

TRANSPORT PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

1.0 General

The main issues in the transport sector that were discussed in the report submitted earlier comprised technical, institutional and economic aspects. The analysis of these three aspects and their various components in the land, maritime and air transport sub-sectors led to the identification of several gaps and shortcomings that are contributing to the bad or unsatisfactory performance in most of the sub-sectors. Consequently, a list of projects was drawn that would shift the performance in the medium term to the desired level. A further examination of the recommended projects was required to identify those that would have the priority to be started during the coming three years.

The aim of the current write-up is to justify the selection of priority projects in light of the stated objectives and identified constraints.

The common understanding applied to all sub-sectors is that the prerequisite to any physical activity is to have a solid and efficient institutional structure. Therefore, the projects dealing with establishing new authorities and organizing existing ones were automatically pushed forward in the list of priorities. Other projects dealing with studies and soft measures were also included in the priority list, due to the fact that these are easy to implement and they are naturally a corner stone for other subsequent activities.

Below is a brief discussion on the selection of construction or physical projects, in various sub-sectors, to be part of the priority list.

2.0 Land Transport – Roads

2.1 Strategic Road Network

The re-classification of the road network is a vital step in the definition of responsibilities and hence works to be carried out on the different network components. Therefore the study in this respect is given a priority to be conducted at the onset of other activities.

Maintenance works are also included in the priority list due to their impact on the economic aspect of road transport and their time related magnitude, i.e. the more these are deferred, the more the network deteriorates and the more cash has to be spent to reinstate it back to normal condition.

Other projects included in the list are the Périphérique and the A2 motorways. Although these are high cost projects, they constitute part of the essential committed infrastructure at the Beirut entrances.

The remaining projects under the strategic road network relate to those projects committed under the UTDP (Urban Transport Development Program). These projects form the link in the urban transport between the physical measures and traffic management measures, and they are extremely important in relieving the expensive congestions in and around Beirut.

2.2 Road Passenger Transport Modes

The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) studied on the northern entrance to Beirut up to Jounieh, was included in the priority list to form a pilot project for this new type of mass transport in Lebanon. This is supposed to contribute in the desired shift from private cars to public modes, in order to reduce road congestions and establish an efficient transportation system both technically and economically.

A similar exercise needs to be studied for the intra urban public transport bus dedicated lanes. This study is included in the priority list in order to seize the benefits of this system as early as possible.

The list of priorities includes as well the design and construction of bus stations and terminals in order to organize and improve the inter-urban public transport and contribute in the modal shift mentioned above.

2.3 Road Freight Transport

One project is included as a priority under this sub-sector consisting of a feasibility study for the logistic centers and inland port. The construction of these facilities is deferred to a later stage in the medium term due to its dependence on regional developments and the establishment of trade routes within Lebanon and in the region.

3.0 Land Transport – Rail

The project list under the rail sub-sector includes clearing the rail right-of-way as a priority. This project would open several opportunities for benefiting from the existing platform thus reclaiming a national asset that is abused and misused.

A priority in this field is to establish the mass transport importance especially at the entrances to Beirut and on the coastal strip. The feasibility study for mass transit corridors is included in the priority list in order to identify at an early stage the optimum bus-rail configuration that would serve the objective of encouraging the use of public transport. This would complement the BRT pilot project mentioned above.

The priority list includes as well a study to identify the need and benefit of introducing rail operations in Lebanon as a whole and the linkage with the regional rail network.

4.0 Maritime Transport

The only project brought forward in the priority list concerning Maritime Transport besides the institutional arrangements is the study on the extension of the Beirut Port up to Nahr Beirut, and mainly the provision of a new container terminal. This extension builds basically on the current success of the container terminal and the expected growth in transshipment traffic through Beirut. The Master Plan must be ready for the next stage, when the current terminal reaches its capacity.

5.0 Air Transport

The projects related to air transport are all included in the priority list. Projects dealing with the physical stock comprise the rehabilitation and development of the Beirut Rafic Hariri Airport, which is a priority in order to safeguard the huge investment made in recent years and allow the airport to develop a regional role and fulfill its local function as the only air portal to Lebanon.

The other project included in the list is a feasibility study aiming at establishing the need to upgrade some airport facilities (mainly runway length and gates) to be able to receive the New generation of Large Aircrafts (NLA). The study would also identify the need to have a backup runway within Lebanon in cases of emergency.