

INTEGRATED SAFEGUARDS DATA SHEET CONCEPT STAGE

Report No.: ISDSC9849

Date ISDS Prepared/Updated: 17-Mar-2015

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I. BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country:	India	Project ID:	P151072
Project Name:	National Agricultural Higher Education Project (P151072)		
Task Team Leader(s):	Edward William Bresnyan		
Estimated Appraisal Date:	03-Aug-2015	Estimated Board Date:	27-Oct-2015
Managing Unit:	GFADR	Lending Instrument:	Investment Project Financing
Sector(s):	Agricultural extension and research (50%), Tertiary education (30%), Agro-industry, marketing, and trade (10%), Public administration- Education (5%), Information technology (5%)		
Theme(s):	Education for the knowledge economy (35%), Managing for development results (5%), Rural services and infrastructure (30%), Improving labor markets (20%), Rural policies and institutions (10%)		
Financing (In USD Million)			
Total Project Cost:	165.00	Total Bank Financing:	82.50
Financing Gap:	0.00		
Financing Source			Amount
BORROWER/RECIPIENT			82.50
International Development Association (IDA)			82.50
Total			165.00
Environmental Category:	B - Partial Assessment		
Is this a Repeater project?	No		

B. Project Objectives

The project development objective is to increase educational relevance and quality in selected State Agricultural Universities.

Equity, especially gender and caste-based equity, is a cross-cutting theme of the proposed project and would be tracked through the key performance indicators.

C. Project Description

The proposed project addresses strategic reforms in agricultural higher education at the state level (targeting SAUs) and the central level (focused on ICAR). Selected SAUs would pilot a range of innovations in education, research and extension under diverse settings. In so doing, these SAUs will test options to create 21st century educational institutions to successfully meet the current and future challenges facing India's agricultural sector. These institutions will attract a diverse cadre of high-quality students, train them with labor-market relevant skills, nurture research talent and ensure knowledge flows between lab and land. The second set of reforms will empower ICAR by strengthening its capacity to provide strategic support to SAUs nationwide.

The project would likely consist of three components:

Component 1 – Support to State Agricultural Universities – addresses the need to raise educational quality and relevance in SAUs and create knowledge and technology hubs for priority themes in support of agricultural transformation. The component, which would absorb most of project finance, would have two sub-components:

Sub-component 1a – Investments toward 21st Century State Agricultural Universities – would target reform-ready SAUs and States (applying verifiable criteria) and support Institutional Development Plans (IDPs), developed through multi-stakeholder processes, that undertake key governance reforms, finance new and refurbished research and teaching facilities, curricula and faculty development, training for administrators, strengthening locally relevant research, student placement and technical assistance. Supported IDPs would also emphasize universities' exploring of alternative income streams, such as: tuition; alumni contributions; competitively-selected research projects; patents; joint ventures; extension services; consultancy services; and special courses for mid-career professionals. These diverse activities would not only generate own financial resources for SAUs, but also link them to the national and global knowledge economy, thereby further enhancing their relevance. By focusing on income-earning capacity, SAUs would also create openings for sustained private sector participation. Suitable twinning arrangements with foreign universities would also be explored, as would innovative pilots for research dissemination and mechanisms for internal revenue generation.

Sub-component 1b – Investments in Centers for Advanced Agricultural Science and Technology – would support SAUs in establishing interdisciplinary centers for teaching, research and extension on critical agriculture and rural development topics (e.g., agricultural adaptation to climate change; land and water use efficiency, scalable technology and mechanization, agro-industry, agro-entrepreneurship). Multi-stakeholder consultations would inform the selection of geographic locations and core themes under the sub-component. The sub-component would finance research and teaching equipment, faculty and scientist development fellowships, scholarships, and costs associated with twinning arrangements with similar centers outside and within India.

Component 2 – Investments in ICAR for Leadership in Agricultural Higher Education – would: (a) empower ICAR by financing its own internal reforms to enhance its effectiveness in coordinating, guiding and managing agricultural research and education nationwide; and (b) support ICAR in its interactions with SAUs and key stakeholders nationwide through interventions that increase the quality and relevance of agricultural education. The component would have two sub-components:

Sub-component 2a – Investments in ICAR to support excellence in SAUs – would leverage ICAR’s comparative advantage in assessing systemic challenges across all SAUs and incubating solutions. Among the interventions financed would be: (a) digital information systems for SAU data collection and analysis to improve quality metrics in agricultural higher education; (b) an improved curricula review process to tighten its relevance in today’s dynamic job market; (c) enhanced methods to consolidate and disseminate global best-practices (e.g., benchmarking) in agricultural higher education; and (d) institutionalization of stakeholder and advisory inputs to better inform research, education and extension across the SAU system.

Subcomponent 2b – ICAR innovation grants to SAUs – would be open to all SAUs nationwide and support interventions that would include: (a) quality assurance (e.g., accreditation); (b) next-generation management information and financial management systems to increase transparency and administrative efficiency; (c) campus student placement offices to facilitate stronger linkages between academics and future employment opportunities; (d) theme-based competitive grants to students, faculty and academic departments to promote inter-state and international collaboration, including matching funds from the private sector; and (e) needs-based equipment, training and technical assistance.

Component 3 – Project Management and Learning – would support ICAR’s project management, primarily through its Education Division, to administer, supervise, monitor and evaluate overall project implementation. The component would also support the formation of an external advisory board to guide ICAR throughout project implementation.

D. Project location and salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

The proposed project would target a subset of the 63 State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) across India, based on selection criteria that are currently being developed and would form part of the Project Operational Manual. Institutional Development Plans would finance goods, works, consulting services and non-consulting services for these SAUs on existing campuses. All activities will take place on existing land and no new land acquisition is envisioned.

E. Borrowers Institutional Capacity for Safeguard Policies

IICAR is well versed with the Bank’s safeguards arrangements and has previously implemented several Bank-funded projects (e.g., National Agriculture Technology Project, National Agricultural Innovation Project). The safeguards performance for most of these projects was rated Satisfactory. Apart from Bank-financed projects, ICAR operates a series of research laboratories, which have standards in place for laboratory management and emergency protocols. Some amount of capacity building would be required to ensure that disposal of biological material and other laboratory chemicals adhere to prescribed norms. ICAR will undertake an Environmental Assessment and lessons learned from previous and ongoing projects with ICAR will be incorporated in the safeguards management plan for the proposed project.

F. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

Anupam Joshi (GENDR)

Smrithi Talwar (GSURR)

II. SAFEGUARD POLICIES THAT MIGHT APPLY

Safeguard Policies	Triggered?	Explanation (Optional)
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Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	Yes	This is triggered to screen the proposed investments against any potential adverse impacts.
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04	No	The proposed project would not finance any activity that may endanger any critical (or other) natural habitat.
Forests OP/BP 4.36	No	The proposed project does not finance any activity that involves forests.
Pest Management OP 4.09	Yes	Although the proposed project would not promote pesticides or chemical fertilizers, any residual risk emerging from using small amounts of pesticides or other agrochemicals on farmer's fields for research activities prescribed in the project (e.g., demonstration plots) would be addressed through the development of integrated pest management practices for the project as a part of the management plans.
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11	No	Small construction activities executed under the proposed project would primarily involve retrofitting existing buildings or developing laboratory extension facilities in existing university campuses. Thus, no excavations or deep digging would occur.
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	TBD	The societal composition of participating states (to be determined) may trigger this policy. It may also be triggered in the event of a request for academic infrastructure, whose establishment may impact indigenous communities. State-level targeting would be finalized during project preparation, after which a final determination would be made regarding triggering the policy.
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	No	The proposed interventions would occur on existing campuses of State Agricultural Universities and no additional land acquisition would take place. There are no issues of encroachment in any of the public lands to be used.
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37	No	No dams are involved.
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50	No	No international waterways are involved.
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60	No	No disputed areas would be covered under the proposed project.

III. SAFEGUARD PREPARATION PLAN

A. Tentative target date for preparing the PAD Stage ISDS: 05-Jun-2015

B. Time frame for launching and completing the safeguard-related studies that may be needed. The specific studies and their timing¹ should be specified in the PAD-stage ISDS:

¹ Reminder: The Bank's Disclosure Policy requires that safeguard-related documents be disclosed before appraisal (i) at the InfoShop and (ii) in country, at publicly accessible locations and in a form and language that are accessible to potentially affected persons.

As the proposed project does not pose any major environmental issues, only an Environmental and Social Management Framework would be prepared and completed by Appraisal. ESMF will: (i) consider issues of civil works in refurbishing buildings and laboratory construction, upgrade, and use; (ii) provide for screening of innovation grants if they are expected to have a physical footprint or include use of hazardous materials; and (iii) include an assessment of the barriers that vulnerable groups, such as scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and women, face in accessing agricultural education, teaching and research opportunities; and propose measures to address these barriers, given the project's focus on ensuring equity.

The societal composition of participating states (once they are determined) may independently trigger safeguards policies in relation to indigenous peoples. A firm assessment of whether OP/BP 4.10 is triggered is therefore postponed at this stage and would be confirmed during project preparation.

A participation strategy would be developed to ensure that the multi-stakeholders consultations planned to inform the selection of geographic locations and core themes under sub-component 1b include representation from, among others, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women's NGOs. This will be important to ensure that social issues are considered in SAU selection and the specific activities supported under the project.

During preparation, any proposed activities that could benefit Tribal Peoples (e.g., strengthening locally relevant research, student placement and technical assistance) would also be identified as would potential issues and appropriate measures, as relevant, regarding patents on indigenous knowledge.

IV. APPROVALS

Task Team Leader(s):	Name: Edward William Bresnyan	
<i>Approved By:</i>		
Safeguards Advisor:	Name: Francis V. Fragano (SA)	Date: 18-Mar-2015
Practice Manager/ Manager:	Name: Simeon Kacou Ehui (PMGR)	Date: 01-Apr-2015