TOLLING ON THE HUNGARIAN MOTORWAY NETWORK

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ABSTRACT

The paper starts with a review of the tolling ideas in the last 40 years in Hungary.

The second part of the paper presents three direct toll project case studies: the M1/M5 concession, the M5 concession and the M3 state toll motorway. It describes their location in the country, in the road network, the applied manual semi open and closed tolling systems, the toll categorisation and multipliers, the rate escalations, the discount schemes, their traffic, the capture rates, the incomes and their distribution, the reliability of traffic forecasts, and the local consequences. Following a short financial and acceptability evaluation, temporary solutions, like partial shadow tolling, buy out and restructuring, consequence of toll cuts in traffic and incomes are also discussed.

An overview of changes in the toll and financing policy is given in the third part of the paper, explaining why the motorway users pay now only the operation and maintenance costs, while the construction and financial costs are covered by other sources, contrary to the former pricing method which was based on covering total project costs. The step-by-step introduction of the unified vignette system is discussed, which became nationwide by this time, showing first the utilisation, then the omission of former toll facilities, the current enforcement method, the user charge categorisation and multipliers, the traffic growth, the capture rates, the income structure and its correlation with network and traffic output development.

The next part focuses on equity or fairness issues experienced, such as whether road infrastructure should be financed by taxpayers, motorists or facility users, by present or future generations, whether to calculate the category multipliers according to wear caused or allowing cross financing (cost allocation); whether to favour rich or poor regions (accessibility); whether to provide free sections and parallel free links, whether to favour frequent or infrequent users (who suffers the negative impacts); whether enforcement solutions can distinguish between lawful and cheating users.

The closing part of the paper discusses the future plans of the electronic toll collection, the supporting detailed long-term toll policy and the public relation tasks to be completed in order to gain political consensus. To achieve the above, special surveys should be conducted, such as cost allocation to vehicle categories through well-established multipliers, definition of tolled and free sections and defining socially as well as economically acceptable toll levels.

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1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Hungarian *motorway construction started in the early 60's*. In the beginning the investments were financed by the central state budget. As the economic policy was not in favour of the road transport, the officials responsible for the road network tried to seek an automatism solution for the long-term financing.

Aiming at these goals, *a market oriented motorway programme was elaborated by 1970*. This defined that *an overall 500 km long tolled motorway network would be implemented* within 10 years. The planned toll level was equal to an average consumption car's gasoline cost at that time. Through an international tendering, 5 bids arrived for the implementation. After the first oil crises, the preparatory works slowed down, and finally due to political concerns, in 1976 it was declared, "*there is no need for foreign investment and toll collection in the socialist Hungarian motorway network*".

The way of financing remained dependent upon the general taxes. From the mid-80's *international financial institutions' loans* became robust in financing. From 1989 the *gasoline price earmarked Road Fund's sources* became the exclusive financial source. It was not a question that these improvements helped a lot, but the traffic demand grew much faster than the road supply.

Although *there were some attempts and studies to introduce a vignette-like user charge system at the end of the 80's*, the road users and the missing supplementary funds undermined these efforts. Because of the real budgetary constraints and high public debts, the attention turned to extra financial sources, the *pure private financing* and after the first experience to the *public/private partnership*. Until realisation of this programme on 5 different toll-free motorway and expressway stretches (M0, M1, M3, M5, M7) altogether a 383 km network was put into operation by 1994.

2.1. THE FORMER M1/M15 MOTORWAY CONCESSION

The M1/M15 motorways lie in Trans European Transport Network Corridor No. IV., on routes E60, E65, E75 in the North-West part of Hungary on a plain area which has sometimes high ground water because of the gravel bed of the close Danube river. They connect three capital cities of the European Union: Wien (Austria), Bratislava (Slovakia) and Budapest (Hungary).

This 43 km + 14 km long new project with 7 interchanges and 5 rest areas has brought the direct toll collection in the Hungarian speedways financed by the private First Hungarian Concession Motorway Co. Ltd. (called as ELMKA Rt.).

The toll collection was implemented by a *"semi open" system*, the private Hungarian Transroute Co. Ltd. operated this and the motorway itself. There was a main toll barrier (handling 95% of the toll income) and there were 4 satellite toll barriers on 2 entry/exit ramps of 2 interchanges.

The initial *toll rates* were defined in the Concession Contract by *vehicle categories* and toll plazas². The 4 vehicle categories used were:

- category 1:	personal cars and bikes	toll rate was = EUR 0.23 / km,
	height < 1.9 m	allowed maximum was = EUR 0.23 / km;
- category 2:	minivans and minibuses	multiplier was $= 1.0$,
	$1.9 \text{ m} \le \text{height} < 2.4 \text{ m}$	allowed maximum was $= 4.0;$
- category 3:	trucks and heavy good vehicles	multiplier was $= 2.5$,
	$2.4 \text{ m} \le \text{height}$	allowed maximum was $= 4.0;$
- category 4:	buses	multiplier was $= 4.0$,
	$2.4 \text{ m} \le \text{height}$	allowed maximum was $= 4.0$;

A 30% higher rate was possible to be used in July and August for category 1 and 4.

Rates were automatically escalated without any prior consent of the Ministry according to domestic CPI^3 and/or the ERD^4 in proportion of loans raised in foreign currencies.

The 4 discount schemes used on the motorways were as follows:

- Local User Cards were available for local private residents (of settlements close to the motorway) for a minimum start up fee and entitled users for 50% discount;
- Frequent User Cards were available for domestic/international private users and companies for a minimum start up fee and entitled users for 30% discount;
- Coupons for 2, 6 or 10 passes with a validity period from 1 to 6 months gave 20% to 40% discount;
- Fleet Cards were available to fleet operators under case-by-case negotiated terms, where the monthly discount rate could be up to 50% based on the frequency of trips.

From January 1996 to September 1999, the AADT⁵ grew from 6,300 to 7,000 vehicles/day. It represented only 55% of the estimated amount of the initial traffic study. On yearly average, the toll motorway captured 45% of the traffic from the corridor as initially estimated. The *traffic shortfall* was due to among others:

- the much lower than expected traffic in the corridor consequently influenced the motorway traffic (as a result of worse than estimated macroeconomic environment such as higher inflation rate and robust drop of real incomes in Hungary between 1994 and 1996);
- the length of tolled section (less than 40 km, easy to divert, time saving was limited to only 15-20 minutes);
- location of the project (close to border where waiting time for trucks is measured in hours);
- structure of traffic on the motorway (mainly long distance traffic, West-European users, passenger cars, but 80% of buses and trucks diverted the toll road).

⁵ Annual Average Daily Traffic

² This entire paper calculates with EUR 1 = HUF 255 exchange rate.

³ Consumer Price Index

⁴ Exchange Rate Differential

Following the opening of the new sections, the lawyer of the Hungarian Automobile Club initiated three litigations against the Concession Company. The road signs, the "extremely high and unjustifiable" toll level plus the inproportionality of the service rendered in counter of it were challenged. Finally, after 3-5 years all appeals were practically lost.

traffic Due to the shortage, the concessionaire could perform only 50% (about net EUR 11 million/year) of the toll revenue forecast. The difference between the actual traffic and toll revenues was mainly attributable to the moderate approach of not raising the tolls at the frequency and amount allowed by the Concession Contract. The project needed a *restructuring* SO negotiations started between the Shareholders, Lenders and the Ministry. The negotiations aimed at a possible agreement to extend the length of the toll collecting



M1 main toll barrier

section with 90 km to Budapest and parallel to lower the average toll rate.

After the general elections of 1998, the concept was changed and the negotiations detoured towards the *buying out the whole insolvent private company*. After a yearlong discussion, the parties agreed on the application of the Substituted Entity⁶ clause of the Concession Contract. The Ministry established a state owned company, the West Hungarian Motorway Co. Ltd. (called as NyUMA Rt.) which was appointed by the Lenders in September 1999.

After the substitution, *the state cut the tolls by half*, which resulted in an average 30% raising of the traffic on the tolled section with a capture rate of 55%. As a bottom line, *the income was reduced by 35%* compared to the previous term.

2.2. THE M5 MOTORWAY CONCESSION

The M5 motorway lies in Trans European Transport Network Corridor No. IV. and X/A, on route E75 in the middle of the South part of Hungary on a plain, sandy area. It connects the capital of Serbia and Crna Gora, Belgrade to Budapest.

This project incorporated a 26 km already existing full motorway reconstruction + 30 km 'half motorway' or expressway extension to a full motorway + 44 km of new construction with altogether 11 interchanges and 5 rest areas financed by the private Alföld (Great Plain) Concession Motorway Co. Ltd. (called as AKA Rt.).

⁶ A Substituted Entity means any Company selected by the Ministry or the Lenders to replace the Concession Company in the Concession Contract and who has to enter into the agreements instead of the original Concession Company.

The toll collection was implemented by a *"semi open" toll collection system*, the private Hungarian Intertoll Co. Ltd. operated this and the motorway itself. There were 2 main toll barriers (handling 75% of the toll income) and there were 8 satellite toll barriers on entry/exit ramps of 3 interchanges.

The initial *toll rates* were defined in the Concession Contract by *vehicle categories* and toll plazas. The 4 vehicle categories, which were used:

_	category 1:	personal cars and bikes	toll rate was = EUR 0.12 / km,
		irrespective of axles	allowed maximum was = EUR $0.12 / \text{km}$;
_	category 2:	minivans, small trucks	multiplier was $= 1.4$,
		two axles, no twin tyres	allowed maximum was $= 1.5$;
_	category 3:	trucks, buses	multiplier was $= 2.0$,
		two axles twin tyres, three axles	allowed maximum was $= 2.0$;
_	category 4:	heavy good vehicles	multiplier was $=$ 3.1,
		four or more axles	allowed maximum was $= 4.0$;

Rates were automatically escalated without any prior consent of the Ministry according to domestic CPI and/or the ERD in proportion of loans raised in foreign currencies.

The 4 discount schemes originally implemented were as follows:

- Local User Cards were available for local private residents (of settlements close to the motorway) for a minimum start up fee and entitled users for 20-60% discount (through this system it was possible to eliminate the disproportionateness of travelled distance in the "semi-open" toll system);
- Frequent User Cards were available for domestic/international private users and companies for a minimum start up fee and entitled users up to 26% discount;
- Coupons were available for the agriculture wholesale market suppliers for 40% discount;
- Fleet Cards were available to fleet operators under case-by-case negotiated terms, where the monthly discount rate could be up to 40% based on the frequency of trips.

Right after the opening to traffic of the already existing and at that time tolled sections, *the inhabitants of villages and cities along the parallel national road began protestation movements against the tolls* as the diverting traffic burdened the free national road at once. Notwithstanding the capture rate of the motorway was near expectation, the traffic increase on the parallel road network was high. Mainly local users and truck drivers avoided the toll road.



M5 ramp toll barrier

Because of political and socio-economic considerations, serious negotiations started at the beginning of 1997 between the Ministry and the Concession Company in order to convince the company to decrease the toll level. As it was considered by the private company to be a significant limitation of their commercial freedom in setting up toll and establish their own toll policy granted by the Concession Contract, negotiations continued in the frame of extending the already existing commercially based discount systems. The targeted groups were the frequent and local users, the farmers and the large fleet operator companies. The state offered cash support to the company to compensate the loss of revenue as a consequence of not commercially based discount development, which resulted in a *partial shadow tolling*.

As a result of the negotiations public sources compensated for income losses of extra discounts to the already described discount schemes, and two new discounts were introduced:

- Truck Coupons were available allowing 4 passes for 15% discount;
- Debit Cards were available to agricultural primary producers for a 20% discount.

From January 1997 to March 2004, the AADT grew from 7,600 to 10,000 vehicles/day. The net income was about EUR 31 million/year. On yearly average the motorway captured more than 45% of the traffic in the corridor as initially estimated, but 75% of heavy good vehicles in the corridor used the parallel toll free national road.

2.3. THE FORMER M3 STATE TOLL MOTORWAY

In 1994 the Ministry commissioned a study for searching alternative ways of motorway financing. This study indicated that either the concession scheme or the alternative of a state tolled road could only be implemented economically if the long existing sections would be tolled.

After the former experiences, there was no will to transfer the existing sections to the private sector, so the M3 motorway had a *"closed/mixed" state toll system* but only for 1-year term to open the field later to the nation-wide vignette system⁷.

The M3 motorway lies in Trans European Transport Network Corridor No. V., on route E71 in the North-East part of Hungary. It connects Ukraine and East Slovakia to Budapest.

This project incorporated a 59 km already existing full motorway reconstruction + 44 km of new construction with altogether 10 interchanges and 13 rest areas. The toll facilities were implemented and operated by the state owned North-East Hungarian Motorway Co. Ltd. (called as ÉKMA Rt.).

The *introduction of toll collection was rescheduled twice* because of general and local elections and an operation subsidy facility had to be opened from public sources for compensating the income lost.

⁷ The vignette system is a time dependent access charge method, which will be described later in this paper.

Finally, in January 1999 a unique *mixed direct toll collection and vignette like user charge system* was introduced in which these 3 vehicle categories were used:

- <u>category 1:</u>	personal cars and bikes height < 2.1 m
- category 2:	heavy good vehicles, buses 2.1 m ≤ height, max 2 axles
- category 3:	all other vehicles

As the motorway was (re)constructed with a closed toll collection system all users had to stop at the control gates where there was a possibility "to pay as you go" or to hand over the magnetic cards which belonged to the given term valid vignettes and which justified the trip under an "access charge" principle. This method was very popular, as *the frequent users used the vignettes and the occasional users paid the toll*. While 100% of the traffic was controlled, *there was no payment evasion*. Roughly 50% of the users had vignettes and 50% paid the toll, but they

toll rate was = EUR 0.04 / km, vignette was = EUR 80/year or 9/month; toll multiplier was = 2.5, vignette multiplier was = 2.5; toll multiplier was = 3.5, vignette multiplier was = 4.0;



M3 ramp toll barrier

generated more than two-third of the total income (about net EUR 13 million/year). As a result of this system, the traffic diversion was less than 10%.

3. THE NATION-WIDE SPREAD OF THE VIGNETTE SYSTEM

In the beginning of 1999, there were 2 private concession companies, 2 private motorway operating companies and 2 state owned motorway companies in Hungary (besides the already mentioned ones there was the State Motorway Management Public Purpose Co. [called as ÁA Rt.] which was responsible for the still toll free motorway and expressway sections). After the M1/M15 project restructuring, in 2000 we had 1 private concession company, 2 private motorway operating companies and 4 state owned motorway companies (a development and a regional operating company was added to the previous ones).

In spring 2005 we have 1 private concession company and 1 private motorway operating company (for the M5) and two state owned motorway companies. The National Motorway Co. Ltd. (called as NA Rt.) is responsible for the new developments (under realisation or preparation: M0, M10, M2, M3, M30, M35, M4, M43, M56, M6, M7, M70, M8, M9). The State Motorway Managing Co. Ltd. (called as ÁAK Rt.) is the legal successor of the former state companies. It is responsible for the operation and maintenance of existing network (M0, M1, M15, M3, M30, M7, M70 and M9).

After the toll levels applied proved to be too high compared to local purchasing power, a Government Decision in 1999 fixed that "*motorway users have to pay only for the operation and maintenance costs*" while the construction and financial costs should be covered from the central budget. As a result, *a unified vignette system was introduced on the whole length of the M1 and M3 motorways in 2000*. This cancelled the direct toll on the M1/M15 and the mixed toll on the M3 and introduced the vignette system on the formerly free M1 section.

Although the cancellation of the direct toll was not fully welcomed by the occasional and mainly short section users (on the M3 there were sections where more than 75% paid the toll rather to have a vignette in 1999) the capture rate of the former tolled M1 section raised to 80% and the traffic diversion on the formerly free M1 section was less than 10%. As in 2000 and 2001 the former toll gates were used as vignette selling and controlling facilities, we had very well detailed usage features. The weekly vignette users represented more than 50% of the total traffic, while monthly vignette users were about 10% and yearly vignette users were between 30% and 40% of the total traffic, depending on time and section.

However, in 2001 all motorways were planned to be usable with the unified vignette system without any physical toll gates or check points. Because of this, instead of the well-developed regular vignette checking at the former toll gates, a never tried non-audited *electronic selling and enforcement system had to be implemented* by the beginning of 2002. Demolition of former toll gates finally took only two months at the end of 2001.



Demolition of M1 toll facilities



Demolition of M3 toll facilities

The electronic system was a pilot project in the first 3 years and became fully operational in 2005. An electronic right of use database filled by GSM⁸ contacted POS⁹ terminals registers the user charge category and licence plate of the vehicle plus the validity term of the vignette. MLFF¹⁰ gantries (fixed cameras) covering some sections of the motorway network and mobile enforcement cars both equipped with LPR¹¹ cameras catch images.

⁸ Global System for Mobile communication

⁹ Point Of Sale

¹⁰ Multi Lane Free Flow

¹¹ Licence Plate Recognition



POS terminal

Fixed cameras



Mobile control device

Manned mobile patrol groups scroll around the network and rest areas controlling the users by mobile control devices and collecting excess charges on the spot if necessary. An excess charge administration collects the fee after the unjustified usages through registered mails. Unfortunately, the vignette evading foreign drivers would be enforced only from the EU when such an agreement will be reached.



Mobile enforcement car



Manned mobile patrol group

The net income 2000 until 2002 grew from EUR 35 million/year from to EUR 42 million/year. During 2003 new section of M3 motorway, the new M30 motorway and the reconstructed M7 motorway joined the vignette system raising net income to EUR 60 million/year. The further construction of the M5 motorway under the Concession Contract was finally agreed in change of an availability payment scheme, which made it possible to extend the vignette system as well on this concession motorway in March 2004. With this step the vignette system like user charging became the nation-wide unified system, allowing motorist to use about 575 km motorways with a relatively cheap and simple tool (the net income for 2004 was EUR 80 million/year). Later in 2004 the former manual toll plazas of M5 were demolished as well. Now 18% of the length of the motorways can be used free of charge (city by-passes, urban and border station access sections) as well as the about 170 km expressway network.



The vignette prices in EUR (including 25% VAT) in 2005 (by 4 charging categories)

User	Calendar	4-Day Rolling Vignette			10-Day	31-Day	Calendar
charge categories	1-Day Vignette	1 January – 30 April	1 May. – 30 September	1 October – 31 December	Rolling Vignette	Rolling Vignette	Yearly Vignette
		50 April	50 September	51 December			
D1 ≤ 3,5 t	-	4.40	5.75	4.40	9.00	15.30	137.00
$3,5 t < D2 \le 7,5 t$	_	_	_	—	24.70	45.10	396.00
$7,5 t < D3 \le 12 t$	_	_	_	-	38.45	65.50	588.00
12 t < D4	7.85	_	_	-	49.00	83.50	750.00

The excess charge is fixed to the payment deadline. Within 3 days it is 5 times, within 15 days it is 10 times and within 30 days it is 20 times of the 10-day rolling vignette price. Non-payers are cited to the civil court after one month.

The main indicators of the vignette system in 2004 (by 3 charging categories)

Distribution of	$D1 \leq 3,5 t$	$3,5 t < D2 \le 7,5 t$	7,5 t < D3
\sum 8 million vignettes	92%	2%	6%

\sum 4 billion vehicle km	82%	4%	14%		
∑ 80 million € income	66%	6%	28%	2004 HIM HANT-THE	

4. SHIFTING BALANCE IN THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF FAIRNESS

Until the end of 1980s, the speedway network was financed as the national road infrastructure itself, *by general taxpayers*. However, because of the then heavily indebted budget, after 1988 the Road Fund became the sole financing source which had its *earmarked income from the motorists* through the petrol tax. From the middle of the 1990s, the *facility users paid all costs* via the tollbooths, but it resulted in extremely high toll level, which forced politicians to interfere. Now the operation, maintenance and periodical renewals are fully paid by motorway users through the vignette prices, but the development (as construction and financial) costs are paid by general taxpayers again. It raises the classical dilemma: whether these high priced *projects should be financed by present or future generations*?

While the M1/M15, the M5 and the M3 projects had their independent tolling system, the *toll level followed the economic development level* and the purchasing power of the local inhabitants of the given region. *With the introduction of a* 'cheap' but nationwide *uniform vignette system, this distinction disappeared.* It means that there is no way to favour the poor regions, where unemployment is much higher, which creates an accessibility issue.

The calculation method of the category multipliers leads to another interesting equity issue. If the toll level of the heavy goods vehicles were set according to the wear caused by them, the personal cars would pay practically nothing. However, as *trucking firms are experienced to be very cost sensitive, until now there was no possibility to charge them according to the real costs*. The vignette system encodes an other contradiction as well, although the multipliers are such as D1 : D2 : D3 : D4 = 1 : 2.9 : 4.3 : 5.5 *the real burden per kilometre multiplier in the vignette system is much less for the goods vehicles as they circulate much more* than for the private cars. It results in a robust cross financing between the user groups.

The endless possibilities of making distinction between toll free and charged sections create a whole guinea pig effect for the political decision makers. When the private toll projects started it was declared "the formerly built toll free section will never be tolled as they had already been paid by the taxpayers". This solution necessarily created tensions when those settled in the vicinity had to pay tolls, while the others who had motorway connections even for decades could travel free of charge. The vignette system brought a cheap charging level, but in turn it charged the whole network almost equally. However, not really equally, because some sections (according to the 'principles' the big city bypasses, in- and outlet and border crossing approaching sections) remained vignette free. It resulted in a new problem: 37% of the M1 motorway, which crosses the richest part of the country, is free while only 3% of the M3 motorway, which crosses the poorest part has the same feature.

One basic feature of the vignette system is that long term validities are cheaper per day. In addition, as there are minimum charging terms (e.g. 10 days), they make *infrequent or short distance trips extremely expensive compared to frequent or long distance trips*.

The *enforcement solutions can result unfair situations* too. Until the toll was collected at toll barriers, there was no way to avoid payment. But the vignette system has no access control, only a sampling of the users, so it can not distinguish between lawful and cheating users.

5. THE DESIRED FUTURE

The above detailed solutions were the consequences of mainly politically driven, professionally unfounded decisions. In the past nine years, this resulted in four types of toll categorisation, three kinds of toll collection system, two types of technology and high differences in the fee levels on a network of about 750 km.

Recognising this contradictions the elaboration of a well-founded, professional and political consensus based Toll Policy became a short-term necessity. This work has been started by the Toll Policy Expert Committee created by the Ministry of Economy and Transport, co-ordinated by the Toll Strategy Bureau of the State Motorway Management Co. Ltd. The first step of the elaboration of the Toll Policy has been the determination of the "*Toll Policy Principles*" which were accepted by the Ministry in February 2004 as follows.

The vignette system like user charging is not recommended for use after 2007 as this type of fee collection gives unjust advantage to the frequent (e.g. companies) and long-distance (e.g. transit traffic) users over the infrequent (e.g. private persons) and short-distance (e.g. local) users. Using these resources financing of the operation and maintenance of the network cannot be ensured in this system mainly because of the significant network expansion planned in mid-term (2,000 km by 2015). The growing network means wider accessibility, the growing personal incomes mean higher yearly running of cars, which shift demand for yearly vignettes resulting in lower virtual toll level¹² for users, lower income per vehicle mileage and per motorway length (currently net EUR 400.000/year/km). The traffic growth experienced in previous years was between 5-8% depending on different sections and vehicle classes.

¹² Virtual Toll Level = Yearly Total Vignette Incomes / Yearly Total Vehicle Mileage



Comparison of the main features of the vignette system (base: year 2000)

The mileage based tolling is recommended from 2008 as in this system all users pay according to the real use of the pavement or to the load share of capacity. The objective of toll collecting can also be the management of traffic demands according to place or time, besides providing financial resources. This solution gives the basis of balanced charging. With the application of mileage based tolling, funding the financial resources and keeping the real value necessary for operation and maintenance of the increasing network can be better provided for.

For roads with limited access, the introduction of toll can be justified right at the first opening of the excess capacity. In this case, the toll of a 2×2 lanes expressway, or a 2×1 lanes expressway could be linked to that of the motorway. These rates have to be precisely determined in the detailed Toll Policy. Otherwise, when introducing toll collection only at the final motorway level construction, problems will arise with the municipalities due to traffic transfer.

The basic objective is to introduce the new policy in all categories at the same time, but the technical solution chosen as a result of international, technologically open tendering should also make it possible, that this deadline would be later in case of passenger cars. In this case, on the other hand, the new system should be able to control 100% the vehicles using vignettes but should be able to handle mileage based tolling for those who chose it. Nowadays significant part of the vignettes is bought by infrequent users, but new surveys should be conducted to determine the frequency of these infrequent users in the various sections.

Further surveys are needed to split the costs between vehicle categories, tolled/toll-free sections, determination of the toll categories and multipliers and determination of the socially affordable toll level. It is important that the decision should be made on political consensus, while it is inevitable to have long-term strategic decision. In case the detailed social discussion can be done in 2005, the up-to-date interoperable electronic toll collection can be

up and running in mid 2008 the earliest, following the tendering, and construction of the chosen technology.

The partial reason of the formerly missing public understanding of the essential aim of tolling was that in Hungary there was never elaborated a clear-cut marketing strategy and public-relation background in this field. The accountability of toll incomes, the way and reason of spending will be in centre of the *future communication campaigns*.

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