

SP20 ROAD SAFETY AUDITS AND INSPECTIONS

Recommendations to Decision makers

There are effective and efficient measures to improve road infrastructure safety and all countries and road operators are encouraged to deploy them over their network. These include **road safety audits** (RSA) during the project phases and regular **road safety inspections** (RSI) on the whole existing network – two proactive approaches that identify the potential for a crash, and make improvements before the crash occurs. **Road safety audits** can be put into practice immediately in every country. They are inexpensive to implement and the return on investment is significant. As an example, RSAs are implemented for federal and interurban roads in Germany, and they are optional on urban roads, but can be very useful. Countries in transition, in particular, should focus on RSAs for their numerous projects.

- Donor organizations should set the example. They should make preliminary safety audits a compulsory condition for the funding for any road projects. They should also continue making funding available for all road safety measures and emphasize the use of cost-effective safety treatments.
- The EU considers road safety “a shared responsibility” and should continue to foster an integrated approach, including implementing RSAs and other tools to ensure safety is integrated in all phases of planning, design and operations in EU countries.
- Dialogue between policymakers and engineers should be facilitated with ongoing information exchanges. Raising political awareness of roadway safety needs is an important activity.
- Road owners and operators need to consider the broad range of inputs and make the greatest impact in improving safety. Limited funds mean that discrimination and careful prioritisation of actions, using real accident data when available, are essential.

Technical aspects

PIARC has developed and disseminated guidelines on implementing RSAs, along with checklists that can assist new users in adequately using this powerful safety technique. Road safety inspections are a newer, but equally powerful tool for taking a proactive approach to improving safety on existing roadways, and there is also a PIARC guideline on this topic. PIARC has also produced a very practical catalogue of frequent defects and possible solutions.

- Special attention must be paid to vulnerable road users. Mixed traffic is a source of danger, so separated lanes for pedestrians and cyclists are a useful option.
- The legal framework for auditors is an important aspect with regard to minimizing the fear of litigation that prevents some countries from fully implementing RSAs. The same applies to inspectors and RSIs.
- The systematic features of the checklists for performing RSAs and RSIs are an important feature and should be emphasized, but both should be customized for local needs.

- We should continue to compile and share efficacy information on road safety countermeasures to insure that the appropriate range of solutions are considered and applied when deficiencies are identified through RSAs, RSIs or other techniques.
- Other tools and techniques, particularly **Network Safety Management (NSM)** should be used as a complement to the full implementation of a Road Safety Inspection approach. NSM identifies priority corridors as the ones where accidents occur at a high frequency. NSM then aims at understanding the specific local reasons behind this and then making cost-effective recommendations for remedies. NSM goes beyond accident accumulation location treatment and takes a wide perspective on the infrastructure and the driving procedure, so that it is able to take into account all factors affecting the drivers on a given corridor.

Recommendations to PIARC

- Continue to assist developing countries and countries in transition in implementing tools such as road safety audits and road safety inspections to improve safety.
- Support training centres for road safety auditors and inspectors.
- Analyze and disseminate best practices with regard to legal and institutional frameworks to implement RSAs and RSIs.
- Continue to develop and provide easy-to-use tools and information on identifying appropriate countermeasures to improve roadway safety – including maintaining and improving the PIARC *Catalogue of design safety problems and countermeasures*.
- PIARC should clarify the use of the term “accident” vs. “crash”