



USAID Banda Aceh to Meulaboh Road/Bridge Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Project Stakeholder Update October 2006

Introduction

The USAID Aceh Road/Bridge Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Project achieved a long-awaited milestone during October 2006 when on October 4 notice-to-proceed was issued to Wijaya Karya to begin construction of the Lhoong River Bridge. In response to progress on land acquisition by the Government of Indonesia, USAID also issued notice-to-proceed on October 13 to begin construction of an additional 5.7km of road in the Lhoong River area and for the fabrication of the Meunasah River Bridge.

The project expressed appreciation of the hard work by all participants in the land acquisition process. However, challenges remain, and continued progress is contingent on ongoing success with property acquisition and diversion of utilities off the proposed right-of-way.

Road construction is now underway and the project is moving into full gear for the upcoming months. In addition to land acquisition, October included mobilization of construction machinery and workers into the Lhoong area. On November 2nd advertisements appeared in two major Indonesian newspapers announcing that USAID has opened pre-qualification for the tender of the primary construction contract. The tender is open to qualified construction firms worldwide and expected to generate international interest.

We anticipate significant progress over the upcoming months, but are also realistic that challenges exist. Through partnership with communities, the Government of Indonesia and the provincial authorities, the design and construction of the new coastal road vital to the economic recovery of the region will remain on schedule with a targeted completion in 2009.

This monthly update gives a brief overview of developments from October 2006. If you have questions, need further information or want to share your thoughts, please feel free to contact us.

Road Construction Moves Ahead

Just south of the Lhoong River Bridge, PT. Wijaya Karya (WiKa) moved equipment and workers into position early in October based on a green light given by USAID. WiKa's mobilization was preceded the month before by a go-ahead on fabrication of the Lhoong River Bridge. We are pleased that the more visible stage of the Project has arrived and thank the local communities for their cooperation.

While the construction stage is in progress, maintenance operations continue to ensure that the roads currently being used remain passable.



Despite the eagerness to proceed with construction, our team does not overlook the importance of safety and worked with WiKa to finalize their site-specific safety plan. Safety inspections of field operations including traffic control measures, maintenance



activities, an asphalt plant, and drilling rigs were conducted regularly. In addition to keeping the roads open, our primary objective is as always safety. Whether to project crews or communities, no-accidents or property damage is acceptable. To deliver on this commitment, project engineers and their teams are busy with inspections of all temporary bridges and road surfaces

between Banda Aceh and Lamno. Problems or deficiencies found are corrected by WiKa.

Right of Way / Land Acquisition

Land acquisition remains a tremendous challenge for the project. This is the responsibility of the Government of Indonesia and progress on land acquisition is critical to our mission of building the road. We continue to see progress with communities and the Government working closely. However, we need to keep in mind that land acquisition takes time and is not an overnight process. Our team continued to provide support and assistance related to land acquisition to BRR, the provincial and district land acquisition committees and other relevant government bodies. This involvement included data collection and support for administrative tasks, coordination with NGOs relating to reconstruction projects on or near the road, and daily updates and monitoring of progress in the field and at the provincial level.

Environmental Management

With the start of construction, the Project’s environmental team has increased its activity. Team leaders visited the Lhoong construction site several times in October and issued an Environmental Monitoring Report (EMR-004). The report noted



satisfaction that WiKa is following environment-friendly procedures and guidelines.

In October, the environmental team also conducted an ecological survey of the “horseshoe link” that is located just north of Meulaboh.

The reports mentioned above are public information available through the Project. We invite your review.

Environmental Management - continued

The Project's environmental commitment goes beyond monitoring. Training is a key element in ensuring that the road is built according to standards. It is also an important tool in capacity building and transferring skills and know-how that will be used once the road is complete. On October 3rd, project environmental leaders conducted a training session for 11 PT Wijaya Karya site engineers.

Equally important, our environmental team maintained strong oversight. This included inspection of the asphalt mixing plant in Leupung on its environmental impact mitigation measures and environmental impacts as well as monitoring of the construction activity at Lhoong River.

Community Outreach



As part of the Project's commitment to the people affected by the road, the community outreach team continues to play an active lead role. We believe that empowerment of communities with information, and cooperation with the people of Aceh, is an essential element our project.

In October, the primary issue of our community outreach team was land acquisition. The team continued its work facilitating the process being run by the Government of Indonesia. Much of their support continues to focus on the provincial and district levels through the land acquisition committees of Aceh Besar and Aceh Jaya districts. The team provides daily land acquisition process updates. The project's community outreach team also provided administrative assistance to the land acquisition committee and *Badan Rekonstruksi dan Rekonsiliasi* (BRR) for payment of land parcels in Aceh Besar.

Beyond land acquisition, community outreach continues the important task of keeping NGOs informed of project progress.

Website Update

With the start of construction, we recognize that more information will need to be available to our stakeholders. A website has been developed and will be launched shortly. Our website will serve as a repository for project information including photos, documents, articles, and progress updates. It is be the official voice of the project that stakeholders can rely on for up-to-date and accurate information. Once the site is launched the Internet address will be provided.