

UPS AND DOWNS OF TRANSPORT GOVERNANCE REFORM: LESSONS FROM THE 4-YEAR REVIEW OF THE SPANISH NATIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN

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ABSTRACT

Governance reform is one of the key areas of activity identified in the National Transport Plan of Spain, approved by the Government in 2005. The reform aimed at:

- increasing the relevance of policies based on management of transport services, compared to infrastructure expansion, and
- better integrating the objectives of sustainable development within transport policy-making.

To achieve an incremental, but continuous move in this direction, three combined instruments were identified:

- Empowerment of a consensus-building framework, based on the one hand on public participation processes, by making it easier to the public to enter the debate on transport policy measures and transport infrastructure projects, and on the other hand on a better formalised framework for the institutional dialogue between the Ministry of Transport and its counterparts at regional and local administrations.
- Streamlining the decision-making process, by establishing a new technical report regarding new initiatives and proposals by stakeholders on transport policy, which should assess its compatibility with current policies and with the strategic objectives of the National Plan.
- Establishing a more objective-oriented management within the Ministry of Transport and its organisations, with a focus on the integration of the objectives of sustainable development, particularly through the implementation of environmental management systems.

The outcomes of this strategy, four years later, seem quite heterogeneous. There has been significant progress in the capacity of dialogue of the Ministry of Transport (MoT) with its

institutional counterparts, as well as with most of stakeholders in the transport sector. The commitment of the entire organisation to the Plan's contents has facilitated the public debate, and has focused it in a reduced number of controversial topics, compared with the confusion which reigned in the precedent period. Institutional reform has allowed to increase efficiency in the safety sector for all modes, and to improve the quality of public transport services, particularly in the rail sector. However, ironically, public support for "sustainable mobility" seems to have diminished, as most stakeholders have moved the public debate to focus on increased accessibility throughout the country, hiding the financial and environmental costs associated to this approach. As the decision-making process has become more accessible and understandable to the public, short-term actions and proposals have rapidly filled the agenda of institutional dialogue, at the expense of medium and long-term strategies and needed reforms.

The conclusions are thus, mixed. The fidelity of the Government to the main contents of the National Plan has reduced the number of controversial topics "on the table for discussion", facilitating the institutional dialogue and limiting the consumption of time and resources in the development of new "out of the box" projects, which in the past have frequently been advocated by interest groups. However, progress in the integration of sustainable development objectives within transport policies, which should probably have been translated in practice in a lower pace for new infrastructure construction and increasing resources being allocated to service provision, management and regulatory control, has been modest, if existent at all.

These mixed achievements suggest that, in future, institutional reform should be supported by more strategic, multi-year targets for each agency or Directorate monitored in the framework of Environmental Management Systems, so that the general objectives of the National Plan could be better internalised by these executive organisations. Institutional dialogue should keep moving towards more strategic and ambitious targets, including quality of transport services, and environmental targets such as emission reduction as major elements of any agreement between the MoT and its regional and local counterparts. Last but not least, the public image of the MoT as an effective provider of sustainable mobility should more decisively replace its current image as infrastructure provider.

Transport planning; policy science; governance

GOVERNANCE REFORM IN TRANSPORT: THREE COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES

The concept of governance in this paper refers to the set of rules, which establish how the planning and implementation services of the Public Administration conduct business, and interact with other relevant agents in the public and private sectors (Williamson, 1994).

Compared to other sectors of public policy, transport governance is strikingly characterised by inertia and resistance to change. Button (2005, p.50) points out several reasons why the transport sector may be so reluctant to reform. In particular, he stresses the fact that 'those concerned with transport industries have an active liking for the product'. Indeed, when those in charge of the system are more interested in technical developments than in actual

Ups and Downs of Transport Governance Reform: Lessons from the 4-Year Review of the Spanish National Transport Plan
APARICIO, Angel

performance, there is an almost irresistible trend to focus policy-making on investments, rather than management. This also means that business-as-usual solutions are more likely to survive through time, and that reform processes will be more likely to fail.

There seems to be some kind of missing link from theory to practice, which could help to explain why the transport sector has been trapped for many years in the contradiction of dedicating much time to discuss at the highest level paradigms such as integration or sustainable transport, while doing so little for their implementation. Institutional rules and organisations are probably the missing link, or at least a very relevant part of it. An EU Research Project (Stella, 2004, p.3, 8, 12) points out that movements towards sustainable transport are influenced by institutional conditions, and identifies a number of critical questions, such as management of intergovernmental relations, interest groups, or goal definitions of public organizations. Furthermore, institutional changes and regulatory reform, when implemented, seems to have positive effects on efficiency, but not necessarily on the environment.

Current strategies to reform governance in the transport sector can be structured under three major categories:

- A focus on performance, which tries to develop more accountable and objective-driven organisations, although from different ideological backgrounds: from a neo-liberal, economic-dominated perspective (narrowed to economic indicators and monitoring to a broader, integrated and environmentally-led perspective (like the European Union's Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism, TERM). In the first case, the focus of governance reform leads to extensive outsourcing of MoT's activities, and involvement of the private sector (public-private partnerships, PPPs); in the second case, to increase pressure on the organisation to give response to perceived environmental (and other) challenges.
- A focus on management within the Ministry's organisation, typically by adapting management tools from the private sector so that integration of sustainability objectives within transport can be translated into the routine activity of a complex public organisation such as Ministries of Transport and their agencies.
- A focus on consensus-building, by adapting alternative participatory, which have proved successful at the local and metropolitan levels to the more abstract context of transport planning at the national level.

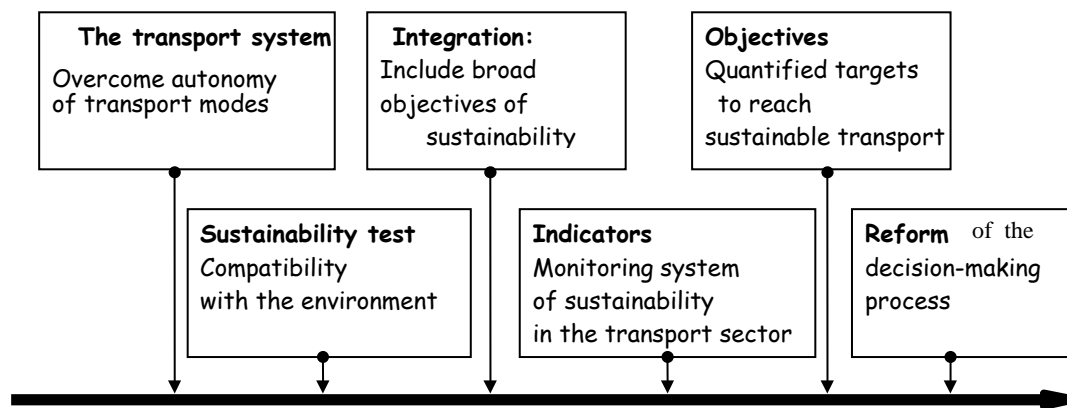
While the two first approaches are being widely used in Europe, progress in public involvement in national transport planning has been limited. Among recent processes, the French national debate organised within the "*Grenelle de l'Environnement*" process is probably the most innovative experience, although transport was only one of the many sectors under discussion, and the outcome of the process focused on policy reform, with little- if any- attention to the decision-making process.

These three trends can be considered as complementary within a reform process. This was the perspective taken in the preparation of the Spanish National Plan (PEIT) in 2004-5.

Building upon different European experiences, the PEIT experience has shown both, the potential and the difficulties of governance reform in the transport sector at the national level. To better understand the Spanish strategy for reform, the evolution of the three strategies in Europe are analysed in some detail, before describing the results achieved in the case of the PEIT.

Institutional integration and environmental management

The concept of integration of environmental objectives within transport policies has been at the core of a continuing, and sometimes difficult, process of reform of transport policy within the European Union (EU) and its Member States (Figure 1). The so-called Cardiff Process, launched by the Heads of State and Government of the EU in 1998, started a precise strategy of integration in various sectors, including transport. Since then, various documents have been produced by the EU institutions for reviewing the process. In 2006, the integration strategy for the transport sector was subsumed within the renewed strategy for Sustainable Development (European Commission, 2006) gives more attention to the achievement of quantitative and qualitative targets on key challenges- such as greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on the global side, and local transport impacts (i.e. air quality- mainly particulate emissions for the use of diesel, congestion and noise) than to institutional issues.



Restrictions to the autonomy of transport policy

FIGURE 1: Key elements of the integration process in the transport sector in Europe

One basic problem seems to be that considerations about integration are difficult to be linked in practice to day-to-day transport policy development. Many EU countries and organizations are evolving from a position in which transport contribution to economic growth was overvalued, to a more balanced vision, in which social and natural capital are given more weight, and in which strong involvement from different actors and the public at large, is seen as a key element of modern governance. In this move, most EU countries are still at an intermediate step: sustainability is increasingly important, but it does not dominate decision making. At this stage, policy makers are conscious of the relevance of including such elements as pricing, land use- transport coordination and some kind of limits to individual mobility, but are reluctant to adopt measures that are perceived as scarcely popular.

Action at the institutional level has been more fruitful in some Member States. Finland, for example, initiated an ambitious institutional reform process in the transport sector in 1999, inspired in the Cardiff Process. The Finnish experience stresses the need for defining a long-term, strategic vision for the transport sector, monitoring progress, implementing an incremental, but formalized approach for the reform of regulations and bureaucracy, and involving staff as much as possible, through a continuing capacity-building or "learning" process (Valli, 2002).

On the other hand, it is necessary to create management mechanisms, which will facilitate the contribution of the different organisations to the long term vision. In the Finish case, the use of environmental management systems within the different transport organisations has served as a useful tool for this. A 2005 review of results (Valli, 2005, p.34-35) found that *"building an EMS covering an administrative sector is time consuming, but **long term commitment to the work is essential** to ensure that the work of different actors can be brought together into a functioning, realistic entity and that the undertaken environmental work is efficiently done"*, and that the success of the approach is based upon the establishment of *"**well functioning cooperative networks** that support information exchange and allow environmental issues to be considered from many angles and viewpoints"*.

Performance-oriented management: the consolidation of indicators

As objective measures of any process, indicators also play a key role in transport: they should monitor progress towards a more sustainable transport system, and they should help decision makers to benchmark policies, and to communicate progress to stakeholders and the public at large.

The use of measures to monitor the performance of the transport system, and to support decision-making, is a relatively new phenomenon in the transportation realm. These measures refer primarily to the performance of the transport system (congestion, speeds, mobility options...) and they usually do not refer to such things as environmental quality, economic development or social inclusion (Amekudzi, 2005).

The use of indicators in transport planning and policy is probably linked initially to a narrow ambition of improving economic performance (see Healey, 2006, p. 23), and was focusing on simple performance measures (cost of services, rate of return of investments, etc). However, the inclusion of social and environmental indicators represented a major turning point. What is interesting about environmental indicators is that they try to broaden the scope of narrow economic/neo-liberal analysis while respecting the rational/technical approach to policy making. This raises concerns from some policy-makers and stakeholders: on the one side, because their concerns/interests are positioned in a weaker condition (or simply because they are forced to leave well-chartered waters to face "the unknown"); on the other hand, because it reinforces the role of technical information in the debate, further weakening other levels of communication, linked to values, ethics, or aesthetics, which are quite important in public policies and in politics.

Ups and Downs of Transport Governance Reform: Lessons from the 4-Year Review of the Spanish National Transport Plan
APARICIO, Angel

The use of performance measures is usually associated with the development of long-term transport strategies, plans or visions, and allows regular monitoring of the system. Monitoring provides a feedback loop to the definition of goals and objectives: poor system performance may lead to further analysis and revision of the chosen strategy, or even to the identification of new goals and objectives.

Nevertheless, the actual influence of indicators in decision-making remains, at best, modest. Attempts to put indicators at the centre of the political debate failed after 2002, when a report from the European Environmental Agency (EEA) was presented to a Joint Council of the EU Ministers of Environment and Transport. That was supposed to be the starting point of a biennial indicator-based revision of the EU transport policy, but the experience yielded modest results and was not resumed since then.

Many reasons have been pointed out to justify why indicators are not playing the cornerstone role that the EU integration strategy reserved to them: lack of reliability of basic data, badly identified relationships between indicator trends and transport policies and decisions, lack of accountability of transport policy-makers and, last but not least, the fact that indicators' trends more often than not suggest the urgent need to adopt radical policies, which decision-makers perceive as unacceptable for a majority of the public.

Significant efforts have been made to develop sets of indicators as key elements for transport monitoring and as support to decision-making and policy assessment in the last ten years. However, existing experiences show that a long way still remains ahead for indicators to become a cornerstone of the transport decision-making process. Some of the reasons, which may explain why monitoring systems have fallen short of initial expectations, may be: lack of reliable data, lack of an adequate environment for transport planning and decision making and inability of many indicators to identify incremental progress (Aparicio, 2008).

Some ways of improving the quality of the monitoring system have been identified. The use of alternative, qualitative, data collection systems seems to be a promising strategy, and has been used- with a limited scope- by the EU's TERM system in the past. From the point of view of decision makers, the development of less ambitious, more specific indicators, focused on concrete problems and clearly linked in their values to the implementation of policy measures in the short-to-medium term would probably give more credit and attention to monitoring systems.

Monitoring systems are essential tools for empowering stakeholders and the public at large in the transport planning process. From this perspective, they should be integrated within a strategy to develop more collaborative planning processes, and to increase transparency and accountability of transport policies, particularly at the national and trans-national levels, where transport administrations largely remain seen as opaque organizations.

From public involvement to collaborative planning

The discussion of proper planning practices in the 1970s presented public participation as an alternative to the technocracy associated to "rational planning". There was a growing interest in social, interactive processes, which would complement the limitations of the traditional idea that "value" and "knowledge" have objective existence only in the external world, to be discovered by scientific inquiry. The ways of thinking, ways of valuing and ways of acting linked to public policies could be actively constructed by participants (Healey, 2006, p.27 and 29). This intellectual wave in the planning theory has driven to the concept of collaborative planning.

While collaborative planning was consolidating in local planning processes (city and regional planning), transport planning, particularly at the national level, was progressively dominated by economists, within a competitive, neo-liberal theorisation of the process. This approach was focusing in the *ex ante* evaluation of policies and the *ex post* assessment of performance over time based on economic indicators, as earlier discussed.

Healey argues, following Habermas and Forester, that in the public debate, technical reasoning has "crowded out" equally legitimate emotional and ethical reasoning and, as a result, the public debate lacks the resources with which we can understand each other, and public policy is severed from people's daily lives. We must construct our ways of validating claims, identifying priorities, and developing strategies for collective action through interaction, through debate. In this conception, **planning becomes a process of interactive collective reasoning**. (Healey, 2006: 52 and 53).

This is a trend followed in the local context, in the practices of collaborative planning: addressing planning through the building up of structures of cooperation among individuals, which should be able to establish a network of shared knowledge based on common sense and practical consciousness; an approach to public policies which attempts to respect individuality while establishing a place to debate, and manage collective concerns in an inclusive manner.

Innes, with a more practical approach, focuses on the necessity of using negotiation and mediation techniques, in those cases where it is really needed, rather than as a general approach to planning practices. While highlighting the virtues of consensus building in planning practice, she suggests that, as a time consuming and highly skilled process, these practices should be limited to "*situations of uncertainty and controversy where all stakeholders have incentives to come to the table*". (Innes, 2004).

This approach could also be valid for national transport planning. The question is not whether a collaborative approach should be used, but rather under which conditions that approach is feasible and yields better results, compared to conventional practices. The fact is that the dominance of the rational/technical approach to transport policies could be more apparent than real, as the actual decision-making process is much more open and non-formalised than it seems to be. The real problem would then be that the current context favours some

players, which would combine a pseudo-rational approach with open access to decision-makers in a non-formalised context, which prevents other stakeholders from entering the game. Some questions emerge here:

- The individuals and their involvement. Contrary to the situation in local planning or local governance, it would be difficult to identify the kind of "shared knowledge" that a collaborative process could bring out in the transport sector.
- The channels to build up an "interactive collective reasoning". What kind of interaction can be established, so that emotive-aesthetical and moral-ethical reasoning can play a balanced role together with technical/rational reasoning?
- Following Innes, how to establish fairer rules for the game?

Planning at the national level seems dramatically far away from the individual's interests and experience, posing a challenging problem of **scale**. This probably requests the emergence of intermediate structures/institutions, which can articulate the individuals' views into coherent claims and requests. For example, at the European context, the transport planning and policy process is filled with numerous groups of experts and stakeholders at many levels, including representatives at the local and regional level, special interest groups, professionals and the academia.

The fact is that, at any level, participation is articulated through the intervention of individuals, playing different roles as stakeholders, and that these individuals keep acting that role during extensive periods of time (as representatives of institutions or interests). Beyond economic interests, there are also values and emotions involved in the interaction, and as a result, there is the possibility of building cooperative frameworks also at the national level. Consensus-building is that a useful tool at any scale of planning, and the questions at stake justify to try to play the game. The real question to address in national transport planning would rather be on which grounds of legitimacy stakeholders should be identified as such, and allowed to enter the process. The next question is how to conduct the process, as many dimensions are at stake: political balances, territorial stress, economic-ecological interests/concerns ... A final question is whether the purpose of the process is to reach agreements (as Innes suggests) or rather to try to approach the "**collective knowledge**" mentioned by Habermas, and to dramatically enrich the information available for planners and decision makers.

TRANSPORT GOVERNANCE REFORM IN SPAIN

A combined approach

The Spanish Government approved its new Transport Plan (Plan Estratégico de Infraestructuras y Transporte, PEIT 2005-2020) in July 2005. Beyond its proposals for infrastructure construction and regulation of services, this transport strategy claimed to be a road-map to in-depth reform of the transport sector, pushing to align it with the objectives of sustainability, i.e.:

Ups and Downs of Transport Governance Reform: Lessons from the 4-Year Review of the Spanish National Transport Plan
APARICIO, Angel

- To enhance the system's efficiency.
- To enhance social and territorial cohesion.
- To contribute to the general objectives of the environmental policy, such as greenhouse gas emissions, air quality and land occupation and fragmentation.
- To promote economic development and competitiveness.

As a key element to attain these objectives, the PEIT 2005-2020 highlighted the need to incrementally reform transport policy-making and management, so that consensus could be built on the need to move the focus of transport policy from infrastructure development to sustainable management of the existing transport system. This strategy would reinforce the planning system through a combination of the three components discussed above:

- A system of indicators, focusing on the monitoring of the PEIT objectives.
- Environmental management, to increase the involvement and commitment of technical services and agencies with the vision of sustainability.
- Strengthening participation and interaction with stakeholders, in order to gain a more robust "common knowledge".

The monitoring system based on indicators (SISTIA)

The Spanish monitoring system, named SISTIA (Sistema de Indicadores de Seguimiento del Transporte y su Impacto Ambiental), is built upon 41 indicators, which cover most of the objectives of PEIT 2020. Indicators have been chosen trying to find a sometimes difficult compromise between their accuracy to measure progress towards each objective, and data availability and reliability. In the last monitoring report, issued at the end of 2009 (Ministerio de Fomento, 2009), major attention has been given to those areas where the Strategic Environmental Assessment of PEIT identified higher uncertainties: effects on biodiversity and the fragmentation of natural spaces, the impact in terms of noise, waste and soil and water pollution, accessibility, economic effects, and a number of social factors external to transport.

The preparation process of SISTIA showed in practice the difficulties and barriers mentioned above for the development of coherent monitoring systems, similar to those identified in the TERM experience:

- Limited quality of the basic data to build the indicator: this requires an in-depth analysis of transport statistics, and corrections to data collection protocols. In some cases, the influence of poorly collected data (for example, vehicle occupancy for freight and passengers) in the reliability of the system may be dramatic.
- Strategic, outcome indicators are valuable to assess the transport system performance, but they change at a slow path, and are hardly attractive to decision-makers, who do not see how the achievements of their term-in-office initiatives will be reflected. It is necessary to identify indicators which, keeping coherence with long-term objectives, are able to track short and medium-term trends.
- The potential of concrete policy measures to modify indicators' trends must be analyzed and, if possible, forecasted in advance.

Ups and Downs of Transport Governance Reform: Lessons from the 4-Year Review of the Spanish National Transport Plan
 APARICIO, Angel

These limitations were faced by establishing a short set of “core indicators” within SISTIA (table 1). In these core indicators, it should be easier to identify the potential impact of the action of the various stakeholders through time. While keeping an eye on long-term strategic objectives, these core indicators should be able to perceive short and medium-term changes.

Table I – PEIT 2020 major objectives, and related core indicators of SISTIA

Objectives of PEIT 2020	Indicators
Setting formalized information and participation channels and encourage public debate on transport issues	Number and quality of established channels
Increase participation of environmentally-friendly modes in freight and passenger modal split	Modal split passengers (surface public transport) Modal split freight (rail and maritime transport)
Cut by 50% the number of deaths on trunk roads by 2020	Road safety: number of deaths
Safety in professional transport activities	Number of professional accidents
Private car transport demand (Stabilization by 2012 at 2005 levels)	Vehicle-km by private car
Accessibility of vulnerable groups to key places by public transport	Accessibility index (percentage of vulnerable population having full access to designated places)
Internalising external transport costs	Internal/external costs ratio (road transport)
Territorial cohesion	Participation of public transport modes in modal split among major metropolitan areas.
Stabilization of GHG emissions	Transport GHG emissions
Fragmentation of natural (sensitive) areas	Fragmentation index
Integration of Spanish cities within the EU urban system	Direct air services among main Spanish and EU metropolitan areas
Cross-border integration	Connections with neighbouring urban areas in Portugal and South of France
Improve energy efficiency	Energy consumption per ton-km, pass-km.

The monitoring system attempts to cover at the same time the demand of transport decision-makers (in terms of identifying their decisions' impacts) and those of strategic planners and the society (to identify the outcome or environmental performance of the transport sector). In practical terms, the first monitoring report (Ministerio de Fomento, 2009) mainly focused on the following indicators:

- Strength of the collaborative planning process (channels of information and discussion among the MoT, key stakeholders and the public).

Ups and Downs of Transport Governance Reform: Lessons from the 4-Year Review of the Spanish National Transport Plan
APARICIO, Angel

- Development of alternative transport supply services (availability of competitive, environmentally efficient interurban public transport services among cities).
- Changes in users' behaviour and mobility attitudes (bear costs vs. total costs; interurban vs. urban mobility).
- Evolution of transport demand (modal split for interurban travel; transport intensity for passengers (annual km per capita) and freight (ton/GDP)).
- Environmental performance of the transport sector: GHG, NO_x, fragmentation of environmentally sensitive areas.

Reinforcing interaction: towards collaborative planning?

Actions for the reform of the transport administration have proved to be difficult to gather consensus, and this is probably a most challenging area of action. The Ministry of Transport initially envisioned a set of mechanisms to facilitate interaction with stakeholders:

- Developing and reinforcing a new hierarchy of plans, from the Strategic plan down to modal plans, corridor analysis and project definition, in parallel to the European system of environmental assessment. The new system included provisions for monitoring and revision. This should facilitate the involvement of a wider range of stakeholders, as planning moves down to more concrete questions. The general procedure was announced while launching the process and publishing the MoT's initial goals.
- Encouraging a more participatory environment, mainly by developing new mechanisms of information and monitoring to consolidate public involvement, transparency and accountability.
- Focusing at this stage in the participation of those stakeholders with a higher interest in long-term, strategic topics, while keeping the general public informed.

Interaction during the planning process was organised through the following mechanisms:

- Discussion of key transportation challenges (as identified by the technical MoT services in an initial document of diagnosis) within focus groups. The selected discussion themes included environmental goals in transportation, landscape and spatial development, economic development and transportation; development of intermodal systems for passengers and freight; sustainable urban mobility, and pricing. This procedure ended with a general meeting, with some 200 participants representing a wide array of stakeholders and interest.
- Frequent contacts with the media, presenting and justifying the planning approach, including a half day meeting of the technical team with a wide audience of journalists.
- Bilateral meetings with the regional transportation administrations in the country followed by a general discussion when the draft document was completed, before launching it for public enquiry.
- Formal consultation procedure.

The public involvement strategy faced significant constraints, mainly derived from lack of previous experience. In particular, it was clear that the identification of particular social needs was not extensive enough to guarantee an adequate integration of social equity concerns

Ups and Downs of Transport Governance Reform: Lessons from the 4-Year Review of the Spanish National Transport Plan
APARICIO, Angel

within the national transport policy. Furthermore, early involvement and effective participation of stakeholders was biased in favour of transportation and academic elites due to the channels chosen for dissemination, the structure and format of the panels, and the contents of the documents. Finally, consensus building, although intensive, was penalized and conditioned by a tight and rigid schedule for the approval process, and was probably critical in the opposition of some stakeholders (mainly conservationist groups) to key aspects of the plan.

In spite of these and other constraints, public involvement efforts succeeded in giving key contributions to the plan's contents, increase its legitimacy, and recover long-term planning as a key element of transport policy. For example, the different meetings and workshops offered an interesting consensus about the need for a new paradigm based on sustainable principles, although coupled with a high degree of scepticism about the viability of attaining long-term radical change. In this sense:

- The different meetings and workshops, although dominated by technical discussions, showed an overwhelming consensus in the need to radically remake the transport policy paradigm, replacing the focus from infrastructure investments (and how to finance growing needs) to a balanced pack of reform of existing regulations, demand management measures and focused investments to make intermodality work in practice. That consensus also included the controversial point of making national government more visible in local transport policies.
- The consensus also extended to reckon that the new paradigm is extremely difficult to put into practice, even if it counts with broad support. The route towards sustainable transportation, as proposed by the Plan, was lacking precision and was- maybe consciously- hiding the most crucial points to the public.
- The new paradigm had to fight the suspicions of some relevant stakeholders, which wanted those infrastructure announced in the past years to be implemented. Most of those stakeholders have kept striving for increasing infrastructure investment levels in their regions or areas of interest.

The formal public consultation process mobilized more than 3,000 responses, although they could be grouped into a little more than 200 different contributions and views, as some responses were endorsed by many groups and individuals. Most of these claims referred to the need for additional (or anticipated) infrastructure provision in particular areas of the country, and challenged the "need for change" and the "turn towards greener transportation" proposals associated to the new plan.

Globally, this process showed that the whole decision-making procedure was probably not clear for a significant part of the participants. Communication gaps from the MoT were probably reinforced by the lack of precedents in public involvement for a strategic plan and the confusion about the level of definition adequate for strategic planning at the national level. Consensus building suffered from reduced time and resources, which make it difficult to disseminate contributions and encourage feedback.

Once the plan was approved, participation efforts clearly lost priority in the Ministry's agenda. While interaction with regional and local authorities was kept as a first priority for decision-makers, and the Plan itself proved useful in channelling this interaction and building up consensus, the effort to reach out other stakeholders faded away. As a result, the formalisation of a participatory National Transport Forum, acting as an advisory body to the Ministry made slow progress and, although in the legislative agenda, has not been set up yet. The circle of stakeholders has been reduced back to economic actors, whereas a similar level of communication has not been searched with more critical partners such as environmental NGOs.

Environmental management

Strategic planning is only a first step to improve the environmental performance of the transport sector and to drive it towards the objectives of sustainable development. In this sense, the PEIT had the ambition of establishing guidelines to the complex administrative structure of the Ministry of Transport, so that its agencies and organisations could initiate their own environmental- oriented programmes and measures.

A number of organisations and agencies within the realm of the Ministry of Transport are currently implementing- or improving their environmental management systems, and other measures. Some of them had already launched this process long before the Plan was approved, but the PEIT was also challenging for them as a step forward was required, including:

- Improvement of existing EMS, so that agencies should more clearly set targets and actions to achieve them.
- Setting up environmental performance objectives and targets within the area of activity of each agency, in line with those established by the Plan for the whole system.
- Identification of each organisation's interactions with other organisations, so that cooperation in the field of the environment could be reinforced within the Ministry's structure.
- Development of a monitoring system by each agency/organisation for managing environmental matters, which should be opened to verification by an independent source.

The current situation shows quite limited progress, and leadership from the MoT itself seems to be weak, if existent:

- Whereas the Ministry of Transport clearly identified its general environmental objectives, it was unable to mobilize all its organisations. Ironically, those organisations with more autonomy and longer tradition have probably been those, which have moved faster implementing their EMS, whereas those organisations, which remain within the core structure of the MoT, have not been able to put such a system in place yet.

- The quality of EMS is gaining interest from top managers, and is receiving increasingly more resources.
- Informal networks of those in charge of EMS at the different organisations of the MoT have emerged and consolidated, thus facilitating the flow of information and exchange of views on technical issues.
- However, this informal cooperation has not been coupled with a similar level of formalised cooperation among organisations, which is only at its infancy. This is in large part due to the increasing interest of societal groups in environmental performance; however, there is no evidence of strengthened cooperation with other organisations of the MoT.

ASSESSING THE OUTCOME OF GOVERNANCE REFORM

Governance reform is a complex, long-term process. While assessing results, care should be taken not to focus on the actual implementation of the initially foreseen measures, but on the intended outcome of the reform process, i.e., the achievement of a more sustainable transport system, fostered by the consolidation of a more favourable institutional structure. The process in Spain shows:

- High-level commitment is necessary to launch the process, but it does not suffice to sustain it in the long-run.
- Those organisations most imbedded within the MoT seem to be far more rigid and reluctant to change. Autonomy seems to facilitate the implementation of more modern, flexible management structures, which are more likely to implement innovative management tools such as EMS (at the very least, to adopt management practices from large organisations in the private sector).
- There is a strong tendency to limit EMS to the realm of activity of each organisation, losing the whole picture. This seems obvious while analyzing these organisations' environmental reports. In this respect, the planning system may help by introducing some kind of intermediate planning documents to bridge the gap between long-term, multimodal planning and short to medium-term modal management activities.
- The development of more general monitoring systems on sustainable development has acted as a powerful incentive for transport organisations to develop and improve their respective EMS. In this respect, the activities of the "Spanish Sustainability Observatory" (under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment), and the issue of regular monitoring reports by the Ministry of Transport have acted as a catalyst for those organisations to increase the quality of their own reports, and to gain attention and support from their top managers.

It is certainly more difficult to assess the outcomes of the on-going process. Certainly, EMS are facilitating (as it was the case of performance indicators) the development of richer management processes and attitudes: as information on the environment is becoming available to managers under standardized formats, they may be more prone to take this information on board at their decision-making. On the other hand, the inclusion of

sustainability as a top objective of the MoT's policy (and the maintenance in time of the Plan as the main reference for the MoT's action), has contributed to this. But to say that EMS have actually contributed to the development of more sustainable policies and the adoption of more environmentally-friendly solutions would be to go a little bit too far. Working tools and habits, and administrative procedures, which largely shape final measures and projects in large organisations such as the MoT are quite resilient, and there was not a proactive programme to change them.

CONCLUSIONS

Adequate technical information may dramatically contribute to improve interaction among stakeholders in all public policies, including transport. If adequately chosen, they bridge the gap between raw technical data and the diverse technical backgrounds of stakeholders, thus contributing to find a shared language to exchange views.

A long way remains ahead for indicators to become a cornerstone of the transport decision-making process. Indicators have been developed primarily to monitor and foster progress towards more sustainable transport systems. From this perspective, there seems to be no reasonable alternatives to their use. There is an urgent need to empower monitoring systems and to make them more useful for decision-makers and more influential in decision-taking.

Monitoring systems are essential tools for empowering stakeholders and the public at large in the transport planning process. From this perspective, they should be integrated within a strategy to develop more collaborative planning processes, and to increase transparency and accountability of transport policies, particularly at the national and trans-national levels, where transport administrations largely remain seen as opaque organizations.

Public involvement, even at a scarcely formalized level- increases the number of stakeholders and the interest of the general public in transportation policy choices, progressively moving the attention and the discussion from infrastructure investment and financing to a more complex and varied set of choices.

Although public involvement seems to facilitate consensus around the goals of sustainable mobility, the actual results may slow down the path for change. Public involvement stimulates the need for dialog and consensus among stakeholders. Ironically, the consensus building process is likely to strive for attracting the more conservative and influential groups rather than for gaining support for short-term implementation of radical measures.

Social diversity has proved to be difficult to address during public involvement in long-term planning for various reasons: lack of organization of the various affected groups; lack of visibility of the link about national transportation policies and local/community needs, and the general acceptance of the "general interest" or "social optimum" as the balanced meeting point to reach consensus.

There are significant prospects for making public involvement more influential in long-term transport planning, including at the national level. A more straightforward linking between

Ups and Downs of Transport Governance Reform: Lessons from the 4-Year Review of the Spanish National Transport Plan
APARICIO, Angel

general transport policy goals and stakeholders' daily interests, such as quality of service, environmental quality and access to development opportunities should empower the dialog among technicians, decision makers and the public, and should put additional pressure on the transport sector to gather further evidence and develop a better understanding about these complex links.

Sustainable transport has been a priority for many European policy-makers for more than two decades. However, the transport sector has proved to be particularly reluctant to reform, so that the institutional framework (rules and organisations) in the public sector seem to be a major barrier to move the transport system from a "business as usual" inertia towards sustainability.

Even if PEIT could initially have been considered as a promising step forward to make sustainable transport possible in Spain, this planning experience has also showed the methodological limits of the approach, mainly due to lack of previous experience, insufficiency in the development of new tools, and lack of data. New tools are urgently needed to better identify long-term objectives, and effective transport policies to attain them. Otherwise, classical planning tools (modelling, cost-benefit analysis, accessibility...) may gain a disproportionate importance during the decision-making process, due to its apparent "solidity" compared to less conventional tools, based on discussion panels and consensus-building techniques. Together with an urgent need to improve and refine the methodological approach, there are significant uncertainties and difficulties to bridge the gap between planning and implementation.

Institutional reform will probably remain as the main challenge for the future. The strength and consolidation of business as usual practices, the feeling that the organisation can be paralysed in the short term, the difficulty to identify effective framework mechanisms and the request of an additional and uncertain effort to the staff contribute to delay decisions in this field.

The implementation of Environmental Management Systems is an effective way of facilitating the reform of transport organisations within the Ministry of Transport. The Spanish experience shows that these systems need some degree of flexibility and autonomy within each organisation or agency, in order to be effective. Furthermore, it seems difficult to keep the needed support from the Ministry, so that the focus is maintained in the key strategic objectives of the plan.

Public involvement efforts contribute to change the strategy of lobbies and key institutional and social stakeholders. While they will try to benefit from the new opportunities of participation, and to attract the general public to their views, they will also be compelled to better justify their proposals and to replace "behind closed doors" practices by opened consensus-building processes.

Regular monitoring of goals attainment is a powerful tool to both, facilitate consensus, and keep public involvement alive. While decision-makers may be reluctant to adopt radical

Ups and Downs of Transport Governance Reform: Lessons from the 4-Year Review of the Spanish National Transport Plan

APARICIO, Angel

measures and adopt "business as usual" policies", the monitoring system periodically brings back to the table the long-term issues of sustainability.

In the case of Spain, the mixed results achieved thus far suggest that, in future, institutional reform should be supported by more strategic, multi-year targets for each agency or Directorate monitored in the framework of Environmental Management Systems, so that the general objectives of the National Plan could be better internalised by these executive organisations. Institutional dialogue should keep moving towards more strategic and ambitious targets, including quality of transport services, and environmental targets such as emission reduction as major elements of any agreement between the MoT and its regional and local counterparts. Last but not least, the public image of the MoT as an effective provider of sustainable mobility should more decisively replace its current image as infrastructure provider.

Governance reform in the transport sector, focused on a vision of sustainable mobility for policy-making seems possible, and may greatly benefit from instruments developed in other management areas, such as indicators and Environmental Management Systems, provided that a link is clearly established among these instruments and the strategic goals of the Government's transport policy. Sustainability will need a proactive consensus-building environment, and the experience of collaborative planning at the local level should serve as a useful reference to create the channels for interaction among the key stakeholders, and to increasingly gain the interest of the various social groups, which are affected by transport decisions.

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