



Accessibility to Peripheral Areas – A need for targeted Motorways of the Sea funding mechanisms

StratMos Leaflet

Improving accessibility to peripheral areas is one of the key objectives of the Motorways of the Seas (MoS) funding instrument, and is also linked to the Commission's overarching aims of territorial and socio-economic cohesion which were formally adopted as EU objectives stipulated by the Lisbon Treaty. The need for territorial and socio-economic cohesion is furthermore reflected in EU's inclusive growth strategy Europe 2020.

Despite the opportunity for peripheral areas to submit applications for funding under both previous and current MoS calls, no such applications have been submitted to date. In practice there is a perceived bias towards MoS funded projects promoting modal shift.

StratMos sub work package C4a has explored the rationale behind improving accessibility

to peripheral areas, with the aim to identify some of the reasons for the apparent lack of peripheral based MoS applications. Some of the factors which might be limiting peripheral based MoS projects have been discussed, along with possible initiatives to encourage and facilitate peripheral based applications.

The short term recommendation from this work is that there is a need for a more targeted funding mechanism, with revised criteria aimed at facilitating and encouraging peripheral based MoS TEN-T applications.

The long term recommendation is that greater coordination of EU funding instruments for transport and infrastructure (such as TEN-T MoS and Marco Polo) could contribute to strengthening territorial cohesion and the accessibility of peripheral areas.



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Background and challenges

StratMoS sub work-package C-4a aims to better understand the potential benefits of improved accessibility to peripheral areas and to propose criteria for peripheral oriented MoS TEN-T projects for the North Sea Region.

According to current TEN-T guidelines (Article 12a), MoS funding should be awarded to infrastructure projects which aim to:

- Reduce road congestion and/or
- Improve access to peripheral and island regions and States.

The formulation 'and/or' implies that these objectives are equally important to the Commission. However, despite the opportunity to submit a peripheral based application under previous and current MoS calls, no such applications have been submitted to date. In practice there is a bias towards MoS projects promoting modal shift.

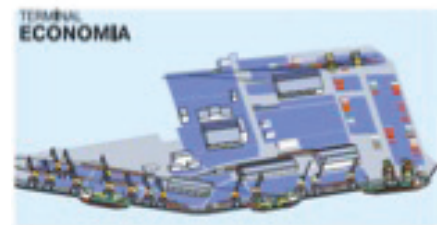
The Commission currently has no specific framework for assessing the quality of future periphery based MoS applications, and they have no criteria for weighing periphery based applications up against cargo shift based applications. All applications are assessed against the same four blocks of criteria (relevance, maturity, impact, quality).

In order to arrive at functional criteria for assessing peripheral based MoS applications, peripheral challenges have to be more closely defined.

The key challenges with this work have been to develop a better understanding of the potential benefits of improved accessibility to peripheral areas, and to develop criteria for good MoS projects.

Objectives

The objectives of StratMoS sub work-package C-4a have been to develop a better understanding of the potential benefits of improved accessibility to peripheral areas, and to influence the criteria for MoS proposals in order to give real opportunity for peripheral areas to obtain funding for MoS TEN-T projects.



Work processes

Work package C4-a has been undertaken as a transnational process involving eight Strat-MoS partners. Based on a review of background documents for the MoS regime, some of the factors which might be limiting peripheral based MoS applications were identified.

Two workshops were held, one in Stavanger, Norway and the second in Aberdeen, Scotland. The work has been coordinated by the Lead Partner. Input from all partners has been incorporated into the work package report and the proposed criteria.

Description of results

Based on a review of background documents for the MoS regime, some of the factors which might be limiting peripheral based MoS applications were identified. These include:

- Unclear status for applications seeking only to promote access to peripheral areas
- Less availability of tools and methods for assessing socio economic cohesion & accessibility benefits compared to assessing modal shift benefits.
- Evaluation criteria are less specific for socio economic cohesion than for modal shift
- Limiting the eligibility for MoS funding to Category A seaports may restrict applications from some ultra-peripheral areas

The objectives and criteria for MoS applications in the existing North Sea Open Call do not sufficiently facilitate or encourage applications aimed at improving access to peripheral areas. However, this is one of the main objectives of the MoS funding instrument according to current TEN-T guidelines Article 12a.

In order to facilitate MoS project applications from peripheral areas (being not only ultra-peripheral areas, but areas peripheral to the core area of Europe) , there is a need for a more strategic view of peripheral areas, and a better understanding of the benefits to the wider EU Community of improved territorial, economic and social cohesion of improved accessibility to peripheral regions.

The need to reinforce the strategic position of peripheral areas on the TEN-T network is also reflected in the Annual Activity Report 2009-2010 for Priority Project 21 on MoS, which called for a dedicated aid system which is better suited to islands and ultra-peripheral regions.

We suggest that future MoS calls under TEN-T (from 2011 onwards) should be amended to better facilitate peripheral based applications, and that peripheral MoS applications should be compared to other peripheral based applications rather than modal shift applications.

To this end we have developed preliminary suggestions for a revised checklist for the North Sea call which would better facilitate the development and evaluation of periphery based project applications. We also suggest that there is a need to operationalise the

definition of peripherality in order to clarify which project applications should be considered as 'peripheral based', and we have developed a set of proposed checklist questions for this purpose.

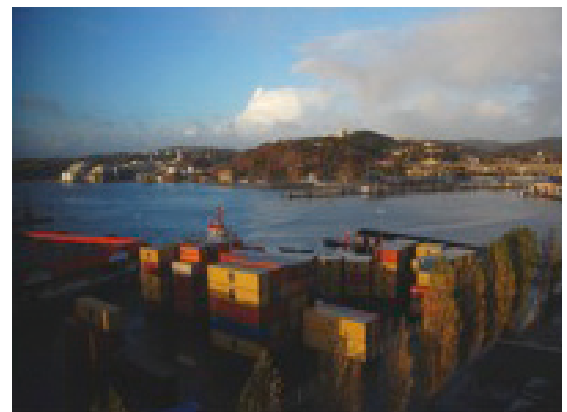
Within the context of the current call, proposed checklist questions for peripheral based MoS applications have been developed under the following headline topics:

- Topic 1: Does the project comply with criteria for peripherality?
- Topic 2: Does the project contribute to economic, social and territorial cohesion?
- Topic 3: Does the project contribute to improved accessibility to peripheral areas?
- Topic 4: Is the project differentiated from any similar existing services?

The long term recommendation from this work is that there is a need for a stronger emphasis within Motorways of the Sea on the accessibility of peripheral areas and territorial cohesion.

We also suggest that combining existing funding instruments could generate greater cohesion benefits for the Community, and that greater coordination of funding instruments for transport and infrastructure (such as TEN-T MoS and Marco Polo) could contribute to strengthening territorial cohesion and the accessibility of peripheral areas.

This would require the introduction of an explicit "cohesion/ accessibility objective" under Marco Polo, which is currently not present (although improved accessibility and cohesion could result from modal shift projects). The benefits of greater coordination between TEN-T and Marco Polo and the weaknesses of Marco Polo in relation to MoS were also reflected in the Annual Activity Report 2009-2010 for PP21 (Oliveira 2010).



Taking the results forward

The WP C-4a paper was submitted and presented initially to the North Sea MoS Task Force at their meeting in Bruges on December 8th 2010. An exchange of views between the Member States representatives, EC officials and the project representatives took place. A final contribution from StratMos on the peripherality issue will be submitted for consideration to the next meeting of the North Sea MoS Task Force.

The paper will be presented to the European Commission DG MOVE and EACI, the Agency dealing with Marco Polo. Recommendations could also be distributed to industry associations and Member States representatives.

Wider application of the recommendations proposed for any future MoS calls under the North Sea programme might be possible but would require closer scrutiny of the existing application procedural requirements concerning accessibility and cohesion.



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The StratMos Project

The full name of the project is "Strategic Demonstration Project for Motorways of the Sea". The name signals that the project seeks to be strategic and policy oriented, and at the same time seeking for concrete and tangible results.

The core aim and idea of the StratMos project is to promote and facilitate shift of cargo from road to seabased intermodal transport as well as to improve accessibility within the North Sea Region by supporting the implementation of Motorway of the Sea (MoS) and related transport networks in an integrated logistical chain.

The StratMos project is funded by EU and the Norwegian government through the Interreg IV B North Sea Region Programme. The project currently comprises twenty nine partners, covering the North Sea Region from Flanders in the south to Finnmark, Northern Norway in the north. The Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and Nenets regions in Russia are associated partners.

The StratMos project was approved in December 2007, and the first formal International Management Group meeting was held in April 2008. The project will end on 30th September 2011.

Reflecting the dual aspect of the project, the project comprises work packages that are policy and methodology oriented and demonstration projects which will provide concrete and tangible results.

Partners Involved

- Rogaland County Council
- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeenshire County Council
- Hordaland Fylkeskommune
- Hull University
- Napier University
- Troms Fylkeskommune
- Vest Agder Fylkeskommune