**Summary of the results of the PA 6 impact evaluation**

**Summary of the impact evaluation preparation**

The impact evaluation was preceded by several months of communication within the programming and evaluation department. In this sense, the "Working group for the management of the evaluation for the OPII of the MTC SR" was also established, which at the first meeting, in addition to approving the statute and rules of procedure, also commented on evaluation questions for PO 3, PO 6 (specific objective 6.2 of first-class roads). Since the signing of the terms of reference at the end of January 2022, there has been intensive communication between the client and the team of evaluators.

**Summary of evaluators’ answers on main evaluation questions**

The aim of the *"* *Impact assessment of projects financed under priority axis no. 6 Road infrastructure (outside TEN-T CORE) OP Integrated infrastructure 2014 – 2020".* The evaluation was focused on priority axis 6 specific objective 6.2 Improving the safety and accessibility of the TEN-T road infrastructure and regional mobility through the construction and modernization of Class I roads. The goal of the assessment was to evaluate whether the result indicators were achieved and, above all, what impact ESIF financial interventions had on their achievement. By its very nature, the impact assessment does not provide room for questions regarding changes in the field of output and result indicators, but points to the impact of the intervention on the changes made and the achievement of specific goals.

The evaluation team provided answers to all evaluation questions regarding the selected sample of projects supported under OPII PA 6 SO 6.2. In the case of **evaluation question no. 1** „*What were the most significant results from the interventions allocated to PO6 OPII projects in achieving specific objective 6.2 (ŠC 6.2)?“* the following main benefits from the provided OPII interventions have been identified:

* improving the quality of transport and improving transport comfort on Class I roads;
* increase in travel time savings;
* increase in average speed;
* increase in road traffic safety and decrease in accidents;
* reduction of negative impacts on the environment;
* wider socio-economic effects.

In connection with evaluation **question no. 1**, it should be noted that **the most significant effect** among these benefits is the **increase in travel time savings.**

Evaluation **question no. 2** „*Has road traffic safety increased through construction and modernization projects of Class I roads financed under PO 6, ŠC 6.2 OPII?***” is of key importance for the assessment of the effectiveness** of public interventions **for projects of construction and modernization of Class I roads outside the TEN-T CORE.** The analysis carried out showed the positive impact of these interventions on the **reduction of accidents** and **the increase of road traffic safety**. The problem, however, is the fact that the results achieved in this area are distorted due to the COVID pandemic, which resulted in reduced mobility.

Evaluation **question no. 3** “*What is the contribution of the projects implemented within PO6, SO 6.2 to the reduction of environmental burdens and noise?”* regarding the impact of implemented interventions in the analysed area on the reduction of environmental burdens and noise was only partially answered. The evaluation team did not provide evidence of the direct impact of the assessed investments of modernization and reconstruction of Class I roads on the reduction of environmental burdens and noise. Only the indirect impact of the aforementioned investments on the improvement of the environment was demonstrated, because of the increase in the flow of road traffic and the reduction of driving times. At the same time, poorly prepared feasibility studies, or incomplete feasibility studies and CBA analyses in the project preparation stage, were a problem for ensuring a sufficient explanatory power of the results of the analyses connected not only with the given question, but also with all evaluation questions. In addition to the mentioned factors, the results of this impact assessment were also distorted due to the short period of operation of the analysed projects and non-updated values ​​of traffic flows (RPDI).

**The most significant findings resulting from the Final Impact Assessment Report**

1. The following results were identified for the entire sample of projects that were the subject of the impact analysis:
2. The average relative accident rate reaches a lower value for all consequences of accidents because of interventions from ESIF in the evaluated projects. The total number of traffic accidents in relation to the transport services implemented on the road network, which was the subject of the impact assessment, decreased and the safety of road traffic on these sections of the road network increased. At the same time, the analysis showed that there was also a reduction in the severity of the consequences of traffic accidents;
3. In the case of all assessed projects, after the commissioning of a newly built or reconstructed section of the first class road, there was an increase in the average speed as a result of interventions from public sources;
4. Based on the updated traffic forecast in two versions, it was clearly established that the most significant benefit is the saving in travel time. At the same time, it was demonstrated that the dynamics of the development of traffic flows represents a risk factor for meeting the target value of the subject result indicator "achieved travel time savings". In the case of a significant increase in the values of traffic flows compared to the original version of the CBA, there is a risk that the target value of the indicator in question set at the level of SO 6.2 will not be met. In this context, it is necessary to create conditions for continuous monitoring of the development of traffic flows on first class roads and subsequently to ensure the updating of the values of achieved travel time savings through ex-post CBA analyses;
5. All evaluated projects included in their objectives the improvement of the environment, conditions for the protection of life and health of the inhabitants. The analysis showed that positive environmental effects were manifested in projects aimed at building new road infrastructure. Modernized road sections affect the quality of the environment indirectly due to the increase in the flow of road traffic, reduction of driving times, decrease in emissions, which indirectly affects the quality of the environment:

* from the point of view of the analysis of broader socio-economic effects (unemployment, development of the business environment) it emerged that interventions from public sources in the implementation of the evaluated projects have an indirect effect on increasing the competitiveness of the affected regions, on the growth of employment and the improvement of the economic situation of the respective location;
* the impact evaluation showed that, from the point of view of the effectiveness of the intervention in the evaluated projects (based on the ratio of achieved results and investment expenses), projects aimed at building new roads - city bypasses are more advantageous compared to projects focused on the reconstruction of first class roads.

Based on the impact assessment, the following recommendations were proposed in order to increase the efficiency of interventions from public resources for projects of construction and modernization of sections of I-class roads:

1. carry out an impact assessment of projects at least 5 years after the end of the projects in an effort to eliminate possible short-term fluctuations in the traffic behaviour of residents and also in the traffic situation in the relevant location;
2. demand, when submitting transport investment projects, that the developed feasibility studies be completed and increase the emphasis on the quality of their elaboration;
3. when submitting projects (request), put more emphasis on the quality of processing and the reporting ability of CBA;
4. require from beneficiaries to process ex-post CBA within the monitoring period of the project;
5. the current format of monitoring reports represents only a limited source of information for the needs of impact assessment, especially when it comes to the substantive focus of the project, its goals and wider socio-economic benefits. In this context, it is necessary to use the extended information about the project at [www.opii.gov.sk](http://www.opii.gov.sk);
6. to carry out a satisfaction survey of residents, or representatives of local governments, entrepreneurs, etc. with the aim of obtaining absent data and information related primarily to the increase in travel comfort and wider socio-economic benefits obtained by end users as a result of the support of projects financed by OPII, PA6 SO 6.2;
7. verify the conclusions of the carried out impact assessment after the publication of the results of the national traffic census (2022);
8. create conditions for the impact assessment to be carried out, assuming the availability of current data on traffic flows (RPDI);
9. evaluate data on traffic flows (RPDI) on roads, number of passengers in public passenger transport, urban public transport, etc.) in the first year after the period of validity of measures restricting mobility in connection with COVID-19 and issue guidance for interested persons regarding the processing of CBA, ex- post CBA, feasibility studies and other traffic analyses, including projects related to COVID-19;
10. in the case of road infrastructure projects (first class roads), consider the possibility of installing automatic traffic counters in order to monitor traffic intensity and evaluate project results;
11. re-evaluate the indicator "Number of removed critical accident locations and collision points on first class roads". For the future setting of the values of measurable indicators, it is more appropriate to use the "number of total accidents" as an indicator, or accident density indicator;
12. verify the environmental benefits of projects through pollutant emissions and noise measurements;
13. in the monitoring reports, to supplement the justification for the fulfilment of the indicator "Number of people killed on first class roads", as this indicator was evaluated only formally in the monitoring reports. If the format of the monitoring reports does not allow this, then this justification must be stated within the so-called extended information on the project;
14. carry out a re-evaluation of the project "Reconstruction of road I/65 Turčianske Teplice - Príbovce" at least 5 years after its completion, as the results of the impact assessment are only affected by the short period of operation of this project.