Workshop on Sustainable and Healthy Urban Transport, Chisinau, 29-30 Oct. 2008

SESSION V: IMPROVING POLICY INTEGRATION IN TRANSPORT, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

Supportive institutional conditions for coordinated policy-and decision-making

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THE Core issue:

Which institutional mechanism could allow all the involved ministers and administrations to start talking and working together in coordinated way?
Coordinated Policy and decision-making in practise

• Coordinated policy cannot be achieved by using a single magic formula fitting all the situations.

• Although it’s not possible to transfer experience and good practice from one place to another by just doing “cut and paste”, a series of useful lessons and recommendations can be drawn from the THE PEP activities and other reference documents.
Organizing coordinated policy and its implementation

- Several mechanisms promoting horizontal and vertical cooperation can be conducive to joint policymaking:
  1. Setting up organizational arrangements (interdepartmental committees, commissions, working and steering groups);
  2. Establishing a central steering role in charge of the coordination of the outcomes of these arrangements;
  3. Setting objectives that cut across sectoral and administrative boundaries (intersectoral and integrated strategies, programmes and policy).
Capacity-building and awareness-raising

• Evaluation of the process is essential for success:
  1. Benchmarking enables organizations to evaluate the process(es) in relation to best practice and allows to develop plans in order to use these;
  2. Mechanisms for cross-sectoral monitoring and assessment of policies, programmes and projects including ex-ante-techniques (SEA, HIA);
  3. Using specific parameters and - if possible quantitative - indicators for monitoring.
Benchmarking, monitoring and reporting

- supportive human resource policies are necessary to achieve coordinated policy:
  1. Exchange of good practice, e.g. training workshops, international exchange of experience, etc.;
  2. Building intersectoral capacity through various instruments and tools;
  3. Balancing the multidisciplinary and specialization of the civil servants and stakeholders.
The role of the public

- Public debate and other forms of public participation leads to more integrative policies and practice, meaningful public involvement is further essential.

- Public participation can support and enhance policy coordination, leading to better performance and reception of implementation activities and thus enhancing public trust and confidence in political decisions.
Some lessons learned

1. Coordinated policy usually springs from long and painstaking political and administrative preliminary negotiations but there are often a preliminary (and unavoidable) step.

2. To really work it needs:
   - Real political will and guidance, administrations should not be let on their own;
   - Sense of ownership and accountability by all the actors;
   - Gradual formation of a ‘common’ culture that facilitate trust between the actors;
   - Stability regarding the persons involved and to, some extent, personal trust between the actors;
   - As clear as possible mandate and procedure(s);
   - Predetermined budget and human resources.

3. Potential threats or traps
   - Installed heavy procedure could be paralysing in ‘real life’ and can nourish a sort of ‘routine’ bureaucracy.
   - Actors can spend more time and energy on coordinating themselves than working on ‘policy’ or actions
   - Institutional actors can live in a ‘bubble’ and forget the existence of an outside world, information and participation of the stakeholders (NGO’s, Trade-Unions, etc.) and of the public should be kept in mind as a core goal for any mechanism dealing with THE issues.
Provisional conclusions

1. Achieving coordinated policy and decision-making is not an easy task. It should not be seen as an end in itself but rather recognized as a way of achieving practical outcomes that simultaneously fulfil the goals of more than one sector. What is vital is that plans and policies result in practical action on the ground;

2. Political will, and the allocation of resources, is often just as important to policy coordination as the mechanisms, institutional conditions or practices themselves;

3. A variety of institutional barriers to coordinated policy exist but most of these could be surmountable.
Final word

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