



Honduras

MCC Learning from

Transportation and Farm to Market Roads

NORC, May 2014

MCC has identified the following programmatic and evaluation lessons based on the NORC Honduras Compact Transportation and Farm to Market Roads evaluation.

PROGRAMMATIC LESSONS

As a result of a FY2014 realignment of the Department of Compact Operations, the transport practice was organized as a single business unit with various staff under one **Practice Lead and Senior Director (PLSD)** with expertise in transport sector. Work is underway by the transport unit to:

- Develop and put in place project management tools and procedures that will significantly enhance consistency and quality of practices during the development and implementation of transport projects.
- Specific guidelines and templates will be developed to support various aspects of MCC's transport practices ranging from data collection to the application HDM-IV for planning and decision support.
- Ensure stricter accountability in the planning, design and construction of transport facilities so projects are executed efficiently, cost effectively and in a timely manner.
- Ensure closer monitoring of implementation oversight by the PLSDs through operational authority over the management of their projects in their respective portfolios at each stage of compact development and implementation.

In addition, the PLSD will be the primary POC with Economic Analysis (EA) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) during the planning and implementation of any evaluation of transport projects. Specific transport staff will be assigned by PLSD for specific evaluation exercises as may be required. These actions, combined with strengthening of the capacity of the MCA staff for improved oversight, are expected to reduce construction delays and improve the overall quality of the road projects.

EVALUATION LESSONS

- *Evaluation design must set realistic timelines to align exposure period with actual project implementation.* Inevitably there are delays in large infrastructure projects, which may in turn affect evaluation timelines. In the case of Honduras, given the delays in implementation and inflexibility in the evaluation schedule, the exposure period to the improved roads network in some cases was only 5-6 months, whereas for some sections of CA-5 highway rehabilitation wasn't completed at the time

of endline data collection. This is a limited exposure period when decision makers are interested in looking at longer term outcomes, such as changes in prices and income.

- *Evaluation design must carefully understand the target beneficiary population.* For this evaluation, the target population for the household survey was the population of all households in Honduras at the beginning and end of the project. For the evaluation, the Evaluator used a sample frame constructed for the most recent national census. By focusing on the broader Honduran population, while the evaluation looks at average effects across the country, it is reasonable to expect that some specific groups, particularly those who live closer to the roads upgraded and businesses that rely on the Highway CA-5, would benefit more from the investments.
- *Evaluation design should be structured to ask about sustainability.* One of the peer reviewers of the Network Model report commented that for any evaluation of road improvement projects, understanding if and why poor road construction outcomes occurred is important. For future MCC Roads evaluations, we would like to try and answer questions like: Was poor road construction an outcome? If so, then we should explore ways to mitigate this in the future.

As a result of these lessons, MCC evaluation practices changed in the following ways:

- *MCC institutionalized a formal review process for evaluations.* The Monitoring and Evaluation unit is pilot testing a formal review process that defines critical milestones in the evaluation cycle that require substantive review and clearance by key internal stakeholders. This review process also requires local stakeholder review of key evaluation documents in consultation with the evaluator prior to submission to MCC to provide feedback on feasibility of proposed evaluation, as well as technical, and factual accuracy of evaluation documents. The formal review process is intended to ensure that evaluations are designed with stakeholder buy-in, are designed using the program logic, use appropriate methodologies for the timeframe of the expected results, and are flexible enough to adjust to changes in implementation.
- *MCC institutionalized continuous evaluation risk assessment.* An Evaluation Risk Assessment Checklist has been developed and institutionalized by the Monitoring and Evaluation unit. The risk assessment checklist is reviewed by the M&E lead with M&E management. The risk assessment is intended to inform decision making and identify necessary course correction for more timely response to risk identification.
- *MCC institutionalized use of standardized evaluation templates.* The Monitoring and Evaluation unit has developed standardized templates to provide guidance internally and to independent evaluators on expectations related to evaluation activities and products. These templates are intended to clarify and raise standards for evaluations by influencing the daily work of M&E staff and evaluators.