



Feasibility Study Development of a Provincial and District Based Transport and Communication System for Health, Tete, Mozambique

Project Location: Tete, Mozambique

Project Start Date: September 2007

Project Duration: 2 months

Introduction:

The Department of Health in Tete Province, Mozambique, has the demanding task of delivering health services to a sparsely dispersed population in an area lacking sufficient transport infrastructure. An efficiently managed and well maintained Department of Health fleet is not only essential for effective health service delivery but is also a matter of life and death for the 1.6 million inhabitants of Tete province who rely on these vehicles for provision of their basic medical needs.

The Department of Health in Tete Province has a fleet comprising of approximately 200 vehicles responsible for delivering health services across a geographical area of 82,625 Square km (approximately the same size as the entire land mass of Malawi). The geography of Tete Province, in particular the location of the Cahora Bassa Lake serves to complicate and extend supply routes to a number of district health centres. To emphasise the extent of the problem, one of the health centres in Zumbo is a 14 hour drive from the Provincial capital, 12 hours of that route being along unsealed dirt roads. Under these conditions the effective maintenance and repair of the vehicle fleet is of paramount importance to sustain health service delivery, as is the proficient scheduling and regulation of all aspects of fleet management.

Commencing in September 2007, a 10 week Transaid study funded by Danida aimed to complete the following activities:

- Creation of a full vehicle inventory for all 12 districts including specific on site vehicle inspection data to determine current fleet composition and condition
- Execution of Operational Assessments within existing health facilities to ascertain current transport management practices
- An evaluation of both in-house and private maintenance facilities and practices
- Facilitation of a two day stakeholder workshop focusing on the findings of the study and the development of a draft transport policy
- Review of district supply routes including an assessment of roads by inspection and also interview with local informants and road users
- An evaluation of existing policies related to the operational, financial and human resource aspects of transport management within the Ministry of Health

Methodology:

During the 10 week study, a Transaid representative from Wincanton Logistics in the UK, in collaboration with a consultant and translator, conducted a series of activities requiring many weeks of travel to all 12 district health offices and 4 hospitals within the province as well as the Provincial Health Directorate and Training Centre both found in Tete City.

Prior to the commencement of the study, a fleet questionnaire was distributed to health offices throughout the province to allow the collation of a full vehicle inventory preceding the commencement of physical vehicle inspections. One of the key outputs of his piece of work was a comprehensive and detailed vehicle inventory.

During the study a schedule of visits to district health offices was established allowing for the completion of onsite vehicle inspections, operational assessments of existing transport management procedures and interviews with key stakeholders at each location. These visits allowed the consultants to assess each sites individual processes and procedures for managing transport with specific regards to the following focus areas:

- Situational Analysis-
 - This section of the Operational Assessment dealt with vehicle inventories and replacement plans
 - It found that the main areas of concern were vehicle vision (a knowledge and understanding of transport that produces clear data driven information on how many vehicles and what type of vehicles should be used) and replacement plans (which are important so that no locations have vehicles past their economic point of replacement and there is a plan in place so service delivery does not suffer)
- Policy-
 - This dealt with documentation, understanding, implementation and contents
 - The largest loss was due to lack of understanding and knowledge of local and national transport policy
- Operational Management-
 - This includes fuel control, logbooks and planning. Good Operational Management sustains and increases cost effectiveness and service delivery
 - A detailed and systematic questionnaire was completed at each location during the consultancy to ensure statistically consistent and objective information
- Fleet Management-
 - This is the management of a vehicle from the very start to the very end of the vehicles life in service.

This covers specification, procurement, maintenance, replacement and disposal.

- Bicycles, motorbikes, buses, mini buses and trucks are all used in the delivery of the health service in Tete Province
- The fleet was largely dominated by Toyota vehicles and it was recommended that the inclusion of other makes of motor vehicle should be considered in order to increase competitiveness and control when putting out tenders for new vehicles
- It was also advised that four stoke engines replace the two stoke engines
- Management Information-
 - This dealt with data analysis, communication and information utilisation
 - The areas that caused the most mark loss were documentation, data analysis and information utilisation
- Human Resources & Organisation-
 - This dealt with structure, job description, training and career turnover
 - It was apparent that there was a lack of specific transport training for personnel in charge of transport

This series of activities enabled the consultants to produce a holistic report spanning all facets of the transport operation detailing specific recommendations to optimise the efficiency of the fleet

Outcomes:

The report that was produced as a result of this study was the focal point for a two day workshop held with staff from every district office in attendance. A series of presentations firstly provided the audience with a basic understanding of the key concepts of efficient transport management. From this starting point the workshop moved to discuss and dissect the findings of the report, before analysing the recommendations and looking at the practical interventions which had been proposed. The workshop was productive; along with feedback being obtained regarding the report's findings there was also an opportunity to develop a draft policy with the stakeholders which will serve as a base document from which a final version can be developed in time.

Conclusion:

The feedback from district health staff during the workshop was very positive and it is hoped that this momentum towards change will continue hand in hand with support from senior management. If the recommended interventions are made allowing transport to be managed more efficiently ongoing the results will be lower operational transport costs, greater fleet efficiency, and ultimately improved service delivery to the citizens of Tete Province.

Tools Utilised: Feasibility Study Development of a Provincial and District Based Transport and Communication System for Health, Tete, Mozambique and <http://www.transaid.org/projects/mozambique,-fleet-assessment-and-transport-analysis,-department-of-health,-tete-province---september-2007>

Partners: Department of Health -Tete Province – Mozambique, Danida, Wincanton

About Transaid:

Transaid is an international UK development charity that aims to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods across Africa and the developing world through creating better transport. Transaid was founded by Save the Children and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. Our Patron is HRH The Princess Royal. Transaid specializes in the following:

- Building the capacity of public health authorities to provide effective, safe and cost efficient transport management systems to promote equitable access to primary health care services.
- Developing and improving logistics and supply chain systems to enhance the delivery of medicines, equipment and relief services to vulnerable communities.
- Promoting effective partnerships to support and enhance community participation in developing sustainable transport solutions in rural areas.
- Developing and delivering transport and logistics training and qualifications for public and private sector operators.

Transaid has the capacity and reach to lead projects throughout the developing world, but is equally capable of providing niche technical assistance to large scale health systems strengthening projects. Transaid maintains strong relationships with a number of leading international organizations including donor agencies such as DfID, DANIDA and USAID, and implementing organizations such as Health Partners International, Options Consulting, John Snow Inc. and Management Sciences for Health.

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