SSATP Transport Indicator initiative

Report on the Second Transport Data Collection Cycle

July 2006

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1 Introduction

The present document summarizes the findings after the second cycle of transport data collection in the context of the SSATP transport indicator initiative.

By the end of July 2006, 15 countries[1] had produced data out of the 21 currently involved.[2] All those data have been compiled in a spreadsheet which is an annex to the present document.

This second cycle shows some improvements over the first cycle in terms of data formatting and overall quality as well as comprehensiveness. Yet it was observed significant delays in getting those data together despite similar resources and procedures as for last year. On the institutional framework, very few changes have occurred despite the added tool of a questionnaire aimed at giving a "quick and dirty" institutional assessment of the national transport data system.

2 The data collection

The number of countries having collected and sent data has decreased from 16 during the first cycle to 14 this year. This decrease is further compounded by the fact that among the data-producing countries are newcomers.

In addition, it has been observed a real slow down in the gathering and sending of data. The cumbersomeness of the World Bank procedures for consultant hiring had been mentioned during at mid-cycle but all those were explained and clarified once more in the SSATP Annual Meeting. This fact can't explain the delays since the procedures have not changed since the first cycle and also newcomers did not get any problem in local consultants for their respective data collection exercise.

As a result of the discussion at the end of the first cycle, a new, more precise and constraining Excel spreadsheet was used to enter data. It did improve the format and quality of data received but its use was sometime felt as uneasy and restrictive, further compounded by some bugs.

2.1 Synthetic indicators

The synthetic indicators are still difficult to produce as they are based on data that are not readily available. Indeed many of these data will require serious commitment to be established.

2.1.1 Road network management

Although they do exist, data on the road network are usually facing two problems. First, they are not exhaustive in that they often lack the knowledge of the low level network (i.e. rural roads) and/or the conditions of this network is almost always unknown. This lack of knowledge is problematic since it affects all the rural poor who depend on this tertiary network for their day-to-day survival.

The second issue is relative to the road condition: even though this is known at least for the main network, comprehensive and detailed information about the methodology for classification between good, fair and poor conditions were unavailable. This limits somewhat the extent of comparison between countries. More important, it cast some doubts about the objective measurement of such condition by the various agencies.

[1] Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia

[2] Burundi, DRC, Gabon Kenya, Mali, and Swaziland are in addition to the respondents.

The indicator aimed at measuring "appropriateness" of road investments failed to receive necessary information. The absence of detailed data on traffic does prevent a useful analysis of the few figures received.

2.1.2 Rural Accessibility Index

Although this index is now becoming more and more accepted as a valid indicator to measure the impact of road transport on the rural poor, it is still not readily available in most countries. Indeed, the prerequisite are numerous: detailed knowledge of the location of the road network as well as of its condition, detailed knowledge of the location of the rural population, and possibility to cross-reference these two sets of data. This does not seem to exist in participating countries and the few figures received are estimates resulting from various methodologies, Guinea being the only country attempting to measure it through sampling with some resources from the SSATP initiative.

2.1.3 Urban transport efficiency

The measure of the speed of travel to work promoted has a means to measure urban transport effectiveness proves as difficult to build as for the first cycle and the few estimations received lack adequate statistical validity.

2.1.4 Corridor effectiveness

Interesting data assessing both the cost and time required to transport an imported container to its final destination from the onboard a ship have been collected. However, the data sent by many non-landlocked countries give the perspective from the port as an origin to a destination, usually in another country. Yet, this indicator aims at measuring the performance of corridors from the recipient viewpoint, i.e. from the consumer side, to assess how its economy might be penalized from inadequate corridor inefficiency. It means that for countries whose main economic center is the seaport, the data should measure the time and cost from on onboard a ship to outside the port's gate. In this case, the indicator measures the port's performance. This has not been well understood and therefore irrelevant data has been collected and sent.

2.2 Secondary indicators

It has been observed that among secondary indicators, inventory data are generally relatively accessible. For instance, the road infrastructures and vehicles are usually well known, including for the urban sub-sector, which leads to very interesting information on seat provisions in the main cities.

As for last year, data on the rail, maritime and air transport sub-sector are by and large very good.

On the other hand, high-variability data raise numerous problems. Indeed, by nature they require a working data management system to be kept up to date. For instance, financial data are difficult to obtain and often incomplete since such data should come from various sources on a regular basis but links are not functioning.

Traffics are not very available either, but because of deficient production. in addition, the few traffic data available are not very useful for comparison between since they are not standardized.

Data on road safety are also few with no documentation on the methodology to capture accidents and fatalities. Those figures are therefore likely to be a minimum.

Last, as for the first cycle, urban transport is still globally difficult even though some information on the road infrastructures as well as the supply of public transport seats have been collected. The urban transport sub-sector will require major changes in its setting to be useful.

2.3 Implementation of the second cycle

Apparently, the new Excel sheet that was used to enter the data with all its added constraints led to a better formatting of data leading to fewer ambiguities and misinterpretation at both entry and analysis. Yet the metadata are still lagging behind: if the sources and dates are usually well filled, information about methodology or definitions are too often missing or vague, making comparison between countries difficult. This improvement in apparent quality of data received suggests that the Excel sheet needs only marginal improvements for the next cycle. The improvement should focus on limiting furthermore the ambiguities by both increasing the constraints/protections on what data can be keyed in and clearer definitions.

It was also observed that, among the respondents, the spreadsheet filling rate was significantly better than last year. It might be that some mechanisms are now in place in the countries and channels have been built that facilitate the data collection exercise. If this proves true, it is a good omen for the long term establishment of procedures defining the relationships for data centralization.

However, this second cycle witnessed a serious slowdown in the data collection exercise at the national level. Indeed, it took a long time to initiate the hiring of consultants despite the experience gained during the first cycle. Actually, the momentum was lost in some countries sometimes for unexpected institutional changes, sometimes with no apparent reasons.

3 The institutional framework

During this cycle, at the request of a few countries a simple questionnaire for institutional assessment was designed in order to have a simple and quick description of the institutional framework currently in place in each country. Some countries chose to request their consultant to fill this questionnaire while looking for data. This was done with some accuracy even though not with completeness in the 7 countries that filled in the questionnaire.

The general findings are that in all those countries several structures produce and/or manage data of the sector. It confirmed that apparently intercommunication between them is very limited and mostly informal.

It was also found that the IT systems used to store and manage data within a country are very disparate, ranging from the simplest business software on out-of-date personal computers (the vast majority) to very powerful combination of high end database system with client/server setups. It seems there is no strategy to streamline the various systems which is consistent with the fact that there is no global approach for sector data management.

Last the shortage of skilled staff was often mentioned as a problem, especially in statistics and IT.

The data as gathered during for this exercise can be very useful as a basis for an analysis of the institutional framework but do not substitute for a complete institutional analysis. This is still needed and solutions have to be found to conduct comprehensive and detailed institutional assessments in each country. Such assessments should for instance detail the procedures that govern the operation of identified structures individually and their relationships.

4 Other developments at the international level

During this second cycle, the SSATP witnessed and was actively involved in promising developments within and outside the World Bank to promote appropriate sectoral monitoring. Indeed, all donors are currently pushing for results on the ground with a strong will to measure the impacts and outcomes of their financial support. This strong push is generating concerted actions at both the international (in the

donor community or the RECs) and the national levels (implementation of cross-donor sectoral M&E or program M&E.)

These developments prove that the ongoing SSATP initiative is a precursor. As a result, it has been and still is solicited to exchange about its experience and to collaborate actively.

In 2005, it was essential in the regional study commissioned by the World Bank' Africa Region Infrastructure Unit to take stock of the stylized economic facts and identify emerging policy issues in SSA's infrastructure sector, based on existing sources of information. The transport part of this study was provided by the SSATP transport performance indicator initiative. The SSATP has also been contacted by the OECD Development Centre to provide data on the transport sector for the preparation of African Economic Outlook 2006. This joint publication with the African Development Bank will focus on transport issues in Africa.

Other similar activities, with various magnitudes, are now ongoing and the SSATP is actively involved in them.

The World Bank Africa Transport Unit (AFTTR) has launched a comprehensive review of its projects' Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) systems with the objective: to assess the projects' monitoring-evaluation systems and their capacity to measure the projects' impact. The initial results of this survey, for which the SSATP has been consulted, show that projects suffer from the absence of a permanent sector data, which compound the projects difficulties to establish baseline data early enough into the project life. This absence is blamed on inappropriate or failing national sector data management systems. This survey should recommend a serious commitment of the World Bank projects into the support and development of such systems.

Another ongoing initiative in the World Bank is the digital mapping of the road network in Sub-Saharan Africa with the objective of establishing a digital map of road infrastructures in sub-Saharan Africa, accessible to all on the Internet. The SSATP through its initiative on indicators has been asked to contribute by sending all available geo-referenced data. When completed, this product could help in calculating the Rural Accessibility Index in SSA countries.

Indeed, there is a strong push within the World Bank projects to establish the rural accessibility indicator (RAI) in all SSA countries as this indicator is an official IDA-14 impact indicator and it will be used to evaluate the success of IDA investments in the transport sectors. AFTTR is now strongly encouraging its ongoing and future projects to find ways and means to put in place as quickly as possible a baseline RAI in all countries. The SSATP will be a major tool in the development of the RAI in those countries.

The last but important initiative occurring in the World Bank in the launch of the large Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic (AICD) study which aims at significantly improving the knowledge on infrastructures in Sub-Saharan Africa and facilitate the monitoring of results emanating from upcoming donors' capital flow in the sector. The SSATP's participation has been requested from the beginning to provide and discuss available data supply. It has been very influential in the design of this study and used this opportunity to build support in the necessary development of national transport data systems in the World Bank. To get additional or fill gaps in data, additional studies will be carried out under this umbrella.

In general, the result-based approach currently developing in the World Bank creates opportunities for the SSATP initiative on transport performance indicators to either promote its agenda or get support for its activities.

This led to a successful application to the World Bank's Trust Fund Statistical Capacity Building (TFSCB) to finance an institutional assessment of transport data management system in 4 countries Uganda, Cameroon, Niger and Ethiopia. These countries have been selected after discussion with the project supervisors (from the World Bank for Uganda, Cameroon and Niger and the European Commission in Ethiopia.) It has been agreed that recommendations from this institutional assessment will be used as the base for the definition of activities to be promoted and if possible carried out through the ongoing or upcoming projects they oversee.

A useful collaboration has also started with the Development Data Platform (DDP) in the World Bank. This data management system of the World Bank is indeed currently deepening the set of its data to include sectoral data and it will use the data centralized by the SSATP as a source of data for the transport sector in SSA. It has been agreed that the SSATP will use the DDP tools to make available its data to the public through its website. If possible, tools will also be developed to allow direct input of national data in the database through a web-based interface. This would considerably simplify the data management for all participants.

5 Evolution at country level

The SSATP initiative on transport performance indicators is starting bearing fruit at the national level where it influences new development for transport data related activities.

In Rwanda, the monitoring of the impact of the transport sector on the PRSP is done now with the use of some indicators promoted by the SSATP. The weakness of the transport data management system has been identified as a substantial issue that should be addressed and the establishment of a transport M&E system is an objective for 2006.

In Ghana, major development has occurred at the end of 2006. Indeed, in the phase 2 of its Transport Sector Programme Support, a sub-component titled "Transport Sector Indicators and Databases" has started in January 2006, funded by the Danish cooperation for an initial amount of US$ 650,000 for the first 15 months.

The stated objective of the Sub-Component is "*To improve the effectiveness of implementation of policies and development programmes for the transport sector, including related infrastructure and services*."

The outputs will include a Stakeholder Committee with representatives from important agents in the transport sector as well as two databases – one focused on the road sub-sector and a more general database. In addition two analytical tools will be developed: a Social Accounting Matrix and a Performance Assessment Model.

Besides the fact that the proposed databases will be based on the SSATP set of indicators, this sub-component will implement the approach to develop a centralize transport sector database, with an emphasis on making data readily available to all stakeholders thus giving a powerful tool for transport policy in Ghana. The first results of this work will be observable in 2008.

This new developments demonstrate that, given time and patience, the SSATP initiative on transport performance indicators may results in operational changes on the ground to the benefit of participating countries. However, this will succeed only if appropriate leverage is found in the donor community to support governments to put in place appropriate transport data systems.

6 The second workshop on transport performance indicators and the SSATP initiative next steps

The second workshop on transport performance indicators was held in Dakar from 20 to 22 June 2006. Were present 23 representatives of 18 participating countries.[3] The goal of this second cycle was for all participants to take stock of this second cycle as presented in the paragraphs above, discuss ways to improve it performance by reviewing the list of data as well as their definition. It was also an occasion for all to exchange on their own experience as well to hear from other successful experience. Indeed, two

[3] Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Representatives of Burundi, Gabon and Rwanda could not be available for this workshop.

representatives of the Moroccan *Centre National d'Etudes Routières* (CNER) were invited to present their current road transport monitoring systems and especially its evolution over time, explaining the difficulties they faced to build the systems with little political support at the beginning but increasing over time as data were used more and more for the process of planning and programming road investments and policies.

Worth noticing is the fact that 5 out of the 23 participants were sent by projects and governments from Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia. This reflects the growing importance of the transport monitoring by various stakeholders and the willingness to work on its improvement to the benefit of all national and international stakeholders.

All participants stressed the need for additional funding for data production, and to a lesser extent, data management. Since the SSATP cannot be the source of such funding, other resources have to be tapped. The consequence could lead a real wearing of participating countries in their willingness to take part in the SSATP initiative on transport performance indicators. Finding new sources of funds should therefore be a necessary endeavor of the next cycle, at the both national and international levels.

Actually new initiatives such as those described in paragraph 4 above can provide such opportunities. It is therefore critical for all participants to the SSATP initiative to be actively involved in those initiatives and to prove useful for them in reaching their goals. Not only can they be both a message bearer to get across the message of required transport data management system, but also they can fund the whole or part of activities necessary to operationalize such a system. Creating active links to sectoral projects is an objective to be shared by all participants to tap these resources. This strategy should not be limited to World Bank projects as demonstrated by the successful example of Ghana or the soon to start TFSCB-funded institutional assessment whose recommendation should be implemented through both World Bank and EC commission (cf. page 4.)

The spreadsheet used for the second cycle has also been comprehensively reviewed and data definitions and methodology were discussed. Overall, the form as used for the second cycle was deemed satisfactory. The main changes were for the data for public expenditure in the transport sector as well as classification for road traffics. The sheets for those two will be reviewed to simplify data input.

Other smaller changes will also be made especially to give cleared definition of what is expected. No indicator or data were removed nor added.

Representatives of newly joining countries requested to get some support to launch activities in their respective countries, especially to hire local consultants to gather requested data. Indeed, the use of local consultants to gather data is likely to be the main tool for data gathering at the national level. However, some countries have expressed their willingness to use part of the budget allocated to finance the operation of committees that would bring together the national representatives of all the agencies that are related to transport data production and management. Such initiatives are indeed a promising first step into the implementation of an adequate, coordinated transport data management system.

Last, the SSATP will produce guidelines for appropriate transport sector data management systems over the next cycle. The purpose of this document will be to give recommendations about how such a system should be designed to sustainably produce data for the benefit of transport monitoring. The public of this document are project supervisors as well as government officials.

7 Conclusion

This second cycle mixes positive and negative developments. The negative was the difficulty to get the second set of data from some countries, possibly because of some lassitude to reproduce past tasks. On the other hand, data as centralized by the SSATP gained in consistency and clarity (even though many are still missing and their quality has to be improved.) On the same positive side, the number of participating

countries is increasing. Some other countries are meanwhile slowly moving toward the reform of their transport data production and management systems with open reference to the SSATP initiative on transport performance indicators. Last but not least, numerous other similar initiatives are emerging and the SSATP initiative is perceived as a central support by these activities. This should increase the support for the SSATP initiative and its purpose and thus might increase its long term impact.