

Evaluation of European Commission Interventions in the Transport Sector in Third Countries – ref. 951655

Abstract

The evaluation finds that significant progress has been made by the Commission towards a sectoral approach in many ACP countries, where the clear majority of funds were spent during the period under review. However, this progress is not sufficiently reflected in other regions, although sector guidelines and a Communication on Promoting Sustainable Transport in Development Cooperation exist. In some countries and regions an imbalance in types of support remains, resulting in a lack of appropriate attention to institutional and legislative accompanying measures, as well as to the maintenance of existing infrastructure. Although there is a clear link between appropriate transport investments and poverty reduction objectives, cross-cutting aspects with an impact on quality of life, such as environment, gender and safety, require more attention, and a sustained effort is needed to broaden certain key reforms to which the Commission is formally committed.

Subject of the evaluation

The European Commission committed Euro 5 million to the transport sector in the ACP, TACIS, ALA, MEDA and CARDS regions in the period from 1995-2001. Over three-quarters of this amount was allocated to ACP countries, with a strong preference for the road sector. The evaluation focused on the Commission's role in sector dialogue with partners, on economic and political benefits derived from interventions in the sector, and on key cross-cutting issues, as well as the implementing modalities and delivery mechanisms for Commission assistance.

Evaluation description

Purpose: In the absence of a sector wide evaluation on transport since 1995, the principal purpose of the study is to assess the Commission's co-operation activities, describing the general and specific objectives to which they relate. Built upon this is an analysis of the degree to which the sectoral approach articulated by the Commission in the mid-1990s has been adopted in practice and has proved appropriate. The evaluation should also look forward to the development of future transport policy and programmes in the light of the reformed external assistance environment, taking account of the move towards sector policy support programmes.

Methodology:

The evaluation was carried out in three phases: (i) A structuring phase setting out the overall framework of the analysis, and reconstructing the Commission's intervention logic with a view to addressing the specific questions posed in the terms of reference. At this stage, appropriate judgement criteria and indicators were also defined. (ii) The field phase, which was intended to complete the data collection and to test hypotheses through interviews and workshops. In this case, detailed field visits were undertaken in five countries - Ethiopia, Tanzania, Albania, Madagascar and Russia (each the subject of a field mission report). A particular emphasis was given to the role of the European Commission delegations, to donor co-ordination and to the nature of the sector dialogue undertaken, as well as to aspects relating to the impact of infrastructure investments themselves and to institutional issues including the financing of management and maintenance. (iii) A synthesis phase in which final conclusions and recommendations were drafted and the final documents prepared.

Main findings

- (1) The objectives pursued by EC interventions in the transport sector, and the prioritisation of those objectives, vary significantly from region to region. In many developing countries transport sector interventions have contributed to economic growth and generated employment. In some cases such as ACP and the Western Balkans, a positive effect on trade and regional integration is also evident.

- (2) In ACP countries, where the bulk of EC investment has been made, significant progress has been made since the early 1990s towards the realisation of a sector approach. However, the approach is not yet truly sector-wide as it pays little attention to non-road transport or to transport services and regulatory and institutional aspects. Outside the ACP region, there is little evidence of a sector approach and consequent inconsistency between actions.
- (3) Close partnerships between the Commission and government, as demonstrated in some ACP countries (where there is also broad agreement between donors on the principles to follow), enhanced the relevance of interventions and coherence with national priorities. However, even in ACP countries, the commitment of partner governments to implementing reforms conducive to sustainable transport development have been uneven. Outside the ACP region, the Commission's lack of continuous and systematic dialogue on transport policy issues puts the sustainability of its interventions at risk.
- (4) The involvement of non-governmental stakeholders in the development and implementation of transport policy and projects remains limited. Few attempts have been made to develop local capacity in the sector and thereby increase employment opportunities.
- (5) In the ACP region, the Commission played a key role in ensuring the maintenance of transport infrastructure - this problem deserves similar attention elsewhere.
- (6) Environmental Impact Assessment has been given greater attention but the focus has been mainly on construction rather than generated traffic or longer term effects.
- (7) Safety and health aspects related to the sector, including transport as a vector for disease transmission, have been given insufficient attention.
- (8) Outcomes and impacts of transport interventions have not been systematically monitored and little use has been made of evaluation.

Recommendations

NB - due to the complexity and size of many transport projects, many of the recommendations below are divided in the report into sub-recommendations matched to different phases of the project cycle - ie programming, identification, formulation, implementation etc

- (1) Ensure capitalisation of experience and quality thematic support to delegations through the maintenance of a properly resourced and sustainable transport thematic network, with the involvement of DG TREN in addition to the RELEX family DGs, and participation of key delegation staff.
- (2) Broaden the approach to the sector in ACP countries to cover all modes and take a comprehensive view of the range of activities involved in each mode. In line with the general evolution of sector policy support programmes, consider a shift towards broader use of budget support in the sector.
- (3) Promote the involvement of non-governmental stakeholders in design and implementation of transport policy and also in the programming and project cycle.
- (4) Support the development of the private sector in transport related activities.
- (5) Put sharper focus on the contribution of EC transport sector interventions to poverty reduction, including reviews of the links between transport sector objectives and those articulated in PRSPs.
- (6) Give more attention to the protection of the environment - through the regulatory framework, local consultations, ex-post EIA activities and capacity building.

- (7) Adopt a comprehensive approach to transport safety. Increase attention to health risks in relation to increased mobility.
- (8) Take steps to improve the quality of feasibility studies, reviewing fee guidelines for various types of expertise, giving more weight to technical criteria in the selection of consultants, and updating feasibility studies if excessive time elapses before the launch of construction work.
- (9) Support the development of data collection, processing and dissemination, extend project monitoring and make better use of evaluation, including publishing responses to independent findings.

Feedback

- Distribution within the Commission's Services involved; publication on the Internet.
- Preparation of a *fiche contradictoire* to discuss implementation of recommendations.
- Plan to hold a follow-up seminar in November, hosted by the Evaluation Unit and DG DEV, with participation of the World Bank and other major donors.

Donor: European Commission	Region: Asia, Latin America, Mediterranean, ACP, EX-USSR, Western Balkans	DAC sectors: 21010 for transport policy and administrative management, 21020 road transport, 21030 rail transport, 21040 water transport, 21050 air transport (all transport-related areas, including institutional aspects)
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