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# **A rapid assessment of rural transport services in Luapula Province, Zambia**

*by*

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as part of a project to develop a methodology for the  
rapid assessment of rural transport services



## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study was undertaken for the Sub Saharan African Transport Policy Program (SSATP), administered by the World Bank. The aim was to develop a methodology for rapidly assessing the nature of rural transport services in sub-Saharan African countries, namely Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Tanzania and Zambia providing information that can assist with policy formulation in these countries.

Kiran & Musonda Associates was appointed by Practical Action Consulting (previously known as Intermediate Technology Consultants) to carry out the study on Rural Transport Services in the Luapula province of Zambia.

The overall objective was to carry out a rapid assessment of existing motorized and non – motorized transport services and their costs; the demand for transport services for economic requirements as well as for social, health, educational and community reasons, and the regulatory situation. This document discusses the nature of road and water transport services in Luapula province and provides information and ways by which the various services could be improved.

The existing passenger and freight transport services in three districts of Luapula province namely Milenge, Nchelenge and Samfya were surveyed including the provincial routes linking the districts to Mansa – the provincial capital and the market and village hubs serving the rural catchments. The required information and data was collected using data sheets that were designed during the planning phase of the study. The interviews were undertaken by the members of the implementing team (the national coordinator and team leader) to ensure a clear understanding of the wide-ranging issues, discover new ideas, new information and new sources of information.

The terms of reference required the assessment to provide a rapid but valid impression of the existing rural transport service for a wide range of stakeholders in the whole selected area. From the survey and interviews carried out, it could be seen that the methodology developed by the study team was very effective. From the rapid assessment carried out in Luapula Province it was established that:

- There is very little motorised traffic on most roads and very few motorised rural transport services. Vast areas are located very far away from centres of commerce and social service provision and are beset by accessibility problems e.g. poor roads and no transport service support infrastructure and low economic demand.
- There are major variations in motorised traffic between agricultural and fish markets in the ratio of 1 to 20 respectively.
- Traffic is seasonal: very low during the wet season (farming and fish ban period) and high during harvest time and fishing period (March – November).
- Cost of bicycles in Zambia is very high.
- People walk and cycle long distances – exceeding 100 km to access goods and services.
- Lack of transport in outlying areas results in unnecessary deaths and wastage of agriculture produce.
- Bicycles and small boats are the main intermediate means of transport in Luapula Province and other types of IMT are almost non-existent
- There is a need to improve rural transport services in Luapula Province and Zambia in general as most areas are far from centres of commerce and social service provision.

Results of the survey indicate that the stakeholders would like the government to improve the rural transport infrastructure, support promotion of IMTs, improve the canals and waterways and provide large transport vessels on the lakes, reduce the cost of bicycles and offer incentives and tax rebates for rural transport providers.

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