

PIARC (World Road Association) Strategic Plan - 2024-2027

Technical Committee 2.2 – Roads for Equity, Accessibility and Mobility in Rural and Interurban Areas

Overview

Roads play a crucial role in promoting equity, accessibility in both rural and interurban areas. Within this context, there are two primary areas of emphasis: enhancing active modes of transportation and improving road safety for all users, as well as investigating technical solutions for both paved and unpaved roads.

The Technical Committee 2.2 Roads for equity and accessibility in rural and interurban areas is established to address the challenges associated with roads in rural and interurban areas. The committee aims to develop practical recommendations and initiatives that promote equitable access, sustainable mobility, and enhanced road safety.

TC2.2 will focus on two key topics:

- Topic 1: Enhancing Active Modes and Improving Road Safety for All Users:

Roads for equity and accessibility in rural and interurban areas require a focus on enhancing active modes of transportation and improving road safety for all users.

The committee will outline initiatives that promote walking, cycling, and other non-motorized modes of transportation. Additionally, the committee will focus on to improve road safety for all users, will analyse existing road safety measures and identify areas for improvement.

- Topic 2: Technical Solutions for Paved and Unpaved Roads:

The committee will focus on collecting and assessing technical solutions for both paved and unpaved roads in rural and interurban areas. This includes exploring innovative road construction materials, pavement solutions, and maintenance techniques that enhance road conditions, improve accessibility, and ensure safer transportation. The committee will prioritize cost-effective solutions that consider the specific requirements and resources available in each area.

The committee's work in both topics will foster the implementation of effective solutions by leveraging global best practices and experiences.

Recognizing the diverse contexts and challenges encountered by high-income countries (HIC) and low- and lower-middle income countries (LIMIC), the committee will take into account the distinct requirements of each group.

2.2.1 Accessibility and mobility in rural and interurban areas: enhancing active modes and improving road safety for all users

Purpose: The purpose of this topic is to address the challenges faced by rural and interurban areas in terms of accessibility and mobility, and to outline initiatives that promote active modes and improve road safety.

This topic is devoted to HIC and LIMIC. We aim to ensure a diverse range of perspectives and expertise from both HICs and LIMICs, acknowledging the valuable contributions that experts from all backgrounds can bring to the table.

Preliminary research questions:

- What are the key challenges and barriers to accessibility and mobility in rural and interurban areas, particularly in low and lower-middle income countries?
- How do the existing transportation infrastructure and services in rural and interurban areas impact accessibility and mobility for different user groups: women, VRUs, persons with disabilities?
- What are the specific safety challenges faced in rural and interurban areas, and how can road safety measures be enhanced to reduce accidents, injuries, and fatalities?
- What are the best practices and successful interventions implemented in other regions or countries to enhance accessibility and mobility in rural and interurban areas?
- We intend to attract experts from HICs who are knowledgeable in active modes and safety, while also ensuring that the needs and challenges of LMICs are adequately addressed. We will look at the opportunity of having two subtopics one for HIC and another one for LMIC. this is intended to facilitate focused discussions and actions tailored to the specific contexts and challenges faced by each group.

Importance to roads agencies: This work is important to road agencies/road industry because by improving accessibility and mobility, road agencies can enhance connectivity between rural and interurban areas and other urban centres. This connectivity is vital for social and economic development.

Road agencies are responsible for ensuring safe and efficient transportation and by addressing the specific challenges faced in rural and interurban areas, road agencies can contribute providing equal access to safe and sustainable transportation for all users.

Audience: The audience and users involved in the topic of accessibility and mobility in rural and interurban areas are diverse and include:

Road Agencies and Transportation Authorities, road engineers, community Organizations and Advocacy Groups (for road safety, walking, cycling, public transport,...) , researchers and Academics, public transportation operators,

It is crucial to engage and involving these various stakeholders for effective decision-making, collaboration, and implementation of initiatives that address the challenges and enhance accessibility and mobility in rural and interurban areas.

Deliverables: Case studies, briefing note, workshop or conference.

Background to TC's work on this topic: Nothing done in the previous cycle. We plan to collaborate with TC2.1 mobility in Urban areas, and with TC 3.1 on road safety.

Low and lower-middle income countries: LMICs countries face specific challenges related to transportation: higher rate of road, accidents, climate change impacts, disparities, limited resources...

Enhancing safe accessibility and mobility and promoting sustainable transportation mode such as walking, cycling and public transportation contribute to economic development and social inclusion of LMICs countries.

Gender inclusion & diversity: HIC and LMICs countries have significant rural populations that face barriers to access to essential services: education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

Women and girls in rural areas may experience unique safety concerns and risks while using transportation system.

By improving accessibility and mobility, these countries can promote social inclusion and ensure that rural communities have equitable access to services and opportunities.

Potential duration: 2024–2027.

2.2.2 Technical solutions for paved and unpaved roads

Purpose: The purpose of this topic is to explore technical solutions for both paved and unpaved roads which improve road conditions, enhance accessibility, and ensure safer transportation for local communities.

This topic is devoted to HIC and LMIC.

Rural areas in different countries face varying challenges and constraints. Collaborating between HICs and LMICs ensures that technical solutions take into account the specific needs and conditions of different regions.

Preliminary research questions:

- What are the existing challenges and issues associated with unpaved roads in rural areas?
- What technical solutions are currently available and proven effective for improving unpaved roads in similar rural contexts?
- What are the environmental considerations and potential impacts of implementing various technical solutions?
- Are there any innovative or context-specific technical solutions that can be explored to address the unique challenges of rural areas?

Importance to roads agencies: This work is important to road agencies/road industry because enhancing and maintaining road infrastructure is crucial for efficient transportation, economic development, and ensuring safe and accessible travel for vehicles and pedestrians.

Audience: The audience and users involved in this topic include:

Road Agencies and Transportation Authorities, road maintenance, civil engineers, researchers and academics, contractors and suppliers...

Deliverables: Case studies, briefing note, workshop or conference.

Background to TC's work on this topic: During the past cycle, TC2.2 organised a joint seminar with TC4.3 "earthworks" and we plan to continue our collaboration during the new cycle.

Low and lower-middle income countries: LMICs countries face specific challenges in terms of infrastructure development, socio-economic conditions and resource limitations.

Focus will be on: low cost solutions, define suitable materials and techniques using locally available material, community-Based Maintenance and identify good techniques for construction and maintenance

Gender inclusion & diversity: Many LMICs countries have significant rural populations that face barriers to access to essential services: education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

Women and girls in rural areas may experience unique safety concerns and risks while using transportation system.

By improving accessibility and mobility, these countries can promote social inclusion and ensure that rural communities have equitable access to services and opportunities.

Potential duration: 2024–2027.