

Strengthening an Evidence-based Policy Framework for Sustainable Transport

World Sustainable Development Summit

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OBJECTIVE

The workshop is a platform for data providers, statisticians, industry, government and research institutions engaged in transport sector to discuss and take stock of data challenges and issues. The workshop would come out with suggestions to improve existing data management and collection practices and procedures which would be of relevance to policy makers in India and other emerging economies as well. In particular, the workshop will focus on the Indian transport sector data collection and management practices which could be of relevance to policy makers and highlight global best practices and benchmarks.

BACKGROUND

Integrated transport planning has the potential to tap efficiencies in movement of goods and people in a resource scarce environment. Accurate, robust and regularly updated data in respect of all modes of transport is essential for developing an integrated transport plan and for taking appropriate decisions on investments across different modes. Unfortunately such data is not available in India in respect to all modes and even where it is available is published after a considerable time lag which often undermines the usefulness of the data to the policy makers and other users. This issue is further complicated due to the presence of myriad of agencies involved with the transport sector in India.

The demand for mobility has been growing at an exponential rate driven by India's rising growth rate. There is therefore an urgent need to understand the present data availability across the multiple modes obtained from numerous sources while suggesting ways to consolidate this information to help in more strategic planning of transport networks. It is critical to have a holistic view of the transport sector, both from the supply side, including information about the infrastructure, energy and other resources used, and from the demand side, in terms of drivers and composition.

It is expected that this kind of information would help in making strategic planning across different modes which minimize both resource use and negative externalities. This workshop is therefore a platform to determine the present availability, issues and gaps in the availability of transport data in India across various modes of transport.

COVERAGE OF TRANSPORT SECTOR

There are six different modes of transport: (1) Road; (2) Rail; (3) Air ; (4) Sea; (5) Inland waterways and; (6) Pipelines. Transport sector activity in each of these modes can be measured in terms of (a) Transport of goods: in tonnes and tonne kilometres; (b) transport of people: number of passengers transported and passenger kilometres and; (c) Stock of rolling stock (automobiles, aircrafts, ships etc) and vehicle kilometres

FRAGMENTATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR

In many countries including India transport industry consists of a fragmented collection of infrastructure, services, actors, rules and regulations that are administered or managed by independent ministries, departments, agencies, organizations and companies, each operating in their own “silos”. In India, responsibility for each transport mode often falls under the jurisdiction of a separate agency. For instance, various sub sectors of transport sector In India at central government level are looked after by 7 different ministries focusing on different modes (e.g., Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Urban Development for Urban Roads & Transport, Ministry of Commerce for Container Freight Stations (CFS)/ Inland Container Depots (ICD) and Ministry of Rural Development for Rural Roads. Besides, Niti Aayog was earlier entrusted with allocation of plan outlays across various transport modes spread across Ministries/Departments. At present, in India there is no central agency to collect, collate and maintain comprehensive data base on transport sector which is essential for planning and determining priorities within the transport sector. In addition there are distinct jurisdictions for State governments. For example major ports are the responsibility of the central government but minor/non major ports are governed by the respective maritime states; National Highways are under the central government but State Highways, Major

District Roads are the responsibility of the State Governments. Further, fragmented responsibility and overlapping jurisdictions makes coordination and integration a daunting task. Consequently, investment and development decisions are based primarily on the needs of the sub-sector with little coordination between the different modes.

GAPS AND SHORTCOMINGS IN TRANSPORT DATA

At present there are serious data gaps in road transport statistics. These include; (1) No information/data on road freight/passenger movement. This makes it difficult to identify corridors for capacity improvement; (2) No data on average vehicle kilometres clocked by different categories of vehicle (car, buses, trucks etc) and occupancy of different modes passenger vehicles. These data are important for working out emissions of greenhouse gases from road transport and planning policies to mitigate adverse impact of emissions and; (3) consistency and accuracy of data

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

In order to develop a comprehensive statistical data collection, processing, storage and sharing, an adequate information technology infrastructure is needed. There is need to develop harmonized system of reporting, data collection and dissemination. The results from the deliberations will be used to develop an understanding of the present availability, issues and gaps in data across different modes of transport. The workshop will also devise a plan of action that would improve the transport related data systems in the country to help in development of an integrated view of transport in India.

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