

SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

Country:	Bangladesh	Project Title:	South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Road Connectivity Project
Lending/Financing Modality:	Project Loan	Department/Division:	South Asia / Transportation and Communications

I. POVERTY ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY**A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy**

Bangladesh has reduced its poverty levels and improved living standards significantly despite global economic shocks and natural calamities. The national poverty headcount has declined to 32% in 2010 from 40% in 2005.^a The Bangladesh National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction II articulates that the country operates within an integrated world and that reliable transportation linkages within the country and region are a priority. One of the five strategic blocks is focused on improving essential infrastructure for pro-poor growth; it states that the vision of road transport is to achieve a well-maintained, cost-effective, and safe road network. The strategy emphasizes that road development is critical to socioeconomic development and poverty reduction. An improved road communication system reduces road user costs and costs of production, facilitating socioeconomic development. It contributes to the reduction of poverty by creating employment opportunities for all, including women; increasing workers' mobility; and facilitating the distribution of capital and consumption goods. It contributes to the expansion of markets, augmentation of regional balance, and creation of investment opportunities—all of which are conducive to economic growth and poverty reduction. It supports human resource development through improved access to health and education services.^b

The project demonstrates a clear linkage to the country partnership strategy of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Bangladesh, 2011–2015, as well as Bangladesh's 6th Five Year Plan, FY2011–2015, and the government's Road Master Plan, 2007–2026.^c This project will contribute to the strategy and plans by (i) providing for improvement of strategic links of the main Asian Highway Number 2 and South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Highway Corridor Numbers 4 and 8 to four-lane standard, with safety features including a separate lane for slow-moving traffic and construction of flyovers at busy junctions; (ii) improving two land ports, which will facilitate regional transport connectivity; and (iii) improving the institutional capacity of the Road and Highways Department (RHD) by modernizing its facilities and equipment.

B. Poverty Analysis Targeting Classification: General Intervention (GI)**Key issues:**

Road component. The road will contribute to economic and social development in the north central region by providing better and uninterrupted transport to and from Dhaka and other commercial centers. Regional products will have wider and quicker access to the country's large markets. At the same time, the road will contribute to the growth of industrialization in the region. The overall economic growth in the region will induce additional income and employment, thereby reducing poverty.

The immediate benefits of the road to the poor in the affected areas include employment in construction activities, additional employment in relocation-related exercises, and subsistence allowances and other benefits under resettlement and rehabilitation. Land acquisition and displacement would have caused impoverishment if resettlement and rehabilitation were not designed and implemented for the project. Wage laborers, businesspeople, contractors, and suppliers of raw materials will benefit from work and business during construction. The presence of construction workers and contractors will generate demand for daily necessities, creating scope for improved business.

The project will have significant impacts on various sectors of the economy at the regional and local levels. Road users will enjoy reduced cost of travel and transportation in terms of time and money, safety and comfort, and freight security. This will encourage higher mobility of people for increased trade and income. The potential long-term economic benefits of the road improvement to poverty reduction are (i) a reduction in the cost of travel and transportation to increase people's mobility, (ii) increased access to non-agriculture employment as a result of higher mobility, (iii) increased scope for education and training at higher levels, (iv) diversification in agriculture for access to wider markets, (v) lower prices of farm and commercial inputs and higher prices for agricultural produce, (vi) lower prices of commodities in local markets, (vii) improved

access to specialized medical services, and (viii) creation of local level employment as a result of industrialization and development of market linkages.

Land port component. The near-border population is relatively financially well-off and will likely benefit from the predicted growth in passenger and goods traffic around the land ports. Demand for local commercial services will grow.

Roads and Highways Department institutional development component. The RHD headquarters will be constructed on a contained piece of land in Dhaka. Commercial vendors around the project site will benefit in the short term from construction activities. Once the headquarters is operational, RHD staff working on the compound will increase demand for commercial activities.

II. SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY

A. Findings of Social Analysis

Key Issues

Road component. The road passes through two districts where an estimated 6.9 million people reside. The social and poverty analysis found that project-affected persons were in favor of the project and believed that the project would provide the northwest and north central region with improved road network; and provide improved access between the northwestern region and the mainstream development of the country, which is located in the central and southwest regions. Aside from providing improved transport services, the road will reduce travel time and vehicle operating costs.

Land port component. The land ports are located in Benapole (population 49,000) and Burimari (population 25,000). They operate within a contained walled compound. The subproject will help increase the effectiveness and efficiency of transshipment practices, which could contribute to increased revenue of the two land ports. This will likely contribute to the economic growth of the surrounding areas.

Roads and Highways Department institutional development component. The area around the RHD headquarters is highly urbanized. The area of Tajgaon contains several industries, commercial areas, and residential areas. Commercial vendors around the project site will benefit in the short and long term.

B. Consultation and Participation

A sample of 20% of residents and other road users was selected from the immediate vicinity of the road for the social survey. In total, 1,903 households with a population of 8,709 along project roads were surveyed and participated in focus group discussions. Consultations were also held with primary and secondary stakeholders, including project beneficiaries, persons affected by involuntary resettlement, deputy commissioners and their supporting agencies, local governments, project consultants, nongovernment organizations, and Civil Society Organizations. The consultation process involved discussion of proposed project activities, benefits, and other impacts. This was also done to increase awareness of the project, to find out their needs and concerns, and to obtain suggestions for enhancing benefits and mitigating the negative impacts.

What level of C&P is envisaged during the project implementation and monitoring?

Information sharing Consultation Collaborative decision making Empowerment

Was a C&P plan prepared for project implementation? Yes No

Consultation and participation will take place. No separate C&P plan is prepared, but the approach for C&P is outlined in the resettlement plans.

C. Gender and Development Gender Mainstreaming Category: Some gender elements

Road component. Based on the social and poverty assessment survey, women account for about 48% of the affected population. About 64% of economically active women are engaged in household work, 3% participate in industries, and 3% are employed in other occupations. In some project areas, women participate in decision making in 90% of households. Women indicated that improved road conditions, especially a dedicated lane for slow-moving vehicles and pedestrians, would provide better and safer access to health services, higher levels of education, economic opportunities, and social interactions. During construction, women will be encouraged to participate in civil works and will receive equal pay for equal work. For road maintenance, local women will be engaged through labor contracting societies for routine maintenance. A minimum of 50% women will be employed for routine maintenance. They will be trained before starting and will be provided with safety equipment and simple tools.

Land port component. Awareness materials for human trafficking and prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) will be developed for within the land port compound, where the project interventions will be located. Other capacity building initiatives will be covered under the SASEC Trade Facilitation Program.^d

Roads and Highways Department institutional development component. Women RHD employees will be fully consulted in the design of the RHD headquarters building to ensure that gender-friendly designs are incorporated. The consultation will be led by the RHD Gender and Development Forum, which has been active since 2003.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Gender action plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other actions or measures <input type="checkbox"/> No action or measure			
III. SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES AND OTHER SOCIAL RISKS			
Issue	Significant/ Limited/ No Impact	Strategy to Address Issue	Plan or Other Measures Included in Design
Involuntary Resettlement	Significant	The road component will involve significant involuntary resettlement, affecting 2,224 households and requiring 18.911 hectares (ha) to be acquired. The land port component will not involve any resettlement. The RHD institutional development component will involve no land acquisition and 11 non-title households will be affected. Two resettlement plans have been prepared in accordance with ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement (2009) and government regulations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resettlement plan <input type="checkbox"/> Resettlement framework <input type="checkbox"/> Environment and social management system <input type="checkbox"/> No action
Indigenous Peoples	No Impact	The social impact assessment did not identify any indigenous peoples in the project influenced areas.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No action
Labor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Labor retrenchment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Core labor standards	Limited No impact No impact	Project construction is expected to generate employment opportunities for the local communities during construction. Implementing agencies will ensure that all civil works comply with all applicable labor laws, including men and women receiving equal pay for equal work and not employing child labor. Labor conditions within land ports will improve with enhanced facilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other action <input type="checkbox"/> No action
Affordability	No impact	Communities will benefit from better market prices, economic diversity, market accessibility, and reduced spoilage.	<input type="checkbox"/> Action <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No action
Other Risks and/or Vulnerabilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Human trafficking <input type="checkbox"/> Others (conflict, political instability, etc.)	Limited No impact No impact	The social assessments undertaken did not identify any significant risks in social aspects such as gender, HIV/AIDS, or human trafficking. However, the executing and/or implementing agencies will ensure that civil works contractors disseminate information at worksites on the risks of STIs, including HIV/AIDS, for those employed during construction. Contracts for all subprojects will include clauses on these undertakings and the government will monitor compliance strictly during project implementation. The executing and/or implementing agencies will conduct awareness programs on STIs and human trafficking.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Other action <input type="checkbox"/> No action
IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION			
Are social indicators included in the design and monitoring framework to facilitate monitoring of gender and social development activities and/or social impacts during project implementation? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

^a 2010 Household and Income Expenditure Survey.

^b Government of Bangladesh, Planning Commission. *National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction II (FY2009–11)*. Dhaka.

^c ADB. 2011. *Country Partnership Strategy: Bangladesh, 2011–2015*. Manila.

^d ADB. 2012. *South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Trade Facilitation Program*. Manila.