

Indigenous Peoples Plan

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India: Assam Skill University Project

Prepared by the Government of Assam for the Asian Development Bank

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CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(as of 26 March 2021)

Currency	–	Indian
unit		rupee/s (₹)
₹1.00	=	\$0.0137
\$1.00	=	₹72.62

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
ASDM	–	Assam Skill Development Mission
ASU	–	Assam Skill University
GER	–	gross enrollment ratio
GRC	–	grievance redress committee
GRM	–	grievance redress mechanism
IPP	–	Indigenous Peoples plan
ITI	–	industrial training institute
INRM	–	India Resident Mission
PMU	–	project management unit
PSC	–	project steering committee
R&D	–	research and development
SEED	–	Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department
SPS	–	Safeguard Policy Statement
TVET	–	technical and vocational education and training

NOTES

(i) The fiscal year (FY) of the Government of India and its agencies ends on 31 March. "FY" before a calendar year denotes the year in which the fiscal year ends, e.g., FY2021 ends on 31 March 2021.

(ii) In this report, "\$" refers to United States dollars.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. This draft Indigenous Peoples plan (IPP) has been prepared for the proposed Assam Skill University Project in India in accordance with the requirements of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Safeguard Policy Statement (SPS 2009) based on the poverty, social, gender, and Indigenous Peoples assessment conducted as part of project preparation due diligence and stakeholder consultations.
2. The Government of India has requested a regular loan of \$112 million from ADB's ordinary capital resources to help finance the project. The project will assist the Government of Assam in strengthening its skills education and training system to ensure decent employment for all and accelerate sustainable and inclusive infrastructure and industrial development. It will create pathways for skills progression and mobility between technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education through the establishment of a skill university which will fill critical gaps in skill education and training integrated with higher education, applied research and development (R&D), and entrepreneurship education and support, and raise skill levels to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of industries in Assam and other states. The project will enhance skills and employability of youth and adults, especially women and those from disadvantaged groups, and improve their prospect of getting higher-paying, decent jobs.
3. The Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department (SEED) of the Government of Assam will be the executing agency, and the Assam Skill Development Mission (ASDM) will be the implementing agency. SEED will establish a project steering committee to oversee the implementation of project activities. ASDM has established a project management unit (PMU) which will be responsible for day-to-day management of the project.
4. Assam was home to 3.88 million scheduled tribe people who accounted for 12.4% of the total population (2011 Census). The project would not cause any adverse impacts on the scheduled tribe population but benefit them. Youth and adults from scheduled tribe groups will have access to industry-aligned skills education and training, which would enhance their prospect of getting higher-paying, decent jobs. The project is categorized B for Indigenous Peoples and this IPP has been prepared with measures to improve access to skills education and training, career development programs and services for the scheduled tribe population.

II. THE PROJECT

A. Background

5. Assam is the largest state in the northeastern region of India and occupies a strategic position for various regional cooperation programs in South and Southeast Asia.¹ Despite its abundant natural resources and higher proportion of young population (under 40 years of age) than the rest of India, Assam has yet to unleash its growth potential. Being landlocked, largely rural, and with underdeveloped infrastructure, Assam's economy is dominated by low value added, natural resource-based products and is poorly integrated with regional and global value chains. Its manufacturing sectors are undiversified and small in terms of outputs and capital investment. Studies conducted by ADB indicate that aggressive infrastructure and industrial development, specifically, corridor-based industrial development, is necessary for Assam to grow its economy. Yet limited availability of skilled workforce has been identified as one of the

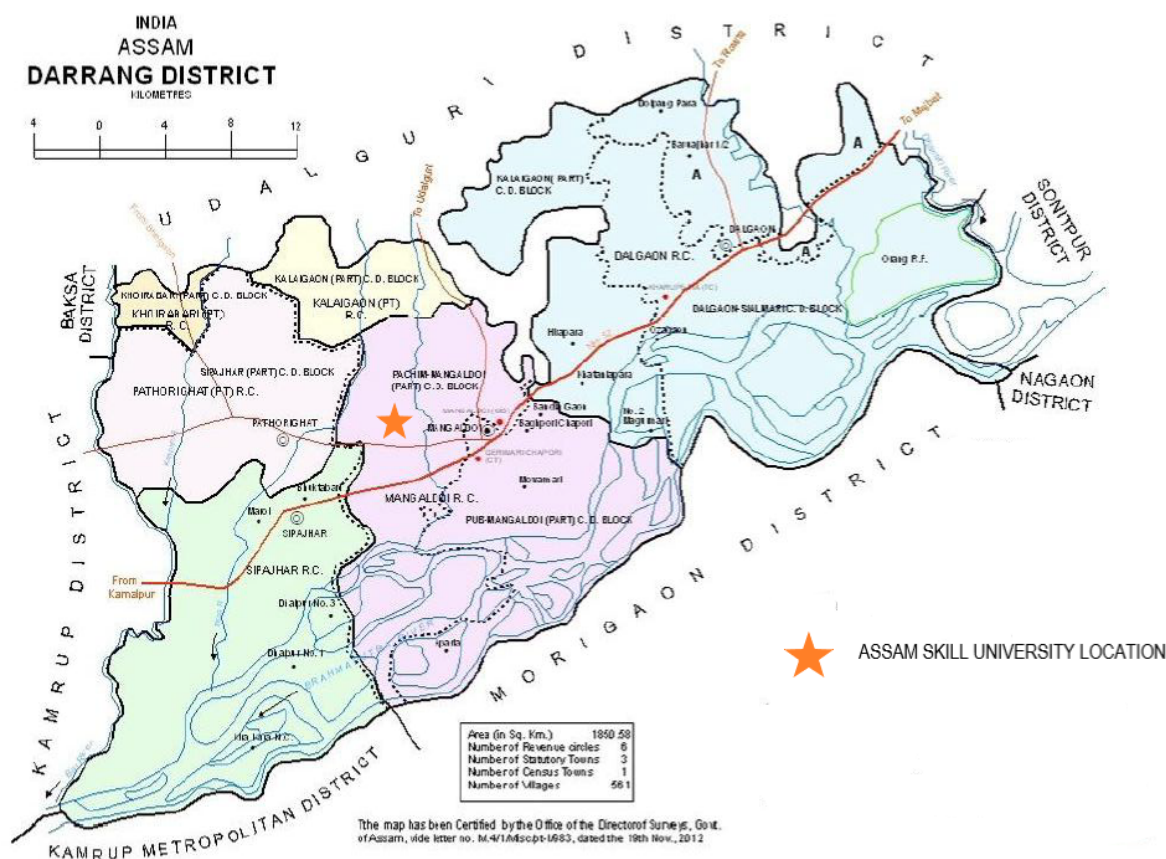
¹ For example, South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Economic Cooperation (BIMSEC), and South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

constraints to this strategy.² Fewer prospects for socioeconomic development have propelled out-migration for jobs and education, leading to shortages of higher-level skills in Assam. TVET and higher education is undersupplied, and the existing systems face many challenges, including low quality and industry relevance of education and training programs leading to poor employability of graduates from industrial training institutes (ITIs), polytechnics, engineering colleges, and academic colleges and universities; lack of pathways for progression and mobility between different types of institutions and programs to pursue further study or skills development; and inadequate training systems for trainers and faculty of ITIs and polytechnics.

6. In September 2020, the Assam Legislative Assembly passed the Assam Skill University Bill to establish the Assam Skill University (ASU) in compliance with the regulations of the University Grants Commission. The Government of Assam envisages ASU to distinguish itself as a premium institution with its campus and facilities equipped with the state-of-the-art technologies; fill critical gaps in high-quality, industry-aligned, and flexible skill education and training integrated with higher education; conduct applied R&D and technology transfer; support entrepreneurship and business startups; and raise skill levels to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of various industries in Assam and the northeastern region. The government also expects ASU to cater for the needs of students, TVET and higher education institutions, and industries in neighboring countries which face similar challenges in skills education and training, and with which the state has long-standing relationships. ASU will be in Mangaldoi, located about 74 km east of Guwahati, and falling within 25 km of the National Highway 27 (NH-27) connecting Guwahati with other major cities in Assam. NH-27 is integrated with other modes of transport (i.e., airways, waterways, and railways) and provides important connectivity to neighboring states and countries.

² Asian Development Bank (ADB). 2020. *Assam: India's Gateway to the ASEAN*. Manila; ADB. 2020. "Northeast Economic Corridor: Bringing People and Markets Together". Presentation. Manila.

Map 1: Location of Assam Skill University



7. An in-depth skills gap analysis conducted for the project indicates growing demands for higher-level skills in the following industries in Assam: agriculture and food production; automotive; construction; creative industries; electronics; energy, including renewable and alternative energy; healthcare; information technology; tourism and wellness.³ Based on the skills gap analysis, and considering planned and ongoing major infrastructure projects in Assam (e.g., hydropower, multimodal logistics parks), as well as ADB studies (footnote 2),⁴ and all India, regional, and global skills studies, nine faculties have been identified to form part of ASU: faculties (i) agricultural and food technology; (ii) technology; (iii) design and creativity; (iv) manufacturing and construction; (v) sustainability; (vi) mobility; (vii) management and finance; (viii) tourism, hospitality, and wellness; and (ix) healthcare. In addition, ASU will support the development of entrepreneurial and transversal skills for all ages at faculties of entrepreneurship and innovation; life skills and languages; lifelong learning; and curriculum and faculty development (for continuous professional development of ASU faculty, trainers and instructors of ITIs and polytechnics).

³ KPMG. 2020. *Micro-Level Skill Gap Study for the State of Assam*. Infrastructure, Government, and Healthcare. KPMG Advisory Services Private Limited.

⁴ The studies point to growth potential for higher education, medical tourism, IT, and IT-enabled services, aircraft maintenance, repair, and overhaul, and agro- and food processing industries in Assam.

B. Project Description

8. The Assam Skill University Project will assist the Government of Assam in strengthening its skills education and training system in Assam. It will contribute to the achievement of the government's goals to ensure decent employment for all and accelerate inclusive and sustainable infrastructure and industrial development.⁵ The project will have five outputs.

9. **Output 1: University management and operating systems, business models, and faculty development and management systems developed.** For sustainable operation of ASU, the project will support the development of ASU's (i) management and operating systems; (ii) leadership and management skills; (iii) student service systems and programs; (iv) business and funding models for skills education and training programs, applied R&D, and other services; (v) faculty recruitment, professional development, performance appraisal and incentive systems; and (vi) digital campus platform, including systems for teaching and learning management; building and facility management; labor market intelligence; technology-enabled learning (e.g., simulation, augmented reality, and virtual reality); and online education. A framework of credits and pathways for skills education and training programs, including the recognition of prior learning, will be developed. Strategies to promote interest from, and enrolment of, females and disadvantaged groups at ASU will also be developed.

10. **Output 2: Environmentally sustainable and climate resilient university campus and facilities developed.** The project will support the design and construction of environmentally sustainable and climate resilient ASU campus and facilities equipped with the state-of-the-art technologies (e.g., academic and administration buildings, laboratories, practical training workshops, library, dormitories, student leisure facilities). The ASU campus and facilities will comply with green building standards, and adopt energy and water saving systems, and climate adaptation measures. A sustainable campus and facility management strategy will be developed to reduce emission and enhance energy efficiency. Features to address the needs of females and disadvantaged groups will be incorporated in the design of the ASU campus and facilities.

11. **Output 3: Industry-aligned and flexible skills education and training programs designed and delivered.** The project will support, in collaboration with internationally and nationally renowned institutions and industries, the establishment of skills education and training programs at NSQF Level 4 and above (certificate, diploma, advance diploma, B. Voc., post-graduate diploma, M. Voc., and Ph.D.), and other advanced skills, career development, soft skills, and language skills programs at ASU for dropouts and graduates from senior secondary education, ITIs, polytechnics, engineering colleges, and universities, as well as professionals and other working age population. These programs will (i) be designed and delivered in various modalities (e.g., on-campus, off-campus, online, "hub-and-spoke", institute-industry-consortium) in collaboration with industry; (ii) offer flexible entry and exit options; (iii) allow the recognition of prior learning, with possibility of completing bridge courses; (iv) require assessment and certification of skills in collaboration with industry; (v) be accredited by national and international accreditation agencies; and (vi) integrate modules on environmental sustainability and climate change, and entrepreneurship. The project will also support the development of (i) career development programs, services, and resources for students, including special programs and services for female students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds to help them succeed, especially in non-traditional fields; (ii) programs to develop soft skills such as communication and collaboration, and foreign language skills; and (iii) continuing education

⁵ Transformation and Development Department, the Government of Assam. 2018. *Assam Agenda 2030: Strategies and Actions for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals*. Guwahati.

programs, including micro and alternative credential programs and customized programs for industry partners.

12. **Output 4: Capacity to manage and support entrepreneurship, applied research and development, and technology transfer developed.** The project will support the establishment of the school of entrepreneurship and innovation which will (i) develop and manage networks of industry partners, alumni, business support and funding organizations through its office of industry engagement and commercial ventures; (ii) provide support for the other schools to deliver entrepreneurship education and support; (iii) manage incubator facilities and programs; (iv) manage joint and contract R&D, consultancy, and technology transfer for ASU and industry partners; and (v) provide support for the other schools to develop, manage, and operate R&D facilities in collaboration with industry and other institutional partners. A digital platform for entrepreneurship education and support, applied R&D projects, and technology transfer and deliver services will be developed. Feasibility studies for the establishment of industry-specific technology service, R&D, testing and certification facilities in collaboration with industry and other institutions which will promote digital and green transformation will also be supported.

13. **Output 5: Access to professional development and quality skills education and training resources in Assam, other states, and neighboring countries improved.** Drawing on the systems, resources, and networks developed across different schools at ASU, the project will support ASU to establish itself as a hub for professional development and quality skills education and training resources for trainers, instructors, and assessors of ITIs and polytechnics in Assam and other states, and for partnerships with TVET and higher education institutions in neighboring countries (e.g., Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal). The project will support the establishment of the school of faculty and curriculum development which will (i) conduct research on instruction, training, curriculum, and assessment; (ii) support continuous professional development of ASU's faculty and staff members; (iii) develop and deliver pre- and in-service training programs for trainers, instructors, and assessors of ITIs and polytechnics in Assam and other northeastern states; and (iv) develop and disseminate state-of-the-art curriculum, instructional and assessment strategies and approaches, and training materials. A digital platform to manage professional development of trainers, instructors, and assessors of ITIs and polytechnics will be developed. Further, the project will assist ASU in forming partnerships with TVET and higher education institutions in neighboring countries and developing skills education and training programs for common strategic industries, leveraging its locational advantage at the center of various regional cooperation programs.

III. OVERVIEW OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN ASSAM

14. The term "Indigenous Peoples" in ADB's SPS (2009) is used in a generic sense to refer to a distinct, vulnerable, social and cultural group possessing the following characteristics in varying degrees: (i) self-identification as members of a distinct indigenous cultural group and recognition of this identity by others; (ii) collective attachment to geographically distinct habitats or ancestral territories in the project area and to the natural resources in these habitats and territories; (iii) customary cultural, economic, social, or political institutions that are separate from those of the dominant society and culture; and (iv) a distinct language, often different from the official language of the country or region. ADB's SPS (2009) recognizes the diversity of Indigenous Peoples across countries and notes that national legislation, customary law, and any international conventions to which the country is a party should be considered.

15. In India, "scheduled tribes" are specified in each state or union territory in accordance with the Constitution of India and refers in general to communities which are characterized by: (i)

primitive traits; (ii) distinctive culture; (iii) geographical isolation; (iv) shyness of contact with the community at large; and (v) backwardness. According to Article 342 of the Constitution, scheduled tribes in a state or union territory shall be designated first through the President's notified orders after consultation with the state governments concerned and shall be amended subsequently through the Acts of Parliament. As of March 2021, there are nine orders and eight acts which spell out scheduled tribes in different states and union territories.

16. In Assam, there are 23 scheduled tribe communities which are broadly grouped into the "plain" and "hill" tribes.⁶ Major scheduled tribe groups include Bodo (35.1%), Mishing (17.5%), Karbi (11.1%), Rabha (7.6%), Sonowal Kachari (6.5%), Lalung (5.2%), Garo (4.2%), and Dimasa (3.2%) and constitute 90% of the schedule tribe population in the state.

17. According to the 2011 Census (Table 1), districts with high proportions of scheduled tribe people included Dima-Hasao (70.9%), Karbi Anglong (56.3%), Dhemaji (47.4%), Chirang (37.1%), Baksa (34.8%), Udalguri (32.1%), and Kokrajhar (31.4%). 94.4% of the scheduled tribe population live in rural areas.

18. The sex ratio among the scheduled tribe population was 984, higher than that in the state (903), and closer to the national average (990).

Table 1: Scheduled Tribe Population in Assam by District (2011)

No	District	Scheduled Tribe Population				Total Population		
		Total	% of Total Population	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	Assam	3,884,371	12.4	1,957,005	1,927,366	31,205,576	15,939,443	14,402,855
1	Kokrajhar	278,665	31.4	139,579	139,086	887,142	452,905	434,237
2	Dhubri	6,332	0.3	3,198	3,134	1,949,258	997,848	951,410
3	Goalpara	231,570	23.0	116,013	115,557	1,008,183	513,292	494,891
4	Barpeta	27,344	1.6	13,530	13,814	1,693,622	867,004	826,618
5	Morigaon	136,777	14.3	68,382	68,395	957,423	486,651	470,772
6	Nagaon	115,153	4.1	57,759	57,394	2,823,768	1,439,112	1,384,656
7	Sonitpur	232,207	12.1	117,685	114,522	1,924,110	983,904	940,206
8	Lakhimpur	249,426	23.9	126,716	122,710	1,042,137	529,674	512,463
9	Dhemaji	325,560	47.4	165,449	160,111	686,133	351,249	334,884
10	Tinsukia	82,066	6.2	41,769	40,297	1,327,929	680,231	647,698
11	Dibrugarh	102,871	7.8	51,835	51,036	1,326,335	676,434	649,901
12	Sivasagar	49,039	4.3	24,989	24,050	1,151,050	589,216	561,834
13	Jorhat	139,971	12.8	70,795	69,176	1,092,256	556,805	535,451
14	Golaghat	111,765	10.5	56,420	55,345	1,066,888	543,161	523,727
15	Karbi Anglong	538,738	56.3	272,460	266,278	956,313	490,167	466,146
16	Dima-Hasao	151,843	70.9	76,520	75,323	214,102	110,802	103,300
17	Cachar	17,569	1.0	8,736	8,833	1,736,617	886,284	850,333
18	Karimganj	1,940	0.1	994	946	1,228,686	625,864	602,822
19	Hailakandi	691	0.1	354	337	659,296	337,890	321,406
20	Bongaigaon	18,835	2.5	9,377	9,458	738,804	375,818	362,986
21	Chirang	178,688	37.1	89,273	89,415	482,162	244,860	237,302
22	Kamrup	182,038	12.0	92,094	89,944	1,517,542	778,461	739,081
23	Kamrup (M)	75,121	6.0	37,902	37,219	1,253,938	647,585	606,353
24	Nalbari	23,364	3.0	11,692	11,672	771,639	396,006	375,633
25	Baksa	331,007	34.8	165,634	165,373	950,075	481,330	468,745

⁶ Government of Assam. 2014. *Assam Human Development Report 2014*. Guwahati.

No	District	Scheduled Tribe Population				Total Population		
		Total	% of Total Population	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
26	Darrang	8,419	0.9	4,300	4,119	928,500	475,273	453,227
27	Udalguri	267,372	32.1	133,550	133,822	831,668	421,617	410,051

Note: On 15 August 2015, five new districts (Biswanath, Charaideo, Hojai, South Salmara-Mankachar, West Karbi Anglong) were formed in addition to the 27 districts above. On 27 June 2016, Majuli was also declared as a district. As of March 2021, the state is divided into 33 districts.

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs. 2014. *Census of India, 2011*. New Delhi.

19. The 2011 Census indicated that the scheduled tribe population may be socioeconomically disadvantaged. The percentage of people living below the poverty line was higher among the scheduled tribe population (40.5%) than the state average (31.9%; 33.9% in rural areas; 20.5% in urban areas). 18.6% of scheduled tribe households reported lacking durable household assets and having limited access to banking services and grid electricity. The literacy rate among the scheduled tribe population was slightly lower (72.1%) than the overall average in the state (72.2%), with that for women significantly lagging (65.0%; 66.3% in Assam). Likewise, the level of educational attainment among the scheduled tribe population (aged 15 years and above) was lower, with 55% having only primary education or no education at all (49% in Assam), 25% completing grade 8 (23% in Assam) and 20% attaining grade 10 and above (27% in Assam) in 2012.

20. Student enrollment in elementary, secondary, higher secondary, and senior education among the scheduled tribe population in Assam appears in general higher than the state and national averages (Table 2). For example, the gross enrollment ratio (GER) in secondary education (grades IX-X) among the scheduled tribe youth in Assam was 99.9% in fiscal year (FY) 2016, higher than the overall average at the state (77.6%) and national (80.0%) levels. This was also the case with GER in senior secondary education (grades XI-XII) at 50.6% among the scheduled tribe youth, compared to the overall state (38.8%) and national (56.2%) averages in FY2016, and GER in higher education at 24.3% among the scheduled tribe youth, as opposed to the state (18.7%) and national (26.3%) averages in 2018–2019. In senior secondary and higher education, girls from scheduled tribe groups seem to have slightly less access than boys from scheduled tribe groups in Assam.

Table 2: Gross Enrollment Ratios for Scheduled Tribe Population in Assam and India

Item	Assam			All India		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
GER in Elementary Education*	104.56	98.82	101.62	99.59	94.53	96.91
GER for ST	119.56	115.57	117.52	103.09	103.41	103.25
GER in Secondary Education*	83.04	72.48	77.59	80.97	79.16	80.01
GER for ST	101.51	98.28	99.88	75.38	73.74	74.53
GER in Senior Secondary Education*	39.47	38.22	38.81	56.41	55.95	56.16
GER for ST	49.16	52.03	50.63	42.44	43.76	43.12
GER in Higher Education**	18.3	19.1	18.7	26.4	26.3	26.3
GER for ST**	23.1	25.6	24.3	16.5	17.9	17.2

GER = gross enrollment ratio, ST = scheduled tribe.

* Elementary education covers grades I-VIII, secondary education covers grades IX-X, and senior secondary education covers grades XI-XII. Data are for 2015-2016.

** Data are for 2018-2019.

Sources: Ministry of Human Resource Development. 2018. *Educational Statistics at a Glance*. New Delhi; Ministry of Human Resource Development. 2019. *All India Survey on Higher Education 2018-2019*. New Delhi.

21. However, the pass rate in senior secondary education completion certification examination (High School Leaving Certification Examination in Assam) among the scheduled tribe youth appears lagging. In 2017, whereas the overall pass rate in the state was 54.2%, that for the scheduled tribe youth was 36.4%. Among the scheduled tribe youth, girls and youths from Plain tribe groups performed better (39.2% for girls, 42.0% for boys, 40.6% for both) than those from Hill tribe groups (30.0% for girls, 34.2% for boys, 32.1% for both).

22. Regarding TVET, the proportion of students from scheduled tribe groups is higher, considering that the scheduled tribe population represented 12.4% of the total population in Assam. In FY2019 and FY2020, the percentage of students from scheduled tribe groups in the state government engineering colleges was 13.3% and that in the state government polytechnics was 16.3%. Fewer female students enroll in engineering colleges (25.0%) and polytechnics (19.4%). Among female students enrolled in the state government engineering colleges and polytechnics, students from scheduled tribe groups accounted for 15.7%.⁷

23. Although official data are unavailable, a similar picture emerges from student enrollments in ITIs. Based on estimates, the proportion of students from scheduled tribe groups in ITIs was 17.8% (20.0% for female students; 17.0% for male students) in FY2020.⁸

IV. SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

24. Given that prospective students at ASU will be dropouts and graduates from senior secondary education, ITIs, polytechnics, engineering colleges, and universities, as well as professionals and other working age population, the project is expected to have positive impacts on the scheduled tribe population in Assam with improved access to industry-aligned skills education and training, which would enhance their prospect of getting higher-paying, decent jobs. No adverse impacts on the scheduled tribe population are anticipated as a result of the project.

25. Moreover, the project will also benefit the scheduled tribe population in the northeastern region. There are nearly 200 scheduled tribe communities in the northeastern region and the scheduled tribe population constitute more than 80% of the population in Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland. ASU will not only admit students from all India, including those from the northeastern region, but also improve access to professional development and quality skills education and training resources for trainers and faculty of ITIs and polytechnics in the region.

26. Potential positive effects of the project on the scheduled tribe population are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Potential Positive Effects on the Schedule Tribe Population by Output

Output	Potential Positive Effect
Output 1: University management and operating systems, business models, and faculty development and management systems developed	Prospective students from scheduled tribe communities and their families will be reached out to through promotional and outreach activities to encourage their enrollment in ASU. Students from scheduled tribe groups at ASU will receive student services. Interest from, and enrolment and employment of women and disadvantaged groups, including scheduled tribe groups, will be promoted through the preparation and implementation of strategies at ASU.

⁷ Government of Assam. Directorate of Economics and Statistics. 2020. *Statistical Handbook Assam–2019*. Guwahati.

⁸ Estimated based on data provided by the Assam Skill Development Mission (ASDM).

Output 2: Environmentally sustainable and climate resilient university campus and facilities developed	Students from scheduled tribe groups will have access to ASU campus and facilities equipped with the state-of-the-art technologies, including academic and administration buildings, laboratories, practical training workshops, library, student and staff residential facilities.
Output 3: Industry-aligned and flexible skills education and training programs designed and delivered	Dropouts and graduates from senior secondary education, ITIs, polytechnics, engineering colleges, and universities, as well as professionals and other working age population from scheduled tribe groups will have access to skills education and training programs at the National Skills Qualification Framework level 4 and above, and other advanced skills, career development, soft skills, and language skills programs at ASU. Female students and those from disadvantaged groups, including scheduled tribe groups, will be provided with special career development programs and services.
Output 4: Capacity to manage and support entrepreneurship, applied research and development, and technology transfer developed	Youths and adults from scheduled tribe communities will benefit from incubator facilities and programs offered at ASU. Faculty members and students from scheduled tribe groups will also receive training on guidelines, code of conduct and ethics, incentive and support mechanisms for applied R&D and technology transfer.
Output 5: Access to professional development and quality skills education and training resources in Assam, other states, and neighboring countries improved	ASU faculty and staff, trainers and faculty of ITIs and polytechnics from scheduled tribe groups will have access to professional development programs offered by ASU.

ADB = Asian Development Bank, ASU = Assam Skill University, ITI = industrial training institute, R&D = research and development.

Source: ADB.

27. Legal and institutional framework applicable to Indigenous Peoples. The rights of the scheduled tribe population are protected through acts of the legislature, including the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and the Assam Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Posts) (Amendment) Act, 2012. The Department of Welfare of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes of the Government of Assam is responsible for overall socioeconomic development among the scheduled tribe population, and formulates and implements plans and schemes for the scheduled tribe population, including scholarships and other financial aid for students from scheduled tribe groups. The Hill Areas Department is the administrative department of the two autonomous councils (i.e., Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council and North Cachar Hill Autonomous Council) constituted under the Assam Autonomous Districts (Constitution of District Councils) Rules, 1951 (amended in 1987). The department is responsible for the two hill districts (Karbi Anglong and Dima-Hasao), and prepares, coordinate, monitor, evaluate, and allocates funds for schemes based on plans prepared by the autonomous councils.

28. Policy principles of Indigenous Peoples safeguards. To maximize the potential positive effects of the project on the scheduled tribe population, the following policy principles of Indigenous Peoples safeguards set out in ADB's SPS (2009) apply to the project:

- (i) Screen early on to determine (a) whether Indigenous Peoples are present in, or have collective attachment to, the project area; and (b) whether project impacts on Indigenous Peoples are likely.
- (ii) Undertake a culturally appropriate and gender-sensitive social impact assessment or use similar methods to assess potential project impacts, both positive and adverse, on Indigenous Peoples. Give full consideration to options the affected Indigenous Peoples prefer in relation to the provision of project benefits and the design of mitigation measures. Identify social and economic benefits for affected

- Indigenous Peoples that are culturally appropriate and gender and intergenerationally inclusive and develop measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate adverse impacts on Indigenous Peoples.
- (iii) Undertake meaningful consultations with affected Indigenous Peoples communities and concerned Indigenous Peoples organizations to solicit their participation (a) in designing, implementing, and monitoring measures to avoid adverse impacts or, when avoidance is not possible, to minimize, mitigate, or compensate for such effects; and (b) in tailoring project benefits for affected Indigenous Peoples communities in a culturally appropriate manner. To enhance Indigenous Peoples' active participation, projects affecting them will provide for culturally appropriate and gender inclusive capacity development. Establish a culturally appropriate and gender inclusive grievance mechanism to receive and facilitate resolution of the Indigenous Peoples' concerns.
 - (iv) Prepare an IPP that is based on the social impact assessment with the assistance of qualified and experienced experts and that draw on indigenous knowledge and participation by the affected Indigenous Peoples communities. The IPP includes a framework for continued consultation with the affected Indigenous Peoples communities during project implementation; specifies measures to ensure that Indigenous Peoples receive culturally appropriate benefits; identifies measures to avoid, minimize, mitigate, or compensate for any adverse project impacts; and includes culturally appropriate grievance procedures, monitoring and evaluation arrangements, and a budget and time-bound actions for implementing the planned measures.
 - (v) Disclose a draft IPP, including documentation of the consultation process and the results of the social impact assessment in a timely manner, before project appraisal, in an accessible place and in a form and language(s) understandable to affected Indigenous Peoples communities and other stakeholders. The final IPP and its updates will also be disclosed to the affected Indigenous Peoples communities and other stakeholders.
 - (vi) Monitor implementation of the IPP using qualified and experienced experts; adopt a participatory monitoring approach, wherever possible; and assess whether the IPP's objective and desired outcome have been achieved, taking into account the baseline conditions and the results of IPP monitoring. Disclose monitoring reports.

V. INFORMATION DISCLOSURE, CONSULTATION, AND PARTICIPATION

29. A poverty, social, and gender assessment including Indigenous Peoples assessment was carried out through extensive document reviews of relevant national and state laws, policies, data, and studies, and consultations with key stakeholders by the national social development and gender specialist (consultant) engaged for project preparation and due diligence in November 2020–February 2021. Those consulted included local communities around the ASU campus site, local non-government organization staff, and female and male students, trainers, and placement officers of three TVET institutions, as well as state government officials and industry associations. Focus group discussions were also conducted with female and male students at the TVET institutions. The pictures taken during the consultations and details of the consultations held are in Appendixes 1 and 2.

30. The main objectives of the assessment were to (i) understand the overall socioeconomic and cultural context in which ASU will operate; (ii) identify barriers and facilitating factors to ensuring decent employment and entrepreneurship opportunities; (iii) gather information on the concerns and expectations of local communities around the ASU campus site; (iv) map out the

key stakeholders during the project implementation stage; and (v) understand the aspiration of female and male youth and adults for skills, career, and livelihood development.

31. The consultations revealed that all key stakeholders considered the project as having positive impacts on them, including scheduled tribe communities, and contributing to the overall development of the state, the northeastern region, and India at large. The stakeholders also acknowledged that the project would increase opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship among women and men of all ages. There was no instance witnessed of any stakeholder opposing the project in any manner. Findings from the stakeholder consultations are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Stakeholder Consultations

Areas of Consultations	Perceptions/Views
Scheduled tribe communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cultures of scheduled tribe communities have often been blended with some of the mainstream culture and are reflected in the state's dominant culture • Some scheduled tribe communities in Assam are in remote rural and forest areas and have limited access to basic facilities such as higher and technical education, healthcare, water, and sanitation • Literacy levels of scheduled tribe communities are at par with the overall population in Assam, although literacy rates for women are lower, especially in rural areas • Most scheduled tribe population engage in traditional trades like textile, handloom, and a range of arts and crafts, and ASU will provide opportunities for upskilling • Scheduled tribe communities in the entire northeastern region can take advantage of ASU and outreach activities for students completing senior secondary education beyond Assam should be conducted
Educational backgrounds of prospective students at ASU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most children in both urban and rural areas go to school in Assam but some of them start dropping out after grade VII or VIII due to early marriage for girls and work at home or outside for boys from low-income families • Very few students take up higher education, especially in rural areas • Parents often do not motivate their children, especially girls, to take up higher education or technical education
Demand for skills education and training from youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is very little awareness among students in rural districts about skilling and technical education opportunities and students often drop out to either take up semi or unskilled jobs • If students can afford, they prefer to receive technical education outside the state in cities of western, eastern or southern India • Even if students received education and training in Assam, they have to go out of the state for jobs as there is very little development in the state • Youth from scheduled tribe communities already have locally nurtured skills in forestry, animal husbandry, horticulture, weaving (especially women), and other handicrafts • Skills are needed for students to be more employable across the country and even abroad • The choice of courses is often defined by the family or by gender role, and female students are rarely encouraged in science or engineering courses • Students suggested that the school system should be involved in promoting skills education and training in the state • It is important to counsel and guide students about available options with involvement of their parents • Some private TVET institutions have formally or informally integrated career counselling to help students with their choices, motivate them, especially during job search • There is tremendous potential for ASU, as expressed by students at TVET institutions at different levels, because it would allow them to develop higher skills and get better jobs or entrepreneurship opportunities in various sectors • A large number of youths engaged in education or jobs in other states have started to return to Assam during the novel coronavirus pandemic and expressed their interest in starting up businesses in the state

Areas of Consultations	Perceptions/Views
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges for ASU would be to identify and motivate students to apply • Promotional activities and access to technical education and skills education and training are limited among students and parents who are mostly unaware of skills development opportunities and career options • There are many locations in the state, especially in rural scheduled tribe blocks, where youths do not have access to technical education institutions • The state has a limited number of industries and slow progress in infrastructure development, limiting the potential to absorb skilled workforce in the state
Suggestions for ASU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is necessary to recognize the existing skills in local communities that are traditionally culturally rich, such as textile and weaving • It is important to encourage and equip students with skills aligned to the employment potential of the state such as tourism, health and wellness, organic farming, and fishery • It is important to think about the potential courses that would attract more students from scheduled tribe communities

ASU = Assam Skill University, TVET = technical and vocational education and training.

Sources: Asian Development Bank and the Government of Assam.

32. **Information disclosure, consultations, and participation during implementation.** To ensure stakeholder participation in the project, periodic consultations and focus group discussions will be conducted during project implementation. All views expressed during consultations and discussions, including those of women from scheduled tribe groups, will be considered and incorporated, if appropriate, in the process of planning and monitoring project activities. The electronic version of this IPP has been posted on the websites of the Assam Skill Development Mission (ASDM) and ADB. The IPP has also been disclosed in local languages to scheduled tribe communities. The project management unit (PMU) established by ASDM will post and update information on the project regularly on the ASDM website. Further, promotional and outreach activities will be conducted to proactively disseminate information on the project among prospective students and their parents, especially from the scheduled tribe population and other disadvantaged groups in Assam and the northeastern region. Semiannual social safeguards monitoring reports will be disclosed on ADB's website.

VI. ACTION PLAN FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

33. Based on the findings of the assessment and consultations, the following measures are considered necessary to improve access to skills education and training, career development, entrepreneurship programs and services ASU for the scheduled tribe population.

34. **Strategies.** ASU will prepare and adopt, with the support of the consulting firm for ASU management and operating system development, strategies to promote interest from, and enrolment of, females and disadvantaged groups, including the scheduled tribe population, at ASU.

35. **Outreach.** The stakeholder consultations indicated the need for promoting awareness among and reaching out to prospective students and their families, especially in rural areas and scheduled tribe communities in Assam and the other northeastern states, to improve their participation in skills education and training, and entrepreneurship education and support programs. PMU, with the support of the consulting firms for project management support and outreach support, will prepare a plan for promotional and outreach activities which should identify target groups among prospective students and entrepreneurs, especially in the seven districts and northeastern states with higher proportions of the scheduled tribe population (paras. 14 and 22), media for reaching out to, promoting awareness of, and disseminating information among

the target groups, and government agencies at the state and district levels, non-governmental and community-based organizations to collaborate in promotional and outreach activities.

36. **Stipends, scholarships, and other financial aid for students.** Scholarship and other financial aid schemes and programs for students from scheduled tribe groups supported by the central and state governments shall be applied to students at ASU. ASU will make the information on the schemes and programs available to prospective students and their families and facilitate the application processes through its student services.

37. **Residential facilities for students, faculty, and staff.** The ASU campus and facilities will be designed and constructed in a barrier-free and universally accessible manner with facilities, safety and security measures for female students, faculty, and staff members. The information on ASU's residential facilities for students, faculty, and staff will be made available to all prospective students, faculty, and staff. Preferential treatment will be offered to students, faculty, and staff from disadvantaged backgrounds, including scheduled tribe groups.

38. **Career development programs and services, soft and language skills development programs.** ASU will track progress of each student in its skill education and training programs and develop and deliver career development programs and services, and soft and language skills development programs, especially for female students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including scheduled tribe groups, to help them succeed in skills development, further study, entrepreneurship, job search, and career development.

39. **Skills education and training programs addressing skills needs of industries.** Under partnership agreements, ASU will establish skills education and training programs that address skills needs of industries at the local, national, and regional levels at the schools of (i) agricultural and food technology; (ii) technology; (iii) design and creativity; (iv) manufacturing and construction; (v) sustainability; (vi) mobility; (vii) management and finance; (viii) tourism, hospitality, and wellness; and (ix) healthcare. Where appropriate, programs will be designed to build on the existing skills among local communities, including scheduled tribe communities, in traditional trades.

VII. GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

40. ASDM and PMU will establish a grievance redress mechanism (GRM) for the project. Grievance can be registered through the following modes:

- (i) Web based: A separate corner will be developed at ASDM and ASU's websites so that the public and affected persons can register their complaints in the online column.
- (ii) Telephone and email-based: Contact details (name, phone number, and email address) of the complaint receiving officer will be available on ASDM and ASU's websites and on the project information board at the ASU campus site so that general public and affected persons can register their complaints by phone call and email.
- (iii) ASDM's Public Grievance Redressal System: ASDM's mobile application system DAKSHA (Digital Access to Knowledge and Skilled Human Resource of Assam) is a multi-faceted app which will bring all stakeholders to a single platform to register, monitor, track, and manage grievances.

41. The affected person(s)/aggrieved party can give their grievance verbally or in a written form to the ASU site office in Mangaldoi which will be established by the civil works contractor during the pre-construction and construction phases and by the ASU administration during the operation phase. The grievance of the affected persons will first be brought to the attention of the officer in charge of the site at ASDM (District Program Manager of ASDM) who may resolve the issue at the ASU campus site. If the matter is not resolved within 7 days by the officer in charge of the site at ASDM, it will be brought to the grievance redress committee (GRC) constituted for that purpose at the ASU campus site.

42. **Grievance redress committee at the university campus site.** The GRC shall discuss the issue in its monthly meeting and resolve the issues within one month after receiving the grievance. The agenda of the meeting will be circulated to all the members and the affected persons/aggrieved party, together with the venue, date, and time at least one week prior to the meeting. The GRC at the ASU campus site will be headed by officer in charge of the site at ASDM (District Program Manager of ASDM) and comprise PMU civil engineer, PMU environment specialist, PMU gender and Indigenous Peoples specialist, and one elected representative from the local Panchayat during the pre-construction and construction phases. If the matter is not resolved by the GRC at the ASU campus site within one month, the officer in charge of the site at ASDM will refer it to the GRC at PMU. Once operationalized in 2024, ASU will set up a GRC to discuss and resolve the grievance of students, faculty and staff members, and local communities, including those from scheduled tribe groups.

43. **Grievance redress committee at the project management office.** The GRC at PMU shall look into the complaint which are not resolved by the GRC at the ASU campus site. The GRC at PMU will be headed by ASDM Mission Director and comprising PMU environment specialist and gender and Indigenous Peoples specialist, and PMU/ASDM finance manager/officer. If the matter is not resolved by the GRC at PMU within one month, the aggrieved persons or party can bring the matter to the project steering committee (PSC). The GRC at PMU can also refer the complaint to PSC.

44. The aggrieved persons/party can bring the matter to the Court of Law at any time. The aggrieved person also can use the ADB Accountability Mechanism through directly contacting (in writing) the Complaint Receiving Officer at ADB headquarters or the ADB India Resident Mission (INRM). Before submitting a complaint to the Accountability Mechanism, it is necessary that affected persons make a good faith effort to solve the problem by working with the concerned ADB operations department and/or INRM. Only after doing that, and if they are still dissatisfied, will the Accountability Mechanism consider the complaint eligible for review. The complaint can be submitted in any of the official languages of ADB's developing member countries. The ADB Accountability Mechanism information is included in the project-relevant information to be distributed to the affected communities, as part of the project GRM.

45. PMU and ASU site office shall keep records of all grievances received including contact details of the complainant, the date of receiving the complaint, the nature of grievance, agreed corrective actions, the date of the actions taken, and their outcome. A complaint register will be also maintained at the ASU site office. The cost of GRM will be financed by the PMU operating budget.

VIII. MONITORING, REPORTING, AND EVALUATION

46. The PMU gender and Indigenous Peoples specialist, with the support of the social development and gender specialist from the consulting firm for project management support, will

prepare and submit semiannual social safeguards monitoring reports to ADB within 30 days after the end of each period. The first semiannual social safeguards monitoring report will cover the first 6 months from the date of loan effectiveness. The semiannual social safeguards monitoring report will detail how the Indigenous Peoples benefit from the project in terms of skills education and training; residential, entrepreneurship, and other facilities and services; career development programs and services; and employment. The design and monitoring framework and gender equality and social inclusion action plan for the project include indicators and targets for women and disadvantaged groups, including scheduled tribe groups, such as enrollment in skills education and training, and continuing education programs, and delivery of career development programs and services. After review by ADB, the semiannual social safeguards monitoring reports will be disclosed on ADB's website.

IX. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

47. The Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department (SEED) of the Government of Assam will be the executing agency of the project, and ASDM will be the implementing agency. ASDM has established PMU which will be responsible for coordinating and facilitating, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the action plan for Indigenous Peoples. A full time gender and Indigenous Peoples specialist will be appointed to PMU and will be supported by the social development and gender specialist from the consulting firm for project management support. In addition, another consulting firm or non-governmental organization will be engaged to provide student outreach support. The PMU gender and Indigenous Peoples specialist and the social development and gender specialist from the consulting firm will conduct training workshops on the action plan for Indigenous Peoples for SEED, ASDM, and ASU staff as well as the other consultants, contractors, and suppliers engaged under the project.

X. BUDGET AND FINANCING

48. The budget required to implement, monitor and evaluate, and report on the action plan for Indigenous Peoples is estimated to be around \$1.0 million which has been incorporated into the project cost. Details are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Budget for Indigenous Peoples Plan

Action	Responsibility	Budget (Source of Budget)	Allocation
Preparation of strategies to promote interest from, and enrolment of, females and disadvantaged groups, including the scheduled tribe population, at ASU	ASU, consulting firm for ASU management and operating system development, PMU	Consulting firm for ASU management and operating system development (ADB loan)	10%
Preparation of a plan for and conduct of promotional and outreach activities to improve awareness among and reaching out to prospective students and their families, especially in rural areas and scheduled tribe communities in Assam and the other northeastern states	PMU, consulting firms for project management support and outreach support, ASU	Consulting firm for outreach support (ADB loan)	20%
Dissemination of information on the scholarship and other financial aid schemes and programs to prospective students and their families through its student services	ASU, consulting firm for ASU management and operating system development, PMU	ASU operating budget (counterpart fund)	15%
Dissemination of information on ASU's residential facilities to all prospective students, faculty, and staff and preferential treatment for students, faculty, and staff from disadvantaged	ASU, consulting firm for ASU management and operating system development, PMU		

backgrounds, including scheduled tribe groups			
Development and delivery of career development programs and services, and soft and language skills development programs, especially for female students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including scheduled tribe groups	ASU, consultants for skills education and training program development, transaction TA consultants for career development service development	ASU operating budget, consultants for skills education and training program development, transaction TA consultants for career development (counterpart fund, ADB loan, attached TA)	20%
Design and delivery of skills education and training programs building on the existing skills among local communities, including scheduled tribe communities, in traditional trades	ASU, consultants for skills education and training program development	ASU operating budget, consultants for skills education and training program development (counterpart fund, ADB loan)	20%
Operation of GRM, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, and organization of training workshops	PMU, consulting firm for project management support	PMU operating budget (\$2.1 million), consulting firm for project management support (social development and gender specialist) (ADB loan)	15%

ADB = Asian Development Bank, ASU = Assam Skill University, GRM = grievance redress mechanism, PMU = project management unit, TA = technical assistance.

Sources: ADB and the Government of Assam.

APPENDIX 1: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS



Fig 1: Discussions with the residents/villagers around the proposed ASU campus site in Managaldoi



Fig 2: Interactions with the leaders from the Local Panchayat in Mangaldoi



Fig 3: Interactions with local community people during the collective walk around the proposed ASU campus site in Mangaldoi



Fig 4: Multistakeholder consultations chaired by Darrang District Collector



Fig 5: Focus group discussions with female and male students in various courses at a technical and vocational education and training institution in Guwahati



Fig 6: A student sharing his view at a technical and vocational education and training institution in Guwahati



Fig 7: Discussions with placement officers and trainers of a technical and vocational education and training institution in Guwahati



Fig 8: Discussions with placement Officers and trainers of a technical and vocational education and training institution in Guwahati

APPENDIX 2: DETAILS OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

No.	Stakeholder Consulted	Date
1.	Ms. Madhuchanda Talukdary, Assam Civil Service (ACS) Deputy Secretary Skill entrepreneurship Department, Government of Assam	11 November 2021
2	Mr. Mrigesh N. Barua, ACS Director Department of Welfare of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Government of Assam	11 November 2020
3	Ms. Shanta Sharma Representative Confederation of Indian Industries, Guwahati	11 November 2020
4	Consultation Meeting in Darrang District Mr. Dilip Kumar Borah District Collector Darrang Mr. Nabajyoti Das, Mr. Punkaj Kumar Deka, Mr. Kumar Surajeet Barua Additional Deputy Commissioner, Darrang Mr. Gauranga Kumar Das District Labour Officer, Darrang Ms. Madhuri Borah District Social Welfare Officer Mr. Gobinda Kaita Block Development Officer, Mangaldoi Ms. Rajashree Anil General Secretary, Horizon (non-governmental organization) Mr. Nayan S. Pathak Circle Officer, Mangaldoi Ms. Rekha Biswas, President, Gram Panchayat Mr. Gajendra Desa Panchayat Pradhan	12 November 2020
5	Consultation meeting with 14 residents (8 women, 6 men) around the ASU campus site in Mangaldoi	12 November 2020
6	Focus group discussion with 40 students (10 women, 30 men) and 10 training and placement officers (8 women, 2 men), Ajitaaksh Ventures Private Limited	11 November 2020
7	Focus group discussion with 5 trainers (4 women, 1 man) and 20 students (12 women, 8 men), Flyyway Training Institute	21 January 2021
8	Focus group discussion with 15 students (10 women, 5 men) and 10 trainers (7 women, 3 men), North East Skill Centre, Guwahati	21 January 2021
9	Mr. Endree Phangchoo Taravati Development Foundation (non-governmental organization)	21 January 2021