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Drivers Licensing / Training

8.1 Section – I Importance of Effective Driver Licensing & Training Systems:

8.1.1 Of the three components of highway traffic, i.e. roads, the vehicle and the driver, the driver is the active component with the highest potential for increasing or reducing the risks associated with unsafe driving and an increasing vehicle population.

8.1.2 In countries with well developed traffic management system, the focus on the driver competence and behavior is high. In countries that can afford continuous investment in monitoring driver behavior, the system also relies on technology to monitor and enforce.

8.1.3 A penalty system that enables penalty points to be cumulatively counted and maintained with each repeated driving offences, resulting in suspension or cancellation of a driver's license is considered to be the most effective system for creating an environment of compliant and safe driving. However, when such a system is introduced and enforced, it is equally important that a distinction between the "Vehicle" and "Driver" exists. This is only possible when both the Vehicle Registration System and the Driving License System work in unison. Today, as in many other areas, IT provides the opportunity for such a unified and integrated system.

Obtaining a license in Pakistan is very easy. There is a complete lack of systems to regulate learning, testing and licensing. The holder of a driving license generally poses a danger, both to his own life and to the life and property of others. As the vehicle population increases and with it unqualified drivers, ever increasing speeds on an improving network of roads and highways are creating greater risks to life and property than ever before.

8.1.4 Chapter 5, relating to the importance of the Central Data Repository of Provincial vehicle registration systems, briefly introduced the driving license system in the holistic framework (See diagram titled "Diagram of Enterprise Application Design - without Central Data Repository, as currently being progressively deployed in Provinces"). The reason for introducing the driving licensing system in this framework is the important linkage between the two systems in managing a penalty based enforcement for ensuring safer roads, vehicles and drivers.

8.2. Section – II Limitations of Current Systems:

- 8.2.1 In the context of a fast growing vehicle and driver population, the overall environment in Pakistan - in which a driver learns, obtains a license and drives generally disregarding safety of public life and property - requires urgent attention.
- 8.2.2 Obtaining a driver's license in Pakistan is relatively easy. There are no proper and accredited training schools, trained driving instructors, properly equipped vehicles, or testing and licensing facilities. Driving is generally learnt from an obliging relative or friend. There is the occasional small and self styled private driving school, set up by an enterprising individual where an old and decrepit vehicle, owned privately by the owner, is used. Vehicles equipped with dual controls for the learner, are unheard of.
- 8.2.3 A learner's permit, followed by a learner's license is obtained from the Provincial Police, by applying and completing a few simple formalities. For the privileged, the process of obtaining the piece of paper, booklet or computer generated plastic-card, entitling the holder to become a licensed driver, does not even require the applicant to present himself for a driving test. The result of such a prevailing system is evident in the road behavior and driving competence of the average licensed driver. With faster vehicles, better roads and an increasing traffic density, the accident rates, already amongst the highest in the world, are more likely to spiral than reduce.
- 8.2.4 Consequently, as with introduction of new vehicle registration systems and the necessity to re-register (already registered vehicles) as a way to clean up the database, it is equally necessary for current licensed drivers to undergo re-licensing. Re-licensing requires a system involving strict re-training (or re-orientation), to ensure that the new license, whether in the shape of a traditional book or a modern "plastic-card", signifies that the holder is competent - in the true sense - to drive in accordance with the demands of a modern and safe road and traffic environment.
- 8.2.5 The Laws and Rules regulating Licensing of Drivers are contained in the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1965, incorporating Federal and Provincial amendments. A comparison with the Laws of more progressive countries shows the archaic and outdated state of Pakistan's driving licensing and regulating environment. The only positive and encouraging aspect is the recent and increasingly well equipped presence and new systems introduced by the National Highways & Motorway Police (NH&MP). Traffic Police Islamabad (introduced recently in the Islamabad Federal Capital Territory and now emulated in Lahore, (by the Government of Punjab) are further positive steps. Marked improvement in driver awareness and road behaviour is evident, mainly because of the strict penalties imposed on offending drivers.
- 8.2.6 The penalty and fine system that the NH&MP and the Urban Traffic Police impose for driving offences is in accordance with a defined table of offences, penalty points and fines contained in the National Highway Safety Ordinance (NHSO-2000). However, for effective enforcement (that enables suspension or cancellation of a driving license resulting from repeated and undeterred offences) a computerized driving licensing system is still lacking. An effective system does

not end at a penalty being imposed and a fine being recovered, but enables that a track can be maintained of penalty points that accumulate and eventually result in temporary suspension or cancellation of the license.

8.2.7 Moreover, a distinction between vehicle and driver related offences is also required. While the NHSO 2000 provides for this distinction to be

achieved, implementation by the NH&MP and the Metropolitan Traffic Police is not possible because of the lack of unified or integrated working between the vehicle registration and licensing systems. In Pakistan, the National Highway Safety Ordinance (NHSO 2000) already provides for this linkage, but it needs the systems for effective implementation.

8.3. Section – III Requirements in the Context of Modernizing the Trucking Industry

8.3.1 With various related areas receiving focus under the stated objectives of “Modernising the Trucking Industry of Pakistan” the subject of Licensing of Truck Drivers - appropriately trained for driving on national highways and roads - cannot be ignored. It cannot be assumed that the large population of truck drivers, mostly accustomed to driving the old rigid body Bedford or even the newer Hino, will progressively adapt to driving requirements of a modern network of highways and roads. Drivers that go through such an evolutionary process would continue to be a danger on the road. This is already evident from the increasing number of trucks ending up in an overturned or jack-knifed position on our highways and roads. Therefore, in the context of modernizing the trucking industry and the objectives of the NTCIP, there is a need for a proper and systemized approach to retrain and re-license the existing population of truck drivers, estimated at 0.2 million, along with licensing of new drivers.

8.3.2 Such a systemized approach requires the following:

i) Creating the proper infrastructure for truck driver licensing, equipped with modern training systems and techniques. Manufacturers of

vehicles, such as Hino, Daewoo, Nissan etc. and large fleet users or operators, such as NLC, Shell, PSO, Caltex, etc. are organizations that would participate (as a corporate social responsibility) in setting up the infrastructure for re-training, in addition to others interested in the private sector.

ii) Introducing accredited and approved driving schools that are regulated and monitored. The driving schools would need to be equipped with proper and modern day requirement, training facilities, vehicles and driving instructors.

iii) Adopting a structured programme, for achieving re-orientation and re-licensing of an existing truck driver population of approximately 0.2 million, equipping them for the demands of modern day driving on the National Trade Corridor in accordance with international norms and standards.

iv) Reviewing and harmonizing of driver licensing laws, regulations, licensing methods, etc. for achieving consistency and compliance in all Provinces, Territories and Federally Administered Areas.

8.3.3 To consider private sector, especially truck manufacturers and large fleet operators, for setting up infrastructure for a re-licensing and re-orientation programme of current truck driver license holders, suggests a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) arrangement. While the truck driver's re-licensing is envisaged to be undertaken as a social responsibility by participants suggested above, the model would also attract private sector investment and involvement in setting up accredited driving schools. For a wider re-orientation, re-licensing, new driver learning programme, the large scales

involved makes it necessary to consider such models.

8.3.4 Accredited driving schools would be licensed and regulated by the Government and the license itself would be issued by the Licensing Authority, based on learning and certification issued by the driving schools. If required, the existing structure whereby the traffic police (supposedly) conducts a driving test could continue. However, for the role of the traffic police to become meaningful (rather than merely an eye-wash) capacity enhancement and re-training of the traffic police will also be required.

8.4 Section – IV Recommendations and Policy Interventions

8.4.1 For a modernized and effective system of driver licensing, and more particularly in the short term, a programme that aims to provide re-orientation and preparedness of truck drivers in the context of modernized trucking industry and the wider objectives of the NTCIP, it is recommended that :

- i. A programme of re-orientation and re-licensing of existing population of truck drivers is initiated by-on the one hand-teaming with large players in the trucking industry, such as manufacturers and large fleet operators while inviting on the other hand private sector investment and involvement in setting up accredited driving schools.
- ii. For achieving an environment of improved driver behaviour, compliance and road safety of international standards, a review of the existing system of driver training, driving schools, licensing, including current laws and regulations should be undertaken. The objective of such a review

would be to revise existing laws and regulations and create an environment that can claim to have a properly trained and licensed driver population.

- iii. The Government should review the existing Driver Licensing Laws, Rules and Regulations and ensure wider compliance by monitoring and regulating mechanisms, including implementation of the penalty structures contained in NHSO-2000, in a manner that can manage and effectively result in suspension or cancellation of the license of a dangerous and repeatedly delinquent driver. The existing penalty structures should be implemented, through computerization, in a manner that distinguishes between vehicle and driver related offences and penalties.
- iv. Computerized Driver Licensing Systems introduced by the Provincial and other Territories should require interplay and integration with the Vehicle Registration Systems, with

connectivity being provided to stakeholders responsible for traffic policing and penalty management.

- v. The revised laws, regulations and systems, evolved centrally, at Federal level, should be implemented by all Provinces, Territories and Federally Administered Areas, for achieving consistent and harmonized implementation and enforcement.
- vi. The private sector (interested local OEM's, large fleet operators - Shell, Caltex ,PSO and NLC) should be invited and attracted to participate in setting up accredited driving schools, in accordance with international standards, with

government effectively playing the roles of regulation, driver testing and license issuance authority.

8.4.2 Implementation

Ministry of Communications/ NTRC in collaboration with Provincial Governments, NAVTEC and TEVTA, to implement a project for setting up Driver Training Schools all over Pakistan. Interested local OEMs will also be encouraged to participate in setting up Drivers Training Schools. Alongside, review and harmonization of the existing Driver Licensing Laws, Rules and Regulations shall be carried out by NTRC.