

SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

Country:	India	Project Title:	SASEC Road Connectivity Investment Program
Lending/Financing Modality:	Multitranche Financing Facility	Department/Division:	South Asia Regional Department Transport and Communications Division

I. POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY
Targeting classification: General Intervention
A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy
<p>The South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Road Connectivity Investment Program aims to increase domestic and regional trade through the North Bengal and Northeastern Region of India. The improvement of road corridors between India and its neighbors—Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Nepal—will help promote trade and tourism, local investments, and socioeconomic development in the region.</p> <p>The program will support governments in strengthening regional cooperation. It is relevant to achieving the goals outlined in the Asian Development Bank (ADB) country partnership strategies for India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, as well as the interim country partnership strategies for Bhutan and Myanmar.¹ The program also aligns with ADB's regional cooperation strategy (2011–2015) aimed at improving subregional connectivity and promoting international trade in South Asia.² Development of regional connectivity will enhance access to opportunities at local and regional levels, leading to poverty reduction and balanced regional growth.</p>
B. Results from the Poverty and Social Analysis during PPTA or Due Diligence
<p>1. Key poverty and social issues. Two national highways (AH-02 and AH-48) that will be improved as part of tranche 1 are currently in poor condition. At the international and national levels, the roads do not have the capacity to handle current transport needs. At the local level, the project will directly benefit the poor and the non-poor living in the region as road transport is the primary, and most often the only reliable, form of transport. A social assessment carried out in the project influence area found the people responsive to positive growth in employment and economic opportunities in the area, with the road development project having a direct link to poverty reduction. An efficient road network will provide stronger links between remote, poor regions and more developed markets both within India and subregionally, thus improving the socioeconomic situation and enhancing poverty reduction.</p> <p>AH-02 and AH-48 are located in the northern region of the state of West Bengal. The poverty and social situation in the project impact area were analyzed during project preparatory technical assistance. The region lacks industrial growth, and can be characterized by (i) a predominance of traditional farming; (ii) occurrence of flood due to cyclonic rainfall leading to loss of agricultural productivity in some districts; and (iii) lack of road connectivity causing limited access to health care services, educational institutions, marketing facilities, and government development agencies. Informants engaged during the poverty and social survey expressed that they could not benefit from locational advantages because of inadequate road connectivity, despite proximity to bordering nations and other Indian states. With improved connectivity, economic opportunities, including in tourism and growth of Siliguri (the regional commercial hub), can be realized. The improvement will directly benefit approximately 1.3 million people who reside in the project area and indirectly benefit 45 million residents who will benefit from improved subregional connectivity.</p> <p>The project area is predominantly rural, where Hindus form half of the population and the other major communities are scheduled castes (27%) and scheduled tribes (16%); the gender ratio is 943 females for every 1,000 males. The proportion of illiterate people and those without formal education is nearly 30%. However, there is a high level of school enrollment, including girls who are educated to at least high school level. Half of the working population is self-employed in trade and business including cross-border trade. Agriculture, nonfarm labor, and the service sector each account for equal proportions of workers, while about 11% are engaged as tea garden laborers. The work participation rate is 37% for men and 31% for women of working age. Of the work force, about 41% are employed for a period of at least 6 months and most of them are male, while only 11% are female; 10% of sampled households are living below the poverty line. Very few households possess cultivable land, but nearly 86% have their own sources of drinking water in the form of a well, tube well, or hand pump; 73% own nonmotorized vehicles and nearly 25% own motorized vehicles.</p> <p>2. Beneficiaries. Beneficiaries include road users, transport providers, traders (local and subregional), communities in the vicinity of the project influence area, civil works contractors and businesses supporting them, and executing and implementing agency staff.</p> <p>3. Impact channels. The poor and vulnerable will benefit from the project roads, which will increase economic and employment opportunities by improving links to commercial facilities. Improved connectivity will help rural people</p>

¹ ADB. 2013. *Country Partnership Strategy: India, 2013–2017*. Manila.

² ADB. 2011. *Regional Cooperation Strategy: South Asia, 2011–2015*. Manila.

transport their produce faster and receive higher profit margins. There will also be improved access to public and social service facilities such as government agencies, health centers, and schools. There are provisions in the bidding documents for the civil works contracts to comply with core labor standards. There are special provisions for the vulnerable displaced households in the entitlement matrix provided in the resettlement framework and the combined resettlement and indigenous peoples plans.

4. Other social and poverty issues. No other social and poverty issues are anticipated.

5. Design features. Pedestrian footpaths will be constructed for urban areas of the two subprojects financed under project 1, which will provide safer access for pedestrians, who are more likely to be poor, vulnerable, and women.

II. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR

1. Summarize the participatory approaches and the proposed project activities that strengthen inclusiveness and empowerment of the poor and vulnerable in project implementation.

A sample of 20% of residents and other road users comprising 480 households from the immediate vicinity of AH-02 and AH-48 were surveyed; 33 focus group discussions and 38 key informant interviews were conducted with stakeholders. This was also done to increase awareness of the project, to find out needs and concerns, and to obtain suggestions for enhancing benefits and mitigating negative impacts. Continued consultation will take place throughout the implementation period. A grievance redress mechanism will be set up in all project areas.

2. If civil society has a specific role in the project, summarize the actions taken to ensure their participation.

Civil society will be engaged to assist the government in implementing the resettlement plans and conduct awareness raising programs on HIV/AIDs and human trafficking in project areas. This includes disseminating information regarding the project through multiple channels.

3. Explain how the project ensures adequate participation of civil society organizations in project implementation.

Nongovernment organizations will be engaged to implement the resettlement plans.

4. What forms of civil society organization participation is envisaged during project implementation?

H Information gathering and sharing **H** Consultation **M** Collaboration **L** Partnership

5. Will a project-level participation plan be prepared to strengthen participation of civil society as interest holders for affected persons, particularly the poor and vulnerable? Yes. No.

Consultation and participation will take place. No separate project-level participation plan was prepared, however the approach for consultation and participation is outlined in the social safeguard planning documents.

III. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender mainstreaming category: some gender benefits

A. Key issues. Nineteen focused-group discussions were conducted and 10 key informants were interviewed as a part of the analysis of women's needs during preparation of tranche 1. Women in the project area are mainly involved in household work, cultivation, working in tea estates, and other farming activities. Women indicated that improved road conditions and connectivity will provide better access to health services, higher levels of education, economic opportunities, and social interactions. Specifically, it was found that the more common health ailments that women from the project area suffer from are anemia, skin diseases, diarrhea, and tuberculosis. Block primary health care centers revealed that many of these ailments are prevalent because of lack of awareness of personal hygiene, proper intake of nutritional food, and medication during pregnancy and postnatally.

B. Key actions.

Gender action plan Other actions or measures No action or measure

Design features have been formulated to (i) maximize women's access to project benefits, (ii) minimize social vulnerability, and (iii) mitigate the risk of health and social issues related to the highway project.

Mitigation and proactive key actions for tranche 1 include (i) constructing more than 30 kilometers of paved raised sidewalks in urban areas that will be highly beneficial to pedestrians, the elderly, women, and children; (ii) encouraging civil works contractors to engage women workers as wage laborers and ensuring that rates of remuneration are determined without gender bias according to the principles of equal remuneration for work of equal value (this measure is adopted in light of the identified patterns of gender-related job segregation and pay gaps in the project area); and (iii) providing awareness-raising seminars for contractors, construction workers, and women in the project areas on HIV/AIDS, health and hygiene, road safety, and human trafficking.

IV. ADDRESSING SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES

A. Involuntary Resettlement

Safeguard Category: A B C FI

1. Key impacts. For tranche 1, the two identified subprojects will both have significant impact. A total of 9.13 hectares of private land will need to be acquired; 4,132 households and 3,578 structures will be affected. Tranche 2 will also likely have significant impact.

2. Strategy to address the impacts. Subprojects have been designed to minimize the need for involuntary resettlement by adopting the most appropriate technical design. For tranche 1, all resettlement impacts of the two subprojects were assessed and are documented in two resettlement plans. A resettlement framework was prepared for the investment program to guide the preparation of resettlement plans for subsequent subprojects and tranches.

3. Plan or other Actions.

Resettlement plan

Combined resettlement and indigenous peoples plan

Resettlement framework

Combined resettlement framework and indigenous

<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and social management system arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/> peoples planning framework
<input type="checkbox"/> No action	<input type="checkbox"/> Social impact matrix
B. Indigenous Peoples	Safeguard Category: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> FI
1. Key impacts. One hundred and thirty five indigenous peoples households will be affected in AH-02 and AH-48. Indigenous peoples in areas affected by the project have been integrated with the mainstream and dominant population of the state. The indigenous peoples households do not have collective attachment to project areas and they do not live together in distinct communities. The socioeconomic impact of the subprojects on these people and on the mainstream population will be the same. Two combined resettlement and indigenous peoples plans are in place to address the impacts on indigenous peoples.	
2. Strategy to address the impacts. Special provisions have been made in the resettlement plan to address the impacts on indigenous peoples. An indigenous peoples planning framework was prepared for the investment program to guide the preparation of indigenous peoples plans for subsequent tranches.	
3. Plan or other actions.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement plan and indigenous peoples plan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples planning framework	<input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement framework and indigenous peoples planning framework
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and social management system arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples plan elements integrated in project with a summary
<input type="checkbox"/> Social impact matrix	
<input type="checkbox"/> No action	
V. ADDRESSING OTHER SOCIAL RISKS	
A. Risks in the Labor Market	
1. Relevance of the project for the country's or region's or sector's labor market. L unemployment L underemployment L retrenchment L core labor standards	
2. Labor market impact. Construction is expected to generate 466,500 person-days of work for tranche 1. Men and women will be paid equally for equal work. There are provisions in the bidding documents for the contractors to ensure that all the civil works comply with core labor standards (e.g., no child labor; no bonded labor; no work discrimination regardless of gender, race, and ethnicity; and freedom of association and collective bargaining).	
B. Affordability	
The investment program will reduce transport costs and increase the mobility of the local population in the areas covered by the investment program.	
C. Communicable Diseases and Other Social Risks	
1. Indicate the risks, if any, and rate the impact as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA): M Communicable diseases M Human trafficking	
2. Describe the related risks of the project on people in project area. The project area is characterized by increasing rates of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, with concentrated epidemics in at-risk groups (injecting drug users, sex workers, and truck drivers). Based on the assessment, the State AIDS Prevention and Control Society of project states are tasked to provide medical and health services, public awareness raising projects and social sector services, and monitoring. Also, the state governments have set up district AIDS prevention and control units to provide more targeted interventions to high-risk groups and an integrated and augmented system of prevention, care, and support and treatment at the district level. The project implementation unit (PIU) will ensure that civil work contractors conduct awareness programs in HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, and child labor at the construction camp sites and work places. All contracts will include specific clauses on these initiatives and the state governments will strictly monitor compliance during implementation. A nongovernment organization will conduct awareness programs in HIV/AIDS and human trafficking in project-affected communities.	
VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION	
1. Targets and indicators: Performance targets and indicators, and their data sources, will be established by the social development specialist of the implementation support consultant.	
2. Required human resources: The PIU will have a social safeguard focal point. A resettlement and social development and/or gender specialists will be part of the implementation support consultant team. A social development specialist from the ADB regional department will oversee the implementation.	
3. Information in Facility Administration Manual: The frequency of project reviews, monitoring, and timing of completion reports is included.	
4. Monitoring tools: Monitoring will be undertaken on a day-to-day level by the project implementation consultant. The PIU will undertake monthly monitoring. The implementation of RPs will be monitored externally by a qualified expert, who will undertake overall monitoring of the safeguards and social issues and prepare semi-annual monitoring reports for the executing agency and ADB.	

Sources: Asian Development Bank estimates.