RURAL TRANSPORT INITIATIVES

SDC’S OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES
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<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Community of Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFRTD</td>
<td>International Forum for Rural Transport and Development</td>
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<td>IMT</td>
<td>Intermediate Means of Transport</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>SDC</td>
<td>Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation</td>
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<td>SoDev</td>
<td>Social Development Division (SDC)</td>
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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of the Operational Guidelines for Rural Transport Initiatives is to describe the context and trends of, and SDC’s involvement in the rural transport sector and to outline the strategy for SDC supported rural transport initiatives.

Context and Global Trends

In many countries in the developing world poor access to and from remote rural areas remains a major constraint for the socio-economic development of their population. Improved transport can facilitate mobility and access, stimulate economic growth and, as a consequence, reduce poverty.

Despite of the global trend of reducing resources for infrastructure development, there is a rising focus on poverty, and a greater emphasis on livelihoods and ecological sustainability that consider transport as important and sector policies and strategies are increasingly geared towards cross-sectoral concerns. Gender equity, HIV/AIDS, private sector participation and income generation are only some of the hot issues. Within the donor community there is a growing recognition that an intensified engagement in the transport sector is essential to address unmet needs for transport systems delivery and mobility as a key for poverty reduction and economic growth and thus for meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

SDC Involvement in Rural Transport

SDC has been involved in rural transport initiatives since 1964. Traditionally it has supported road, trail and bridge construction. Construction technologies have always been geared towards the use of local resources and the protection of the environment. The participation of local governments and communities in the decision-making processes through social mobilisation has always been crucial. Currently, SDC is implementing transport programme in six countries of Asia and Africa amounting to approximately 17 mio. CHF annually.

Operationally, the thematic desk within the Social Development Division of SDC assures the overall steering of the services offered in the field of mobility including transport and provides direct backstopping, advisory and policy support to SDC’s thematic and operational divisions. In this the
division is assisted by an external consultant that provides support in the fields of documentation and innovation, networking and knowledge sharing and through the provision of advisory services. The most prominent outputs of this arrangement include the establishment of a national community of practice called TransNet, the TransWeb and the newsletter Focus on Mobility. In addition the thematic desk supports international sector networking through the International Forum for Rural Transport Development (IFRTD). Through this network SDC has access to the international knowledge sharing and development actors on the global level.

**Operational Guidelines for Rural Transport Initiatives**

The objective of SDC’s initiatives in rural transport is to improve access to resources and services through improved mobility and proximity. Whilst improvement of access encompasses infrastructure improvements, mobility implies the provision and use of transport services and thus ease and frequency of movement.

Transport is an important element in the livelihood system that sustains rural communities and as such is an integral part of the institutional and legal framework, the economic and financial, the technological and environmental framework.

Within the legal and institutional framework the main concerns are decentralisation through policy dialogue and the provision of appropriate institutional reforms. Integrated transport and accessibility planning as political and technical process must be fostered and capacity building at all levels promoted. The management of transport infrastructure is only sustainable if legal issues such as ownership, taxation as well as institutional and financial structures are adapted to the new framework conditions.

The economic and financial sustainability to a high degree depends on the real decentralisation of funds and their management including tax collection and fund use to the local authorities. Besides government resources also local resources must be mobilised in the form of labour, skills, materials and finance. Scarce financial resources must be used economically and adequate means allocated to ensure operation and maintenance requirements.
The socio-cultural framework is characterised by the tradition on relying on hierarchical governmental service delivery systems. This has undermined the confidence of many communities in their capacity for self-help. Such initiatives should be supported through social mobilisation. The concerns of women and men must be considered in a way that benefits both. In particular the needs and potentials of women related to transport requirements need to be addressed. Particular attention has to be given to the rural urban link and to health impacts. Adequate transport should ensure that rural people should get better opportunities in participating in the overall development.

The technological framework should ensure that local capacities and resources are being utilised. In order to create employment during construction and maintenance of infrastructure measures labour-based technologies should be introduced. Appropriate standards need to be developed and applied. Means of transport should be designed to be most economical in order to allow access and provide affordable mobility. Technology transfer and exchange of know-how should consider that resources should be utilised most economically.

The environmental framework should ensure that transport interventions are only be undertaken after thorough assessment of potential impacts. Climatic and topographic conditions should carefully be analysed and mitigation measures for adverse environmental impacts introduced.
2. Context and Global Trends

2.1 Issue

Transport - Opportunities for the Poor?

Poverty reduction remains a major challenge for development cooperation. In rural areas, especially in remote ones, transport and communication conditions are often a major bottleneck for economic growth and social progress. Inadequate access to basic facilities and opportunities (services, resources, markets, information, training, and decision-making processes) leads to deprivation. **Transport is a means to facilitate mobility and access** and a way to stimulate economic activity and better economic efficiency, which in turn can reduce poverty.

Transport, as a key means to many development processes, particularly economic and social processes, is indispensable, even in the presence of modern communication technology. Transport creates physical access to basic services such as health and education. It links rural and urban markets, and stimulates agricultural production and the development of non-agricultural rural economies. It provides access to labour markets for the rural population and exchange (incl. social and cultural exchange) between the rural and urban society. The global integration of markets and the resulting increased competition between economic zones requires efficient, flexible and fast transport services.

...but transport for its own sake is not sufficient to induce development

The effects of transport intervention on general development cannot be measured directly. Whilst transport is an important precondition for development, enhanced transport on its own cannot ensure that development will occur. Transport strategies and programmes that do not consider the complexity of transport interventions can have a negative impact in social, cultural, economic, and environmental terms. Transport development that focuses only on efficiency may even have unexpected negative effects on the poor, such as increased imports of goods to the detriment of local production and markets, and higher dependency on motorised transport. This in turn tends to displace infrastructure for non-motorised transport to the disadvantage of the poor. Insufficient consideration of the needs of specific groups may also mean that improved transport and thus mobility
exacerbates the existing disparities between groups (e.g. women not benefiting equally from increased mobility for social reasons). Poorly planned interventions can overstrain public finances and may lead to environmental degradation and damage.

2.2 Context

Underdevelopment and even deterioration of transport facilities (especially in rural areas) is a matter of concern for national governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies. Levels of public expenditure are far below the levels required to cover construction, operation and maintenance costs. Privatisation is perceived as a way to overcome problems in transport financing and as a means of addressing the management challenges on strategic networks. However, rural areas generally lack attractive investment opportunities, and the rural population is often not able to modernise local transport without outside help. Local revenues and direct contributions, national and international subsidies, and credit cannot be mobilised to the degree required. Decentralisation of political power and of management responsibilities would appear to be prerequisites for effective local development.

Rural communities, particularly underprivileged groups, are often the focus for development co-operation initiatives. To address transport requirements, rural travel and transport concepts have been developed to take into account the particularities of rural mobility needs. These concepts address basic needs and rely on local technical and institutional capacity and capability. In addition, they must take account of the potential impact they may have on the local economy and on the issue of migration. While the transport infrastructure has to be adapted to match with appropriate (motorised and non-motorised) means of transport, initiatives that are only indirectly related to transport (such as water supply and afforestation) can also play a role in reducing transport needs, especially for women and children.
2.3 Global Trends

Donor support for transport issues in developing countries must be seen against a global background of decreasing resources allocated for development in general. The past fatigue towards rural development, led some donors to reduce their inputs also to the transport sector. However, it is encouraging that the rising focus on poverty, and the greater emphasis on livelihoods and ecological sustainability begin to consider transport as important. There is substantial transport knowledge available internationally, the application of which could deliver significant improvement in sector performance. Against this backdrop there is a growing interest within the donor community about "promoting and disseminating" lessons from projects and research towards building up a global knowledge base. An example is the DFID, moving away from a sector department towards dealing with transport from within its knowledge & research programme and supporting the Transport Knowledge Partnership (TKP).

Similar trends can be observed across the like-minded bilateral donor community (Danida, Sida, DGIS, Norad). Although a large proportion of the sector’s investments still go towards creation of transport infrastructure (especially roads and bridges for motorised transport), sector strategies and policies are thematically more and more geared towards ‘soft’ issues (sector reform, decentralisation, maintenance, financing, road safety, networking, knowledge exchange) and cross-sector issues (poverty reduction, health and non-transport elements in general). Institutional, economic, financial, social, environmental and technical sustainability are targeted in a holistic approach. Participation, gender equality, HIV/AIDS, private sector strengthening and income generation are some hot issues (amongst others) that are addressed through transport programs supported by the North European donor community.

Within the frame of its mission - to assist clients to reduce poverty by improving the efficiency and equity of transport policy and interventions - the World Bank works with the public and private sector and communities to enhance the capacity of transport institutions to provide sustainable infrastructure and services. In the 90’s, the Bank’s focus
shifted gradually from the infrastructure business to social sectors and governance, in the hope that the private sector would pick up the slack. Since 1997, the sharp drop in private investments in infrastructure has belied this hope. With its recent action plan, the Bank intends to re-establish infrastructure as a key to its mandate, combined with an emphasis on sound sector policies, enhanced capacity building and more efficient use of existing financial instruments. To maximise infrastructure investments, the approach tends towards Public-Private Development-Partnerships.

Overall, it can be concluded, that within the donor community there is a growing recognition that intensified and specific engagement in the transport sector is essential to address the vast unmet needs for transport systems delivery and mobility. Transport systems delivery starts to be seen as a key for poverty reduction and economic growth and for meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Nevertheless, the donor community is still dealing with the paradigm shift from the traditional preoccupations with efficient transport systems to focusing on the role that transport plays in meeting the needs of poor people and strive for defining the significance that transport should have in their policies, strategies and support activities.
3.1 Past and present

SDC has been involved in mainly rural transport projects and programmes since 1964. It has supported road and bridge construction in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Traditionally, SDC has been active in hilly to mountainous areas, corresponding to prevailing conditions in Switzerland, but it has also participated in bridge and ferry construction across watercourses and deltas in lowland areas. Environmental aspects have been a major concern for SDC. Construction technology has always been geared towards the use of local capabilities and materials and the protection of the environment. In recent years, the private sector has received encouragement and support in response to an increasing involvement in the sector, both during design and construction activities. The participation of local governments and beneficiaries in planning, execution and maintenance has always been crucial.

Currently (2005) SDC is implementing transport (infrastructure) programmes in Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Nepal, Niger and Tanzania, extending its activities from traditionally rough terrains to the smoother Sahel settings. Beyond the provision of sustainable transport systems, issues of resources protection, livelihood development, local governance and conflict prevention have gained great importance in the programmes. According to the country specific context, programmes are either implemented directly by SDC or outsourced to Swiss NGOs and/or private sector companies. Investments in transport programmes amount to approximately 17 mio CHF annually - comparable to SDC’s bilateral expenditures in the health sector. In addition mobility has become an integrated component of many rural development and livelihood programmes of SDC worldwide.

Poverty reduction and sustainable development are the overriding concerns of SDC activities. Presence and partnership ensure sustainable change as well as action, which is both preventive and suited to the situation. In pursuing a development policy geared to improving the living conditions of disadvantaged peoples, SDC focuses in its Strategy 2010 on 5 thematic areas: crisis prevention & management; good governance; income generation & employment; increase of social justice; and sustainable use of natural resources. Within this framework, SDC considers mobility as a central determinant of socioeconomic development and understands it as an essential component of the overall aim to increase social justice and livelihoods.
3.2 Lessons learned

Transport and poverty reduction are intimately but not directly linked. Transport infrastructure and services as such are not the aim of the programmes but are only the means to induce development. Operational programme experience has shown that transport infrastructure improvements will bring positive developments only if appropriate framework conditions exist:

- Better opportunities for sustainability have been observed in programmes that are based on a demand-responsive approach, where the responsibility for participation and the ownership of all development activities resides with the people directly affected by the development. Such programmes promote decentralised decision-making processes and place greater emphasis on the use of local resources and capabilities. Participation of the local actors allows answering specific local mobility requirements and guarantees the legitimacy of local resources mobilisation.

- It is the responsibility of each country (but also of each donor) to pay due attention to sustainability; it is particularly important to achieve a balance between investments for new construction, rehabilitation and maintenance work, institutional development and capacity building. Maintenance requirements generated by renewed infrastructure have, for example, to be balanced with the supply of maintenance that can be locally and sustainably assured. Combination of process and product is a key success factor in rural transport initiatives.

- Transport investments inevitably have a strong political dimension. Global improvement of the sector requires substantial financial resources. Only more intensive interaction, achieved through more international exchange of opinions and co-ordinated approaches, ensures efficiency. Experience shows that multilateral institutions have an important role to play in the transport sector (e.g. major investments linked to policy and sector reform).
3.3 Operational Set-up and Capacities

“Mobility” desk

The thematic desk within the Social Development Division (SoDev) assures the overall steering of the services offered in mobility including transport and provides direct advisory and policy support to SDC’s thematic and operational divisions. The desk manages the allocation of backstopping/support mandates and programme contributions to partner organisations.

The mobility desk is the focal point for issues related to mobility and transport systems, including transport infrastructure and intermediate / non-motorised means of transport. The support focuses on advisory and policy support, learning from experiences, networking, innovative research and development, sector documentation and knowledge dissemination. SDC can also rely on a wide range of rural transport expertise in Switzerland, with consultants, national NGOs and the Federal Institutes of Technology.

* Since 2004 Support Mandate by Skat Consulting, St.Gallen
3. What and how is SDC willing and able to contribute?

Support mandate

In order to fulfil its obligation towards the thematic and geographical divisions an external consultant supports SoDev. Specifically, the external consultant is entrusted with the mandate that provides support in the fields of documentation and innovation, (inter)national networking and knowledge sharing and through the provision of professional services (advisory service, follow-up of SDC project developments, services on demand, etc.). The most prominent outputs of this collaboration include the development TransNet, the TransWeb and the electronic newsletter Focus on Mobility (cf. annex). TransNet is a national community of practice bringing together organisations and individuals active in the sector, representing a platform for dialogue, exchange of experiences and mutual learning.

Programme contribution

The thematic desk supports international networking activities in the field of mobility and transport by acting as a core-funding agency of the International Forum for Rural Transport Development (IFRTD). IFRTD aims at making the sector more accountable to peoples’ needs and more sensitive to poverty. IFRTD currently counts about 1,000 active members in 100 countries and approximately 15,000 regular information seekers world-wide. The Forum is recognised as a global network representing southern interests and has had considerable success in influencing the rural transport agenda internationally and in several countries where it has a presence. Through IFRTD, SDC has access to the international knowledge sharing and development actors and a global network in the field of mobility and transport.

3.4 Definitions and Scope of SDC

Communities and individuals require access to goods, services, facilities and opportunities – basic needs are e.g. water, food, health, shelter, education and employment. People need access to markets and wish to participate in civic, religious and leisure activities. Accessibility can be measured in time, effort and costs. Accessibility is a function of infrastructure (water sources, schools, hospitals, markets, etc.) as well as available
and affordable transport options for people and their loads. Improving people’s **access** to essential services requires improving:

- their **mobility** (ease and frequency of movement) through better transport infrastructure and services or means of transport),
- the **proximity** to and affordability of **economic and social services** (location / distance, price and quality)

Commercial transport services and private transport constitute the transport operations and encompass conveyance services for passengers and freight by non-motorized and motorized means of movement and related physical infrastructure, mainly roads, tracks, trails, paths and bridges. Transport infrastructure and transport operations form the overall transport system. Mobility, for women, men, children and goods, depends on the availability, affordability and efficiency of transport systems.

**Availability and targeted sustainable operation and maintenance of rural transport infrastructure**¹, services and means are currently the main foci of SDC’s involvement in the field of mobility.

¹ Footpaths, trails, tracks, bridges, community / communal / district roads, etc.
4.1 Objectives

- **to improve access to resources and services:**

  Improvement in access encompasses infrastructure improvements, facilitating the use of transport means, improving services and their location, which also covers non-transport activities (e.g. afforestation, water supply, flourmills, etc.)

- **to improve mobility and proximity:**

  Mobility implies the provision and the use of motorised and non-motorised transport services and thus ease and frequency of movement.

Transport is an important element in the livelihood system that sustains rural communities; it is an integral part of the institutional and legal, economic and financial, socio-cultural, technological and environmental framework. It is a public concern. Therefore, transport programmes and projects have to take account of these frameworks. More importantly, programmes should exhibit an active and even-handed influence on these frameworks to arrive at sustainable solutions that provide benefit to the poor as well as the rich.

4.2 Strategic elements

In line with the SDC guidelines, strategies and priorities, the following components of the socio-economic, institutional and environmental framework are to be considered in the design and implementation of programmes and projects.

**Institutional and Legal Framework**

- **Decentralisation**

  Within the context of transport development, local governments and local administrations are to be given support to use their increasing levels of authority and responsibility effectively, but they are also to be given support to interact with communities and with the private sector in a cooperative approach. At national level, the partial devolution of authority and the allocation of adequate resources at local level is encouraged through the policy dialogue and through the provision of support for appropriate institutional reforms.
It is important that decision-making processes in planning and implementation should respect the principle of subsidiarity. This guarantees that a demand-responsive approach is adopted with broad participation from the stakeholders and assures accountability and transparency as a means for prevention of corruption.

- **Policy Dialogue and Debate**

  The transport related policy dialogue and debate takes place at national and international levels and is promoted through bilateral and multilateral channels. Important aspects in the policy dialogue and debate are the setting of comprehensive national sector strategies, the promotion of sector coordination, the achievement of cross-sector synergies and the responsibility for adequate budget allocations; also for transport system maintenance – as the maintenance question is also to a great extent related to political willingness.

- **Integrated Transport and Accessibility Planning**

  Integrated transport and accessibility planning as a political and technical process must be fostered. It considers both economic and social criteria (e.g. road networks in relationship with markets and social services) and represents a practical tool for strengthening a functioning public-private partnership at local level. It ensures that scarce resources are used in an optimal manner, i.e. that investments lead to planned and sustainable outputs and that an adequate distribution of benefits occurs. The technique also boosts the capacity of local administration to operate and manage public services efficiently.

- **Capacity Building**

  Organisational capacity building at all levels must be promoted to enable all stakeholders to participate in decision processes and to ensure an
effective, sustainable management of the investments. Transport development involves capacity building measures at various levels in terms of technical, managerial and organisational capacity. In rural transport the focus is on the empowerment of communities in order to enhance 1) their awareness of the institutional and legal context, 2) their ability to take an active role in the planning and implementation of transport projects, and 3) their technical capacity in construction and maintenance. The aim is to strengthen their capacity for self-help as well as helping them to voice their needs and claim their rights.

**Rural communities** are not homogeneous, and traditional institutional mechanisms often work against the most vulnerable members. These patterns have to be observed and taken into account to ensure that human and institutional development and technology transfer at community level benefit all groups equally.

**Local administration** are supported with capacity building measures to the extent that they are capable of fulfilling their respective roles within the context of public-private partnerships, i.e. to provide quality services and to co-operate effectively with other administrations and the community.
At national level, institutions may be supported if they play an important role in rural transport development and/or if they are in a process of adjusting their institutional frameworks to meet the requirements of a decentralised system. Human and institutional development may also mean support for the development of existing transport related institutions or the establishment of new bodies (e.g. transport development boards).

Strengthening **Public-private-partnerships** is a must, since transport development is only viable if public and private sector work jointly with efficient allocation of roles and tasks. Collaboration with and development of the private sector (incl. capacity building) is needed to increase the efficiency of transport sector development. A well-developed private sector, as a major constructor and user of the infrastructure, can contribute substantially towards the covering of investment and operational costs and towards sustainable construction, use and maintenance of the transport systems.

### Supporting the development of the legal framework

The mobilisation of communities and of local resources as well as the management of transport infrastructure is only sustainable if related legal issues are clarified and settled. These include:

- Ownership and responsibilities associated with transport infrastructure.
- Rights for raising local taxes, duties and user charges for road maintenance and procedures for utilisation of such funds.
- Legal recognition of transport development entities (associations, boards, committees, co-operatives, etc.)
- At national and local level: support the adaption of the institutional and financial structures to the new framework conditions, whilst addressing the issue of transparency and corruption.

A clear, appropriate and locally adjusted distribution of roles and responsibilities between actors is vital, based on an enabling policy environment, legal frameworks and means for their enforcement. Projects should actively support settling these issues with the aim of bringing the ownership and the means for the development and management of transport infrastructure as close as possible to the beneficiaries.
Economic and Financial Framework

Decentralisation of fund allocation and management

A particular requirement for achieving real decentralisation is the allocation of funds to local authorities. Ideally fund-raising (tax collection) and fund use should be managed at the local level. As a minimum requirement, mechanisms should be developed for the distribution and allocation of funds available at national level (e.g. road funds) to the local level. Another concern is that such transport related funds are genuinely used for this purpose at the local level.

Local resource mobilisation

Government resources alone are not sufficient for rural transport development. The optimal use of local resources (i.e. community & private sector), including labour, skills, materials and finance must be pursued. This requires the establishment of mechanisms to ensure that the contributions required of stakeholders are commensurate with the perceived benefits of a development. It includes, for example, fund raising (e.g. through road taxes) from those private users who profit from improved public transport infrastructure. Where transport development is a general public interest for a larger geographical / administrative unit, community contributions should complement (but not substitute) adequate public funding. Local resource mobilisation should always be linked with institutional and legal framework improvements.

Financial management

Scarce financial resources must be used economically and there should be an adequate allocation of funds to ensure that operation and maintenance requirements considering the potential gains that can be achieved in terms of improving access by making existing infrastructure functional. Rehabilitation work, or if required new construction, should follow the “spot improvement” concept, i.e. the focus is on localised problem spots that hinder overall access (e.g. a bridge or deteriorated sections of a road).
Socio-cultural Framework

**Promotion of self-help / self-organisation**

The tradition of relying on hierarchical governmental service delivery systems has undermined the confidence of many communities in their own capacity for self-help. Community self-help initiatives should be supported through social mobilisation. In this way, traditional organisational patterns (e.g. collective work) and leadership structures can be utilised. A strong capacity for self-organisation is a precondition for the mobilisation and management of local resources as well as for a balanced development of transport.

**Promoting gender sensitivity**

The concerns of men and women must be considered in a way, that they benefit both equally and that neither group experiences negative impacts. In particular the needs and potentials of women need to be addressed. Reduction of time and effort spent on transport dependent domestic tasks (fetching water, wood, etc.) is crucial for women. Schemes to save on domestic transport requirements should be included in projects, and synergies with other programmes covering these issues need to be exploited. The participation of women in planning and decision-making is essential.

Saving time for women through the improvement of the transport options gives them enhanced opportunities in terms of education and productive activities. Such enhanced opportunities encourage income generation and therefore ultimately favour improvements in family living standards.
Transport and health

Improving transport increases poor people’s access to health services, enables better servicing of health outposts, increases the flow of health information and facilitates the movement of health extension workers. These factors contribute to reducing morbidity and mortality, to increasing awareness about reproductive issues and to improving livelihoods. Despite many benefits, improved mobility has the potential to exacerbate female poverty through migration of male family members, to lead to the importation of harmful substances to hitherto isolated villages and to increase the diffusion of infections. Holistic health impact assessments and mitigation measures, optimizing the health benefits and minimising the adverse impacts, need to be included in the planning, design and implementation of transport interventions.

Rural–urban link

With the growing dynamism of urban centres, the link between rural and urban societies is growing in importance for a number of reasons. If poor accessibility hinders this link, the gap in economic development between urban and rural areas will continue to grow, leading to further migration into towns. If the link is supported by adequate transport, migration towards urban centres is not stopped, but rural people have a better chance of participating in overall development.
Technological Framework

Utilising local capacities and resources

The technology applied should both accommodate and exploit local know-how and resources to the maximum, as a basis for increasing self-reliance and to ensure economical use of resources. This implies that the potential of existing local skills, materials and tools should be assessed, and that “imported” technologies should be adapted so that local craftsmen, women and labourers can apply them together with local material wherever possible.

Utilising labour-based technology

Labour-based technology fulfils these requirements to a great extent. Moreover, it is a means of creating employment and income – temporary in construction and permanent in maintenance – particularly for poor people, because much unskilled and semi-skilled labour is required. It increases the self-reliance of the actors and their awareness and knowledge about construction and maintenance. This enhances the sense of ownership and management responsibility for the infrastructure. Further, temporary income generated through such transport initiatives can be a booster for other livelihood development opportunities and small-scale local private sector.

Appropriate standards and quality indicators

Owing to their style of education, technicians often favour sophisticated standards that are too expensive for the purpose of rural transport and that do not reflect local realities. Appropriate standards for technologies and services, combined with practical indications of quality, need to be developed and applied. The resulting maintenance requirements need to be appropriate to the local and institutional capacities.
Means of transport

Besides the infrastructure, the means of transport is an important parameter in defining the most economic way to develop access and provide affordable mobility. For example, in areas where the construction of a road may not be economically viable, an appropriate means of transport adjusted to already existing infrastructure may solve the access problem. Similarly, intermediate means of transport (IMT) can often provide affordable mobility for poor people who could otherwise not take advantage of physical infrastructure development. The role of appropriate means of transport in a particular situation should therefore always be considered along with physical infrastructure solutions. The introduction and use of intermediate means of transport should be promoted, wherever suitable.

Technology transfer and exchange of know-how

Technology transfer and exchange of know-how are important in two ways. Firstly, to make the most economical use of resources for rural transport development, the identification and application of existing, appropriate solutions is essential. The range of such solutions is expanding and the related information is available in international and regional networks. Secondly, the exchange of know-how increases the potential for
learning and further development of innovative solutions among the actors involved. Such exchanges should be stimulated at all levels (i.e. local to international) among the relevant actors and the related topics.

**Environmental Framework**

- **Assessment of environmental impact of transport interventions**

  The opportunity to open up new areas for settlement, to provide access to natural resources, or to connect areas by crossing environmentally sensitive areas are not primarily issues of these guidelines. However, it is critical that transport interventions only be undertaken after thorough assessment of the potential impacts on migration, environment and natural resources.

- **Mitigation of adverse environmental impacts of transport interventions**

  Solutions for facilitating access should take careful account of climatic and topographic conditions. Likewise, construction methods and standards must be adequate from the perspective of local ecosystems allowing for dangers and implicit risks.

  When deciding on options for the development of access, a suitable framework should be in place for the anticipation and mitigation of likely adverse impacts on the (sustainable) use of natural resources in the area.

  Initiatives for protecting the environment will be strengthened by the reinforcement of national and local assessment capacity in terms of the environmental impacts of transport systems. The establishment and implementation of appropriate legislation should be encouraged.
Additional resources and information:

**SDC knowledge and information:**

**TransWeb:** TransWeb (www.trans-web.ch) is the knowledge portal of the mobility desk of SDC. For practitioners as well as anybody else interested in Mobility & Access in the developing world, TransWeb is a gateway to knowledge about international sector issues and about how SDC and its partners are dealing with them. TransWeb provides access to:

- Mobility at SDC: An overview of SDC’s, policies & strategies, profile, global action, in-country activities, publications and partners in the field of Mobility
- TransNet: The Swiss COP (see below) bringing together all sector organisations and individuals in a platform for dialogue, exchange of experiences and mutual learning
- Current topics: Main concerns and hot issues in the Mobility & Access practitioners community of today
- Links pages: A structured and moderated navigational aid helping, through qualified linking, to quickly obtain relevant information from the multitude of sources on the WWW

“**Focus on Mobility**”: Focus on mobility is the electronic news bulletin of the mobility desk within SDC, providing twice a year information on meaningful an relevant news, current issues and trends, SDC project milestones, recommended reading, upcoming events as well as new interesting and relevant web pages in the mobility & transport sector. Subscriptions at the news section of TransWeb (www.trans-web.ch) or by e-mail message to transweb@skat.ch with the subject line “subscribe focus on mobility”.

“**Toolkit for Promoting Sustainability of Rural Transport Infrastructure**” (SDC/IFRTD): Presented as a user friendly tri-lingual CD Rom (English, French and Spanish), the Toolkit for Promoting Sustainability of Rural Transport Infrastructure demands a greater understanding of the political and social relationships between stakeholders and promotes recognition of the interdependence of rehabilitation and maintenance as a condition for sustainability. Through a series of steps, questions and useful suggestions the toolkit guides the user through an analysis of their particular situation; examining strengths and weaknesses, defining realistic objectives,
and asking relevant questions to choose the best possible options. It is brought to life by case studies and highlights lessons learned from each case study in relation to the issues raised. Designed for rural development practitioners and planners involved with local level transport infrastructure interventions, the Toolkit is not a technical guide but a complement to the existing technical inputs which already inform this work. See http://www.ifrtd.gn.apc.org/new/proj/infrast.htm for further information or ordering, or contact directly IFRTD.

SDC advisory and support services:

**SDC Support Mandate in Mobility**: In order to fulfil its obligation towards the thematic and geographical divisions, an external consultant supports the mobility desk at SDC. The support mandate reinforces and complements the limited SDC internal capacities in mobility by building up and supporting the offer and activities of the mobility desk in the fields of:

- **Documentation & Innovation** (Documentation centre, TransWeb, capitalization of best practices, training, R&D, elaboration of tools / guidelines, etc.)
- **Networking & Knowledge sharing** (Animation of TransNet, international networking, collaboration with IFRTD, “Focus on Mobility” bulletin, etc.)
- **Provision of professional services** (Advisory / policy support, Q&A service, follow-up of SDC project developments, activities on behalf of SDC, services on demand, etc.)

Skat, who has successfully supported SDC transport issues since 1999, is entrusted with the mandate for the phase 2004-06. Skat is a leading Swiss consultancy firm for development cooperation providing consulting services and project assistance since 1978. It can build on its comparative advantages like the established experiences as a SDC backstopper and its familiarity with most of SDC’s mobility & transport programs, its extended and vibrant international and national networks and its recognition as a professional resource centre. The close interplay between consultancy and resource centre are further a strength allowing that a wealth of up-to-date knowledge enriches resource centre activities.
**SDC Networks and communities of practice:**

**TransNet:** TransNet (see at http://www.trans-web.ch) was conceived in 1999 as a Swiss-based informal community of practice (COP) with the aim to promote the dialogue and to co-ordinate and exchange information, know-how and experiences as a basis for mutual learning with other public and private, national and international actors in the field of transport. It provides a high-standing forum for discussion of important transport issues, such as technical, institutional, public-private partnership, gender, poverty and transport, good governance, community involvement and livelihood aspects. TransNet organises twice a year events for its members and invited people: half-day information, exchange and networking meetings; one-day exchange, think tank and learning workshops on hot sector issues. TransNet constitutes for SDC an essential framework for exchange and sector coordination as well as a pool of expertise and a think tank in mobility.

**International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD):** IFRTD (http://www.ifrtd.org) is a global network of individuals and organisations working towards improved access and mobility for the rural poor in developing countries. Since its inception in 1992, IFRTD has worked to make the sector more accountable to peoples’ needs and more sensitive to poverty. It currently counts about 1’000 active members in over 100 countries, 19 affiliated national and regional networks in Asia, Africa and Latin America, as well as over 15’000 information seekers all over the world. IFRTD is a unique, southern driven network of sector specialist lobbying at all levels (grassroot to policy) perfectly in line with SDC’s rural transport strategy. SDC has been one of the core founders of IFRTD since 1995. IFRTD acts (together with the external support mandate) as SDC’s resource centre for mobility & transport and as a vehicle to share SDC experiences in this area. Through IFRTD, SDC has access to the international knowledge sharing and development actors and a global network in the field of transport.