



Initial Poverty and Social Analysis

Project Number: 53335-001
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India: Assam Road Network Improvement Project

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Asian Development Bank

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(as of 18 January 2022)

Currency unit	–	Indian rupee (₹)
₹1.00	=	\$ 0.013
\$1.00	=	₹ 74.27

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
CSO	–	civil society organization
IPSA	–	initial poverty and social assessment
PWRD	–	Public Works (Roads) Department

NOTES

- (i) The fiscal year (FY) of the Government of India and its agencies ends on 31 March. "FY" before a calendar year denotes the year in which the fiscal year ends, e.g., FY2022 ends on 31 March 2022.
- (i) In this report, "\$" refers to United States dollars.

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INITIAL POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Country:	India	Project Title:	Assam Road Network Improvement Project
Lending/Financing Modality:	Project loan	Department/ Division:	South Asia Department/ Transport and Communications Division

I. POVERTY IMPACT AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy

The Government of Assam has launched a flagship road improvement program 'Asom Mala',¹ which is intended to improve the quality and service level of the state highways and major district roads (MDRs) networks and fill critical infrastructure gaps through effective interventions like development of alternative corridors, feeder routes, and roads near international borders. The project is listed in ADB's country operations business plan for India, 2021–2023. The project contributes to ADB's Strategy 2030 operational priorities by (i) addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities; (ii) accelerating progress in gender equality; (iii) tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability; (iv) promoting rural development and food security; (v) strengthening governance and institutional capacity; and (vi) fostering regional cooperation and integration. The proposed project will reduce travel time and vehicle operating costs, improve accessibility in the less developed areas of Assam and provide a vital link to economic growth centers, urban areas, markets, tourist destinations and the agricultural sectors. Improved connectivity to the Assam hinterland would spur economic growth of the entire state and region.

B. Poverty Targeting

General intervention Individual or household (TI-H) Geographic (TI-G) Non-income MDGs (TI-M1, M2, etc.)

The Asom Mala program has identified 31 priority sections of state highways and MDRs with a total length of 1,296 km for improvement. Some of the road sections will provide the shortest route connection to adjacent district headquarters. The proposed project will improve and enhance the interconnectivity of road infrastructure and increase the economic development in Assam and surrounding region. At a broader level, economic activities and competitiveness of households and institutions along the project road will increase, while at the local level, access to public and social services such as schools, health facilities, workplaces will improve. The economic growth and enhanced delivery of social services will in turn contribute to poverty alleviation.

C. Poverty and Social Analysis

1. Key issues and potential beneficiaries.

The primary project beneficiaries are the households, commercial and institutions along the alignment of the project roads. Secondly, all the road users, including pedestrians will benefit from the improved road facilities. Road safety in terms of improved accessibility and travel will be the main benefit. Constraints on achieving these benefits will be included in the poverty and social analysis. Assam is home to 34 million people, a third of whom are poor. The incidence of poverty in Assam remains higher than the national average, with poverty levels being very high in some parts of the state.²

2. Impact channels and expected systemic changes.

Improving road infrastructure will enhance access to markets, economic opportunities, as well as administrative, health and educational facilities. There would be commuting time saved because of enhanced interconnection of roads that will lead to increase in general productivity of the population. While poor road safety often impact the poor and vulnerable, improving the road design as well as the enhancing safety elements for pedestrian will ensure project benefits are realized.

3. Focus of (and resources allocated in) the transaction TA or due diligence.

The social impact assessment, which includes the review of involuntary resettlement impacts and gender dimension, is currently carried out by the PWRD and its consultants. The ADB through TA 9761-IND: Strengthening Capacity to Design and Implement Transport Infrastructure Projects will provide additional consultant support and guidance to ensure consistency with ADB SPS and other relevant guidelines.

II. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

¹ It is synchronized with the North-East Corridor Study initiated by ADB and is aligned with regional initiatives, such as, South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation and Bay of Bengal Initiative of Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.

² World Bank Group. 2017. *Assam Poverty, Growth & Inequality*. Washington D.C.
<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/545361504000062662/pdf/119141-BRI-P157572-Assam-Poverty.pdf>

1. What are the key gender issues in the sector and/or subsector that are likely to be relevant to this project or program?

Based on the ADB strategic pillars, ADB will support long-term urban development planning and basic urban infrastructure investments, including for multimodal public transport facilities and smart transport management. In the transport sector, ADB projects will focus on improved road connectivity at the state, district, and rural levels to improve access to services and enhance productivity and incomes.³ Female pedestrians killed by road accidents accounted for only 17.4% of the total fatality.⁴ It is inferred that the sphere of women's activities from home is very narrow; mobility of women is very constraint; and women mainly use public transportation when going out. As the project seeks to improve the road infrastructure in Assam, women and other vulnerable groups will likely benefit and see further improvement in their socioeconomic standing. Assam has the highest maternal mortality ratio in the country considering the large states; Assam has fewer women than men with secondary education; and female labor force participation is among the lowest in the country; and a large majority of rural women in Assam work in the farming sector.⁵ The proposed upgrading of roads under the proposed project is expected to open up new economic opportunities for women to improve their skills and for better access to educational and health facilities.

2. Does the proposed project or program have the potential to contribute to the promotion of gender equity and/or empowerment of women by providing women's access to and use of opportunities, services, resources, assets, and participation in decision making? Yes No

A gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) action plan shall be prepared to ensure inequality and inclusion issues are address in the project. In particular, the GESI will also look into specific issues relevant to tribal households.

3. Could the proposed project have an adverse impact on women and/or girls or widen gender inequality?
 Yes No

4. Indicate the intended gender mainstreaming category:

EGM (effective gender mainstreaming)

III. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

1. Who are the main stakeholders of the project, including beneficiaries and affected people? Explain how they will each participate in the project's design.

The main stakeholders of the project are the following: (i) PWRD, as the project implementing agency; (ii) households along the project roads (tribal and non-tribal) as the main beneficiaries and likely to be affected, they will be adequately consulted during the project design phase; (iii) commercial and other economic establishments along the road as beneficiaries and likely to be affected, they will also be consulted during the design phase; (iv) the road users and pedestrians, they will be consulted more broadly through focus groups discussion and through various interest groups; and (v) other institutional stakeholders such as educational, health, and services, they all be consulted during project design phase.

2. Who are the key, active, and relevant civil society organizations (CSOs) in the project area?

Initial assessment indicates that road safety advocates, agencies dealing with tribal affairs, educational and commercial focus groups, and the Autonomous Councils and Development Councils for different Scheduled Tribes in Assam. Other CSOs will be identified during further project preparation.

3. Are there issues during project design for which participation of the poor and vulnerable is important?

Yes No If yes, what are these issues?

Improvement of the 6 project roads will have significant involuntary resettlement impacts, including the potential displacement or resettlement of women and disadvantaged households. The participation of the poor and vulnerable is important in the project particularly in the areas of accessibility, safety of road users and pedestrian, and access to transport services. At project design stage, consideration for the poor and vulnerable should be included, mainly to enhance safe mobility and access to basic and cultural services found along the project road.

4. How will the project ensure the participation of beneficiaries and affected people, particularly the poor and vulnerable and/or CSOs, during project design to address these issues?

A robust Stakeholders Participation Plan will be designed for the project to ensure participation of all during the entire cycle of the proposed project. PWRD will facilitate the engagement meaningfully and relevant suggestions from all stakeholders will be incorporated into the design, as much as practicable. The project management unit, having the adequate staff and expertise will document and ensure all issues and concerns are addressed in the grievance redress mechanism. During the preparation of safeguards documents, meaningful consultations with the affected people will be ensured at all project phases. The TOR of the project preparation include sufficient provisions

³ ADB. 2017. [Country Partnership Strategy: India, 2018–2022—Accelerating Inclusive Economic Transformation](#). Manila.

⁴ Transport Research Wing, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India. 2020. *Road Accidents in India 2019*. New Delhi.

⁵ World Bank Group. 2017. *Assam Gender*. Washington D.C.
<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/819821503988361571/pdf/119137-BRI-P157572-Assam-Gender.pdf>

to undertake all public consultations and disclosure, surveys and workshops and preparation of plans stipulating the necessary mitigating measures.

5. What level of CSO participation is planned during project design?

M Information generation and sharing H Consultation NA Collaboration NA Partnership

IV. SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

A. Involuntary Resettlement Category A B C FI

1. Does the project have the potential to involve involuntary land acquisition resulting in physical and economic displacement? Yes No

The proposed project will likely have significant involuntary resettlement impacts that will entail physical and economic displacement due to the rehabilitation of the upgrade, reconstruct, and rehabilitate of about 313 km of state highways and MDRs in Assam, including 6 road sections in the western and southern regions of Assam. Resettlement plans will be prepared for each road segment of the project.

2. What action plan is required to address involuntary resettlement as part of the transaction TA or due diligence process?

Resettlement plan

B. Indigenous Peoples Category A B C FI

1. Does the proposed project have the potential to directly or indirectly affect the dignity, human rights, livelihood systems, or culture of indigenous peoples? Yes No

2. Does it affect the territories or natural and cultural resources indigenous peoples own, use, occupy, or claim, as their ancestral domain? Yes No

Initial assessment suggests that the land along the project roads is not considered traditional land particularly of 3 (out of 6) road segment although it is known that significant numbers of households along these roads are considered tribal households. Further assessment will be done during project processing to confirm the likely impacts.

3. Will the project require broad community support of affected indigenous communities? Yes No

The proposed project will not likely require broad community support per SPS as project activities will not entail displacement from traditional land, commercial development of cultural resources, and commercial development of natural resources. Confirmation will be done during further project preparation.

4. What action plan is required to address risks to indigenous peoples as part of the transaction TA or due diligence process?

Indigenous peoples plan

V. OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES AND RISKS

1. What other social issues and risks should be considered in the project design?

H Adhering to core labor standards H Spread of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS M Increase in human trafficking

2. How are these additional social issues and risks going to be addressed in the project design?

Other social issues and risks will be assessed during further project processing. The PWRD has contracted project preparatory consultants to prepare the project while ADB will provide additional consultant support under the project preparatory facility technical assistance (TA 9761).

VI. TRANSACTION TA OR DUE DILIGENCE RESOURCE REQUIREMENT

1. Do the terms of reference for the transaction TA (or other due diligence) contain key information needed to be gathered during transaction TA or due diligence process to better analyze (i) poverty and social impact, (ii) gender impact, (iii) participation dimensions, (iv) social safeguards, and (v) other social risks. Are the relevant specialists identified?

Yes No If no, please explain why.

2. What resources (e.g., consultants, survey budget, and workshop) are allocated for conducting poverty, social, and/or gender analysis, and participation plan during the transaction TA or due diligence?

PWRD has engaged consultants and prepared social assessment and resettlement plans for the 6 project roads. Resources including a social and gender specialist has been earmarked for the conduct of necessary additional surveys and engagement with various stakeholders under TA 9761.