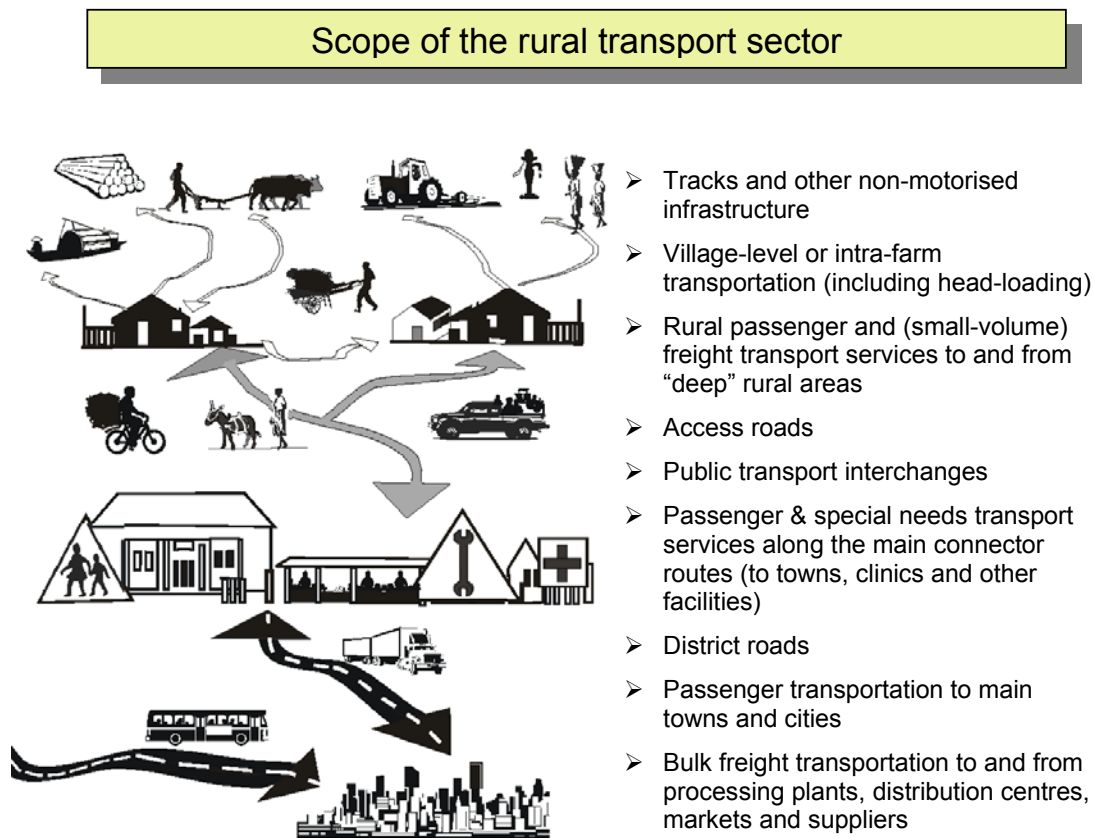


Rural transport

Until recently, most developing country governments and aid donors believed that building comparatively high standard rural access/feeder roads was the most effective way of addressing rural transport problems. While it is true that better road access may well be critical to improving rural transport, there is now increasing recognition that a much wider perspective should be adopted. The most effective solution to the rural transport problem will involve a combination of policies and measures designed to address the wide range of constraints to access and mobility that are commonly experienced in rural areas of developing countries.

Rural Travel and Transport Program 2001

As indicated by the following diagram, the scope of the rural transport sector extends from tracks and transportation (such as head-loading) in and around farms and villages, to the transportation of passengers and freight to and from main towns, markets and distribution centres.



Source of diagram: Starkey, Paul, Simon Ellis, John Hinem, Anna Ternell. 2002. *Improving Rural Mobility: Options for Developing Motorised and Non-Motorised Transport in Rural Areas*. World Bank Technical Paper

Key definitions

Rural transport can be defined as follows:

“...*The movement of persons and goods for any conceivable purpose [including collection of water or firewood], by any conceivable means [including walking and head loading] on various types of infrastructure [including unproclaimed roads, tracks and footpaths.*” Bryceson & Howe, 1992.

This implies that a) the mode of travel does not necessarily need to be motorised or conventional (but should be suitable, cost-effective and environmentally sustainable); b) a wide variety of mode choices and trip purposes has to be considered during rural transport planning and service delivery.

It is nevertheless assumed that the origins of all “properly rural” transport trips are from dispersed rural homesteads and settlements, and that these trips exclude regular home-to-work commuting to main urban employment complexes – as occurs from many so-called peri-urban settlements in South Africa.

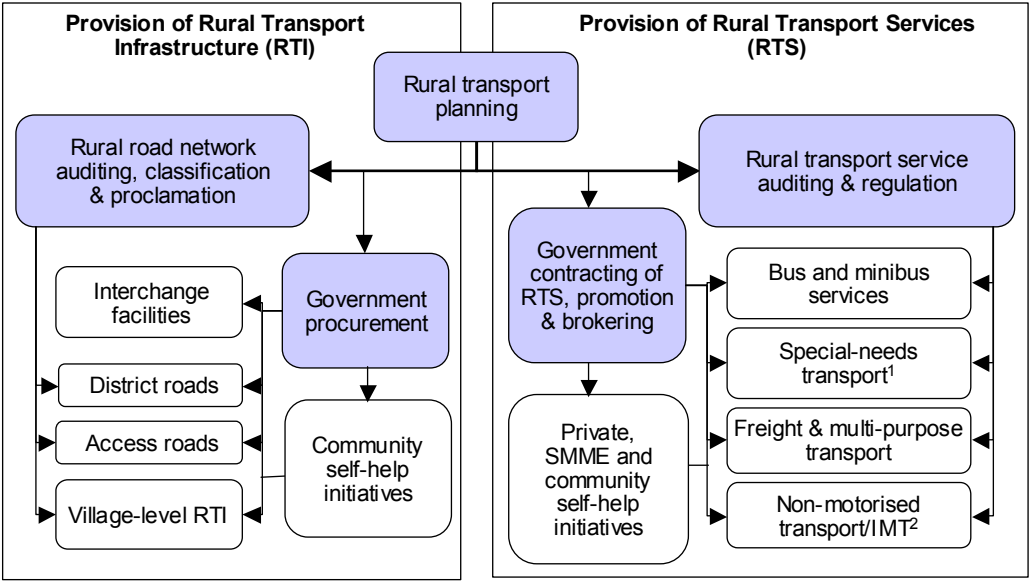
Most of the international literature on rural transport (in a developing country environment) makes a broad distinction between rural transport *infrastructure (RTI)* and rural transport *services (RTS)*. These can be defined as follows:

- Rural transport *infrastructure (RTI)*. This includes all transport-related infrastructure, ranging from proclaimed district or feeder roads, to village-level roads, tracks, trails, paths and footbridges, most of which is often not proclaimed or registered.
- Rural transport *services (RTS)*. This includes services provided by users themselves (e.g. head loading, private vehicular transport) and by operators of all means of motorised and non-motorised transport.

Government intervention in rural transport

Besides the procurement or contracting of rural transport infrastructure and services, the scope of government intervention in this sub-sector also includes transport planning; the auditing, classification and proclamation of the road network; and the auditing and regulation of rural transport services. In certain cases, it may also involve the promotion of certain means of transport, transport brokering and other actions to improve information flows and the general operation of the market for rural transport services. This is illustrated by the following diagram.

Scope of government intervention in the provision of rural transport infrastructure and services



Notes:

1. This includes the transportation of special categories of users – e.g. transportation of the elderly, handicapped and “non-emergency” patients (e.g. AIDS sufferers) – and all specially contracted services for non-work and non-shopping purposes, – especially scholar transport.
2. Intermediate means of transport (such as tractor-trailers).

South Africa’s national rural transport strategy

This strategy has two main thrusts, as set out below:

Thrust	Explanation and motivation
<p>1) Promote coordinated rural nodal and linkage development</p>	<p>The main practical aim should be to develop an effectively interlinked network of multi-purpose nodes and linkages, supported by actions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of transport brokering and logistical services; • Coordination of transport, periodic service provision and market schedules; • The exploitation of advancements in information and communication technologies (ICT) to create linkages between hub and satellite nodes; • Coordinated planning and development of transport linkages, including a system of periodic access services.

<p>2) Develop balanced and sustainable rural transport systems</p>	<p>Besides investing in access roads, the development of a balanced rural transport system requires that actions be taken to also improve other forms of rural transport infrastructure (RTI) - such as local connector or district roads, suspension bridges, pontoons, paths, tracks, trails and public transport interchanges. Similarly, it requires concerted actions to redress the relative neglect of all non-motorised as well as “intermediate” motorised transport (such as tractor-trailers), and strengthen as well as regulate the role of the “bakkie sector” as a viable, demand-responsive means to address a variety rural freight and passenger transport needs.</p> <p>The need for a sustainable rural transport system relates mainly to the need to establish sustainable funding channels and procurement systems, address neglected road maintenance requirements, and develop improved structures for the management of storm water (which is the major cause of deteriorating road conditions in most “deep” rural areas). The need for sustainability also requires that attention be given to the impacts of the rural transport system on the wider social, economic and biophysical environment.</p>
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Further information

The SusTrans website contains further information about:

- ❑ [Rural Transport Infrastructure](#)
- ❑ [Rural Transport Services](#)

Please add Sustrans weblinks

Further information on South Africa’s national rural transport strategy is available on the website of the National Department of Transport::

- ❑ <http://www.transport.gov.za/>

The following websites contain extensive information on rural transport in developing countries (including a wide range of downloadable documents):

- ❑ The World Bank Rural Transport Website:
http://www.worldbank.org/html/fpd/transport/rt_over.htm
- ❑ The Sub-Saharan Transport Planning Programme
<http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ssatp/comp.htm>

For Integrated approaches to rural access issues, see:

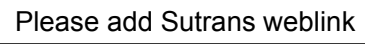
- ❑ [Nodal and linkage development](#) (this website)
- ❑ [Integrated rural access planning](#) (this website)
- ❑ [Accessibility planning](#) (ILO website)
- ❑ [Rural accessibility](#) (website of the Scottish Executive)

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<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/eiip/publ/1998/ratp2/>

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<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/cru/kd01/blue/ruac-02.asp>

References



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