

CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Arusha Region in the northern part of Tanzania, where the requested road is located, has a concentration of national parks and conservation area, forming a world-class paradise for wild animals.

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area, the Lake Manyara National Park and the Serengeti National Park, registered as world heritage sites, form a key area for tourism and the number of tourists visiting the area by the Makuyuni • Ngorongoro Road is increasing.

Very active agricultural production is also observed in Arusha Region with the provincial production volumes of wheat and maize topping the list. The production volumes of cotton, coffee and tea, etc. are also large and the area along the Makuyuni • Ngorongoro Road constitutes the granary of Tanzania as the natural conditions are suitable for agriculture.

The Makuyuni • Ngorongoro Road facilities transportation of agriculture products from upcountry (Arusha district, Mwanza, Dodoma, Shinyanga) to Arusha, Moshi and Dar es Salaam. Even though the road is part of the national trunk road network, it has only a gravel surface and bridges and road crossing structures are damaged due to aging and flooding, etc. The road becomes muddy during the rainy season, hindering road traffic.

The poor state of the Makuyuni • Ngorongoro Road makes it impassable during part of the year, preventing the effective realisation of the agricultural potential as well as the potential of tourism, which is an important source of foreign currency earning, in the area. This is also an impediment factor for Tanzania's economic development.

Under the above circumstances, the Government of Tanzania regards the Makuyuni • Ngorongoro Road as a priority road for improvement in IRP (Integrated Roads Project). After conducting a feasibility study, including an environmental impacts assessment, with IDA funding from 1994 to 1996, it made a request to the Government of Japan for the provision of grant aid for an improvement project in November, 1996. The Government of Tanzania subsequently conducted the detailed design (D/D) for the road from 1998 to March, 2000, funded by the budget of the Ministry of Works, as a preparatory step towards materialising the said improvement project.