



Royal Ministry of Transport and Communications

Programme for the Norwegian Chair of the Steering Committee in the Barents Pan-European Transport Area (BEATA) in 2005

The Programme for the Norwegian Chair was presented and approved at the 9th BEATA Steering Committee meeting in Kirkenes in April 2004. The programme for 2005 is based on this document.

1 Activities in 2004

The proposed activities in 2004 have progressed as outlined in the work programme presented at the meeting in Kirkenes. The main issues at the meeting in Kirkenes in April were status for the STBR-project and the process of the TACIS-application. In addition, closely linked projects in the Barents region were presented, with the aim to coordinate activities and avoid double work.

The second meeting in 2004, in Tromsø, will focus on status report and discussion of further work in STBR, in addition to issues related to traffic safety and maritime transport. As an important parallel activity, a status report will be given for the work of the Barents Task force on Data and Information.

2 Proposed activities in 2005

2.1 The Interreg IIIB project STBR

In December 2002 the European Unions' Interreg-program granted funding for the Interreg IIIB project "Sustainable Transport in the Barents Region" (STBR). The project started in 2003 and will continue through 2005, with a total budget of 2.14 million EURO. The County of Norrbotten, Sweden, is lead partner in the project. The BEATA members have arranged considerable financial assistance for the project, and BEATA acts as its advisory board. The chair and permanent secretary are members of the STBR project Steering Committee.

Previous work in BEATA, the review of traffic volumes and the inventory of the priorities in each country serves as part of the input to the project, which aims at creating a strategic transport plan for the Barents region, and in turn a basis for common transport priorities in the area. Also the identified back-bone network will form a base in this work.

The BEATA Steering Committee will continue to be closely involved in the further work within the STBR project in 2005. Results from STBR will be important input to the further work.

During 2004, efforts have been made to prepare a project proposal and application for a regional aviation project for Russia which coincides with an STBR regional aviation project. BEATA will follow the progress of this work closely in 2005.

2.2 Review of national planning processes in the BEATA countries

As part of the work of exchanging information it would be fruitful to have a common understanding of planning and prioritizing processes in the participating countries. It is therefore proposed to present national transport plan processes in the BEATA-countries in 2005. This is in accordance with the action programme's focus on transport policies in addition to investment programmes. The presentation should be based on written contributions, which later on can form the basis for a report/paper. The work can also be of relevance for the STBR-project.

As part of this issue, and according to the Action Programme 2004-2008, financial co-operation is suggested as a topic for discussion in BEATA. The main intention will be to clarify whether financing support systems overlap and/or certain areas of relevance are not covered by financing support systems.

2.3 Road traffic safety

The BEATA Work Programme focuses on road traffic safety as a policy issue in BEATA. The relative high level of road traffic accidents on the Russian side compared to the Nordic countries, calls for attention. Among others, it can be regarded as an obstacle for the development of transportation, if poor safety subdues international mobility of people and goods in the area. In BEATA an approach could be to compare national road transport safety policies, and possibly define common measures in the Barents region. However, this is a policy area that also is discussed in other relevant national and international fora. BEATA should limit itself to possible value that can be added through a specific Barents approach.

The Chair recognises that the Barents Traffic Safety Forum has worked on road traffic safety issues, and will assess whether there is potential for further initiatives from BEATA.

2.4 Maritime transport

Focus on favouring maritime (and rail) transport as opposed to road is an important element in our national transport policies. In the Barents region the maritime sector along the Russian and Norwegian coastline, as well as out of and to Botnian ports, is of great importance. Sea transport will become increasingly important due to the development in the oil/gas sector in the region, a situation that also gives rise to environmental concerns.

Initiatives have been taken by STBR to arrange a maritime seminar and invite the ports of the Barents region, with the purpose to pinpoint the interest for a Barents Seaport Association. BEATA will follow this initiative closely.

3 Meetings in the BEATA Steering Committee in 2005

Two meetings may be arranged in 2005. The first is proposed to take place in Northern Norway, Norway, 23.- 24. May 2005.

The second, and final meeting for the Norwegian Chair is proposed to take place in Oslo, 10.-11. October 2005. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding Finland will assume the chair of the BEATA Steering Committee after this meeting.