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In partnership with

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PHOTO: An old tram crosses a street in Alexandria, Egypt, 08 September 2019. ©EPA-EFE/KHALED ELFIQI

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Table of Contents

Glossary	4
1 Introduction	5
1.1 Policies and infrastructure affect travel: The Transport sector	5
1.2 What is understood as a successful transport infrastructure?	6
2 Background	7
2.1 Transport Planning in Egypt	7
2.2 The Transport sector in Egypt	7
3 Assessment	9
3.1 Urban mobility	9
3.2 Intercity Travel & Shipping and Logistics	10
4 Conclusion	12
4.1 2014-2021 saw the implementation of old transport plans	12
4.2 Selective implementation favored hard investments over soft ones	12
4.3 More investment's that are spread more widely, but is it enough?	12
4.4 Making the case for a new approach to investing in the next seven years .	13
5 References	14

Glossary

Aconym	Name
MoT	Ministry of Transport
NAT	National Authority of Tunnels
ENR	Egyptian National Railways
LRT	Light-Rail Train
NAC	New Admin Capital
EGP	Egyptian Pounds
USD	United States Dollar
ECM	Egyptian Company for Metro Operations
ENR	Egyptian National Railways
GARBLT	General Authority for Roads & Bridges
LTRA	Land Transport Regulatory Authority
ENIT	Egyptian National Institute for Transport
CAR	Central Agency for Reconstruction
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
HSR	High-Speed Railway
SCA	Suez Canal Authority
NIB	National Investment Bank
MoH	Ministry of Housing
NUC	New Urban Communities
NUCA	New Urban Communities Authority
ACUD	Administrative Capital Urban Development
GCR	Greater Cairo Region
WEF	World Economic Forum
MiNTS	Master Plan for Nationwide Transport System
CREATS	Cairo Regional Area Transportation Study
FY	Financial Year

Introduction

The Egyptian Ministry of Transport's¹ YouTube channel provides an excellent documentation of the far-reaching changes taking place in the transport sector in Egypt: new highways connecting cities and new bridges; new train carriages for the national railways; new public transport systems such as the Metro, Monorail and Electric train. Between 2014 and 2021 the Egyptian state has invested 1 trillion EGP (~63.6 billion USD) in the transport sector² in its bid to achieve sustainable development³.

This paper seeks to examine policies and state investments in the transport sector from a sustainable development perspective, focusing on the environmental and social dimensions.

First, we define the sector to identify some basic categories for analysis: urban mobility, intercity travel and shipping and logistics. We then briefly define global best practices for each category.

Second, we provide background information on the transport planning discipline in Egypt guiding state investments and on the public and private investments themselves as well as the role of the informal sector. We attempt to answer: Where did all that money go?

Third, we assess - at a high level - these investments against the global best practices, examining their contribution to sustainable development. We assess urban mobility for Egypt's four largest urban agglomerations (Cairo, Alexandria, Mansoura, Souhag) and assess intercity travel and shipping and logistics at the national level.

Finally, we provide a conclusion and attempt to derive insights from the analysis.

Policies and infrastructure affect travel: The transport sector

The transport sector covers the base transport infrastructure (roads, railways, ports and airports) as well as the bodies regulating (ministries, authorities, agencies) and companies

providing services to move people (operators) or goods (logistics) using this infrastructure. The flows of people and goods are further broken down into flows within cities and metropolitan areas (urban), between cities (national) and between Egypt and the world (international).

Transport plays an important role in the economy and society. It contributes 5% to GDP⁴ and accounts for 6.7% of every household's budget⁵, excluding vehicle purchases. It employs millions of workers, especially in the informal sector. Transport affects the environment - and by extension public health as it contributes heavily to local air pollution and is the second-largest and fastest-growing emitter of Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.⁶ Reducing the climate impact of transport is globally a key policy objective, especially in light of the agreements of the COP21.

Road crashes are a major public health issue, killing 19 Egyptians daily, injuring many more and reducing prosperity. Promoting equitable access to transport lies in ensuring that citizens can access opportunities and services, affordably and safely. For rural citizens, it often means having uninterrupted road access to the nearest market, education, health, and public facility affordably. For urban dwellers, access is measured in the travel time differential experienced between those with private cars and motorcycles and those without for the same trip,⁸ and in the access to jobs for residents in different neighbourhoods.⁹ For vulnerable citizens, it can be the affordability of a ticket for the poor; the safety from harassment for women or the accessibility of the transport system for those with a disability.

Transport is thus very much a tool for human development and social inclusion. Investments can bring considerable economic returns and are one of the first choices of pursuit for the development fields.¹⁰

For the purpose of this paper, we shall distinguish between three types of mobility within the transport sector:

- **Urban mobility**, or the travel of people within cities to access work and opportunities
- **Intercity travel**, or the travel of people between cities (local, regionally, and internationally)
- **Shipping and logistics**, or the movement of goods, products, or raw materials. A distinction can be made between the physical transport (shipping) and the process of managing the entire physical transport operation (logistics), which includes storage, packing, customs etc.

What is understood as a successful transport infrastructure?

Urban mobility

McKinsey & Company benchmarks urban-transport systems globally to identify the components of effective urban mobility. They identify five determinants of 'leading' systems:¹¹

- **Availability:** the presence of adequate road infrastructure, public transport infrastructure, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and new mobility modes. Indicators such as density of networks, the quality thereof, the share of the population serviced and the number of shared transport (bikes and cars for short-term rental) measure the system quality.
- **Safety and sustainable development:** safety as measured by the accident rate and COVID-19 related public-transport disinfection measures and environmental safety as measured by local air quality and the fleet composition affecting GHG emissions
- **Affordability:** the ratio of household expenditure dedicated to transport and the measures taken to protect vulnerable users
- **Efficiency:** the impact of traffic congestion on private cars, and on public transport, as well as the frequency and reliability of public transport services.
- **Convenience:** the availability of electronic services (apps, WIFI, passenger information systems, online payment), the travel comfort (bus and train carriage quality, accessibility), the intermodality offered (ability to switch between bus and rail) and the ticketing experience (universal travel card, payment by app, and coverage thereof of modes).

The report ranks cities and identifies leading cities to invest heavily in improving the availability of public transport infrastructure while the weakest cities neglect to invest in the safety and sustainability in their systems.

Transport justice literature critiques traditional transport planning for focusing on system performance and its exclusion of social considerations of users and proposes sustainable transport to directly address and mitigate disparities in mobility and accessibility.¹²

Intercity travel and shipping and logistics

Transport is an enabler of economic growth and development. In 2014, Development Finance Institutions (DFI) highlighted figures such as 40% of the value of produce transported from upper Egypt lost due to weak logistics; logistics accounting for around 20% of GDP compared with a global average of 10-12% and Egypt's roads being ranked amongst the worst worldwide.¹³

The World Economic Forum (WEF) benchmarks transport infrastructure using the Global Competitiveness Index, which assesses institutions, policies and infrastructure. It bases its benchmarks on statistical data (length of the network) and on survey data (perception) on the availability and quality of both transport infrastructure, and services.

The transport pillars cover indicators such as 'airport density', 'road congestion', 'quality of roads' and 'competence of the logistics industry'.¹⁴

Background

Transport planning in Egypt

Transport Planning in Egypt has historically been dominated by foreign consultants working with the MoP or the MoT within the framework of bilateral aid and technical assistance. Since the 1950s French, British, Soviet and Japanese expertise studied, designed and proposed interventions to plan and build out key urban mobility, intercity travel and shipping & logistics infrastructure. The two most influential recent studies are the Cairo Regional Area Transportation Study (CREATS) transport master plan commissioned for Cairo in 2000 & completed in 2002,¹⁵ and the Master Plan for Nationwide Transport System (MiNTS) commissioned for Egypt in 2009 & completed in 2012.¹⁶

MiNTS was specific in aiming to 'diversify [its components] beyond the traditional "hardware" concepts associated with infrastructure provision' and towards including what it

07 Egypt Transport Policies 2014-2021

calls a ‘software’ and ‘humanware’ cornerstones. Software refers to the adoption of technology, international standards and modal integration, while humanware refers to having qualified personnel (through dedicated training programs) that collaborates across ministerial boundaries and has access to data for decision-making purposes.

The transport sector in Egypt

Public investments dominate

The Egyptian state invested 1 trillion EGP (~63.6 billion USD 2021) over seven years in transport, supplying 90% of inflows into the sector (as opposed to private investments). The size of these public investments doubled from ~8 billion USD annually in 2014 to an expected 245 billion EGP (~15.5 billion USD) in the 2021/22 fiscal year. A breakdown of investments by institution, project type and relative size is shown in Table 21.¹⁷

The Ministry of Transport (MoT) makes transport-specific plans and monitors their implementation directly or through one of its affiliated economic authorities. These include operators such as the Egyptian Company for Metro Operations (ECM), which operates the Cairo Metro and the Egyptian National Railways (ENR). It also includes more specialised authorities such as the General Authority for Roads and Bridges (GARBLT), which maintains roads nationwide, the Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LTRA)¹ which regulates land-based passenger

1 The LTRA was finally established by Law #73 in 2019 (LTRA Law), in contrast to its predecessor, the Greater Cairo Transport Regulatory Agency (GCTRA) which was mainly based on Prime Ministerial & Presidential decrees.

and freight transport and the Egyptian National Institute for Transport (ENIT) which conducts transport studies and training.

The most significant authority is the National Authority of Tunnels (NAT) which will receive the largest investment contingent. NAT was established in 1983 to facilitate the construction of the Cairo Metro and has since grown and expanded its scope to cover the new construction of the national ‘Electric High-Speed Railway (HSR)’.

The unaccounted portion of the network investments is likely to cover investments in the Suez Canal region through the Suez Canal Authority (SCA), in the ongoing expansion of the nationwide inland dry-port infrastructure, the maritime ports infrastructure, the river ports and management infrastructure and the National Roads project. This project includes the construction of 5000 km of new roads nationwide and is currently nearing completion. Some of its projects were financed by the National Investment Bank (NIB), which took on large debts and is currently undergoing a restructuring process to avoid default¹⁸.

The Ministry of Housing (MoH) is the last significant public player in national transport, as it constructs and maintains the New Urban Communities (NUC) through the affiliated New Urban Communities Authority (NUCA) and as it is a major shareholder in the Administrative Capital Urban Development (ACUD) company.

The Ministry of Local Development (MoLD) encompasses the Governorates, which control Egypt’s only public bus operators, the Cairo Transport Authority (CTA) and Alexandria Public Transport Authority (APTA), respectively, as well as the plethora of local roads. The Governorates also regulate the Paratransit sector (See 2.2.3).

Institution/affiliated with	Purpose	Sample Projects	Budget (FY21-22)
Ministry of Transport (MoT)	Makes transport-specific plans and monitors their implementation.	‘Widening of the Cairo Ring Road’ ‘Expansion of the Nile Crossings’	23b EGP (~1.5b USD)
National Authority of Tunnels (NAT) /MoT	Implements Metro Lines	‘Cairo Metro Line 3 / 4’ ‘Light-Rail Train (LRT)’ ‘East & West Monorails’ ‘Abu Kir Alexandria Metro’ ‘Electric High-Speed Railway’	113b EGP (~7.2b USD)
Egyptian National Railways (ENR) /MoT	Manages & Operates the Railway network	‘Maintenance backlog’ ‘Safety & Communication systems upgrade’	27b EGP (~1.7b USD)
Egyptian Company for Metro Operations (ECM)	Operating the company metro		33b EGP (~2b USD)
General Authority for Roads & Bridges (GARBLT)	Maintenance of the road network		
Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LTRA)	Regulation of land based passenger & freight transport	‘Cairo Ring Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)’	
Central Agency for Reconstruction (CAR)	- Road projects	‘Cairo Thoroughfares’	3b EGP (~190m USD)

Table 1: Breakdown of the MoP FY21-22 Budget. Total Budgets don’t add up to 245b EGP as some projects are not indicated in the source document.

Private investments innovate

Private investment flows are much more limited but not much less impactful. Urban mobility is changing due to new mobility players such as ride-hailing companies (i.e. UBER, Careem) disrupting the taxi market within cities, SWVL segmenting a high-end microbus niche and dominating service within cities and a plethora of private bus operators vying for private concessions to operate within Cairo. Intercity travel and shipping and logistics is also changing as the same companies offer inter-city service, startups such as Trella digitise freight forwarding; and logistics startups such as Bosta raise venture funds and continue to grow.

Informal sector continues

These investment flows have not yet significantly displaced the incumbent informal sector, which continues to thrive within transport². Urban Mobility is dominated by informal private modes of transport, specifically lightly regulated 14-seater or 7-seater minibuses which are driver-owned or organised by small fleets and are called 'Paratransit'. Intercity Travel & Shipping and Logistics includes significant informality as well, with minibuses offering fast, and sometimes only, services between governorates and small pick-up trucks transporting a significant amount of goods.

Assessment

Urban mobility

Greater Cairo Region

1. Availability of infrastructure

Public investments in transport have concentrated on the Greater Cairo Region (GCR). In FY15-16, 93% of the national investment budget in public transport was concentrated on the expansion of the Cairo Metro Line 3.²⁰

Investments in public transport have markedly increased and diversified since and expanded to include the Eastern and Western monorails with a combined length of 98km, a new Light Rail Transit system (90km) that will connect Cairo

with its western suburbs, a proposed Bus-Rapid-Transit (BRT) system on the Ring Road (~100km) in addition to an expected expansion of the Cairo Metro network by 52km until 2025. These investments will significantly improve accessibility,⁹ and increase the share of the population who can access the network. The network itself will become more valuable to use, as it reaches more places. Rail-based projects are all-electric and thus highly efficient. In fact, the Monorail was innovatively financed through the issuance of green climate bonds²¹, the first of its kind in the Middle East. The Cairo Metro has been shown to reduced pollution.²²

Investments in the road network are altering the urban environment in favour of car-centric streets and include the construction of substantial new intercity highways and the widening of inner-city boulevards.²³ While this improves availability, questions have been raised over whether the alleviation of traffic congestion will last as long as road safety concerns remain.²⁴

Cycling and pedestrian infrastructure lack far behind, with some sporadic (and mostly poorly designed) bike lane projects (such as the Nasser Axis in 6th of October or the Ahl Masr Pathway) and a plethora of pedestrian bridges associated with the expanding road network.

New mobility modes (i.e. ride-hailing, shared bookable microbus services) are increasing service provision but remain weakly regulated. Increasingly, regulatory weaknesses threaten the private sector's contribution to the development and maintenance of a balanced city-wide system.²⁵

2. Transit-oriented development

These new investments, however, include a significant shift in the urban planning paradigm of the Egyptian state: whereas all eight NUC's in the GCR started out merely connected with the city proper through a road network, today's new developments are increasingly designed and implemented around the expanding transit network.

A case in point is 6th of October, which was developed starting the 1980s as the first NUC close to Cairo. The Mehwar highway was constructed to connect it directly with the city centre in the 1990s, and then the CTA started operating limited bus services. By 2020, around 3% of passengers travelled in CTA buses, compared to 74% travelling on minibuses, informal transit services that mushroomed to fill the public transport supply gap.²⁶

Transit-oriented development proposes maximising the amount of residential, business and leisure space within walking distance of public transport, and constructing new developments in tandem with public transport. It is widely regarded as an urban development best practice.

2 For an excellent treatise of Paratransit please refer to 'Paratransit in African Cities'.¹⁹ For more info on paratransit operations in Egypt please refer to the [TfC Urban Mobility Lab](#) 8 9.

Today, we are seeing new developments in the GCR increasingly connected to the aforementioned under-construction transit network. The Eastern Monorail is expected to shift 5-10% of travel demand from the informal minibuses. The New Administrative Capital (NAC) has been designed around the electric Light Rail Train (LRT) and western Monorails. Private bus companies have been commissioned to provide service to and within the NAC, even before the NAC itself entered into use.

3. Digitisation in transport

The private sector has led efforts to digitise transport.

The first generation of digital technologies increased the convenience of travelling: First, trip-planning apps (i.e. Bey2ollak, Google Maps) started catering to private car riders by offering congestion data. Over time, they expanded to include public transport data, sometimes in real-time. Second, ride-hailing firms (i.e. Uber, Careem) started providing taxi services with digital hailing and payment options. Prime Minister Decree No. 2180 of 2019 (Ridehail Law) regulated such services and integrated them with the public regulatory regime.

Increasingly, digital technologies are enabling new efficiencies in operation, enhancing service provision: Operators are increasingly using digital fleet-management systems and providing real-time passenger information systems to the public. New mobility modes are increasingly catering to niche markets, such as offering scooter-hailing services (i.e. Uber Scooter) or seasonal niche long-distance trips (i.e. SWVL)

4. Public vs. private

A shift towards more private sector participation in the sector is increasing the reach of these system modernisation efforts. In road transport, Cairo Governor Decree No. 1567 of 2004 and Decree No. 3853 of 2008 (Private Bus Decrees) each enabled private sector service provision using minibuses and large public buses, respectively. In rail transport, Law No. 20 of 2018 (Participation in Rail Law) abolished the State monopoly over the national railway system projects allowing private sector participation in the construction, maintenance and operation of rail services. RATPdev, an international operator, recently took control over the operation of Line 3 of the Cairo Metro, with a mandate to increase ridership through enhanced quality of service and operational efficiencies.²⁷ Law No. 150 of 2020 (Parking Law) organises vehicle parking on the street, defining standards and regulations for hitherto informal parking regulators for the first time.

Alexandria

Alexandria, Egypt's second-largest city, has seen its share of transport investments increase.

Investments in public transport include the recent fleet renewal of part of the tram network (the first purchase of new rolling stock since the 1970s)²⁸ and the ongoing electrification and upgrade of the Abou Qir-Alexandria line to become a Metro. Cairo Metro Line 1 was the result of a similar project in the 1980s.

Secondary and tertiary cities

The NAC is being built around new mass transit infrastructure (LRT and western Monorails) and services (Bus services within the NAC, and connecting the NAC and the GCR).

Al Mansoura, Egypt's fourth-largest city, is currently studying multiple new rail projects: An intercity commuter rail connecting Tanta with Damietta through Mansoura²⁹ and an intercity commuter train connecting Mansoura with Belkas, followed by New Mansoura City or Gamasa. This second project has been referred to in the Egyptian Media as the 'Mansoura Metro'.

Souhag, Egypt's third-largest city, has seen investments in its road network. Local proposals to build a metro line connecting the historic city with New Souhag have yet to materialise into concrete project proposals.

Intercity travel and shipping and logistics

Road network

The National Roads Project (NRP) has improved the regional connectivity between cities in Egypt. Egypt's standing on road quality in the aforementioned Road Quality Index as part of the WEF Global Competitiveness Index improved its rank from 113 to 28, worldwide.¹⁷ The NRP includes the construction of up to new 21 Nile crossings, which are likely to significantly improve connectivity between rural areas and their closest large city.

Rail network

The ENR transported 270m passengers in 2019, most of them are low-income citizens for whom the ENR is the main mode of affordable, interurban travel. The rail infrastructure is ageing, poorly maintained and subject to frequent accidents and delays, which disproportionately impacts Egypt's poorest citizens.³⁰ The Egyptian MoT often cites an overcrowding issue of the ENR, with trains operating at 120% capacity.

Ongoing investments in the ENR include implementing a new Safety Management System comprising signalling improvements and improved human resource management; improving punctuality from 75% to 90% of trains running on time and the purchase of new rolling stock.

The overcrowding issue led the state to invest in the construction of a parallel electric rail network, referred to as the High-Speed-Rail (HSR). NAT recently signed a contract to construct a first phase connecting Ain Sokhna with New Al Alamein city via the NAC, intending to later expand the network to 1800 km reaching Safaga port, Luxor, Aswan and 6th of October City.

While the network will include high-speed trains operating at 250 km/h, it will mainly comprise regional trains connecting nearby cities and freight trains connecting maritime ports with a variety of inland dry-ports around Egypt's cities. The first phase is expected to transport 30 million passengers annually, while the second and third phases aim respectively at alleviating congestion on the existing ENR network and enabling 1-day tourism between Egypt's red sea coastal tourist resorts and ancient sites at Luxor and Aswan.

International trade

While the HSR network invokes images of Europe's high-speed trains, these are likely to play a small role relative to freight. At present, freight transported by the ENR carries 1% of all cargo moved within Egypt. The freight trains that are part of the HSR network are expected to increase that to 15%, a significant increase.

Ongoing studies are exploring the possibility of connecting Egypt's rail network with Sudan's, as well as Egypt's road network with Sudan and with Chad (through Libya)³¹.

Conclusion

2014-2021 saw the implementation of old transport plans

If you look back at the baseline year of 2014 and have 1-trillion EGP to spend, what would you do with it?

The Egyptian state focused on implementing the most recent comprehensive transport plans: MiNTS (2012) for the nation and CREATS (2002) for the GCR. Look closely, and either plan is the hidden originator of most (but not all) of the current projects:

MiNTS referred to road infrastructure 'receiving the highest investment priority' and thus paving the way for the National Road Project. Rail services and specifically its role in facilitating shipping and logistics paved the way for the inaccurately named freight-focused HSR network. CREATS proposed the expansion of transit capacity inside the GCR proposing the under-construction lines of the Cairo Metro, Monorails and LRT.

Over the past years, the Egyptian state succeeded in scaling up the implementation of these long-planned projects: Egypt's roads improved strongly, moving up 85 ranks on the WEF ranking. The HSR network moved from perceived idea to proposal towards the construction stage and the procurement of all required components. The GCR is a construction site for its new transit infrastructure. Annual investments are almost double what they were seven years ago.

Selective implementation favoured hard investments over soft ones

Assessing the benefits of these investments is a more difficult challenge: Egypt moved up only four ranks in the overall infrastructure pillar of the Global Competitiveness Index 2019. It even moved down on the DHL Global Connectedness Index as 'softer' investments such as the operating environment and the operators using the new road networks stagnated.³² Cairo Metro Line 3 is transporting fewer passengers than anticipated, leading the MoT to commission the French RATPdev to increase ridership.

RATPdev's role focuses on building up what MiNTS called the 'software' and 'humanware' components: It aims at 'higher punctuality and regularity, acclaimed customer service practices and strong asset maintenance' while building local human capital, including through the construction of a local Mobility Training Centre.

While there is some progress on the 'software' (the LTRA law, Ridehail Law, the Parking Law and the Participation in Rail law) and the 'humanware' (RATPdev Mobility Training Centre) sides, it pales compared with the infrastructure side. There has been no equivalent public-sector financial investment in either cornerstone of MiNTS, which led to a development of the state-led transport sector skewed towards concrete infrastructure. This contrasts with private-sector investments, which have used mostly relatively much smaller sums in 'software' and 'humanware' elements but seeking higher returns.

More investments that are spread more widely, but is that enough?

In FY21-22, transport infrastructure investments are ~16 billion USD, a substantial increase from 2014.

These investments are increasingly distributed spatially:

- Where in 2015 virtually all national investment in public transport went into the Cairo Metro²⁰, in 2021 investments are flowing in multiple modes across Cairo, Alexandria and the NAC.
- Transit connections linking NUCs of all governorates with their old urban agglomerations are increasingly discussed, such as in Souhag, and planned, mostly through the HSR network. This is an important milestone in enabling NUCs to achieve population targets, which have long been elusive due to weak mass transit connections.⁸
- This critique applies to road investments, which have focused solely on a car-centric improvement of system performance, with benefits for intercity travel and shipping and logistics at the expense of local citizens and urban mobility.²³
- It applies partially to rail investments, which have the benefit of increasing accessibility through the expansion of the public transport network.

Making the case for a novel approach to investing in the next seven years

Soft investments in 'software' and 'humanware'

Key enabling steps towards a more just and fair transport system include the newly established LTRA and the new parking law.

- The LTRA should, in theory, design and lead non-concrete interventions that achieve wider social benefits.
- The parking law should, in theory, enable wealthier car users to contribute more funding towards mass transit projects that benefit less fortunate riders who rely on mass transit.

To realise their effective mandates the LTRA and local transport bureaus need to grow institutionally and in capacity.³ Investing in structural funds for the LTRA – and other institutions working on regulating transport at the national and local levels – is necessary to do so, and requires a different and new investment approach that favours a more decentralised control and distribution of funds.

Decentralising investments

Decision-making and financing in the transport sector are highly centralised, with most funds administered through national-level institutions based in Cairo. While funds have been flowing more widely across the nation, most funds still flow to transit projects in Cairo and Alexandria. This is partly a reflection of pre-existing plans for project proposals within them. In contrast, both Mansoura and Suhag have proposals for respective metro systems originating from their respective universities. Unlike Cairo and Alexandria, the lack of investments in transport plans to move these proposals from the idea stage to the project-concept stage effectively denies these cities their proportional share of national investments in transit.

Locally grounded transport investments such as improvements to transport terminals and interchanges, operational service improvements to the dominating informal transport sector and active travel infrastructure are minimal and uncoordinated. This issue is further compounded by

³ In fact, this point was re-iterated by the head of the Ministry of Transport's planning unit at a recent conference³³.

12 Egypt Transport Policies 2014-2021

the difficulty in accessing data and the minimal public involvement in the ideation and planning phases of transport plans. Transport interventions at the local level often do not happen as the governorates and local municipalities do not have the capacity for medium-term capital investment planning, project design, appraisal, and implementation; have neither funds nor control to raise or use limited funds to build such capacity and implement effective projects.

Potential effective non-capital investments and a way forward

Over the past year across multiple projects, I had the luck of co-designing multiple potential interventions that could rapidly improve transport outcomes at much higher rates of return.

Example: A targeted Social Mobility Subsidy Scheme that increases system-level funding, improves service quality while simultaneously protecting vulnerable user segments from price increases and access to the metropolitan level labour market and by extension social mobility.⁹

Example II: The scaling up of regional and local Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) that diagnose the present context, forecast future scenarios, define a local vision and set of targets, propose packages of measures to achieve said targets and turn them into an actionable road map to implement.²⁶

Such investments in transport ‘software’ and ‘humanware’ should be the focus of future public investment cycles and are a natural extension to realise transport as an enabler of economic growth and of sustainable development, as well as empower governorates and localities to more actively urban mobility within their cities, inter-city travel between their cities and their shipping and freight capacity.

More targeted research is needed to develop such ideas from the idea stage to viable concepts. Transport planning needs to become more localised and iterative. More thought needs to be put into how the central state can ensure that its increasing investment capacity is channelled more effectively towards its final recipients through its multi-level institutions: ministries, authorities, governorates and local units.

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About the Arab Reform Initiative

The Arab Reform Initiative is an independent Arab think tank working with expert partners in the Middle East and North Africa and beyond to articulate a home-grown agenda for democratic change and social justice. It conducts research and policy analysis and provides a platform for inspirational voices based on the principles of diversity, impartiality, and gender equality.

About Women for Justice Foundation

Women for Justice Foundation is a Canadian non-profit organization, aiming at developing and implementing activities that enhance women's participation, boost community development and promote rights, social justice, peace and dialogue through advocacy, networking and researching.



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