

The experiment: background information



Dakar, Senegal, 1996.

■ The origin of the regional road safety program

Since 1992, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been facilitating regional co-operation in land transport in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa by supporting the group of land transport directors in the sub-region.

This forum, which Isted has steered since its transport department was set up (in 1994), has witnessed the emergence of a particular interest in road safety (by 1993), which was rarely considered in Africa at the time.

This theme is today the main object of the actions taken by this working group.

This program emerged from a hypothesis: a regional approach to road safety is justified in sub-Saharan Africa, insofar as, when it was launched:

- The characteristics of mobility and of the transport sector are sufficiently uniform across the sub-region.
- The limited aid resources that can be mobilised for road safety argue for a search for synergies and for pooling tools and methods.
- Lack of knowledge and rare data on the subject and the fact that experience is so recent, calls for sharing new knowledge to speed up the feedback process. For example, an improvement to the BAAC accident database software during a mission in one country is immediately passed on to all countries using the BAAC, making it more powerful, more quickly.
- A regional approach provides an opportunity lay the groundwork for a standardised policy.

■ The partners in the program



Land Transport Directors group meeting in Cotonou, Benin, 1999.

The group of DTTs (*Directeurs des Transports Terrestres - Land Transport Directors*)

The working group of the land transport Directors from French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa has been meeting on an annual basis since its creation. The meetings are the grounds for all actions undertaken by the road safety program (see inset p.8).

In effect, it is in this forum that emerging problems in the sub-region appear, that new accident phenomena or factors are revealed, along with any difficulties of implementing one action or another. In this way, priorities can be defined consistently with locally identified needs and according to the interest manifested within the group.

Originally made up of the DTTs from French-speaking West Africa, the group was extended in 1996 to French-speaking Central Africa, then to Mozambique and Madagascar. The directors of road safety organisations naturally take part in this working group.

In addition to setting up projects steered by Isted, the DTTs have made this forum a venue for practical exchanges of experience concerning questions of transport databases, facilitation, road regulations and safety, urban transport (originally), and training. They seize the opportunity thus offered them to inform their counterparts of their own initiatives, thereby spreading ideas that are as original as they are pragmatic.

THE WORKING GROUP OF DTTs (2001)

- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Congo
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Ivory Coast
- Gabon
- Guinea
- Mali
- Madagascar
- Mauritania
- Mozambique
- Niger
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- Chad
- Togo

→ AN EXAMPLE...

The Togolese initiative of “first aid training for taxi drivers” (they are generally among the first at the scene of an accident) caught the attention of the whole assembly (DTT meeting at Cotonou in 1999) through its judicious and pragmatic character.

Subsequently, the exchanges sometimes continued spontaneously in the context of bilateral relations: some directors, having spotted a similar problem in a nearby country on the occasion of one of these encounters, or being attracted by a solution that seemed to them to be applicable in their own countries, approached their colleagues and instituted “South-South” co-operation with a view to applying or adapting the measure to their countries.

Sources of funds

The program has from the start enjoyed financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [International Co-operation and Development Department - DGCID, DCT/ETC]. More recently (since 1999), the UEMOA (West African Economic and Monetary Union) has made its own contribution to the program, financing a road safety diagnosis study in member countries and putting forward a standardised road safety policy².

Isted has also been charged by the World Bank, since 2000, with supervising the “road safety” component of the Transport Sector Program in Senegal (PST 2).

Technical and scientific expertise

The Ministry of Public Works, Transports, and Housing contributes to the program through its Road and Traffic Safety Directorate (DSCR) and its Directorate of Economic and International Affairs (DAEI) by mobilising the technical expertise it has drawn from the network of CETEs - Civil Engineering Research Center of the METL - and from its own Departments.

The mobilisation of expertise also includes the French scientific and university network, specifically INRETS (National Institute for Transport and Safety Research) and CRET (Research and Technology Centre, University of Aix en Provence), and also African scientific and professional networks, either through SITRASS (International Solidarity on Transport in sub-Saharan Africa) or through recourse to private expertise (information-processing companies, consulting firms, engineering firms, etc.).

DTT MEETINGS - OBJECTIVES

DTT talks provide a platform that:

- favours synergies within the geographical zone concerned,
- serves to preserve and build on innovative experiments in the region,
- provides an opportunity to compare methods and approaches, to shed a fresh light on approaches to the problems,
- serves to identify emerging problems, discuss key issues,
- serves to establish plans of action consistent with local concerns,
- helps lay the groundwork for a harmonised regional policy.

→ AN EXAMPLE...

At the 1996 meeting of DTTs in Brazzaville, the National Transport Director of Mali presented the reform of the technical inspection in his country. It was about outsourcing the technical inspection to a private operator, and establishing the specification through negotiation with carriers. This led the director of land transport of Guinea to go to Mali to learn more about the practical implementation of the reform. Following this bilateral co-operation, the experiment of reform of the technical inspection was reproduced on the initiative of the Guinean authorities themselves; the results were presented as early as the 1998 meeting of the DTTs in Cotonou.



Technical inspection in Bamako, Mali, 2001.



Technical inspection in Bamako, Mali, 2001.

² Ref.: “Common road safety policy of UEMOA countries”, Isted/Inrets/Sitrass report, March 2000.



Pikine, Senegal, 1999.

■ Principles and modalities of action

Favouring reproducible pilot actions

The desire to make the most of limited resources has led to a choice of pilot actions that:

- lend themselves to a concerted approach or are of region-wide interest,
- help generate a common methodology applicable to all countries of a region,
- require only a few adaptations to the specific national context.

Giving priority to local initiatives

One of the principles of the program is to favour actions in those countries that apply and where projects have already been initiated locally. This ensures local support is given to the project and bears witness to a political determination that will contribute to its success.

Action plans are established co-operatively by the land transport directors.

Then comes the phase of searching for financing for the plan of action established in the context of co-operation. This phase, depending on the financing obtained and the demands of the sources of funds, may lead to adapting the plan of action.

Strengthening and developing local capabilities

Local potential for implementing the actions on the one hand, and on the other the complementary skills needed, are then identified, with the understanding that one basic principle is no substitution for local skills. Consequently, preference is given to isolated support in the form of short-term expert missions having a dual aim, both technical and pedagogical. Indeed, the pedagogical aim of these experimental actions is primordial, with a view to helping to develop local capabilities in a sector that is relatively new in Africa.

National or international partners and experts, are then identified in order to assist, when necessary, in the implementation of the projects.

Evaluating the actions

The meetings of the DTTs are an occasion to assess the pilot actions, learn from them, make such changes to them as are necessary to remain in phase with developments in the sector concerned, and at the same time build on experience, disseminate the results and plan possible reiterations in other countries.