

**THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
21st MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS  
WORKING GROUP**

The COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group (TCWG) successfully held its 21st Meeting on October 12-13, 2023, in Ankara, with the theme of "Measuring Environmental Impacts of Transport Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries". In the Policy Debate Session titled "*Formulation of Policy Recommendations for the 39th COMCEC Ministerial Session on Measuring Environmental Impacts of Transport Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries*", on October 13th, 2023, TCWG made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to the environmental impact of transport infrastructure. The policy recommendations were formulated by taking into consideration the research report entitled with the same theme of the above-mentioned meeting. The policy recommendations are as follows:

***Policy Recommendation I: Developing/Improving a comprehensive system and institutional structure through a sound legal and regulatory framework as well as guidelines for better measurement and assessment of environmental implications of transport infrastructure.***

**Rationale:**

The connection between transportation and the environment is complex and intertwined. The factors that drive transportation, the actions involved, the outcomes produced, and the ultimate consequences are all interconnected with the environmental effects they create. The environmental impact, including but not limited to GHG emissions, noise, and water pollution, should be quantified resulting from different transportation modes.

Within this framework, it is essential to design standards for transportation infrastructure that prioritize the reduction of negative environmental impacts and the preservation of ecosystems. To achieve this overarching goal, it is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of the environmental effects associated with transport infrastructure. Therefore, all phases of the infrastructure's life cycle, including construction, operation, and end-of-life, should be thoroughly analyzed in terms of their environmental implications.

To that end, a robust systematic and institutional structure as well as deliberative legal and regulatory framework, and guidelines are needed for effective environmental impact assessment of transport infrastructure, beginning from transport planning, project identification and preparation, ex-ante evaluation, procurement, supervision, and monitoring, to ex-post evaluation. Various tools and methodologies can be applied in this process. Transport modeling and simulation using advanced tools, cost-benefit analysis, stakeholder engagement, and public participation, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and monitoring and measurement techniques are among the important tools and methods being used for that purpose.

***Policy Recommendation II: Improving costs-benefit analyses through among others incorporating environmental costs and benefits during the planning phase of transport infrastructure.***

**Rationale:**

Any transport investment project brings costs and benefits to a country. In the planning phase, it is vital to predict the cost and benefit of a transport infrastructure project so as to reveal the feasibility of the project. In this respect, incorporating environmental costs and benefits into cost-benefit analysis (CBAs) is of particular importance during the planning phase of the infrastructure projects. The systematic process of calculating the benefits and costs of transport projects is widely regarded as an essential step in the policy process. It helps decision makers to have a clear picture of how society and the environment would be affected. Monetizing environmental impacts and incorporating the results into the cost-benefit analysis of a transport infrastructure would provide a clearer picture about the feasibility of the project. In this regard, incorporating environmental costs and benefits into the costs-benefit analyses is a vital and useful tool for the efficient use of resources.

***Policy Recommendation III: Improving the quality of transport infrastructure projects' data and statistics for measuring the environmental impacts***

**Rationale:**

Reliable, continuous, and accurate data and statistics are key not only for the development of transport infrastructures but also for measuring and predicting their effects on the environment. Transportation infrastructures have environmental impacts ranging from climate change, air quality, and biodiversity to water resources. Environmental impacts incurred by transport infrastructures are basically measured through indicators, but not limited to, greenhouse gas and carbon emissions, energy use and intensity, the share of renewable energy sources in the supply mix, emissions of air pollutants (sulfur oxides (SO<sub>x</sub>), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>)), human exposure to fine particulates in the air and related mortality rates and costs, freshwater abstractions, water stress levels, the use of materials, the generation of waste and its recovery, protected areas, forest resources and changes in land cover.

Data and statistics on these parameters shall be regularly produced, updated, and published in terms of domestic, international, and transit transportation separately to make a concrete evaluation of how to minimize the negative environmental impact of the existing systems. In this regard, the implementation of a robust information system including a set of environmental indicators related to transport infrastructure and services is essential. Moreover, the publicity of these data and information is essential for the public to change its demand behavior as well as to open a new path for new investment opportunities from the private sector.

***Policy Recommendation IV: Making use of ex-post analysis through statistical comparisons and qualitative assessments for mitigating environmental impacts of transport infrastructure.***

**Rationale:**

To determine whether transport infrastructure projects have affected the region/country as a whole in economic, social, and environmental terms, as was intended before realizing the project, the impacts of the projects should be measured and analyzed meticulously. The forecasts made for a project in the feasibility study could regularly be compared to the realized period after the project is put into operation to determine to what extent forecasts deviated from actual numbers. In this respect, ex-post evaluation is an important tool for determining the deviation and providing insights into the decision-making process, performance, and outcomes of transport infrastructure projects and for informing the public. Systematic ex-post evaluation of large transport projects including updated environmental impact assessments bears great importance for feeding the process for new environment-friendly transport projects. In this respect, having an identified, simple, and systematic ex-post-analysis process is significant for revealing the burden of transport infrastructure projects on the environment after their realization.

***Policy Recommendation V: Enhancing institutional and human capacity through improved regulatory policies and special training with a view to improving the quality of measurement and assessment of transport infrastructure projects***

**Rationale:**

Transportation infrastructure has an enormous impact on sustainable development. However, poor planning of transportation infrastructure generates negative effects, such as ecological destruction, increased traffic accidents, climate change, increased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and lower transport efficiency. Within this context, measuring the environmental impacts of transport infrastructure, as a complex horizontal issue, is of utmost importance for effective planning of transport infrastructure. It requires, in particular, sufficient human resources with the appropriate level of skills, as well as adequate institutional capacity. These skills may be significant, especially in environmental impact assessments, strategy formulation, and goal setting. On the other hand, the environmental impact assessment itself requires sufficient human resources in many areas of technical expertise, environmental science, economics, modeling, etc.

Furthermore, skills in strategic planning –the ability to identify objectives and prepare action plans- are particularly needed, when it comes to minimizing the environmental impacts of transport infrastructure or distributing the efforts over a long period of time. However, a sufficient number of individuals and the required expertise and knowledge shall exist not only in one organization but distributed to many different organizations engaging in this measuring and assessment process. In this respect, having competent institutional and human resources is of vital importance for enhancing the quality of measurement and assessment of environmental impacts of transport infrastructure projects.

***Policy Recommendation VI: Promoting more environmentally friendly transport modes and technologies with a view to reducing their negative effects on the environment***

**Rationale:**

To reduce the environmental impacts, there is a global tendency to shift the traffic from road transport to rail transport and private vehicle use to public transportation. Likewise, efforts have been exerted on technological advancements in alternative energy technologies, light but durable vehicle materials, and intelligent transport applications. Therefore, governments should encourage the use of more environmentally friendly transport modes and support the respective R&D efforts towards new technologies.

***Instruments to Realize the Policy Advice:***

**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 Support Programs:** 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 projects to be financed by the COMCEC. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office can support financing the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include training programs, study visits, workshops, organizing seminars, peer-to-peer experience sharing, needs assessments, and producing promotional materials/documents.