

COMMON POOL RESOURCES

Worksheet 2

1. Two neighbouring cities, A and B, are connected by just one public road. The road is toll free and no restrictions govern its use. Owing to the ever-growing volume of traffic, the road is frequently congested and delays can be lengthy. Most of the people using the road are from the two cities.

a. What makes this road a common pool resource?

b. One possible solution would be to expand the road from two lanes to four (two lanes in each direction). Would this solve the problem permanently?

c. Another solution would be to restrict the number of times a vehicle can use the road each week to a maximum of four trips in each direction, with the police ensuring that this is observed. Does this solution make economic sense?

2. Working in pairs or small groups, come up with possible solutions for a specific example of a tragedy of the commons.

(Examples: overfishing in public waters, excessive emissions of CO₂ where atmospheric absorption is limited, dirty rehearsal room owing to constant use by several bands, pilferage of food from fridge by several family members.)

Summarise and explain your preferred solution.
