

Lessons from Poverty Reduction Transport Strategy Reviews (PRTSR) Process

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1 INTRODUCTION

1. As the SSATP LTDP (2004-7) was being developed, it had become increasingly apparent that, by and large, the first generation of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) did not pay appropriate attention to the effects of transport patterns on poverty and economic growth. As a result, national transport strategies often were not well aligned with PRSs despite the common aim of both processes to reduce poverty and foster broad-based economic growth. In view of this, the SSATP partners initiated a country-by-country process of **Poverty Reduction and Transport Strategy Review (PRTSR)**. This process sought to open up the discussion on the facilitating role of transport and its relationship with other sectors.
2. At about the same time, integrated approaches were increasingly required to respond to the demands for the formulation of comprehensive sector strategies that were country-owned. The sector strategies had to be based on participatory consultation processes and coherent with national development strategies (notably PRS) and were expected to form a basis for donor support. These demands were reflected in global initiatives such as the Paris Agenda on Aid Effectiveness, the World Bank African Action Plan and the OECD DAC Guidelines on Infrastructure for Poverty Reduction. The AAP in particular, requires that programs be country-led so as to achieve outcomes through increased participation of poor people and women in growth. It was apparent then, that functional links were required between PRS, sector strategies and budgets (national, sector) with clear connections between development priorities and the programming of domestic and donor resources. Improvements to PRS were therefore required, as they often treated transport in a partial way (main roads, not the network as a whole; physical infrastructure not including transport services). Such improvements were required not only in policy and strategy documents, but also in the implementation of policies and strategies, and in operational programs.
3. Given the strategic objective of the LTDP, to anchor national transport strategies firmly in national strategies for poverty reduction, a participatory process that enabled country stakeholders to review and adapt their poverty reduction and transport strategies was and continues to be progressively implemented in SSATP member countries. In order to provide guidance for the process, the SSATP developed a practicable method for undertaking a comparative analysis of transport sector and poverty reduction strategies. This brief note presents the achievements realized over the period 2004 – 2007 in executing Poverty Reduction Transport Strategy Reviews (PRTSR) in SSATP partner countries.

2 CONTRIBUTION OF PRTSR TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

4. Box 1 outlines the contributions of the PRTSR to the policy development process focusing on experiences that proved successful during the LTDP period.

Box 1 A Snapshot of Achievements, Knowledge and Good Practices under the PRTSR

- Facilitation of the adoption of MDGs related transport indicators.
- Development and promotion of a participatory approach in transport policy reviews. Guidelines for poverty reduction and transport strategy reviews and toolkit for facilitation of participatory policy review workshop were delivered.
- Assessment of the coherence of national development strategies and transport strategies leading to recommendations on how to strengthen both.
- Strengthening the treatment of transport in second generation PRSs.
- Promoting the benefits of establishing national transport policy dialogue groups.
- Increased the visibility of SSATP

5. One of the first activities under the SSATP initiative to enhance the contribution of transport to poverty reduction was to facilitate the adoption of **MDG-related targets and indicators for the transport sector**. SSATP partners, through their ministers responsible for transport, adopted the indicators in 2005. This process amplified the recognition of the contribution of transport to achieving the MDGs and poverty reduction in general.
6. **The Participatory Approach** as used in the PRTSR, follows well defined steps designed to result in clear recommendations. This has been a real innovation of the SSATP in terms of policy and strategy reviews. It brought together both transport and non-transport professionals, most likely for the first time, to assess the function of transport and the demand on transport as expressed in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.
7. SSATP developed guidelines for the review of poverty reduction and transport strategies, which were helpful to understand and lead policy strategy reviews. Training on participatory approach and application of the guidelines were delivered to key stakeholders representing the public and the private sector and civil society at regional and in-country training workshops.
8. The PRTSR approach focussed on two fundamental questions:
 - Does the national poverty reduction strategy provide a sufficiently clear framework to orient transport sector strategies? If not, what changes are required?
 - Does the strategy for the transport sector take fully into account the goals and priorities of the poverty reduction strategy? If not, what changes are required?
9. The method drew on research into public policy development, which shows that the following are important for good public policy:
 - Involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, especially those outside the public service and government, in policy-making and in monitoring and evaluation;
 - Better collaboration between the different agencies and actors responsible for policy design and implementation;

- Ensuring that policies are inclusive and take full account of the needs and experiences of those likely to be affected by them;
 - Use of multiple sources of information and knowledge, both quantitative and qualitative, and including the views and opinions of stakeholders;
 - The basing of policy on a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the situation and a widely shared vision of what needs to be done.
10. The steps followed in each country were well structured from preparation, analysis to follow-up action, including:
- a Steering Group of 5-6 leading men and women to manage the process. Group members had to be involved in transport and poverty reduction strategies (public, private and civil society);
 - a local facilitator;
 - A collection of relevant documentation on the strategies to be analyzed;
 - A Stakeholder Group of 20-25 influential men and women formed after rigorous analysis. The Group members represented priority sectors and issues concerning transport and poverty reduction;
 - Three participatory workshops during which the stakeholders analyzed the poverty reduction strategy and how it addresses transport; the transport strategy and its coherence with the poverty reduction strategy; and the development of recommendations and an action plan; and
 - Lobbying and advocacy for the implementation of the action plan.
11. The participatory approach laid the basis for more far reaching processes involving other sectors not initially involved in the PRTSR. It also has **potential in several other areas of transport policy**. Zimbabwe employed the approach to develop a road safety action plan.

Box 2 Participatory Approach in Developing a Road Safety Action Plan

Realizing the huge losses **Zimbabwe** faces due to road traffic accidents, in July 2005 various stakeholders, led by the Ministry of Transport and Communications held a two day workshop to develop a strategic plan for road safety. The workshop was designed to elicit as much active stakeholder participation as possible. Several stakeholders, numbering 55, from government ministries, research organizations, private sector, and civil society took part in the workshop. The Metaplan technique as used in the PRTSR exercises was employed to obtain contributions and the buy-in of the participants.

As a result of the approach employed, the various stakeholders were able to define the roles that that different sectors could play to improve road safety in the country. A strategic plan which identified the roles the various stakeholders could all play was developed.

12. The PRTSR instilled a process of creating **coherence between transport and poverty reduction strategies**. The process has broadened the debate on the role of transport in the economic and social development of the countries involved. The PRTSR initiative demonstrated the facilitating role of the transport sector and indicated how changes in the transport sector not only can improve the delivery of transport services but can, by more effective integration, provide support and improvements in the implementation of services in other sectors, notably agriculture, health, and education.
13. The reviews have started to influence transport strategies. Since 2003 some 18 SSATP partner countries have completed reviews and identified the actions needed to better connect transport strategies with poverty reduction. Several other countries are either carrying out reviews or are at various stages of preparation to start doing so. The countries that have completed reviews are: **Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe**. In most of these countries the PRTSR has influenced the way transport is conceived in second generation poverty reduction strategies (SGPRSs).
14. The program of reviews was given important endorsement at the 2005 Annual Meeting, with the signing by Ministers of the "**Bamako Declaration**", whose first undertaking is to "Implement the Poverty Reduction-Transport Strategy Reviews, and adopt the results, and incorporate them in national poverty reduction and transport policies and strategies". Box 2 summarizes the main achievements of the PRTSR in influencing SGPRSs and transport strategies.

Box 3: Notes on Implementation of PRTSR Recommendations

Several countries have processed and implemented recommendations from the PRTSR as follows:

Central Africa: recommendations are being integrated into National transport Strategy and PRS documents.

DR Congo has prepared a national investment plan for the transport sector based on the PRTSR and the government has allocated resources to support SSATP activities.

Mali, Senegal - recommendations are incorporated in the review of second generation PRSs

Cameroon has submitted recommendations to Government for approval

Uganda, recommendations have been made both on Transport Policy and for the Poverty Eradication Action Plan to the relevant Ministries. These await approval.

Ethiopia, only recently completed the review and the findings on the transport sector have been factored into the new Transport Sector Master Plan which is being finalized.

Lesotho, recommendations from the PRTSR were included in the recently completed Transport Sector Policy.

Rwanda, one of the pilot countries, recommendations have been included in the redrafting of the second generation PRS.

Recommendations from the PRTSR in **Swaziland** have been submitted to the Government. However it is already agreed that where new legislation is not required for the changes proposed these changes will be made.

Tanzania was also one of the pilot countries. The recommendations of the PRTSR have not been formally approved. However, members of the steering committee have been involved in the drafting of the National Transport Policy. The fact that the outcome of the PRTSR has not been endorsed does not mean that they are not acted upon. They are included in the ongoing broader discussions for instance in relation to the development of the 10 year transport investment plan and the proposals emanating from the Poverty Focus Group in Government.

Malawi – An Example of How PRTSR Output was Used

In **Malawi**, the PRTSR was completed in early 2005. It identified high transport costs and neglect of rural transport services as major constraints to marketing of agro products, with consequent impact on rural development. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), initiated in late 2005, utilized the PRTSR process and results. The final MGDs identifies infrastructure as one of the five pillars of the growth strategy. Within infrastructure, transport is recognized as a prerequisite for growth and poverty reduction. The strategy requires the transport sector to deliver:

- 2 Improved mobility and accessibility to facilitate continued development in rural areas;
- 3 Improved mobility and accessibility of rural communities to goods and services in the rural areas at low cost to the economy; and
- 4 Improved multi-modal transport services, including obtaining smooth carriage of cargo in one transport chain, along regional corridors.

15. The PRTSR approach engages the stakeholders in a continuous process with a defined end result. It has therefore, generated a dialogue between the transport and non transport sectors raising issues for both parties generally not considered previously. The process has shown the benefits of having a **sustainable policy dialogue mechanism at national level**. And member countries like Tanzania, Malawi and Nigeria have started practicing the principles. The process has also achieved the buy-in of high level policy makers. An exception was in Central Africa where the entire government (Prime Minister and 18 cabinet Ministers) was mobilised for the sensitization workshop at the beginning of the PRTSR analysis.
16. As a result of the involvement of various sectors in discussions on transport issues, the PRTSR exercise greatly increased the **visibility of SSATP** and strengthened SSATP coordination. The national coordinators were key to the execution of reviews in all PRTSR countries. The process allowed stakeholders representing a wide range of public, private and civil society institutions the opportunity to have better understanding of the values of the Program. These developments during the LTDP laid the groundwork for active SSATP involvement in transport policy developments at national level. This will prove critical to the implementation of the successor development plan.

3 KEY POLICY FINDINGS

17. In general, the key findings from the various countries that have completed reviews are consistent with those expected under the Guidelines and include:
 - An elaboration and clarification of national policies and strategies often by the figures that led their formulation and implementation;
 - Proposals for adaptations to national strategies, both poverty reduction and transport, which have the potential of establishing more complete and coherent frameworks for anchoring transport strategies in poverty reduction.
 - Building informal links and networks between leading actors from different sectors;
 - The creation of mechanisms for cross-sector dialogue – intra-institutional and inter-institutional – on transport and poverty reduction.
 - Restoring the missing links between transport and poverty reduction strategies
18. Clearly, an effective mechanism is required to translate the outcomes of the review process into investment decisions. The development of such a mechanism could exploit some of the characteristics of the PRTSR methodology. There are several areas where the participatory approach as used in the PRTSR exercises has shown potential, especially in general policy analysis and reviews. These are outlined below.

4 LESSONS FROM THE PRTS REVIEWS

19. **Participatory Approach:** In 2006 the SSATP LTDP was subjected to an independent Output to Purpose Review (OPR). Given that out of the 35 SSATP member countries, 24 had been involved at some stage of the PRTSR process the reviews were a major component of the OPR. Overall, the OPR established that the reviews have raised awareness in the countries of the relationship between transport and poverty reduction. Its ability to bring together participation from government agencies, the private sector and civil society was seen as a major strength in policy development. However, the poor representation of technical line ministries was identified as one of the major weaknesses of the processes as they unfolded.
20. The PRTSR approach with its clearly defined end result has been successful in facilitating dialogue between the transport and non transport sectors raising issues for both parties generally not considered previously. The process has shown the potential of an inclusive **policy dialogue mechanism** at national level.
21. However, it was also observed that management of the PRTSR processes was time consuming. The PRTSR approach requires facilitation, resource persons and service provider services. The acquisition of these services can be slow leading to disruptions to the review processes. As such, stakeholders reported significant disappointment and irritation with the process. Still, this is a characteristic of participatory approaches.

22. **Influence on Policy:** To what extent has PRTSR influenced policy? The OPR determined that while it is difficult to say there has been no influence on policy, what is clear is that the approach has been more of a contributor but not a prime mover of policy development. This has been attributed to the level of professionals who have taken part in the process as some may not have been high up in the policy making hierarchy. In fact, some critics have argued that this lack of high level participation has compromised the credibility of the approach.
23. Nevertheless, as shown above, some PRTSR recommendations have been acted upon. However, given the large number of recommendations emanating from the reviews, it is clear that there is need for wider recognition of the PRTSR outputs. This would particularly apply to main line technical agencies and the donor community. It has also been observed that some proposals required legal approval whereas others do not and can more easily be acted upon. The OPR considered it too early to assess whether the PRTSR proposals have resulted in reallocation of resources, the attraction of donor funding or impacted on the poor. These are some of the important indicators of the impact of the whole exercise.
24. Several valuable **lessons** were learnt on how best to utilize the findings of the reviews in the various countries, including the need to:
- Ensure that countries consider the MDG-related transport indicators as benchmarks in their transport strategies and sector programs;
 - Harmonize the timing of the PRTSR and updating of the PRSs and the national transport policy formulation and review cycles;
 - Strengthen implementation of the recommendations and developing appropriate monitoring systems; and
 - Respond to the emerging demand to use broad-based participatory approaches in designing other policies, notably on road safety.
25. Over the LTDP period, the PRTSR Steering Groups identified several factors of success and challenges in the PRTSR reviews. These factors and challenges are important to executing successfully, any activity to develop a transport sector program.

Box 4 Factors for Success and pitfalls - Participatory Process

Factors of Success

- Political engagement in the process, from both transport and poverty reduction actors;
- Dynamic, high-level, cross-sector Steering Group – prepared to invest much time and effort;
- A role for civil society and the private sector in transport strategy;
- Good preparatory work, including stakeholder analysis and selection of key documents;
- Representative stakeholder groups, knowledgeable in the issues and able to influence strategies.
- Effective facilitation;
- Good technical support to Steering Group, e.g. from supporting Ministries;
- Good communication between Steering Group and SSATP;
- Appropriate timing of the process to fit into broader government policy development/review cycle.

Pitfalls to watch out for

- Ensuring that the recommendations are implemented by the competent authorities, and are taken into account in national strategies and in donor support;
- Strengthening official support for the review process, by securing approval from the Ministries responsible for transport and poverty reduction;
- Strong leadership so that Steering Groups have the support they need;
- Carefully considered stakeholder representation (including female participation);
- Speeding up the procurement of support services and the payment of service providers;
- Engaging with donors and that their assistance strategies take full account of process outcomes;
- Sharing of experiences between countries, focusing on processes for transport sector policy development in the context of PRS.

5 THE ROLE OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IN TRANSPORT POLICY DEVELOPMENT

4. The translation of PRSTR recommendations into investment decisions and plans has emerged as one of the main challenges arising from the approach. In general, several governments have not formally adopted the recommendations and action plans. However, some of the recommendations, depending on the timing have found their way into revised transport policies and importantly into Second Generation PRSPs. Still, there is need for a mechanism of translating some of the recommendations into investment plans. This is where the proposal for developing transport sector programs gained currency. The move by major donors towards sector wide approaches has opened the way for employing aspects of the PRSTR methodology in developing transport sector-wide programs.

Box 5: Potential of Participatory Approach in Developing Transport Sector Programs

The recommendations from the PRTSRs require comprehensive pro-poor intervention measures. Such a response would dovetail with the increasing demands for the formulation of comprehensive sector strategies that are coherent with national development strategies.

Sector development programs, which come in different forms, are characterized by a few key principles: They are country owned; They have a common goal of improving efficiency and effectiveness with which internal and external resources are utilized; and, They are a process embodying on-going improvements over time. They seek to:

- Broaden ownership by countries over decision making with respect to policy, strategy and sectoral spending;
- Increase coherence between sectoral policy, spending and results through greater transparency, wider dialogue and ensuring a comprehensive view of the sector; and,

A systematic approach to the development of comprehensive transport sector programs is important. The approach would generally have three main components, namely:

- Establishing a mechanism to coordinate the development process, typically led by a Steering Group that would also allow dialogue between the key stakeholders and development partners;
- Clarifying the goal of the program in a clear policy, making a distinction between the roles of the players in regulatory and service delivery aspects;
- Developing the program including an expenditure framework and performance monitoring system to measure progress towards achieving sectoral objectives.

The participatory approach as used in the PRTSR process has proved effective in addressing elements of the above, especially in terms of broadening ownership and attaining a comprehensive view of the transport sector. The PRTSR has achieved:

- Political engagement in the review process, from both transport and poverty reduction actors; and,
- Dynamic, high-level, cross-sector participation including clear roles for civil society and the private sector in transport strategy – and willingness by the public sector to acknowledge their involvement.

The PRTSR process has, therefore, created some of the pre- and facilitating conditions for the development of transport sector programs. The PRTSR Steering and Stakeholder Groups provide a core group of stakeholders who would be able to articulate the challenges that face, and opportunities that exist, for the transport sector to contribute effectively to poverty reduction initiatives and for the other sectors to also develop complementary sectoral responses.