



COORDINATION OF INTERVENTIONS

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INDEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Coordination during planning is always a hot issue. This paper attempts to provide arguments in favour and against such coordination during the planning of infrastructure interventions.

An obvious advantage of coordination is that it enables synergies between different government interventions. Another advantage is that it avoids that different government units or echelons are working in different directions. On the other hand proper coordination is time and resource consuming. The challenge is thus to determine if coordination is desirable and if so how and to what extends it should take place.

Need for coordination

Infrastructure planning always seems to require some kind of coordination. Constructions of school buildings do not have any impact, when the education department does not provide the school with adequate number of teachers. The education department on the other hand will only be able to provide teachers when it gains enough financial resources to pay these teachers. Usually these funds have to be made available by the Ministry of Finance. Similar logic applies to other facilities for the health sector. In some countries all the resources and responsibilities for construction, maintenance and operation are within one department or ministry. In other countries different units are given the responsibility for specific tasks with regard the provision of these facilities.

Water and sanitation sector

Other coordination efforts usually take place in the water and sanitation sector. Those in favour argue interventions in the water sector will have no impact on the health situation of the population without proper sanitation. They refer rightly to the water borne and water related diseases. Others argue that governments in developing countries are only responsible for the supply of water and solid waste disposal.

Access synergies

The International Labour Organisation developed a multi-sector planning approach for access interventions in the rural areas, Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP). The approach focuses on the lack of access.

The ILO summarises lack of access as:” Lack of access deprives people of the opportunity to improve their lives. Access is composed of two elements. Mobility, reflecting the ease or difficulty in travelling to a service or facility and Proximity (availability and location), of those services and facilities.”¹

Access interventions could be improvements in the road network, transportation systems (e.q. public transport) and the location of facilities and services. After all access to services and facilities can be improved through locating these services and facilities closer to the people, but it is also possible to improve the ease (travel time and cost) of the travel to and from the facilities and services.

¹ Geoff Edmonds: Wasted Time: The price of Poor Access, ILO, 1998

	<p>To avoid congestion on its highways, the Ministry of Transport, Water Management and Public Works in the Netherlands tries to combine interventions at the same location and implement them at the same time.</p>
Urban slum upgrading	<p>Some organisations have developed planning approaches for urban slum upgrading. Very often the approach is a package, including elements like water supply, sanitation, rainwater drainage, solid waste management, road improvements, registration and formalisation of land ownership, electricity supply, (micro-) finance, and sometimes enterprise development. These organisations argue that stand-alone interventions do not result in any impact.</p>
Geographical frontiers	<p>Almost every country consists of neighbouring districts and municipalities. Many issues with which the districts and municipalities are confronted are actually crossing their geographical frontiers. To deal with these issues districts and municipalities have to collaborate in some form. Sometimes the collaboration is completely voluntary and other times it is mandatory and takes place under supervision or management of the province.</p>
Multi-sector	<p>Multi-sector approaches have also the advantage that richer sectors can subsidise the poorer sectors. Usually the willingness to pay for water supply is considerable higher than the willingness to pay for sanitation. However it should be kept in mind that financial management of multi-sector approaches is also more difficult</p> <p>In particular the road networks go beyond administrative borders. In some countries the road sector may be completely self-financing or even generate surpluses. Usually the highways generate most of the traffic. In most countries, the management of the road network is divided between different government levels. Often there is a National Road Authority responsible for the management of all the trunk roads, the corridors that connect all the administrative, economic and cultural centres of the country. Most corridors run over several provinces. Like wise the provincial authorities manage the provincial roads. The provincial roads connect the Provincial centres and run through several districts. They may have connection with the National Highways. Likewise district roads connect the villages and other centres in the district and may connect with either Provincial or National road network. Clearly the National Road Authorities are best equipped to run on a commercial basis. And in some countries where they do, the National Road Authority is usually able to generate additional income, which is often used to expand the National Road Network. The provincial and district road networks usually do not generate enough traffic and if these authorities had to run on a commercial basis they need to reduce its networks. Expansion of the National Road Network may or may not be the best approach to reduce poverty, generate economic growth or contribute to other governmental objectives. But these investments may directly or indirectly result in a lack of maintenance of the other road networks. It is in every organisations nature to expand its services even if they are competing (directly or indirectly) with other befriended</p>

organisations, which services may be even more in demand. When one authority is responsible for all roads, it is less likely that “luxury” projects will prevail over maintenance projects.

In short governments and organisations prefer to coordinate their planning efforts when they think that coordination will result in a more effective and efficient delivery of their services, facilities or they are more effective in reaching their objectives. Coordination efforts are often rejected when it is likely that coordination leads to inefficiency. Coordination requires more time and therefore coordination during emergency and crisis response programs are limited if they at all take place.

The question remains how do governments ensure coordination during planning?

However coordinated planning usually involve a number of units that often have different perspectives towards problems and certain developments within society. To enhance coordination it is important that all units use the same entry points for their planning.

In short there are three types of coordination:

1. Cultural coordination: To obtain a common understanding about norms and values, objectives and interventions
2. Structural coordination deals with the positions of the actors involved. It relates to authorities, functions, tasks, activities, of the involved actors
3. Instrumental coordination enhances coordination through standardisation of procedures and work, and the used of budgeting

Cultural coordination

Cultural coordination usually relates to the top of the government departments. Applied methods to establish a common culture among the different government departments is to select its top civil servants from certain education facilities, provide training to its civil servants and rotating of civil servants over different departments.

Structural coordination

Structural coordination is basically matching of the positions of different actors. It avoids overlaps and gaps in functions. It avoids unnecessary conflicts because the authorities are clear.

Coordination relies heavily on collaboration between different units. Collaboration between only a few units is often easier than collaboration between many units. One way of coordination is that one unit is assigned for planning of all sectors which have to be planned in a coordinated manner. This is often the case in central-planned economies. However there are also bottom approaches where coordination is centralised. In some countries, the districts are responsible for the planning of all infrastructure interventions. These plans are only evaluated by the higher governments on certain criteria and are sometimes a little modified.

Standardisation

Standardisation and budget allocation are two means to coordinate government planning efforts.

An example of standardisation is Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning tool, in which the involved units use the same collected data and more important use the same indicator to plan its interventions. The indicator is defined in a way that it includes all interests of all the involved units. Standardisation of procedures often results in units that start speaking the same language and have the same perspective. Budget allocation is process of awarding or rejecting claims for resources from the different sectors. It deals basically with the questions:

- Who should be given the authority to allocate budgets for interventions?
- How should the claims for budgets be evaluated?

Authority and Functions

The first question is connected to the issue of authorities and functions. To deal with this question properly it is important to assess the need for coordination first. For example access to health, education can be improved through different interventions. The number of teachers at a certain school could be increased, another school building could be build, a bridge could be build connecting a village without a school with a village with a school, a public transport system could be established to reduce travel time.

From this perspective it would make sense to give the budget authority to the districts for these purposes. However sometimes the districts lack the capacity to use such authority properly, in a transparent and accountable manner and the Ministry of Finance have to establish guidelines how it would distribute funds to specific districts. It wants to avoid that the higher populated districts and municipalities, that are often better off in terms of facilities for health and education would receive most of the funds.

Often it is easier for the Ministry of Finance to transfer its funds to the line ministries, who claim to know better where the money is really needed.

Because of the demand for geographical coordination some argue it should be the provinces that have the budget authority. The districts should submit their plans to them for funding. The answer on this question can partly be found when answering the question of what are the evaluation criteria.

Timing

Another way of coordination is timing. Coordination can be enhanced if the involved units are matching their time plans. Often the outputs of one unit are inputs for another unit. When the units can agree on mutual beneficial time schedules, they tend to better collaborate and appreciate each other's coordination efforts.

Coordination outside the government

These types of coordination relate to coordination among government units, intra coordination. Governments also need to coordinate with the private sector about its plans to provide infrastructure and with its costumers (participation).