

## **Seminar on transport projects under the new North Sea Programme 9 Feb – draft introduction**

Welcome to this seminar on the development of transport projects under the Interreg IV North Sea Region Programme for 2007 - 2013 here in Aalborg, organised by the North Sea Commission Transport group. My name is Leif Blomqvist, Councillor from Västra Götalands region in Sweden, and political Chairman of the group. I am pleased that so many participants had the opportunity to attend the seminar, including a number of people (ca. 12 – 13 people) not being members of the Transport group. I would like to extend a special welcome to the representative of the North Sea Programme (NSP) Secretariat in Viborg, Mr. Carsten Westerholt. The NSC has as you may know enjoyed a long standing and fruitful cooperation with the North Sea Programme Secretariat to the benefit of developing the North Sea region as a more competitive and sustainable region. In June, the NSP Secretariat and the NSC will again co-organise the annual conference, this time in Vestfold County in Norway. The launch of the new North Sea Programme 2007 – 2013 will be the main theme for this event, including presentation of priorities and organised partner search. The participants at this seminar are also representing a wide range of projects under the current North Sea Programme, bringing with them valuable knowledge and experience from which we can profit in the development of projects under the new programme. **The purpose of the seminar** is thus to develop ideas & proposals for transport projects, and to facilitate the formation of relevant partnerships for the development of concrete proposals. A lot of ideas & proposals will be presented at the seminar, and I am really looking forward to be updated on the state of project development.

In order to put this seminar into the right context, I would like to conclude my introduction with some thoughts on the role of the NSC Transport group in promoting transnational cooperation:

- The Transport group has initiated and developed Interreg-projects like SustAccess (SA), Nordic Transportpolitical Network (NTN) and Concept
- As a permanent body, the Transport group is an arena for networking and co-operation between partners from several related Interreg projects (SA, NTN, NMC, Remarcc etc.)
- The group is disseminating findings from projects through the organisation of seminars and conferences, like the sustainable transport conferences in Aarhus (2002) and Kristiansand (2005).
- As part of a political organisation, the Transport group has acted as a channel for political resolutions and statements from Interreg projects like NMC and Seaplane

- Interreg projects constitute an indispensable source of knowledge for the work of the Transport group
- Project partnerships constitute a potential pool for recruiting new members to the Transport group
- As a permanent body under political leadership, the Transport group is considered to be a suitable arena for project development, co-ordination & networking across projects and dissemination of results from Interreg projects.
- The Transport group is also a suitable platform for continuation of project networks after Interreg projects have ended