

FEATURES, MECHANISM OF OPERATION AND PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOLL ROADS

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the analysis of the characteristics of paid highways, the mechanism of operation and the prospects for development. The article will consider the history of the emergence of paid roads, their advantages and disadvantages, as well as current issues of the development of this area in Uzbekistan. In addition, international experience in financing, managing and using paid roads is studied. The main purpose of the article is to reveal the economic and social significance of paid roads and develop recommendations for the development of this area in the conditions of Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Toll highways, public private partnership, investment, infrastructure, legislation, transportation, toll.

Introduction

In fact, paid roads are not new to humanity. In ancient times, travelers were charged duties or taxes for traveling by wagon, horse, or foot, using the road. The replacement of horse-drawn cars was followed by toll roads, bridges and tunnels alongside free roads. Unlike in history, the amount of fare on modern toll highways varies depending on the type of vehicle, its weight, or the number of wheel axles. Tariffs for large and heavy vehicles are usually charged higher than for cars.

Transport infrastructure is an important component of the economy and social life of any state. In the context of globalization, an increase in the volume of freight and passenger traffic is increasing the pressure on the existing road system. In such a situation, paid highways (Autobahn) are manifested as a promising way to solve traffic problems. The history of the emergence of paid roads goes back to the distant past. Even in ancient times, merchants and travelers paid various fees for their use of roads. But modern paid roads are distinguished by their high quality, comfort and safety. They aim to speed up traffic flow, reduce congestion and increase traffic safety.

It is recorded that from about 1706, toll road trusts were established in England and Wales with the aim of improving and promoting urban and inter-city road networks and transport links. These bodies were appointed by separate acts of Parliament and had the power to collect duties for the use of roads, which covered the cost of building, reconstructing and maintaining the most important roads.

In 1830, it was recorded that in England and Wales approximately 1,000 trust operated toll roads stretching 48,000 kilometres, collecting tolls through nearly 8,000 points. Thanks to the activities of the trusts, by the 1870s the road and transport infrastructure of the states had improved significantly, agriculture and trade had developed.

As a result, modern toll roads began to be built in other states in Europe in the 20th century to finance the construction of roads and road structures such as bridges, tunnels, etc. Including Italy in 1924, and Greece in 1927, which introduced a toll for Interurban users.

Going into the 50s and 60s, France, Spain and Portugal also began to shift from the state budget to infrastructure development, that is, to private companies, without allocating large funds to road safety. An example is the Chinese experiment, in which the construction of toll roads is carried out by private contractors and nationalized after a certain period of time. About 70% of the world-class toll roads are Chinese contributions.

Germany's GP Günter Papenburg and Turkey's Cengiz — Kolin — Kalyon consortium were likely to be involved in the construction of the first toll roads in Uzbekistan.

In recent years, much attention has been paid to the development of transport infrastructure in Uzbekistan. In particular, the issue of the construction and use of toll highways has become relevant. Paid roads serve to optimize traffic flow, reduce congestion and increase road safety. However, there are a number of problems in the development of this sector, including insufficient legislative base, difficulties in attracting investments and the need to take into account the solvency of the population.

The mechanism of operation of paid roads includes the following stages:

1. Design: a project of the road is developed, the feasibility of which is determined.
2. Construction: the road will be built in private or public-private partnership.
3. Management: Road Management is carried out by a private company or state organization.
4. Usage: a toll is charged for using the road. The amount of payment may depend on the type of vehicle, distance and other factors.
5. Repair: the road is constantly being repaired.

The advantages of paid roads can be seen in several aspects. First, they are built at the expense of private investments, without burdening the state budget. This gives the state the opportunity to direct funds to other social spheres. Second, toll roads are operated by private companies, ensuring that the road is kept in consistently good condition. Thirdly, toll roads allow vehicles to move faster, which saves time and increases economic efficiency. But there are also disadvantages of paid roads. The most important problem is that the amount of payment corresponds to the solvency of the population. If the fee is too high, the use of paid roads will decrease, and the economic efficiency of the project will decrease. Also, the availability of paid roads can further aggravate traffic jams on free roads.

There are several main reasons why the construction of toll roads is delayed from year to year:

1. Lack of a legislative base: initially, Uzbekistan did not have the necessary legislative base regarding the use of toll highways. It was necessary to fill the legal gap in this area, make changes to current legislation and adopt new ones. The Money Highways Act was drafted but not passed by the government.
2. Financing issues: initially, money roads were planned to be built by the state, but the government abandoned this idea due to the risk that the fees that will be introduced in them will not raise the pocket of local residents, as well as free roads on the Tashkent-Samarkand and Tashkent-Andijan routes will also be maintained. At the moment, projects are being developed to build paid roads on the basis of public-private partnerships, but no final decision has been made in this regard either.
3. Negotiations with contractors: negotiations with contractors on the construction of a paid Road on the "Tashkent-Samarkand" route have been stretched, since they are setting a very large amount of the toll charged on the road. For this reason, about ten more projects are being studied.

4. New experience for Uzbekistan: the Ministry of Transport noted that this issue is being carefully studied due to the fact that the construction of paid roads is a novelty for Uzbekistan. For the above reasons, the construction of toll roads is being carried out more slowly than expected in Uzbekistan. Due to problems such as the narrowness of existing roads, traffic lights, railway crossings and passing through settlements, there is a need for paid roads to be built. Such roads allow high-speed traffic. The construction of toll roads may not be a burden on the state budget, carried out by private contractors, and nationalized after a certain period of time.

In Uzbekistan, paid highways will be built on the routes "Tashkent-Andijan" and "Tashkent-Samarkand". It is also planned to build a toll road to bypass the cities of Syrdarya and Bakhti. Originally, the "Tashkent-Samarkand" toll highway was scheduled to be built in late 2021, and the "Tashkent-Andijan" toll road in August 2021. However, these deadlines can extend to at least 5-10 years. In conclusion, it is important to build paid roads in Uzbekistan, and a number of projects are planned in this regard.

However, construction deadlines can be slightly delayed. Significant planning work has been carried out on the construction of toll roads in Uzbekistan, but many projects have become stuck on paper or have slowed down in the process of implementation. It is planned to use mechanisms and attract foreign investment, but the exact duration and conditions of projects often remain unknown. Presidential decisions and final agreements are expected to be a determining factor in the fate of the projects.

The prospects for the development of paid roads in Uzbekistan are great. A number of projects are being implemented in our country aimed at modernizing transport infrastructure, increasing transit capacity and developing tourism. Paid roads can play an important role in the implementation of these projects. But it is necessary to take into account international experience in the construction and use of toll roads, improve the legislative base and take into account the interests of the population.

Prospects for the development of paid roads in Uzbekistan to develop paid roads in Uzbekistan, it is necessary to work in the following areas:

- Improving the legislative framework: it is necessary to improve legislation in the field of paid roads, protect investments and create favorable conditions for the private sector.
- Attracting investments: it is necessary to create favorable conditions for attracting foreign and domestic investments in the construction of paid roads.
- Development of public-private partnership: it is necessary to create favorable mechanisms for the implementation of projects.
- Optimization of the payment system: for the use of the road, it is necessary to optimize the payment system, introduce electronic payment methods and create favorable conditions for the population.
- International experience study: it is necessary to study international experience in financing, construction and management of paid roads and adapt to the conditions of Uzbekistan.

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