

SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

Country:	India	Project Title:	Maharashtra Rural Connectivity Improvement Project—Additional Financing
Lending/Financing Modality:	Project	Department/Division:	South Asia Department Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture 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	
<p>The Maharashtra Rural Connectivity Improvement Project and its proposed additional financing will support the construction and/or rehabilitation of 5,000 kilometers of rural roads and bridges over 34 districts. The project will (i) increase connectivity between rural communities, (ii) increase agricultural productivity, and (iii) improve access to rural socioeconomic centers and help increase market linkages, (iv) expand economic opportunities, and (v) improve economic well-being in rural areas. The project aligns with the State Government of Maharashtra's <i>Vision 2030</i> and ADB's country partnership strategy for India, 2018–2022.^a These overarching policy frameworks emphasize the pivotal role of rural infrastructure in poverty reduction and social development. Sector policies of the government highlight the need to develop farm facilities and infrastructure for post-harvest management, transport, marketing, and export so that farmers will get fair prices for their produce.^b The project aligns with Sustainable Development Goals 1, 8, 11, and 13, and will contribute to poverty reduction, inclusive growth, and social development.</p>	
B. Results from the Poverty and Social Analysis during PPTA or Due Diligence	
<p>1. Key poverty and social issues. Maharashtra has the second-largest population among India's states, and the sex ratio of the population is 1,000 males to 929 females.^c Maharashtra ranks among the states with the highest levels of income and development inequality. Despite the state's impressive and sustained economic growth, about 20 million people (17% of the state's population) still live below the national poverty line.^d Poverty is pronounced in rural areas; in 2012 on average about 24% of the population lived below the poverty line, with that figure rising to as much as 40% in some districts.^e While Maharashtra is India's leading industrial state, 68% of the population directly or indirectly depends on agriculture for their livelihood and subsistence.^f Maharashtra's rural communities face challenges: high levels of indebtedness, underemployment, vulnerability to minor and major shocks (market fluctuations, extreme weather events); lack of access to health, education, communications and technology; discrimination and marginalization by caste; and limited opportunities for livelihood improvement. Poor rural transport infrastructure is a major constraint to improving employment and economic opportunities for rural people.^g The project preparatory phase involved widespread consultations with about 42,000 people living in the project area. Local communities are overwhelmingly supportive of the project; many interviewees expressed a desire to improve mobility between commercial centers to improve their chances of finding economic and employment opportunities.</p> <p>2. Beneficiaries. The project will support about 2,331,000 primary beneficiaries—mostly people from rural households and communities located within a 1.5-kilometer walk of the upgraded project roads.^h Secondary beneficiaries will be those living in communities within a 3-hour round-trip walk of the project roads. Local women will benefit from the actions agreed in the gender action plan e.g., 25% of semiskilled and unskilled employment opportunities will be taken by women. These beneficiaries will benefit from improved all weather roads that result in lower travel costs and shorter travel time to commercial centers.</p> <p>3. Impact channels. The project will have an impact in terms of poverty reduction. It will directly benefit poor and vulnerable members of the community by employing them in road construction and offering additional income-generating opportunities. Indirect benefits to the rural population will accrue from: (i) increased agricultural productivity and improved access to markets and growth centers; and (ii) improved human mobility and access to services, including education and health-care facilities.</p> <p>4. Other social and poverty issues. Risks of human trafficking and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are quite prevalent in infrastructure development projects. The project will address these risks through awareness-raising activities targeting contractors and local communities in the project area. Due diligence findings suggest that direct interventions are already being undertaken in the project area by state agencies (the Women and Child Development Department and the National AIDS Control Organization). Collaborating nongovernment organizations will also assist.</p> <p>5. Design features. The project will promote balanced interregional and intra-regional development through enhanced rural connectivity, trade links, and marketing facilities. Road subprojects will use a community-based model to stimulate local consultation, participation, employment, and income-generation opportunities. Vehicle operating costs will decline because of improved road surfaces.</p>	
II. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR	
<p>1. Participatory approaches and project activities. The project is based on a participatory approach, with the local community involved throughout the project life cycle. During the preparation phase, ADB held extensive consultations with prospective project beneficiaries, civil society representatives (CSRs), local government representatives, and relevant state-level staff. ADB conducted stakeholder analysis via focus group discussions in sample project areas</p>	

to identify supply-side stakeholders (i.e., service providers) and demand-side stakeholders (i.e., beneficiaries); these analyses also identified possible ways to involve these groups during project implementation. The project administration manual includes a stakeholder communication strategy that will be implemented and monitored by six social and gender specialists (one in each of the project's six regional offices).

2. Civil society organizations. Project preparations involved consultations with CSRs along the project corridor of impact. ADB consultants recorded feedback provided by community representatives in social safeguards due diligence reports (SDDR) and integrated recommendations into the project road design and gender action plan (GAP). The project will target CSRs for ongoing consultation and information sharing throughout the life of the project. Civil society organizations will support the STI awareness-raising activities with local communities.

3. 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; (M) Consultation; (NA) Collaboration; (NA) Partnership

4. Participation plan. ADB prepared a stakeholders' communication strategy to ensure the participation of beneficiaries in infrastructure planning, construction, and management and encourage community ownership of the project. Project preparation involved extensive consultations with community members, including women, about the project components and benefits, alongside their roles and responsibilities.

☐ Yes. ☒ No. Stakeholder participation will be recorded in the environmental implementation plan monitoring, and an additional participation plan is not required.

III. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender mainstreaming category: effective gender mainstreaming

Key issues. Maharashtra has significant gender gaps in terms of access to education, health care, and employment opportunities. Women and girls are constrained by a gendered allocation of responsibilities and practices in the household and community that affect their mobility and use of transport. Women have less experience with travel because of the societal expectation that they stay closer to the home, maintaining the household routine; cooking, cleaning, and caring for infants and the elderly. Societal norms also prevent women from undertaking travel on their own. Rural women are often expected to travel in groups or with men for safety reasons. Women's reduced experience with and access to transport means that women are also less able to access services and exercise control over financial resources, and have fewer opportunities than men to alleviate the hardships they face.ⁱ

Women and girls seldom have time to undertake training or other actions to reduce their vulnerability because they are occupied with maintaining the household routine. Women are less likely than men to complete high school. About 20% of rural girls in Maharashtra are married before they reached 18 years of age.^j According to the 2011 census, 88.4% of men and only 75.9% of women in Maharashtra are literate.^c The 2011 census found that in Maharashtra only 36% of women aged 15–49 were employed, compared with 83% of men; and only 38% of employed women worked in nonagricultural occupations, compared with 69% of employed men. A major factor that serves to limit rural women's employability is poor transport networks.^k

Women of reproductive age, children, disabled persons, and seniors in particular require quality transport infrastructure to access health care. Research in India demonstrates that paved roads help increase the use of preventive health care by women and by households in general.^h Road connectivity and improved transport systems also enable families to opt for hospital deliveries, decreasing infant and child mortality (footnote g).

B. Key actions. The project's gender analysis highlighted the need to promote gender equality within communities and within the Maharashtra Rural Road Development Association. The executing agency prepared a GAP that includes activities and the associated indicators and targets. The GAP (i) guarantees local women's involvement in construction and maintenance training and employment; (ii) provides women and children with increased knowledge of road safety and increased awareness of gender-based violence (including sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and STI prevention); (iii) provides eligible Maharashtra Rural Road Development Association women staff within increased knowledge and skills on road safety awareness, road asset management, contract management, financial management, and climate-resilient design and construction; and (iv) ensures that all project outputs incorporate gender-inclusive designs.

☒ Gender action plan ☐ Other actions or measures ☐ No action or measure

IV. ADDRESSING SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES

A. Involuntary Resettlement

Safeguard Category: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ FI

1. Key impacts. During project preparation 100% of the project was screened for involuntary resettlement impacts. No involuntary land acquisition, or physical or economic displacement are required for the project. The SDDR provides details of the social safeguard screening along all 1,100 roads and 236 bridges of the additional financing.
2. Strategy to address the impacts. Not Applicable
3. Plan or other Actions.
No Action

<p>B. Indigenous Peoples</p> <p>1. Key impacts. The screening confirms that scheduled tribes are present within the project area as individual households living among broader communities rather than distinct indigenous peoples groups or communities. The project will not affect any distinct and vulnerable indigenous peoples groups.</p> <p>Is broad community support triggered? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>2. Strategy to address the impacts. No impact on indigenous peoples is anticipated.</p> <p>3. Plan or other actions.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Action</p>	<p>Safeguard Category: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> FI</p>
<p>V. ADDRESSING OTHER SOCIAL RISKS</p>	
<p>A. Risks in the Labor Market</p> <p>1. Relevance of the project for the country's or region's or sector's labor market, indicated as high (H), medium (M), and low or not significant (L).</p> <p>(M) unemployment; (M) underemployment; (L) retrenchment; (M) core labor standards.</p> <p>2. Labor market impact. Significant positive impact. Additional jobs in off-farm activities will be created through construction and maintenance of the project road sections. The project management unit (PMU) will ensure that bidding and contract documents include specific provisions requiring contractors to comply with: (i) applicable labor laws and national core labor standards on: (a) prohibition of child labor as defined in national legislation for construction and maintenance activities, (b) provision of equal wages and benefits to men and women for work of equal value, and (c) elimination of forced labor; and (ii) the requirements to disseminate information on STIs, including HIV/AIDS, to employees and local communities. These will be monitored as part of the project's safeguard and quarterly reporting requirements.</p>	
<p>B. Affordability. Not applicable.</p>	
<p>C. Communicable Diseases and Other Social Risks</p> <p>1. The impact of the following risks are rated as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):</p> <p>(L) Communicable diseases; (L) Human trafficking</p> <p>2. Risks to people in project area. The proportion of road subprojects requiring large numbers of non-local construction workers is low. The social assessment found there is a low risk of spreading communicable diseases, including STIs.</p>	
<p>VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION</p>	
<p>1. Targets and indicators. The indicators described in the DMF and GAP will be used to monitor the social aspects of the project.</p> <p>2. Required human resources. The PMU will have a social development and safeguards focal person. The implementation support consultant teams will have six social and gender specialists (one in each of the six regional offices) to support implementation of the GAP and SDDRs.</p> <p>3. Information in the project administration manual. The project administration manual includes instructions on the frequency of project reviews and monitoring reports and the timing of the project completion report.</p> <p>4. Monitoring tools. The implementation support consultant will undertake day-to-day monitoring. The PMU's social and gender specialists and environment specialists will undertake monitoring at least quarterly.</p>	

^a State Government of Maharashtra, Planning Department. 2018. *Vision 2030*. Mumbai; ADB. 2017. *Country Partnership Strategy: India, 2018–2022—Accelerating Inclusive Economic Transformation*. Manila.

^b Indian Agricultural Research Institute. 2018. *India's Agriculture Policy: Vision 2020*. Delhi; and Government of Maharashtra. 2015. *Maharashtra Agriculture Policy 2015*. Mumbai.

^c Census 2011. *Maharashtra Population 2011-2021*.

^d Government of India, Planning Commission. June 2014. *Report of the Expert Group to Review the Methodology for Measurement of Poverty*. Delhi.

^e World Bank Group. 2017. *Maharashtra: Poverty, Growth and Inequality*.

^f Government of India, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, National Statistical Office. 2020. *Annual Report on Periodic Labour Force Survey (July 2018–June 2019)*. Delhi.

^g S. Asher and P. Novosadz. 2016. *Market Access and Structural Transformation: Evidence from Rural Roads in India*. Job Market Paper.

^h The calculation of primary beneficiaries is based on the 2011 census data that estimates the population density of Maharashtra at 370 people per square kilometer.

ⁱ N. Sieber and H. Allen. 2016. *Impacts of Rural Roads on Poverty and Equity* in *Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific*. No. 86: Sustainable Rural Access. pp. 23–40. Bangkok: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

^j Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. 2010. *Under Age Marriage: District Level Household and Facility Survey, 2007–08 (DLHS-3). Fact Sheets India*. Mumbai: International Institute for Population Sciences, Deemed University. Based on marriages that occurred between 01/01/2004 and the survey date.

^k S. Ahmed and K. Nahiduzzaman. 2016. *Impacts of Rural Accessibility on Women Empowerment: The Case of South West Bangladesh*. In *Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific* No. 86 (footnote h).

^l R. Banerjee and A. Sachdeva. 2015. *Pathways to Preventive Health, Evidence from India's Rural Road Program*. USC Dornsife Institute for New Economic Thinking Research Paper No. 15–19.