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**Past, Present, and Future of ASEAN Transport Cooperation**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper attempts to look at the history of ASEAN transformation and regional cooperation in the transport sector in particular. It also attempts to look into the future of ASEAN transport cooperation as it attempts to transform itself into a progressive evolution of the transportation systems in the region. This paper aims to address the following research questions:

- 1. How did it start as a perspective on formulating transport action plan in the context of ASEAN regionalism?*
- 2. How does it benefit the countries of ASEAN in terms of regional cooperation, multilateral agreements, and other protocols?*

The methodology employed in this paper borrows from Carol Weiss's Theory-based Evaluation (TBE). On that account, there is a need to review the current status and outcome with regards to past practices, current implementation, and future roadmap of ASEAN transport cooperation to move forward and to carry out its mission and service to its people today and tomorrow.

**Keywords:** ASEAN Transport Cooperation, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN Member States (AMS), Theory-based Evaluation (TBE), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

## **Introduction**

ASEAN state leaders recognize the vital role that the transport system plays in the development of the country's economy, trade and commerce, and tourism. The goal is to establish an efficient, safe and integrated transport system within ASEAN and other neighboring countries to support the development of trade and tourism as well as economic development. The hard work by the ASEAN leadership, together with their technical working groups as well as the professional staff of the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), has borne commendable efforts. It is indispensable for every ASEAN Government, through the Heads of Transport Ministers, to formulate and implement a strategic action plan leading to the progressive evolution of the transportation system in the country, particularly in the Southeast Asian region. Member-countries have been working to improve regional transportation since the creation of the ASEAN Transport Ministers (ATM) meeting in 1996. On that account, ASEAN should continue to progress and continue to acknowledge its commitment to binding ASEAN economies closer together and in building the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

Speaking in the context of pre-ASEAN evolution and development, Lambino (2014) on the other hand, classifies four periods of ASEAN transformation. First, its initial institutionalization from 1967 to around 1976; Second, international recognition from around 1976 to 1991; Third, expansion and deepening of partnerships from around 1991 to 2003 and Fourth, the preparation of ASEAN community from around 2003 to 2015 (Lambino, 2014).

Nowadays, ASEAN is one of the most viable regional organizations, it has developed a network of dialogues by and between world's power and organization, gaining a number of important practical concessions with trading partners, and uniting members toward forging ties that will address common economic needs or circumstances and to formulate joint approaches to their dialogue partners. Therefore, ASEAN regionalism would be able to provide for the third world an effective model to pave the way for the establishment of a new international economic order (Tagaki, 1986).

In order to achieve the objectives, ASEAN has forged cooperative partnerships, which covered multiple transport policies, and which in effect are policies to countries adopting the same. Various agreements have since been made to facilitate the flow of goods and people amongst member-countries, recognizing that a well-integrated and sustainable sea, air and land transportation network is imperative for the acceleration of ASEAN's economic development and market integration, and for enabling ASEAN to leverage its location at the crossroads of other neighboring Asian countries, including those countries in the North and West.

### *Research Questions*

The purpose of this paper is to present specifically the overall roadmap, policy, and development framework to serve as a guiding principle for regional cooperation in the ASEAN transport sector from the first organized transport meeting in 1994 up to 2025. Thus, there are two questions, as follows:

1. Primary research question
  - How did it start as a perspective on formulating transport action plan in the context of ASEAN regionalism?
2. Secondary research question
  - How does it benefit the countries of ASEAN in terms of regional cooperation, multilateral agreements and other protocols?

The study will focus on how ASEAN transport cooperation evolved by identifying several challenges, defining strategic perspective and promoting regional cooperation programs in the transport sector. This is suitable to answer the research questions. As much as possible, the study will cover the framework and strategic plan of the 10 member countries of ASEAN, although there are some limitations to access and get relevant information because of different governance and levels of implementation among the countries.

The next part will be an overview of ASEAN transport cooperation to get the readers familiar with. This is how and when the perspectives on formulating transport action plan started. The structure of this chapter will be divided into four (4) parts to make the study picture more visible. Thus, the introduction to the regional transport cooperation topic will have the following structure:

1. Historical Antecedents
2. Issues and Challenges
3. Strategic Perspectives
4. Cooperative Programs

### *Historical Antecedents of ASEAN Transport Cooperation*

In the early days, transport cooperation in ASEAN was conducted as a part of five-year integrated framework plans for the periods of 1982-1986, 1987-1991, and 1992-1996. Reflecting the growing importance of transport sector, at the 1st ATM meeting in Bali, Indonesia, ASEAN transport ministers adopted a Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Transportation and revised the implementation timeframe of the Plan of Action in Transport and Communications from 1994-1996 to 1996-1998. The subsequent plan, the ASEAN Transport Cooperation Framework Plan for 1999-2004, marked a significant step in transport cooperation in the sense that it was the first

dedicated plan for the ASEAN transport sector. In fulfilling its role, the ASEAN transport sector is currently guided by the ASEAN Transport Action Plan (ATAP) 2005-2010 that covers maritime, land and air transport, and transport facilitation. As ATAP will soon to expire in 2010, a successor plan will need to be prepared as the ASEAN Strategic Transport Plan (ASTP) 2011-2015. The ASTP will be the final stage of five-year plans and will act as the main reference for ASEAN transport cooperation to support the establishment of the AEC by 2015 (ERIA, 2010 p. 1-1).

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia or (ERIA) briefly highlight the thrust areas of earlier ASEAN transport cooperation which can be identified as follows:

1. ASEAN Plan of Action in Transport & Communications (1994-1996)
2. ASEAN Plan of Action in Transport (1996-1998)
3. ASEAN Plan of Action in Transport (1999-2004)
4. ATAP (2005-2010)
5. ASTP (2011-2015)

The ERIA study team has been working closely with the ASEAN including the sectoral working group. In particular, the ASEAN has been supporting the ERIA study team to access to the official information from ASEAN member countries.

#### *Issues and Challenges*

Bhattacharyay (2009) identified the four issues and challenges in ASEAN infrastructure development. *First*, different levels of economic and infrastructure development and country capacity (e.g., the infrastructure of newer ASEAN members is relatively underdeveloped; on the other hand, the more mature ASEAN countries may have more developed infrastructures, but the cost of linking them can be prohibitive due to geographical barriers). *Second*, asymmetric distribution of regional infrastructure costs and benefits across participating countries. *Third*, synchronization of national and sub-regional infrastructure planning. *Last*, massive financing requirements.

Moreover, he also mentioned the need to enhance ASEAN infrastructure cooperation towards achieving the ultimate vision of Asia-wide connectivity and integration (Bhattacharyay, 2009).

#### *Strategic Perspectives*

According to ERIA (2010), the emerging development trends generate new issues and pose new challenges to the ASEAN transport sector and have to be taken into consideration in the formulation of ASTP 2011-2015. These new development trends are described in five different perspectives as follows: 1) Intra-ASEAN development trends such as national development plans, new ASEAN initiatives, and non-ASEAN initiated developments; 2) Regional

perspectives covering cooperation programmes of ASEAN and its dialogue partners, as well as bilateral or multilateral cooperation between AMS and non-ASEAN countries; 3) Global perspective of new development trends due to the accelerated pace of globalization in recent years, resulting in increased worldwide trade growth, economic integration and competition; 4) Environmental and climate change perspective that reflects the increased international consensus of the need to implement both adaptive and preventive measures to mitigate adverse environmental and climate change impacts; and 5) Safety and security perspective to ensure safe and secure transport operations against the acts of terrorism, piracy, and armed robbery (ERIA, 2010, p. 5.1).

### *Cooperative Programs*

According to the ASTP 2016-2025, known as ‘Kuala Lumpur Transport Strategic Plan’. The purpose of this plan is to develop the infrastructure of member countries in ASEAN to facilitate the physical integration, completing the missing links and improving the quality of transportation systems covering from air, land, railway, and sea. AMS have agreed on the following strategic goals of the respective area for 2016-2025, as follows: 1) *Air Transport* – the objective is to strengthen the ASEAN Single Aviation Market for a more competitive and resilient ASEAN. 2) *Land Transport* – the objective is to establish an efficient, safe and integrated regional land transport network within ASEAN and with the neighboring countries to support the development of trade and tourism. 3) *Maritime Transport* – the objective is to establish an ASEAN Single Shipping Market and promote maritime safety, security and strategic economic corridors within ASEAN. 4) *Sustainable Transport* – the objective is to formulate a regional policy framework to support sustainable transport which includes low carbon modes of transport, energy efficiency and user-friendly transport initiatives, integration of transport and land use planning. 5) *Transport Facilitation* – the objective is to establish an integrated, efficient and globally competitive logistics and multimodal transportation system, for seamless movement of passengers by road vehicles and cargos within and beyond ASEAN.

In summary then, the above-mentioned information pertains to the regional cooperation in the transportation sector which being introduced, followed by its strategic roadmaps, perspectives, and programs. ASEAN has many problems needed to be resolved in the transport sector, many of which are interrelated in the region, which includes the following:

1. Different levels of economic, infrastructure development and country capacity
2. Asymmetric distribution of regional infrastructure costs and benefits
3. Synchronization of national and sub-regional infrastructure planning
4. Financing requirements

All of these challenges have been supported by continuous study and dialogues among its member countries. Indeed, in fulfilling its role, the ASEAN transport sector identified strategic perspectives such as:

1. Intra-ASEAN development
2. Regional perspective
3. Global perspective
4. Environmental and climate change perspective
5. Safety and security perspective

In line with the strategic goals and the competitive challenges brought about by regional and global trade, ASEAN identified five sector programs:

1. Transport facilitation
2. Integrated transport development
3. Land transport
4. Maritime transport
5. Air transport

The next part will look at the past studies and research papers which are relevant to review the current status and outcome of the transportation development and regional cooperation.

## **Literature Review**

This review of literature related to ASEAN transport cooperation includes academic research study, government-sponsored evaluation report and the third party commissioned report. The main objective is to discover patterns and trends in the performance and outcome of the regional cooperation in the transportation sector. The structure of this review will be divided into four (4) parts, as follows:

1. ASEAN Cooperation on Sustainable Transport Progress and Options (Bakker et al., 2017).
2. Assessment of the Implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2010 (ASEAN, 2017).
3. Assessment of the Implementation of ASEAN Transport Cooperation (ERIA, 2010).
4. Evaluation of European Commission (EC) co-operation with ASEAN (Particip GmbH, 2009).

Bakker et al. (2017), provide a review of the ASEAN cooperation on sustainable transport which is growing since the 1990s, both increasing in breadth and depth. Yet it can be said sustainable transport is still of lower importance compared to the connectivity agenda and has limited ambition. In

terms of activities, cooperation predominantly focuses on to carrying out studies, sharing experience and discussions in expert groups. Work on developing standards and tools for policies and transport indicators and monitoring has started or is being planned. Many of the activities are dependent on international organizations to be developed and funded. Cooperation with other relevant ASEAN bodies such as energy, environment, and industry is rather limited as well. In general, the absence of a strong ASEAN mandate and few country-level drivers limit the current ambition (Bakker et al., 2017).

The development of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2010 drew impetus from the 15th ASEAN Summit in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand on 24 October 2009, where ASEAN Leaders issued a statement to strengthen ASEAN Community-building. This report on the assessment of the implementation of the MPAC 2010 aims to provide a final review of the achievements and challenges of MPAC 2010 as well as the way forward in advancing ASEAN Connectivity through the successor document, also known as MPAC 2025 (ASEAN, 2017).

In the final report of ERIA in 2010 pertaining to the assessment and review of the current status and performance of ASEAN transport cooperation. This includes the regional initiatives that have been taken up under various programs in ASEAN region. Such review is important to understand the trend in general, the major projects that have been completed or ongoing and areas of cooperation program in ASEAN region. The understanding of all these ongoing or completed initiative will be able to provide a broad direction for the formulation of ASTP, 2011-2015 (ERIA, 2010, p. 4.1).

The final evaluation of EC co-operation with ASEAN in 2009. The objectives are to ensure accountability for the use of allocated resources as well as to promote a lesson-learning culture in EC development cooperation. The overall assessment contributed significantly to progress made in regional economic integration. Much of this impact was achieved via EC support for the ASEC which increased its institutional capacity to promote and manage regional integration process. The overall picture that emerges, therefore, is of a programme that was of reasonable quality, consistent with EC strategic objectives, and in line with regional priorities; but whose impacts were limited and often indirect in nature (Particip GmbH, 2009).

In summary of the literature, there is limited coverage in research studies about the regional transport cooperation topics in terms of evaluation and assessment, two of the papers speaks about negative findings, while the remaining pertains to the limitations but the review is important to understand the trend in general. The next part will explain the methods used in this study. Data from various sources will also be presented. More understanding of regional transport cooperation is important for the analysis and discussion which will be seen after the chapter of “Methodology”.



## **Methodology**

To begin with, the characteristic of this paper will be described. This paper can be categorized as a descriptive study because it attempts to describe the characteristics of observed variables in a situation (Sekaran, 2000). Here, the observed variables are ASEAN transport cooperation its current status and outcome, although the characteristic of descriptive research is widely used in education, medical allied and behavioral sciences. Its value is based on the premise that problems can be solved and practices improved through observation, analysis, and description (Koh and Owen, 2000). According to Burns and Grove (2003: 201), descriptive research “is designed to provide for a situation as it naturally happens”. It may be used to justify current practice and make a judgement and also to develop theories.

The methodology employed in this paper borrows from Carol Weiss Theory-Based Evaluation (TBE). Weiss leaves a lasting legacy in the field of education research and evaluation. Weiss’s TBE examines conditions of program implementation and mechanisms that mediate between processes and outcomes as a means to understand when and how programs work.

All the reviews, analysis and discussions were separated into three (3) main parts as follows:

1. Evaluation was based on three particular issues.
2. Theory of implementation vs. theory of programmatic action
3. The five causal chain of policy from inputs to impacts.

### *Evaluation was based on Three Particular Issues*

Evaluators are writing about it, and evaluations structured around theory are beginning to appear in numbers in the literature. Many so-called program theory evaluations continue to demonstrate one or more of these limitations, and evaluators would do well either to read or to reread Weiss’s discussion of three particular issues and to examine recent examples that have addressed them (Rogers, 2007).

By looking at the conditions of program implementation, Weiss explains three (3) issues:

1. Evaluations were based on an implementation of theory application.
2. Evaluation was based on practitioner’s assumptions and logical reasoning.
3. The evaluation consists of gathering evidence about each of the components in the logical model answering the question “did this happen?”

For example, the ASEAN transport cooperation on regional trade and economic integration prior the program deadlines before the end of 2015. The deadline set for 31 December 2015 for the “full” integration of the member

states into the AEC seems to have been more a symbolic onset of formal obligations in a long process where various policy and industry commitments have been made. Among these commitments, some have been implemented while the enabling mechanisms are still being set for others.

Evaluation is then concerned with different ways of reaching objectives and tries to judge which policy instruments, in isolation or in combination, and in what sequence are better suited to the actors situated in given contexts (Stame, 2004).

#### *Theory of Implementation vs. Theory of Programmatic Action*

In his 1967 book *Evaluative Research*, Edward Suchman referred several times to the notion of programs' theories. Suchman (1967) discussed two kinds of reasons for an unsuccessful program: failure of the program to put the intended activities into operation (implementation failure) and failure of the activities to bring about the desired effects (theory failure).

In the application of Suchman's theory, for example, ASEAN countries failed to reach the 2015 deadline. One of the reasons is the economic liberalization through transport linkages because of the different governance system and sectoral arrangement. Prospects beyond 2015 of each transport sector as land, air, maritime and transport facilitation are closely related to uncompleted actions and the proposed actions need to be continuously taken into consideration beyond 2015 (ERIA, 2010, p. 8-1).

In addition, in Chia's (2011) view, ASEAN has been strong on initiatives and commitment, but short on delivery, notwithstanding the acceleration of the deadlines for ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA). The mid-term review of AFTA pointed to some serious shortcomings in implementation compliance. These include a lack of full political commitment, the time-consuming process of consulting and seeking the compliance of private businesses and other stakeholders, and lack of capacity to implement by various government agencies.

#### *The Five Causal Chain of Policy from Inputs to Impacts*

Weiss argues that many programs are so difficult to evaluate because they are based on poorly articulated assumptions. Weiss emphasizes the need to look at the mini-steps if a long-term outcome is to be attained (Msila and Setlhako, 2013).

In applying Weiss's TBE, many organizations that claim to have adopted program theory still focus only on implementation theory. They have institutionalized a causal chain of policy from inputs to impacts (inputs-activities-output-outcomes-impacts).

Take the example of the new master plan (MPAC 2025) which aims to strengthen regional development by addressing the trends that shaped the region such as the rising number of the consuming class, skills gap, and large infrastructure needs. Realizing a closer and more integrated Southeast Asian

region still remains a challenge for ASEAN. Regional cohesiveness requires deeper linkages for a more competitive and resilient region. Addressing this challenge requires a closer look at ASEAN connectivity's achievements and its shortfalls (Vineles, 2017).

This analysis and assessment framework recognizes that a chain of effects results from policy intervention. The scope and scale of intervention extend the causal chain, as commonly applied in policy evaluation, the MPAC's effects in this report at three levels of analysis – output, outcome, and impact – with nested causal relationships. Immediate policy outputs are the units of service that result from the conversion of inputs via government processes (e.g. number of kilometers of new road constructed, number of documents required for export, new ports developed). These drive outcomes, which are the effects on 'clients' receiving the government services or coming under the influence of new rules (e.g. reduced time and cost to export, increased quality of logistics, liberalization of air transport). Finally, impacts are the higher-level effects of interventions that relate to broader policy goals (e.g. increased trade, economic growth) (ASEAN, 2016).

## **Findings**

Findings from the literature review were analyzed through data analysis of the review of the literature (e.g. ERIA, MPAC, and EC-ASEAN cooperation). The findings focus on the following major assessment covering transport linkages and sustainable transportation aspects.

It was observed that some measures have already crossed the specified time limit without much significant progress and some are even not initiated or just started. The ASEAN leaders will have to take a note of this and it is suggested to review the measures and revise the target time limit.

To ensure better and timely implementation of AEC commitments, a scorecard is used at ministerial meetings to document each country's performance record on various commitments. The scorecard for 2008-2009 covering implementation of commitments for the first 2 years, released by the ASEC, showed an overall score of 73.6%, a perfect score for the equitable development and global economy objectives, a score of 82% for the single market and production base, and 50% for the competitive economic region (Chia, 2011).

The findings of EC assistance to ASEAN contributed significantly to progress made in regional economic integration. Much of this impact was achieved via EC support for the ASEC which increased its institutional capacity to promote and manage regional integration process (Particip GmbH, 2009).

The MPAC 2010 scorecard assessed 125 measures which comprised 55 physical connectivity, 50 institutional, and 20 people-to-people connectivity measures (appears in Tables 1 and 2 below). 96 were due for completion by 2015, 9 were due to be completed after 2015 while no specific timeline was

given for 20 measures. As of October 2016, 39 measures have been completed of which 18 are physical connectivity measures, 15 institutional connectivity and 6 concern people-to-people connectivity. For the remaining 86 measures not completed, 63 measures are expected to be completed from 2015 onwards with an implementation plan in place and 16 measures are unlikely to be completed because no implementation plan is in place or no financing has been secured. 4 measures have yet to start because there is no lead sectoral body. Another 3 measures will not be pursued—the Three Pagoda Pass–Nam Tok and the Thanbyuzayat–Three Pagoda Pass rail links will not be pursued as they are not viable economically and the ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standards and Quality (ACCSQ) has decided not to develop regional standards but to harmonize standards following international standards (ASEAN, 2017, p. 2-3).

**Table 1.** *Assessment of Implementation of MPAC 2010 Measures by Target Timeline (as of October 2016)*

| <b>Assessment</b>        | <b>Measures by 2015</b> | <b>Measures beyond 2015</b> | <b>Measures without timelines</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Completed                | 32                      | 0                           | 7                                 | 39           |
| Expected                 | 46                      | 6                           | 11                                | 63           |
| Unlikely to be Completed | 11                      | 3                           | 2                                 | 16           |
| Not Yet Started          | 4                       | 0                           | 0                                 | 4            |
| Not Prioritized          | 1                       | 2                           | 0                                 | 3            |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>94</b>               | <b>11</b>                   | <b>20</b>                         | <b>125</b>   |

*Source:* Assessment of the Implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2010 Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, July 2017, p. 3.

**Table 2.** *Assessment of Implementation of MPAC 2010 Measures by Connectivity Dimension (as of October 2016)*

| <b>Assessment</b>        | <b>Physical Connectivity</b> | <b>Institutional Connectivity</b> | <b>People-to-People Connectivity</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Completed                | 18                           | 15                                | 6                                    | 39           |
| Expected                 | 22                           | 28                                | 13                                   | 63           |
| Unlikely to be Completed | 13                           | 3                                 | 0                                    | 16           |
| Not Yet Started          | 0                            | 3                                 | 1                                    | 4            |
| Not Prioritized          | 2                            | 1                                 | 0                                    | 3            |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>55</b>                    | <b>50</b>                         | <b>20</b>                            | <b>125</b>   |

*Source:* Assessment of the Implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2010 Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, July 2017, p. 3.

## Discussion

The discussion is based on the findings of the assessment and evaluation of ERIA, MPAC, and EC-ASEAN final reports in connection with Weiss's TBE application. The idea of TBE is plausible and cogent, and it promises to bring greater explanatory power to evaluation. Several authors including Weiss who state that evaluation is crucial nowadays. As shown in Table 3 below, are the works of *Suchman, Birckmayer, Stame, Knaap, and Rogers*.

**Table 3.** *Different Studies in the Evaluation*

| Author                       | Year | Title  | Theory-based Evaluation (TBE)  | ASEAN Transport Cooperation  |
|------------------------------|------|--|--|--|
| Suchman, E.                  | 1967 | Evaluative Research: Principles and Practice in Public Service and Social Action Program | discussed two kinds of reasons for the unsuccessful program: (implementation failure) and (theory failure).    | ASEAN countries failed to reach the 2015 deadline (ERIA, 2010).  |
| Birckmayer, J. and Weiss, C. | 2000 | Theory-Based Evaluation in Practice, What Do We Learn?                                   | explains the lessons for the future of TBE.  | ASEAN has been strong on initiatives and commitment, but short on delivery (Chia, 2011).   |
| Stame, N.                    | 2004 | Theory-Based Evaluation and Types of Complexity  | emphasizes TBE as the “theory of change” approach to the complexity of multi-level governance.                 | ASEAN sustainable transport is still of lower importance compared to the connectivity agenda and has limited ambition (Bakker et al., 2017). |
| Knaap, P.V.D.                | 2004 | Theory-Based Evaluation and Learning: Possibilities and Challenges                       | explores the rationale for a theory-based approach in policy development for a government that wants to learn. | Increased ASEAN secretariat institutional capacity to promote and manage regional integration process (Particip GmbH, 2009).                 |
| Rogers, P.                   | 2007 | Theory-Based Evaluation: Reflections Ten Years On  | good practice in program theory evaluation by logical analysis of  | ASEAN transport cooperation has already crossed the specified time   |

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|---|--|
| <p>alternative causal explanations.</p> | <p>limit without much significant progress and some are even not initiated or just started (ERIA, 2010).</p> |
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Suchman (1967) discussed two kinds of reasons for the unsuccessful program in TBE. According to the report, it reflects how ASEAN failed to meet its deadline after first being proposed in 2007 as part of overall plan to complete the scheduled activities and projects in line with ASEAN Vision 2025, the deadline was moved from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015, but the region will still benefit from physical connectivity as it continues the implementation of other infrastructure and linkages project.

Birckmayer and Weiss (2000) explain the results from TBE will lead to cumulative knowledge of change process and more effective programs. As to ASEAN, despite being short in delivery against its commitment and initiatives. ASEAN must find a way to give the commitments more teeth and display a political solidarity.

Stame (2004) in the context of complexity and as to the ‘theory of change’ approach. TBE should match this by comparing the use of various means and assessing the way they worked in different contexts. As to ASEAN for example, between connectivity and sustainability as to measuring the distance between objectives and results or between the actual input and the expected output. Given the shortcomings, it is necessary to implement an adjustment in the next planning process.

Knaap (2004) emphasizes the role of Government in policy decisions from the realization that political responsibility cannot exist without learning and improvement. As to ASEAN, the body of professional staff needs to be strengthened. Limited manpower for example, thus hampered efficient and effective performance. In cases where additional staffs are still needed, the existing personnel hopes to be supported by the ASEAN leaders to fully capacitate its personnel. Likewise, continuous training of existing personnel specifically those who are involved in research, planning, and administration are highly recommended in order to gain knowledge, skills and competencies in their fields.

Rogers (2007) believed that evaluation theory, like all research, must rest upon the logic of evaluation analysis not only to contribute to the observed outcomes, but also to explain how. All of the major programs of ASEAN to include deadlines should not view as a hard target. One should not expect 100% perfect to see ASEAN suddenly transformed, it would take time to introduce huge development opportunities as it is still in the developing stage.

As observed from the results of findings, with regards to efforts to improve ASEAN transport system. It can be assumed that there are two (2) important components to consider: *the driving forces of ASEAN connectivity* and *the role of regional infrastructure cooperation in economic growth*.

First, *the driving forces of ASEAN connectivity* - beyond the region, ASEAN needs to collectively respond to the opportunities offered by its geographical and comparative advantages and to the competitive challenges brought about by global trade and investment environment. ASEAN is located at the heart of an economically vibrant and growing region bounded by India in the West; China, Japan and the Republic of Korea in the Northeast; and Australia and New Zealand in the South. Thus far, ASEAN has achieved considerable results in its economic integration efforts. Enhanced ASEAN connectivity can potentially place ASEAN at the center of growth and development and preserve the centrality of ASEAN in the evolving regional architecture, but only if it is able to reduce the costs of investment and international trade in goods and services (ASEAN, 2011).

Second, *the role of regional infrastructure cooperation in economic growth and integration* - infrastructure development is essential to the realization of ASEAN's goal of economic integration and indispensable to ASEAN's future success particularly if the region is to weather the fallout from the ongoing global economic crisis. Now more than ever, the development of infrastructure needs to be accelerated to enhance physical connectivity, as well as encourage resource-sharing. To promote cross-border trade and investment, improve countries competitiveness, and raise domestic output, it is important for ASEAN countries to be physically connected through various modes of transportation, such as roads, railways, airways, and ports and shipping. An improved and integrated transport and logistics systems in ASEAN is an integral part of the regional integration initiative (Bhattacharyay, 2009).

Given the two components above, the main challenge is to address the problems faced by the current leadership of ASEAN countries especially by the government regulating bodies in the transport sector.

## **Conclusions**

The purpose of this paper is to present specifically the overall roadmap, policy, and development framework to serve as a guiding principle for regional cooperation in the ASEAN transport sector. In the context of establishing the ASEAN, the period leading to and following the realization of ASEAN into ten member countries was a time of regional transformation. The process of widening and deepening proceeded simultaneously. The nature of cooperative activities intensified as the membership grew. The process of deepening was manifested in major policy shift (Abad, 2011).

*As to the first question, how did it start as a perspective on formulating transport action plan in the context of ASEAN regionalism?*

A historical review of the development begins with the philosophical foundation as it can easily predict how ASEAN transport cooperation evolved by identifying several issues and challenges, defining strategic perspective, and promoting regional cooperation programs in the transport sector.

As it stands today, many of these challenges are interrelated and common across the region, which includes: *different levels of economic, infrastructure development and country capacity, asymmetric distribution of regional infrastructure costs and benefits, synchronization of national and sub-regional infrastructure planning, and financing requirements.*

It is also significant to note that there are two important components to address those identified challenges: *first, the driving forces of ASEAN connectivity and second, the role of regional infrastructure cooperation in economic growth and integration.*

In addition, ASEAN should also look beyond strategic perspectives in the transport sector such as *Intra-ASEAN development, regional perspective, global perspective, environmental and climate change perspective and safety and security perspective.* It would take time to introduce huge development opportunities as it is still in the improving stage.

In line with the strategic direction and overall roadmap to improve regional transport system, ASEAN identified five sector programs, they are: *transport facilitation, integrated transport development, land, maritime, and air transport.*

To maintain the momentum, it is important to continue strengthening the growth of ASEAN transport cooperation as the guiding principle for regional policy.

*As to the second question, how does it benefit the countries of ASEAN in terms of regional cooperation, multilateral agreements and other protocols?*

Connecting ASEAN encompasses the following three dimensions: *physical connectivity, institutional, and people-to-people linkages.* As to benefits, it will improve the region's infrastructure to enhance the movement of people, goods, and services. Institutionally, it will help to reduce policy and institutional barriers by harmonizing ASEAN regulations and standards. And finally, it will bring people closer together within the region.

On the other hand, Weiss's TBE provides information about mechanisms that intervene between program activities and the achievement of expected results. Weiss explores the how and why program success or failure. TBE approach is a mainstream approach in policy evaluation. The idea is to describe the pathways between theories of implementation and theories of programmatic action. As a result, the framework and strategic plan for the regional transport cooperation serve as the implementing roadmap for concerted cooperation in the transport sector in line with priorities and action agenda set forth in the ASEAN strategic plan. ASEAN therefore needs to invest more in hard infrastructure and institutional policy to improve regional transport system. In light of the challenges and physical integration efforts, transportation will always play an important role in the movement of people, goods, and other trade services.

However, this paper does not provide a silver bullet with which one can make the conclusive explanations. The author suggests that this particular research it could be an opportunity to encourage continuous assessment and



analysis to measure the effectiveness of the ASEAN transport cooperation in future.

In summary, connecting regions through well-developed transport system and well-organized trade facilitation system can lead to an integrated regional market and the much longed-for economic growth among the ASEAN member-states.

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