

June 8, 2012

Output 1.1: Outline of workshop on informal  
transport

# Workshop 'Mobility for poor: Improving informal transport'

## Proposed program

Prepared for  
UN-HABITAT

---

## Suggested format for citation

TERI. 2012

Proposed program for the workshop- 'Mobility for poor: Improving informal transport'. 8pp.

---

## For more information

Akshima T Ghate

TERI

Darbari Seth Block

IHC Complex, Lodhi Road

New Delhi - 110 003

India

**Tel.** 2468 2100 or 2468 2111

**E-mail** akshima@teri.res.in

**Fax** 2468 2144 or 2468 2145

**Web** [www.teriin.org](http://www.teriin.org)

India +91 • Delhi (0)11

## Table of contents

<b>WORKSHOP- 'MOBILITY FOR POOR: IMPROVING INFORMAL TRANSPORT' .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Proposed themes for the workshop .....	1
Theme 1: What is informal transport? - Agreeing to a common definition.....	1
Theme 2: Role of informal transport in meeting the mobility needs of the poor/low- income population.....	3
Theme 3: Improving informal transport: Challenges and solutions.....	4
Structure of the workshop.....	5
Proposed profile of participants .....	7
Partnerships/sponsorships .....	8



## Workshop- 'Mobility for poor: Improving informal transport'

---

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and UN-Habitat are organizing a three-day workshop titled 'Mobility for poor: Improving informal transport'. The aim of the workshop is to facilitate knowledge/experience sharing on challenges and solutions for improving informal modes of transport in urban and peri-urban areas. The workshop is being organized under the aegis of the 'Pro-poor mobility component' of the Global Energy Network for Urban Settlements (GENUS)<sup>1</sup>. The objectives of the workshop are:

- To create a holistic understanding of informal transport systems and to agree upon a common definition of informal transport
- To deliberate on the role of informal transport in provision of mobility to urban poor or lower-income population in cities
- To understand the present nature and challenges of informal transport modes in developing countries
- To learn from some success stories of improvements in informal transport systems
- To identify key action areas to improve and integrate informal transport systems (legislative, regulatory, policy, urban planning and design aspects to be addressed)

### *Proposed venue for the workshop*

Seminar hall, TERI office, New Delhi

### *Proposed date for the workshop*

12-14 September, 2012<sup>2</sup>

### *Proposed accommodation for outstation participants*

India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India International Centre, New Delhi and TERI guest houses

## Proposed themes for the workshop

### Theme 1: What is informal transport? - Agreeing to a common definition

Transport systems exist because people need to move. A large section of population in the cities of the developing world cannot afford to have their own personal mode of transport. Such population, which forms a significant share of urban centers, relies on walking, cycling, and formal and informal public transport means for meeting its mobility needs. In most developing countries, the experience has been that the government agencies are unable to provide adequate formal public transport systems; in such cases 'informal public transport' systems emerge to cater to the demand. In fact, even where public transport is adequate, informal transport systems cater to the mobility needs unmet/partially met by the formal

---

<sup>1</sup> The Global Energy Network for Urban Settlements (GENUS) was established by UN-HABITAT to promote the design and implementation of energy- and mobility-access programmes and projects for the urban poor worldwide. The GENUS works on three thematic areas: Slum-electrification in East Africa, Waste to energy, in LAC Region and Improved mobility for the urban poor in South Asia.

<sup>2</sup> In the implementation schedule, workshop is proposed to be held in August 2012. TERI would like to extend this by a couple of weeks and proposes to hold the workshop in mid-September i.e. 12-14 September, 2012.

public transport systems; in such cases, informal systems provide last mile connectivity, compliment the formal systems and provide more options to commuters, which may be more flexible and cheaper. Because of such characteristic nature of informal transport systems, they largely cater to the needs of the urban poor/low-income population who do not have much mobility options, especially when they have to travel longer distances.

A review of literature indicates confusion regarding how we define/identify informal transport modes. The fact that such systems are termed as 'informal' indicates that they do not work like formal systems i.e. they lack licenses, vehicles are unregistered, they pick up passengers in undesignated places, they do not follow traffic rules, they do not have to meet any technical standards to ensure safety of passengers, etc. (CDIA, 2011). However, such definition/criteria may not always be followed to designate a mode as 'informal'. The confusion mainly happens with regard to legal/regulatory recognition of informal modes. While in many cases, we may identify a mode as informal, it is not necessary that it may be totally independent of any regulation/legality. For e.g. many would regard Tuk-tuks in Bangkok as 'informal', however, they do require license from the government. They probably qualify as 'informal' due to the nature of their operations and the fact that they are not provided by government agencies.



Tuk-Tuk in Bangkok; Source (GIZ, 2010)



Becak in Jakarta; Source (CDIA, 2011)

There is also a need to make distinction between intermediate para transit and informal transport. Intermediate para transit like auto rickshaws and taxis in many countries including India are regulated (tariffs, vehicle registration, safety/emission regulations, etc.). They however do not have designated routes and have flexibility in terms of following route of their choice. A key distinction between 'para transit' and 'informal transport' is in terms of their affordability to urban poor/low income population. While para transit modes are usually expensive than formal and informal public transport, informal transport modes are cheaper. Low capital and maintenance costs, overcrowding, no registration fees/taxes, etc. help the operators of these modes to reduce fares, which essentially make these modes more affordable to low income population. If we consider formalizing these systems, we need to be careful in terms of not affecting an increase in the vehicle acquisition, operations and maintenance costs to these operators, as this will then force them to increase the fares, hence defeating the whole idea of these modes as 'pro-poor modes'.

Given the above-mentioned differences in understanding, definition and approach to address informal transport, it is felt that a discussion on the same should be carried out at the beginning of the workshop to be able to agree upon a common definition and understanding of the term 'informal transport'. This will help in more focused identification of issues, challenges and solutions for improving 'informal transport'.

Participants will be requested to fill a questionnaire in advance in order to enable the organizers/speakers to understand their perception of the informal transport systems. Questionnaire will seek to understand:

- Their definition of informal transport.
- What in their view are the key challenges associated with informal transport?
- Who according to them are the main users of informal transport?
- Do they see any benefits associated with informal transport?
- Do they view it as a mode that creates problems on roads and needs to be removed or a mode that can enhance transport service availability in the cities and needs to be formalized and integrated?

The responses of the participants will be presented and discussed in the first session followed by a presentation by an expert, who has a deep understanding of the concept and role of informal transport, especially in the context of mobility for poor. The expert will moderate the session and help arrive at a common/agreed definition of informal transport.

## Theme 2: Role of informal transport in meeting the mobility needs of the poor/low-income population

Cities in the developing countries have been witnessing a rapid increase in mobility demand, which has led to fast motorization. The number of personal vehicles is on a rise in most cities. With the absence of adequate public transport and robust urban planning, the urban areas are facing challenges like accidents, congestion and pollution. The worst affected due the current urban transport growth trends are the urban poor who are most exposed to these deteriorating conditions. Uncontrolled urban sprawls require them to commute large distances for employment at minimal costs or force them to live in congested city centers to avoid transport costs. With increased private motor vehicles and buses competing for road space and hardly any infrastructure for non-motorized transport, it becomes riskier for the urban poor and vulnerable commuters to travel by non-motorized transport means.



Cycle rickshaws in Dhaka  
Source: [www.gondolaproject.com](http://www.gondolaproject.com)

With longer distances to be travelled and lack of adequate and affordable transport services for this section of population, many urban and peri-urban areas have seen a rapid growth of informal public transportation modes, mainly catered by private sector, for providing low cost mobility options. Informal transport systems do provide the much-needed, low-cost transport services for poor in the cities of the developing world.

As stated earlier, even in cities where public transport facilities are available, informal public transport modes form a large share of the mobility. They either provide the last mile connectivity between the public transport nodes and the final destination, or complement other formal modes by increasing the options for the commuters. Given the flexibility provided by such informal modes, they are able to meet an unfilled niche demand not met by public or other formal modes of transport. Informal modes of transport carry people over different distances, serve unique markets because of its local advantages, operate within

varying legal constraints within the urban transport network, and provide cheaper/affordable mobility options to the low-income population.

It is important to highlight/recognize the role of informal transport in meeting mobility needs of poor/low income population, especially in the context of increasing distances that they need to travel due to the sprawling cities. Access to affordable/flexible transport systems, provided by informal transport modes in many cases, helps them access their workplaces and helps improve their economic well-being. The discussions as part of this theme will focus on highlighting the important role of informal transport with the help of a few case studies from South and South East Asia.

### Theme 3: Improving informal transport: Challenges and solutions

#### Legal and regulatory issues

Legal and regulatory issues w.r.t vehicle registration<sup>3</sup>, driver licenses<sup>4</sup>, tariffs, routes, etc. of informal modes are typically recognized as key issues to be addressed if these modes are to be improved. It is however, important to appreciate that some of these illegalities/lack of regulations helps the operators to lower the cost of operations, which helps in making these modes more flexible in their operations and affordable to the poorer section of population. The key issues to be deliberated under this theme are:

- Whether informal modes should be formalized?
- Would formalization affect the characteristic nature of these modes that makes them a pro-poor mode?
- What should be extent of formalization, if it is to be done?

#### Environmental issues

The owners of most motorized informal modes of transport generally use inefficient technologies not adhering to any particular technology standard. This is mostly because of the low capital costs of acquiring old and out dated vehicles for this purpose and low or no maintenance. As a result, the energy efficiency of motorized modes of informal transport systems is low and they generate significant amount of pollution. The impact of this is highest on the people who operate and avail these services, belonging mostly to the poorer segments of the community. The key issues to be deliberated under this theme are:

- Technologies/fuels
- Maintenance regime
- Regulations to ensure technology/emission norms compliance

#### Safety issues

Informal modes (motorized and non-motorized) lack safe design making them vulnerable to accidents. In case of motorized modes, this is augmented by overcrowding and the poor driving and maintenance of the vehicles. Even non-motorized informal transport modes such as the human powered cycle rickshaws, which do not aggravate any of the harmful health hazards due to pollution, are exposed to increased accident rates. The key issues to be deliberated under this theme are:

---

<sup>3</sup> In case of motorized modes

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



- Vehicle design
- Driver training and licensing
- Maintenance of vehicles
- Overcrowding
- Street infrastructure/design

### Integrating informal modes in urban/transport planning and with existing formal public transport modes

Lacking the rigidity of the formal transport systems, informal modes of transport have the flexibility to quickly evolve to meet new demands for mobility. This characteristic of this form of transport could be used to enhance/substitute the public transport services. If organized and integrated, these modes can help meet mobility needs of city population in a more efficient manner. The key issues to be deliberated under this theme are:

- How to include informal transport in urban/transport planning?
- How to improve street design/road environment?
- How to integrate informal transport with the existing public transport systems (feeders, routes, integration on terminals, etc.)?

Some of the challenges highlighted above have been addressed across different countries with differing degrees of success. There is a need to learn from these experiences. This would help stakeholders facing similar challenges in different regions to address these issues more effectively. Hence, for the four key issues mentioned above, successful initiatives to address these issues will be explored; the representative of the city/organization, which led such initiatives, will be invited to present their case study.

### Structure of the workshop

Following structure of the workshop is proposed.

Day 1	
<b>First half</b>	<p><b>Introductory session</b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b> to the objectives, purpose, structure and expected outcomes of the workshop - S Sundar, TERI and Andre Dzikus, UN-Habitat</p> <p><b>Theme 1: What is informal transport? - Agreeing to a common definition</b></p> <p><b>What is informal transport? Perception of the participants</b> - Akshima T Ghate, TERI A quick presentation by TERI on the responses of participants on their perception of informal transport, its benefits, challenges, etc.</p> <p><b>What is informal transport? Expert’s view</b> - S Sundar, TERI and Joris Van Etten, CDIA (Asia) Concept, challenges and benefits of informal transport. Experts will moderate a discussion on the subject and help arrive at a common/agreed definition of informal transport.</p>

<p>Second half</p>	<p><b>Theme 2: Role of informal transport in meeting the mobility needs of the poor/low-income population</b></p> <p>Two-three presentations on informal transport systems in different cities in developing countries highlighting the key aspects of these systems, their role in meeting the mobility needs of the poor/low-income population, the key problems, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms Anvita Arora, iTrans (New Delhi) - Indian case</li> <li>▪ Ahmad Rifai, Solo, Indonesia - Indonesia case</li> <li>▪ Thomas Edward Wipperman , Neeti Gobeshona Kendro (Dhaka) - Bangladesh case</li> </ul>
<p>Day 2</p>	
<p>First half</p>	<p><b>Theme 3: Improving informal transport: Challenges and solutions</b></p> <p><i>Legal and regulatory issues*</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whether informal modes should be formalized?</li> <li>▪ Would formalization affect the characteristic nature of these modes that makes them a pro-poor mode?</li> <li>▪ What should be extent of formalization, if it is to be done?</li> <li>▪ Case study</li> </ul>
<p>Second half</p>	<p><b>Theme 3: Improving informal transport: Challenges and solutions</b></p> <p><i>Environment issues</i> - Sarbojit Pal and Raina Singh, TERI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Technologies/fuels</li> <li>▪ Maintenance regime</li> <li>▪ Regulations to ensure technology/emission norms compliance</li> <li>▪ Case study</li> </ul> <p><i>Safety issues</i> - Geetam Tiwari, IIT (Delhi)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vehicle design</li> <li>▪ Driver training and licensing</li> <li>▪ Maintenance of vehicles</li> <li>▪ Overcrowding</li> <li>▪ Street infrastructure/design</li> <li>▪ Need for regulations</li> <li>▪ Case study</li> </ul>

## Day 3

### First half

#### **Theme 3: Improving informal transport: Challenges and solutions**

##### *Integrating informal modes in urban/transport planning and with existing formal public transport modes*

- How to include informal transport in urban/transport planning and with the existing public transport systems (feeders, routes, integration on terminals, etc.)? - Sanjay Gupta, SPA (Delhi)
- How to improve street design/road environment? - Shreya Gadepalli, ITDP (India)

### Second half

#### **Improving informal transport - the way forward**

Session moderated by S Sundar, TERI

Views of all participants, speakers and organizers on way forward

Feedback of participants on E-debate and workshop

\* Speaker to be decided

## Proposed profile of participants

Participation would be requested from selected representatives of city municipalities and planning agencies responsible for urban/transport planning and transport service provision, state and national governments, research institutes/organizations working on sustainable mobility issues, development banks/UN, NGOs working on informal transport issues, service providers of informal transport etc.

- City representatives from South and South East Asia (10-12)
  - From municipalities, planning/development agencies
  - From agencies providing formal public transit services
- Representatives from state/national governments from South and South East Asia (2-4)
  - From Ministry of Urban Development
  - From Ministry of Transport
- Research institutes/organizations working on sustainable mobility issues (8-10)
  - Institute of Urban Transport (India), IIT (Delhi), CEPT (Ahmedabad), SPA (Delhi), ITDP, GIZ, CAI-Asia, CDIA, UNEP, World Bank, ADB, SLOCAT, EMBARQ, etc.
- NGOs working on informal transport issues (4-5)
- Service providers of informal transport (2-4)

## **Partnerships/sponsorships**

There are several participants and speakers that TERI intends to invite from outside New Delhi and India. The financial resources required to do the same are most likely to be higher than the available budget for workshop activities i.e. about 24,890 USD. In TERI's view, partnering with one or more agencies working on similar issues can help in gaining access to additional resources for the workshop. Support of government agencies like Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India or agencies like EMBARQ, GIZ, CAI-Asia, etc. can be explored. TERI wants to be assured that UN-Habitat supports TERI's idea of bringing in one more partner to support this workshop.