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Ministry of Finance

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The Government of India, the Government of Madhya Pradesh and the World Bank today signed a \$210 million loan agreement for the Madhya Pradesh Rural Connectivity Project. The Project is expected to improve the durability, resilience and safety of the gravel surfaced rural roads and enhance the capacity of the state to manage its rural roads network.

The Project will cover 10,510 km stretch of rural roads in Madhya Pradesh that fall under the Chief Minister's Gram Sadak Yojana (CMGSY) program. Of this 10,000 km will be upgraded from existing gravel to bituminous surface roads, while 510 km of new roads will be built to the same bituminous surface standard.

"Government of India is making all efforts to ensure that communities in the most remote areas across the country are connected through a road network. All weather road connectivity is crucial for economic growth, especially in the rural areas," said Shri Sameer Kumar Khare, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance. "The Madhya Pradesh roads project will enhance rural road connectivity in the state which will open up opportunities for economic development and access to social services for beneficiary communities in the state and help in reducing poverty."

The agreement for the Project was signed by Shri Sameer Kumar Khare, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of the Government of India; Shri Pankaj Jhavar, Chief General Manager, Madhya Pradesh Rural Road Development Authority on behalf of the Government of Madhya Pradesh; and Mr Hisham Abdo, Acting Country Director, World Bank India, on behalf of the World Bank.

"This project will leverage resources to support innovations in road construction, improve road safety, and reduce carbon footprint in the transport sector by mainstreaming climate resilient technology in road design and construction," said Mr Hisham Abdo, Acting Country Director, World Bank India. Gravel surfaced roads are more prone to washouts than paved roads during flood seasons. This project will undertake resilience measures such as surface sealing of roads, embankment pitching, and balancing culverts to prevent damages caused by extreme flood events.

The transport sector is one of the most significant emitters of greenhouse gases. Alternate sealing options for road construction like polymer modified asphalt, asphalt blended with plastic waste, and multiple surface treatment to be piloted on approximately 20 percent of the length will not only be more cost-effective but will also reduce the carbon footprint of the transport sector.

This project, on a pilot basis, will engage women self-help groups (SHG) in the post construction maintenance activity. This will involve routine maintenance of off-carriage way parts of the road, while the main carriageway maintenance will remain part of the original contractor's contract. The SHG members will be trained through the project, and their work will be directly supervised and

managed by the Madhya Pradesh Rural Road Development Authority (MPRRDA) field offices. In fact, a direct maintenance contract will be executed between the SHG group and MPRRDA for 3-5 years.

Recognizing that road safety is a critical issue, the project will strengthen road safety management systems with the objective of reducing fatalities and serious injuries from road accidents.

The project will focus on improving road accident data collection and analysis at central and state levels through implementation of the Road Accident Database Management System (RADMS); strengthen road safety capacity at the central level; and focus on training.

The state will pilot a comprehensive Road Safety Program (PCRSP) in districts with most fatal and serious injuries recorded in the recent past. It plans to undertake a bottom-up approach by engaging and empowering local communities to develop customized solutions to improve road safety.

“The Project will benefit the rural people residing in very small villages in Madhya Pradesh. The construction of sealed roads under the project will help reduce transport costs, improve road safety and minimize post-harvest losses for farmers by ensuring transport services in all seasons. The project will also help in reducing pollution and increase access to jobs, markets, schools and health facility for the rural population thus reducing the migration towards urban areas. It will implement a range of contracting and institutional reform measures and update standards and specifications, with a particular emphasis on road safety,” said Shri Pankaj Jhawar, Chief General Manager (MPRCP), Madhya Pradesh Rural Road Development Authority.

DSM/RM/KA

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