Speed management
A road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners
## Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Anti-lock braking system</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARRB</td>
<td>Australian Road Research Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAC</td>
<td>Blood alcohol concentration</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRRI</td>
<td>Building and Road Research Institute (Ghana)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEA</td>
<td>Cost-effectiveness analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBA</td>
<td>Cost-benefit analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development (UK government)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECMT</td>
<td>European Committee of Ministers of Transport</td>
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<td>EDR</td>
<td>Electronic data recorder</td>
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<td>EMS</td>
<td>Emergency medical services</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FIA</td>
<td>Fédération Internationale de l’Automobile</td>
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<td>FIA-Foundation</td>
<td>The FIA Foundation for the automobile and society</td>
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<td>GHA</td>
<td>Ghana Highway Authority</td>
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<td>GPS</td>
<td>Global positioning system</td>
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<td>GRSP</td>
<td>Global Road Safety Partnership</td>
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<td>iRAP</td>
<td>International Road Assessment Programme</td>
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<td>ISA</td>
<td>Intelligent speed adaptation</td>
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<tr>
<td>km/h</td>
<td>Kilometres per hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMIC</td>
<td>Low and middle-income countries</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<td>NHTSA</td>
<td>National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (USA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHS</td>
<td>Occupational Health and Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORN</td>
<td>Overseas research note (published by TRL/DFID)</td>
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<tr>
<td>QALY</td>
<td>Quality-adjusted life year</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCT</td>
<td>Randomised control trial</td>
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<td>RSL</td>
<td>Road speed limiters</td>
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<tr>
<td>SARTRE</td>
<td>Social Attitudes to Road Traffic Risk in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>TARC</td>
<td>Thailand Accident Research Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRL</td>
<td>Transport Research Laboratory (UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td>VKT</td>
<td>Vehicle kilometre travelled</td>
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<td>VRU</td>
<td>Vulnerable road user</td>
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<tr>
<td>VTI</td>
<td>Swedish transport research institute</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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Preface

Road traffic injuries are a major public health problem and a leading cause of death and injury around the world. Each year nearly 1.2 million people die and millions more are injured or disabled as a result of road crashes, mostly in low-income and middle-income countries. As well as creating enormous social costs for individuals, families and communities, road traffic injuries place a heavy burden on health services and economies. The cost to countries, possibly already struggling with other development concerns, may well be 1%–2% of their gross national product. As motorization increases, road traffic crashes are a fast-growing problem, particularly in developing countries. If present trends continue unchecked, road traffic injuries will increase dramatically in most parts of the world over the next two decades, with the greatest impact falling on the most vulnerable citizens.

Appropriate and targeted action is urgently needed. The World report on road traffic injury prevention, launched jointly in 2004 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank, identified improvements in road safety management that have dramatically decreased road traffic deaths and injuries in industrialized countries that have been active in road safety. The report showed that the use of seat-belts, helmets and child restraints has saved thousands of lives. The introduction and enforcement of appropriate speed limits, the creation of safer infrastructure, the enforcement of blood alcohol concentration limits and improvements in vehicle safety, are all interventions that have been tested and repeatedly shown to be effective.

The international community must now take the lead by encouraging good practice in road safety management and the take up of these interventions in other countries, in ways appropriate to their particular settings. To speed up such efforts, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution on 14 April 2004 urging greater attention and resources to be directed towards the global road safety crisis. Resolution 58/289 on “Improving global road safety” stressed the importance of international collaboration in the field of road safety. A further resolution (A58/L.60), passed in October 2005, reaffirmed the United Nations’ commitment to this issue, encouraging Member States to implement the recommendations of the World report on road traffic injury prevention, and commending collaborative road safety initiatives so far undertaken towards implementing resolution 58/289. In particular, it encouraged Member States to focus on addressing key risk factors, and to establish lead agencies for road safety.

To contribute to the implementation of these resolutions, the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society (FIA-F) and the World Bank, are collaborating to produce a series of ‘how to do’ manuals aimed at policy-makers and practitioners. This manual is one of them. Each manual aims to provide step-by-step guidance to
support countries wishing to improve road safety and to implement specific road safety interventions as outlined in the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. They propose simple, effective and cost-effective solutions that can save many lives and reduce the shocking burden of road traffic crashes around the world. We would encourage all to use these manuals.

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Contributors

This manual was drafted under contract to GRSP by a team of researchers from ARRB Transport Research (ARRB, Australia), the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL, UK) and Swedish National Road and Transport Research (VTI, Sweden). Parts of the manual have been taken from earlier manuals such as Helmets: a manual for decision makers and practitioners, the first manual in the series, and Drinking and Driving: a road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners, the second in the series. Such duplication supports the wish to produce a unified series of road safety manuals.

Many people were involved in its preparation as authors, contributors, providers of case studies, peer reviewers and as technical editors. GRSP expresses sincere thanks to them all.

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The following people kindly submitted case studies or supported our search for suitable contributions for inclusion in the manual. Their contributions (used or unused) are gratefully acknowledged – any errors they might contain are the responsibility of the authors.

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Executive summary

Excessive and inappropriate speed is the most important factor contributing to the road injury problem faced by many countries. The higher the speed the greater the stopping distance required, and hence the increased risk of a crash. As more kinetic energy must be absorbed during a high-speed impact, there is a higher risk of injury should a crash occur.

Speed management is a very important tool for improving road safety. However, improving compliance with speed limits and reducing unsafe driving speeds are not easy tasks. Many drivers do not recognize the risks involved and often the perceived benefits of speeding outweigh the perceived problems that can result.

The management of speed remains one of the biggest challenges facing road safety practitioners around the world and calls for a concerted, long-term, multidisciplinary response. This manual advocates a strong and strategic approach to creating a safe road system, with speed management at its heart. Reducing motor vehicle speeds in areas where the road user mix includes a high volume of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists is especially important.

Many low and middle-income countries have a serious, and in some cases worsening, road safety problem. A number of research projects have clearly identified inappropriate speed as being a particular problem. This manual provides advice and guidance for policy-makers and road safety practitioners in these countries and draws on the experience of a number of countries that have already initiated speed management programmes. Lessons from successful and non-successful initiatives are used to illustrate the advice provided.

The manual consists of a series of ‘how to’ modules. It provides evidence of why speed management is important and takes the user through the steps needed to assess the situation in their own country. It then explains the steps needed to design, plan and implement a programme, including how to obtain funding, set up a working group, develop an action plan and, if necessary, introduce appropriate legislation. It considers the potential role of measures involving engineering and enforcement, as well as using education to change speed related behaviour. Finally, the manual guides the user on how to monitor and evaluate the programme so that the results can be fed back into programme design. For each of these activities, the document outlines in a practical way the various steps that need to be taken.

In preparing the material for this manual, the writers have drawn on case studies from around the world to illustrate examples of ‘good practice’. It is hoped that the modular structure of the manual means it can be read and easily adapted to suit the problems and needs of individual countries.
Introduction
Background to the series of manuals

In 2004 the World Health Organization (WHO) dedicated World Health Day – for the first time – to the topic of road safety. Events marking the day were held in over 130 countries – to raise awareness about road traffic injuries, stimulate new road safety programmes and improve existing initiatives. On the same day, the World Health Organization and the World Bank jointly launched the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*, highlighting the increasing epidemic of road traffic injuries. The report discusses in detail the fundamental concepts of road traffic injury prevention, the impact of road traffic injuries, the main causes and risk factors for road traffic crashes, and proven and effective intervention strategies. It concludes with six important recommendations that countries can take to improve their road safety record.

**Recommendations of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention***

1. Identify a lead agency in government to guide the national road traffic safety effort.
2. Assess the problem, policies, institutional settings and capacity relating to road traffic injury.
3. Prepare a national road safety strategy and plan of action.
4. Allocate financial and human resources to address the problem.
5. Implement specific actions to prevent road traffic crashes, minimize injuries and their consequences, and evaluate the impact of these actions.
6. Support the development of national capacity and international cooperation.

The report emphasizes that the growing global problem of road traffic injury can be reduced through the system-wide, multi-sectoral implementation of proven road safety interventions that are culturally appropriate and locally tested. In its fifth recommendation, the report makes it clear that there are several ‘good practice’ interventions, already tried and tested, that can be implemented at low cost in most countries. These include strategies and measures that address some of the major risk factors for road traffic injuries through:

- setting laws requiring seat-belts and child restraints for all occupants of motor vehicles
- requiring riders of motorcycles to wear helmets
- establishing and enforcing blood alcohol concentration limits
- setting and enforcing speed limits
- managing existing physical road infrastructure to increase safety
- improving vehicle safety.

A week after World Health Day on 14 April 2004 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for greater attention and resources to be
Introduction

The resolution recognized that the United Nations system should support efforts to tackle the global road safety crisis. At the same time, it commended WHO and the World Bank for their initiative in launching the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. It also invited WHO, working in close cooperation with the United Nations Regional Commissions, to act as coordinator on road safety issues within the United Nations system.

Following the mandate conferred on it by the United Nations General Assembly, since the end of 2004 WHO has helped develop a network of United Nations and other international road safety organisations – now referred to as the ‘United Nations Road Safety Collaboration’. The members of this group have agreed on common goals for their collective efforts and are focusing attention on the six recommendations of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*.

A direct outcome of this collaboration has been the setting up of an informal consortium consisting of WHO, the World Bank, the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society and the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP). This consortium is working to produce a series of ‘good practice’ manuals covering the key issues identified in the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. The project arose out of the numerous requests to WHO and the World Bank from road safety practitioners around the world asking for guidance in implementing the report’s recommendations.

The manuals are aimed at governments, non-governmental organizations and road safety practitioners. Written in an accessible way, they provide practical steps on how to implement each recommendation in line with good practice, while making clear the roles and responsibilities of all those involved. The manuals are based on a common template. Although primarily intended for low and middle-income countries, the manuals can apply to a range of countries and are adaptable to different levels of existing road safety. Each manual includes case studies from both developed and developing countries.

*The World report on road traffic injury prevention* advocates a systems approach to road safety – one that addresses the road, the vehicle and the user. Its starting point is the belief that to tackle road traffic injuries effectively, responsibility needs to be shared between government, industry, non-governmental organizations and international agencies. Furthermore, to be effective, road safety must have commitment and input from all the relevant sectors, including those of transport, health, education and law enforcement. These manuals reflect the views of the report; they also advocate a systems approach and – following the principle that road safety should be pursued across many disciplines – they are targeted at practitioners from a range of sectors.
Background to the speed management manual

Why was the manual developed?

Speeding (i.e. driving above the speed limit) and inappropriate speed (driving too fast for the conditions, which relates to the driver, vehicle, road and traffic mix rather than the speed limit) are almost universally recognized as major contributory factors in both the number and severity of traffic crashes. In many countries, speed limits are set at levels that are too high for the roadside conditions and the mix and volume of road users, particularly where there are many pedestrians and cyclists. Safe travel conditions cannot be achieved in these circumstances. Speed management policies and programmes will play a key role in any effort to improve a country’s road safety record.

The management of drivers’ speed involves a wide range of measures including setting and enforcing speed limits, engineering measures designed to reduce speeds, and public education and awareness campaigns. Many countries also require speed limiters be fitted to vehicles such as buses and lorries. There is now a vast library of information available on the subject of speed management (and traffic ‘calming’) so the question of what to do and where’ can be daunting. This manual presents good practice on speed management, and offers a framework that can be adapted to local conditions.

The manual was written to inform and support policy-makers and road safety practitioners involved in developing and implementing road safety and speed management programmes in low and middle-income countries. It is one of a series of easy-to-use resources providing practical advice on the steps necessary to improve overall road safety record.

Target audience

Although aimed specifically at low and middle-income countries, this manual has something to offer all countries working to improve their safety record. It aims to help all road safety practitioners, whether working for government or non-governmental organizations. The list of users will vary according to the country, but will certainly include:

- policy-makers and decision-makers in parliaments, ministries, local authorities and road authorities
- members of the judiciary
- politicians
- police officers
- highway engineers
- road safety and public health professionals
- transport managers
• manufacturers of vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles
• employers in the public and private sectors
• insurance industry personnel
• school and college teachers
• researchers on road safety
• driving and road safety instructors.

What does this manual cover and how should it be used?

Managing vehicle speeds is complex and difficult, partly because of the number of opposing factors that need to be overcome. This manual looks at how successful speed management programmes draw on a range of different strategies to do this, including engineering works, setting speed limits, enforcement and public education. For each of these strategies the manual explains the necessary steps, and how they need to be co-ordinated. It explores how political commitment is needed if any substantial programme of change to current travel speeds is to be introduced and supported.

Any new or improved speed management programme will be influenced to a great extent by the systems and programmes already in place. This manual helps users identify which steps are relevant to their particular situation, and then provides practical advice about how to implement them. As well as focusing strongly on engineering and technical measures, the manual also describes the legislative and institutional structures that need to be in place for a programme to be sustainable and successful.

This is a road safety manual, and therefore does not address speed related pollution and energy consumption. It can be noted, however, that in broad terms, reducing vehicle speeds generally offers benefits in terms of less pollution and reduced energy consumption, as well as fewer injuries.

What is covered?

The manual addresses all aspects of speed management, from administration (e.g. legislation and setting of speed limits) to more practical ways of achieving compliance (e.g. engineering, enforcement and education). It is strongly recommended that a balanced programme encompassing all available measures is used. ‘One-track’ solutions are unlikely to be effective.

The technical content of this manual is divided into five modules, briefly described below.

- Module 1 addresses the general and specific links between speed and road risk, and the need for interventions that manage speed to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes. It introduces the Safe-system approach to improve road safety and discusses its reliance on achievement of safe travel speeds across road networks.
• **Module 2** guides the user through the process of assessing a country’s current situation with respect to speed limits and speeding. It outlines the data needed for a good diagnosis, and how these data can be used to set realistic targets and priorities for a programme.

• **Module 3** describes the tools available for use in a successful speed management programme. It begins by explaining how to classify roads by function before determining how to set speed limits. It covers the range of engineering, enforcement and education tools and practices for speed management, providing advice on the benefits that can be expected from each. The module includes sections on what legislation is desirable, how to improve compliance, and establishing appropriate marketing and publicity strategies. Educational interventions are also discussed, as well as the role of employers in speed management.

• **Module 4** discusses how to develop and run a speed management programme. This includes setting up management and consultation arrangements, securing community and political support early on, and choosing from the range of tools described in Module 3. It shows how to decide on the most effective tools for achieving objectives, given the assessment of the problem as advised in Module 2.

• **Module 5** provides a simple framework for evaluating road safety and speed management programmes. The module shows how to use research to guide the development of the speed management programme, monitor progress and evaluate outputs, impacts and outcomes. It discusses the process of identifying the aims of the evaluation, considers different types of evaluation, how to select the most appropriate method of evaluation, and choosing the performance indicators. The module also discusses the need to disseminate evaluation results to inform other stakeholders.

Case studies, in the form of boxed text, are included throughout the manual. These examples have been chosen to illustrate processes and outcomes, with experiences from a wide range of countries. Less detailed ‘notes’ are also included as boxed text to illustrate briefer points of interest. At the end of each module is a summary and references section.

**How should the manual be used?**

The manual is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather adaptable to particular needs. The technical modules contain flowcharts and checklists to help readers determine where their country stands with regard to the problem of excessive speed, and to take the steps that will offer the greatest potential for improvement. The modular structure of the manual is intended to help this process, separating the different elements of the programme.

Although different parts of the manual will be relevant to different stakeholders and practitioners, it would be beneficial if all those involved could be aware of the
contents of the whole document so they can understand how their role fits into the overall programme. All users will probably benefit from reading Module 2, enabling them to assess their situation and to choose particular actions. The choices made at this point will decide which of the remaining sections are useful. For example, a country with little enforcement could decide that this element has a high priority, but importantly recognize the role that education and publicity play in maximising the effect of police activity.

We encourage users to adapt the manual to local conditions: this means it may need to be translated and that sections of it may need to be altered to suit the local environment. We would appreciate feedback on users’ experiences in this process.

**What are the manual’s limitations?**

This manual is not meant to be comprehensive. It draws upon the experience of its contributors from around the world to identify practical and effective steps that can be taken on speed management, and thus reflects the views of those involved in its production. There may well be successful interventions followed by other countries that are not covered here. Similarly, the case studies – used to illustrate processes, good practice and practical constraints – are not exhaustive but merely illustrate points made in the main text.

The manual is not intended to be an academic document or an exhaustive ‘state of the art’ review. The references it contains are those that were found useful in its development, or that can provide more in-depth information, if required, for the reader.

**How was the manual developed?**

The manual is based on a standard template developed jointly by four partner organizations (the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society, and the Global Road Safety Partnership). The template was not meant to be rigid, but to provide a flexible structure which, where possible, would unify the planned set of manuals in their form and approach.

An advisory committee of experts from the different partner organisations oversaw the process of developing each manual and provided guidance on its content. The technical modules of the document were contracted out to organizations or individuals with particular expertise in the area. These people, in this case from Australia (ARRB), Sweden (VTI) and the United Kingdom (TRL), further developed the outline of their modules, reviewed the relevant literature and drafted the technical content, ensuring it reflected the latest scientific views on good practice. Invitations to submit case studies were sent by GRSP to many practitioners around
the world. The draft document was subjected to peer review, and final review by advisory and editorial committees.

The technical content was peer reviewed by road safety practitioners, researchers and other experts from around the world. The draft document was then revised by GRSP to take account of the comments received, and passed for style editing.

**Dissemination of the manual**

This manual is being translated into a number of major languages, and countries are encouraged to translate it into local languages. The manual will be disseminated widely through the distribution channels of all four organizations involved in the series of manuals.

The manual is available in PDF format to be downloaded free from the websites of all partner organizations.

Visit GRSP’s website at www.GRSProadsafety.org

**How to get more copies**

Further copies of the manual can be ordered by writing to:

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Partner organizations in the development of the manual

Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP)

The Global Road Safety Partnership is a partnership between business, civil society and government dedicated to the sustainable reduction of death and injury on the roads in developing and transition countries. By creating and strengthening links between partners, GRSP aims to increase awareness of road safety as an issue affecting all sectors of society. GRSP seeks to establish sustainable partnerships and to deliver road safety interventions through increased resources, better coordination, management, greater innovation, and knowledge sharing both globally and locally.

GRSP is a hosted programme of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

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World Health Organization (WHO)

As the United Nations specialized agency for health, the World Health Organization aims to integrate road safety into public health programmes around the world in order to reduce the unacceptably high levels of road traffic injuries. A public health approach is used, combining epidemiology, prevention and advocacy. Special emphasis is given to low and middle-income countries where most road traffic crashes occur. In recent years WHO has focused its efforts on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the *World report of road traffic injury prevention*, which it co-produced with the World Bank, and in particular on addressing the main risk factors for road traffic injuries. Following a United Nation’s General Assembly resolution on road safety, adopted in 2004, WHO acts as a coordinator for road safety initiatives within the United Nations system, and to this end has facilitated the development of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration – a group of over 40 international road safety organizations, including many United Nations agencies. This coordinating role was further endorsed by a fourth UN General Assembly resolution, adopted in 2005.
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www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/en/

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World Bank
The World Bank promotes the improvement of road safety outcomes in low and middle-income countries as a global development priority. It provides financial and technical support to countries, working through government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to formulate strategies to improve road safety. The World Bank’s mission is to assist countries in accelerating their implementation of the recommendations of the World report on road traffic injury prevention, which it developed jointly with the World Health Organization in 2004. To achieve this, it emphasizes country capacity-building, and the development of global partnerships, with a focus on the achievement of measurable road safety results.

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FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society
The FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society is a registered UK charity with the objectives of promoting public safety and public health, the protection and preservation of human life, and the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment. Since its establishment in 2001, the FIA Foundation has become a prominent player in promoting road safety around the world. It conducts advocacy to raise awareness about the growing epidemic of road
traffic injuries, and to place road safety on the international political agenda. It promotes research and the dissemination of results to encourage best practice in road safety policy, and offers financial support to third party projects through a grants programme.

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