

Third Party Evaluators' Opinion Irtysk River Bridge Construction Project

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Effectiveness:

The primary objective of the Project is to provide a transportation route between both sides of the Irtysk River. It means the new bridge (or so called "Japanese bridge") over the Irtysk River. This project can be presumed as the mostly effective one. At this moment, the Bridge creates an opportunity for 120,000 vehicles per day. They are not only the personal cars, but mostly the heavy transport carrying the several cargos. Moreover, the bridge provides for the intensive traffic of passengers buses. This factor is very important because of its social impact. And finally, there are no blockages and few accidents on this bridge. Totally, this ensures a normal function of economic and social liaisons among the local population.

Besides, the bridge's existence secures a solid financial economy for numerous small and middle business firms and transport companies. So, the diesel fuel expenses are seriously decreased. Thankful to the bridge many drivers no longer need to make the "double circle" (travel over) that demands additional fuel expenditures. So for example, the full loaded vehicle wastes about 25 litres (about 12 USD) for traveling over.

It is necessary to note one more aspect which is a psychological one. That means the absence of road policemen on both sides of the bridges. It is possible in consequence of the superior technical characteristics of the bridge. They exclude possible traffic order violations (speed exceeding, passing etc.). Thus, the drivers are not nervous during the bridge trans-passing.

But there were the problems after the bridge opening. It was considered - to introduce a charge for using bridge. However, this idea provoked the negative population's reaction and negative social emotions. The regional administration should reject the introduction of charge. Also, there is no effective structure which must support a technical expertise and provide the renovation works and other necessary actions. So, the situation demands an immediate intervention from the state structures in order to provide all needed technical observations. At this time, the bridge could be transmitted into the communal property.

Impact

The impact from this Bridge Project might be very essential. As it's known, the Eastern-Northern Province has more priorities toward the short and mid-perspectives. This situation is seen in recent documents and events at the Governmental and the Presidential level, particularly after President's visit in Semey (Semipalatinsk) in the Spring 2007. The Government places more importance to the city of Semey. This town is the convenient transport node and centre of international trade from ancient times. For today, there is an opportunity to reestablish its previous status and to restart its development as trans-regional and trans-national transport bundle. This factor determines the great importance of transport infrastructure and especially the bridge over Irtysk River.

Who is a potential winner thankful the bridge creation? First of all, it is a new logistic center which will be located on the edge of town: on the crossroads between Ust-Kamenogorsk, Almaty (old capital) and China's direction (Eastern direction). The construction is already started and is greatly facilitated by the bridge connection. The winners are traders, logistic and transport managers, storage companies, service infrastructure and office constructing firms.

The second group of the winners are the numerous (15) mineral companies which need the transport service for transporting the ore, ore concentrates, technique and instruments. These companies are ready to invest and to enlarge the transport infrastructure.

The third group of clients could be the big projects coming in the future. They are a further big electric station, the Hyundai bus plant, and construction materials factory. And finally, the bridge can stimulate the port's construction on the River Irtysk.

From this point of view, the importance of the new bridge is inestimable. In accordance with Governmental projects to develop the Semey region and its communication preference, the bridge will accumulate a core transport routes. It is obvious that the bridge will obtain the international importance on the crossroads between Russia, Kazakhstan and People's Republic of China. No doubts, that the general good flows would trans-pass the Semey bridge over the Irtysh River.

The final impact of the Japanese bridge is that the local administration started to restore the old Soviet bridge, which could be also evaluated positively.

Some experts believe that the bridge is impacting on Kazakh-Japanese economic relationship and technical cooperation positively. So, we share this opinion absolutely.