

## **Third Party Evaluator's Opinion on Road Maintenance Improvement Project (2)**

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### **Relevance**

The sixth five-year national development plan (REPELITA VI 1993-1998) mentioned two priority areas for road-sector development: construction of new road and maintenance of existing road. The project was intended to address the second priority area as the background part of the report described the situation of road maintenance authority by the time of appraisal as having "insufficient capability to execute the necessary work due to shortfall in machinery and skill." Although Evaluator agrees that the problem and the proposed solution had some degree of relevance, the root cause of the problem was partially addressed. This may put the effectiveness of project to solve the problem rather limited.

On the other hand, from legal perspective, the project granted a strong relevance to the government policy and development program priority as the economic crisis in 1997 reduced government ability to purchase new machinery or provide intensive training. Other strong proponent for the project relevance is that there has been no change in government policy regarding the hierarchical authority for national/provincial road maintenance since the time of appraisal. These reasons make Evaluator convinced that the relevance of the project at present time is as strong as that of the time of appraisal.

Priority-wise, national and provincial roads have always been important for economic activity therefore its availability and readiness sits on the top priority of government policy. The coverage of the project was nation-wide while the scope of the project was an extension of similar project in 1995 (Phase 1). Only by completing this Phase 2, the optimum benefit of Phase 1 can be realized. This puts the realization of Phase 2 project necessary.

### **Impact and Sustainability**

Logically convincing, the project has been able to improve road quality and safety. As the frequency of road maintenance become more often, we may expect that more safe-roads lead to shorter travel time, more traffic volume but less-congested, more satisfied drivers, as well as an increasing number of economic activities in general. In term of road safety, we may expect that more safe-roads available will reduce the likelihood of traffic accident. The chart in the report might be evidence that showed such causality: as more roads are routinely maintained, lesser number of traffic accidents is likely. Negative impact is less likely to happen and environmental impact is, in my opinion, none.

The sustainability of the project benefit seemed secured for short period, but is challenging for future time. Dramatic changes in government policy and shift in authority locus due to decentralization trend seemed to be too difficult to anticipate by the time of appraisal. The longer sustainability of the project currently depends on the executing agency (DGRI), some way beyond the project's control.

Overall, Evaluator agrees that the project has been designed accordingly to meet government's relevance and priority, has been implemented efficiently, and has brought benefit to many people all over the country. The project benefit's sustainability remains a challenging issue in the future.