section, including a tunnel that is 0.7 km long and two bridges. As of 2018, 59% of the total construction work were completed. Not branded as a BRI project. Exim Bank of China allocated to the project a loan for a period of 20 years at 2% per annum; the Government of the PRC allocated a loan of 112 mln USD for a period of 25 years at 1.5% per annum. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation.	Regional	Bilateral
2016	Development of the road network in Bishkek (phase 1).	Total cost of the project: 70.4 mln USD. Source of financing: • Grant of the Government of the PRC.	Strategic: In the first phase of construction, with the Chinese grant, the repair includes 49 streets totalling 95 km. This project includes the reconstruction and construction of new roads, the renewal of the irrigation network, sidewalks and seven bridges. Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation.	Local	Bilateral
2016	Restoration of highway pavement in Bishkek.	Total cost of the project: 27.5 mln USD. Source of financing: • Grant of the Government of the PRC.	Strategic: Reconstruction of municipal roads provides road safety and a reduction in traffic congestion in Bishkek. Not branded as a BRI project. Currently, Bishkek’s city administration is preparing for a competitive selection among Chinese companies.	Local	Bilateral
2015	Reconstruction of the Issyk-Kul ring road (Balykchy–Tamchy–Cholpon–Ata–Korumdu section).	Total cost of the project: 75 mln USD.	Strategic: The length of the reconstructed section of the road is 104 km. At the moment, the government of Kyrgyzstan has funded only 180 mln KGS, while the contractor carried out work worth 517 mln KGS, investing 337 mln KGS. Now, due to the scandal surrounding the tender, the project is suspended. Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor: LLC Qingdao Road and Bridge Corporation Long Hai.	Local	Bilateral

Central Asia Regional Data Review 21 (2019) 1–18.

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2015–2018	Reconstruction and rehabilitation of municipal roads in Bishkek.	Total cost of the project: 24 mln USD. Source of financing: • Grant of the Government of the PRC.	Strategic: This project includes the reconstruction of roads, the renewal of the irrigation network and sidewalks on 23 streets, totalling 38 km in length. Not branded as a BRI project. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation.	Local	Bilateral
March 2014–November 2019	Construction of an alternative North-South road, phase 1.	Total cost of the project: 399.9 mln USD. Source of financing: • Exim Bank of China.	Strategic: An additional uninterrupted transport route will be established between the north and south of the country, which is geographically separated from the existing Bishkek–Osh route by mountain ranges. The connection of this road with the roads of Kazakhstan and Russia in the north and Tajikistan in the south will allow for the creation of a Russia–Kazakhstan–Kyrgyzstan–Tajikistan route bypassing the Republic of Uzbekistan. Phase 1 includes sections covering kms 183–195 and 291–433, including a tunnel that is 3.8 km long. To date, 66% of the total construction work has been completed. Branded as a BRI project. To the project, Exim Bank of China allocated a loan for a period of 20 years at 2% per annum with a grace period of 11 years. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation.	Regional	Bilateral
2013–2016	Rehabilitation of the Bishkek–Balykchy highway, kms 147–171.	Total cost of the project: 38.37 mln USD. Source of financing: • The Exim Bank of China.	Strategic: The project provides for the rehabilitation of the section from kms 147–171 of the Bishkek–Balykchy highway. A two-layer asphalt–concrete covering and new pipes were laid throughout, and five bridges were repaired and extended. This road connects the Issyk-Kul and Naryn regions with the capital of Kyrgyzstan. Branded as a BRI project. Contractor: China Road and Bridge Corporation.	Regional	Bilateral

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2013–2018	Rehabilitation of the Osh–Batken–Isfana highway.	Total cost of the project: 351.09 mln USD. Source of financing: • Credit – 282.25 mln USD; • Grant – 47.83 mln USD; • Government of Kyrgyzstan – 21.01 mln USD.	Strategic: Total length of the road is 385 km. The given route provides unimpeded transport links between interconnected areas of the border territories of the Batken Oblast of Kyrgyzstan and the enclaves of neighbouring countries located in the territory of Kyrgyzstan. Also, it facilitates transport and economic links for the most remote settlements of the Batken Oblast with regional centres and with the southern capital of the country: the city of Osh. The Osh–Batken–Isfana highway develops the regional economic ties between China, Kyrgyzstan, northern Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Russia, and it also allows transport corridors of Kyrgyzstan to integrate into the international transport network. Branded as a BRI project.	Regional	Multilateral
2010–2015	Rehabilitation of the Bishkek–Naryn–Torugart highway.	Total cost of the project: 445.78 mln USD. Source of financing: • Credit – 360 mln USD; • Grant – 46.3 mln USD; • Government of Kyrgyzstan – 39.48 mln USD.	Strategic: Total length of the road is 539 km. The road connects the three regions of the country (Chui, Naryn and Issyk-Kul) and allows traffic to transit through the country's territories, from the Torugart border point in the south to the Kordai settlement in Kazakhstan in the north. It is the most important of the two main routes linking Kyrgyzstan to China, from where, via the Karakum highway, it provides access to Pakistan and the ports of the Indian Ocean. Branded as a BRI project.	Regional	Multilateral
TURKMENISTAN					
November 2017, Agreement signed	Agreement to increase railway traffic on the China–Kazakhstan–Turkmenistan–Iran (CKTI) route.	Information not available.	Commercial: Increase of the traffic together with the development of a container service, formation of stable container traffic, development of the client and freight base and application of approved tariff rates for a container service along the CKTI will lead to revenues. Not branded as a BRI project.	Regional	Multilateral

Central Asia Regional Data Review 21 (2019) 1–18.

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2016–2017	Transnational railway China–Kazakhstan–Turkmenistan–Iran.	Financed through public institutions (ADB, Islamic Development Bank).	<p>Strategic: The railway aims to increase transport connectivity between Turkmenistan and neighbouring countries, particularly China. It allows for cargo transportation to be sped up by land, because this is the shortest railway to deliver goods from China to the countries of the Persian Gulf.</p> <p>Commercial: Intensive cargo traffic will increase Turkmenistan’s revenues. Test train: February 2016. First train from Changsha to Tehran on 28 December 2017; second train from Yinchuan to Tehran on 29 December 2017; third train from Xi’an to Iran on 30 December 2017.</p> <p>Branded as a BRI project. Media and officials highlighted that this railway is under BRI in Turkmenistan. Contractor: China Railway No. 19 Bureau Group Co., Ltd.</p>	Regional	Multilateral
2013–2015	Delivery of two locomotives to the Farab station in Turkmenistan.	Total cost of the project: 2.5 mln USD.	<p>Strategic: The locomotives serve the Turkmen section of the transnational railway.</p> <p>Commercial: A Chinese company has been paid for the locomotives. Turkmengaz took a loan from the State Development Bank of China to buy the locomotives.</p> <p>Not branded as a BRI project. Contract is awarded to the corporation China CSR in November 2013; locomotives are delivered in August 2015; the contract is paid in 2017.</p>	Local	Bilateral
2012–2014	Construction of high-quality communication systems for the Ashgabat–Bereket–Turkmenbashi railway.	State Development Bank of Turkmenistan.	<p>Strategic: This system will serve the China–Kazakhstan–Turkmenistan–Iran transnational railway.</p> <p>Not branded as a BRI project. Contract with Jiangsu Guotai Litian Enterprises Co., Ltd. signed in June 2012; completion of the work in 2014; payment of the contract in 2014.</p>	Local	Bilateral

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2009–2014	Transnational railway Kazakhstan–Turkmenistan–Iran (eastern line of the Transnational Corridor North–South).	Total cost of the project: 1.4 bln USD. Turkmen section is financed by: • ADB – 350 mln USD; • Islamic Development Bank – 371 mln USD; • Saudi Foundation of Development, Abu-Dhabi Foundation of development, etc.	Strategic: The North–South railway provides transit links between the countries of Northern Europe and Russia with the countries of the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia through Iran. Thus, it reinforces Turkmenistan’s position as a transit and transport hub in the region. Commercial: The traffic is estimated at 35–40 mln tonnes per year. With an average of 13–14 tonnes, the container cargo flow can reach about 1–1.5 mln Twenty Foot Equivalent Unit (TEU) per year. Not branded as a BRI project, but this railway serves as a first stage for the construction of a railway to China. Also, this railway was named the “Silk Road” by Iranian officials.	Regional	Multilateral
UZBEKISTAN					
2017–2021	Construction of the metropolitan ring around Tashkent city (52.1 km).	Total cost of the project: 60.5 mln USD. Source of financing: • Exim Bank of China credit.	Strategic: Presidential decree PP2969 on “The concept of the development of urban passenger transport in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2000–2005” provided for the construction in Tashkent of a new, and fourth, metro line in Sergeli district, where more than 152,000 people live. It was supposed that the laying of a 8-km line, which would pass not only underground but also along the overpass from the crowded part of the Eastern Tashkent Ippodrom (hippodrome) to the Sergeli residential area, with a branch to the existing station Sabir Rakhimov, would involve the Chinese company Citic International Cooperation (CITIC). Construction was to begin in 2004 and be completed at the end of 2018. However, for various reasons, it was postponed. Not branded as a BRI project.	Local	Bilateral
2015–2017	Organisation of production of road-construction equipment and machinery in Tashkent city (100 units total).	Financed by the Chinese XCMG.	Strategic: The Chinese company, XCMG, is one of the largest producers of specialized and road construction machinery. It has branches in more than 140 countries in the world. It entered the Uzbekistan market in the 2000s by becoming the largest shareholder of Khorezm Excavators Factory. It has opened a dedicated assembly line to produce road construction machinery in Tashkent. The number of jobs created and the turnover of the company in Uzbekistan is not reported. Not branded as a BRI project.	Local	Bilateral

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2014–2019	Construction of a network of 46 automobile gas filling compressor stations.	Total cost of the project: 35.0 mln USD. Source of financing: • Chinese Shandong Kerui Petroleum Equipment and South Korean ENK.	Strategic: Contributes to the dependence on imported oil. Chinese company Shandong Kerui Petroleum Equipment and the South Korean company ENK established a joint venture (UTG-Kerui) together with national UzbekTransGas (UTG) in 2014. By the end of 2016, the Uzbek–Chinese joint venture UTG-Kerui had invested 70 mln USD in the construction of a network of gas filling stations in Uzbekistan. The construction of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) filling stations has already begun in five regions of the republic, and the joint venture plans to build 46 CNG filling stations in all regions of the country. Under the terms of the agreement, the joint venture will also operate the stations. The South Korean partner left the consortium due to financial uncertainties in 2016. Not branded as a BRI project.	Local	Multilateral
2013–2019	Construction of the electrified Angren–Pap railroad with electrification of the Pap–Kokand–Andijan section (124.14 km).	Total cost of the project: 1 bln USD. Source of financing: • Fund for Reconstruction and Development of Uzbekistan; • World Bank – 195 mln USD; • Exim Bank of China – 350 mln USD.	Strategic: A new route with a unique tunnel that is one of the longest in the world in a mountainous landscape creates direct transport connection between the centre of the country and its densely populated Eastern Ferghana Valley, halving the commuter time of the previously available railroad connection passing through Tajikistan. It also reduces the traffic from the only intra-country highway, which is extremely vulnerable to rainy and snowy periods. A new intra-country railroad also has high regional importance. It may link the country to China through the shortest terrestrial route. In the opposite direction, it may link Mainland China to the Caspian Sea, with the possibility of reaching the Iranian coast or the European continent. Most importantly, this is the largest ever infrastructure project carried out by the China in Uzbekistan. Branded as a BRI project.	Regional	Multilateral

Central Asia Regional Data Review 21 (2019) 1–18.

Timing	Project	Financing	Project description (commercial vs strategic; connection to BRI)	Local vs regional	Bilateral vs multilateral
2010–2011	Refurbishment of the Guzar–Bukhara–Nukus–Beinaw A-380 highway.	Total cost of the project: 173.5 mln USD. Source of financing: • ADB – 75.3 mln USD; • Government of Uzbekistan – 98.2 mln USD.	<p>Domestic strategic importance: The A-380 highway is the only road connecting the northwest with the central part of the country. The reconstructed section was the worst section of the road in terms of quality.</p> <p>Regional strategic importance: This road connects Western Kazakhstan and Western Russia with Tajikistan, creating an alternative transport corridor to the Southern Kazakhstan route that passes through Chymkent. It also plays a crucial role in connecting Eastern European countries with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.</p> <p>Not branded as a BRI project. Contractors: South Korean Posco (91 km) together with the China Road and Bridge Corporation (41 km).</p>	Regional	Multilateral

Total Chinese investments in Uzbekistan comprised 1.654 bln USD between 2005–2010, out of which foreign direct investment (FDI) corresponded to 305 mln EUR. Total Chinese investments in the period of 1991–2017 exceeded USD7.6 bln.

About CADGAT and Central Asia Regional Data Review

The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the OSCE Academy established the Central Asia Data-Gathering and Analysis Team (CADGAT) in 2009. The purpose of CADGAT is to produce new cross-regional data on Central Asia that can be used free of charge by researchers, journalists, NGOs, government employees, and students, both inside and outside the region. The data articles can be found at <http://osce-academy.net/en/research/cadgat/>

The following CADGAT data articles have been published:

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13. Media in Central Asia: Print Media
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16. Renewable energy policies of the Central Asian countries
17. Wind power potential of the Central Asian countries
18. Solar power potential of the Central Asian countries
19. Hydropower potential of the Central Asian countries
20. BRI in Central Asia: Overview of Chinese projects
21. BRI in Central Asia: Rail and road connectivity projects

CADGAT has also produced a database on Elites in Central Asia, which can be found at <http://osce-academy.net/dbelite/>



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