

# Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services Society

THE WORLD BANK FINANCED

**ASSAM CITIZEN CENTRIC SERVICE DELIVERY PROJECT**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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JANUARY 2019

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## INTRODUCTION

Government of Assam has recognized the need to strengthen service delivery access, and had enacted the Assam Right to Public Services Act 2012 to ensure citizens' access to public services in timely, efficient, and accountable manner. The Act enables the citizens of Assam to get notified public service within a stipulated timeframe and also fixes responsibilities on public servants to provide these services in a time-bound manner. A formal appellate process under the Act has provision of penalizing designated government official for his/her failure to give the services as sought by the citizens within a stipulated time. 55 services related to 14 departments have so far been notified by the State government under the RTPS Act.

Earlier, through a Non-Lending Technical Assistance (NLTA), the World Bank had supported analysis of public administration constraints to service delivery for enabling a clear understanding of bottlenecks and challenges to service delivery access. Simplification and streamlining of administrative procedures, reduction in levels for processing service delivery requests, and preparation of a comprehensive ICT plan and associated backend process re-engineering for efficient G2C service delivery emerged as certain key recommendations of this analytical work. On a request from the Government of Assam, the World Bank has committed \$39.2 million loan under Assam Citizen-Centric Service Delivery Project (ACCSDP) to support and enhance the state initiatives for improving citizens' access to public services and strengthen accountability under the ARTPS Act 2012.

**Assam Citizen Centric Service Delivery Project (ACCSDP)** aims to serve the citizens of Assam, especially the poor, through effective RTPS implementation in the State. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is *"To improve access in the delivery of selected public services in Assam."*

## TRIBAL SCENARIO IN ASSAM

As per the 2011 census, The tribal population of Assam is 38,84,371, which is 12.4% of the total population of the state. Major tribes of Assam are: Bodo (35.1%), Mishing (17.52%), Karbi (11.1%), Rabha (7.6%), Sonowal Kachari (6.5%), Lalung (5.2%), Garo (4.2%), and Dimasa tribes (3.2%). They constitute ninety per cent ST population of the state. The other tribal people in Assam are Deori, Hajong, Thengal Kachari, Khasi, Jaintia, Mech, Chakma, Mizo, Hmar, Kuki tribes, Naga tribes, Barmans (in Cachar), Man (Tai speaking), Khampti and Singhpho tribes. The tribal people normally live in contiguous areas; and their lives are closely associated with the nature – streams, trees, plants, animals etc. Six tribal districts of Assam: Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa & Udalguri have been declared as the Scheduled Areas. While the tribal population of Assam are not entirely primitive or socio-culturally cut-off, there is a need to minimize the gap of development in the Tribal areas. The principal objectives of dedicated attention to tribal areas would be to ensure that project engages in free, prior and informed consultation with indigenous people living in the project area and project benefits are equally accessible to them.

The **Tribal Development Plan** is aimed at critically analyzing from a tribal perspective the systems and processes, the legal environment, ownership of rights and resources, special schemes/ programmes/ institutions in place for their development; their general access to them; assessment of whether the current initiative will positively or negatively impact the tribal community, whether it

will promote the empowerment of tribals and recommend additional inputs that will help in maximizing the benefits for this constituency. It will also look at the other grievance redressal mechanisms available in the state and their use/access by the tribal groups and their impact.

## **LEGAL & INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK IN ASSAM**

According to Article 342 of the Constitution, Scheduled Tribes (STs) are the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within these tribes and tribal communities which have been declared as such by the President through a public notification

The constitutional safeguards related to tribals are : (i) Article 14, related to Equal rights and opportunities; (ii) Article 15, prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex, religion, race, caste etc; (iii) Article 15 (4), enjoins upon state to make special provisions for the tribal; (iv) Article 16 (3), empowers state to make special provisions for reservation in appointments or posts in favor of Scheduled Tribes; (v) Article 46, enjoins upon State to promote with special care educational and economic interests of tribal people, protection from social injustice and exploitation; (vi) Article 243D related to the reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in Panchayats & Municipalities (vii) Article 275 (1), Grand-in-aid for promoting the welfare of STs; (viii) Article 330, 332, 335, related to the reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in Lok Sabha, State Assemblies and official positions in central & state governments; and (ix) Article 339, 340, related to Control of the Union over the Welfare of tribal and powers to investigations thereof. One of the important Act which ensures Social Safeguards of the tribal is “Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. In order to protect the interests of the tribal population, provision of Sixth Schedule is enshrined in the Constitution under Articles 244(2) and 275(1) to enable autonomous administration of the tribal areas of Assam. These Autonomous Councils are entrusted with the responsibilities of formulating integrated development plans for the Council Area, and implement development schemes and programs in adherence to the general policy of the Government. There are acts, rules and policies which provide the legal framework for ensuring dedicated attention to Scheduled Tribes.

- The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989
- The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006
- Assam Right to Public Services Act 2012
- Assam land and Revenue Regulation (Amendment) Act, 1947
- World Bank (Operational Policy) **OP 4.10**

## **STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION**

As part of the social assessment, consultations were held at Kamrup, Kamrup Metro, Nalbari, Baksa, Sonitpur and Morigaon at community, district and state level with different stakeholders that brought out issues of significance for preparation of Tribal Development Plan. Public consultations with representatives of tribal people were also conducted in Baksa (Salbari Sub-division), Karbi Anglong (Hamren Sub-division) (Sixth Schedule districts) and Dibrugarh. These consultation included significant number of Female participants

## **TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

In compliance with the World Bank’s Operational Policy for Indigenous People (OP4.10) and also understanding the fact that some of the ST groups do have a distinct cultural identity as compared to other groups; and have special developmental needs, the Tribal Development Plan (TDP) has been prepared, to specifically address the issues of significance for tribal people; provide for culturally

compatible benefits within the project framework; and to ensure their participation in the project processes.

### **Objective of Tribal Development Plan**

The objectives of the Tribal Development Plan are to ensure that

- (i) the tribal populations are adequately and fully consulted by the project;
- (ii) Tribals take part in the entire process of preparation, implementation and monitoring of project;
- (iii) project benefits are equally accessible to the tribals living in the project area; they are provided with special assistance as per prevailing laws and policies because of their culture identities and to minimize further social and economic imbalances within communities;
- (iv) developing an institutional and implementation arrangement as well as capacity building measures for the implementation of the TDP, associated disclosure mechanisms and addressing any grievances; and
- (v) there is in place monitoring and reporting arrangement, including mechanisms and benchmarks appropriate to the project. Further, a grievance redress mechanism has also been developed to resolve grievances related to service access by tribal people.

### **Strategies for Tribal Development Plan**

The tribal development strategy of the project builds on existing government framework and traditional systems of tribal societies to extend the benefits of Assam RTPS Act to tribal people of Sixth Schedule areas and those residing in other districts. Concepts of community collaboration and community driven development principles of equity, inclusion, participation, autonomy and accountability would form core of tribal development strategy.

#### *1. Extension of RTPS Act to the Sixth Schedule Areas Extension of the Act.:*

Government of Assam has under taken initiatives to extend the coverage of RTPS Act to all these six districts falling under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Dima Hasao Autonomous Council (DHAC) and Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The Autonomous Council districts will formally adopt resolution to implement the act within their territorial jurisdiction. Formal endorsements of the Autonomous Councils is required before an Act of the State Legislature is enforced within the jurisdiction of Autonomous Councils, and hence, at the beginning, the RTPS Act was implemented in the six districts administered under the Sixth Schedule. Now, expanding the RTPS Act to Sixth Schedule areas would call for the Autonomous Councils to realistically assess the institutions, actors and processes for service delivery; and accordingly frame pragmatic protocols of refining / re-engineering these aspects.

#### *2. Issuance of Scheduled Tribe certificate as RTPS services*

The issuance of Scheduled Tribe certificate for tribal people was not included in the list of 55 services notified under the RTPS Act mainly because of the complex procedural formalities and involvement of non-government stakeholders. ST certificate is a critically important for tribal people and hence there is a strong consensus from all tribal stakeholders to find solution to this issue. Thus, as a key strategy for TDP, issuance of ST certificate would come under the ambit of RTPS Act.

#### *3. Public Facilitation centers to bring service delivery closer to tribal people*

ACCSD project will establish about significant number of One-Stop-Service Centers/ Public Facilitation Centers (PFC) in the Sixth Scheduled districts of Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao and BTAD areas which will serve as effective 'single window' to handle RTPS requests and deliver e-enabled

targeted services. This will bring service delivery closer to tribal people. The locations of these centers would be decided by the Autonomous Councils, taking due note of difficult terrain; and the distance to be traversed to access these centres. Special operation & maintenance (O&M) measures would also be put in place to ensure that ICT and connectivity equipments are fully operational even in remote locations

#### *4. Communication and awareness in local tribal languages*

ACCSD Project will implement an inclusive communication strategy to provide user-centered information to all citizens, aimed at creating the demand push for RTPS. The tribal communities are an important and key target audience in this aspect. The IEC (Information, Education & Communication) campaign of the project will have approaches customized to the information needs of all communities, with special emphasis of strengthening outreach to tribal people. The campaign will make sure that all key messages are communicated in local tribal languages, using various traditional communication tools.

#### *5. Women involvement in the project*

In order to ensure greater women participation, it is envisaged to involve more females in the preparation and implementation phase of the project for which a number of formal and informal consultations for women are being planned

#### *6. Continued & concurrent engagement*

In order to make the tribal communities fully aware of their rights and entitlements and also to give a voice to their needs, there will be continued engagement with tribal communities during project preparation and implementation. The project will involve/associate local citizen groups, youth organizations and civil society organizations of repute to work as intermediary between the government departments and the tribal people.

#### *7. Mid-term assessment of Tribal Development Plan*

The project will have a mid-term assessment of Tribal Development Plan after two years of project implementation to review the project implementation and its impact on tribal communities and to recommend corrective action, as necessary.

### **Capacity Building and Change Management**

ACCSD Project will execute an extensive capacity building program to support adaptation of citizen-centered approach for service delivery for the staff. The training programmes will adopt an inclusive approach so that the needs of tribal and other disadvantaged groups in remote areas can be addressed. Change management, which means application of a set of tools, processes, skills and principles for managing the people side of change to achieve the desired outcomes of a change project or initiative, is also an essential component of the project. The objective is to help increase the service-providers' sensitivity for and responsiveness to the needs of tribal and other vulnerable groups and remote areas.

### **Implementation Arrangements**

Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agriculture Services (ARIAS) Society, which manages Bank-financed projects in Assam has been mandated to manage the project. The State Project Director of ARIAS serves as the Project Director of ACCSD Project. The Project Management Unit (PMU) within ARIAS will coordinate with all participating departments and agencies; and will oversee technical inputs, consolidate required documentation, and conduct financial management and procurement activities. A nodal officer in each of the implementing departments and agencies will coordinate

project activities, with the support of PMU-appointed project staff. Such implementation units will also be set-up at the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Dima Hasao Autonomous Council (DHAC) and Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The PMU appointed project staff will assist with the implementation of process re-engineering, and the conduct of change management and capacity-building initiatives.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanism**

The project will build sustainable M&E practices through the strengthening of existing systems and the use of data to monitor the result indicators. The monitoring system is designed to provide concurrent and triangulated feedback to the key stakeholders of the project about progress towards achieving the project's key goals. Performance indicators, monitored by the implementing agency, will also be cross-checked with actual feedback from the tribal people and triangulated with government data wherever possible.

### **Grievance Redress Mechanism**

The project has placed special emphasis on receiving, responding and resolving key grievances raised by citizens. The grievance redress mechanisms could be activated through physical paper based complaints, and electronically on the web and mobile telephones. The project would support investments to activate effective beneficiary feedback systems, which would automatically elicit feedback through mobile based interaction, after the service gets delivered. Additionally, a toll-free call center will be established to register, collate and forward any reported grievances to the relevant department for resolution within the stipulated time. Efforts would be made so that this can be accessed by the tribal people, even from remote areas. The RTPS Delivery Unit, both at the State level and in the Autonomous Councils will regularly track resolution of grievances registered by people. The effectiveness would be measured in terms of count and repetitiveness of complaint received, acceptance of anonymous feedback, and time taken for corrective action.