

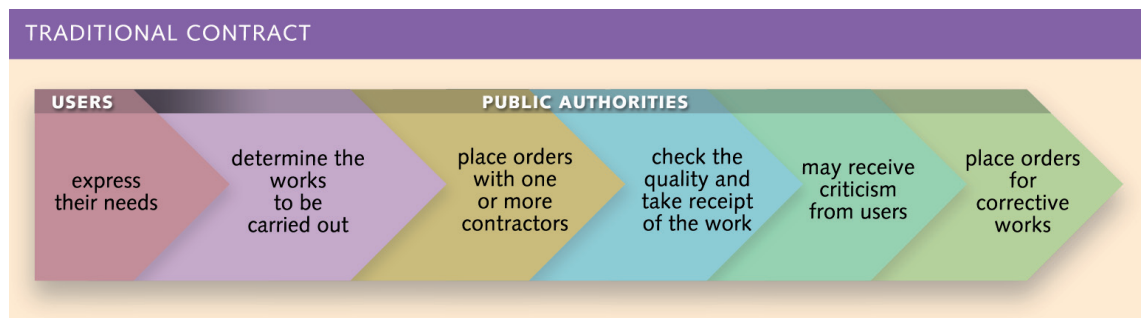
Users and Community Perspectives

The role of users, for a PPP, is not the same as in a traditional contract. The consequences of this should be examined.

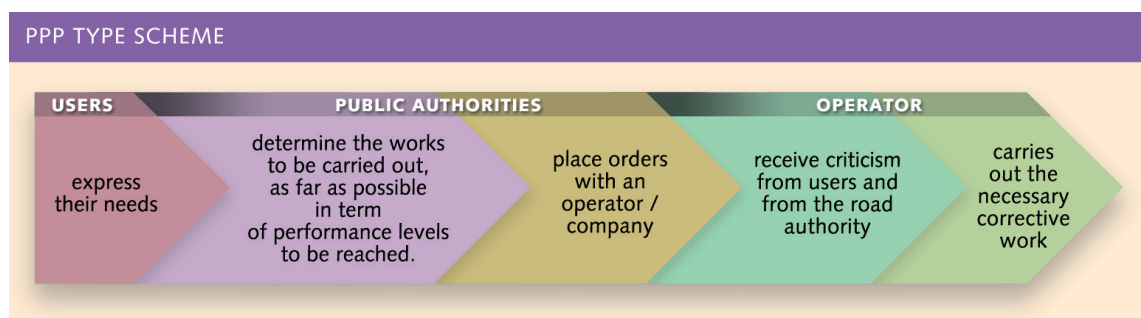
The role of users

As is widely illustrated in many publications, there exists throughout the world a strong tendency to encourage road users to participate in determining how road policy is to be orientated. The role of the users concerned here is of a slightly different nature and results from the PPP philosophy itself.

In a traditional contract, the chain of action is as follows (schematically):



In a PPP type scheme, ideally the sequence of action should, as far as possible, be as follows:



In this second scheme, the road authorities are responsible for organizing free expression of opinion by the public/users (complaints books, audits, etc).

This is one of the objectives of the regulation (technical aspects)

User participation

Road users may be willing to pay for roads, but only if their money is actually spent on roads and the work is executed efficiently. Road users involved in the management of roads generally press for the introduction of sound business practices to ensure that their

constituents get value for money from road spending. This will encourage the highway authority to use resources efficiently and prevent it from abusing its monopoly position.

Road users have an important role to play in the following areas:

- facilitating public acceptance of periodic increases in road user charges;
- supporting reasonable attempts to prevent encroachment and control of land use along the road right of way;
- raising awareness about the importance of axle weight regulations and helping to enforce them
- raising public awareness of road safety and environmental impacts and helping to enforce them;
- encouraging better vehicle maintenance;
- strengthening the overall management of roads;
- facilitating community participation in the planning and implementation of works to encourage community ownership of roads;
- in actively participating in a representative management board and other key road sector committees.



Commercial Management and Financing of Roads - I. Heggie and P. Vickers
World Bank Technical Paper N°409 - 1998 page 43.

Who are the Road Users?

Organizations Representing Road Users: Most countries possess a number of such organizations that are influential at different levels of government. These include:

- National, economy-wide organizations: chambers of commerce, farming organizations, consultant organizations, engineering societies, pedestrian and cycling lobbies, consumer groups, and women’s organizations;
- National transport sector organizations: transport institutions, transport training institutes, transport consultative councils, and transport workers unions; National road sector organizations: road associations (or federations or societies), motoring organizations, trucking associations, and national organizations representing bus owners and operators.
- Local transport organizations: taxi associations and local organizations representing bus owners and operators.
- Local community organizations: village associations, parent-teacher associations, and other local community groups.

Organizations representing car drivers and public transport operators are less common in developing and transition economies. Many of these countries have no formal mechanism for carrying on a dialogue with these potentially influential road users, cannot effectively involve them in discussions on road management, or cannot work with them to confront

other road sector issues. Establishing and strengthening such organizations should be an important part of any agenda for improving the management and financing of roads.

Expectations of Road User Involvement

Once road users are convinced that the government is trying to serve their needs, they will support a whole range of initiatives designed to improve the road sector. Road users also emphasize technical considerations over narrow political interests and help to depoliticize the setting of priorities. Politicians, both national and local, help to set road sector priorities, while the road users strengthen governance and provide access to private sector commercial know-how.

A genuine partnership between road users and the government can take place; there are numerous examples of road agencies and road users working together to solve common problems. Several topics can be tackled through this common involvement:

- **Road Financing and Management:** road users can take part in road management and financing by participating in management committees of road funds, road boards and other comparable structures (see examples below). They can help to better address some important issues in connection with the impact of road policies on the quality of the infrastructure. Service level specifications, for example, for successful implementation, should be based on consultation between all parties -- client, manager, service provider, ratepayers, road users and other stakeholders.
- **Regulations:** e.g. to improve road safety and control overloading. Road Users can be consulted about changing regulations, particularly those relating to vehicle weights and dimensions, and enforcement of axle-weight standards.

The active participation of road users is requested to help win public support for secure and stable road funding. Support for more road funding through a user-pay or fee-for-service arrangement requires that steps be taken to ensure that road agencies do not operate as public monopolies and that no more is spent on roads than the country can afford. It is thus critical to involve road users in road management -a precondition for getting them to pay for roads willingly.

Despite the advantages of having road users participating in road management, some conflicts may arise: When a country is trying to restructure its road management, the community representatives (normally local government) maintain that road corridors are an integral part of land use management and utilized by many utility operators in addition to the road manager. Road users, on the other hand, are more interested in congestion free safe travel on smooth roads. Any road reform must recognize these differences of opinion, and accommodate both in the final design.



Managing Performance of a Highway System in the 21st Century.
R. J. Dunlop/PIARC XXI World Road Congress (Kuala Lumpur)1999, page 5

Ways of Involving Road Users

Two different levels must be distinguished:

- **the project level:** in the process leading to the implementation of road improvement projects, construction of new infrastructure or other major road programs, the opinion of future users has to be sought through specific surveys or dedicated meetings. This is a specific step in the project planning;
- **the overall road management level:** here, the objective is to identify an appropriate institutional mechanism for building a permanent public-private partnership between the politicians who represent the consultative councils, and the road users.

Road users can be easily involved through constituencies, which link the representative individual with large, assertive groups that have compelling interests in well-managed roads.

Road users can be involved in an advisory or executive capacity, in overall management, in management of parts of the road network. Most countries invite outsiders to join steering committees that guide consultants working on the road sector, or to sit on specialized advisory boards that review departmental research programs, training programs, road design standards, and other technical matters.

For example, in England there is a Road Users Committee that facilitates dialogue between the Highways Agency and representatives of both motorized and non motorized road users.

Involvement of Road Users in Road Management Boards: At the national and regional level, road users may participate in the management of road management boards. Some of these are executive boards that manage the main road network, such as the boards of FinnRA and the Ghana Highway Authority; others manage the road fund, such as the Ghana Road Fund Board, the board of the Malawi National Roads Authority, the Yemen Road Fund Board and the Zambia National Roads Board (in Sub-Saharan Africa, 12 road fund boards out of a total of 25 have a majority private sector representation, source: RMI matrix, SSATP). Still others merely advise the appropriate minister on road management and financing, such as the Japan Road Council and the U.K. Highway Agency Advisory Board.



Commercial Management and Financing of Roads - I. Heggie, P. Vickers
World Bank Technical Paper N°409 - 1998 page 64-66.

Indirect influence of road users on PPP's; the case of contracting procedures: The needs of road users can indirectly be taken into account when defining the terms of a contract with a private provider of services. In the example below, the CREMA ((Contrato de Recuperación y Mantenimiento) system focuses on road users' satisfaction and on Contractor's performance to achieve a minimum level of service, rather than on inputs, i.e., quantity activity and unit rates compliance.



Area-wide Performance-Based Rehabilitation and Maintenance Contracts for Low-Volume Roads (Seventh International Conference on Low-Volume Roads).
G. Cabana, G. Liautaud and A. Faiz. World Bank, 1999 page 14.

Example: The South African Roads Board Experience

The South African Roads Board had an interesting history. First established in 1935, it started off with six members, four representing the provinces and two appointed by the Minister of the Interior. Although the Board was meant to function autonomously with the provincial representatives acting “in the national interest,” it quickly lapsed into gridlock because the provinces expected their representatives only to promote their own local interests. In 1948 the Board was therefore replaced by another composed exclusively of civil servants. This worked better, although it led to a large and controversial freeway program and to the accumulation of a large surplus in the road fund which led to the suspension of the fuel levy in 1988.

Following the suspension of the fuel levy, the board was expanded to include representatives of local government, the engineering profession, road users, and industry and commerce. This board functioned well, initiating a successful toll road program and, in 1995, membership was further widened to comprise three members from central government, three from local government, five from the private sector and one from academia.

However, government reforms introduced from 1996, which sought to reign in public spending and increase its accountability, resulted in the dissolving of the South African Roads Board in April 1998. Its responsibilities were transferred to the newly-created South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL or NRA), an independent statutory company operating along commercial lines and at arm’s length from Government. The purpose of the company, which is registered in terms of the Companies Act – with the Minister of Transport as the sole shareholder – is to maintain and develop South Africa’s expanding national road network (currently 16,150 km).

The status of SANRAL as a road agency is intended to better enable constructive engagement with the private sector and the seeking of alternative sources of finance for road infrastructure to reduce dependence on tax-based revenues.

The Board of SANRAL consists of eight members of whom seven are appointed by the Minister of Transport. The eighth member is the Chief Executive Officer, by virtue of holding that office.



The South African National Roads Agency Limited and National Roads Act, 1998