

## NPRS-PRF Poverty Funds<sup>1</sup>

### Thematic Study – Pro-Poor Infrastructure

#### [Draft Summary]

#### 1. Key Outcomes and Lessons

##### **Maximizing the Impact of Infrastructure on Poverty Reduction**

Both the direct and the indirect contributions of infrastructure services to poverty eradication are now widely recognised. Infrastructure can create opportunities for increasing the employment intensity of economic growth and the creation of additional employment. Infrastructure investments can also contribute to the non-income aspects of poverty, including the poor's participation in education and improved access to health services, which can be greatly facilitated by improved infrastructure such as roads, transport, telecommunications, and electricity.

In the case of transport sector, one way to maximize poverty reduction impact would be bring the access closer to the remote poor by linking the highways/expressways and other main corridors with local roads. The work in People's Republic of China (TA 4322<sup>2</sup>-PRC *Poverty impact of area-wide networks in China*) and Viet Nam (TA 4028-VIE *Transport services – networks for the poor in Viet Nam*) are both good examples of integrated planning approaches that can maximise the poverty reducing benefits of investments in roads. The project in Bangladesh (TA 4707-BAN *Participation of the Urban Poor in Municipal Governance in Bangladesh*) demonstrates how poor groups can be directly involved in planning processes, voicing their needs in developing new infrastructure. Planning for new infrastructure also needs to consider the impacts that can lead to reductions in non-income and income poverty. The research carried out under RETA 6171 (*Assessing poverty impacts of cross-border development interventions in the Greater Mekong Subregion*) shows how infrastructure investments can impact differently on different groups, creating both opportunities and new risks.

##### **Infrastructure for the Poor**

The case studies illustrate the work of ADB in encouraging participation by community groups and encouraging bottom-up, local-level infrastructure planning and management processes. These include the projects in which the choice of technology and type of infrastructure directly affects the life of the poor; and, in remote areas where connection to the main grid/system is not possible and where support to decentralized infrastructure could be the only option so that the poor remote communities can be self-sufficient.

Infrastructure investments that are focused specifically on the poor are most effective when based on participation by the poor, as work on the development of participatory assessments for water supply and sanitation interventions showed (RETA 6224 *Participatory methods to assess pro-poor impact of water supply and sanitation projects*). When making such investments there is also a need to consider not just

technical and economic considerations but also the environmental, social, and political factors, which can impact on poor peoples' lives. The project in PRC (TA 4402-PRC *Heating supply for urban poor in Liaoning Province*) looked in detail at the current situation and potential impacts to develop an urban heating supply strategy that was sustainable and responsive to the needs of the urban poor.

### **Mitigating Impacts**

As a regional institution focused on poverty reduction, ADB aims to promote sustainable, inclusive economic growth whilst at the same time ensuring that it manages any risks and adverse impacts among the poor and vulnerable resulting from infrastructure investments. Often there have been negative rather than positive consequences for poor people, including environmental damage in which the poor are most vulnerable; the spread of HIV/AIDS linked with the expansion of transport services; land tenure issues, new disease risks resulting from major dams; illegal logging; exploitation of wildlife; human rights abuses in the displacement of people from shelter or livelihood opportunities; and too costly measures to mitigate these abuses.

Mitigating the potentially negative effects of infrastructure development is a critical part of infrastructure investment considerations, building in safeguards for those who may suffer negative effects. In RETA 6190 (*Preventing the trafficking of women and children and promoting safe migration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region*) worked to assess the increased risks of human trafficking as a result of infrastructure development and to raise awareness among those likely to be affected. Similarly in PRC (TA 4142-PRC *Fighting poverty through HIV/AIDS on road projects in Yunnan Province*) an HIV/AIDS prevention plan was developed alongside a road construction program to mitigate against the potential of spreading the disease along new truck routes. Finally research in Phnom Penh and Dhaka (RETA 6130 *Study of urban violence in Asia; towards more effective urban targeting – Dhaka and Phnom Penh*) was used to collate common lessons and develop options to mitigate urban violence and enhance public safety and security in rapidly developing urban areas.

## **2. Summary Case Studies**

### **Increasing the Impact of Infrastructure**

TA 4322-PRC: *Poverty Impact of Area-wide Networks* sought to reduce regional disparities, tap into new sources of livelihoods, access vital services and raise incomes through area-wider road networks. The project tried to initiate a pro-poor road network project planning process through three strategies. First, by developing an integrated and sustainable road network development strategy; second, by recommending a central Government mechanism to fund local road investments; and third, improving the government's feasibility study methodology and guidelines to facilitate the planning and selection of road network projects.

Regional TA 6171-GMS: *Assessing Poverty Impacts of Cross-Border Development Interventions in GMS* was prepared to provide insights into the influence that regional integration has had on the lives of the poor in border provinces. Fieldwork carried out on economic, social, governance, and resource interactions found that the new wave of regional economic integration (REI) is creating new livelihood opportunities that are critical to the survival of the poor.

TA 4707-BAN: *Involving the Urban Poor in Municipal Governance* was designed specifically to involve the poor and incorporate bottom-up community infrastructure planning and management. It sought to establish mechanisms and processes for the participation of the urban poor in municipal governance in selected municipalities by: developing the capacity of town-level coordination committees (TLCCs), ward commissioners (WCs) and other key municipal officials in pro-poor planning processes; establishing municipal forums for the participation of the urban poor; and, showcasing good practice.

TA 4028-VIE: *Reducing the Physical Isolation of Viet Nam's Rural Poor* examined ways to improve mobility for the rural poor in Viet Nam by looking at both the demand and supply side of transport, followed by a proposed methodology for prioritising transport investments from a network perspective. The technical assistance also included three surveys on transport and the development of a transparent, easy to use methodology for prioritising road investments including indicators which could be used both for long-term/broad policy interventions and immediate/specific measures or actions.

### **Infrastructure for the Poor**

TA4402-PRC: *Improving heating supply for the urban poor* was designed to reform the urban heating sector and promote urban heating supply in the PRC by formulating pro-poor national heating tariff guidelines, establishing an effective heating tariff collection mechanism and developing heating assistance programs for the urban poor. Through the implementation of guidelines, action plans, an international field study and seminar, the TA significantly contributed to the production of a heating supply strategy for the Province that was sustainable and responsive to the needs of the urban poor.

RETA 6224: *Participatory methods to assess pro-poor impact of water supply and sanitation projects* was designed to develop an operational model that improves the capacity of government agencies, implementing agencies, program managers, and communities to design, plan, implement, and monitor pro-poor and participatory water supply and sanitation projects. The RETA's output included an enhanced methodology for participatory assessments for water supply and sanitation interventions in villages of Sri Lanka and Viet Nam.

### **Mitigating Impacts**

The purpose of RETA 6190-GMS: *Preventing the Trafficking of Girls and Women and Promoting Safe Migration for Women in the GMS* was to try and mitigate against the risk of unsafe migration of vulnerable groups and instead, support safe migration, especially of women and children. To achieve this, the project encouraged sub-regional cooperation in the GMS through policy dialogue; targeted research; awareness raising among vulnerable communities and groups; pilot support services to reduce the vulnerability of target communities to trafficking (and aid those affected); and finally, management and coordination between these various components.

RETA 6130: *The Rising Tide of Violence in Asia's Cities* was an intervention focused not only on reducing violence, but on understanding its underlying causes. Specifically, the goal was to collate common lessons and suitable options to mitigate urban violence and enhance public safety and security in urban areas. Based on comparative analysis of Phnom Penh and Dhaka, the project employed various research methodologies which included participatory action research, focus group discussions, community surveys,

individual interviews, and on site-observations with a range of stakeholders (including city dwellers themselves).

TA 4142-PRC: *Combining Road Building and HIV/AIDS Prevention in Yunnan* aimed to develop as HIV/AIDS prevention plan alongside the road building. Combining an integrated package of interventions covering the health sector, behavioural change, condom social marketing, community mobilization and policy and structural change, it was focused specifically on construction workers, commercial sex workers, truck drivers and local communities.

---

<sup>1</sup> NPRS stands for the Cooperation Fund in Support of the Formulation and Implementation of National Poverty Reduction Strategies contributed by the Government of the Netherlands, while the PRF stands for the Poverty Reduction Cooperation Fund contributed by the Government of the United Kingdom, Department for International Development.

<sup>2</sup> Amounts that each TA were funded were as follows:

TA4322-PRC: Poverty Impact of Arterial Roads Networks (PRF \$1,000,000)

TA4028-VIE: Transport Services Networks for the Poor (PRF \$350,000)

TA4707-BAN: Participation of Urban Poor in Municipal Governance (PRF \$480,000)

RETA 6171-Greater Mekong Sub-region: Assessing poverty impacts of cross-border development initiatives (NPRS \$850,000)

RETA 6224-Inter-regional: Participatory methods to assess pro-poor impact of water supply and sanitation projects (PRF \$550,000)

TA 4402-People's Republic of China: Heating supply for urban poor in Liaoning Province (PRF \$500,000)

RETA 6190-Greater Mekong Sub-region: Preventing the trafficking of women and children and promoting safe migration in the GMS (PRF \$700,000)

TA 4142-People's Republic of China: Fighting poverty through HIV/AIDS on road projects in Yunnan Province (PRF \$800,000)

RETA 6130-Inter-regional: Study of urban violence in Asia: towards more effective urban targeting, Dhaka and Phnom Penh (PRF \$150,000)