

EVALUATION OF PUBLIC POLICIES IN THE ROAD SECTOR

20 September 2007 morning

INTRODUCTORY REPORT

Evaluation of public policies in the road sector must be distinguished from the socio-economical appraisal of road projects. As considered in this session, evaluation relates to the policies, i.e. sets of mechanisms and means (interventions, regulations, incentives...) in the service of one or several objectives of public interest. Road infrastructure projects are considered here in a larger context, as elements of a strategy or of a system of action which implies a range of issues and rationalities. Considered here are not only the actions which directly contribute to the production of road service (maintenance, operations) but also regulation actions which determine the framework according to which infrastructures will be managed and used. Approaches and methods for the evaluation of public policies differ from those of project evaluation, in particular by the diversity of the impacts they have to consider, by the importance paid to the analysis of the processes and finally by the place given to a pluralistic debate. Formulation of a system of reference and questions of the evaluation (the questions the evaluation is supposed to bring answers to); selection of the criteria and tools of measurement, work of interpretation which allow the movement from results to conclusions and recommendations : all these stages must be considered as well as the diversity of interests and the legitimate view points on the action which is assessed.

This type of approach is less common in a domain with strong technical issues than in the transport sector, for instance, or in the sector of social and education policies. However, because of an increasingly complex social context and of an increasing request from the community about participation and transparency, transport projects would gain benefit from being considered as items of broader policies. It is now impossible to ignore the contradictions in objectives and conflicting interests generated by the development of mobility. The evaluation of policies should allow scrutinization of them in a framework which is more democratic and more rational.

The two half-sessions are devoted to two sub-themes which will complement each other.

The first will deal with ***evaluation as a tool for guiding road policies***. As illustrated in the three examples which are presented, the notion of guiding corresponds to a variety of functions, approaches and tools. Evaluation can contribute in several ways to the development and monitoring of the implementation of a policy, in particular as a function of the system of stakeholders and the institutional framework in which it is inserted. Delegation of public services to special agencies is one of the axes of the new public management. The example from New Zealand will allow discussion on the role of evaluation as a key element of an integrated system of governance which involves the Department of Transport and the agency in charge of implementation of the road policy.

Assistance from the World Bank in the transport sector illustrates another aspect of guiding and another way of using evaluation as a tool for the dialogue between the financing institution and the client. Finally, as shown by experience gained in France in terms of public debate, ex-ante evaluation of the projects can be integrated in an open and pluralistic process of discussion which aims to enhance the political legitimacy of the projects and to improve the quality from a technical and economical standpoint. These three examples will demonstrate that evaluation is not only a tool to shed light on choices of investment to provide a stronger basis, but evaluation is part of a larger process of rationalization which aim is to strengthen the consistency of the systems of action and to reinforce the democratic consensus around transport policies.

The second part of the session will focus on the **evaluation of impacts**. These can be appraised in a pertinent way at project level (it is the case for the economical and financial impacts), but it is sometimes interesting to question the impacts of a whole policy, with the aim to highlight the strategic choices. The cases presented will allow illustrating this idea in relation to three kinds of impacts. The British case is related to a very topical issue: consideration of the necessity to reduce emission of CO2 in the transport policies. The two other contributions will respectively deal with: consideration of effects of social exclusion of a measure of transport policy in the framework of a cost/benefit analysis and to the territorial impacts of European transport policy. Confronting these approaches will necessarily raise the question of their respective weights when shedding light on the choices for transport policies. Can rules of decision be proposed to decision-makers without defining a hierarchy or weighing of the different criteria? How is this weighting being made today?

REFERENCES

- Decision-making processes for Sustainable Transportation. PIARC Reference 21.33.B, 2000
- Methods to Obtain Public Participation in Road Project Development. PIARC Reference 04.05.B, 2000.
- European Environment Agency: TERM 2002 - Paving the way for EU enlargement - Indicators of transport and environment integration. EEA, Environmental issue report No 32, 2002.
- OECD: Greenhouse Abatement Policies in the Transport Sector: Overview, 2000.
- "*Placer l'évaluation des politiques publiques au coeur de la réforme de l'État*", Sénat, Rapport d'information n° 392 (2003-2004) de MM Joel BOURDIN, Pierre ANDRE et Jean-Pierre PLANCADE fait au nom de la délégation du Sénat pour la planification, 2004. <http://www.senat.fr/rap/r03-392/r03-392.html>
- Bernard PERRET, *L'évaluation des politiques publiques*, éditions La Découverte, Paris 2001.
- Conseil scientifique de l'évaluation, *Petit guide de l'évaluation*, La documentation française 1996.
- L'évaluation à la Banque Mondiale : <http://www.worldbank.org/oed/>
- Commission européenne – politiques régionales : *Guide pour évaluer le développement socio-économique* - http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evaluation_fr.htm
- OCDE, site consacré à l'évaluation des programmes de développement : http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,2688,en_2649_34435_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

Drafted by : Bernard Perret (Conseil général des Ponts et Chaussées, France)