

## FAQs

### ACCESS Bhutan Project P181278

#### 1. What is the ACCESS Bhutan Project?

The ACCESS (Accelerating Transport and Trade Connectivity in Eastern South Asia) – Phase 2 Bhutan Project aimed at improving the efficiency and resilience of Bhutan's trade, transport, and digital connectivity, particularly along selected regional corridors.

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#### 2. What is the total project cost, and who is funding it?

The total cost of the project is US\$300 million, financed through a grant of US\$146 million and a credit of US\$154 million from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank.

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#### 3. Who is implementing the project?

The Department of Surface Transport (DoST), GovTech, and the Department of Forest and Park Services (DoFPS) are the primary implementing agencies, supported by Project Management Units (PMUs).

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#### 4. What are the main components of the project?

- Component 1: Digital Systems for Trade
  - Component 2: Green and Resilient Transport and Trade Infrastructure
  - Component 3: Institutional and Policy Strengthening for Transport and Trade
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#### 5. What are the activities under the Digital Systems for Trade?

Key activities under the Digital Systems for Trade are:

1. Implementation of NSW for Trade
  2. Strengthening digital enablers
  3. Enhancing cyber security
  4. Improving digital connectivity and data infrastructure resilience
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#### 6. What is the National Single Window (NSW) and why is it being implemented?

The NSW is a digital platform to simplify trade processes by integrating permit, license, and customs procedures into one interface—reducing delays, paperwork, and costs for Bhutanese traders.

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**7. How will the project improve Bhutan's digital infrastructure?**

It will upgrade the Government Data Center, enhance cybersecurity via a Government Security Operations Center (G-SOC), and improve internet connectivity through procurement of international bandwidth.

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**8. What key activities are planned under the Green and Resilient Transport and Trade Infrastructure?**

Some of the major activities under the Green and Resilient Transport and Trade Infrastructure are:

1. Construction of Gelephu - Tareythang roads and bridges on Southern East-West Highway
  2. Tareythang to Panbang Studies to connect Southern East-West Highway
  3. Road Asset Management System
  4. Piloting of Performance Based Maintenance Contract (PBMC)
  5. Improving Multimodal Connectivity
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**9. What specific infrastructure will be built under the project?**

The project includes the construction of a 13.6km of climate-resilient greenfield road from Gelephu to Tareythang, featuring four major bridges (Mau bridge - 1005m, Jengkhurung and Taklai - 780m, Langer and Singye - 380m each). This road will bypass the current 45-km stretch between Gelephu - Tareythang. The new Gelephu - Tareythang road will be the part of the Southern East-West Highway.

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**10. How does the project address environmental and biodiversity concerns?**

Through a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP), the project includes wildlife crossings, buffer zones, and habitat restoration efforts, particularly for endangered species like the Asian Elephant and Gee's Golden Langur.

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**11. What is "multimodal transport" in the context of this project?**

Multimodal transport refers to the integration of multiple modes of transport—such as road, rail, and inland waterways—to move goods and people more efficiently, sustainably, and cost-effectively. The project will support:

- Feasibility studies for railway and Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) networks
  - Development of masterplans for integrating dry ports, growth centers, and transport infrastructure
  - Institutional capacity-building in railway and IWT operations
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**12. What will the ACCESS Bhutan Project do under Performance-Based Maintenance Contract (PBMC)?**

- Pilot a five-year PBMC covering 75 km of national highways between Wangduezang and Chuserbu in Trongsa, where this stretch of road is a part of Northern East-West Highway (Semtokha in Thimphu- Kheri in Trashigang)
  - Develop performance indicators for climate resilience, such as drainage, slope stabilization, and availability
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**13. Why does Bhutan need a Road Asset Management System (RAMS)?**

Bhutan's road network faces climate-related challenges. RAMS helps prioritize maintenance, plan budgets, and extend the life of infrastructure through data-driven decisions.

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**14. Will the affected land be acquired for construction of Gelephu - Tareything road and bridges?**

All affected lands will have to be acquired by the government. This will be confirmed once the detailed design of road and bridges are complete. The preparation of the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) is underway. The RAP will outline the framework for managing land acquisition, including compensation rates, physical and economic displacement, and livelihood restoration of Project-Affected People (PAPs). Before the finalization and implementation of the RAP, all PAPs and stakeholders will be consulted and informed.

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**15. How many households will be affected by the construction of Gelephu - Tareything road and bridges?**

As per the preliminary survey, a total of 149 Households will be affected. This will have to be further validated once the detailed design of road and bridges is complete.

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**16. When will the construction of Gelephu Tareything road and bridge be commenced?**

The detailed design of roads and bridges is underway and planned to complete around mid 2026 . The construction will tentatively commence from June 2027 and complete in June 2030.

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**17. What are the expected project benefits for the public?**

- Reduced travel and transport time
- Better trade facilitation and digital services
- Improved job creation, especially in construction and logistics
- Enhanced safety and climate resilience of infrastructure