

Bangladesh Development Forum 2010

Transport and Communications

Key Messages

- ✓ A good transportation system is a key to the further development and prosperity of Bangladesh economy and consequently poverty reduction.
- ✓ The transport system in Bangladesh continues to suffer from congestion, lack of traffic safety, inadequate capacity, inefficiency in operation, low productivity, lack of adequate maintenance, poor service conditions. These are major impediment to Bangladesh's economic and social development.
- ✓ There is no mechanism in place, as yet for coordination among the ministries directly involved in planning, development and operation of the transport sector. Adoption of an ***Integrated Multimodal Transport Policy (IMTP)*** will further contribute to effective coordination and ensure that a right balance between the different modes of transport is achieved to attain the overall objective of providing accessibility to services and the economy.
- ✓ Progress of implementation of the Government's railway reform agenda is delayed. To make the railway competitive and financially viable, railway reform has no choice.
- ✓ The establishment of Road Fund is urgent to ensure adequate and quality maintenance of the primary and the secondary road network in the country. Equally important is the need to have not only technical capacity in place to properly utilize the funds, but also to have the right institutional framework and the right governance framework in place.
- ✓ Development of transport connectivity roads in the context of regional cooperation has been slow compared to other regions in Asia.
- ✓ Despite rigorous efforts of the government and development partners in promoting good governance, there is still room for improvement of transparency in some executing agencies.

Brief overview of the Sector

- The present transport network, comprised of road network of 48,364 km of roads, a 2,884 route km railway system, an inland waterway system 24,000 km, two major ports and shipping and air transport services, is considered insufficient to serve the demand of this 150-million-population country.
- Based on the country's geography, more large-scale bridges are still needed to ensure effective land transport network.
- Many transport policies and plans (Land Transport Policy, Integrated Multimodal Transport Policy, Road Master Plan, Inland Water Transport Master Plan, etc.) have been developed but rarely brought into force or executed.

- Implementation of transport projects have been adversely affected by slow and inefficient bureaucrat system. Most transport projects suffer from significant delays of 20-40 months.
- Due to shortage of budget, part of the source for road maintenance fund is from loan projects and Japan's Debt Cancellation Fund, which may not be available after 2-3 years.

Recent Progress

- Policy formulation (Land Transport Policy, Integrated Multimodal Transport Policy, Strategic Transport Plan, Road Master Plan, Inland Water Master Plan, Railway Development Plan)
- New Projects (Padma Bridge, Deep Sea port, Mass Transit System, Connectivity Roads)
- Governance (Reform, Corporatization, e- governance, transparency, Multi Donor funded Strengthening Public Expenditure Management Program, third party monitoring, construction sector transparency initiative)

Current and Future Challenges

- Project implementation, financial efficiency, resource mobilization
- Aid effectiveness: Need to identify priorities in the sector so that resources are not thin spread and that the priorities fit the country's macroeconomic framework.
- Poor riding quality and weak structure of many road sections due to the country's shortage of good construction materials
- Consistent under-funding for maintenance of the road network
- Reform of Road & Railways and ports to improve the governance in the Transport Sector. Progress of implementation of the Government's railway reform agenda is delayed. Sustaining past reforms in the port sector is vital for the economy of the country.
- Lack of coordination among ministries and agencies
- Severe road safety problem and the deteriorating situation
- Institutional & Legal Framework for Mass Rapid Transit (MRT)
- Deteriorating traffic condition of Dhaka city
- Increasing efficiency in port operation and management for Chittagong and Mongla Seaport
- Adaptation measures against climate change (disaster)

Proposed Way Forward

- Capacity Development for improving the performance of Government Agencies
- Ministry of Communications and Ministry of Shipping to play the leading role in the implementation of the reforms.
- To promote a well coordinated and integrated transport system in the country, an Integrated Multimodal Transport Policy (IMTP) need to be adopted
- Establishment of Road Fund for maintenance is urgent to ensure adequate and quality maintenance of roads. Equally important is the need to have not only

technical capacity in place to properly utilize the funds, but also to have the right institutional framework and the right governance framework in place.

- More dynamic and action oriented multi-agency co-coordinated program is needed to address road safety
- Inland Water Transport can make significant contribution to providing cost-effective transport system. Identify the core waterways network and formulation of dredging strategy.
- Improve the traffic management system through proper enforcement of traffic rules and regulation
- Establishment of New Authority and formulation of the legal frame work for MRT
- Attracting participation of the private sector (PPP)
- Transport development strategies of Bangladesh should include a regional role for its national transport system

Expected Support from Development Partners

- Sharing of Experiences
- Funding and Technical Assistance
- Focusing on result
- Capacity Development