

Executive Summary

In the challenging environment of postconflict rehabilitation and reconstruction, the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) experience in Timor-Leste provides practitioners with effective analytical tools and methods to: (i) assess the political, economic, social, and gender aspects of road transport investments and planning projects; (ii) identify relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries; and (iii) select realistic and well-targeted interventions that promote gender-balanced poverty reduction.

The road sector is the dominant mode of transport in Timor-Leste due to the lack of domestic civil aviation, limited nature of sea transport, and impossibility of river transport. The country has a substantial road network of 6,000 kilometers (km), including 3,000 km of rural roads that cross remote and mountainous terrain. About half of the road network is paved. However, the condition of the network—and of the rural road network, in particular—is generally poor, severely limiting people's access to basic social services (e.g., education and health care) and local markets in rural areas, where three quarters of the total population live. Insufficient funding and a lack of coherent planning hamper maintenance of the road network. This calls for greater involvement of local communities through labor-intensive and community-based construction and maintenance of rural feeder roads. The Government of Timor-Leste (GOTL) recognizes that infrastructure is of overarching importance to all sectors of the economy and society, and that improving infrastructure, especially the transport system, is critical to fostering private sector growth, improving agricultural productivity, reducing poverty, promoting investment and human development, and strengthening the capacity to deliver social services. Implementing sustainable strategies for the maintenance of rural access roads is critical to providing the rural poor with access to basic services.

In this context, an ADB-financed feasibility study team assessed the road sector and developed initiatives for the GOTL to improve and maintain the nation's road network over the next decade, of which the first-

year investment program has been primarily funded by an ADB grant. The project was designed to specifically include socially and culturally acceptable interventions so that traditionally excluded and disadvantaged groups such as women and the poor would be key agents and beneficiaries. The proposed first-year project, with construction to start in 2007, consists of four main components: (i) rehabilitation of three roads that consist of the following road links: Viqueque–Uatucarbau, Aituto–Betulala, Betulala–Same, Oeleu–Lourba, and Lourba–Zumalai; (ii) labor-intensive maintenance of Illiomar–Loapalos Road; (iii) community empowerment initiative; and (iv) institutional strengthening of the Public Works Department of Timor-Leste. The project includes the following socially inclusive and gender-responsive design features:

- vehicle fleet transformation program,
- labor-intensive maintenance,
- involvement of women,
- connection of rural areas with community-based initiatives,
- community empowerment initiative,
- budget allocation, and
- specific assurances.

This case study gives a thorough account of how ADB and the feasibility study team developed socially inclusive and gender-responsive project design features that are specific to the context of Timor-Leste. The methods and tools used include various stakeholder consultations and field data collection efforts that provided the groundwork for the social analysis and the distribution and poverty analysis (DPA). Based on the team's experience and international good practices, the following were identified as the most critical and practical interventions in developing socially inclusive and gender-responsive transport projects:

- commitment to social inclusion and gender mainstreaming;
- comprehensive poverty, social, and gender analyses;
- need for women's involvement in road infrastructure governance;
- engaging men on gender issues and concerns;
- encouraging community buy-in and maximizing stakeholder consultations;
- providing innovative options;

- partnering with local and international nongovernment organizations; and
- developing a project-specific gender action plan.

The analytical tools and methods used in this case study can be applied to transport sector projects in other developing member countries. Since countries vary in many aspects, including size, sociocultural norms, government structures, history, education levels, gender roles, poverty levels, infrastructure capacity, and institutional structure, such methods must be tailored to the country or region in which they are applied. These factors affect the design of transport projects, and therefore, they should be considered at the start of project identification and throughout the design process to select the best methods and tools for a specific country. The case study follows this outline:

- *Chapter I, Introduction: Lessons from Past Projects for the Timor-Leste Transport Project* summarizes good practices by ADB and other development parties in incorporating social and gender concerns in infrastructure-related projects, including transport. The Road Sector Improvement Project adopted some of these practices.
- *Chapter II, Stakeholder Consultations and Data Collection for the Project* outlines the methods used by the feasibility study team to (i) conduct various stakeholder consultations to collect primary data, including field consultations for the social analysis and DPA; (ii) identify locations for fieldwork based on secondary data; (iii) and develop and test appropriate questionnaires.
- *Chapter III, Poverty and Social/Gender Analyses for the Project* presents, based on the stakeholder consultations and collected primary and secondary data, the project's (i) poverty incidence and number of expected project beneficiaries; (ii) social/gender analysis to identify the expected impacts on vulnerable groups, such as women; and (iii) DPA to determine the expected distribution of project benefits among key stakeholder groups, structural constraints, and recommended complementary actions to increase the benefits to the poor.

- *Chapter IV, Socially Inclusive and Gender-Responsive Design Features of the Project* provides details on the social and gender features that were included in the project's final design based on the stakeholder consultations and data collected and the results of the social/gender analysis and DPA.
- *Chapter V, Successful Approaches in Designing Socially Inclusive and Gender-Responsive Transport Projects* summarizes the approaches used for the Road Sector Improvement Project in identifying and incorporating its socially inclusive and gender-responsive design features.
- *Chapter VI, Conclusion: Lessons from the Timor-Leste Transport Project for Future Transport Projects* summarizes the Road Sector Improvement Project's socially inclusive and gender-responsive design features, and the approaches used to identify and incorporate them in project design, which could serve as guideposts for future transport projects in Timor-Leste and other countries.