Public Affairs Centre (PAC) is a not for profit organization, established in 1994 with a mandate to improve the quality of governance in India. The creation of PAC was perhaps the first civil society-led institutional initiative to mobilize a demand for good governance in India. The focus of PAC is primarily in areas where citizens and civil society organizations can play a proactive role in improving governance.
Improving Quality of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) roads through Social Audits and Monitoring Platforms

Summary
A study of 70 roads built under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) scheme in Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Meghalaya revealed that the roads were substandard and lacked maintenance. Every 2 out 5 roads in Meghalaya did not meet the Bill of Quantity (BOQ) standards w.r.t carriage width. Similarly less than 50% of roads in all 3 States met the quality standards for shoulder camber. Likewise only 50% of roads met quality standards for PMC (pre-mix carpet) thickness.

Introduction
In this study, the roads were monitored by Citizen’s Monitoring Audit Teams (CMATS) which also created monitoring mechanisms for reviewing the construction of PMGSY roads. CMAT members were mobilized and trained by Public Affairs Centre. The CMA training was on road construction mechanisms and specific tools and techniques to measure parameters and generate data for analysis of road quality.

Key Findings
• Poor quality of standards across parameters (carriage width, camber of shoulder and PMC thickness).
  o 1 out every 5 roads in all 3 states did not meet the BOQ standard for road carriage width.
  o Less than 30% of all 70 roads matched the quality standard for shoulder camber.
  o In Meghalaya, less than 5% of roads were up to the standard (shoulder camber).
  o Only 50% of all roads matched the required standard for PMC thickness. In Meghalaya none of the roads had used PMC.

• Presently there is no stakeholder feedback mechanism in the programme that can give on-ground scenarios of PMGSY progress. The absence of a Social Accountability Mechanism makes non-adherence easier.
Recommendations:

✓ Including a Social Audit Component in PMGSY:

A yearly Social Audit conducted by independent agencies for each road should be made mandatory during the contract period. The results of the Social Audit must be analyzed to judge the performance of the state. Recommendations made in the Audit Report must be tracked by an Action Taken report.

✓ Creating RMTs (Road Monitoring Teams):

RMTs comprising of communities, CSOs, local political representatives and civil servants (both at district and panchayat levels) need to hold regular meetings and use various tools to evaluate and monitor the progress of roads. These RMTs must report to an independent committee (comprising of government officials, technical experts, lokayuktas and eminent citizens) who will further evaluate the performance of the contractor based on these reports.

✓ Incentivise use of technology:

Use geo-Informatics (Geographical Information Systems, Remote Sensing and Global Positioning Systems) to monitor location of roads and quality of roads. This can be done by incentivizing states to use geo-informatics technology through rewards and recognition. This will also lead to greater transparency and accountability in the PMGSY.