



**RECOMMENDATION OF THE COUNCIL ON  
ASSESSMENT AND DECISION-MAKING  
FOR INTEGRATED TRANSPORT  
AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

**Endorsed by Environment Ministers on 20 April 2004**

**Adopted by the OECD Council on 21 April 2004**

## THE COUNCIL,

Having regard to the support for action to decouple environmental pressures from economic growth in the transport sector as expressed in the OECD Environmental Strategy for the First Decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which was adopted by OECD Environment Ministers and endorsed by OECD Council at Ministerial level in May 2001.

Having regard to the Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Guidelines, a practical tool to guide the development and implementation of national environmentally sustainable transport strategies, which were endorsed by OECD Environment Ministers on 16 May 2001;

Having regard to progress achieved in the follow-up on EST, as reflected in the outcomes of the international conference on EST in the Asian Region (Nagoya, 25 March 2003), the conference on EST and Rail Transport (Eskilstuna, 26 October 2001), and the OECD Workshop on the Role of Soft Measures in Achieving EST (Berlin, 6 December 2002);

Having regard to the existing Council Acts which recommended *inter alia* specific actions to mitigate various environmental impacts of transport, namely: the Recommendation of the Council on the Assessment of Projects with Significant Impacts on the Environment [C(79)116] of 8 May 1979; Recommendation of the Council on Noise Abatement Policies [C(78)73/FINAL] of 3 July 1978; Recommendation of the Council on Strengthening Noise Abatement Policies [C(85)103] of 20 June 1985; Recommendation of the Council on Traffic Limitation and Low-Cost Improvement of the Urban Environment [C(74)218] of 14 November 1974; Recommendation of the Council Concerning the Reduction of Environmental Impacts from Energy Production [C(76)162/FINAL] of 12 October 1976; Recommendation of the Council on the Control of Air Pollution from Fossil Fuel Combustion [C(85)101] of 20 June 1985; Recommendation of the Council on Integrated Pollution prevention and Control [C(90)164/FINAL] of 31 January 1991;

Having regard to the ECMT Resolution 2003/1 on Assessment and Decision-Making for Integrated Transport and Environment Policy on which this Council Recommendation is based; the joint statement of ECMT Transport Ministers on Sustainable Transport Policies agreed at the Council of Prague in 2000 and in particular the stress it puts on the importance of integrated decision making; the ECMT Resolution 2002/1 on the Development of European Railways and especially its recommendation that good multi-criteria and cost benefit analyses must be used as the basis for making decisions on infrastructure investment;

Having regard to the results of the OECD report on the impact of Transport Infrastructure on Regional Development [DSTI/DOT/RTR/IM2(2001)1]; the conclusions and recommendations of the ECMT report on Assessment and Decision-Making for Integrated Transport and Environment Policy [CEMT/CM(2003)9]; the Key Messages for Government from ECMT reports on Implementing Sustainable Urban Travel Policies [CEMT/CM(2001)12 and 13]; the conclusions of ECMT report on Assessing the Benefits of Transport [CEMT/CM(2000)7/FINAL]; the conclusions and recommendations of ECMT report on Strategic Environmental Assessment for Transport [CEMT/CM(2000)8/FINAL];

Having regard to Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment; the Report to the European Council on integrating environmental concerns and sustainable development into Community policies, SEC (99)1941; the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the UN/ECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Kiev, 2003); the UN/ECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention, 25 June 1998); the 1997 UN/ECE Vienna Declaration on Transport and the Environment, the 1999 UN/WHO London Charter on Transport, Environment and Health and the subsequent WHO and ECE Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme;

Considering that providing society with safe, economically and socially acceptable access to people, places, goods and services is a prerequisite to continued economic prosperity and sustainable development in OECD economies; that, however, the transport sector is also a source of environmental pressures, such as releases of pollutants to air, water and soils, emissions of greenhouse gases, and noise as well as habitat fragmentation; and that, nevertheless, technological advances and comprehensive policies to reduce environmental impacts have shown success and such efforts should be continued.

Considering that integration of transport and environmental policies is fundamental to sustainable development; that improved decision making procedures are the key to more integrated policies; and that tools to support better decision making developed by OECD Member Governments should be more widely deployed;

On the recommendation of the Environment Policy Committee;

**I. Confirms** the importance Member countries attach to integrated transport and environment policy and decision making.

**II. Agrees:**

- (i) that good economic, environmental and health assessments of transport policy and project proposals are essential to ensuring efficient and robust decision making and cost effective use of resources;
- (ii) that appraisals of economic efficiency need to be supported with wider analysis that values — qualitatively and/or quantitatively — environmental, health and safety effects and reveals the distribution of costs geographically and in terms of the different communities affected;
- (iii) that integrated assessments are likely to be more effective than isolated economic, environmental, social and health appraisals;
- (iv) that integrated transport and environmental policy requires transparent decision making procedures that relate clearly to the results of economic and environmental assessments;
- (v) that integrated assessment and decision making procedures should be designed to facilitate effective and transparent decisions and their implementation;
- (vi) that co-operation between the Ministries responsible for transport, planning, the environment, infrastructure, regional development and health will be required to develop effective integrated appraisal procedures.

**III. Recommends** that systematic evaluation of economic, social and environmental effects should underpin all transport plans and programs and all major transport sector investments, and to this end the guidelines annexed below should be followed.

**IV. Instructs** the Environment Policy Committee, in conjunction with the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, to monitor best practice in the development of integrated evaluation procedures and tools to support decision making in the transport sector and to report to the Council on action taken pursuant to this Recommendation.

## ANNEX: GUIDELINES FOR GOOD ASSESSMENT AND DECISION-MAKING SUPPORT

### 1. Overall

- a) Systematic evaluation of economic, social and environmental effects should underpin all transport plans, programs and all major transport sector investments, as part of integrated assessment procedure.
- b) As far as possible, similarly integrated evaluation should be incorporated into transport policy making.
- c) Decision makers should be engaged in establishing the wider objectives that transport projects are intended to deliver for the economy and the community, through consultation with transport and environmental as well as health experts, planners, stakeholders and the public, early in the planning process in order to establish consensus and avoid challenges to project objectives at later stages with potentially high costs.

### 2. In relation to decision making support

- a) Integrated assessments should be presented in a way that directs decision makers to the key factors to weigh in their decision, highlighting trade-offs, risks and uncertainties, rather than making judgments in place of the decision maker.
- b) The results of project, plan and program assessments should be presented to decision makers in a form that is simple, concise and clearly communicates the key issues.
- c) Traceability must be assured and this can be done by referencing summary results to supporting analysis in successive layers of detail.

### 3. In relation to institutional arrangements and procedures

- a) Integrated assessments should be linked directly to the decision making procedures of elected and technical decisions makers for full effect.
- b) Consultation with stakeholders and the general public is critical to the legitimacy of assessments and the durability of their results; it should begin early and be professionally conducted in order successfully to engage participation, and elicit and address the true concerns of the public.
- c) Evaluations of infrastructure investments should be undertaken with equal rigor whatever the mode of transport concerned.
- d) Cross-border consultations should be undertaken where necessary.
- e) *Ex post* evaluations to analyse the effectiveness of policies and projects after their implementation are important for verifying the results of assessments and for improving future project assessments.
- f) Transport and land-use planning agencies may need training, support and additional expertise in the newer disciplines of environmental and health impact assessment; institutional capacity building is desirable even in respect of existing procedures.

### 4. In relation to the contents of assessments

- a) Integrated assessments should aim at a systematic presentation of all relevant positive and negative welfare effects (economic, health, environment, safety); where possible these should be quantified, otherwise they should be qualitatively described in a transparent way.
- b) Assessments should contain explicit consideration of alternatives including the "non-implementation" option.
- c) The uncertainties and limits of assessments should be made clear.
- d) Assessments should explicitly account for significant distortions (in relation to marginal social costs) in the pricing of transport services and in the markets they serve as such distortions result in wider economic effects, both positive and negative, than captured in conventional cost benefit analysis.
- e) Where additional positive effects, for example in terms of regional development, are important to the overall benefits of a project, the specific mechanisms by which they are delivered must be identified in order to be sure that the intended results are likely to be achieved.
- f) Distributional impacts should be reported in sufficient detail, as the indirect positive and negative impacts on regional development accrue to different people and places than initial transport benefits and their incidence is likely to change over time.

