

European Commission  
DG Energy and Transport  
Unit B2-TEN policies & technological development  
B-1049 Brussels

## **Comments to the Public Consultation on the Extension of the Major Trans-European Transport Axes to the Neighbouring Countries and Regions**

NORTH EAST CARGO LINK (NECL) is a trans-national project part-financed by the Baltic Sea Region INTERREG IIIB Neighbourhood Programme. The project involves round 40 partners - including ports, local and regional authorities, national transport authorities as well as private companies - from 3 countries. The aim is to develop strategic initiatives to promote economic growth and a sustainable development in the South Baltic Sea area by improved use and availability of intermodal transport resources and new solutions.

The Steering Committee of the NECL project welcomes the initiative "Public consultation on the extension of the major Trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions" taken by the Commission and hereby present its comments.

In sum, the principle points highlighted by NECL are:

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**NORTH EAST CARGO LINK** 

MENY



 LÄNSTYRELSEN  
VÄSTERNORRLAND



## **Background and vision**

Economic life in the Mid Nordic Region is dependent upon well-functioning transport. The export industry needs cost-effective transport to important international markets in the EU and to the growing markets around the southern and eastern Baltic. Effective goods transport networks must be better coordinated at transnational level with supplementary regional links and nodes. The North East Cargo Link (NECL) project has been running since 1996 with the aim of developing and marketing a Mid Nordic Region east-west goods transport link to global markets. This will alleviate intense pressure on goods transport routes in northern and central Europe. The project was started by business interests, but the cooperation between regional and local authorities has gradually increased.

## **Project work to date and agreement on future work**

An extensive network has been created among industries, transporters and authorities covering the whole of the Mid Nordic Region with contacts in western Russia and the UK. Extensive lobbying and discussions concerning the project have also taken place with relevant ministers and transport departments in the countries concerned. The project includes a pre-study of a potential Internet portal that can simply and effectively provide access to booking and ordering departments for transport services in the corridor - "Business to Business". In the autumn of 2002, a partnership was formed with the aim of applying for funding from the EU Interreg IIIB programme. In June 2003 the project was allocated approximately SEK 14 million from the EU regional development fund. In addition to this, another SEK 8 million have been raised by the 35 project partners. The Västernorrland County Administrative Board is the Lead Partner in the project.

## **The project's four areas of operation**

### **1. Devising an overall strategy for creating an intermodal transport network in the Mid Nordic Region**

Work will begin with an inventory of reports and studies of economic geography, infrastructure, transport and goods quantities in the relevant areas of the different countries. Information bases will be collated, analysed and evaluated. Further material will be produced as the basis for a proposed overall strategy as above. This will take place with the help of consultants or in-house personnel, depending on scope, skills and knowledge requirements. The work will be reinforced in ongoing seminars during the various development phases in which views, knowledge and reporting material will also be obtained from the various seminar participants. When the first draft of a strategy has been prepared, this will be presented as the basis for discussion for businesses, the transport sector and departmental and political organisations at all levels. After this round of comments from interested parties, a final proposal for an overall strategy for creating an overall strategy for an intermodal transport network in the Mid Nordic Region will be prepared. The creation of the strategy will take place in close cooperation with area 2 of operations.

### **2. Survey and identifying weaknesses in the current goods transport system**

The status of the infrastructure in the transport corridor for marine, rail and road transport will be surveyed. Particular attention will be paid to shortcomings in capacity, standards, bottlenecks and missing links. An inventory of goodshandling resources, e.g. in ports and other terminals, will be prepared. An assessment of the potential goods quantities will be prepared, divided among types. Proposals for suitable logistical solutions for the relevant goods will be prepared. Cost calculations for the necessary infrastructure investments will be carried out. As in Area 1, ongoing seminars will take place for discussions and information/knowledge gathering.

### **3. Implementing strategies for investing in a Mid Nordic transport corridor**

An inventory will be prepared of the political processes at national and international levels concerning planning systems and infrastructure investments and priorities for TEN classification. A plan will be prepared for how the results from areas 1 and 2 will influence national and European infrastructure priorities. The transport departments in the various countries will receive continuous reviews of reports, conclusions and proposals for measures resulting from the overall project work. Interim reports and summaries of conclusions will be prepared in close cooperation with area 3. Further, the possibility of extending engagement by various EU programmes, e.g. Marco Polo, will be examined. The conditions for cooperation with other transport-orientated or otherwise closely related projects within and outside the region will be examined. The relevant EU organs will be lobbied.

### **4. Develop business connections between parties in participating countries as well as Russia and the UK**

An inventory of current and potential goods owners, transport operators, contractors, agents and other interested parties in the corridor will be prepared. On the basis of the results of this inventory, suitable transport solutions will be presented. A model for an Internet portal will be prepared, which will provide easy and effective access to booking/ordering departments for transport services in the corridor. This will require the identification and analysis of the information relevant to a freight portal and the technical conditions required to develop a website for goods administration. Chambers of commerce are important players, along with the project's "North East Cargo Link Alliance". The alliance has around 40 members representing private businesses in the corridor. Cross-border seminars and meetings are arranged with the aim of creating business links and spreading information about the project's ambitions, guidelines and strategies for transport solutions among users of the corridor.

**The project is expected to lead to:**

- A fully developed sustainable strategy for intermodal goods transport in the Mid Nordic transport corridor. The strategy will include costed investment measures and a financing plan.
- Border obstacles that inhibit trade and transport between countries will be removed.
- A valuable base for environmental efforts towards a transition from road to rail and marine transport, which will improve the environment.
- The region's existing companies will gain better transport service.
- A development of the companies in the region as a result of improved goods transport solutions.
- Increased employment in transport and other sectors.
- The effect of infrastructure planning in the various countries in the direction of investment promoting the Mid Nordic transport corridor.
- Increased trade in the region.
- The exchange of knowledge and experience among national and international traffic authorities.
- An Internet portal for information between freight operators and goods owners in the corridor.
- Influence of the revision of the new TEN structure which, in the long term, could lead to the Mid Nordic transport corridor becoming a TEN project.
- Conditions for an important transport link to large growth areas in Russia being created.
- Transport links to the UK/continent will be strengthened.

By the project we will focus on the importance of good and efficient transport solutions in an east-west direction in the Mid Nordic Transport Corridor and reorient the transport flows - hereby following the intentions in EU:s white book of transportation .

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NECL project

Appendix 1 – websight

<http://www.necl.se/inenglish.4.1961581faa8d908847fff2460.html>

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