

Improving transport infrastructure in South Sudan



Operational excellence for results that matter

The Republic of South Sudan contains only a few all-weather roads, meaning that vast tracts of a country the size of France are only accessible during the dry season. This is considered one of the critical factors hindering development.

Roads are vital when building a stable and viable state, to improve access to markets in order to boost food production and economic growth, to allow state structures to quickly respond to internal conflict, to expand police and judicial services and to increase access hospitals and schools.

However, building an effective road network in South Sudan is no easy task. The country suffers from a lack of trained construction workers, a difficulty sourcing building materials, ongoing security concerns, and a rainy season that severely limits transport and construction activities.

UNOPS has extensive experience in South Sudan and a proven track-record of using specialist project management and technical skills, as well as considerable local knowledge to overcome such constraints. UNOPS is a not-for-profit United Nations organization and our transparent, accountable management services meet the highest international standards.

UNOPS and transport infrastructure globally

UNOPS builds and rehabilitates thousands of kilometres of roads every year. We help our partners connect farmers to markets in Liberia, improve humanitarian access in Haiti, promote development and stability in Afghanistan and much more.

Building roads and bridges in South Sudan

By the end of 2011 UNOPS had constructed or fully rehabilitated more than 430 kilometres of roads in South Sudan, and carried out emergency repairs on a further 45 kilometres, on behalf of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, the Common Humanitarian Fund and the South Sudan Recovery Fund.

We have also constructed or repaired 10 bridges and four airstrips. On behalf of USAID, UNOPS is currently working on repairing the damaged Juba Nile Bridge – the only bridge across the Nile in all of South Sudan. The damage to one side of the bridge is severely disrupting traffic on a critical arterial road which links the capital to Kenya and Uganda.



The change in conditions on the Diabio-Tambura road, after UNOPS implemented a USAID project. **Photo:** UNOPS

Creating stability

UNOPS is constructing and rehabilitating roads in some of the most remote and conflict-prone areas in Warrap, Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria, under three UN Joint Stabilization Programmes that are currently led by UNDP and funded under the South Sudan Recovery Fund. These programmes aim to improve security and address the root causes of conflict, and are a good example of the UN 'delivering as one' in a post-conflict context.

“UNOPS has proven its ability to find innovative solutions for delivering results in some of the most remote, inaccessible and insecure target sites in South Sudan, in an expedient and cost effective manner.”

*- Kunal Dhar, Programme Coordinator
UNDP-led SSRF Stabilization Programmes,
Crisis Prevention & Recovery Unit,
UNDP South Sudan*

The road components ensure access for security forces, the extension of state authority and the provision of basic services and humanitarian aid to completely isolated and long underserved areas.

In many cases, UNOPS is working closely with United Nations Mine Action Service to clear key target areas of landmines and unexploded ordinance, prior to commencing construction works.

Emergency repairs

The UNOPS Emergency Response Unit (ERU) helps its partners get aid where it's needed most, by repairing critical transport routes damaged by war, neglect and heavy rains.

Working closely with the United Nations Mission and Logistics Cluster, the ERU reacts quickly to restore roads, bridges and airstrips needed for vital humanitarian interventions.



New roads help to reduce travel times to markets, hospitals and schools in South Sudan. **Photo:** UNOPS

Considering the environment

Before building roads, UNOPS teams carry out environmental impact assessments and complete the necessary mitigation measures to minimize any negative impact. For example, under the Jonglei Stabilization Programme, the original course of a road was re-aligned to minimise the impact on an important elephant conservation area.



UNOPS trains South Sudanese equipment operators to ensure continued road maintenance. **Photo:** UNOPS

Building government and industry capacity

UNOPS is working closely with the officials from the Ministry of Transport and Roads and the state ministries of physical infrastructure to plan, design, implement and monitor projects and to manage procurement. UNOPS is also providing training to equipment operators and mechanics to ensure continued road maintenance.

Where appropriate, UNOPS tries to attract smaller construction companies to bid for works contracts. This often provides an opportunity to train local contractors and labourers.

Case study: Yambio-Tambura road

Under the Sudan Accelerated Infrastructure Program, which UNOPS is implementing on behalf of USAID, the construction and rehabilitation of selected road corridors in South Sudan is helping to boost development and improve delivery of humanitarian aid.

On the 80 kilometre stretch of road from Yambio to Diabio in Western Equatoria State, travel used to take over four hours in dry weather and now takes 90 minutes. This has improved the quality of goods and services and the overall economic development of the area. In early 2008, Nzara market, on the Yambio to Diabio route, contained three shops providing basic products and supplies. By the end of 2010, after the road was completed, Nzara had 31 big shops, 109 small shops and 20 restaurants.