

THE TRANSPORT RECORD

The Foundation That Does Not Hold.

\$11.2 Billion Committed.

96% Below Satisfactory.

The Connective Tissue of Every Sector.

The Worst-Performing Portfolio on the Continent.

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10.8%

Satisfactory — one in ten

\$10.8bn

96% of resources below standard

4 years

FY2019–22: zero Satisfactory

12

Countries with 2+ projects at 0%

Executive Summary

The World Bank is the largest provider of development financing for transport in the world. Its active global transport portfolio stands at \$45 billion. In FY2025 alone, the Bank approved 53 new transport operations for \$11.2 billion. The institution describes transport as the connective tissue of economic development — the infrastructure that gets crops to market, patients to clinics, children to schools, and workers to jobs.

The IEG record for Transport in Sub-Saharan Africa between FY2015 and FY2026: 65 evaluated projects, \$11.2 billion committed, 10.8 percent Satisfactory. One in ten. \$10.8 billion — 96 percent of committed resources — went to projects that did not achieve Satisfactory development outcomes. This is the worst-performing major Global Practice in Africa. The global Transport rate is 32.3 percent. Africa underperforms by 22 percentage points.

The portfolio is 100 percent IPF — no DPF, no PforR. The entire transport portfolio is investment lending. Roads, bridges, rail, ports, urban transit. And it still delivers Satisfactory outcomes only one time in ten. The problem cannot be attributed to the wrong instrument. It is the right instrument, deployed in the right sector, producing the wrong results.

Between FY2019 and FY2022 — four consecutive fiscal years — the Africa transport portfolio recorded zero Satisfactory outcomes across 17 projects and \$5.1 billion. Twelve countries with two or more transport projects returned zero percent Satisfactory on a combined \$5.9 billion: Kenya (\$1.4 billion), Ethiopia (\$1.2 billion), Nigeria (\$918 million), DRC (\$494 million), Tanzania (\$490 million), Ghana (\$404 million).

The Bank’s own May 2025 report — Transport for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa — found that 37 percent of locally produced food is lost in transit, transport adds up to 30 percent to final food costs, and food travels an average 4,000 kilometres taking 23 days. The Bank publishes reports documenting that transport failure drives food insecurity while its own transport portfolio delivers 10.8 percent Satisfactory.

Transport is the connective tissue of every sector initiative the Bank is scaling. AgriConnect cannot get crops to market without roads. Health Works cannot staff clinics without connectivity. Mission 300 cannot wire communities without logistics. If transport delivers at 10.8 percent, every other sector initiative is building on a foundation that does not hold.

1. The Portfolio

The World Bank has committed \$11.2 billion to 65 IEG-rated Transport projects in Sub-Saharan Africa between FY2015 and FY2026. Of this, \$10.8 billion — 96 percent — went to projects rated below Satisfactory. The Africa Transport Satisfactory rate is 10.8 percent. The global rate is 32.3 percent. South Asia achieves 22.0 percent on \$11.1 billion — also poor, but twice Africa’s rate on comparable volume.

M&E quality was Modest or Negligible in 50 of 65 projects (77 percent) — three-quarters of the transport portfolio cannot adequately measure whether the roads it built improved connectivity. Bank Performance was rated MU or U in 22 of 65 projects (34 percent) — the Bank’s own design and supervision were flagged as problematic in one-third of operations.

2. Regional Split

Region	Projects	S+	S+ Rate	Commitment
Eastern and Southern Africa	31	3	9.7%	\$7,662M
Western and Central Africa	34	4	11.8%	\$3,548M

Eastern and Southern Africa — which receives two-thirds of the commitment — returns 9.7 percent Satisfactory. Three projects out of thirty-one. The region’s largest operations all failed to reach Satisfactory: Kenya’s Northern Corridor (\$665M, MS), Kenya’s National Urban Transport (\$300M, U), Ethiopia’s Transport Sector (\$415M, MU), Mozambique’s Roads and Bridges (\$2.3 billion, MS).

3. The Four-Year Zero: FY2019–FY2022

Closing FY	Projects	S+	Commitment
FY2019	7	0	\$3,457M
FY2020	3	0	\$639M

FY2021	4	0	\$744M
FY2022	3	0	\$268M

Seventeen projects. \$5.1 billion. Four years. Zero Satisfactory. This is not a bad year. It is a structural delivery failure sustained across an entire IDA replenishment cycle. The projects include the Ethiopia Transport Systems Improvement (\$300M, MU), the Nigeria Rural Access and Mobility Phase 2 (\$230M, MU), the Southern Africa Trade and Transport Facilitation (\$213M, MU), and the CEMAC Transport-Transit Facilitation (\$201M, U).

4. FCS vs Non-FCS: The Same Inversion

Category	Projects	S+ Rate	Commitment
FCS	16	18.8%	\$3,845M
Non-FCS	49	8.2%	\$7,365M

The same inversion documented in FCI: stable economies perform worse than fragile states. One in twelve transport projects in non-FCS countries achieves Satisfactory outcomes. The Bank builds roads worse in stable countries — where institutional capacity, procurement systems, and contractor markets should be stronger — than in conflict-affected states. The binding constraint is not fragility. It is the Bank's delivery model.

5. Twelve Countries, Zero Satisfactory

Country	Projects	Commitment	S+ Rate
Kenya	4	\$1,363M	0%
Ethiopia	4	\$1,185M	0%
Nigeria	5	\$918M	0%
Africa (continental)	2	\$519M	0%
Congo, Dem. Rep.	3	\$494M	0%
Tanzania	2	\$490M	0%
Ghana	3	\$404M	0%
Senegal	2	\$289M	0%
ESA (regional)	2	\$282M	0%
Côte d'Ivoire	2	\$130M	0%
Burundi	2	\$76M	0%
Lesotho	2	\$66M	0%

Combined: 33 projects, \$5.9 billion, zero Satisfactory. Kenya has borrowed \$1.4 billion for transport — four operations — zero Satisfactory. Ethiopia \$1.2 billion — four operations — zero Satisfactory. Nigeria \$918 million — five operations — zero Satisfactory. These are the Bank’s largest transport borrowers on the continent.

6. The Largest Failures

Project	Country	FY	Rating	Commit.
Roads and Bridges Management	Mozambique	FY2019	Mod. Satisfactory	\$2,317M
Northern Corridor Transport	Kenya	FY2016	Mod. Satisfactory	\$665M
Transport Sector Project (RSDP)	Ethiopia	FY2019	Mod. Unsatisfactory	\$415M
Kenya Transport Sector Support	Kenya	FY2020	Mod. Satisfactory	\$398M
Federal Roads Development	Nigeria	FY2017	Mod. Unsatisfactory	\$333M
Nat'l Urban Transport	Kenya	FY2019	Unsatisfactory	\$300M
Intermodal and Rail Dev.	Tanzania	FY2023	Mod. Unsatisfactory	\$300M
Transport Systems Improv.	Ethiopia	FY2025	Mod. Unsatisfactory	\$300M
Multi-modal Transport	DRC	FY2018	Highly Unsatisfactory	\$255M

The DRC Multi-modal Transport project (\$255 million) was rated Highly Unsatisfactory. Kenya’s National Urban Transport (\$300 million) was rated Unsatisfactory. Mozambique’s \$2.3 billion Roads and Bridges — the largest single transport commitment in Africa — did not reach Satisfactory.

7. Annual Trend

Closing FY	Projects	S+	S+ Rate	Commitment
FY2015	10	2	20.0%	\$843M
FY2016	11	1	9.1%	\$1,540M
FY2017	11	1	9.1%	\$1,819M
FY2018	4	1	25.0%	\$742M
FY2019	7	0	0.0%	\$3,457M
FY2020	3	0	0.0%	\$639M
FY2021	4	0	0.0%	\$744M
FY2022	3	0	0.0%	\$268M
FY2023	5	1	20.0%	\$484M
FY2024	4	1	25.0%	\$305M

The pattern is clear: transport performance collapsed from FY2019 and has not recovered. The FY2023–24 recovery — one Satisfactory per year — is marginal. At current rates the Bank would need decades to bring the transport portfolio to pre-2019 levels.

8. Transport and Food Security: The Bank’s Own Diagnosis

The Bank’s May 2025 report — *Transport for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa: Strengthening Supply Chains* — documents the cost of transport failure:

Thirty-seven percent of locally produced food in Africa is lost in transit. Transport inefficiencies add up to 30 percent to the final cost of goods. Food in African countries travels an average of 4,000 kilometres and takes 23 days — four times longer than in Europe. Fifty-eight percent of Africans are food insecure, double the global average.

The report identifies 10 ports, 20 border crossings, and 20 road segments as critical chokepoints. But the Bank’s transport portfolio has committed \$11.2 billion to roads, bridges, corridors, ports, and transit systems in Africa — and delivered 10.8 percent Satisfactory. The diagnostic is correct. The delivery is failing. AgriConnect promises to transform smallholder agriculture. It cannot do so on roads the Bank has spent \$11.2 billion building and cannot certify as having achieved their development objectives.

9. What the Lessons Say

Constraint	Projects Citing	% of Portfolio
Implementation capacity	55	86%
Road infrastructure design	43	67%
Design complexity	42	66%
Institutional capacity	36	56%
Maintenance sustainability	17	27%
Road safety	8	12%
Procurement	8	12%
Employment/jobs	6	9%

Maintenance is cited in only 27 percent of projects — yet it is the single most important determinant of whether a road investment produces lasting economic returns. The Bank builds roads. It does not build the institutions that maintain them. Employment is mentioned in 9 percent of lessons. The GP whose infrastructure is supposed to enable job creation across every other sector barely measures whether its own investments produce employment.

10. The Connective Tissue Argument

Transport is not a standalone sector. It is the connective tissue of every other sector initiative the Bank is scaling in Africa:

AgriConnect promises to transform smallholder agriculture and create 800,000 jobs in Senegal alone. The IEG transport record for Senegal: 2 projects, zero Satisfactory, \$289 million. Thirty-seven percent of African food is lost in transit on roads the Bank cannot certify as functioning.

Health Works promises quality health services for 1.5 billion people. Health workers cannot reach clinics, medicines cannot reach pharmacies, patients cannot reach hospitals without transport. The transport record for the countries with National Health Compacts — Nigeria, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Uganda — is uniformly below Satisfactory.

Mission 300 promises 300 million electricity connections. Transmission infrastructure, maintenance teams, and fuel supply all depend on roads. The transport record for the largest energy borrowers — Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania — is zero Satisfactory across all four.

The sectoral records documented across this platform now cover every major GP in Africa: health at 34.6 percent, agriculture at 35.7 percent, water at 24.5 percent, education at 21.4 percent, energy at 30.3 percent, FCI at 25.4 percent, and transport at 10.8 percent. Transport is at the bottom — and it is the foundation on which everything else is supposed to stand. If the foundation delivers at 10.8 percent, nothing built on it will hold.

Data and Sources

IEG outcome data: IEG Master Database March 2026 (10,542 deduplicated rated projects). Transport GP = IEG Global Practice classification. Africa = ESA + WCA. S+ = Satisfactory or Highly Satisfactory only. FCS: World Bank FY26 Harmonized List, July 2025. Commitment data: World Bank Projects Database, April 2026.

World Bank (2025), *Transport for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa: Strengthening Supply Chains* — found that 37 percent of locally produced food is lost in transit; transport adds up to 30 percent to final food costs; 58 percent of Africans are food insecure. IEG project-level lessons: ICRR/PPAR database, FY2015–2026.

This paper extends prior analyses at mdbreform.com: the IDA Performance Record; the Education Record; the Health Record; the FCI Record; the Energy Record; the Agriculture Record; the Water Record; the FCV Strategy Submission; the DPF Incentive Trap; the Board Governance paper; the Game Theory analysis. Full data at mdbreform.com/data/.

Parminder Brar is the founder of mdbreform.com and a former World Bank Country Manager and Lead Governance Specialist.