

Alternatives to Vehicle Fleet Management

In some circumstances managing a fleet of vehicles for the given transport requirements could end up being inefficient, expensive, administratively difficult, or dangerous. Staff movement can be also enabled by combining transportation services from public and private transportation providers.

Humanitarian logistics professionals often validate and contract different transport services that users can access according to their needs. Once a transport services have been identified and enabled, the burden lies in monitoring its use and paying the service providers accordingly. Agreements with the service providers are normally done per trip or/and distance. It is recommended to regularly assess (at least annually) the quality of the service offered by outside transport providers, ensuring its compliance with the contractual terms and its usefulness.

Assessing the operational needs and the context and comparing existing transport alternatives is prerequisite in order to choose the most suitable transport option.

Common alternatives to fleet management are:

Other Humanitarian Agencies	<p>It is very common for humanitarian agencies to operate simultaneously in certain locations. Pooling resources is a simple manner of optimising costs and recovering an investment. This is valid not only for transportation but also for common fleet facilities or resources, like a mechanical garage, a mechanic or a communications/radio room for movement tracking.</p> <p>For sporadic use of other agencies vehicles, sharing of information and basic coordination mechanisms might be sufficient. In situations where agencies might make regular use of other agency fleet resources, both parties are strongly recommended to formalise partnerships through a Memorandum of Understanding, clearly outlying the benefits of the shared resources and clarifying the terms of accessing it. The contribution of each agency should grant equitable share of management efforts and expenditures.</p>
Collective Public Transportation	<p>In some locations collective transportation can result useful and cost-effective for moving people at regional or national level. This method can cover sporadic travels through safe routes not regularly covered by the agency. In addition, public road collective transport companies usually offer the service of transporting small parcels at low rates which can be useful in certain occasions.</p> <p>Safety of public use vehicles and reliability of the service are major concerns when assessing collective public transportation means, and should be specifically evaluated for each candidate company offering the service. This is especially important in developing countries. Overall condition of the vehicles and availability of the basic safety means, maintenance routines, loading of the vehicle and drivers' capabilities are some of the basic parameters to assess.</p>

**Individual
Public
Transportation
(Taxi)**

In urban settings, the use of taxis is one of the most common individual transport means. A taxi's flexibility, affordability and ease of management make of it a very good alternative or complement for the organisation's fleet in urban operations. Taxis can be very useful for managing unplanned requests, and for scaling-up of transport based on need.

Safety and reliability of the taxi service are main concerns and should be specifically evaluated for each candidate company offering the service.

Where taxi companies are not well established or are not reliable, agreements with a specific pool of trustworthy taxi-drivers can be a solution. This is a common practice to cover the transport to and from the airport. This kind of agreements allow extended services such as prolonged stand-by time, wearable visibility from the agency, transport of goods, or handover of necessary material at arrival or departure such as mobile phone or keys.

**Third-party
Transport
Providers**

Although third-party transport providers are usually specialised in the transport of goods, in some locations they can also be trusted for the transport of people. The transport of people privately operated is mostly handled by renting companies that hire vans, minibuses or coaches with driver. This solution for transporting people is a suitable alternative for punctual and specific needs such as events gathering a significant number of people or for preventative security evacuations.

When regularly using third-party transport providers, a framework agreement can be useful to ease the management process. It is strongly recommended to include particular terms and conditions related to safety in the agreement and to duly assess that they are respected prior to the delivery of each service.

Please reference the road transport section of this guide for more information on the advantages and disadvantages of [using third-party transportation](#), and the [recommended terms for developing contracts](#) for third-party transport.
