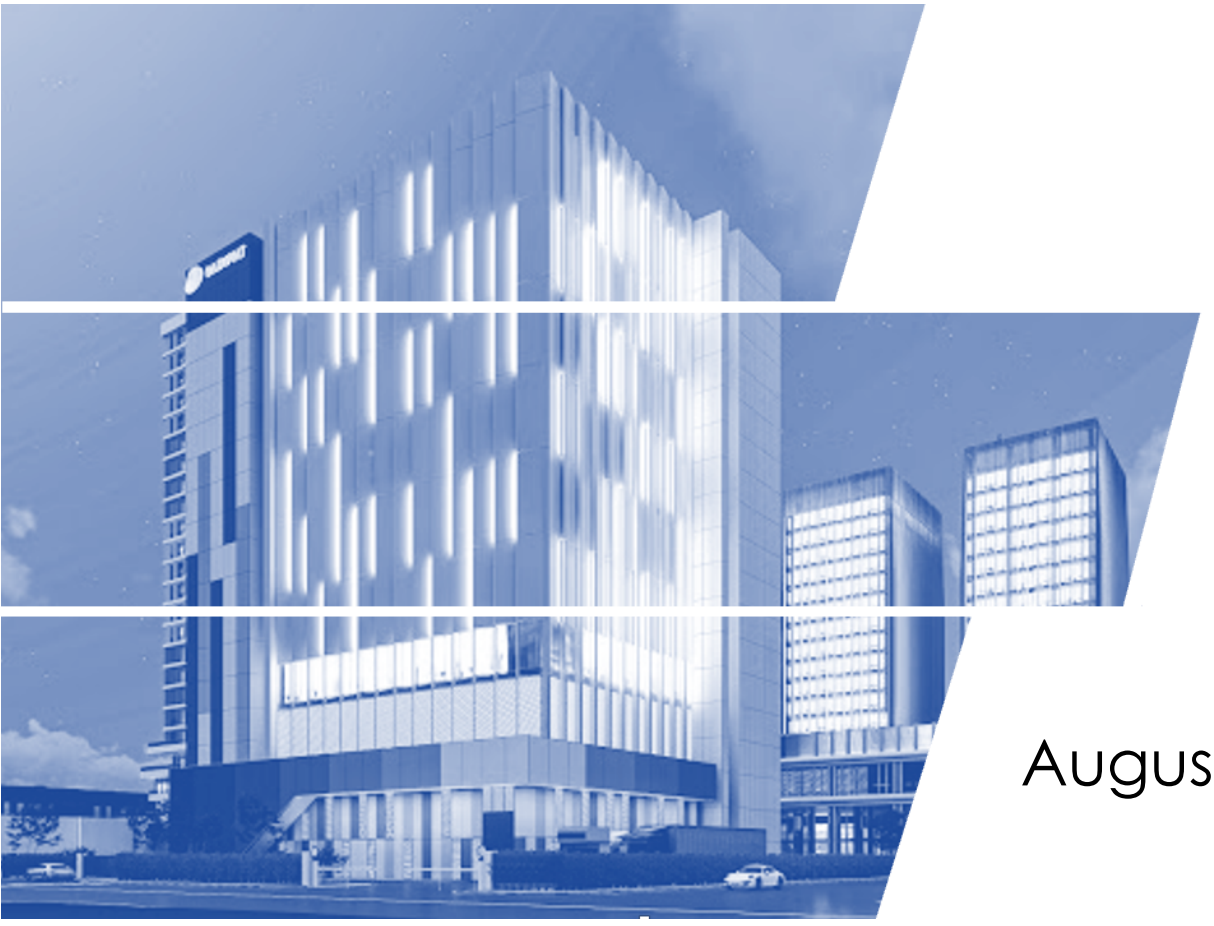
DataVolt Data Centre
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

Volume I: Non-Technical Summary



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DATAVOLT

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1	Financial Capital
2	Social Capital
3	Natural Capital
4	Manufactured Capital
5	Human Capital

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	MEANING
5 Capitals	5 Capitals Environmental Consultants & Studies L.L.C.
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AOI	Area of Influence
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
COD	Commercial Operational Date
E&S	Environmental & Social
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EHS	Environment, Health and Safety
EPC	Engineering, Procurement, and Construction
ESAP	Environmental and Social Action Plan
ESDD	Environmental and Social Due Diligence
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMS	Environmental and Social Management System
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HGVs	Heavy Goods Vehicles
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LGA	Local Government Authority
LV	Low-Voltage
MDAs	National Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
MEEPCC	Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change
MV	Medium-Voltage
MW	Megawatt
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
PC	Project Company
PS	Performance Standards

1 WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

1.1 National Context

To foster the growth of the digital economy and integrate modern information and communication technologies across all sectors, Uzbekistan is implementing the "Digital Uzbekistan – 2030" strategy. This initiative aims to drive sustainable economic development and enhance citizens' quality of life through digital transformation.

Significant progress has been made in internet connectivity, as reflected in Uzbekistan's global ranking, rising 24 positions to 131st in broadband speed (2023), surpassing other Central Asian nations. To further bridge disparities in telecommunications and digital services, the government is prioritizing infrastructure development. A key objective is establishing Uzbekistan as a regional "Information Technology (IT)-Hub" by advancing digital technologies, including the expansion of data centres as part of this strategic vision.

1.2 The Project

As part of Uzbekistan's efforts to enhance its digital infrastructure and strengthen the IT sector, data centres will be developed in Tashkent. The DataVolt Tashkent IT Park Data Centre in intended to be a 12 MW IT load facility which will support the country's digital transformation under the "Digital Uzbekistan – 2030" strategy.

The project is implemented by a special-purpose vehicle, DataVolt IT Park JV LLC, jointly owned by DataVolt UAE (95%) and the IT Park under the Ministry (5%).The Project will be the first Tier 3 carrier-neutral, AI-enabled data centre in Central Asia, fully powered by renewable energy (RE), provided under an energy supply agreement (ESA) with JSC "Uzenergosotish". The data centre will be LEED-Gold certified.

A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) is being planned which will further ensure uninterrupted green energy supply and provide stability in case of grid fluctuations. This initiative aligns with Uzbekistan's broader objective of becoming a regional IT hub while prioritizing energy efficiency and advanced technological solutions. The BESS facility will be located on an adjacent but connected plot of land to the main data centre building; also referred to herein as the 'buffer station'.

The Project will also include an underground transmission line connecting the project to a local grid sub-station. The underground line will run along existing road infrastructure and will be arranged in two alignments for contingency purposes.

1.3 Key Project Information

Project Title	DataVolt 12 MW Data Centre, Tashkent, Uzbekistan / IT Park / TAS01
Project Developer	DataVolt Information Technology Company
Project Company	DataVolt IT Park JV LLC Tax payer ID number: 311685614 Bobour Street, House 58a, Muhandislar Mfy, Yakkasaroy District, Tashkent City, Uzbekistan Contact Person: Ankit Kumar (Project Director) a.kumar@data-volt.com
EPC Contractor	Larsen and Toubro Ltd. (L&T)
O&M Company	To be determined*
ESIA Consultant	5 Capitals Environmental Consultants & Studies L.L.C. (5 Capitals) PO Box 119899, Dubai, UAE Tel: +971 (0) 4 250 8783, Fax: +971 (0) 4 343 9366 Contact Person: Max Burrow (Project Director) max.burrow@5capitals.com www.5capitals.com
	Nazar Business and Technology Consulting Company (NBT) Karakum 1st Passage, 100100, Tashkent, Uzbekistan Tel: +998 71 203 79 97 https://www.nbt.uz/

1.4 Project Timeline

Based on the details provided by DataVolt, the following timeline is currently in place for the Project.

Table 1-1 Project Milestones for Data Centre

Milestone	Scheduled Date
Limited Notice to Proceed (LNTP)	2nd week of February 2025
Notice to Proceed (NTP)	7th of March 2025
Phase I Completion	31st of December, 2026
Phase II Completion	31st of March, 2027
Commercial Operation Date (COD)	31st of March, 2027

1.5 Project Overview

The Project will be a ten-story structure inclusive of a basement, mezzanine floor, a terrace, and a chiller plant. There will be six floors (from the 2nd floor to the 7th floor) for the data hall, where each floor will accommodate 250 racks with an average power density of 8kW per rack.

The equipment of the data centre will consist of:

1. Medium-voltage switchgear and ring main unit (RMU)
2. Distribution transformer

3. LV Switchgear
4. LV Generator
5. LV Busway
6. Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)
7. Power Distribution Unit

The data centre is planned to operate as a 'net zero' facility, with the potential to be powered entirely by renewable energy (RE) sources 100% of the time. The primary sources will be solar photovoltaic and wind energy supplied through the national transmission grid. To ensure uninterrupted power supply and system reliability, the facility will be supported by battery energy storage systems (BESS) and backup fuel generators.

The Project will also have various ancillary facilities that support the Data Centre. A detailed project description is provided in Volume II of the ESIA package.

2 WHERE IS THE PROJECT LOCATED?

2.1 Project Location

The Project site is located in the Tashkent IT Park in an urban area of north-east Tashkent. It is located 15.4 km from Tashkent Airport and 8.5 km from the nearest railway station. The site will occupy a land plot measuring (0.44 ha) and (0.13 ha).

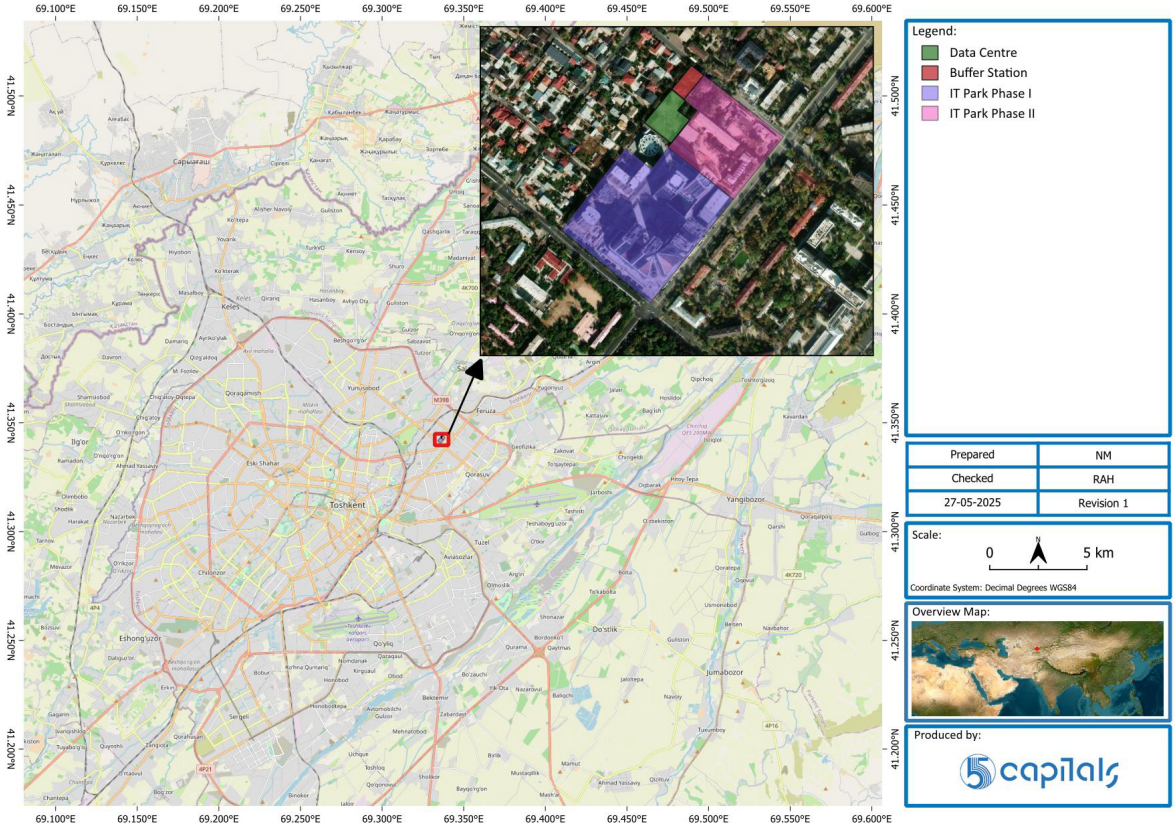

Figure 2-1 Project Location

2.2 Land Ownership

DataVolt has obtained the land plot for the Data Centre building on a 25-year lease from the Ministry of Digital Technologies of the Republic of Uzbekistan with options to extend the lease. The land lease has been approved following issuance of a Presidential Decree.

For the buffer (BESS station) plot, DataVolt has secured an adjacent land parcel to the main Data Centre plot. This plot, which previously contained a residential building, was acquired by the SPV Project Company DataVolt IT Park Data Center LLC through a mutual willing seller and buyer agreement. The agreement is valid for 6-months following which the land lease will be under a Land Lease Agreement with Local Hakimyayat (Mirza Ulukbek District Corporation). The land designation will be changed once the land ownership is transferred to the local area's Hokimiyat.

2.3 Land Use & Site Condition

The project site is situated within the Tashkent IT Park masterplan, surrounded by existing urban developments. A mosque, constructed several years ago and more recently re-developed, is located immediately adjacent to the proposed Data Centre building. The land use surrounding the IT Park is a mix of residential, educational, medical, and industrial facilities, making the area overall urbanised and well developed.

3 What is an Environmental & Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)?

3.1 Requirements for EIA & ESIA

3.1.1 Uzbekistan Requirements

The MEEPCC is the main regulating body of state administration on environmental protection issues. The primary responsibilities of the MEEPCC include ensuring the implementation of a unified state policy on environmental safety, environmental protection, and the use and reproduction of natural resources; and enforcing state control over the compliance of ministries, state committees, departments, enterprises, institutions, and organisations, as well as individuals, with respect to the use and protection of land, mineral resources, water, forests, flora and fauna, and atmospheric resources. Structurally, the MEEPCC consists of the central unit (located in Tashkent), regional units (oblast) and local (district) units.

The Centre for State Ecological Expertise: The Centre for State Ecological Expertise's activities are directly related to the evaluation of materials for EIA and the issuance of documents determining compliance with environmental requirements for planned or executed business and other activities, as well as determining the admissibility of the implementation of the object of environmental expertise.

3.1.1.1 Applicable Standards

The national Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure for various development projects is mandated by the following legislation:

- Law "On Environmental Expertise" No.73-II of 25.05.2000 (as amended on 29.04.2021).
- Regulation on SEE, approved by Decree No.949 of the Cabinet of Ministers on 22 November 2018 which is replaced by "On the further improvement of the environmental impact assessment mechanism No.541, approved by Resolution of the cabinet of ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 9 July 2020."

3.1.2 Lenders Requirements

The Project will utilise its own equity in the beginning of the construction, to build the Data Centre facilities. The Project plans to obtain project finance from IFIs during the construction phase, when they will have several customers/buyers who will use the data centre.

IFC Performance Standard (PS) are widely used as a standard because they provide a globally recognized benchmark for managing environmental and social risks associated with private sector projects, helping companies identify, assess, and mitigate potential negative impacts on people and the environment.

3.1.2.1 Applicable Requirements

Although the lending group has not been confirmed at this stage, the ESIA has been prepared to align with the requirements of:

- Equator Principle
- IFC Performance Standards (2012)
- WBG/IFC General EHS Guidelines (2007)
- ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement (2009), and Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) (effective 1 January, 2026)
- EBRD's Environment and Social Policy (ESP) (Oct 2024)

3.2 Key Purpose of the ESIA

The primary purpose of the ESIA is to assess the potential environmental & social risks and impacts of the Project's activities (construction and operational phases) in comparison with the existing baseline situation (i.e. current situation within the expected project area of influence) to predict the expected changes that will occur and the extent of these changes. Further, the ESIA aims to establish mitigation and management measures for implementation against potentially significant impacts and to outline how such impacts will be monitored into the future.

The ESIA is submitted to prospective project lenders as part of their broader due diligence relating to their investment decision, where it will be evaluated against that E&S policies and related obligations. In accordance with Equator Principles IV (ref. Principle 7), the evaluation by lenders will also be undertaken by an independent party.

3.3 Structure of the ESIA Report

The ESIA is presented in the following format developed by 5 Capitals:

- **Volume 1:** Non-Technical Summary
- **Volume 2:** ESIA - Main Text, Tables and Figures
- **Volume 3:** Framework for Environmental & Social Management
- **Volume 4:** Appendices
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan

4 What is the Current Situation?

4.1 Site Land

The Project is in an urban area surrounded by commercial, educational, and residential buildings. There are no notable natural features in the vicinity of the site, and the project plot is characterised by relatively flat topography.

Construction activities for the data centre have already commenced. Excavation works at the data centre site are now complete, and the site is prepared for foundation pouring.

At the buffer station site, the existing structure has been demolished; however, further construction works are currently on hold pending the issuance of the required permits. Similarly, works related to the underground power line (UPL) are yet to begin and remain subject to permit approval.

4.2 Surrounding Area and Receptors

Key E&S receptors within 500 metres of the Project components have been mapped and are presented in the Figure below with further details in the following table. 500 metres is considered to be the maximum anticipated extent of potential direct impacts associated with the project facilities from the data centre and buffer station site.

This assessment was based on a review of satellite imagery and findings from site visits. As illustrated in the following figure, the identified receptors include residential buildings and compounds, commercial, medical, educational and industrial facilities and utility infrastructure.

The below map and table provide an overview of the E&S impact receptors pre-identified within the expected AOI, for the Project's non-linear facilities.

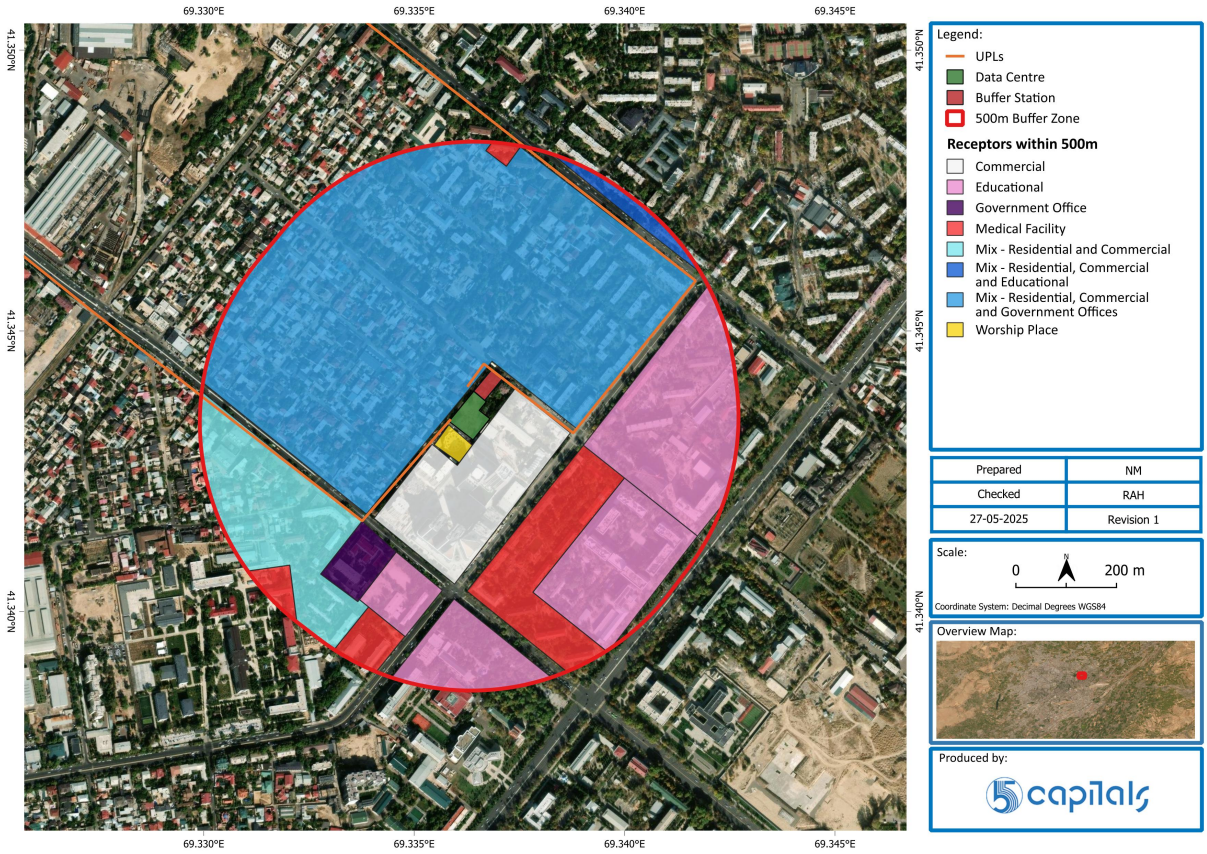

Figure 4-1 Potential E&S impact receptors within 500 metres from the project site

4.3 Overview of Baseline Conditions

The ESIA has followed the scope of work in the approved scoping report prepared by 5 Capitals. This has included several new surveys specific to this Project, as well as reference to existing and available studies/data.

A brief overview of the notable existing conditions is presented below. Full baseline surveys for these topics and others are included in Volume II of the ESIA package.

4.3.1 Air Quality

The main source of air pollution in the city is the extensive use of automobiles, many of which are outdated, with some dating back to the Soviet era. Additional contributions to air pollution include emissions from factories, power plants, and other industrial operations.

The monitoring results for $PM_{2.5}$, NO_2 and CO are in compliance with the national and international standards. However, SO_2 concentrations were relatively high throughout the monitoring period exceeding the national and international thresholds applicable to the project. This suggests the presence of a continuous source of fossil fuel combustion, likely linked to the site's proximity of the project plot to a main road, and the presence of a worship place adjacent to the data centre building.

4.3.2 Noise

The Project site is located within an urban area, within the wider IT Park masterplan. There are no significant existing noise sources within the site itself.

Based on the survey, the noise levels are within the permissible limits set by the national regulations and international standards. The sources of noise during the monitoring periods are related to vehicular movement on the road adjacent to the site, honking, and the mosque's Adhan.

4.3.3 Soils Quality

Visual inspection indicated that the soils were largely disturbed, with widespread evidence of construction debris from prior activities. Based on sampling result analysis, it is shown that concentrations of Cr, Ni, Cu, Zn, and As exceeded the national maximum permissible concentration at all four (4) sampling locations. Additionally, Ni, Cu, and Zn, concentrations exceeded the Dutch soil quality target values at all sampling locations, while As exceeded the target value at SQ4 only. Further, Zn concentration exceeded the Dutch intervention value at all four (4) sampling locations.

4.4 Other E&S Topics

Other E&S topics such as waste management, landscape and visual, archaeological and cultural heritage, traffic and transportation labour & working conditions community health, safety and security have more specific descriptions of baseline within the ESIA Volume 2.

4.5 Stakeholders and ESIA Engagement

Stakeholder consultation is a key part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process in Uzbekistan, involving engagement with various groups to incorporate their concerns and perspectives into project planning and environmental management. The National EIA requires a statutory consultation (public hearing) process to be undertaken and for a positive consensus from participants, prior to meaningful construction activities commencing on-site.

DataVolt conducted several consultations with the local authorities for planning approval. Based on the result from the consultations with local authorities, the Project Company updated the project design according to the recommendations received from the agencies.

Based on information from the project delivery team, prior to construction commencement, DataVolt team met with community leaders, those were the Mahalla representative and the Imam of the local mosque, the inform about the project and discuss the same.

As part of the National EIA process and prior to the approval of the National EIA, a public hearing session was conducted by the Ministry of Digital Technologies and a local consultant to inform the relevant stakeholders about the IT Park masterplan and the Project.

Specific information on this session has not been provided for this ESIA, however, the outcomes of this consultation were sufficient to enable approval and permitting of the National EIA by the regulatory authorities in Uzbekistan.

Further details about the stakeholder engagement activities carried out during the ESIA process are available in the Volume II of this ESIA package.

5 What are the Key Benefits of the Project?

5.1 Socio-Economic Benefits

5.1.1 IT Infrastructure Development

The primary purpose of the Project itself is to foster the growth of the digital economy and integrate modern information and communication technologies across all sectors in Uzbekistan. This initiative aims to drive sustainable economic development and enhance citizens' quality of life through digital transformation. The broader goal is to establish Uzbekistan as a regional "Information Technology (IT)-Hub".

5.1.2 Economic Benefits

As one of the IT related projects in Tashkent, there will be certain benefits during both construction and operations, including employment, dissemination of skills to the workforce, and use of local goods and service providers.

5.2 Location Benefits (Through avoidance of impacts elsewhere)

5.2.1 No Physical or Economic Displacement

The Project is located within the IT Park masterplan plot which will not induce neither physical nor economic displacement. Previously, the site hosted structures believed to be associated with a non-kinetic military training facility, which were demolished by the end of 2021.

5.2.2 Limited Impacts to the Site Land

As mentioned above the land used for the project site was previously a building used for military training. The plot's soil analysis tests results reflected that heavy metal contamination was present. This is likely due to the previous land use and activities being carried out within the plot, prior to the demolishment of the structures. The project itself poses no specific concerns related to geology and soil quality.

5.3 Project Technology (Benefits vs. other technologies)

The data centre is planned to operate as a 'net zero' facility, with the potential to be powered entirely by renewable energy (RE) sources 100% of the time. The primary sources will be solar photovoltaic and wind energy supplied through the national transmission grid. To ensure uninterrupted power supply and system reliability, the facility will be supported by battery energy storage systems (BESS) and backup fuel generators.

Several technological and locational alternatives have been taken into consideration in the course of the project's conceptual planning, feasibility studies and detailed design. Further details about the project are available in Volume II of the ESIA package.

6 What are the Negative Impacts or Uncertainties and How Are These to be Managed?

6.1 Environmental Impacts, Mitigation & Monitoring

6.1.1 Construction Phase

Environmental impacts due to the Project construction are minimal and will mostly be temporary. This includes impacts upon air quality (primarily dust from earthworks, and air emissions from diesel generators and heavy machinery), noise, soils (e.g. risk from spills/leaks), groundwater, traffic, waste management and others.

Such impacts are minimised with the adoption of project-specific good practices during the construction phase, and mitigation measures when the impacts are considered minor or moderate.

The most significant construction phase impact will likely be air quality and noise from the site and its impacts to the adjacent community.

6.1.2 Operational Phase

Following construction there will be minimal land-based impacts from the Project. For instance, the Project will not result in air emissions from its direct operations and there is limited noise. Emergency diesel generators (EDGs) will be in use when required to maintain the operation of the datacentre during power shortages and regular maintenance activities. Air emissions from the EDGs are likely to have a temporary impact, as the generators are expected to operate for a maximum of 200 hours per annum.

The risk of spills and leaks to soils will be very minimum, since the small quantities of chemicals will be stored and used on-site, except for diesel which will be stored in bulk quantities. Such risks will be mitigated through secondary containment and other provisions to avoid spills and leaks from the diesel tanks.

The operation of the data centre may pose risks to public safety, particularly from fire, explosion, or fuel spills, though such incidents are unlikely with proper controls.

Key risks relate to the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and diesel tanks in the building's basement. Fire hazards, especially from thermal runaway events in the BESS, are addressed through industry-standard design, fire detection and suppression systems, ventilation controls, and emergency coordination.

Electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure from the BESS is expected to be minimal, with assessments confirming no health risks to workers or the community.

Diesel-related risks are mitigated through standard safety features including tank bunding, vapor-recovery, and discharge controls, maintaining low risk levels for all occupants and nearby residents.

These risks are further managed through an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan and associated training.

There will be a small number of waste streams generated during operations and where these are classified as hazardous (e.g. electronic wastes), they will be handled accordingly and disposed of though licensed third-party contractors. There will be certain wastewater streams, which will be directly connected to existing sewage facilities.

6.1.3 Monitoring & Reporting

Volume II of the ESIA package includes various monitoring processes based on the assessed risks, impacts and compliance requirements of the Project.

6.2 Social Impacts, Mitigation & Monitoring

6.2.1 Construction Phase

There are expected to be up to 450 workers on-site during peak construction. Key risks during construction relate to occupational health and safety, which is a particular concern for dangerous work activities, including working at height and working with electrical interfaces. The EPC Contractor is contractually bound to implement a comprehensive health & safety management system with relevant controls on a risk-based approach.

Impacts relating to labour, working conditions and welfare have potential risks and largely depend on the management of the workforce by the specific companies engaging the workers. For example, the Project will include the Project Company (as owner), the EPC Contractor (as the main contractor) and various sub-contractor companies undertaking an array of skilled and unskilled works. Various risks and mitigation measures are outlined in Volume II of the ESIA package.

Labour accommodation will be arranged for a number of workforce by the specific company that employs workers (likely to be Gold Step and/or their sub-contractors) and will be required to be up to the IFC & EBRD Workers' Accommodation: Processes and Standards.

Impact to the communities is expected to be minimal, with some of it are positive impact (such as employment and dissemination of construction skills). The Project will implement an external party grievance mechanism in case of complaints.

6.2.2 Operational Phase

Impacts during operations will be similar to those during construction, however the risks are likely to be lower due to the reduced number of operational staff required at the project (vs.

construction). During operation, impact to the communities expected to be positive, such as employment and training of new skills. The Project will implement an external party grievance mechanism in case of complaints.

7 How Will the Environmental & Social Elements of the Project be Managed?

DataVolt has developed a set of management plans and an HSE policy specific for this project. The management plans cover most environmental and social aspects that are likely to be impacted by the project activities. The management plans may need to be updated to ensure alignment with the mitigation and management measures established in the ESIA (Volume II).

7.1 Environmental & Social Management System (ESMS)

Such documented information will form the broader project specific Environmental & Social Management System (ESMS) implemented by the applicable project parties relevant to their role in the Project.

This includes HSE Policy developed by DataVolt, with more specific in-depth ESMS documents including the management plans specific that have been prepared by DataVolt and their EPC Contractor to cover the construction phase, and Operation Environmental and Social Management Plan (OESMP) (and other complimentary plans/procedures) and O&M Company; to be developed prior to the commencement of operations. The EPC Contractor is expected to develop additional management plans, as per the HSE Implementation Plan adopted for the project.

7.1.1 Framework for E&S Management

Volume III of the ESIA package presents a framework to outline how the ESMS shall be developed and by which parties.

This includes outlining:

- Applicable requirements related to E&S management;
- Responsibility for and expected contents of the ESMS;
- Project Company HSE Policy;
- Identification of legal and compliance obligations;
- Identification of risks, impacts and opportunities;
- E&S Management Plans and Procedures (consolidated based on the risks assessed in Volume II of the ESIA package);
- E&S Monitoring Requirements;
- Organisational Capacity;
- Audit;
- Non-Conformance and Corrective Actions;

- Emergency Preparedness and Response;
- Stakeholder Engagement;
- Communication;
- Data Management and Record Keeping; and
- Review.

7.2 Key Project Responsibilities

Project Company	**E&S Role**	Overall accountable project party for E&S compliance.
	Key E&S Responsibility	To ensure overall compliance, direction and principles regarding E&S Management. Including regulatory project E&S permits/approvals are maintained. To ensure contracted parties have compliant and effective ESMS to manage compliance and E&S risks. To monitor contracted parties' implementation.
EPC Contractor	**E&S Role**	Contractually responsible for construction via EPC Contract and is therefore responsible to the Project Company for E&S management for the duration of the agreement.
	Key E&S Responsibility	To develop an ESMS to manage project compliance and risks. To manage & implement the ESMS in practice. To monitor and report on ESMS implementation and compliance (for all project parties).
O&M Company	**E&S Role**	Contractually responsible for operations via O&M Contract and is therefore responsible to the Project Company for E&S management for the duration of the agreement.
	Key E&S Responsibility	To develop an ESMS to manage project compliance and risks. To manage & implement the ESMS in practice. To monitor and report on ESMS implementation and compliance (for all project parties).
Sub Contractors	To comply with the E&S Policy and implement relevant ESMS elements to ensure compliance. As necessary (dependent on ESMS structure) to report on E&S matters to the contracting party.	