



The North Sea Programme Joint Annual Conference 2007, Brunstad, Norway, 21st June

Rapporteur's Notes for Seminar on Priority 3 – Improving the Accessibility of Places in the NSR

“Creating Real Projects on Regional Accessibility, Logistics and Transport Corridors”

Speakers:

Jon Halvard Eide, Coordinator NSC Transport Group, Vest - Agder Fylkeskommune, Norway
Philine Gaffron, Institute for Transport Planning and Logistics, TU Hamburg-Harburg, Germany

Panel:

Sverre Mauritzen, Rogaland County Council
Dirk Harmsen, “SustAccess” project
Pim Bonne, Flemish Ministry of Mobility and Public Works

The North Sea Programme Secretariat:

Asta Gulijeva, Stuart Bews, Eric-Louis Méléneç - Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation

Concluding summary (Secretariat):

The following summary reflects the discussion during the seminar and attempts to draw conclusions of the key issues covered.

During the introductory part of the seminar the moderator Jon Halvard Eide briefly presented Priority 3 and its part in the new Interreg IVB programme. The moderator described the character of the programme towards new projects in terms of sustainable development, innovation, territorial cohesion, equal opportunities, transnational co-operation, expanded geographical area and idea of strategic projects. In addition, in the process towards new projects such issues as partner-search, links to core policies, other projects and programmes were highlighted.

The moderator underlined that Priority 3 focus on intermodal transport corridors and modal shift makes it a particularly suitable framework for developing “strategic projects”, due to large geographical coverage and consistence with European and national policy objectives.

Supporting the extension of the TEN-T networks, developing Motorways of the Sea, a North Sea “Master Plan” for transport and a North Sea Forum for sustainable transport were mentioned as potential themes for strategic projects. A significant role of the NSC Transport Group in promoting and coordinating transnational cooperation was mentioned.

In addition, the moderator emphasized the importance of developing projects in a more coordinated manner, considering larger umbrella projects with a high potential of becoming strategic projects. Transport Master Plan and High Level Meetings within the Baltic Sea Region were mentioned as a good practice example within other European Regions.

Panel discussion encouraged to promote the Priority 3 itself and simultaneously develop more ideas within the Priority as currently it constitutes a minority of the ideas in the Project Idea book. More project ideas from the UK and Continental countries were encouraged as most of the Priority 3 ideas so far have been submitted by Scandinavian countries. Priority focus areas such as regional accessibility, logistics and transport corridors were underlined as of high importance from the regional development and sustainability point of view. Priority 3 meeting in Stavanger 20 – 21 August was mentioned as a great possibility to discuss current ideas on marine and maritime projects and to develop them further. Some participants also called for more ideas on passenger transport.

It was emphasised that new project ideas should focus not only on the need to develop new transport networks but also skills of people working in transport sector. Stand-alone projects were encouraged to cooperate with political authorities and develop into integrated partnerships therefore enabling the project results to become as much extensive and effective as possible. The need for more cooperation across Programme boundaries (e.g North Sea – Baltic Sea – North West etc.) was also emphasised.

The second key speech on improving the accessibility of places in the NSR by Philine Gaffron clarified the term of accessibility itself and stressed, that it was not only a question of transport connections. A review of studies on location effects of road transport infrastructure investment in Eastern Germany was shown to illustrate, that population levels, number of enterprise and unemployment rates do not always improve after such investments and are in fact not always directly connected to them. Consequently, Ms. Gaffron emphasised key questions such as “What is already there? How sustainable is that and how could it become more sustainable? What else is desired and by whom?” to be answered in the initial stage of the project idea in order to prevent project results from failure. Responsibility for sustainability at all levels at all times was mentioned as a consequence of matching project activities with the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies. One possible path to innovation was the proposal to work with “what if?” scenarios that assume (drastic) changes in the parameters determining current structures and activities. It was also pointed out, though, that the INTERREG project structures focus on pre-defined tasks and work packages as well as outputs while innovation can be closely related to failure it might require trial and error. It was stressed, that to allow knowledge transfer, not only the project results but also the processes need to be well documented. Linking up “islands of knowledge” was described as systematic approach towards increases in sustainability. Such networks can connect companies, science & research, NGO’s, public (national) bodies, associations & foundations and supranational structures and organisations to harness as much expertise as possible concerning a particular task or question.

The discussion between the panel and the audience began after the speeches. Participants raised the question how to cope with sometimes ambiguous requirements of the operational programme. Transnational aspect to integrate into the projects was found rather challenging due to the shortage of time when preparing an application and developing project partners’ network. One of the participants presented the dry ports concept as important for the future and invited the participants to cooperate with him. Several participants used this forum to attract partners to their projects and it was also stressed, that the focus should not only lie on goods transport but that passenger transport was also an important issue.

Seminar participants discussed Private Public Partnership process and expected more projects would use this approach in the future. Olav Hauge mentioned the NMC project as a successful example of private and public partnerships within Interreg IIIB projects and encouraged new Interreg IVB projects to establish a specific work package “communication” in order to facilitate cooperation and exchanges with related projects.

Svere Mauritzen expressed the importance to develop further Motorways of the Sea idea in the new Interreg IVB programme.

Discussion continued on such issues as Intelligent Transport Systems, Transport and Globalisation, demonstration project in Transport Corridor, Port Connection with Hinterland, Short Sea Shipping Initiative, High Speed Train, and Regional Airport Business and tourism.

Accessibility was a major participants concern. It was noted that various transport modes should be taken into account in order resolve issues within this field.

Presentations can be downloaded from our website

<http://www.northsearegion.eu/ivb/events/show/&tid=18>