

The Nodal Department of the State Government for PMGSY identifies a State-level Autonomous Agency (Society, etc), with a distinct legal status, under its control for receiving the funds from the Ministry of Rural Development. Each State Government has to set up a State-level Standing Committee (preferably headed by the Chief Secretary) to vet the Core Networks and the related Project proposals to ensure that they have been formulated in accordance with the official guidelines. The State Level Standing Committee is responsible for close and effective monitoring of the programme and overseeing the timely and proper execution of road works.

Each State Government/UT Administration has identified one or two Executing Agencies. These Executing Agencies are the Public Works Department, Rural Engineering Service/Organisation, Rural Works Department, Zilla Parishad, Panchayati Raj Engineering Department, etc. The Executing Agencies have a Programme Implementation Unit (PIU) in the district for the purpose of road works.

Roads can be constructed with a variety of materials depending on the local conditions of soil, rainfall, expected traffic and the environment. Some of the materials that can be effectively used for durable roads are discussed below.

1. Construction of Cement-concrete Roads

In order to establish the techno-economic feasibility and appropriateness of cement concrete roads in the rural road construction programme, the National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCCBM), an Agency of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, is executing a programme for construction of cement-concrete roads on a pilot basis in selected States.

2. Use of Modified Bitumen

Modified Bitumen of various kinds including polymer-modified bitumen and rubbermodified bitumen have been found suitable for improving the quality of roads and to have techno-economic advantages in certain traffic, terrain and climatic conditions. The details are specified in the Rural Roads Manual (IRC:SP20:2002).

3. Use of Fly-ash and Soil Stabilisation Measures

In order to facilitate the use of fly-ash in the construction of rural roads as well as soil stabilisation measures/techniques, the NRRDA is in touch with premier research institutes such as the Central Road Research Institute (CRRI) to develop appropriate specifications in this regard.

The programme is being implemented in all states with their active participation. The starting point for the development of rural roads is the preparation of a District Rural Roads Plan and the Core Network. The road works approved by the Ministry of Rural Development are executed by the Executing Agency at the State level through the Programme Implementation Unit (PIU) in each district. The works are executed through reputed and capable contractors. The contractors are selected through the process of Open Competitive Bidding using a Standard Bidding Document (SBD) that guides the evaluation of the tenders and the execution of works. The Road works are to be completed within a period of 9 months from the date when the Work Order is issued. Delayed execution of projects could adversely affect clearance of the proposals in subsequent years. PMGSY does not provide for any cost over-runs. Any cost over-run, either due to time over-run or for any other reason whatsoever, is to be borne by the State Government.

Except for Hill States, the Road works under the PMGSY are not to be taken up in stages. Once road works are taken up, they should be completed to the requisite technical specifications in the prescribed timeframe. In the case of the Hill States and Andaman & Nicobar Islands, a period equivalent to two working seasons, about 18 months, is allowed to the Executing Agency to complete the projects cleared by the Ministry of Rural Development under the Programme. This is to enable the formation to stabilise during one season, followed by metalling and surfacing in the subsequent working season.

The roads constructed under this programme are expected to be of very high standard, requiring no major repairs for at least five years after the completion of construction. Accordingly, very high technical specifications as laid down by the Indian Roads Congress (IRC) given in the Rural Roads Manual (IRC:SP20:2002) have been prescribed for these roads.

The Quality Assurance is effected through a three-tier mechanism. The State Governments are responsible for the first two-tiers of the Quality Control Structure. The first tier comprises the Programme Implementation Unit or the Executive Engineer, whose prime responsibility is to ensure that all the materials utilised and the workmanship conform to the prescribed specifications.

Each State Government/ Union Territory Administration is expected to appoint a senior Engineer (not below the rank of a Superintending Engineer) to function as the State Quality Coordinator at the State level, who would oversee the satisfactory functioning of Quality Control mechanism within the State/Union Territory. As the third-tier of the Quality Control Structure, the NRRDA engages senior retired engineers with life long experience in road construction, designated as National Quality Monitors (NQM), for the inspection of the road works at random.