

POLICY TOOLS – PROVISION OF MEANS OF TRANSPORT

4.10 TRANSPORT SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION

Problem: Responsibility for the implementation of improved rural transport services is split between the community, the private sector, government and non-government organisations.

Solution: Improved co-ordination between the different actors, and a better understanding of what can be done, is essential for increasing rural mobility.

BACKGROUND

There are many obstacles to lower cost and more efficient rural transport and many stakeholders with different priorities and agendas. Any one initiative is unlikely to have a significant impact and so there is a need to push forward on a number of fronts. Underlying everything is the need to inform and sensitise all stakeholders and to get political support. Most politicians, transport operators, transport planners and rural communities assume that motor transport is most important and that infrastructure improvements will lead to improved rural transport. This is partly true, but not the whole story.

Support from national and local political leaders is essential but often difficult. Prevailing attitudes have been entrenched through years of education and media images that associate modernisation and development with urban issues and motor vehicles on tar roads (not with complementary motorised and non-motorised transport services in rural areas). Possible activities include sensitising stakeholders of the issues through attractive publications and videos, the news media, workshops, study visits and networking exchanges. Local user groups should lobby politicians.

When attempting to implement improved rural transport provision there are five main areas requiring concurrent action:

- To encourage a more user-focused, gender-sensitive approach to the provision of rural transport and take particular regard to the poorest and least mobile sections of the community.
- To tackle the impact of low density of demand which is common in rural areas throughout the world.
- To improve the promotion of all vehicle types but particularly intermediate means of transport. Efficient rural transport requires a multi-modal system.
- To enhance the role of the private sector and encourage creative competition.
- To strengthen the various institutions that contribute towards a conducive environment for rural transport operations.

USER AND POVERTY FOCUS

Transport users (women, men and children) and especially the rural poor have been neglected in the planning and implementation of rural transport interventions. As a result, transport interventions have not been able to meet their needs to travel for a wide variety of subsistence, social and economic requirements to maximise their livelihoods. The market has not adequately responded to provide transport services to areas where there is a low density of demand and to the poorest and least mobile sections of the community.

Solutions revolve around an increased dialogue with rural users (the main beneficiaries of rural transport initiatives) using inclusive, participatory techniques as described in other sections of this toolkit. Since the more powerful rural people, with their own transport agendas, are likely to be most vocal and articulate, inclusive participatory techniques will be required to empower the less powerful rural people (women, children, the very poor, the elderly and the disabled) to participate in the planning and implementation processes. In line with prevailing policies of governments and donors, poverty reduction criteria should

be implicated in the needs assessments. The planning process should adopt a gender sensitive approach and consider issues relating to disadvantaged groups.

Strategies should address the total picture of a transport system looking at infrastructure and mobility as an integrated solution, with complementary roads, railways, waterways and transport devices. A cross-sector approach is required and may be achieved using the principles and practices of Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP) and Sustainable Livelihoods Framework analysis.

ADDRESSING LOW DENSITY OF DEMAND

Rural areas generally suffer from dispersed populations, low incomes, seasonal demand for goods movement and long distances between villages and services (markets, health, education, etc). These factors combine to produce a low density of demand. A vicious circle of scarce transport, insufficient users and inadequate support services hinders development and constrains the profitability and viability of transport operations.



Increasing the viability of transport services can be achieved through amalgamating the demand that is available and stimulate information flows that maximise the returns from existing transport. Appropriate interventions may include increasing non-motorised and motorised ‘feeder’ transport (intermediate means of transport); improving rural transport infrastructure and inter-modal links (particularly road-waterway hubs); developing well-located rural markets; using information communications technology to match demand with supply and provide timely market information. Demand may be

stimulated through increased rural employment (including labour-intensive road works), agricultural production, marketing, greater technology availability, credit (particularly important) and subsidies (applied with care).

To achieve any of these will require a co-ordinated, integrated approach from local government, several ministries (transport, communications, agriculture, rural development), private sector marketing companies, local financial institutions and NGOs. These should draw up regional plans for a range of complementary initiatives and investment programmes to be implemented by all sectors (government, private, NGO). Inclusive, participatory methods involving all stakeholders are essential to determine infrastructure priorities, appropriate locations for facilities and suitable types of ‘feeder’ transport.

PROMOTION OF MULTI-MODAL RURAL TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

An effective transport system relies on a combination of vehicle types to move passengers and goods. The type and diversity of vehicles depends on infrastructure, environmental conditions, users and demand. Motorised public and private rural transport services concentrate on routes from villages to market towns and from towns to cities, where there is greater demand and better infrastructure. Around villages, much transport involves short distances and small loads carried on paths and tracks. The lack of effective means of transport goods and people within villages and to and from local markets is inefficient and costly. It often puts a heavy burden on women. The lack of local transport solutions increases risk, while constraining production, market efficiency, reliability and the quality of rural life.

Solutions include an active promotion campaign on the use of intermediate means of transport and multi-use vehicles. The campaign should encourage vehicle diversity and provide stakeholders with information on technology choices. There must be incentives to encourage adoption, particularly credit, without which a ‘critical mass’ of transport technologies and support systems will not be achieved.

Implementing these solutions will require a co-ordinated effort between local government, ministries of transport, agriculture and finance who should collaborate to provide incentives, such as tax breaks, on imported vehicles (including bicycles) and parts as well as encourage local manufacture and a wide distribution of appropriate transport technologies. Existing credit programmes (relating to agriculture, rural development and small industries) can be expanded to include loans for the purchase, manufacture

and servicing of transport devices. The Ministry of Agriculture should promote the transport roles of multi-purpose agricultural power sources (animal traction, power tillers and tractors).

ENHANCING THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The benefit to users of the liberalisation of transport services is uneven. In some places it has increased competition and improved the quality and availability of transport types and services. In other places, fare setting and route allocation has been taken over by monopolistic transport associations, maintained through political patronage, corruption and powerful interest groups. Lack of effective regulation has compromised the safety of passengers and other road users. Over regulation of private informal sector transport services and the imposition of industrial standards on artisan-produced transport devices can restrict the availability of affordable rural transport services. Private sector importers and local suppliers can suffer from the unfair competition from the subsidised imports by government and aid programmes.

The lack of fair competition can result in infrequent, unreliable, costly transport services and a limited choice of transport devices, particularly in rural areas. Due to the lack of appropriate safety regulation, users travel with considerable risk to their lives and to their goods.

If these issues are to be resolved and competition increased it is important that the private sector has the skills and capacity to deliver. To get the most out of any interventions to improve the frequency and cost of rural transport provision it is necessary to have an educated work force who understand the business of operating a vehicle (motorised or non-motorised). There are two basic areas in which operators and vehicle owners require training:

- Vehicle maintenance and operations - educating drivers and owners to the benefits from routine maintenance and slow running.
- Business management - increasing awareness of total vehicle operating costs, the importance of long term planning and increasing the responsibility of drivers for keeping records and finding business.



For operators to have confidence in their ability to provide a service it is necessary for them to have backup servicing. Rural areas need small-scale enterprises to repair and maintain their vehicles as well as larger enterprises who manufacture spare parts and undertake vehicle modifications. These entrepreneurs also need support and training with technical and business management skills.

Government has an important role in creating a competitive environment that reduces monopolistic associations and encourages various private sector stakeholders to provide a range of transport devices, services and support. Governments should develop and implement appropriate health, safety and welfare standards for the range of vehicles and operations. National and international networking, study tours, training and sensitisation of all stakeholders maybe required to develop an understanding of the benefits of competition, a strong private sector and of safer transport. This should be supported by all sectors (government, NGO and private).

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY

The transport-related resources of governments and supporting donors have concentrated on the construction and maintenance of infrastructure. Those departments responsible for the regulation and planning of transport services have an immense task, but their resources and staff are often inadequate. Transport operators require an adequate planning and regulatory framework within which to operate, particularly if there are to be interventions to assist low-density areas and disadvantaged groups. The diverse needs of transport users, operators and support services are not well understood, but those responsible for transport planning in government, the private sectors and NGOs have little knowledge of key topics such as intermediate means of transport, participative processes and gender analysis. The experience of rural transport programmes has been inadequately evaluated and shared and the lessons of other countries have not been learned.

The result is that there is insufficient information and understanding for the coherent formulation of rural transport policy and for the effective regulation of the quality, price and availability of transport services. Policies are seldom made in relation to intermediate means of transport. Time is wasted and progress is slower than necessary due to failure to build on previous experiences. Cross-sector, interdisciplinary collaboration is rare.

To address these issues it is important to undertake training and capacity building for local experts in all sectors and at all levels in key issues including intermediate means of transport, participatory processes and gender analysis. Technical assistance to regulatory and planning authorities for the development of integrated transport strategies and the formulation of transport regulations is an important starting point. Positive images should be presented through education and the media of the present and future value of a true multi-modal transport system. Government, donors and other stakeholders have to place a much higher priority on transport provision if the full benefits from infrastructure investment are to be realised.

MONITORING

Indicators for the provision of transport

1) Transport demand

- Passenger fares for basic motorised transport services (fare/km over 10kms and 50kms)
- Freight charges per 100kg bag over 10kms and 50kms (tariff/ton/km over 10km and 50km)
- Availability of transport services (number of motorised transport services to village/week)
- Distance to motorised services (number of km to pick-up point)
- Non-motorised passenger and freight charges (as above)
- Diversity of vehicle types (number of different vehicle types – motorised and non-motorised)

2) Market structure and regulatory regime

- Ownership of public transport (public or private)
- Free entry/exit or not
- Price control or not
- Service obligations or not (routes, frequency, operating times)

3) Managing the density of demand

- Average distance to markets and other essential services (km)
- Availability of telephones (phones/1000 people)
- Are there transport brokers or not
- Are rural traders active or not

4) Transport supply

- Is there access to affordable credit facilities or not
- Is there an established vehicle/parts manufacturing business or not

Source: Adapted from PRSP source book

KEY REFERENCES

Starkey P et al (2002). On the move in rural areas. *Prepared for the Rural Transport Thematic Group. World Bank Technical Paper, awaiting publication.*

Starkey P (2001). Promoting the use of intermediate means of transport – vehicle choice, potential barriers and criteria for success. The Rural Transport Knowledge Base. *Crowthorne: TRL Limited*
www.transport-links.org/knowledgebase.htm

Witkiss M, J Hine and S Ellis (2001). The provision of rural transport services: an agenda for reform. The Rural Transport Knowledge Base. *Crowthorne: TRL Limited*
www.transport-links.org/knowledgebase.htm