

# **AN OVERVIEW ON ETHIOPIA RURAL ROAD SERVICE**

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## **1) Introduction**

Annual income per capita in Ethiopia was just over US\$140 in 2010. Ethiopia's development has been held back by an infrastructure gap, it has one of the lowest road densities in Africa. For the government to sustain its economic growth and poverty reduction initiatives, it is imperative to address Ethiopia's severe infrastructure constraints.

Roads are clearly a critical enabling condition for improving living conditions in rural areas. However, the distribution of socioeconomic benefits resulting from a rural road is a separate issue, and there are no guarantees or inherent mechanisms to ensure that these benefits will be distributed equitably between the poor and the non-poor in communities.

Ethiopia is implementing the Universal Rural Road Access Program (URRAP): its vision is to free the country's rural peoples from their access constraints, reduce rural poverty, improve welfare and opportunity, stimulate agro-productivity and share growth - a growth in which poor people benefit. And its mission is to connect all Kebele by all-weather roads. Road infrastructure will be of appropriate standards to meet the needs of the rural communities and will be affordable to build and maintain.

## **2) Rural Road Planning & Development in Ethiopia**

Most Ethiopians still rely on pack animals and carrying loads on their own heads and backs to get goods to market. Approximately 64 per cent of the land area in Ethiopia lies more than five km from an all-weather road. Some 48 million people in the rural areas of Ethiopia live further than two km away from the nearest all-weather road. On average, households are often more than 10 kilometers away from a dry-weather road and 18 kilometers away from public transport services.

In Ethiopia, road transport was the means of movement for about 93 percent of freight and 95 percent of all passengers. In 1991, in addition to the 13,000 kilometers of all-weather roads, of which about 4,000 were asphalted and 8,900 were all-weather gravel roads, there were 4,900 kilometers of rural dirt roads, making a total of nearly 18,000 kilometers of all types of roads. The road system centered in Addis Ababa radiated in all directions in a spoke-like pattern. However, substantial parts of the country, notably in the west, southwest, and southeast, still lack all-weather connections to network. Only about 12 percent of the population had ready access to roads. Most roads in the national network were concentrated in the central, eastern, and northern highlands.

### Road Service Coverage by Road Standards (2009)

No	Regions	No of Woreda	No. of Kebeles	All weather rural roads Kebeles		Community roads connecting Kebeles			Kebeles not connected by rural roads
				No	%	No/km	No of Kebeles	All weath /dry road Kebeles%	
1	Tigray	335	666	363	55	3689	252	92	37
2	Afar	29	371	156	42	1733	116	73	99
3	Amhara	124	3234	1074	38	5954	725	56	1186
4	Oromia	295	6814	2575	38	6092	772	49	3467
5	SNNP	134	3806	1473	39	6684	1118	68	1215
6	Gambela	11	198	64	32	291	17	41	117
7	Benishangul e	23	400	90	23	1056	50	35	260
8	Somalia	50	401	90	23	382	50	35	261
9	DreDawa	1	47	18	38	75	15	70	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>702</b>	<b>15937</b>	<b>5903</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>26736</b>	<b>3115</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>6647</b>

\* This figure increased to 39% in 2010

The total Kebele and community roads in Ethiopia are estimated at approximately 100,384 km of which around 39% provide Kebele connection to an all-weather road. Around 20% of all Kebele have community roads (about 26,000 km) providing seasonal (dry weather) access and 37% have roads giving all weather access (range 35% to 92% seasonal access and 23% to 55% all weather access respectively depending on region). Some 43% of all Kebele do not have any motorable access and are impassable or unreachable by motorized transport in any season (range 6% to 65% depending on region).

Communities in eastern and western part of Ethiopia are often left isolated and without access, particularly during periods of rains. This excludes them from exposure to new ideas and influences. Remoteness, isolation and lack of services increases vulnerability and severely constrain their ability to contribute to the economy and development of Ethiopia. Investment in road transport, improves the wellbeing of the poor: access to social services and facilities, access to market, access for employment opportunities; and reduces the negative impacts of natural disasters and shocks and provides the links needed to manage it.

The current Road Sector Development Programs (RSDP-IV, 2010-2015) is thus aligned fully with the objectives and targets of the GTP (2010-2015). One of the pillars of the GTP is the intensification of support to marketing farm products by small and large farmers, both for the domestic and export market. Between 1991 and 2004, the rate of expansion of the road network has been of the order of 8.5 per cent per annum on average. In terms of meeting the Millennium Development Goals, the required rate of expansion would need to rise by some 16 per cent per annum over the period 2004-2015 (See Table 1: Road Indicators of 1970 & 2010).

**Table 1: Increase in Selected Indicators**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>2010</b>
Proportion of asphalt roads in good condition	<b>17%</b>	<b>70%</b>
Proportion of gravel roads in good condition	<b>25%</b>	<b>54%</b>
Proportion of rural roads in good condition	<b>21%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Proportion of total road network in good condition	<b>22%</b>	<b>56%</b>
Road Density/ 1000 sq. km	<b>24.1km</b>	<b>44.4km</b>
Road Density/ 1000 Population	<b>0.46km</b>	<b>0.58 km</b>
<b>Road Density/ 1000 sq. km (including community roads)</b>	<b>24 km</b>	<b>136.6 km</b>
Road Density/ 1000 Population (including community roads)	<b>0.49 km</b>	<b>1.83 km</b>
Proportion of area more than 5 km from all-weather road	<b>79%</b>	<b>64.2%</b>
Average distance to all weather road, km	<b>21.41</b>	<b>11.3</b>

More than 100 Wereda now have a ten-year strategic plan and annual development plan that includes road provision and maintenance. This includes new rural road construction, upgrading (improving the existing) and rehabilitation (restoring an existing road to its originally constructed or subsequently upgraded).

Better local planning is having an impact on the quality of local transport and services. Sensible planning of road and service infrastructure, such as clinics, schools and water supplies, can, when provided with reliable linkages, bring facilities ever closer to the rural poor.

The Rural Roads and Transport Development Program must be systematically prepared to meet the infrastructure and transport service requirements for mobility and accessibility in relation to socio-economic realities, and anticipated opportunities and constraints.

In the planning and programming phase of rural road, ERA considers the following issues:

- ✓ The network planning approach should be a fundamental tool leading to decisions in allocating resources between new construction, rehabilitation and maintenance.
- ✓ Regional Governments shall have a decisive role and mandate to co-ordinate rural road construction activities carried out under other development programmes of Government organisations, NGOs and private developers.
- ✓ Continuation of traditional investment criteria to be applied for the upgrading and construction of higher standard rural roads.
- ✓ A planning and programming framework for low-level rural road infrastructure and transport development at the Regional and Wereda levels. The criteria shall comprise not only agricultural production, but also network linkages, population density, accessibility, and opportunity cost of time and effort. It should be stressed that regional disparities in the road network, demographic conditions, natural resources, level of development, employment, and economic development needs should be part of the criteria for the identification and ranking of rural roads.
- ✓ Introduction of a point score system of road ranking. This system may include data on agricultural production, population densities, access to markets, access to

social and community services as well as safe and clean water, household income, and existing road conditions.

Variations in geological and geographical formation, geomorphology and hydrology are key factors to be considered in the route selection because they constitute the main component of the road construction maintenance, and vehicle operation costs. Therefore, the fundamental variables to be considered for prioritise of rural road projects might include the elements:

- ✓ Level of agricultural production;
- ✓ Access to social services; markets (measure of distance from nearest main market);
- ✓ Proximity to sources of inputs;
- ✓ Utility of road in regional network;
- ✓ Reducing period of wet season interruption for travel and transport;
- ✓ Number and size of development programs;
- ✓ Population density;
- ✓ Road density;
- ✓ Quality of new land (productive potential);
- ✓ Livestock resources.

### **3) Major Challenges of the Rural Road Service:**

- Problems of maintenance;
- Procurement problem (to minimize resource misuse applying open bid system and improving community participation);
- Access/availability of rural roads linking Kebeles and Woredas;
- Quality/standard of rural road;
- Availability of contractors;
- Rural road budget distribution and utilization;
- Lack of clarity to road ownership and responsibility of the community.

### **4) Application of Social Accountability for Rural Road Service Monitoring**

*Social Accountability is understood as the processes by which ordinary citizens, who are the users of public services, voice their needs, preferences and demands regarding public services; and are able to hold policy makers and service providers accountable for weak performance.*

It requires that citizens understand and put into practices their rights and responsibilities with respect to access and quality rural road services. And it requires government officials and service providers to apply mechanisms and procedures to take account of citizen's demands and to respond with appropriate policies and solutions. Thus the application of Social Accountability can foster collaboration between government actors and citizens and create mutual ownership and responsibility which result in improved rural road service delivery.

## Good Practices of Social Accountability:

- The government of Ethiopia working in partnership with partners and the citizen, there is an increase both the size and quality of Ethiopia's road network. Most rural-access roads in Ethiopia are constructed by hand as part of the world's largest "work for food" program.

Based on ESAP1 experience it is also possible to use Citizen Report Card (CRC), Budget Tracking, and Social Audit to evaluate the citizen participation, design, procurement, resource utilization in rural roads service in Ethiopia.

- Philippines Road Watch: organised citizens groups monitoring disbursements of funds to the local level; the actual procurement of contractors; disbursements of funds; and construction monitoring till project completion. Thus their monitoring influences policy decisions at local and state level.
- The findings of the social audit of PMGSY rural roads were disseminated to local in Parlakhemundi on 21st April, 2012. Accordingly, The ultimate objective of a social auditing initiative is to promote a more transparent and effective public administration. The main objective is to strengthen government's capacity and responsiveness by providing government officials with constructive feedback and information about performance and impact of the rural road service. Accordingly, social audit can enhance accountability by allowing ordinary citizens to access information, voice their needs, evaluate performance, and demand greater accountability and transparency.
- Citizen's Report Card on Rural Roads, Getting value for money on investments in rural roads infrastructure. In 2008/09 the National Taxpayers Association (NTA) undertook an assessment of roads infrastructure across Kenya to gain an in-depth understanding of the extent to which local government of Kenya and citizens were getting value for money

## 5) References

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- 7) Asian Development Bank (2006), **When Do Rural Roads Benefit the Poor and How?** An In-depth Analysis Based on Case Studies.
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