

Upgradation of Kohamara to Gondia NH 753 (Package I - Km 0+000 to Km 28+000) in the state of Maharashtra to two lane with paved shoulder configuration
Justification for Locating the Project in Forest Land

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH), Government of India, has decided to take up the development of Kohamara – Gondia NH 753 Package I (Km 0+000 to Km 28+000) in the state of Maharashtra for augmentation of capacity for safe and efficient movement of traffic by upgrading to 2-lane/2lane with paved shoulder configuration based on the traffic demand.

The project road starts at Kohamara and passes through Sadak Arjuni, Wadegaon, Dawwa, Murdoli and ends at Goti Village.

The existing project road predominantly has a carriageway width ranging from intermediate to two lane configuration with earthen shoulder 0.5 to 1.5 m on both sides with exception at a few locations. Paved shoulders are observed at all minor and major built ups along the project stretch. The existing width is incapable to cope up with the increasing traffic. Being a National Highway, the project road requires minimum two-lane with paved shoulder configuration.

This stretch passes through plain terrain for entire length of highway. Horizontal geometry is straight for major portion of the highway. Vertical geometry needs substantial improvement to meet highway standards. Inadequate carriageway width and lack of adequate safety appurtenances and markings are major causes for accident along the stretch. Absence of proper highway lighting at built-up areas is another cause of concern.

The junctions present along the built-ups are lacking channelization, signs, place identification boards, markings and maintenance. The pedestrian crossing facilities such as zebra crossings and signs are nowhere observed.

The total length of the project stretch is 28 km of which 9.125 km is passing through forest area. The proposed widening requires diversion of 8.36 ha of forest land in Sadak-Arjuni and Goregaon forest ranges of Gondia Division. 27.4 km of the project stretch from Kohmara is falling under the proposed Navegaon – Nagzira Tiger Reserve Eco-Sensitive Zone. Therefore, the widening of this stretch requires forest clearance from Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and wildlife clearance from National Board for Wild life.

The diversion of forest area has limited to the minimum that satisfies the National Highway standards. As the project road is passing through the middle of the forest area, bypassing the forest and the proposed Eco-Sensitive Zone is not possible. Alternatives have been examined and found that no better option is available. The widening has been limited to non-forest land where the road is abutting the forest land only on one side of the existing road, to reduce the requirement of forest land diversion.