

*African Road Maintenance Funds Association (ARMFA),
Antananarivo, Madagascar.*

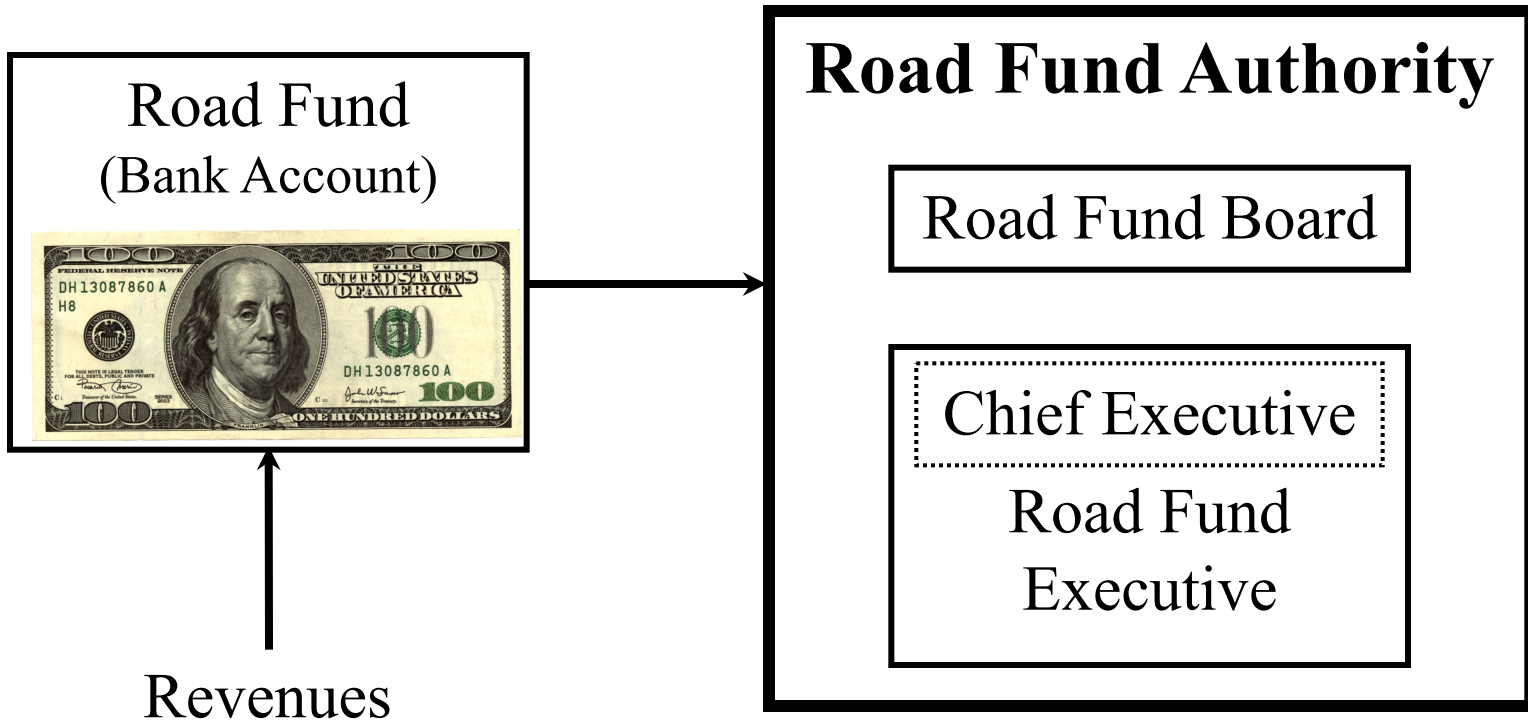
Communication Strategies for Road Fund Authorities (RFAs)

Presented by

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Definitions: Be Clear About Any Terminology You Use



Communications is a Two-Way Process

- **Externally**, between the RFA and its stakeholders:
 - Top-down: Policies, objectives, activities, issues, etc.
 - Bottom-up: user priorities, activities, issues, etc.
- **Internally**, between the organisation's leadership (the Board & CEO) & all of its staff (executive):
 - Top-down: vision, objectives, strategies, etc.
 - Bottom-up: Staff issues, operational factors, etc.

Don't Underestimate the Importance of a Good Communication Strategy!

- It is an important element for every successful commercial organisation in every country.
- It involves consistently promoting (selling) the organisation: what it does, for whom, and why.
- The reasons why a RFA needs a communication strategy are the same as why commercial organisations have one: they get paid to provide a product or service to customers (road users).

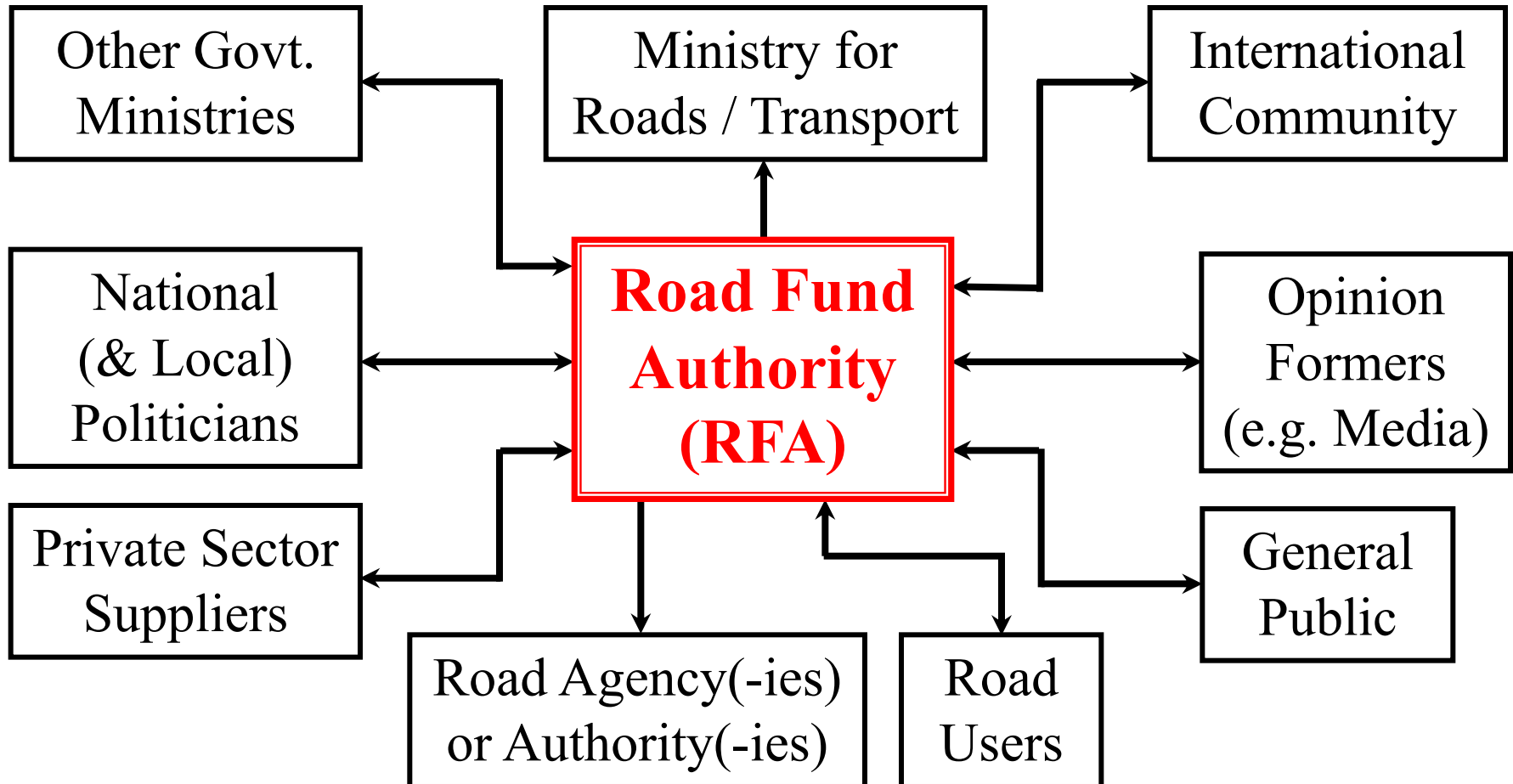
Good Communications are Particularly Important for a RFA

- Those paying have little choice about who provides the service and limited say in how their funds are used.
- There is a long lead-time between their payment and the subsequent provision of the service to them.
- The relationship between what users pay and what they receive is not clear, simple nor direct.
- There is a temptation to spend limited funds on building new roads, rather than on the maintenance of existing roads. A RFA needs to explain why they are focusing on maintenance.
- Roads cost a lot of money to maintain. There is a temptation to “borrow” some of this for other purposes. Good communications & transparency discourages this “raiding”!

A Good Communication Strategy should Provide REAL Benefits to any RFA.

- The RFA can be **proactive**: setting and controlling the agenda, and dealing with the most important issues on an informed basis.
- It can educate the wider community about the issues it faces and engender a higher level of community understanding & hence support.
- It promotes transparency and discourages inappropriate or ill-informed external interference.
- Within the RFA, it can promote a sense of common purpose, team building & staff esteem.

All Road Fund Authorities *must* Communicate with their Key Stakeholders



Elements of a Good Communication Strategy

- Have **clear objectives**: why are you doing it? What are you trying to say?
- Know your **market**: who are you targeting?
- **Tailor the message** to suit the target market: how can your message best be received (not sent!)?
- **Sell the benefits**, not the features!
- Use **appropriate terminology**: no acronyms!
- Use **appropriate technology**: e.g. what medium does your target market use & understand best?
- Use **local people** and the **local language**.
- Be **consistent** and **keep doing it!**

Information & Messages to Communicate

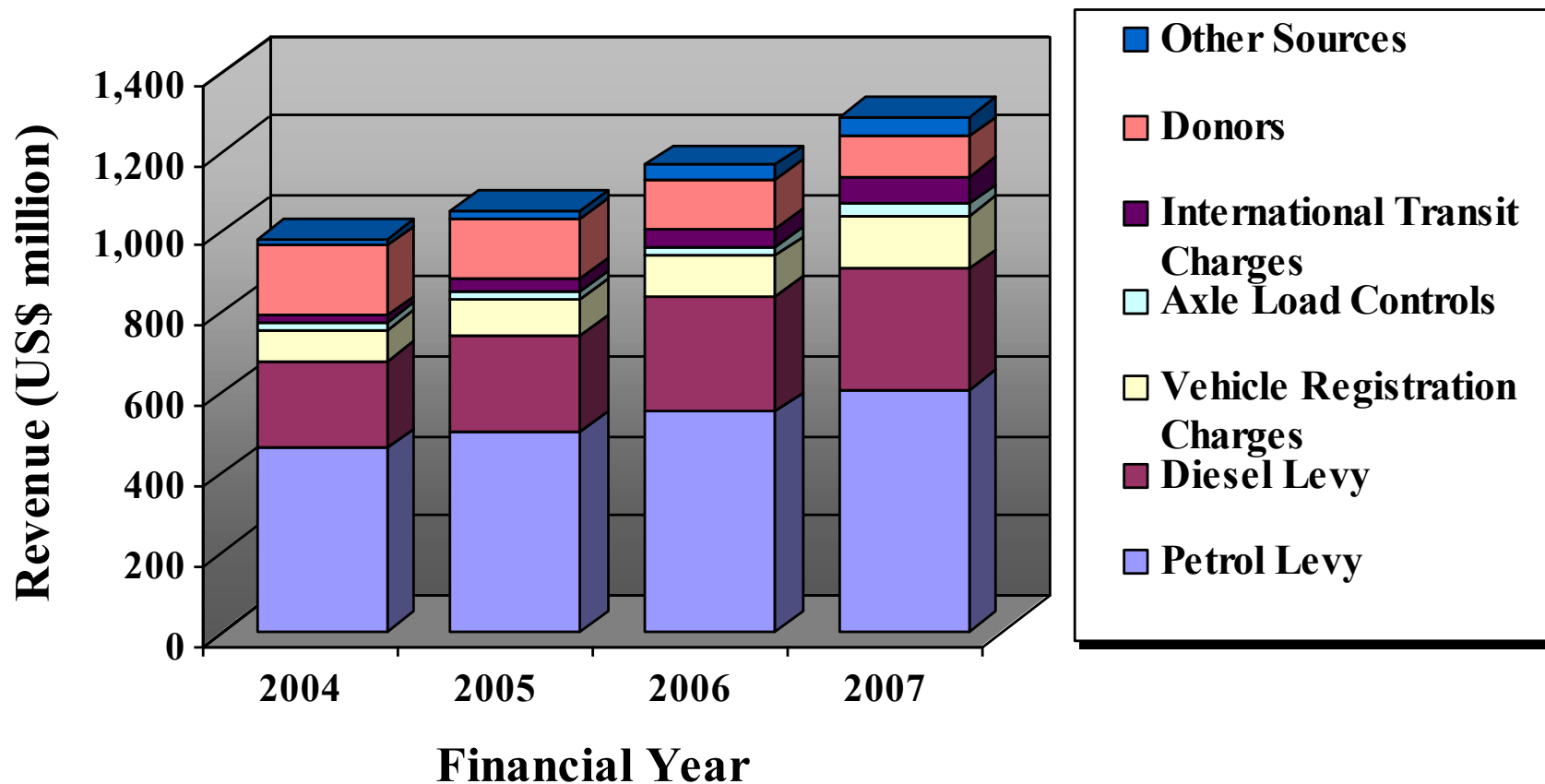
- Network statistics (lengths, condition, speed & axle load limits, journey times, trends, etc.).
- Work scheduled & completed.
- KPIs, target values & trends.
- Revenue & Expenditures (planned & actual).
- Key policies & Organisational Structure.
- Technical issues faced by the RFA.

Use MAPS, CHARTS, PHOTOS & COLOUR!

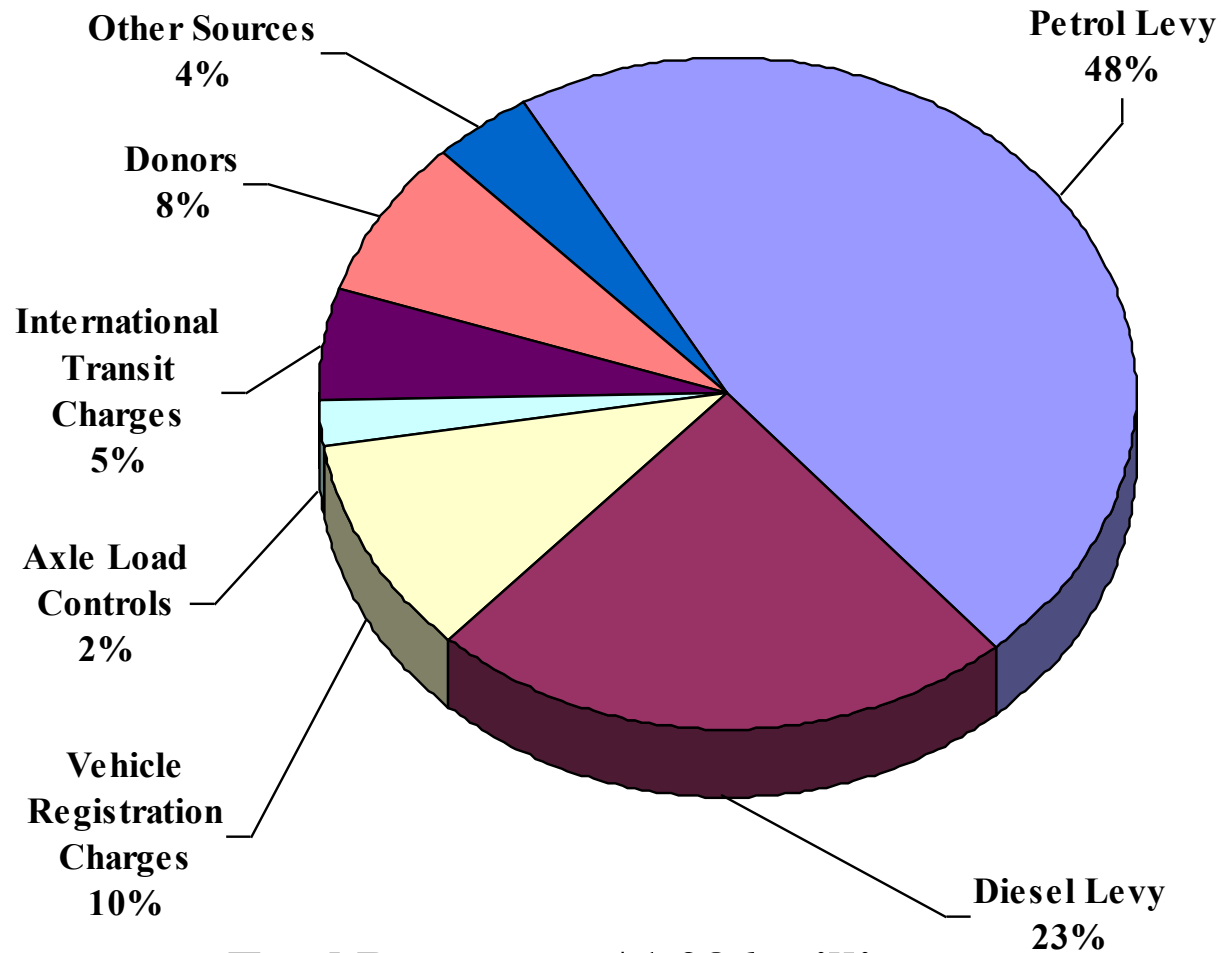
What Format Works Best?

Example: Source of Funding				
	Revenue (US\$ millions)			
Revenue Source	2004	2005	2006	2007
Petrol Levy	456	498	548	605
Diesel Levy	217	240	287	300
Vehicle Registration Charges	78	90	102	135
Axle Load Controls	21	20	23	27
International Transit Charges	16	32	45	68
Donors	175	150	125	100
Other Sources	15	21	34	51
Total	978	1051	1164	1286

Source of Funding

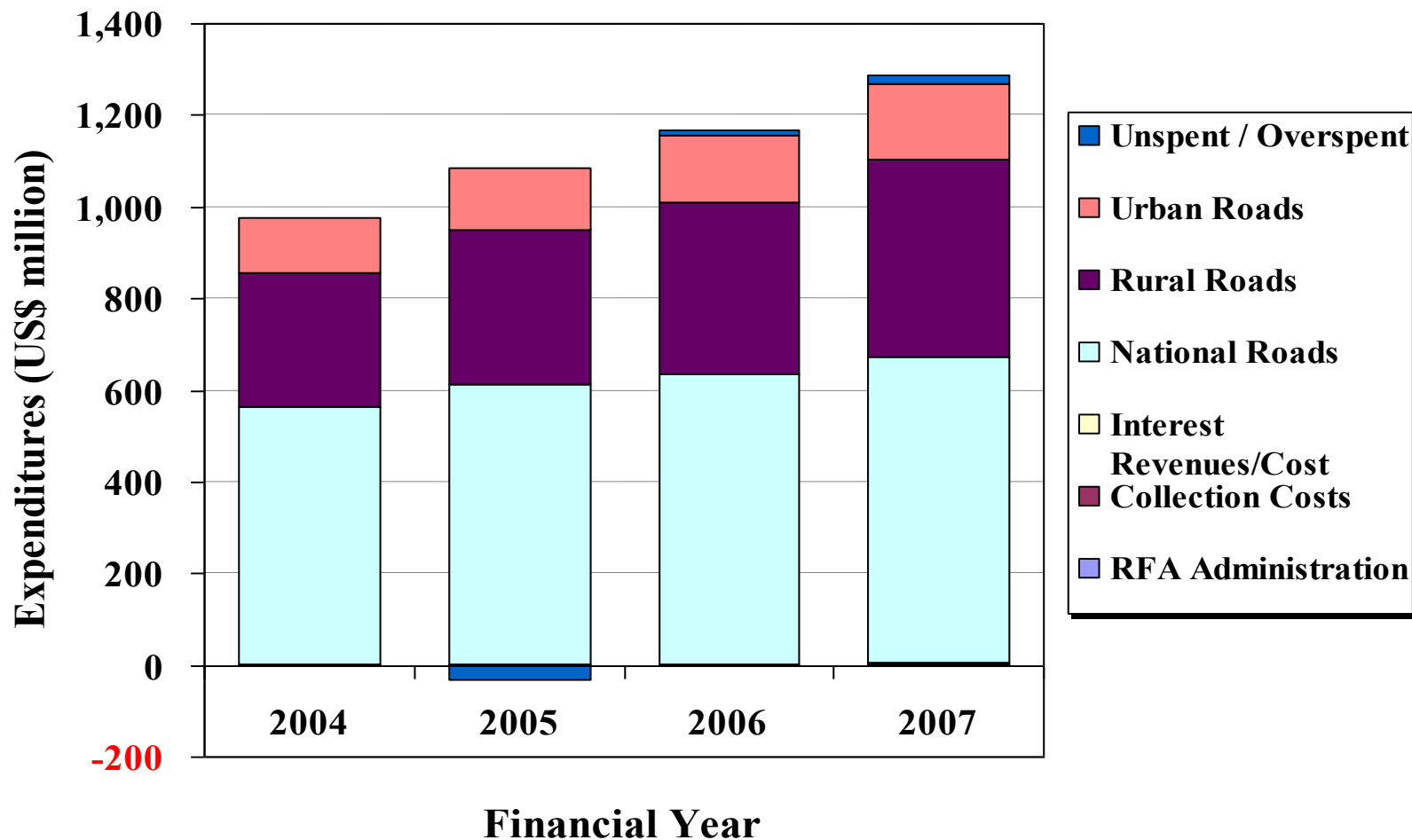


Revenue Source (2007)

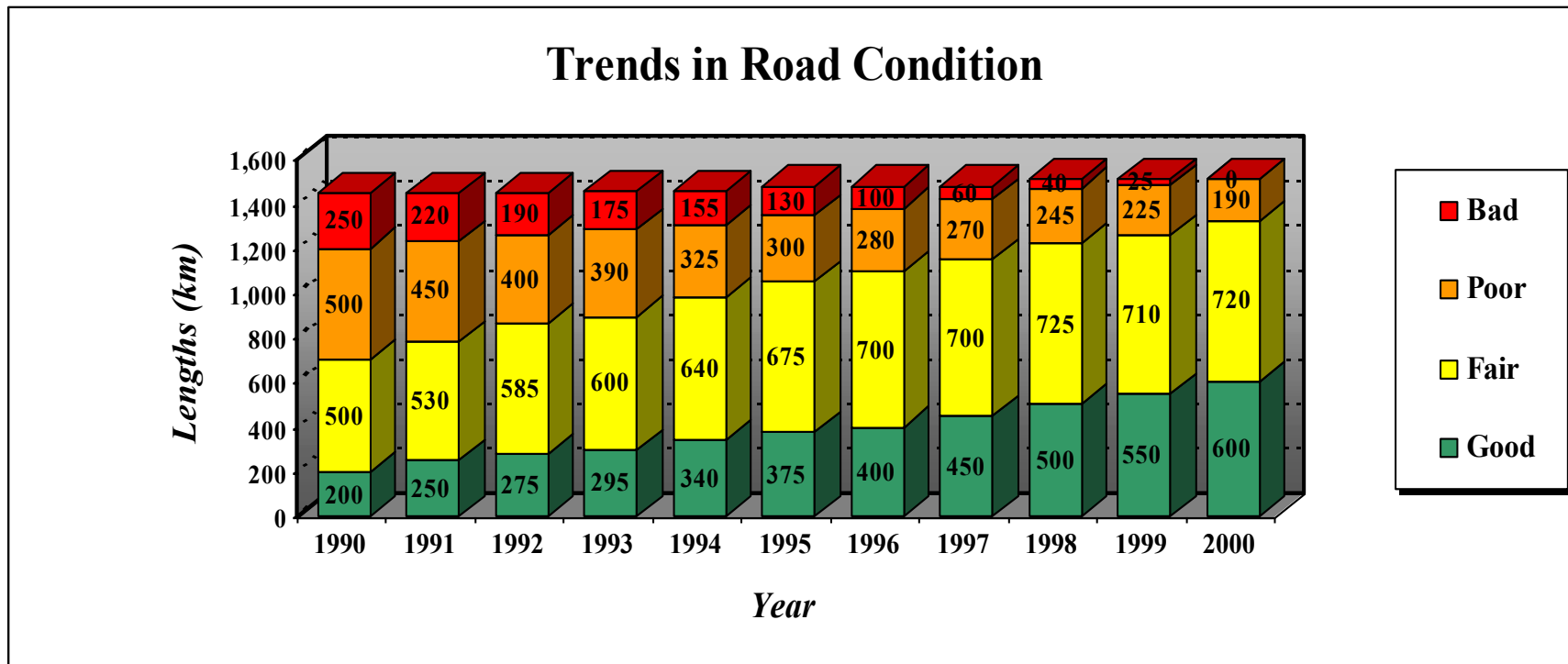


Total Revenue = \$1,286 million

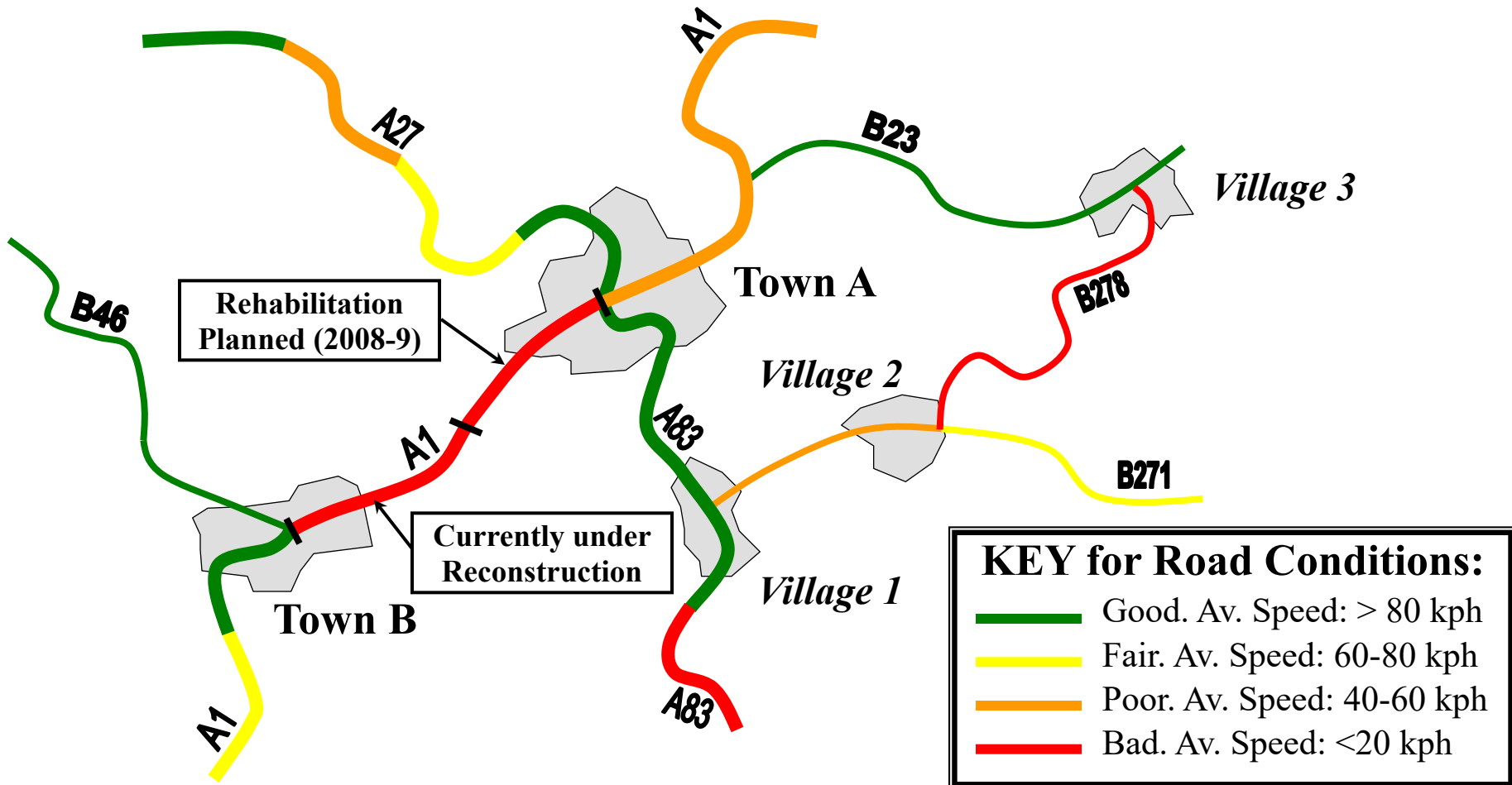
Road Fund Expenditures 2004 - 2007



Trends in Road Condition											
	Year										
Condition	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Good	200	250	275	295	340	375	400	450	500	550	600
Fair	500	530	585	600	640	675	700	700	725	710	720
Poor	500	450	400	390	325	300	280	270	245	225	190
Bad	250	220	190	175	155	130	100	60	40	25	0
Total	1450	1450	1450	1460	1460	1480	1480	1480	1510	1510	1510

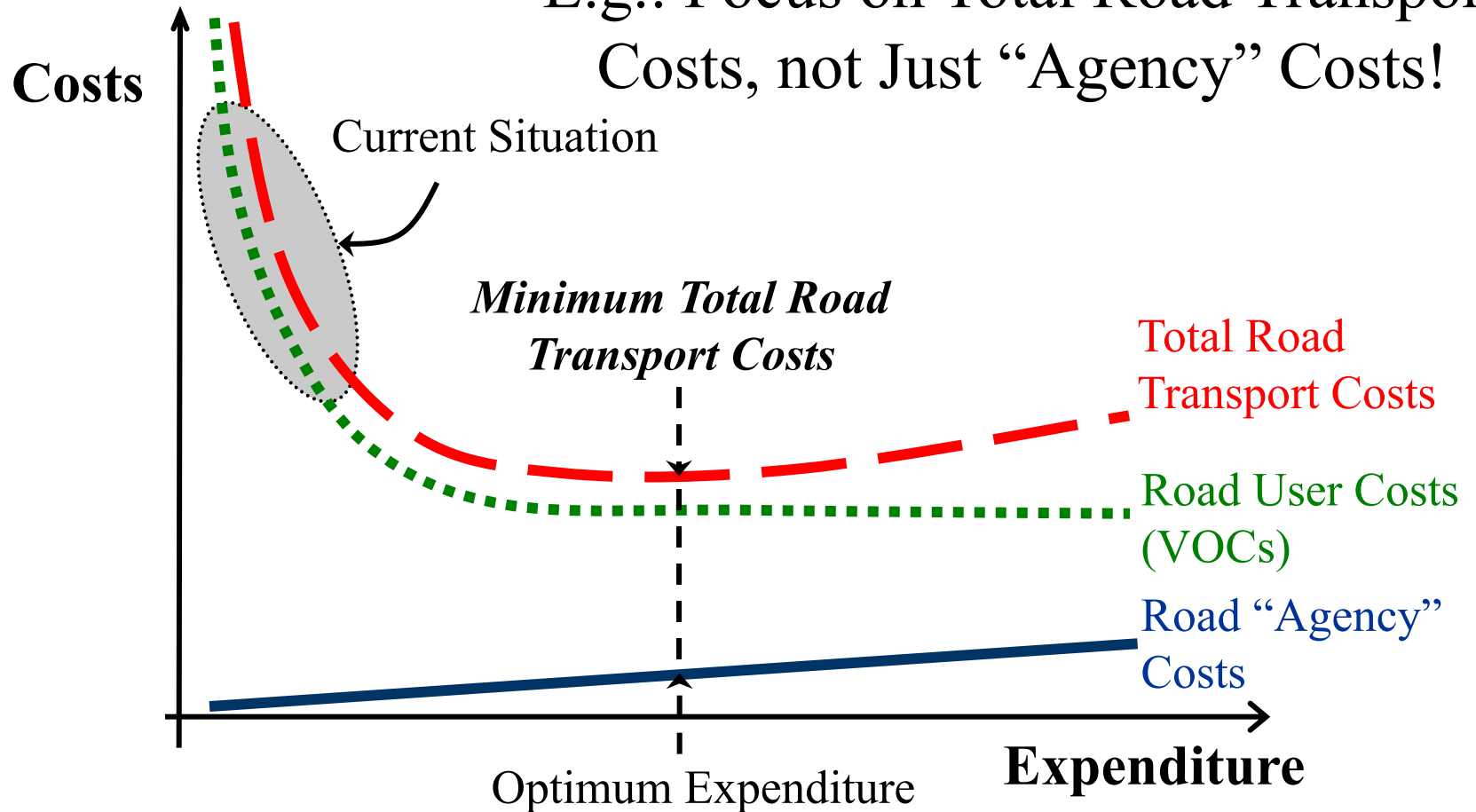


Example: Use Maps to Show Network Condition, or Average Travel Speeds, etc.

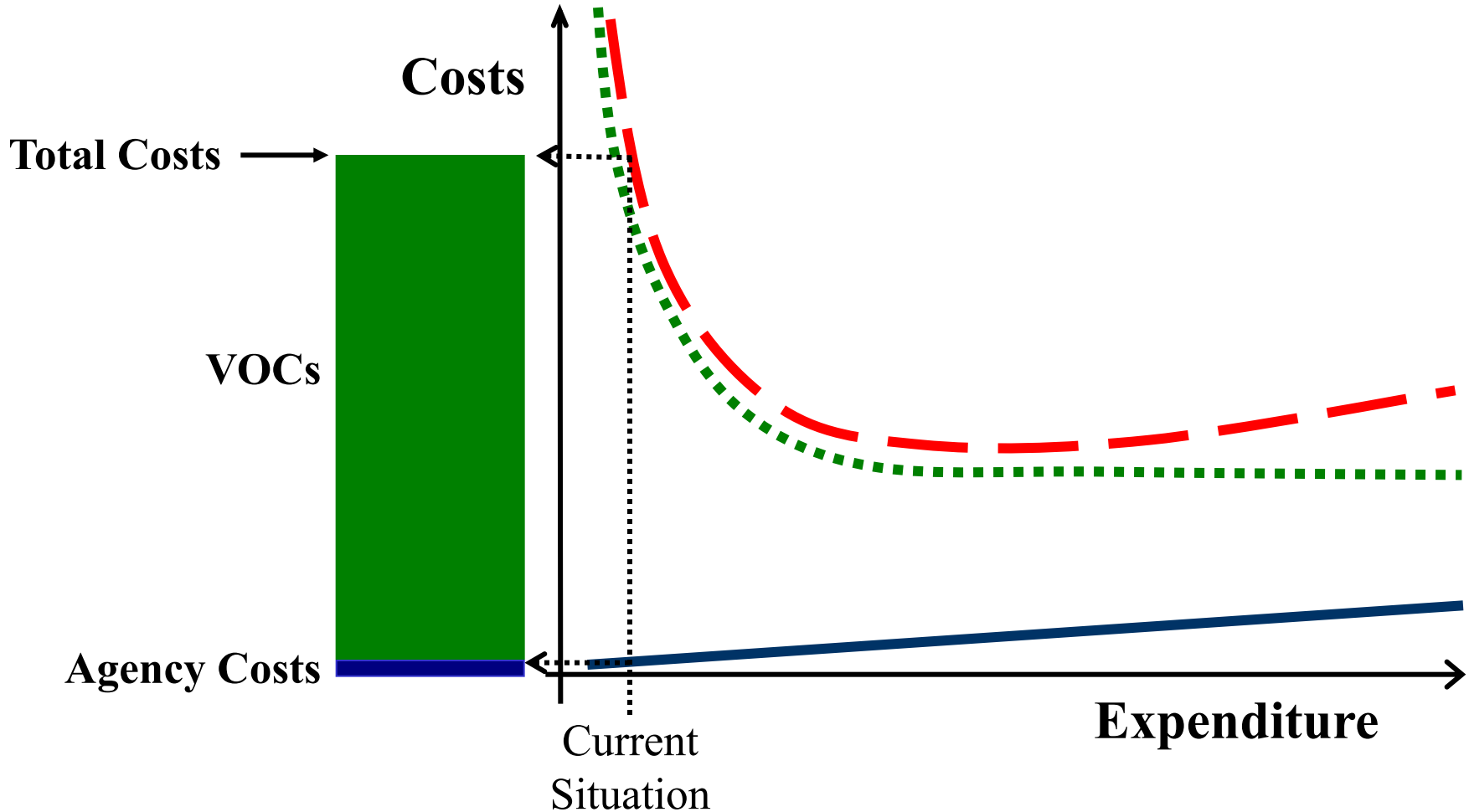


What Messages are you Trying to Send?

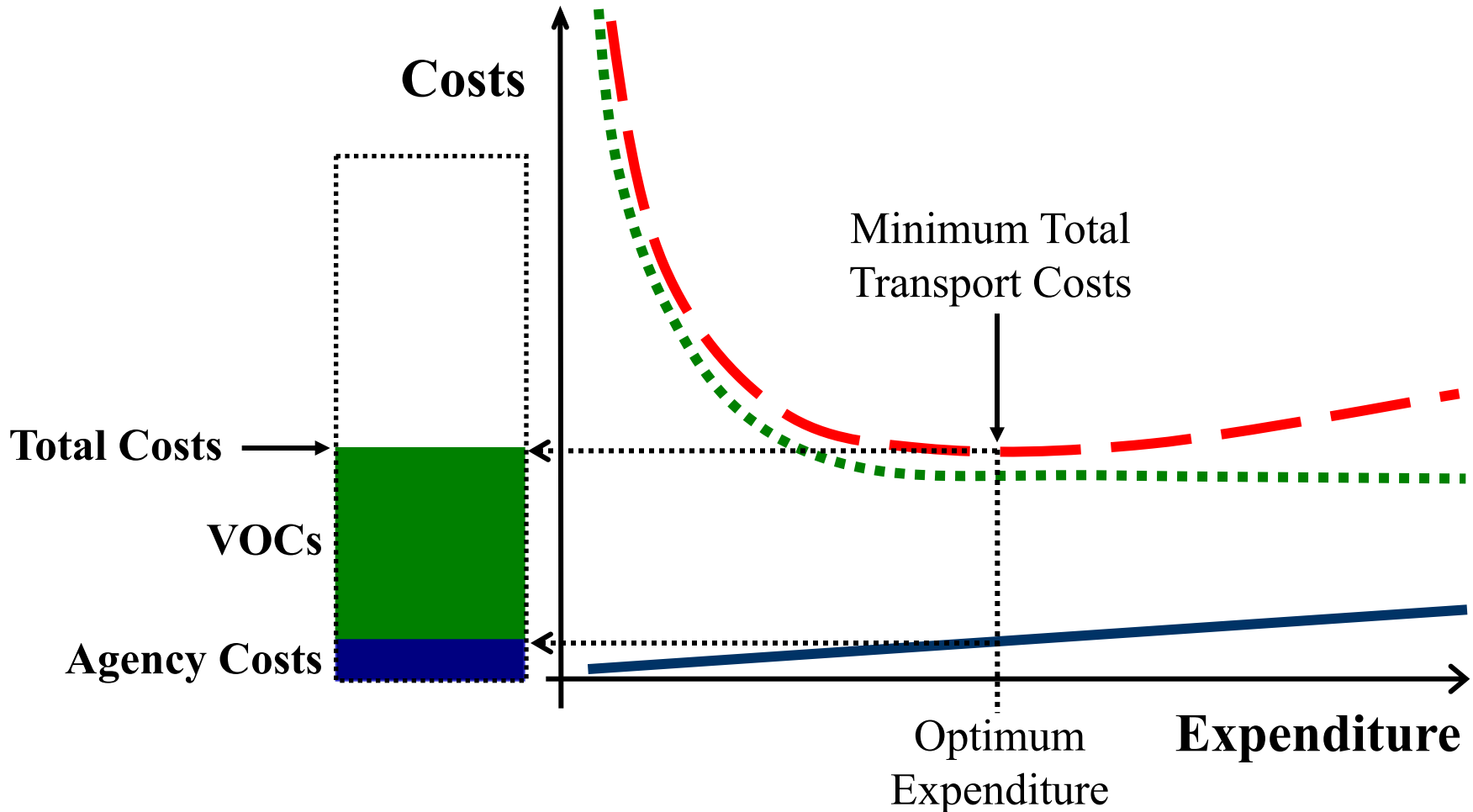
E.g.: Focus on Total Road Transport Costs, not Just “Agency” Costs!



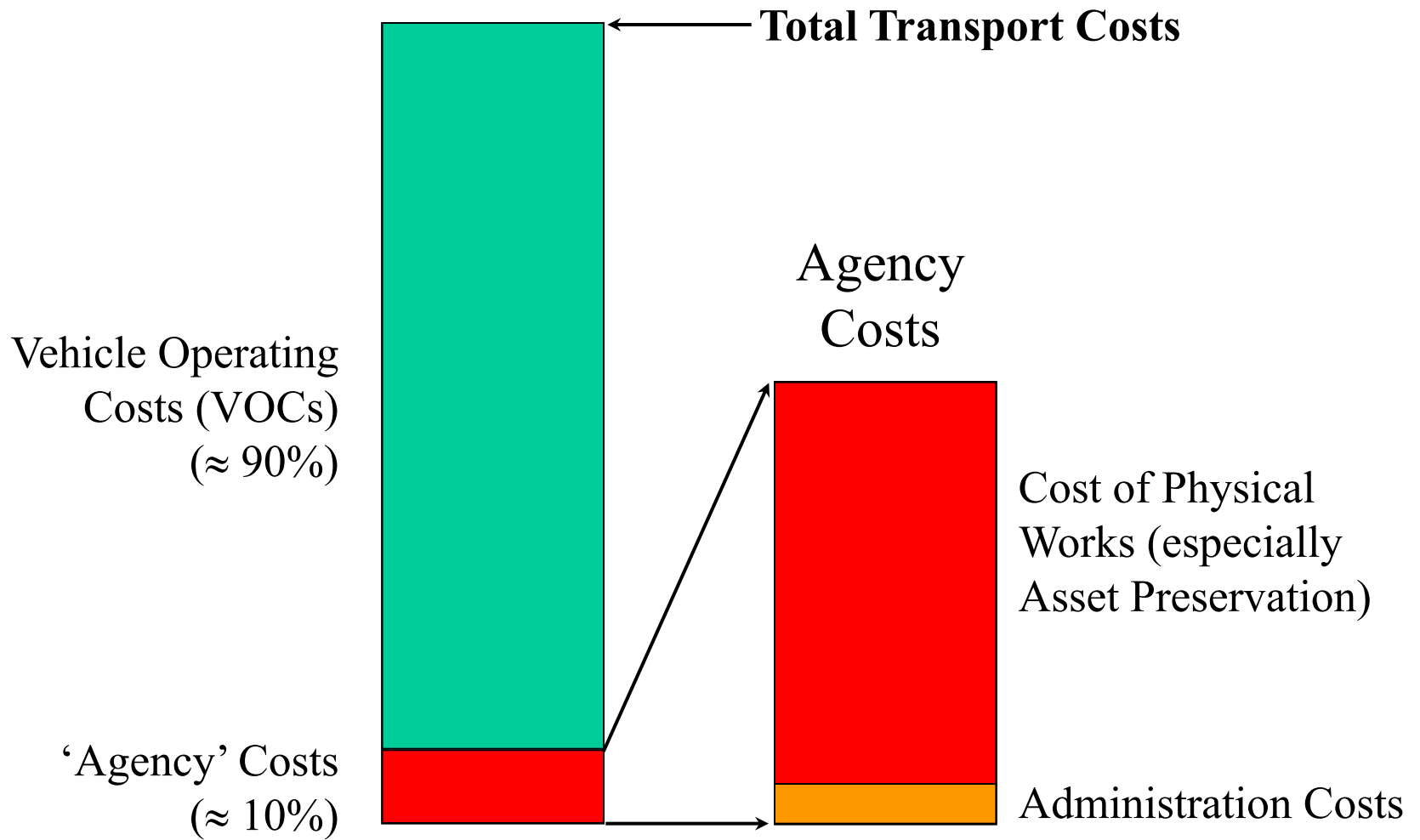
Current Relationship Between “Agency” Costs, VOCs & Total Cost



Relationship under Ideal Funding Arrangements

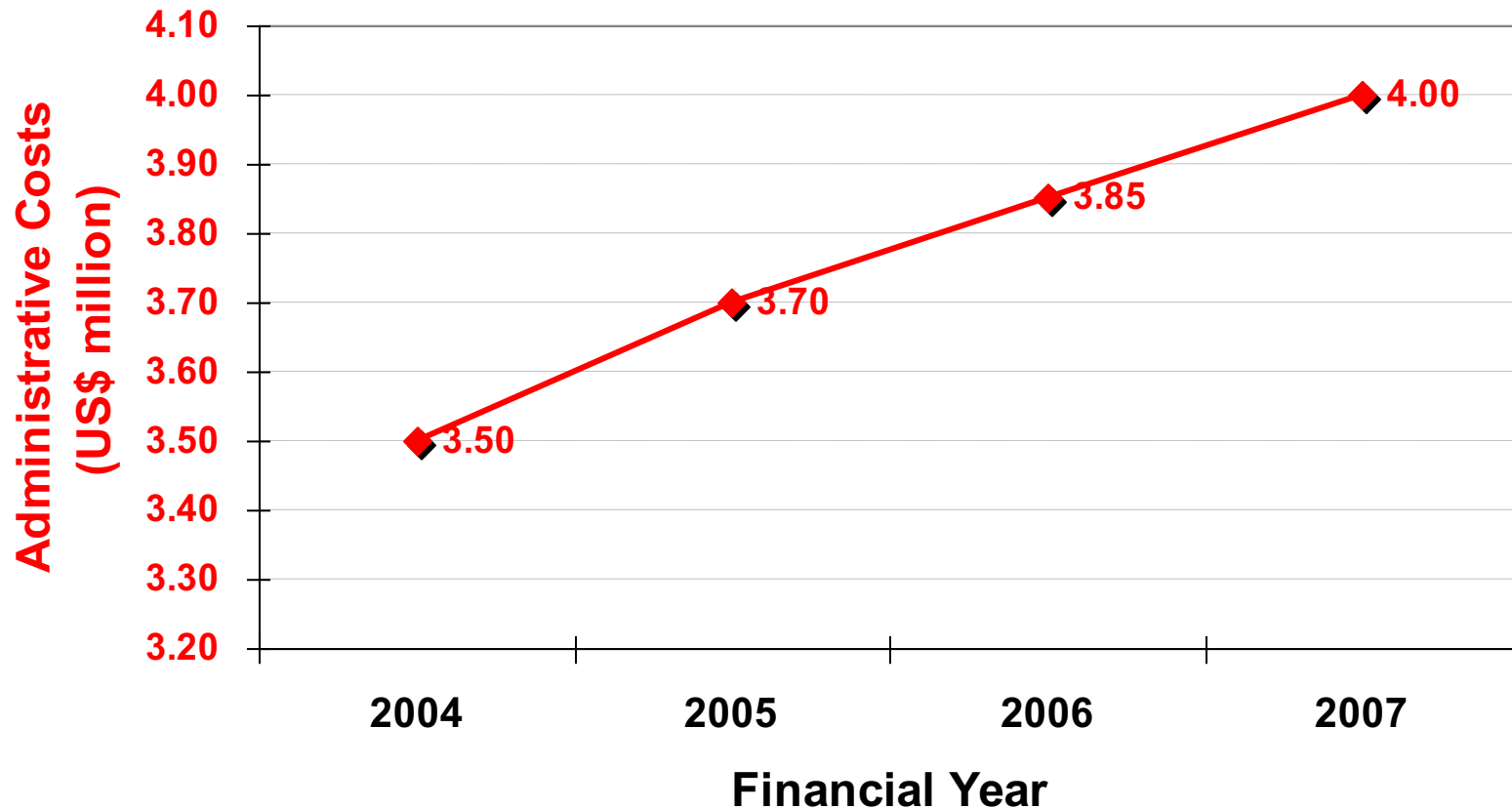


Approximate Overall Transport Costs

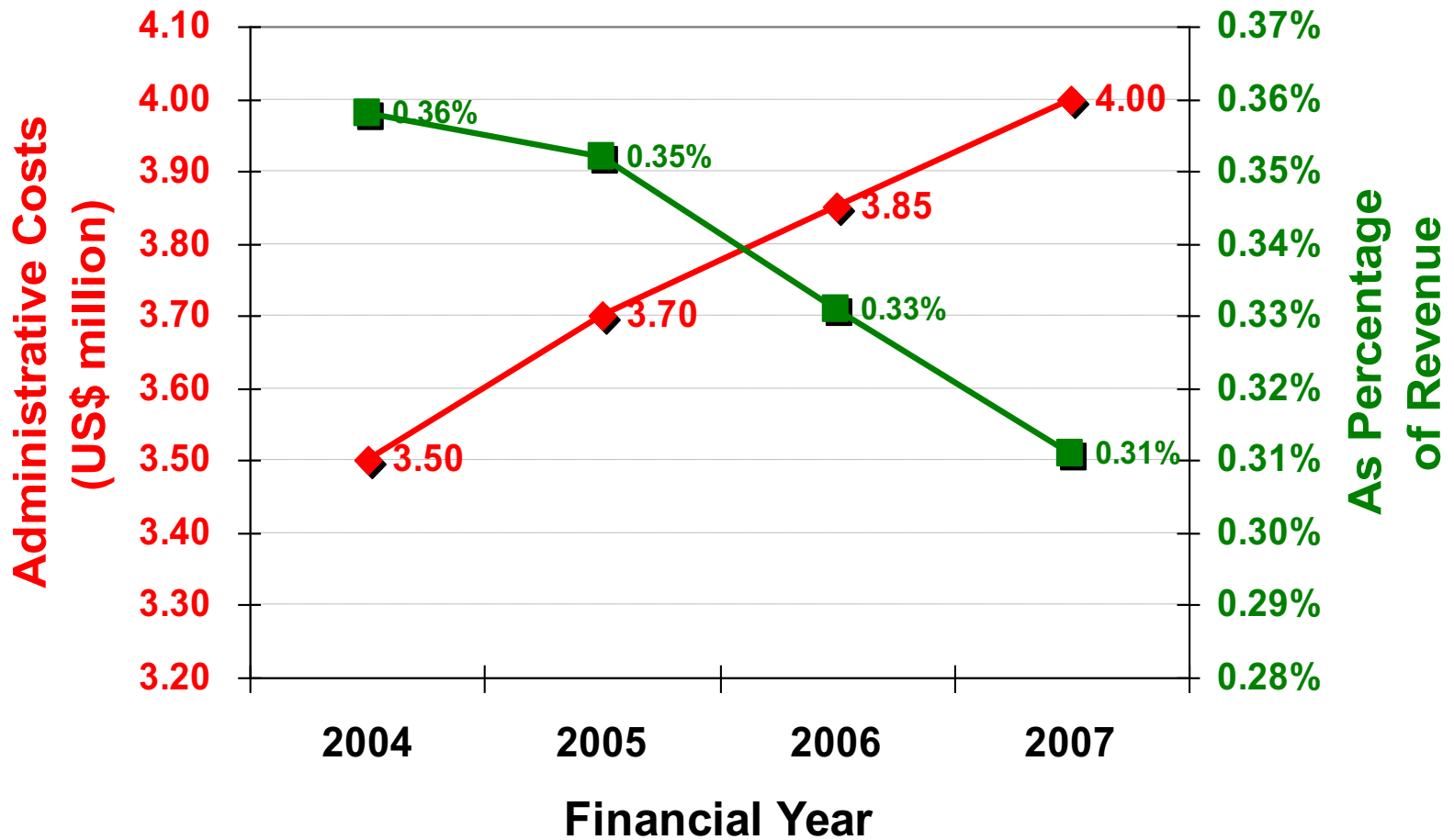


A Real Example of Ill-Informed Criticism.

Road Fund Administrative Costs



Road Fund Administrative Costs cf. Revenue



Tell them the Difference Between a “Tax” & a “Charge” or “Fee”!

Tax

- Level unrelated to the cost of service provided.
- Revenue raised not necessarily spent on the service provided.
- Forms part of general government revenue.

Charge or Fee

- Level determined directly by the cost of service provided.
- Revenue used to provide the service.
- Revenue under the control of those providing the service & not by government.

Suggested Communication Strategies

- Publication of **regular Newsletters** (e.g. double sided colour A4 pamphlets). Distribute to ALL key stakeholder groups.
- Newspaper & **media interviews & articles**.
- Regular **meetings / briefing sessions** with MPs, Road Users, Institutions, Media, Opinion formers, General Public, etc.
- **Annual Report** (detailed & summary).
- **Technical articles** in specialist publications.
- **Web site** containing maps, statistics, reports, policies, etc.
- **Telephone “hotline” & email** address for comments.
- Road **billboards & posters**.
- TV, Radio, Newspaper & Magazine **advertisements**.
- **Sponsorship** of suitable events, individuals &/or facilities.

Arrangements Within a Road Fund Authority

An effective communication strategy is an **ongoing process**. The RFA should therefore have a **specialised but small PR or Communications Unit** devoted to promoting the organisation's message and image. This small unit should report directly to the CEO and contain:

- **A PR / Communications expert**, knowledgeable of the local market & with good local contacts.
- **A DTP / Graphic artist / publishing expert.**
- **Secretarial / Administrative support.**
- **Adequate resources.**

Institutional Support

- Regular budget for PR/Communications by the RFA.
- Legislation stipulating specific reporting requirements for Road Fund Board & CEO to external stakeholders.
- Legislative requirement for Independent Technical & Financial Audit (& published in Annual Report).
- Policy of transparency: everything is to be publicly available unless specific reasons are given why not.
- The RFA should require specific annual Performance Agreements with its Implementation Agency/-ies.
- Proper monitoring by parent Ministry & public.

The End

Thank you for your Attention!