



REGERINGSKANSLIET

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**Programme for the Swedish Chairmanship of the steering
group for cooperation in the Barents Pan-European
Transport Area (BEATA) for 2001**

During 2001, Sweden will act as chairman in the so-called BEATA cooperation between the EU Commission, Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. Sweden will take over the chair from Russia in March 2001 and hand over to Norway in March 2002 at the end of the period. Sweden will also chair the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) during the same period.

Background

Attention was initially brought to the need for cooperation between the countries of the Barents region at a meeting of the transport ministers of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in Archangelsk in September 1996.

At the second Pan-European transport conference in Crete in 1994, and again at the third in Helsinki in 1997, the transport corridors and four Pan-European transport regions were defined. Barents was one of these regions.

At a meeting in Copenhagen in May 1998 between the transport ministers from Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden and representatives from the EU Commission, the BEATA cooperation was established and guidelines for its work drawn up. The aim of this work is to promote international cooperation in the development of transport infrastructure in the Barents region. Development work in the Barents region will include border crossing, customs cooperation and the maintenance, reconstruction and construction of new infrastructure. Its objective is to create an efficient and integrated transport system employing various modes of transport in an internationally viable system. Financing and expertise will be used within both the public and private sectors, wherever it is most practical.

After the meeting of transport ministers in Copenhagen, a steering group was established for cooperation between the member countries. This steering group is empowered to appoint working groups. The steering group is required to submit its report once a year to the BEAC, the G-24 Transport Working Party and to the EU Commission.

A regional cooperative organisation has been formed by the counties of Finnmark, Nordland and Troms in Norway, Västerbotten and Norrbotten in Sweden, the provinces of Lappland and Uleåborg in Finland, and the oblast of Archangelsk, the Republics of Kariela and Murmansk and the autonomous district of Nenets in Russia. Special meetings are held within this regional group.

Activities undertaken, current working situation

A working programme was set up for the period 1999-2003 during Finland's chairmanship in 1999. During 1999, a so-called Back-bone network was defined, describing a priority transport network for road and railway traffic, as well as aviation and maritime transport. Three activities were started during 2000 but have not yet been completed.

- The construction of a GIS data base with information on alternative transport possibilities and planned initiatives within the area (Finland is responsible for this)
- A review of the estimated traffic volume for the links in the Back-bone network (Norway responsible)
- Inventory and compilation of current priority extensions within the BEATA region in the four countries involved (Sweden responsible)

In addition, in its capacity as chairman for 2000, Russia organised a conference on transport via Russia between Europe and Asia and a meeting of transport ministers of the BEAC in September 2000 in St Petersburg.

Proposed activities for 2001

GIS data base

Work on the GIS data base has progressed relatively rapidly. A structured BEATA website on the Internet provides access to information in the GIS data base. The website can be found at www.barentsinfo.fi/beata/. Finland is continuing the work of adding to and updating the GIS data base and the website. The website is currently only available in English. Being able to access information in Russian as well should be considered.

Traffic volume estimations

Norway is in the process of completing this work, hopefully during the spring of 2001. Contact needs to be taken about this. In a follow up, focus should be given to methods for estimating future traffic over border passages, statistics that are at present hard to obtain.

An inventory of the priority extensions taking place now

Sweden will complete this inventory during the spring of 2001. The inventory includes both national and regional investment plans. The

inventory is divided into four different priority groups:

1. Extensions or other initiatives planned for the next four-year period and for which finances have been found,
2. Extensions or other initiatives that are included lower down in decided investment plans and for which finances have thus been found,
3. Extensions or other initiatives which were included in choices when the investment plans now applicable were being drawn up, The priority group may include objects which have a total cost, equivalent to the total costs of groups 1 and 2,
4. Other projects discussed.

We have hitherto been able to compile background material from the Nordic countries. Since this inventory should cover the entire BEATA region, we need to take renewed contact with Russia in order to obtain the relevant background material for this country as well.

Joint priorities of extensions and other initiatives in the Barents region

Based on the estimates of traffic flows, traffic analyses and an inventory of the priority currently being given to extensions by the different countries, a project is currently being undertaken aimed at drawing up common priorities within the framework of BEATA cooperation for extensions and other joint projects in the Back-bone network. At a later stage, funds for extensions and other improvement projects could be applied for, from, for example, the various subsidy systems of the EU, based on this joint priority plan. The priority plan may also be used by the regions as a basis for the future investment planning of their national governments.

At the moment, an INTERREG III project is being discussed in the context of regional cooperation which may well be directed at carrying out this activity. This requires, however, that it receives funding from different members of the BEATA cooperation.

Meetings in the BEATA steering group

Regional representatives will also be invited to the meetings of the steering group. Two meetings are planned. The first is planned to take place in Norrbotten in September. A report on the situation of work with the GIS data base and website will be given. The final reports of the traffic flow measurements and the national inventories of current priority extensions will be submitted. In addition, agreement may be reached for guidelines for joint priorities within BEATA. At a meeting of the steering group in Rovaniemi in 1999, it was decided that a review of, and possible additions to the Back-bone network would be made during 2001. The forms of such a review should be discussed at this meeting.

The second meeting is planned for Västerbotten during January/February 2002. At this meeting, one of the themes should be the joint priority plan. Discussions may also be initiated on the direction of the next version of the

BEATA working programme. The current programme extends until December 2003. At the beginning of 2002, it may be necessary to make a review of the relevance of the working programme. Discussions should be held on a joint update of the different forms of subsidy within the EU on which BEATA may be able to base joint applications for funding. Preparations for transferring the chairmanship to Norway are also included on the agenda of this meeting.

Other meetings involving the chairmanship are the meeting of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in March 2001 when the formal transfer of the chairmanship for BEATA will take place. An equivalent meeting will take place when it is transferred to Norway in March 2002.

Reports from BEATA cooperation may be given at meetings between the chairmen of the various transport corridors and transport areas of the EU and to the Commission as well. Participation in two meetings, which will probably be held in Brussels, will be necessary.

The organisation of Swedish activities during 2001

Conclusion of inventory of the priority extensions taking place now

This work is being undertaken by the county administrative boards of Västerbotten and Norrbotten counties in collaboration with the other participating regions within BEATA cooperation. The county administrative boards may also be able to obtain support from the regional organisations of the various Swedish traffic agencies. The Government Offices have allocated SEK 60 000 to BEATA to help complete this work.

Joint priorities of extensions and other initiatives in the Barents region

There are two alternative organisatory scenarios for this work.

1. The work is included in the INTERREG III project planned within the regional cooperation group. This work may be started during the autumn of 2001 and is planned to continue for three years. If the activity is included as a first section of this project, results may possibly be reached during mid-2002.
2. Work is undertaken within the regional cooperation group but supported by consultants. In this plan, results may possibly be achieved more rapidly but the resources for carrying out the work will probably be smaller.

SEK 150 000 has been allocated to this work from BEATA's budget. The funds may be used as a contribution to our own resources if the work is organised according to alternative 1. If the work is organised according to alternative 2, the sum may be used together with funding from other actors for consultant support that may be needed by the regional cooperation group.

Meetings during the chairmanship

Meetings in the BEATA steering group are planned for September and January/February 2002 in Norrbotten and Västerbotten.

For the planning of activities and local transport in connection with these meetings, grants have been allocated by the respective county administrative boards. Practical arrangements may be taken care of by resource staff from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the counties working particularly with the Barents cooperation. Two of these will be able to back up the county administrative boards in arranging the meetings. The work of issuing invitations and drawing up the agenda will be undertaken by the chairmanship.