

**Third Party Evaluator's Opinion on
Bangkok-Chonburi Highway Construction Project (II)**

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Effectiveness:

The primary objective of the Project, to provide a transportation route to the eastern coastal area and to ease traffic congestion in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area (BMA) is well achieved. The number of vehicles comprising of both personal cars and commercial cars have increased as initially forecasted. The Highway also provides an effective access to the eastern coastal area for traffic from the northeastern part of the country, bypassing the BMA. This effectively eases both the traffic within BMA and helps speed up traffic heading for the eastern coastal area.

The Project should have been more effective if design of the structure of the bridge is more carefully contemplated. The highway cuts across paddy field with a naturally soft ground and across a large number of Klong. The gradually sinking road causes to widen gap with the bridge and hence forces the approaching car to slow down or bump into the bridge. This either eventually leads to lower average speed of the car or higher maintenance cost of the suspension part of the car. Given this, the proper and regular maintenance of the Highway- in particularly the part approaching to the bridge- should have high priority in order to sustain the effectiveness of this Project.

One more issue that could help improve effectiveness, in terms of safety of traffic, is the construction of additional rest areas. There exists one rest area in this 80 Kilometers span of highway. The existing rest area is used by both commercial vehicles as well as personal cars and moreover it has been already overcrowded. Additional rest area would help relieve fatigue of driver and hence help prevent unnecessary traffic accidents from fast driving vehicles in the Highway.

Impact

Impact from this Highway Project has been immense.

In terms of traffic, it could help ease traffic in the BMA significantly. The Highway also helps divert traffic from the already congested Bangna-Trad highway heading for Chonburi-Pattaya. Moreover the Project also helps feed a large portion of traffic heading for the New International Airport, Suvarnabhumi International Airport.

In terms of industrial sector, the Highway provides a smooth and fast transportation route for traffic from Bangkok and Northeastern and Central Thailand to the most active and largest industrial zone of the nation, namely Eastern seaboard and the Laem Chabang port. It also provides easy access to a number of industrial estates, i.e. Amata Industrial Estate, Saha Group Industrial Estate.

In terms of tourism industry, the Highway provides a good access to resort areas in Chonburi, Bang Saen, Pattaya and Rayong. This helps to further boost tourism industry in the areas.

In terms of local residents, the Highway provides a number of roadside fruit and vegetable trading places for people living along the Highway. This helps bring economic impact to lower income populations. However, such activities could also possibly lead to unnecessary traffic

accidents. Therefore construction of additional rest areas and bringing all these people to trade within the areas would be a good win-win solution.

The Highway run past a number of education institutes, King Mongkut Institute of Technology, Laadkrabang, for instance. The noise from the fast driving traffic would certainly have detrimental effect on the function of the institute. Measures should be taken for future Highway Project not to infringe unnecessary negative environmental impact, on the other hand some relieve measures should also be considered for the existing cases.