

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

The plight of rural people has been highlighted by numerous policy studies and considerable public awareness has been created via the media. Whereas 50% of the population of South Africa is rural, the rural areas contain 72% of those members of the total population who are poor. Compared to their urban counterparts, rural people also have vastly inferior access to basic social services and the economic mainstream. Given this context, the delivery of rural transport infrastructure and services can be a significant catalyst for sustainable economic development, improved social access and poverty alleviation in South Africa's rural areas.

Scope of the sub-sector

The delivery of rural transport infrastructure and services includes the following main categories and related delivery actors:

- € *Rural transport infrastructure* – not only access roads, but also district roads, public transport interchanges, tracks and other non-motorised transport infrastructure – provided mainly by the provincial and local spheres of government, the National Department of Public Works (NDPW) and the South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) – all of which are directly or indirectly involving communities and creating local construction-related jobs
- € *Village-level or intra-farm transportation*, where communities – particularly women – and farmers themselves provide transport services that involve head loading, as well as the use of non-motorised and intermediate means of transport (such as tractor-trailers), trucks and light delivery vehicles (LDVs)
- € *Rural passenger and (small-volume) freight transport services to and from “deep”, rural areas*, where operators of LDVs (the so-called “bakkie sector”) and animal-drawn carts are the main service providers
- € *Passenger transport services along the main connector routes* (to towns, clinics and other facilities), served mainly by combi-taxis, converted LDVs and – in some areas – subsidised bus services
- € *Special needs transportation services* – to address the needs of persons with disabilities, the elderly, trauma and non-emergency patients, learners and tourists – provided, either in-house by the relevant sectors or on an out-sourced basis
- € *Bulk freight transportation* to and from processing plants, distribution centres, markets and suppliers– provided mainly by commercial producers and transport operators

Legislative and policy framework

The national rural transport strategy encompasses the rural transport component of the National Land Transport Strategic Framework (NLTsf), which, in turn is a legal requirement in terms of Clause 21 of the National Land Transport Transition Act (Act 22 of 2000), (NLTtA). However, the rural transport strategy maps out sustainable programmes of action for the short, medium *and* long term (i.e. up to 20 years), whereas the NLTsf is only focused on the next five years.

Besides the NLTsf, the relevant acts, policies, strategic frameworks, programmes and related requirements in terms of which the rural transport strategies should be aligned, include:

- € The *Integrated and Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP)*, which is aimed at the coordinated delivery of integrated bundles of services and anchor

- development projects in terms of a prioritised set of rural development nodes (13 at present)
- € The requirements for *integrated development planning* (IDP) as set out in the Municipal Structures Act
- € The government's main *social and economic development programmes*, such as the Poverty Alleviation Programme, the Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP), and the Local Economic Development (LED) Programme
- € The *White Paper on National Transport Policy (1996)*, which – among others – has established the principle of a user-focused transport system, and the need to prioritise public over private transport
- € The *Road Infrastructure Strategic Framework*, as well as the *Provincial Land Transport Frameworks* that are currently being developed in all of the provinces

Strategic challenges

One of the key challenges is to overcome the “big jump” in access opportunities from the village (and its ubiquitous store or local school) to the nearest town centre. This problem affects economic access (to markets, or the economic mainstream) as well as access to education and social services. Addressing this problem requires a coordinated set of nodal and linkage development initiatives. In the first instance, there is a need for spatial coordination of, and investment in nodal infrastructure (e.g. in multi-purpose centres) to support the development of a “logical spatial hierarchy” of nodes and linkages. In addition, there is a need to develop viable transportation services from the village to the nearest multi-purpose centre and/or market.

A second set of challenges concerns the need to increase the overall level and transform the pattern of investment in rural transport infrastructure and services, given the backlogs and current needs. Besides general transport infrastructure and services, linkage infrastructure and services should include scholar transport and various other sector-specific transport services to address special needs (e.g. the needs of HIV-AIDS patients), non-motorised transport infrastructure and services, as well as rural freight and postal services, rural logistical services and the full range of ICT-based services (i.e. services based on information and communication technologies).

There is also an urgent need to re-evaluate and develop appropriate regulatory mechanisms for light delivery vehicles (i.e. the vehicles being used for ‘bakkie operations’). On the one hand, there is a need to facilitate the flexible, combined passenger and freight services currently being offered by most of these operators, whilst, on the other hand, ensuring compliance with the road safety standards and licensing regulations that apply to minibuses and other normal public transport services.

Another set of main challenges concerns institutional arrangements – in particular how to redress the overly complex and un-coordinated rural roads planning and procurement process that is the result of the current multitude of roads procuring agencies and funding sources. Because of the strong inter-dependence with institutional rationalisation and financing options that are currently being considered for the roads delivery sector as a whole, comprehensive recommendations emanating from the exercise will be incorporated into the strategy document. Suffice to note that due cognisance would need to be given, not only to constitutional requirements, but also to the existing technical and managerial weaknesses of most rural district councils.

The final strategic challenge relates to capacity building and monitoring. The ability of a province or a local authority to chart and maintain a sustainable development

agenda is predicated upon the capacity of its people, its institutions and its resources. Clearly, there is an absence of a critical mass of the requisite skills and methodological approaches at the various levels of the decentralised system, which necessitates the development and implementation of massive capacity building initiatives. For this capacity building exercise to be manageable, affordable and accessible, technology needs to be co-opted as a development partner. However, significant improvements in capacity building, requires long-term, broad-based efforts to improve rural governance (i.e. the integration of political, administrative, and developmental support needed to achieve a more equitable allocation of power, wealth and development). For provincial and local authorities therefore, leadership is decisive and learning is capital.

Strategic thrusts

Against this background, the draft national rural transport strategy described in this document has two main strategic thrusts:

- € Promote coordinated rural nodal and linkage development.
- € Develop demand-responsive, balanced and sustainable rural transport systems.

On the other hand, the coordinated development of rural service nodes and transportation linkages should ideally be pursued within the context of strengthened IDPs, rural transport, and rural spatial planning procedures, and support the aims of the ISRDP, rural LED and poverty alleviation programmes. The main practical aim should be to develop an effectively interlinked network of multi-purpose nodes and linkages.

The development of a balanced rural transport system requires the following:

- € Investment in access roads
- € Improvement of other forms of rural transport infrastructure (RTI) - such as local connector or district roads, suspension bridges, pontoons, paths, tracks, trails and public transport interchanges
- € Concerted actions to redress the relative neglect of all non-motorised as well as intermediate motorised transport (such as tractor-trailers)
- € Strengthening as well as regulating the role of the bakkie sector as a viable, demand-responsive means to address a variety of rural freight and passenger transport needs

The need for a *sustainable* rural transport system relates mainly to the need to establish sustainable funding channels and procurement systems, address neglected road maintenance requirements, and develop improved structures for the management of storm water (which is the major cause of deteriorating road conditions in most “deep” rural areas). The need for sustainability also requires that attention be given to the impacts of the rural transport system on the wider social, economic and biophysical environment.

Operational aims

In order to achieve the objectives of the rural transport strategy, the main operational aims and rationale of the national rural transport strategy are, firstly to achieve improved *strategic guidance and coordination* – both within the transport sector and within the broader cluster of key rural service delivery sectors – and secondly, to facilitate *accelerated service delivery* in neglected geographical and functional areas.

Because of the complex variety of rural transport service delivery agents, funding sources and mechanisms within the transportation sector – much of which involves

the private and SMME sectors, and rural communities – improved guidance and coordination is particularly important.

Within the broader cluster of main rural service delivery sectors, the main rationale for improved guidance and coordination is simply to promote coordinated nodal and linkage development.

Rural transport development programme and actions

It is accepted that the delivery of most rural transport infrastructure and services will increasingly be a local government responsibility, funded through consolidated capital grants, the equitable share mechanism and transfers of monies in terms of the NLTTA. Although some provinces may still have a strong direct delivery role in the short to medium term, the long-term focus of all provinces – together with that of the national sphere – will be on the facilitation, coordination and strengthening of service delivery.

To guide and support this, and serve as the principal short-, medium- and long-term mechanism for the implementation of the rural strategy, a Rural Transport Development Programme (RTD programme) will be established. Some of the actions suggested for inclusion in this programme form part of the gazetted rural transport strategic actions specified in the NLTTSF. In January and February 2002, workshops were undertaken in all provinces at which comments on the strategic actions were solicited from provincial representatives.

Seen together with the NLTTSF, the RTD programme will be the principal guiding mechanism in terms of which the national and provincial spheres of government will perform their short-, medium- and long-term delivery, facilitation and coordination roles.

The RTD programme comprises 21 strategic actions (see table on page vi). Nine of the strategic actions are gazetted NLTTSF commitments (reduced from 11 because some have been combined). Several of the additional actions are intended to support or extend the implementation of the gazetted NLTTSF actions. Others are of a more general, long-term nature. Because of substantive overlap with transport policies and initiatives in other functional areas, the implementation of some of these will require close cooperation with the relevant policy and delivery champions in these other areas.

To ensure coherence and facilitate easy reference to the actions, they have been grouped and annotated in terms of the following list of “action areas”:

- A. Alignment with ISRDP and related initiatives.
- B. High-leverage focus projects and programmes, broken down into three components, namely:
 - € High-leverage RTI projects and programmes, (dealing with the provision of rural transport *infrastructure*);
 - € High-leverage RTS projects and programmes, (dealing with the provision of rural transport *services*);
 - € Promotion of non-motorised and intermediate transport
- C. Regulation and safety.
- D. Capacity building and monitoring.

Given the inevitable limitation of resources and capacities, there is a need to prioritise the 22 actions that are included in the proposed programme, and establish a coherent package for the short-to-medium term. In this regard, the 11 actions outlined in the NLTsf are a starting point. Priorities will have to be assessed within the context of annual and medium-term budget constraints, and with reference to the budgetary implications of the different actions.

Overview of the rural transport development programme	
Alignment with the ISRDP and IDP projects	
A1. Alignment of rural transport interventions with ISRDP and IDP projects	A2. Linkage with rural LED, poverty alleviation and social service delivery programmes
High-leverage focus projects and delivery programmes	
B1. Joint interventions to develop multi-purpose nodes and linkages <div>Provision of Rural Transport Infrastructure (RTI)</div> B2. Development of feeder or access roads associated with key nodes and linkages ¹ B3. Development of sustainable road maintenance and off-road spot improvement programmes	<div>Provision of Rural Transport Services (RTS)</div> B4. Facilitation of transport brokering and special needs transport services B5. Piloting of combined passenger and freight transport services ^{1,2} B6. Containerisation and logistics support for rural freight operations B7. Development of appropriate rural public transport and subsidisation options
Promotion of non-motorised and intermediate means of transport	
B8. Alignment and linkage with existing non-motorised programmes	
B9. Development of infrastructure for non-motorised transport ¹	B10. Promotion of animal-drawn carts and other intermediate means of transport
Regulation and safety	
C1. Implementation of rural CPTRs and operating license strategies	C2. Development of adapted vehicle licensing & traffic safety regulations to facilitate combined passenger and freight services ⁴
Capacity building and monitoring	
D1. Dissemination of guidelines & tools for rural transport planning, implementation & auditing D2. Development of guidelines to undertake integrated rural access, transport and spatial planning ³ D3. Promotion of labour-intensive methods D4. Facilitation of community participation including mainstreaming gender in all aspects of rural transport provision ³	D5. Development of feasible systems for the classification, registration and monitoring of all types of rural transport infrastructure ⁴ D6. Development of strategic monitoring and evaluation systems ⁴ D7. Dissemination of institutional guidelines for the provision and management of rural transport infrastructure and services ⁴
<p><u>General guide to notation:</u> All the actions that are indicated in bold only (e.g. A1) are specified in the NLTsf (albeit phrased differently). All underlined and italicised actions (e.g. A2) are supplementary actions.</p> <p><u>Specific explanatory notes (see superscripted numbers):</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actions in terms of which the NLTsf has specified particular targets for the ISRDP nodes. 2. Substantially rephrased and/or extended NLTsf recommendations. 3. Combination of two of the NLTsf recommendations. 4. Actions that overlap substantially with general transport institutional arrangements and regulations, and that would therefore require substantial coordination between rural transport and other functional areas. 	