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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

**14th Meeting of the Resource  
Mobilization Committee (RMC)**

**PROPOSALS FOR UPDATING PROCEDURES FOR THE  
SELECTION OF UNTACDA II PROJECTS  
(Agenda item 2)**

## Introduction

1. At its ninth meeting held on 12 and 13 March 1993 in Addis Ababa, the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning decided that the following procedures would thenceforth be applied to the selection of new projects for inclusion in the programme for the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (UNTACDA II):

- "(i) Priority programmes and projects should be clearly defined by member States so as to avoid duplication and all national UNTACDA II projects should be contained in the countries' Priority Public Investment Programme (PPIP);
- (ii) All national projects submitted for inclusion in the UNTACDA II programme should have been approved by the appropriate authority in charge of the public sector investment programme;
- (iii) All projects of the UNTACDA II programme, while meeting the criteria determined by the Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, should be thoroughly reviewed and prioritized on the basis of the Decade objectives, Government priorities, their level of preparation and their potential environmental impact."

2. At its eighth meeting held in Abuja in February 1991, the Conference of Ministers had already adopted guidelines and procedures for the selection of Decade projects, project selection criteria and a general format for project briefs.

3. Consequently, this present note has been prepared to review the new elements introduced by the ninth meeting of the Conference of Ministers and to make recommendations regarding the updating of procedures for the selection of UNTACDA II projects.

II. Review of new elements introduced by the ninth meeting of the Conference of Ministers

The Abuja decisions

4. The decisions taken in Abuja in 1991 can be summarized as follows:

(a) Project submission and screening mechanisms

- (i) The projects must of necessity conform to the strategies and priority action programme worked out with a view to attaining Decade objectives in the various sectors;
- (ii) The information which will be required for screening of projects to be included in the Decade programme is shown in the following format for presentation of projects.
- (iii) All national projects should be submitted by the countries to the subregional coordinating organizations which, through ECA, will communicate to RMC, those which the organizations support.

(b) Project selection criteria

- (i) Projects should meet one or several objectives of the UNTACDA II programme;
- (ii) Projects should be included in national development plans or programmes;
- (iii) Projects should demonstrate social, economic and technical feasibility and/or other demonstrable benefits;
- (iv) Projects should conform to environmental policies and programmes;
- (v) There should be appropriate and adequate institutional capacity to carry out the project;
- (vi) The amount of operating expenditure and local costs should be determined and adequate financing secured;
- (vii) The project should be included in the work programme of intergovernmental organizations, international organizations or

- subsectoral working groups (applicable to regional and subregional projects);
- (viii) To promote subregional or regional cooperation and integration (applicable to regional and subregional projects) the project should involve, more than one country;
  - (ix) The project should contribute to the pursuit of an important part of the Decade strategy.

Review of the new guidelines given by the  
Conference of Ministers

5. The new guidelines can be summarized in the following terms:

(a) All national projects should be contained in the priority public investment programme of the submitting country;

(b) To be included in the UNTACDA II programme, national projects should have secured the prior approval of the Government authority in charge of the public sector investment programme;

(c) Priorities should be set on the basis of Decade objectives, Government priorities, level of project preparation and potential impact on the environment.

6. A review of these guidelines shows some redundancy:

(a) First, between the inclusion of the project in priority public investment programmes and the requirement for prior approval by the national authority in charge of programmes;

(b) Secondly, between the inclusion of projects in the priority public investment programme and the need to set Decade programme priorities on the basis of national priorities.

7. To simplify matters, it is suggested that all three guidelines could be merged into one by asking member States to ensure that their UNTACDA II projects are submitted by the national authorities in charge of public investment programmes. This way, there would be a sufficient guarantee of the priority accorded to the projects at the national level and of their inclusion in the priority public investment programme.

8. If the simplified guidelines of March 1993 are compared with those approved at Abuja in February 1991, the following observations can be made:

(a) The submission of national projects by the authorities in charge of public investment programmes is a new element. To date, projects were generally submitted by the Ministries of Transport and/or Communications and the criterion for acceptance was that it should be included in national development plans or programmes. This criterion could be checked only on the basis of information provided to this effect in the project brief;

(b) The taking into account of Decade objectives is already reflected in the 1991 selection criteria through the following provisions:

- (i) Projects should meet one or several objectives of the UNTACDA II programme;
- (ii) The project should contribute to the pursuit of an important part of the Decade strategy.

(c) The taking into account of the level of project preparation is not basically new. Indeed, the 1991 selection criteria include provisions to the effect that:

- (i) Projects should demonstrate social, economic and technical feasibility and/or other demonstrable benefits;
- (ii) There must be appropriate and adequate institutional capacity to carry out the project;
- (iii) The amount of operating expenditure and local costs should be determined and adequate financing secured.

The fulfilment or otherwise of these three criteria provide a very good means of assessing the level of project preparation;

(d) The potential impact on the environment is already catered for in the criterion which stipulates that projects should conform to environmental policies and programmes.

9. In the final analysis, the guidelines given by the ninth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning call for no major modification of the selection criteria adopted in 1989 and confirmed in 1991. What should be done at most is to replace the requirement for inclusion of the project in national

development plans or programmes by that of being included in priority public investment programmes. This raises, however, the issue of countries which have no priority public investment programmes in the sense that such programmes are covered within the context of structural adjustment. A solution to this should be found in the project submission procedure.

10. The March 1993 guidelines raise, however, basic issues having to do, on the one hand, with the national authority competent to submit projects for screening and, on the other hand, with the preparation of project briefs and the strict application of selection criteria.

11. With regard to project briefs, the lesson drawn from the analysis leading to the establishment of the initial list of projects shows that briefs received from project initiators seldom contain all the information required for the screening that a strict application of the selection criteria entails.

12. This state of affairs was amply demonstrated in the report that the RMC technical committee prepared on the work of its meeting held from 27 March to 19 April 1991 in Abidjan. Indeed, the report of the technical committee notes the following difficulties, among others:

(a) The fact that information was missing because many of the forms were incompletely or badly filled out;

(b) Local costs and foreign exchange costs had not been indicated. Nor had the sources of financing;

(c) No indication have been made of the findings of feasibility studies;

(d) No breakdown of the costs between studies and actual project work.

### III. Recommendations

13. To make sure that the guidelines of 1993 are implemented, steps will have to be taken at three levels: the procedure for submission of national projects, the preparation of project briefs and the application of project selection criteria.

#### The procedure for project submission

14. The guidelines on this issue require that projects should have secured the prior approval of the national authority in charge of public investment programmes. To avoid further problems of bureaucracy, it recommended that the national authority in charge of

public investment programmes should have sole competence for submitting projects that are to be screened for inclusion in the UNTACDA II programme.

15. Since the national authority in charge of public investment is almost invariably the one having competence to officially request external assistance, this procedure should guarantee that projects submitted for the Decade not only have priority but are also the same as those submitted to funding agencies.

#### Preparation of project briefs

16. The format for the presentation of project briefs, as adopted in Abuja, does not require major modification. All that needs to be done is to replace "degree of project priority in existing development plan/programme" by the following question. "Is the project included in the priority public investment programme?"

#### Application of project selection criteria

17. The criteria approved at Tangier in 1989 and confirmed at Abuja in 1991 need not be modified except with regard to replacing the inclusion of a project in the national development plan or programme with its inclusion in the priority public investment programme.

18. With regard to the application of criteria, strict enforcement will necessarily have to be based on adequate and reliable information. It is therefore recommended that:

(a) The format for the presentation brief should include comments which help to define the required information;

(b) Before RMC approves certain projects, field missions should be conducted to verify the information in particular countries;

(c) Funding agencies that are members of RMC should provide the project screening committee with all information at their disposal on existing priority public investment programmes.

#### Implementation of recommendations

19. In order to enforce the new guidelines, it is assumed that the decision to be taken by RMC should apply to those projects already received by ECA but which are currently waiting to be screened.

20. Should the new procedure for project submission be approved by RMC, all member States should be officially notified. This procedure will also have to apply retroactively to new projects that have not yet been screened.
21. A model project brief format, with modifications and comments, has been attached to the present report as a proposal. Once approved by RMC, this project brief format should also be officially circulated to member States and made to apply retroactively to new projects that have not been screened.
22. For the new projects already sent to ECA, RMC could also decide to field missions to the States concerned in order to make the project briefs consistent with the new guidelines. Such an approach would avoid offending member States but will require substantial resources financially.

ANNEX  
GENERAL FORMAT FOR PROJECT INFORMATION/PROJECT BRIEF

1. Country:
  - Country or organization which initiated project and prepared project brief;
2. Sector:
  - Transport, Communications or other;
3. Subsector:
  - This may be any of the eight transport subsectors, namely: air transport, railways and rail transport, road transport, multimodal transport, maritime transport, ports, inland waterways (rivers and lakes) and urban transport;
  - The projects covering several subsectors may simply be classified under multimodal transport;
  - In communications, there are three subsectors, namely: broadcasting, postal services and telecommunications;
4. Name of project:
  - The project must be given an explicit and concise title which must remain the same in all programmes of the country or organization in order to avoid any confusion;
5. Executing agency:
  - Specify the Ministry, Company or Organization implementing the project;
6. Location of the project:
  - Place where the project will be implemented;
7. Objectives:
  - The aims (as distinct from the description) of the project which should be concisely defined;

8. Is the project included in the priority public investment programme?:

- Answer yes or no;
- Specify period covered by the programme;
- Indicate the major donors involved in programme preparation, promotion and implementation;

9. Description of the project:

- Indicate the various components of the project;
- For infrastructural projects, studies and construction works can not be considered under a single project;
- A project of infrastructural construction can be proposed only if, at least, a feasibility study has been conducted. Otherwise, only the project relating to the feasibility study should be submitted.

10. Estimated total cost:

- Specify the total estimated cost of the project and the breakdown by local and foreign exchange cost components

11. Financing:

- Specify the financing secured: amount, dates secured and donor;
- Indicate the amount of financing required;
- Indicate the funding agencies contacted and their reaction.

12. Status of preparation:

- Indicate action taken or underway: preparation of terms of reference, studies conducted or being conducted, missions to identify and/or evaluate funding agencies, short listing of consultancy firms or enterprises, invitation of bids, negotiation of financing etc.;
- Time frame for implementation;

13. Justification of the project and expected benefits:

- For projects having to do with infrastructural and other facilities, specify the findings of the feasibility studies (internal rates of return/cost benefit ratios) as well as the date of the study;
- Project linkages with other national or subregional projects;
- Impact on regional integration (inter-State linkages, subregional market etc.);

14. Other issues:

- Potential impact on environment and steps taken;
- Accompanying activities: training, subregional coordination, etc.;
- Institutional capacity for carrying out the project and management capability for managing the project after implementation (for example maintenance of infrastructural and other facilities).