

# Africa Transport Policy Program - Fourth Development Plan (SSATP DP4) (ID: P173455)

## SSATP DP4 Thematic Area 4: Resilient Road Asset Management (RRAM)

### Draft Concept Note

#### *1. Background and Motivation*

1. The negative impacts of Climate Change are evident in all sectors of the African economy including transport. Climate change adaptation and risk reduction from climate change impacts is a priority. Many countries have taken steps to identify measures to contribute to the reduction of national Green House Gases emissions and improve resilience to climate change. However, the implementation of these measures both for adaptation and mitigation require financial resources and institutional capacity. Transport infrastructure is exposed to climate-related hazards and protecting road infrastructure against natural hazards is a challenge. There is a need to systematically incorporating climate mitigation and adaptation measures in road asset management systems to make road networks resilient to climate change impacts.
2. Many studies have shown that sustainable road maintenance interventions are critical to mitigating climate change impacts. However, in many African countries road sector public expenditure has been low and declining over time. There is still a pronounced capital bias and budget allocations for maintenance are below requirements. A few countries are deviating from the road sector commercialization reform agenda. Some of the Second-Generation Road Funds have lost their autonomy and effectiveness. Revenues from fuel levy which represent 80% of total revenues is hardly adjusted to inflation and its proceeds are often not directly transferred to Road Funds and is well below to meet routine maintenance needs.
3. Road management agencies/departments still face challenges related to technical and management capacity and major governance issues. Road Agencies absorption capacity is weak, disbursement rates range from 60% to 90%, due to cumbersome procurement process and weak contract management capacity. Therefore, the governance of the road sector management and financing needs to be revisited to sustain road maintenance financing and substantially improve road asset management and ensure the efficient use of scarce budgetary resources.
4. Considering the above, an interest is expressed by key stakeholders to address the deteriorating performance of African road management and financing institutions. It is

proposed that SSATP renew its commitment to strengthening road management institutions as a strategic priority thematic area, Resilient Road Asset Management (RAAM), under its fourth Development Plan (2021-2026).

## *2. Development Objective*

5. The Resilient Road Asset Management (RRAM) Thematic area development objectives are (i) to reassert the importance of road maintenance and support the mainstreaming of climate resilient practices into road asset management systems; (ii) to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the road management and financing institutions and (iii) strengthen the capacity of road sector institutions/associations at national and continental level.

## *3. Pillars and General Activities*

6. **Pillar 1: Strengthening Road network climate resilience** and support the mainstreaming of climate resilient practices in road asset management systems. This pillar will generate knowledge products including (i) guidelines for climate vulnerability assessment, (ii) road network adaptation strategies, and (iii) guidelines for climate resilience audit of road and engineering design including climate resilient road maintenance interventions based on local material and techniques. This pillar will also support the mainstreaming of climate resilient practices in road asset management systems.
7. **Pillar 2: Support to enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of road management and financing institutions.** This pillar will assess through working papers the experiences of the road sector commercialization reforms including the assessment the second-generation road funds effectiveness and the efficient of roads management agencies and practices. This pillar will also assess the experiences of road maintenance interventions using performance-based contracts approach.
8. **Pillar 3: Strengthen the capacity of road sector institutions.** This pillar will support the deployment of digitalization tools and techniques to support road asset management systems (i.e., road conditions inventory and traffic surveys). It will also support the development and deployment of user-friendly road asset management tools. A training program will be developed to inform strategic decisions at country and sector level.
9. The three pillars and the topics to be covered represent the main program of activities of this thematic area and will be implemented through four types of activities:

- a. Generating cutting-edge knowledge and innovations to make the road network climate resilient,
- b. Country-level technical assistance to support road sector reforms and strengthen road management and financing institutions,
- c. Capacity building through training programs and exchange of experiences,
- d. Advocacy and regional engagement, including support to continental and regional associations such as the Africa Road Maintenance Funds Association (ARMFA) and road agencies associations (i.e. ASANRA).

#### ***4. Expected Results and Outcomes***

10. RRAM expected results and outcomes are as follows:

- i. Road network climate resilient policies and practices embedded in road sector strategies and road asset management systems.
- ii. Regained focus on sustainable road management and financing policy reforms.
- iii. Capacity of road sector institutions at country and continental level strengthened.

#### ***5. RRAM implementation arrangements and financing***

11. Resilient Road Asset Management (RRAM) Thematic Area was identified as an optional priority thematic area under the SSATP-DP4 strategy, subject to availability of funding. The European Commission is considering an additional support to this thematic area with \$4.0 to \$5.0m in parallel co-financing over the SSATP DP4 cycle (2021-2026). RRAM will be administered and directly financed by EC under SSATP Program Management technical oversight. As this parallel co-financing arrangement will only be finalized by October 2023, it was suggested to initiate discussions to identify the scope of work and priority activities to be implemented during the DP4 cycle.

#### ***6. Staffing***

12. Using a service agreement contract, a RRAM Pillar Leader will be hired and located in one of the EC delegations in Africa, close to the SSATP Program Management Team. Individual consultants could also be recruited to carry out country and continental level technical assistance to support road sector reforms and strengthen the capacity of road management and financing institutions/associations.

## **7. Risks**

13. Policies require countries ownership and commitments to take the knowledge developed by SSATP to the next steps and have the recommendations implemented at the country, sector, and project investment level. Whereas SSATP has the role of developing sound policies and the convening power to sensitize decision makers, without countries commitments to own and implement SSATP recommendations, the likelihood of achieving results in a short period of time remains low. However, SSATP governance structure and operational framework provide space and opportunity for the country members to participate and gain ownership. Like in any policy related matters, SSATP objectives take a long time to materialize but ones that could achieve long-term efficiencies.

## **8. Dissemination and Outreach Strategy**

14. In addition to using the SSATP website in English and in French, webinars, a periodic newsletter, and thematic workshop/training programs, as proposed in the Operational Framework, a Development Partners Coordination Group will be established to formalize interactions with partners and stakeholders. This will provide an opportunity for development partners to identify communication focal points (i.e. EC delegations in Africa; African Development Bank Country Offices) tasked with liaising with SSATP and its Communications Officer. This community of practice will be essential for conveying a coordinated vision of transport policy in Africa and ensuring ‘one voice’ across all the communication channels of SSATP and its partners. RRAM regionally based Thematic Area Leader will be responsible for coordinating with development partners on the ground and ensuring that policy recommendations are disseminated and fully integrated in the transport policy dialogues of development partners and member countries.