

PRESS RELEASE
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AIReF RECOMMENDS IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT SELECTION TO RAISE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT AND MEET MOBILITY NEEDS

- **The institution states that Spain has made enormous investments, leading to noticeable population mobility improvements**
- **It claims that infrastructure planning has been highly ambitious, without prioritising actions and without tying plans to the budget process and the economic situation**
- **It identifies widespread planning optimism that has tended to undervalue the costs of investment, minimise the risks of projects and overestimate travel demand**
- **It believes that infrastructure planning has not taken place while identifying mobility problems based on evidence and focusing the interest and resources on alternatives to resolve them**
- **It proposes approving new integrated mobility and transport infrastructure legislation capable of defining common criteria and objectives for all modes of transport**
- **It suggests developing a mobility and transport infrastructure strategy or plan and set up an independent project evaluation authority**
- **It proposes strengthening consultation with civil society, transparency and accountability, as well as improving coordination and cooperation between the various authorities**

The Spanish Independent Fiscal Responsibility Authority (AIReF) today published its ‘Transport Infrastructures’ study from the second stage of the Spending Review, in which it analyses its efficiency and suggests improvement proposals. It specifically recommends “improving infrastructure investment selection to raise their social and economic yield and to meet the mobility needs of the public”, said the Chairwoman of AIReF, Cristina Herrero, at the event held earlier today to present the study.

In the study, AIReF states that Spain has made enormous transport infrastructure investments in the period 1985-2018. In fact, Spain invested the most in infrastructures of all leading European countries in the period 1995-2017.

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This has enabled the country to significantly close the gap with leading European countries. However, a steep decline in investments since 2012 has led to a situation in which the gross annual investment has failed to cover stock depreciation.

AIReF stresses that infrastructure investment policy is essential for guaranteeing high-quality public networks, in turn essential for guaranteeing economic growth and raising overall social well-being. However, the institution states that Spain has no regulatory framework providing a structure to the drawing up of transport infrastructure plans. It also believes that infrastructure planning has been highly ambitious in the last 35 years, without prioritising actions and without tying plans to the budget process and the economic situation.

Furthermore, AIReF states that the cost of works to be completed has been undervalued at the various stages of the project planning process, that investments are not evaluated and that only the airport sector has an up-to-date sectoral plan in place while all other modes of transport are incurring significant delays in drawing up their plans.

It also identifies widespread planning optimism that has tended to noticeably undervalue the costs of investment and overestimate travel demand. It underlines a lack of genuine *ex ante* evaluation of the investments to be made given that, in most cases, the most important decisions are taken before launching the feasibility studies. The study by the institution claims that infrastructure planning does not take place while identifying mobility problems and focusing the interest and resources on the possible alternatives for resolving them.

In this context, AIReF believes there is an extensive catalogue of good practices that Spain could apply through adaptation to its specific reality in order to reduce planner optimism, identify transport needs, better estimate construction costs, specify *ex ante* and *ex post* infrastructure investment evaluation methods and improve transparency, involvement and accountability.

Proposals

It therefore proposes approving new integrated mobility and transport infrastructure legislation capable of defining common criteria and objectives for all modes of transport and aligning its planning and management with the international commitments made in terms of sustainable mobility. Furthermore, it proposes strengthening budgetary planning mechanisms in infrastructure plans and projects with greater involvement by the Spanish Ministry of the Treasury, as well as establishing an objective roadmap for medium-term investment transport infrastructures.

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To improve planning, it suggests developing a mobility and transport infrastructure strategy or plan, drawing up transport sector plans and tying them to the national plan and approving regulatory documents for the railway sector. It also proposes creating an independent project evaluation administrative authority and defining a new project evaluation framework.

AIReF suggests strengthening consultation with civil society, transparency and accountability with measures such as the creation of mechanisms to facilitate real involvement in decision-making by those affected before decisions have been finalised, the implementation of an open data policy and application of the comply or explain principle so that the reasons are made public whenever technical recommendations are not followed.

Finally, it proposes improving coordination and cooperation between the various authorities by creating coordination and cooperation mechanisms and reforming the Infrastructures Sector Conference, developing joint responsibility mechanisms in spending by territorial authorities and agreeing an infrastructure project evaluation and planning framework with the regional governments and local council authorities.

Consult the Press Release on the Findings and Proposals on High-Speed Rail and Suburban Rail [here](#)

Consult [here](#) the Press Release on the Findings and Proposals on the Air Transport Subsidies for Residents in Extra-Peninsular Territories