



Initial Poverty and Social Analysis

Project Number: 56283-001
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India: Climate Resilient Brahmaputra Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Project in Assam

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CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(as of 27 January 2023)

Currency unit	–	Indian rupee (₹)
₹1.00	=	\$0.012275
\$1.00	=	₹81.4635

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
AIFRERMIP	–	Assam Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Program
CSO	–	civil society organization
DAG	–	disadvantage group
DMC	–	disaster management committee
RP	–	resettlement plan
SHG	–	self-help group
ST	–	Scheduled Tribe

NOTES

- (i) The fiscal year (FY) of the Government of India and its agencies ends on 31 March. "FY" before a calendar year denotes the year in which the fiscal year ends, e.g., FY2020 ends on 31 March 2020.
- (ii) In this report, "\$" refers to United States dollars.

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INITIAL POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Country:	India	Project Title:	Climate Resilient Brahmaputra Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Project in Assam
Lending/Financing Modality:	Project	Department/Division	South Asia Department/Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture Division

I. POVERTY IMPACT AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy

Continued ADB support for low-cost innovative riverbank erosion protection, in combination with climate resilient flood embankments and nonstructural measures, aims to reduce poverty and enhance disaster resilience. It aligns with the national development agenda, which has multipronged poverty elimination at its core.^a India's climate action strategies address inclusive growth through disaster resilient infrastructure.^b The most recent draft of the Assam State Climate Change Action Plan (2021-2030) includes strengthening embankments and riverbanks of the Brahmaputra River and Barak Valley.^c Increased climate resilience is an objective of Pillar 3 of ADB Country Partnership Strategy 2018–2022.^d The project addresses Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, and 15.

B. Poverty Targeting

☒ General Intervention ☐ Individual or Household (TI-H) ☐ Geographic (TI-G) ☐ Non-Income MDGs (TI-M1, M2, etc.)

The project is a general poverty targeting intervention that aims to reduce economic vulnerability and social disruption induced by flood and riverbank erosion in selected, highly flood and erosion prone areas. Assam is the largest and most populous state in Northeastern India and home to 31 million people, of which one-third live below the national poverty line.^e The incidence of poverty in Assam is the seventh highest in India, and the pace of poverty reduction is the country's slowest.^f Each project district has a high multidimensional poverty rate: Dhubri 51%, BARPETA 39%, Morigaon and Tinsukia 36%, Nagaon 31%, Dibrugarh 29%, and Dhemaji 28%.^g Vulnerability to flooding is an exacerbating factor of high poverty levels, particularly for DAGs.^h Economic growth in Assam, driven mainly by services, is among the lowest in the country (note f); the main differentiating factor for poverty across Assam's districts being per capita income. Furthermore, the state lags in many other development indicators, including poor infrastructure, remoteness, and inability to minimize the impacts of damages and loss of productivity from frequent flooding and riverbank erosion. The design and monitoring framework includes inclusive, pro-poor features: (i) agricultural and residential land protection, (ii) support for DAG livelihoods, and (iii) formation and training of SHGs and disaster management subcommittees in agriculture, fisheries, women's income generation, and women's empowerment.

C. Poverty and Social Analysis

1. Key issues and potential beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are project area local communities. In the Assam Brahmaputra Valley, almost 83% households are vulnerable to flood induced poverty.ⁱ Large scale floods have devastating effects: the 2022 flood that affected 34 of Assam's 35 districts, claimed 201 lives, damaged 315,000 houses and 244,000 hectares of cropped area, and adversely effected 8.8 million people in 10,000 villages.^j Flooding and erosion lower agricultural production; destroy land and productive assets; degrade wetlands that provide important ecosystem services (groundwater recharge, flood peak attenuation, fish habitat, etc); displaces people to embankments, unstable newly-accreted floodway land (chars), and towns; and contaminates water, spreads waterborne disease, and reduces access to medical services and schools (note i).

2. Impact channels and expected systemic changes. The project aims to reduce socioeconomic vulnerability and disruption through in a climate resilient protection of lands and homes. The livelihood improvement output will improve opportunities to increase incomes and expand sustainable employment. A graduation approach pilot will promote resilient livelihoods for the most vulnerable.

3. Transaction TA or due diligence focus and allocated resources. During due diligence these documents will be prepared: (i) SDDR, (ii) PSA, (iii) market/livelihoods assessment, (iv) GESI AP, (v) SPRSS, (vi) RP, and (vii) IPP. Project processing team includes international social development and livelihoods experts.

II. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

1. What are the key gender issues in the sector and/or subsector that are likely to be relevant to this project or program? Women, particularly those in multiple DAGs, are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and disasters. When hazards and disasters occur, women are responsible to protect vulnerable family members, which increases their risk. Women's: lifesaving skills (swimming and climbing); mobility due to layered clothing and carrying infants and seniors; and access to flood warnings are reduced, and they are heavily burdened during disaster recovery as primary care givers. Thus, enhancing their preparedness, responsiveness, and recovery is important. Most women are engaged in agriculture-related livelihoods, including agricultural wage labor for others, tending their own marginal lands, cattle and/or goat rearing, and fuelwood collection. Women comprise 30% of all agricultural cultivators and 40% of agricultural wage laborers. Female landholding is low: women own only 12% of total agricultural operated area, and mostly own marginal land.^k About 20% of female farm ownership arises from widowhood or male outmigration. Most female headed households cannot access extension services, farmer support institutions, or inputs such as seed, water, credit, and subsidy. Women have limited representation and voice in decision-making bodies,

and women's wages are lower than men's.^l Climate impacts and slow development trigger male outmigration, leaving women responsible for household work, productive activities, and financial obligations, including repaying loans and finding new loans (note h).

2. Does the proposed project or program have the potential to contribute to the promotion of gender equity and/or empowerment of women by providing women access to and use of opportunities, services, resources, assets, and participation in decision-making? ☒ Yes ☐ No Livelihood interventions and the graduation approach pilot will target and empower women. Key GESI issues related to climate and water, degrading watershed, livelihood practices, and governance, will be explored during due diligence and a GESI AP prepared to ensure women participation in project activities, DMCs, and SHGs.

3. Could the proposed project have an adverse impact on women and/or girls or widen gender inequality?

☐ Yes ☒ No The project is not expected to adversely impact women or girls nor widen gender inequality.

4. Indicate the intended gender mainstreaming category:

☒ GEN (gender equity) ☐ EGM (effective gender mainstreaming)
☐ SGE (some gender elements) ☐ NGE (no gender elements)

The project aims at delivering tangible benefits to women by improving their socioeconomic opportunities and ensuring gender equality and social inclusion across all project activities.

III. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR

1. Who are the main stakeholders of the project, including beneficiaries and affected people? Explain how they will each participate in the project's design. Primary beneficiaries are small and subsistence farmers and DAGs affected by flood and erosion in the project districts. All stakeholders will be meaningfully consulted on project design and implementation. These include: (i) Assam state agencies (FREMAA, Water Resources Department, Agroforestry Development Board, State Disaster Management Authority, Inland Water Transport Development Society, Social Welfare Department, State Rural Livelihood Mission); (ii) local NGOs and CSOs; (iii) districts and panchayat level administrative units.

2. Who are the key, active, and relevant CSOs in the project area? The key CSOs relevant for the project are women SHG and village-based DMCs, including many established under AIFRERMIP.

3. Are there issues during project design for which participation of the poor and vulnerable is important?

☒ Yes ☐ No The livelihood output targets DAGs. Specific poverty targeting and beneficiary assessments are planned through meaningful consultation with the poor and vulnerable in collaboration with local CSOs.

4. How will the project ensure the participation of beneficiaries and affected people, particularly the poor and vulnerable and/or CSOs, during project design to address these issues? A PSA will be conducted to ensure that clear baselines for DAGs are defined for proper monitoring of equitable access to project benefits, representation across project activities, and to understand disaster risks and vulnerability issues, and needs for livelihood support. A market assessment will ensure that livelihood training interventions provide realistic opportunities. Collaboration with NGOs and CSOs to define livelihood activities further to AIFRERMIP will continue with coordination by FREMAA field officers. DAG participation will be ensured in all focus group discussions, surveys, workshops, etc, to understand their concerns. A stakeholder participation and communication strategy will target DAG participation to ensure inclusion and enhance sustainability. Opportunities to engage with CSOs and their DAGs during awareness campaign design and e-governance will be explored. Specific efforts will be made to explore engaging with identity- and advocacy-based CSOs supporting DAGs as service providers for training and capacity building.^m During design, partnerships will be explored based on scope of work and presence of qualified CSOs in the project area.

5. What level of CSO participation is planned during the project design?

M Information generation and sharing M Consultation L Collaboration NA Partnership

Meaningful consultation will be throughout project design and implementation to ensure that interventions meet local needs. Collaboration with CSOs (SHGs, DMCs) following from AIFRERMIP will be enhanced.

IV. SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

A. Involuntary Resettlement Category ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ FI

1. Does the project have the potential to involve involuntary land acquisition resulting in physical and economic displacement? ☒ Yes ☐ No Structural works include riverbank erosion protection and flood embankment construction and strengthening. Due to bank shifting, land acquisition locations and affected people must be identified later but initial estimations show that about 1,770 households and 385 hectares of land will be impacted. Underwater riverbank stabilization works will first be constructed (no IR impacts), then after banks settle, due diligence and RPs at each subproject will be completed. One draft RP will be prepared and approved prior to loan approval, for which due diligence cannot be 100% completed, therefore the RP preparation methodology stated in OM F1 para. 31, for projects with "*Uncertainties in Location and Alignment of Infrastructure and Unanticipated Impacts*" will be used to meet ADB requirements. This includes preparing a description of the RP completion process, consultant terms of reference for the work, and defining budgetary provisions and responsibilities. A summary of the agreed process will be included in the RRP and legal agreement.ⁿ

2. What action plan is required to address involuntary resettlement as part of the transaction TA or due diligence process?

☒ Resettlement plans ☒ Resettlement framework ☐ Social impact matrix

<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and social management system arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/> None
B. Indigenous Peoples Category <input type="checkbox"/> A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> FI	
1. Does the proposed project have the potential to directly or indirectly affect the dignity, human rights, livelihood systems, or culture of indigenous peoples? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No STs and other small ethnic minorities are present in the project area, including river dwelling STs, known as plain tribes, the Bodos, Mising, Rabha, Tiwa, and Deori. The project is expected to benefit them by enhancing disaster resilience and providing livelihood opportunities to DAGs including STs.	
2. Does it affect the territories or natural and cultural resources indigenous peoples own, use, occupy, or claim, as their ancestral domain? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Due diligence will assess presence of STs and potential project impacts on them, including impacts on territories, natural and cultural resources, and subsequent measures.	
3. Will the project require broad community support of affected indigenous communities? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
4. What action plan is required to address risks to indigenous peoples as part of the transaction TA or due diligence process? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples plan <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples planning framework <input type="checkbox"/> Social impact matrix <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and social management system arrangement <input type="checkbox"/> None	
V. OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES AND RISKS	
1. What other social issues and risks should be considered in the project design? <input type="checkbox"/> Creating decent jobs and employment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adhering to core labor standards (L) <input type="checkbox"/> Labor retrenchment <input type="checkbox"/> Spread of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in human trafficking <input type="checkbox"/> Affordability <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in unplanned migration <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in vulnerability to natural disasters <input type="checkbox"/> Creating political instability <input type="checkbox"/> Creating internal social conflicts <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify _____	
2. How are these additional social issues and risks going to be addressed in the project design? Core labor standards will be adhered to during all construction activities.	
VI. TRANSACTION TA OR DUE DILIGENCE RESOURCE REQUIREMENT	
1. Do the terms of reference for the transaction TA (or other due diligence) contain key information needed to be gathered during transaction TA or due diligence process to better analyze (i) poverty and social impact, (ii) gender impact, (iii) participation dimensions, (iv) social safeguards, and (v) other social risks? Are the relevant specialists identified? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
2. What resources (e.g., consultants, survey budget, and workshop) are allocated for conducting poverty, social, and/or gender analysis; and the participation plan during the transaction TA or due diligence? For the due diligence assessments, the project will hire national and international consultants and undertake meaningful consultations with DAGs in the project area.	

ADB=Asian Development Bank, AIFRERMIP=Assam Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Program, CSO=civil society organization, DAGs=disadvantaged groups, DMC=disaster management committee, FREMAA=Flood and River Erosion Management Agency of Assam, GESI=gender equality and social inclusion, GESI AP=gender equality and social inclusion action plan, IPP=indigenous peoples plan, IR=involuntary resettlement, NGO=nongovernmental organization, PSA=poverty and social assessment, RP=resettlement plan, RRP= Report and Recommendation of the President, SDDR=social due diligence report, SHG=self-help group, SPRSS=Summary Poverty Reduction and Social Strategy, ST=Scheduled Tribe.
 Source: Asian Development Bank.

^a Government of India. National Institute for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog. 2020. [India Report 2020](#). Delhi.

^b [Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform](#)

^c Assam Climate Change Management Society. 2022. Draft Assam State Action Plan on Climate Change (2021-30).

^d ADB. 2017. [Country Partnership Strategy: India, 2018–2022-Accelerating Inclusive Economic Transformation](#). Manila.

^e According to population census 2011. Directorate of Economics & Statistics. 2019. [Assam at a Glance-2019](#). Assam.

^f World Bank Group. [Assam - Poverty, growth, and inequality](#). India state briefs. Washington, D.C. 2017.

^g Government of India. NITI Aayog. 2021. [National Multidimensional Poverty Index: Baseline Report](#). Delhi.

^h DAGs refer to those who historically have been unable to fully access and/or benefit from social, economic, and political rights, opportunities, and resources due to their identities and/or because of their vulnerability. The project will adopt an inclusive approach to address persisting issues and gaps experienced by these groups in the sector, particularly for: (i) households headed by women, older people and people with disabilities; (ii) women and children; (iii) people with social identities including Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes; (iv) landless or those without agricultural land who depend largely on day labor for survival; (vi) households living below poverty line; and, (v) other project affected households having residual agricultural land area less than the national average.

ⁱ R. Mahanta and D. Das. 2017. [Flood induced vulnerability to poverty: Evidence from Brahmaputra Valley, Assam, India](#). *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*. 24. 451–461

^j Assam State Disaster Management Authority Flood Reporting and Information Management System.

^k Government of India. Department of Agriculture. 2020. [All India Report on Agriculture Census 2015-16](#). Delhi; and Government of India. Department of Agriculture. 2021. [Annual Report 2020-2021](#). Delhi.

^l Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission. [Empowering women in agriculture](#).

^m Organizations for DAGs will be explored, including, but not limited to, organizations working with STs, SCs, and persons with disabilities. This includes organizations working with people with intellectual disabilities; children and youth with disabilities and their caregivers/parents; people with mobility, sensory or communication difficulties; and organizations working on specific topics with people with disabilities, for example, c, agriculture, supply chains, accessible tourism, and universal design.

ⁿ ADB. 2013. [Operations Manual: Safeguard Policy Statement](#). para. 31. Manila.