

**THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTED BY  
THE 7<sup>TH</sup> COMCEC TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP  
MEETING**

Distinguished Members of the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group,

The COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group (TCWG) successfully held its 7th Meeting on March 24th, 2016 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Enhancing Road Maintenance in the OIC Member Countries.” During the Meeting, TCWG made deliberations concerning policy approximation among the Member Countries in the field of road maintenance. The Room Document, prepared in accordance with the main findings of the research report conducted for the 7th Meeting of TCWG and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions, was the main input for the discussions. During the Meeting, the participants discussed the policy recommendations given below.

**Policy Recommendation I: Developing a National Road Maintenance Strategy Based on Evidence and Data**

**Rationale:**

Preventive maintenance requires, almost by definition, looking into the future – the future condition of the road network needs to be anticipated and preventive actions taken to prevent serious deterioration of the road network. Doing so requires, clear goals and objectives, excellent knowledge about the current state of the road network, a realistic picture of available funds for funding maintenance works, and very importantly, accurate, timely, and relevant data for setting priorities and making trade-offs when deciding on which maintenance works to fund and which ones to defer. All of these issues should be brought together in a National Maintenance Strategy.

A national road maintenance strategy should define clear goals and objectives for the performance and “levels of service” for the different categories of roads in the road network. The performance goals and levels of service must be realistic insofar that they must be explicitly and directly linked to available resources and funding for maintenance activities. Furthermore, the national strategy should explicitly assign the responsibilities for realizing the stated performance goals and objectives, for the different categories of roads, to specific institutions and organizations. The sources and volume of revenues/funds available to each of these institutions should also be specified in this strategy. The strategy itself must be based on solid evidence and data that is regularly collected to support the continued evolution of this strategy. The Asset Management Framework is a widely used framework and can form a good basis for developing such a national road maintenance strategy.

**Policy Recommendation II: Ensuring the Allocation of Adequate and Sustainable Funding for Road Maintenance and Increasing Effective Utilization of Available Road Funds through a Sound Legal Framework and Institutional Structure**

**Rationale:**

Research and experience have shown that inadequate and unreliable funding is a major set-back for improving road maintenance in many countries. Adequate, secure, and stable funding for carrying out periodic maintenance services is of crucial importance for a well-functioning road network. The number of countries that do not have a road fund is clearly an issue for the OIC Member States. However, road funds are simply a mechanism for facilitating adequate and stable flow of funds to finance required maintenance activities. Besides, even the road funds that have been established are not all performing equally effectively. The effective performance of road funds requires a sound legal framework and institutional structure. Generally, the road funds that have been established in the OIC Member States are characterized by the following:

- The legal basis of many road funds remains weak and the independence and autonomy of the road funds is not ensured,
- The participation of stakeholders in the road funds is very limited and the accountability and transparency of road funds is mostly limited to conducting an annual financial audit,
- Road funds rarely, use data-based performance indicators for monitoring and evaluating the impact of their funding activities. Thus, there is no link of the funding to improvements in the performance of the road network.

As a result, adequate and stable funding for maintenance is often limited, and there is generally a lack of specifically dedicated funding source to financing maintenance activities. This situation generally causes what is known as the “maintenance gap”, making a detrimental impact on the performance of the road network.

### **Policy Advice III: Making Use of Performance-Based Contracts in Road Maintenance**

#### **Rationale:**

Performance-based contracts have several advantages for outsourcing maintenance to private sector. For such contracts to be implemented, responsible road agencies need a competent maintenance program management, a good monitoring system, and clear and transparent procurement procedures. In this type of contract, contractor is paid monthly based on performance outputs measured against standards stated in the contract rather than inputs. Penalties are imposed if the outcomes for a specific activity fail to comply with the contract standards, and payment may be reduced or suspended until the necessary repairs are done. The fundamental point is that the emphasis is on realizing the performance objectives in terms of the end-result, the outputs. Thus, for example, the focus is not on how many kilometers of the road network have been maintained, but rather on, for example, the cumulative delays resulting from maintenance works on the road network. This focus makes it important to no longer just do the maintenance, but do it in ways that minimize the interruptions and disturbances resulting from the maintenance works.

### **Policy Recommendation IV: Establishing a Road Database Management System**

#### **Rationale:**

The basis of effective preventive maintenance is good information; information about the condition of the road network and the volume of traffic on this road network. Making preventive maintenance not just effective, but also cost-effective, further requires information on the costs of various maintenance works, and their beneficial effects. This information is needed not only for the current time, but also needed in models (transport demand models, pavement deterioration models, cost models) to forecast the future condition of the road network, for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of various maintenance options and strategies, for setting priorities, and for allocating resources according to these priorities. Compared to the cost of the maintenance works themselves, this data collection exercise is quite inexpensive, but the returns it provides are huge.

#### ***Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:***

**COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.

**COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organization of seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing of analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents.