

17.4.2008 / Anders Jansson

# A Flock of Projects or a Flood of Programs, Will We Ever Learn to Focus?

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# Shrinking funding - growing challenges

## **Finnra's annual research budget is ca 9 M€**

- divided into road research and development, data management development and administration process development.
- "Traditional" road r&d expenditure ca 3.5 M€.
- **Since the late 1990's, a slightly over 50% reduction.**
- **The production division of Finnra was formed into a separate state owned enterprise in the year 2000, but also a general funding reduction for the whole transport and infrastructure r&d sector.**
- **At the same time, the challenges are increasing.**

## **The need to find efficient methodologies for development is pressing.**

- by making each project, and synergy between projects, more effective,
- by sharper focus towards truly effective projects,
- by cumulating research resources with other actors in the field.

# On focusing

**Important to focus action, but:**

Year	Focus Areas	Project Areas	Projects
1991	9	151	
2000	24	158	
2007	6	141	207

- it's not possible to decree a reduction in numbers
- a target of increasing project size, and thus reducing numbers, was set, but not effective
- now, the target is to improve performance and implementation
- serves to redistribute resources towards a more complete range of finalising and implementation, instead of ever new projects.

**A sharper focus not by looking at the numbers, but by looking at what r&d clients really need.**

# On co-operation

- **About half of our projects are co-operation projects, with one or more partners in the project consortium**

- about 67% of expenditure 2007 was used for co-operation projects.

- **Most of these are national projects;**

- international partners, such as other road administrations, as yet involved in only 6%
- the national funding share for international project participation is about 7%, most of which telematics r&d.

- **In international co-operation, resource limits are stringent.**

- the 'overhead' is much larger than in own-country projects, because of the need to cope with very different interests and methodologies when many countries are concerned.

- **From previous EU Framework Program tradition we know that a major part of the efforts will go to administrative tasks**

- and what remains may produce results we didn't really need...

# Learning to use international co-operation

## •We aim at increasing our international action

- many of the challenges we face, especially in regard of climate change or mobility management, can no longer be resolved at a national level.

## •Through ERA-NET, the responsibility for choosing objectives, programming and criteria for acquiring projects is shifted to the administrations participating.

- We want to respond by developing truly simple, straightforward procedures, based on trust, that can then be made into a consensus methodology for our sector.

## •These initiatives can be very successful, if we learn how to use them fully

- and if for instance the EU Commission also understands that the innovations of these schemes must be given room to move into practice, before new demands can be met.

## •For co-operation, trust is the essential element.

- Building trust is easiest for partners who know each other closely. The larger the group is, the more time it will take.

# On focusing co-operation

## •What do we expect of our partners if we decide to co-operate on creating a sustainable transport system?

### •An in-built conflict

- our primary motive for building a co-operation program is because the task is so large that we cannot succeed by ourselves.
- but these large tasks tend to be very complex, often with broad political implications and thus almost by definition unsolvable.

### Stand the matter on its head:

- instead of first looking at the problem for ourselves and then, when that fails, spreading an ever larger net to find enough partners and resources to get anywhere,
- start by checking if the solution already exists somewhere out there, and if not, which are the right partners to approach for working on it - be it at home or abroad.

# The Swedish five-step model

**Five-Step Decision Principle for Research & Innovation Projects** (Hans Ingvarsson)

