



Partners for Roads



Rijkswaterstaat

**Second Announcement: Call for Participants and Presentations/Papers, Deadline June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009**

## **6th Conference on Roads and Regional Development**

14-18 September 2009, Venue: Sinaia, Romania

### **Opportunities for Sustainable Road Infrastructure**

#### **Meeting Social, Economic and Environmental Challenges in a Changing World**

##### **Aim and topics of the Conference**

We live in an ever changing and more and more complex world. We have to deal with various crises looming on the horizon, concerned with economy, climate, food, raw materials or energy, to name but a few. How should we make important decisions regarding our future transport infrastructure systems against this background? Development of infrastructure requires major investments and involves many years of preparation. Once completed, infrastructure projects should function for decades. For all the years to come we will reap the fruits, if our decisions were well thought through or .... pay the price if they weren't. Planners and actors must be able to cope with the challenges that lie ahead. The key issue here is "sustainable development".

**"Sustainable development"** is a way of resource use that aims at meeting human needs not only in the present, but also in the far future. This can be done by preserving the environment. The term was introduced by the Brundtland Commission in its famous report "Our Common Future". The definition of this term in the report is quite well known and often cited: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

*How do roads relate to their immediate surroundings?*

This Conference focuses on road infrastructure. Basically, the road concept – route and shape – influences the possible use of the area that a road cuts through. Therefore it is sensible to determine the coherence between the road concept and the development of the area around it. The combined development of the road infrastructure and the areas it passes through creates new opportunities for sustainable development without additional costs, even with financial profit. This is a very welcome spin-off, as all over the world, when it comes to roads, ambitions are often higher than the available funds allow. Resources are always scarce and therefore need to be implemented in a sensible way. Economic appraisal techniques such as cost-benefit analysis (CBA) can support decision-making here, as can a sound analysis of the environmental effects (EIA). In order to demonstrate that environmental effects also have economic effects, they can be taken as environmental costs and benefits into the CBA.

*Roads: What are the basics that we need?*

In any infrastructure development and planning process discussions between internal and external stakeholders keep coming with regard to the balance between the costs and the desired quality of the road and the way the road should be embedded in its environment in a sustainable way. What should the standard be for a functional, safe and sustainable road design that meets the capacity requirements? Where does "luxury" begin, in terms of mitigating measures, environmental provisions, landscaping or technical and architectural "hobbyhorses" and who makes the decisions?



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Will the road be on the surface level or will it be at a lower level than the surrounding area? Will the road be made to fit or will it allow for growth? A functional road design that contains the basic elements is a powerful tool for a Road Authority through which additional investments can be identified and measured.

*Roads that are geared to the future...*

What is the future situation that we have to take into account? In order to make road infrastructure "future-proof", we should be aware of the possible directions in which our society will move. New technologies can be important drivers of change. But climate change, depletion of raw materials and energy sources are already affecting the way we build our infrastructure, and they will become much more important in the future. We have to think about scenarios that might await us. Within this context, also (upcoming) policy initiatives provide important input. Trends regarding policy towards environment, private participation, economy, accessibility, safety and security must be taken into account during the planning of road infrastructure in order to achieve sustainability. National initiatives and Directives from the European Commission are important here. Cooperation between the different stakeholders may offer opportunities to create an added value, for example in cleverly combining raw material deficits from one place with the surpluses from elsewhere. However, a shift in operational roles from government to other actors could also jeopardize sustainability. For example when private parties make decisions based on business economic criteria with a short time horizon or when external costs have not been internalised sufficiently. The way in which market parties are involved then determines how sustainable solutions will be in the end!

One of the aims of the Conference is to create a platform for the exchange of views, knowledge and experience regarding the state of the art on how to create a road infrastructure that is geared to the future and to continue the reflection on the aforementioned issues which are so vital for our society. After all, without the proper investments, it will not only be the road infrastructure that is in danger, but also the present and future functioning of our society. The Conference is the 6<sup>th</sup> in a sequel of annual Conferences that are held within the frame of the Roads and Regional Development Window of the Partners for Roads Programme. These Conferences aim at strengthening the existing expert network and creating optimal opportunities for the exchange of best practices. Earlier Conferences were held in Arnhem, the Netherlands (2004), Pokrzywna, Poland (2005), Eger, Hungary (2006), Prague, Czech Republic (2007) and Saaremaa, Estonia (2008). The first of these Conferences were either dedicated to environmental or economic issues. The more recent Conferences tried more and more to look from an integrative perspective in which environmental, economic and cooperation issues merge. In this 6<sup>th</sup> Conference, "sustainability" forms the wider perspective. Earlier Conferences have shown, that apart from presentations and key-note lectures also workshops are a very useful instrument for discussing the issues. Therefore, during the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference an emphasis will be put on workshops.

## **Hosts**

In 2009 the Conference will be held from 14-18 September in Sinaia, Romania. This 6<sup>th</sup> Conference will be co-hosted by the Dutch Rijkswaterstaat and the Romanian National Company of Motorways and National Roads. In 2008 it was agreed under the Partners for Roads Programme to jointly deepen the knowledge on the following issues:

- functional road design and basic quality;
- integration of environmental effects in economic evaluation;
- environmental impact assessment/ strategic environmental assessment;
- standardization, procurement and evaluation of economic and financial analysis;
- developing a professional relationship between client and contractor.

These issues will also be reflected in this 6<sup>th</sup> Conference.

## **Who should participate?**

Representatives of Ministries or National Authorities responsible for roads and regional development, from the new and future EU Member States.



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## Conference programme

The Conference programme will include keynote presentations, country presentations and workshops. Monday September 14<sup>th</sup> will be the day on which all participants arrive. Official opening of the Conference will be on Tuesday September 15<sup>th</sup>. Key note presentations will be held, as well as a "Dream Session" in the afternoon. On Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September the theme will be "Economy & Finance", while on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September the theme will be "Environment & Social Impact".

On all these days, also so-called "country presentations" will be held, during which participants have the opportunity to present to situation in their home country, give examples or express their views. The Conference language will be English.

Conference evaluation, closing and departure take place on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September. Representatives from the European Commission and the World Bank will also be invited to the Conference. Also two site visits will be organised. The first site visit will be dedicated to the Bucharest – Ploiesti Motorway, a Natura 2000 area. The second site visit will be to the Comarnic – Brasov Motorway. More detailed information regarding the programme will be sent to you in due course.

The Conference venue will be Sinaia, Romania. Situated in breathtaking mountain scenery, Sinaia is located at 120 km distance from Bucharest and 49 km from Brasov, on the Prahova valley. Sinaia takes its name from the 17<sup>th</sup>-century monastery built by a Romanian nobleman after undertaking a pilgrimage to Mount Sinai, Egypt. Sinaia is one of the most famous and oldest mountain tourist resorts in Romania, known as the "Carpathian Pearl". It is best known for being the summer residence of the Romanian Royal family. The Conference hotel will be the "International Hotel". It is located in a beautiful landscape, the "International Hotel" offers ideal conditions for not only the Conference, but also recreation and entertainment. More information about the hotel can be found via the link: <http://www.international-sinaia.ro>



## For additional information please contact:

### Organisational Aspects

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More information on the Partners for Roads Window Roads and Regional Development in general and the Conference in particular can be found on [www.roaddevelopment.org](http://www.roaddevelopment.org).

We look forward to meeting you in Romania!



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