

## POLICY FORMULATION AND ACTION PLANS

### 3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN

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<b>Problem</b>	<b>A rural transport action plan rarely exists because of its cross-sectoral nature, and the absence of a natural champion</b>
<b>Solution</b>	<b>A lead organisation should take responsibility for development and ownership of an action plan</b>

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#### BACKGROUND

An action plan identifies the programme for implementing policy and strategy. At a strategic level for rural transport development, it should identify, in broad terms, the targets, responsibilities, resources and outcomes of the programme. The identification of key milestones aids monitoring of the plan. Ownership of the plan should rest with one organisation that co-ordinates the activities of others. Because of the wide-ranging nature and size of action plans, they are often built around donor sector support initiatives. In this case, the donor usually provides technical assistance to support identification of the plan, and to manage its implementation.

The plan may include a mix of projects, institutional support and re-structuring, technical assistance, financial and other measures, all designed to contribute to the achievement of common goals concerned with rural development.



Rural transport is a cross-sectoral issue that is often approached in a non-integrated manner: for example, a feeder road programme funded under a highway sector loan; a small-credit facility (which can be used for rural transport) funded under a small-enterprise loan; district organisation strengthening through a local government loan. A rural transport action plan is thus a rare event, and likely to remain so until more integration is achieved in rural development. Steps in the development of an action plan and factors involved are described by World Bank (1999) and summarised below.

#### ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS

##### Projects

Road investment has always been a key feature of rural development. Rural road investments are notoriously difficult to justify on the basis of generally accepted economic criteria. Their need, however, is clearly an important component for any rural development programme; identification and prioritisation is now key to the development of a rural transport action plan.

##### Institutional strengthening and restructuring

With the increasing trend towards decentralisation of responsibility, an action plan must cover the need to strengthen institutions so that they may have the capacity to meet the expectations placed with them. This will include the establishment of new bodies, the restructuring of existing organisations, staff recruitment and re-training, etc. These activities may require new legislation to be enacted and new funding mechanisms to be instituted. Technical assistance to support all of these activities may be needed. The timing of these events is always difficult to estimate because they involve political and parliamentary processes, as well as processes

(like retrenchment) which directly impinge on individuals in life-changing ways that must be handled in a sensitive manner.

### PREPARING AN ACTION PLAN

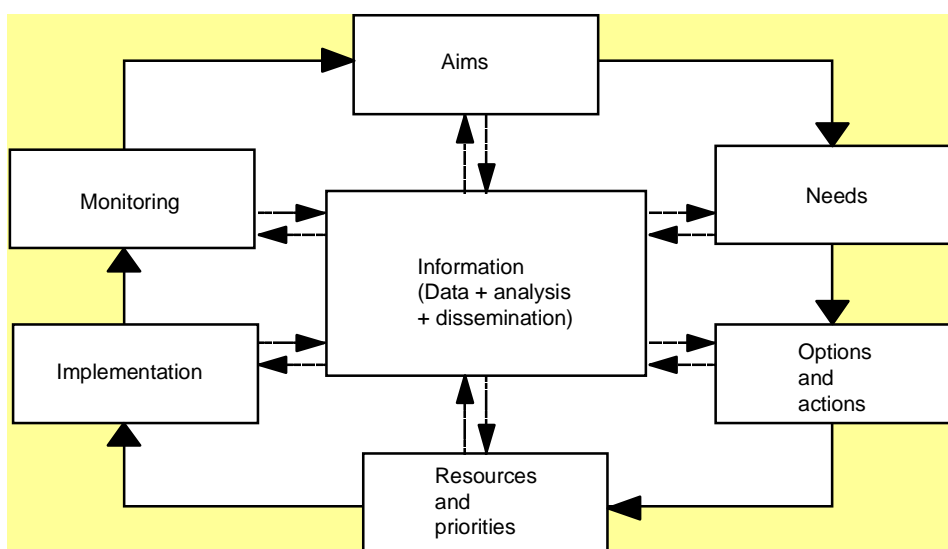
Preparing an action plan in itself requires significant planning. Government objectives, policies and strategies have to be translated into activities that will fulfil these goals. This involves the identification of projects and programmes, usually on the basis of consultancy assignments that identify problems, issues, options for development and recommendations (refer to **Appendix H** for an example action plan produced in Cameroon). Donors often provide preparation funds (which may be part of an existing credit facility) for this exercise, with the express purpose of developing a new sector loan.

A series of well-defined steps can be used to take the policy formulation process through the project management decision-making activity. These steps can be considered as the following:

- i) Aims
- ii) Needs
- iii) Options and actions
- iv) Resources and priorities
- v) Implementation

The sequence of these steps through the decision-making process is known as the *Project Cycle* (**Figure 1**).

**Figure 1: The Project Cycle**



*Source: World Bank (1999)*

### KEY FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN

#### Relationship with policy

A rural transport policy is likely to consist of:

- those policy issues that can be addressed immediately, and
- those that can only be addressed over time.

A *strategy* may be needed to enable the policy process to move from the immediate possibilities to those policy measures desired in the future. Thus, 'strategy' adds the dimension of time to the policy formulation process. An action plan enables a strategy to be put in place. *Whereas a strategy may be defined in fairly broad terms at a fairly high level, an action plan is much more detailed.* It should be very specific about the activities to be undertaken, the individuals responsible for each component of the strategy, and the time scale and resources for completion.

**Key players**

One of the key roles of a steering committee and its secretariat will be to produce a strategy and action plan for policy formulation and updating. These will need to reflect the policy development process for both the national policy statement and the policy frameworks for the sector organisations.

**Formulation**

The process of formulating a strategy and action plan will mirror that of the policy formulation process. Normally, the strategy for policy formulation will be developed in parallel to the policy itself. In many cases, it will not be possible to divorce the two activities. However, there is a need at all times to keep in mind the distinction between policy and strategy.

**Format**

*The strategy and action plan should be written down and made available for public scrutiny.* The national strategy will normally be contained within the same document as the policy statement. For individual organisations, it is normal to produce the following types of policy documents:

- *Framework document*  
This sets out the requirements of government, and includes the legal framework, the areas of responsibility and the mission and overall objectives of the organisation
- *Corporate plan*  
The sets out the medium to long term strategy for the organisation's business, and includes all major aims, objectives, programmes and tasks for the next few years
- *Business plan*  
This concentrates on setting out the business targets of the organisation for a given year

Action plans consist of a list of activities to be undertaken. Against each can be noted:

- The activity to be undertaken
- The individual, unit or organisation responsible for delivery of this activity
- The target completion date for the activity

**Financing an action plan**

The action plan must have clearly identified sources of funding, so that components can be sensibly implemented. Finance is often sourced by donors, but a matching contribution may be required from government. Funding is likely to be channelled through a single organisation (the 'owners' of the plan), though different bodies may be involved in the execution of the programme.

**Monitoring an action plan**

As noted above, responsibility for executing the plan will rest with its 'owner', who should be responsible for monitoring progress. Where donor funds are involved, a task manager will represent the interests of the lender. A project management team may also be established as part of the loan to oversee progress on a continuing basis.

One technique used extensively by donors to assess and manage projects is the 'Logical Framework'. This sets out in concise form the project aims and objectives, outputs, activities, milestones and conditions. An example of a logical framework is shown in the Table below.

**KEY REFERENCES**

Connerley E & L Schroeder (1996). Rural Transport Planning. The World Bank and Economic Commission for Africa SSATP Working Paper No. 19. *Washington D.C: World Bank*

World Bank (1999). Rural travel and transport policies in action. *Washington D.C: World Bank*

### Rural Transport Action Plan

OBJECTIVE	OUTPUT	ACTIVITIES
1 To establish a clear Rural Travel and Transport Policy and institutional framework.	<p>1.1 Clear Policy on rural travel and transport as a subset of the NTP established.</p> <p>1.2 Strengthened institutional frame work in place.</p>	<p>1.1.1 Review Transport Act.</p> <p>1.1.2 Attend meetings on NTP.</p> <p>1.1.3 Ministry of Transport enforces Transport Act.</p> <p>1.1.4 Intensify efforts of obtaining Cabinet approval of the NT policy.</p> <p>1.1.5 Develop an action plan for the implementation of the rural travel and transport strategies in the NTP.</p> <p>1.1.6 Monitor and evaluate implementation of rural travel and transport strategies in the NTP.</p> <p>1.2.1 Establish MRTTP unit.</p> <p>1.2.2 Form MRTTP Steering Committee.</p> <p>1.8 Prepare action plan for the above.</p>
2. To promote Rural Travel and Transport Programmes.	<p>2.1 Enhanced awareness and understanding of rural travel and transport issues.</p> <p>2.2 Information on RTT available.</p>	<p>2.1.1 Promote MRTTP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invite participants.</li> <li>- Establish venue.</li> <li>- Conduct workshop for district and local level Representatives.</li> <li>- National launch workshop.</li> <li>- Conduct stakeholders meetings.</li> </ul> <p>2.1.2 Prepare and Implement IEC programmes.</p> <p>2.1.3 Promote RTT amongst multilateral/bilateral agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Host donor meeting.</li> </ul> <p>2.1.4 Monitor and evaluate the impact of the IEC programme</p> <p>2.2.1 Define the data required for baseline survey.</p> <p>2.2.2 Prepare TOR for baseline survey.</p> <p>2.2.3 Execute the baseline survey.</p> <p>2.2.4 Establish RTT data bank with required information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disseminate information on RTT.</li> </ul> <p>2.2.5 Prepare action plan for the above activities.</p>
3. To achieve integrated planning and rational allocation of resources for the RTT sub sector.	<p>3.1 District planning system implemented and capacity built in districts.</p> <p>3.2 Mechanism for capital and recurrent funding for RTT established.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Review the current planning systems to reflect the RTT issues.</p> <p>3.1.2 Replicate the District Planning System in all districts.</p> <p>3.1.3 Train DDC's, DEC, ADC's, AEC's, and VDC's in elements of the District Planning System.</p> <p>3.1.4 Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the District Planning and Financing Systems.</p> <p>3.1.5 Identify training needs of RTT sub-sector.</p> <p>3.1.6 Prepare training programme.</p> <p>3.1.7 Seek MRTTP Steering Committee approval of the training programme.</p> <p>3.1.8 Execute training programmes.</p> <p>3.1.9 Monitor and evaluate impact of training programmes.</p> <p>3.2.1 Review current financing system.</p> <p>3.2.2 Orient staff to revised financing systems.</p> <p>3.2.3 Prepare financing requests for RTT interventions.</p> <p>3.2.4 Prepare action plan for the above activities.</p>

*Source: Extracts from an action plan produced by the Malawi Rural Travel and Transport Programme*