The Nordic Road and Transport Research Program enters its 5th year

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NordFou vej&trafik

• Nordic road administration experts co-operate in many r&d projects and programs. As the field of co-operation extended globally, there was a need to organise Nordic co-operation on a more systematic basis.

• In December 2004, the Nordic Road Administrations' Directors General signed a framework agreement on road and transport research and development, the NordFoU vej&trafik agreement, "to strengthen scientific and technological contributions within the sphere of authority of the Nordic Road Authorities"
The co-operation model

• In a NordFoU project, two or more road authorities agree on project ownership and designate one to have project responsibility.

• Co-operation follows the "common obligation" model: the responsible administration handles all financing, invoicing the other authorities for their share, makes all contracts, regardless of country of origin, and oversees all outputs.

• The results are owned by the participating authorities, and disseminated to all NordFoU member countries.
Activities since 2005

• A slow program start - five projects implemented:
  – The Nord2000Road Engineering Model (finalised)
  – The ETSI project for bridge life cycle optimisation (ongoing)
  – Disturbance from lighting during road works at night (ending)
  – Pavement performance modeling (ongoing)
  – Bridges without waterproofing (started)

• A number of project ideas under preparation, i.e.
  – Road surface texture for low noise and rolling resistance
  – Evaluation of tunnel safety projects in the Nordic context
  – End-of-contract functional specifications for long duration PPP and other contracts
From ideas into projects

• Some reasons that ideas have not developed into common projects:
  – climate change: the initial national program grew so large that there were no resources left for involving other countries (but returned to the international market via ERA-NET ROAD!)
  – safer roadside geometry: the national projects had proceeded before the co-operation mechanism could be set up,
  – for some other ideas: difficult to express them in a way that would engage the interest of other countries or the project manager's reluctance to submit the idea to co-operative management.

• the ideas easiest to implement have been those based on previous co-operation
Modes of operation

• The Nordic Steering Group meets once, the Preparatory Group three times a year; chaired by the lead country, which also provides a secretariat.

• The overall framework is based on a research priority list.

• A set of project and program documents
  – forms for project idea, proposal, project plan and contract
  – reports on project status and final project evaluation
  – the program annual report.

• For dissemination: a website, www.nordfou.org, and publication in the Nordic Road & Transport Research Journal
Finances

• A designated share of r&d budgets:
  – not a binding commitment
  – not additional to ordinary r&d funding
  – an indication of the space available for this type of projects

• Average annual level is ca 0.2 M Euro for each country
  – costs for researchers and consultants, mainly shared equally, but a lower share for Iceland, taking account of the scale difference.
  – administrations participate with personnel for project management, meetings and dissemination; each carries its own costs.

• Total project volume ca 1.8 M Euro
  – ca 50 000 Euro per project and participating country
NordFoU today:

- NordFoU vej&trafik is a stable program with strong links to the Nordic Road Administrations' tradition of co-operation.
- The connection to the Nordic Road Association is reinforced by the Association's new strategy.
- The Road Administrations take account of NordFoU in their r&d policy development.
- NordFoU has unified the methodology for co-operation and offers a set of tools for r&d managers.
To date, NordFoU has produced

• On process
  – a common obligation structure, with 3-5 participants per project
  – a standardised contract model
  – a set of project documents
  – an annual management routine, with rotating chairmanship and secretariat
  – a home page with a continuous updating mechanism.

• On substance
  – a priority subjects listing
  – one finalised project, Nord2000Road
  – four projects under way
  – a set of project proposals under preparation.
Towards systematic, integrated R&D co-operation:

• Development needed:
  – The flow of project ideas to finalised proposals, contracts and collaboration is still intermittent and depending on periodic campaigns.
  – Project managers are not familiar with the methodology.
  – The most time-consuming process is now identifying and clearly expressing the true common interest.

• A powerful perspective:
  – International co-operation as a key element in developing national networks of excellence.
  – NordFoU vej&trafik mechanisms develop in parallel with and probably in increasing integration with ERA-NET ROAD.