



## 1. Project Data

<b>Project ID</b> P146936	<b>Project Name</b> UP Pro-Poor Tourism Development Project
<b>Country</b> India	<b>Practice Area(Lead)</b> Urban, Resilience and Land

<b>L/C/TF Number(s)</b> IBRD-88110	<b>Closing Date (Original)</b> 30-Dec-2022	<b>Total Project Cost (USD)</b> 31,404,536.08
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<b>Bank Approval Date</b> 20-Dec-2017	<b>Closing Date (Actual)</b> 31-Mar-2024
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	<b>IBRD/IDA (USD)</b>	<b>Grants (USD)</b>
Original Commitment	40,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	35,420,000.00	0.00
Actual	31,404,536.08	0.00

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## 2. Project Objectives and Components

### a. Objectives

According to the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) (p. i) and the Financing Agreement of December 28, 2017 (p. 5) the objective of the project was “to increase tourism related benefits for local communities in targeted destinations”.

### b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?



No

**c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?**

No

**d. Components**

The project included four components:

**Component 1: Destination Planning and Governance (appraisal estimate US\$2.59 million, actual US\$1.75 million):** This component was to finance i) participatory formulation of destination-level tourism development plans for selected destinations; ii) support to the refinement of branding and promotion strategies for target destinations; iii) support to public-private dialogue and the strengthening of public, private and community institutions involved in the tourism sector for coordinated destination planning, management and investments; iv) improvement of the state visitor information system; and v) training of individuals and groups employed in the tourism sector.

**Component 2: Tourist Products Development and Management (appraisal estimate US\$25.05 million, revised amount US\$20.47 million, actual US\$20.29 million):** This component was to finance i) enhancement of public areas and the surroundings of current main attractions; ii) provision of interpretation and information through visitors centers and signage; iii) rehabilitation of destination-level products and diversification of activities beyond monuments sightseeing; iv) provision of facilities and services for tourists and local communities alike, such as drinking water, shaded rest areas, toilets; and v) improvement of access to main sites and tourist products and their adjacent communities.

**Component 3: Support to Local Economic Development (appraisal estimate US\$9.26 million, actual US\$7.77 million):** This component was to finance i) mapping of local productive and creative industries and support to business development and tourism service providers with the highest pro-poor impacts; ii) provision of training, information, tools and infrastructure for business development, production and marketing within the tourism value chain; iii) enhancement and diversification of skills; and iv) promotion of locally produced goods linked to tourism products.

**Component 4: Project Management (appraisal estimate US\$3.10 million, actual US\$1.60 million):** This component was to finance i) establishment and operation of a State Project Coordination Unit (SPCU) at the state Directorate of Tourism in Lucknow and the hiring of relevant technical specialists as Technical Support Units (TSUs) to support the Development Authorities in implementation; ii) development of a project monitoring and information system; and iii) project communication.

**e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates**

**Project cost:** The project was estimated to cost US\$57.1 million. Actual cost was US\$44.9 million.

**Financing Amount:** The project was financed by an IBRD loan in the amount of US\$40.0 million of which US\$31.4 million was disbursed. During the first project restructuring US\$4.58 million was cancelled since some project activities were dropped.



**Borrower Contribution:** The Borrower was to contribute US\$14.1 million. Actual contribution was US\$13.5 million.

**Dates:** The project was restructured twice:

- On December 22, 2021, the project was restructured to: i) cancel US\$4.58 million due to the dropping of five sub-projects, reorganizing of remaining sub-projects, and adding new activities into four packages under component 2: and ii) modify the Results Framework and drop two intermediate outcome indicators, increase the targets of three intermediate outcome indicators, and reduce the target of two intermediate outcome indicators.
- On December 19, 2022, the project was restructured to extend the closing date by 15 months from December 30, 2022, to March 31, 2024, to allow for the completion of project activities which had been delayed due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 3. Relevance of Objectives

#### Rationale

**Country and sector context.** According to the PAD (para. 5), despite India experiencing high growth in international and domestic tourism, it had been unable to take advantage of the power of the tourism sector to achieve the goals of inclusive growth and poverty reduction. The economic benefits from tourism had unevenly trickled down to local communities or to the assets and locations that draw millions of visitors and pilgrims in the first place. Uttar Pradesh, one of India's biggest cultural and tourist destinations has some of the country's most iconic assets such as the Taj Mahal in Agra, one of the most ancient living cities in the world, Varanasi, located on the banks of the sacred Ganges, and to two of the world's four most important Buddhist sites, Sarnath and Kushinagar.

However, Uttar Pradesh remained a low-income state and India's third poorest state (37.7 percent poverty rate) with a low literacy rate, especially among women, and a high infant mortality rate. Agra and the Braj region, which were two of the prime tourist and pilgrimage destinations of India and UP, had some of the state's highest poverty rates. Agra's most iconic heritage asset and India's primary tourism destination, the Taj Mahal, was surrounded by more than 20 slums with crumbling infrastructure and a severe lack of services. In the Braj region, Mathura, the largest city and pilgrimage attraction, lacked the most basic urban infrastructure and services, condemning residents to the lowest living standards.

As a result of ineffective approaches and practices, the tourist destinations of Agra and the Braj region, among others in Uttar Pradesh, were not able to use their unique cultural and natural assets as endogenous sources of inclusive growth and poverty reduction through pro-poor tourism development. Key challenges included: i) lack of a shared vision and consensual strategy among stakeholders for the coordinated development and promotion of asset-rich destinations, leaving many touristic areas to degradation; ii) lack of adequate destination planning, management and institutional capacity, threatening assets and isolating local communities while reducing visitor satisfaction and retention; and iii) ineffective and non-participatory policy approaches, excluding communities from the benefits of tourism.

**Alignment with the Government Strategy.** The objective of the project supported the four main objectives of Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (India's major tourism scheme) which aimed to: i) enhance the contribution



of tourism to local economies; ii) create jobs including self-employment for local communities; iii) enhance the skills of local youth in tourism and hospitality; and iv) preserve and enhance local cultural and natural resources. Furthermore, the objective was in line with India's 12th Five-Year Plan, which aimed for faster, sustainable and more inclusive growth within a pro-poor perspective. In addition, the project supported Uttar Pradesh's 2022 Industrial Investment and Employment Promotion Policy which aims to create one million jobs in the tourism and hospital sectors as well as develop focus tourist destinations that include Sarnath and Kushinagar.

**Alignment with the World Bank Strategy.** The objective of the project was in line with the World Bank's most recent Country Partnership Framework (CPF) (FY18-22, extended to 2025) and its objective 1.2 "improve living conditions and sustainable cities" (under focus area 1 "resource efficient growth") as well as objective 2.5 "enable more quality jobs for women" (under focus area 2 "enhancing competitiveness and enabling job creation").

The World Bank was asked to assist the government through this project due to its extensive experience in inclusive tourism development, urban revitalization, and heritage stewardship.

The objective of the project was pitched at the outcome level to address a critical development problem.

Therefore, the relevance of the objective is rated as High.

**Rating**  
High

#### 4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

##### **OBJECTIVE 1**

###### **Objective**

To increase tourism related benefits for local communities in targeted destinations.

###### **Rationale**

**Theory of Change:** The project's theory of change stated that project activities/inputs such as providing training and conducting a technical assessment for the state Directorate of Tourism for capacity building in pro-poor tourism, investing in an integrated package of basic services in project areas including water and sewerage connections, toilets, streetlights, roads/drains, sidewalks, greenery as well as developing comprehensive business development support to local crafts people including self-help group organizations and training in hospitality and business literacy were to result in several outputs. These outputs were to include the capacity for inclusive tourism development of the state Directorate of Tourism being enhanced, cleaner, safer and more attractive tourist areas being regenerated, products and services for tourists being improved, and craftspeople/ women entrepreneurs being supported. These outputs were to result in the outcome of increased tourism related benefits for local communities.



The theory of change was sound and did not have any logical gaps.

The ICR defined “tourism related benefits for local communities” as: i) improved distribution of tourism-related benefits to local communities; ii) improved quality of basic services for local communities and tourists; and iii) enhanced local economic development and social empowerment. However, the project did not measure “distribution” of tourism related benefits but only an increase in average daily tourist expenditure and duration of stay. Therefore, instead, this review will define the first benefit as “increase in tourism-related benefits among local communities”.

According to the ICR (para. 29) twelve studies were conducted during project preparation to identify priority areas in each targeted destination to maximize pro-poor impacts: i) **Agra:** Shah Jahan Park to provide the city with a green asset that connects its most visited monuments, the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort. Also, two craft hubs were targeted, the Tajganj (low income crafts neighborhood adjacent to the Taj Mahal), and Kachhpura (last authentic leather shoe making village in the city overlooking the Taj Mahal); ii) **The Braj Region:** Vrindavan, a city where Krishna spent his childhood and thousand temples were devoted to him); iii) **The Buddhist Circuit:** Sarnath and Kushinagar (two of the four most sacred pilgrimage places for Buddhists).

#### ***Increase in tourism-related benefits among local communities:***

##### **Outputs:**

- The number of domestic visitors in project destinations increased from 43,600,000 in June 2014 to 59,689,960 in March 2024, exceeding the original target of 47.3 million visitors and the revised target of 27 million domestic visitors.
- The average stay across all targeted destinations increased from 0.25 days in June 2014 to 1.58 days in March 2024, exceeding the target of 0.5 day.

The following outputs were reported in the ICR but not included in the Results Framework and hence did not have any target values:

- In Sarnath, the project financed the regeneration of its core area by transforming it into a green promenade that links the two main monuments (Buddhist stupas) and archeological sites by constructing shaded walking paths, street vending zones, and plazas with local restaurants and public toilets. Furthermore, the project upgraded the two main access roads (1,800meters) to the archeological sites and the state museum. In Kushinagar, the project rehabilitated the most visited section of the Hirnyawati riverfront and last forest plot near the two main Buddhist stupas.
- In Agra, the project financed the preparation and implementation of a green regeneration plan for the Shah Jahan Park including upgrading pathways (3.086 meters), creating dedicated bicycle lanes (2.900 meters) along lakes and meadows, installing new benches, lighting, trash bins, playground and parking.
- In the Braj Region, the project financed a network of craft centers in selected artisan villages to provide tourists access to local craftspeople and locally made products.

##### **Outcomes:**

- The average daily tourist expenditure through day tourists in project destinations increased from US\$6.80 in June 2014 to US\$15.60 in March 2024, exceeding the target of US\$10.20.



- The average daily tourist expenditure for overnight tourists increased from US\$13.80 in June 2014 to US\$74.51 between 2022 and 2024, exceeding the target of US\$20.70. According to the World Bank team (November 13, 2024) during the last two years of project implementation, the state government, through local NGOs, conducted 16,026 surveys that covered 73,453 domestic tourists across all project areas. In Agra and the Braj Region, the surveys were conducted monthly from July 2022 to June 2023. In Sarnath and Kushinagar, the surveys were conducted from April 2023 to March 2024. The survey periods (and results) differ between Agra-The Braj and Sarnath- Kushinagar because the subprojects in Sarnath and Kushinagar started and were completed later, since the project followed a cascading implementation strategy. However, according to the ICR the number of visitors at the selected project destinations cannot be solely attributed to the project, since the data collected by the state was not disaggregated by subproject area

***Improved quality of basic services for local communities and tourists in targeted destinations.***

**Outputs:**

- Three subproject areas (Banke Bihari Temple area in the Braj region, Shah Jahan park in Agra and Kachhpura village in Agra) were declared Open Defecation Free (ODF), achieving the target of three areas.

The following outputs were reported in the ICR but not included in the Results Framework and hence did not have any target values:

- In Agra, the project financed the rehabilitation of 103 streets (4,184 meters), installed a sewerage system with household connections and street drainage (7,050 meters), improved street lighting and created community green spaces.
- In Mathura, the project rehabilitated all 22 streets leading to the temple (8,608 meters), installed new drains (13,736 meters), installed underground cabling (13,738 meters), sewerage connections, landscaping, and streetlights.
- In Sarnath, the project financed the rehabilitation of underground cabling and streetlights, as well as sewerage (7,575 meters), last mile connectivity between the ward and Varanasi city through upgrading pavements and drains (6,300 meters).

**Outcome:**

- 2,919 households in subproject areas had improved conditions such as access to basic services, exceeding the original target of 500 households as well as the revised target of 2,000 households. According to the World Bank team (November 13, 2024) these improved conditions included: i) access to individual toilets; ii) improvement of water supply system; iii) improvement of solid waste collection facilities; iv) improvement of drainage systems; v) improvement of sewer connections; vi) installation of underground electricity cabling; vii) improvement of streetlights; viii) rehabilitation of community places, and ix) improvement of roads/streets/walkways. Households benefited from multiple improvements as a package.
- The urban living conditions of 15,861 people were improved, exceeding the original target of 500 people and the revised target of 8,000 people. According to the World Bank team (November 13, 2024) this indicator measured the same results as the indicator above.



***Enhanced local economic development and social empowerment.***

**Outputs:**

- 2,861 jobs were created within the tourism value chain, exceeding the original target of 200 jobs and the revised target of 2,500 jobs.
- 7,007 local entrepreneurs or small businesses in project destinations were supported with improved business development capacities, infrastructure and/or tools, exceeding the original target of 300 entrepreneurs or small businesses and the revised target of 2,500 entrepreneurs or small businesses.
- 9,824 community consultations were held in project destinations, exceeding the original target of 200 community consultations and the revised target of 4,000 community consultations.
- 5,725 people (of which 4,369 were women) were organized into 561 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to incentivize craftspeople to lend and borrow internally to improve their production or pay for receiving financial assistance during an emergency. This output was not included in the Results Framework and lacked a target.

**Outcomes:**

- 3,895 local entrepreneurs, including 1,921 women, reported increased income after project completion. The original target of 2,000 entrepreneurs and the revised target of 3,895 were achieved.

The following outcomes were reported in the ICR but not included in the Results Framework and hence lacked target values:

- In Agra, the monthly average income of local entrepreneurs increased by 164 percent, in the Braj Region by 78 percent, in Sarnath by 36 percent, and in Kushinagar by 19 percent.
- In Agra, the monthly average income generated for new jobs that were created was US\$210, in the Braj Region it was US\$51.45, in Sarnath it was US\$16.10, and in Kushinagar it was US\$7.6.
- 80 percent of 590 surveyed beneficiaries reported significant improvements in their social status and household conditions including: i) increased involvement in decision making and less exposure to violence; ii) children having better educational outcomes; iii) increased ownership of household appliances; iv) greater affordability and awareness of medical facilities, health, and hygiene issues; and v) enhanced business development capacities.

The project was able to build capacity for inclusive tourism development within the Directorate of Tourism, regenerate cleaner, safer and more attractive tourist areas as well as improve products and services for tourists while also supporting local craftspeople and women entrepreneurs. While the project was able to achieve its targets, some of the achievements may not be solely attributable to the project given other interventions by the government. Overall, the achievements of the project were Substantial with minor shortcomings.

**Rating**  
Substantial



## **OVERALL EFFICACY**

### **Rationale**

The project was able to deliver several key outcomes such as improving households' access to basic services, as well as increasing incomes and capacity of local entrepreneurs. The project contributed towards changing the state government approach to tourism development from its previous focus on investing in beautification of sites and services for international tourists to now investing in providing basic services and supporting job creation/income generation for local communities and poor pilgrims. While the project was able to achieve its targets, some of the achievements may not be solely attributable to the project given other interventions by the government. Overall, the achievements of the project were Substantial with minor shortcomings.

### **Overall Efficacy Rating**

Substantial

## **5. Efficiency**

### **Economic efficiency:**

Both, the PAD and the ICR conducted a benefit-cost analysis.

The PAD (p. 15) defined the benefits as: i) increasing dispersal of visitors to different tourist attractions with subsequent increases in the amount of time they spend in the destinations. In Agra, for instance, the analysis considered an expected increase in the proportion of Taj Mahal visitors visiting some of the other main attractions of the city (Agra Fort, and Itmad-ud-Daulah); ii) increasing the proportion of visitors staying overnight at the destination. For the Braj Region, it was expected that the project was to increase the duration of stay of overnight visitors by half a day in the moderate case and one day in the high case. It was also expected that by extending their visits to stay overnight, average local expenditure per tourist in a destination would increase; and iii) increasing average tourist/pilgrim out of pocket expenditure per day. These benefits seem appropriately assessed.

The Internal Rate of Return (IRR) in the moderate case and high case scenarios was 37.8 percent and 80.2 percent, respectively. Applying a discount rate of 10 percent, the Net Present Value (NPV) was US\$74 million in the moderate case scenario and US\$210 million in the high case scenario, indicating that the project was a worthwhile investment.

The ICR (p. 28) also conducted a benefit-cost analysis including the following benefits: i) economic revenue from tourism; ii) livelihood interventions; iii) improved basic services; and iv) benefits from convergence. The analysis estimated an Economic IRR (EIRR) at 66.9 percent for the moderate case scenario and 70 percent for the high case scenario. The EIRR at completion was higher due to higher benefits than originally anticipated.

### **Operational efficiency:**





The project’s implementation period was extended by 15 months due to delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic and several changes in the Tourism Director General which significantly impacted contract approvals and payments. Also, year around religious and cultural events resulted in delays in the completion of project works which were not taken into account when planning project implementation (ICR, para. 69).

Overall, the project’s efficiency was Substantial.

### Efficiency Rating

Substantial

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

\* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

### 6. Outcome

Relevance of the objective was High given its alignment with the most recent Country Partnership Framework (FY18-22, extended to 2025). Efficacy was rated Substantial with minor shortcomings and Efficiency were Substantial. The overall outcome rating is Satisfactory.

#### a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

### 7. Risk to Development Outcome

**Government commitment/financial risk:** The government remains committed to the project’s objective as demonstrated through the government’s adoption of a pro-poor approach in its new Tourism Policy 2024. Also, the government launched a package of new tourism projects in the amount of US\$340 million in March 2024 aiming to upscale this project’s focus on urban regeneration of underserved tourist areas and to create jobs and incomes for vulnerable groups and traditional craftspeople (ICR, para. 25).



**Sustainability risk:** According to the ICR (para. 84) there is a risk of insufficient funding streams for the additional costs associated with operating and maintaining the current investments especially physical infrastructure built under the project.

## 8. Assessment of Bank Performance

### a. Quality-at-Entry

According to the ICR (para. 79) the World Bank team conducted extensive consultations with local communities and civil society organizations to ensure that they participated in the decision-making process. Also, the World Bank worked with critical partner organizations such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as well as several government agencies to improve inter-governmental coordination. According to the PAD (p. 9) the project design was built on several lessons learned from World Bank projects implemented in other countries. These lessons included: i) tourism is an often-overlooked means for poverty reduction; ii) pro-poor tourism is an approach which, when applied effectively can contribute to improve local communities from tourism development; iii) an area-based pro-poor intervention relies on particularly high-quality destination planning and development; and iv) collaboration and coordination are critical for achieving pro-poor benefits.

According to the PAD (p.14) the World Bank team identified several risks such as technical design and weak institutional capacity as Substantial. The World Bank mitigated these risks by applying a phased and learning-by-doing approach and by providing strong technical support to implementing entities during preparation. However, the mitigation measures were not sufficient and the project experienced procurement issues due to low capacity (see section 10b for more details). Also, the World Bank team did not identify the risk of year around religious and cultural events, which resulted in delays in the completion of project works.

The Results Framework had some shortcomings such as PDO and intermediate outcome indicators measuring results that could not be solely attributed to project activities and indicators not being disaggregated between the three project areas. Also, some of the end targets were not sufficiently ambitious and had already been achieved before the Mid-Term Review (see section 9a for more details).

### Quality-at-Entry Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

### b. Quality of supervision

According to the ICR (para. 81) the World Bank team conducted 13 implementation support missions. Furthermore, the project provided support throughout project implementation to build capacity in the different government agencies involved in project implementation. The project benefitted from the same Task Team Leader (TTL) managing the project from appraisal to closing, allowing for continuity.



However, even though the project's Results Framework was restructured, several indicators would have benefitted from being revised to allow for better assessment of the project's achievement.

### **Quality of Supervision Rating**

Moderately Satisfactory

### **Overall Bank Performance Rating**

Moderately Satisfactory

## **9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization**

### **a. M&E Design**

The objective of the project was clearly specified and the theory of change and how key activities and outputs were to result in the intended outcomes was sound and reflected in the project's Results Framework. Furthermore, the M&E arrangements were robust, and roles and responsibilities were clearly defined for the SPCU as well as the NGOs. The project developed a Management Information System (MIS) to assess progress towards the project's targets.

While the PDO indicators encompassed all outcomes of the objective, there were some shortcomings. For example, PDO indicator 2 ("increase in average daily tourist expenditure in project destinations") was not measuring results that could be solely attributed to project activities; ii) the indicators were not disaggregated between the three project areas; iii) the indicator targets were not sufficiently ambitious resulting in the need to increase the targets during the 2021 restructuring.

According to the PAD (p. 12) the state Directorate of Tourism was to be responsible for the project's M&E activities.

### **b. M&E Implementation**

According to the ICR (para. 16) the state Directorate of Tourism hired an M&E specialist who was responsible for establishing a Management Information System and aggregating all data collected by NGOs. The project conducted an extensive survey on tourism data (tourist expenditure and duration of stay). Also, an endline beneficiary impact assessment was conducted at project closing. However, even though the Results Framework was revised during the 2021 restructuring, the shortcomings stated above such as indicators measuring the results of all project areas together rather than separately were not addressed, not allowing for a specific assessment of the project's achievements on each project area.

According to the World Bank team (November 13, 2024) the M&E data were found to be of reliable quality.



### c. M&E Utilization

According to the ICR (para. 74) the project's M&E was used to track implementation progress on an ongoing basis to identify bottlenecks and risks resulting in two project restructurings of which one of them included the raising of project targets.

The overall M&E quality is rated as Substantial with some design shortcomings,

### M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

## 10. Other Issues

### a. Safeguards

The project was classified as category B and triggered the World Bank's safeguard policies OP/BP 4.01 (Environmental Assessment), OP/BP 4.04 (Natural Habitats), and OP/BP 4.11 (Physical Cultural Resources). According to the ICR (para. 76) the project hired an environmental and social expert in the PMU and hired two NGOs to prepare Environmental Social Management Plans (ESMPs). Those ESMPs were implemented during construction and included mitigation measures such as monitoring of various environmental parameters including noise, tree preservation, use of personal protective equipment by labor, equal wages for women as well as maintenance of incidence registers at sites. A few projects impacted families in Sarnath who were relocated as per resettlement plans. When the project closed, the project's safeguard compliance was rated Satisfactory.

### b. Fiduciary Compliance

#### Financial Management:

According to the ICR (para. 78) the project's Financial Management performance was Satisfactory throughout implementation. The project used the government treasury systems and benefitted from well qualified accounting staff at the SPCU who provided efficient oversight and control. The project submitted Interim Unaudited Financial Reports on a quarterly basis as well as disbursement claims and audit reports in a timely manner. According to the World Bank team (November 13, 2024) the external auditor's opinions were unqualified. The only shortcoming the project experienced in terms of Financial Management was related to the state government's delay in releasing funds to the project during the first two years of implementation.

#### Procurement:

SPCU was responsible for the project's procurement activities. According to the ICR (para. 77) agreed procurement procedures such as using NIC's e-procurement portal and the World Bank's Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) were generally followed. However, the project experienced several procurement related issues such as lack of capacity of procurement specialists who were hired by



the Directorate. The procurement specialists were not able to adequately resolve contract management issues according to the World Bank’s procedures which resulted in delays in closing contracts, as well as in payments of contractors and consultants. Due to these persistent shortcomings, the project’s procurement performance was downgraded to Moderately Unsatisfactory in August 2023. According to the World Bank team (November 13, 2024) the procurement issues were addressed through: i) preparation of a month-wise disbursement plan with clear and realistic targets; ii) weekly meetings with the heads of the consultancy firms and daily meetings with their ground-level staff to ensure adequate staffing/workers; and iii) expedited procurement of toolkits and training for craftspeople in Sarnath and Kushinagar. The Bank’s Procurement Specialist also provided hands-on advisory technical support to the new Procurement Specialist at the State Project Coordination Unit to bring them up to speed.

In February 2024, the project’s procurement performance was upgraded to Moderately Satisfactory which remained the rating until project closure.

**c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)**

NA

**d. Other**

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**11. Ratings**

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	High relevance of objective, and Substantial efficacy and efficiency.
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Modest	Substantial	While acknowledging the shortcomings in M&E design, they are not significant enough for a Modest rating. The M&E system were generally robust and provided sufficient evidence for a Substantial rating of Efficacy.
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

**12. Lessons**



The ICR (p. 19) included several lessons learned which were adapted by IEG:

- **Working closely with local communities and key stakeholders during project preparation and implementation can positively impact the project’s ownership and sustainability but keeping implementation time in mind is key to ensure efficiency.** This project had a highly participatory approach with local communities and key agencies. However, this process prolonged preparation and reduced implementation time due to a lacking clear commitment to a timeframe for each phase.
- **Pro-poor tourism may work well when the location attracts a large number of tourists.** In this project, Agra the Braj region and Sarnath were well established destinations where a large number of tourists came to visit. Identifying opportunities of products and services that local social enterprises could provide to tourists was easier than in Kushinagar which did not have as many tourists visiting.
- **Decentralization of decision-making can make project implementation smoother.** This project supported state authorities to decentralize power which allowed to address institutional risks like frequent changes in leadership, slow decision-making, and lengthy approval processes.

### 13. Assessment Recommended?

No

### 14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR provided an adequate overview of project preparation and implementation, was internally consistent and sufficiently outcome driven. Also, the ICR included an economic analysis and useful lessons learned that can be applied to future projects in this area. However, the ICR would have benefitted from stating which World Bank safeguard policies were triggered. Overall, the quality of the ICR is rated Substantial.

#### a. Quality of ICR Rating

Substantial

