

TOPIC I: WINTER MAINTANCE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Report and draft conclusions

A general report

Within the topic of » WM Policy and Strategies? there is a wide coverage of subtopics including the setting of policies, the specification, tendering and operation of contracts involving a move towards private sector involvement in the operation, quality systems and their benefits, management of weather information and so on. The papers are being presented by WM professionals from a variety of backgrounds from those directly involved in operational matters and research to senior Government staff from a number of countries.

Of the papers submitted for consideration by the Working Group, 14 have been chosen for oral presentation and 3 for poster presentation.

The logo of the Congress: New Challenges for Winter Road Service was meant to provoke the authors also towards more visionary and future-oriented contributions about necessary changes in WM policies and strategies. The Papers presented show very good overlook of the situation of WM in different countries, but many challenges remain unopened.

Several papers present theoretical models or even their practical application not only in WM but also widely in Road management under winter conditions.

Recent developments of detailed WM Policies and Strategies in various countries including Finland, France and Slovenia is one of the subjects covered.

The papers also cover the various moves away from direct provision of the WM service by the state/local authorities towards the private sector, delivering the service through formal contractual arrangements.

There are interesting papers dealing with the development of Quality Systems for WM, an essential requirement in view of the volume of litigation now being experienced in some countries as a result of road accidents.

Some of the papers suggest or even present the already existing international organisation of WM. This seems to be very positive approach on the regional level and will be probably further experienced in several regions around the globe.

One particularly interesting paper from Finland deals with joint working by several northern European countries to identify best practice in WM and is a good example of the benefits which can be derived from working in partnership between countries.

Almost in every contribution the economical aspects of WM were at least mentioned as one of the most important ones. The systems of raising funds upgrading the possibilities of state budgets and implementation of risk-sharing also with private sector occupy many experts.

The topics covered will stimulate a great deal of interest and discussions and a number of the papers will be useful to those involved in WM for use in making decisions which affect the WM service in their own countries or at local authority level.

B - Draft conclusions

Due to the ongoing processes of globalisation with so called 'just in time' delivery of goods and congestion of jobs in cities, several economies are extremely vulnerable in case of unpredicted and uncontrolled winter conditions in road transport. There is no doubt that part of unpredictability is caused also by the global climatic changes and its reflections on the microclimate.

Because of this the tasks posed to WM Policies and Strategies as a part of the Road Management and Traffic Management are more and more complex and costly.

Adequate answers how to overpass these problems need to be given through properly corrected WM policies and strategies, because there is no doubt, that these are long term questions.

Only properly organized, properly interconnected and adequately funded the actors in WM will be able to play their roles to the satisfaction of users. Obviously this can remain no more only the responsibility of the national administrations and budgets.

If we follow the thoughts exposed directly or implicitly by the experts and participants of this PIARC 2002 SAPPORO CONGRESS we can presume that regarding winter maintenance policies and strategies in the next future, our common effort should be focused at least on four:

1. - firstly, to the integration of the Winter maintenance policies and strategies on the regional level (interstate) and its implementation also to the operational levels and
2. - secondly, to more intensive inclusion of private policy inactive to the Public Private Partnership of Winter maintenance with implementation of more fair risk-sharing especially on its executional level.
- 3 - Thirdly, to more user-friendly and simultaneous WM of roads and side-walks focused on special groups of pedestrians (elder, disabled, children).
- 4 - Fourthly, to more user-friendly and on-line information and communication between users and responsible authorities.

Peter PENGAL
STATE SECRETARY