

UPDATED SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

Country:	India	Project Title:	Second Rural Connectivity Investment Program
Lending/Financing Modality:	Multitranches Financing Facility	Department/Division:	South Asia Department/ Transport and Communications Division

I. POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY

Poverty targeting: General intervention

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

The Government of India is implementing a nationwide rural road investment program—Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) or the Prime Minister's Rural Roads Program—as a key tool of its rural poverty reduction agenda. The PMGSY aims to provide all-weather road connectivity to currently unserved habitations in rural areas where 70% of India's population live.

The Second Rural Connectivity Investment Program aims to build or upgrade to all-weather standards about 12,000 kilometers (km) of rural roads, benefiting around 4,600 habitations in the states of Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and West Bengal (the investment program states). As part of its support, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is also building capacity for the implementation of the PMGSY, especially in the areas of design, environmental and social safeguards, and road safety.

The investment program is in line with the strategic objectives set out in ADB's Strategy 2020; India's Three Year Action Agenda for FY2018–FY2020; ADB's country partnership strategy, 2018–2022 for India; and its country operations business plan, 2015–2017.^a

B. Results from the Poverty and Social Analysis during Program Preparation or Due Diligence

1. Key poverty and social issues. The investment program states are among the poorest in India.^b According to the 2011–2012 National Sample Survey, rural poverty rates range from 45% in Chhattisgarh to 23% in West Bengal; in Assam, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha, 33%–36% of households in rural areas live below the poverty line.^c In the investment program states, close to 50% of rural households depend on agricultural self-employment. The importance of the agriculture sector is reinforced by the findings from the baseline survey conducted at the onset of the investment program, wherein most journeys made were trips to the workplace and markets, and the key goods being transported were agricultural produce, construction material, and livestock.

2. Beneficiaries. Key beneficiaries are the residents of habitations expected to be connected by the project. Other beneficiaries include commercial service providers, transport providers, and government workers such as health workers, teachers, and agricultural extension workers.

3. Impact channels. A socioeconomic impact assessment was conducted during the processing of tranche 1 in each of the five states. The assessment was based on focus group discussions and surveys, where 47% of respondents were women, with a sample of 149 roads (totaling 620 km) representing about 13% of the total number of roads to be financed under tranche 1. Key findings indicate that the investment program improved accessibility and contributed to economic development for the population along the program roads. Immediate benefits include significant savings in travel time to the workplace (a reduction in time between 30% and 40%); an increase in the use of motorized vehicles; an improvement in the availability, frequency, and quality of public transportation; and a marginal increase in the monthly income of households (5%). Moreover, most of the people surveyed (60%–70%) indicated an improvement in road safety knowledge and road signage as a result of the investment program. In the long term, the investment program will contribute to improving basic access to markets and employment as well as administrative, health, and educational facilities.

4. Other social and poverty issues. No other social and poverty issues were found during the due diligence.

5. Design features. The participatory approach in preparing the road construction program or upgrades led to the inclusion of design features that cater to the elderly, children, and women, such as speed breakers, rumble strips, and cautionary and informative signages where needed.

II. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR

1. Participatory approaches and program activities. The investment program uses a participatory, pro-poor approach. The design phase follows the approach outlined in the state-specific community participation framework (CPF) prepared during the approval of the multitranches financing facility and disclosed on the ADB website.^d The CPFs include a comprehensive consultation process, with the requirement of conducting transect walks with community residents along each program road and the objective of selecting the alignment that best suits the community's needs and minimizes adverse social impacts. Another key objective is to identify affected households and, among these, vulnerable individuals, who will then be linked with state- or national government-sponsored poverty alleviation schemes. The findings and discussion resulting from transect walks are documented by the project implementation consultant and have proven

effective in improving road designs or screening for roads that do not fulfill the CPF criteria. Transect walks took place along all the 204 roads to be financed under tranche 2.

2. Civil society's role. Civil society was consulted during program design. Notices with program information were disclosed prior to the transect walks, and compliance reports were prepared and disclosed on the ADB website (footnote d).

3. Civil society organizations. Given the nature of the program, which has minimal social and environmental impacts, the participation of civil society organizations was limited to information sharing during the overall consultation process.

4. The following forms of civil society organization participation are envisaged during project implementation, rated as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA)?

M Information gathering and sharing **L** Consultation **L** Collaboration **N/A** Partnership

5. Participation Plan. Yes. No.

Detailed guidelines for community consultations and support to the poor and vulnerable are included in the state-specific CPFs. Community members are represented in the grievance redress committee established for each program road.

III. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender mainstreaming category: Effective gender mainstreaming (EGM)

A. Key issues

The investment program is classified *effective gender mainstreaming*, and a gender action plan (GAP) was developed. The initial gender analysis highlighted the benefits of all-weather roads in improving women's access to educational and health services. Consultations with women confirmed their support for greater connectivity and their need to access secondary education facilities, health services, and markets. These expectations were shared during the transect walks with women across the five states, representing close to 26% of total participants.

Moreover, experience from implementing ongoing GAPs of earlier ADB-financed assistance shows that the program can create income-generating opportunities for women. Female representation was not uniform, however, and depended on their current workload and social status. Women and girls also benefit from the road safety awareness sessions that take place at the schools bordering the program roads. Previous assistance has demonstrated good progress in achieving subproject-specific GAPs. But more broadly, women comprise approximately 20% of participants in transect walks, 22% of grievance redress committee members, and about 30% of the road construction workforce. The new investment program will continue to leverage program benefits for women.

B. Key actions

Gender action plan Other actions or measures No action or measure

Tranche 2 is classified *effective gender mainstreaming*, and a GAP specific to the program was prepared taking into account the lessons from the ongoing implementation of earlier ADB assistance. Gender activities and targets that were not implemented or achieved have been revised to reflect this experience. The key targets of this GAP are (i) women's participation in construction activities (33% of the construction workforce); (ii) women's participation in road design (20% of transect walk participants); (iii) women's participation in grievance redress committees (30% of members); (iv) 15% of PMGSY engineers trained are women; and (v) schoolgirls' participation in road safety awareness campaigns (40% of participants).

IV. ADDRESSING SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES

A. Involuntary Resettlement

Safeguard Category: A B C FI

1. Key impacts. Road improvements will take place in existing rights-of-way. Where small strips of land will be required in a few cases of minor widening and realignment, voluntary land donation will be provided to the community member as an option within the PMGSY framework. The guidelines of the state-specific CPF ensure that affected persons will directly benefit from better roads and no donation will severely adversely impact their living standards. The CPF is disclosed on the ADB website (footnote d).

2. Strategy to address the impacts. Specific procedural requirements involving comprehensive consultations with the communities are provided in the state-specific CPF. The project implementation units will secure a memorandum of understanding with each affected individual who will voluntarily donate land, verified by a third party. A grievance redress committee will be set up for each project road.

3. Plan or other actions.

Community Participation Framework

B. Indigenous Peoples

Safeguard Category: A B C FI

1. Key impacts. The census survey identified scheduled tribes along program roads in all five states. However, scheduled tribes are considered not falling under the meaning of indigenous peoples in the Safeguard Policy Statement (SPS) because they are largely assimilated into the local population and they do not have collective attachment to land. The program will not have any differentiated impact on scheduled tribes. They will receive similar benefits from the investment program as the general community and will not be rendered vulnerable because of it.

Is broad community support triggered? Yes No

2. Strategy to address the impacts. The CPFs identify special provisions for all scheduled tribe households, ensuring that their living standards are not adversely affected by the program.

3. Plan or other actions.
 No action

V. ADDRESSING OTHER SOCIAL RISKS

A. Risks in the Labor Market

1. Relevance of the program for the country's or region's or sector's labor market, indicated as high (H), medium (M), and low or not significant (L).
 L unemployment L underemployment L retrenchment L core labor standards
 This project has no impact on the country's labor market.

2. Labor market impact. During construction, jobs will be available to men and women from the local communities.

B. Affordability
 No affordability issues arise from the proposed road interventions.

C. Communicable Diseases and Other Social Risks

1. The impact of the following risks are rated as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):
 L Communicable diseases L Human trafficking Others (please specify) _____

2. Risks to people in the program area. The social risks of the project on local communities are perceived to be minimal. Still, the executing agency will ensure that civil work contractors (i) comply with national labor laws such as the prohibition of child labor, and (ii) disseminate information among workers and communities in the project sites on the risks of sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS. The executing agency will strictly monitor compliance during implementation.

VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. Targets and indicators. Impact assessment indicators and a baseline were established by the technical support consultant in consultation with ADB. An impact assessment report will be produced for each state.

2. Required human resources. Social experts will be included in the team of consultants and have been adequately budgeted for. ADB's social development specialist will oversee the implementation and monitoring of the program.

3. Information in FAM. The frequency of program reviews, monitoring, and timing of completion reports is included in the facility administration manual.

4. Monitoring tools. Monitoring will be undertaken on a day-to-day level by the program implementation units. The program implementation consultant will undertake monthly monitoring. The technical support consultant will undertake overall monitoring of the safeguards and any social issues, and submit annual monitoring reports.

^a ADB. Forthcoming. *Country Partnership Strategy: India, 2018–2022*. Manila.

^b Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and West Bengal.

^c Government of India. Planning Commission. 2013. [Press Note on Poverty Estimate, 2011–12](#).

^d Reports were disclosed on the [ADB website](#) on 25 August 2017.

Source: Asian Development Bank.