

## ADB Provides USD 200 Million to Upgrade Rural Roads in Maharashtra State

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a loan of USD 200 million to upgrade rural roads to all-weather standards in 34 districts of India's Maharashtra State to better connect rural areas with markets and services. The upgraded roads under the ADB project will boost links between local residents, productive agricultural land, and economic centers across the state.

Maharashtra has an extensive road network, with rural roads making up two thirds of the network. ADB has previously supported rural road development in several South Asian countries. The project will build on their experience to upgrade 2,100 kilometers of rural roads to all-weather standards, including contractual maintenance for 5 years following construction. Road designs will incorporate climate resilient features such as improved drainage and higher surface elevations, and stronger embankments, and safety features such as signage, guard posts, and speed breakers. Environmentally friendly sealing options such as asphalt blended with plastic waste will be piloted on selected road segments.

The project will also work with the rural infrastructure agency, the Maharashtra Rural Road Development Association (MRRDA), to develop road safety, road asset management, contract management, and climate resilient design. Accompanying the loan is a technical assistance grant of USD 1 million to support MRRDA to improve its management performance in these areas. Outreach for road users will be carried out in the state to build awareness of road safety, gender issues including human trafficking, and enhancing women's road construction and maintenance skills.

The total cost of the project is USD 296 million, of which the government will provide USD 96 million. It is due for completion at the end of September 2024.

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