Background

In 2007, the European Commission launched the concept of Green Corridors in its Freight Transport Logistics Action Plan. The Commission wanted to increase cooperation across national borders and collaboration between society, business and research, in order to create green transport corridors for goods traffic. The goal was more efficient and more sustainable transport and logistics solutions. A corridor comprises solutions for both infrastructure and traffic within a wide geographical area.

In the autumn of 2008, Sweden, headed by the government Logistics Forum, initiated the aim of a broad Swedish involvement in the field. There was a great interest in “green logistics” and climate-friendly solutions in the Swedish business community and at the political level. In 2010, the work took on a new direction to some extent when the government commissioned the Swedish Transport Administration, Maritime Administration and VINNOVA (Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems) collaborate on the continued development of the Green Corridors concept. The government commission ran until the turn of the year 2012/2013, and the results of the commission are presented in a final report. The work to create and develop Green Corridors continues, but it will in the future be integrated into the established operations of the authorities.
What is a green corridor?

Simply put, the green corridors involve reducing the impact on environment and climate and enhancing the safety and efficiency of freight transport. A green corridor is characterised by

- sustainable logistics solutions with a documented reduction in environmental and climate impact, high safety, high quality and efficiency
- integrated logistics with an optimal utilisation of the modes of transport
- a harmonised regulatory framework with transparency for all stakeholders
- a concentration of national and international goods traffic spanning relatively long transport stretches
- efficient and strategically located transfer points, as well as customised and supportive infrastructure
- a platform for research, development and demonstration of innovative logistics solutions.

Cooperation

The work with Green Corridors has been conducted in project form through cooperation in a secretariat. The focus has been on cooperation with society and the business and research communities. In addition to a steering group, the project has had a reference group consisting of approximately 150 persons from the business community, academia and the public sector. The project has organised a few full-day events every year wherein the large group is apprised of information regarding the progress to date. The group has also had the opportunity to provide input with regard to the work on Green Corridors. The concept of Green Corridors has been established in collaboration with other stakeholders and through lectures, conferences, participation in other projects and contacts with the European Commission and the ministries in other European countries.

European Commission

The work on the government assignment has involved close cooperation with the European Commission. It has been important to monitor and influence the European Commission’s work with the green corridor perspective in the preparations of the 2011 White Paper on transport and the revision of the EU’s transport network (TEN-T).

In its continuing work with the TEN-T, the Commission is very interested in taking advantage of the experience gained in the work with Green Corridors in Sweden, in order to introduce this approach in the endeavour to make the freight corridors of Europe more efficient and green. The close cooperation continues, in part to assist the European Commission in its continuing work with the TEN-T, and also to increase Sweden’s ability to influence the future development for the benefit of industry.
What has been achieved by the commission?

During the two years of the government commission, the work on the Green Corridors has been concentrated on

- driving the work with Green Corridors forward towards new efficient and sustainable solutions, through various development projects,
- establishing a green corridor within, to and from the Nordic countries where new solutions are being applied
- monitoring what is happening within the field of Green Corridors and disseminate knowledge on these issues.

Development project

In 2011, ongoing and completed projects were inventoried with a bearing on Green Corridor criteria. The aim was to map the transport research taking place in order to identify white spots within the field of green corridors. In the winter of 2012, several development projects were initiated that aimed to fill these identified gaps. One example of such a project is the Motorways of the Sea project MONALISA 2.0 which is developing a new concept for Sea Traffic Management; traffic and information management within the maritime field. The project, led by the Swedish Maritime Administration, aims at more efficient and safer shipping with reduced environmental impact.

Calculation manual

Within the framework of the project, a handbook has been produced with an accompanying spreadsheet tool to make it possible to measure how “green” a transport is. Great emphasis has been placed on making the spreadsheet tool user-friendly, and accordingly the tool has been tested and developed in cooperation with a transport company. The products are available from the project website: www.trafikverket.se/grona_korridorer.
Establishing corridors

Two green corridors have been identified as suitable for establishment; a western corridor stretching from Oslo via Gothenburg to Randstad, and an eastern corridor from Narvik via Stockholm to Naples. The goal has been for at least one of them to be established during 2012, which the project has achieved.

Oslo–Randstad

The Oslo–Randstad corridor follows one of Northern Europe’s most important freight routes. In conjunction with the International Demonstration Day on 12 December 2012, the first green corridor in Europe was opened. Prior to the inauguration, a number of partners from the countries in the corridor signed declarations of intent that aim to strengthen the green corridor. Much of the work involved in establishing the corridor has been carried out within the framework of the EU-financed Structural Funds projects:

- GreCOR, Oslo–Randstad, led by the Swedish Transport Administration and including 14 partners in six countries, and which runs from 2012–2014
- COINCO North II (to some extent), which includes the Oslo–Copenhagen route
- STRING, which aims to develop the Malmö–Hamburg route.

Narvik–Naples

The Narvik–Naples corridor connects major transport flows from the producers of Northern Europe to consumers in Southern Europe. The establishment of this corridor has not progressed as far as the work on the Oslo-Randstad corridor. In the northernmost part, however, the work is progressing at full capacity within the framework of the Structural Funds project Bothnian Green Logistic Corridor (BGLC).

Europe’s first green corridor has been opened

On 12 December 2012, an International Demonstration Day was organised in Malmö for the project Green Corridors. In conjunction with this day, an opening ceremony was held for the first green corridor in Europe: Oslo–Randstad. This corridor involves Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Netherlands, and these countries will now work together to make the corridor greener and more efficient. The corridor’s bottlenecks have been mapped and measures have been proposed. Freight flows and the largest carriers have also been identified.
What conclusions can be drawn and how will the work progress?

Since the government commissioned the Swedish Transport Administration, Maritime Administration and VINNOVA in 2010, many contacts have been established within and outside the country, with various projects and groups working on similar issues. We have been able to achieve a fairly accurate picture of the work being conducted with Green Corridors in the Baltic region, and we have contributed in various ways within many of these projects.

The development projects are currently underway

The project has attempted to create a picture of ongoing development projects that have a bearing on Green Corridors, and we have thus compiled a list of around 200 projects. We have noted that there are a significant number of technical development projects underway but far fewer projects that focus on logistics, solutions and regulatory framework. Further work is required within these areas. This applies particularly to transport across national borders, where regulations and general practices often differ.

As the work has progressed, the project has initiated new research and development projects. Several of these are currently underway, such as MONALISA and GreCOR. The results of the development projects need to be further disseminated and implemented, not least to other countries within the EU, with the aim of garnishing international support for the Swedish view on the Green Corridors concept.

Increased use of handbook and model

A recurring question within the field of Green Corridors is how to measure the improvements. The project has developed a handbook and a computational model to calculate certain environmental effects. It would be appropriate to promote a greater utilisation of these computational models in order to compare actual and hypothetical changes in a transport chain.
Continued development of the Oslo–Randstad corridor

The continued efforts to develop the established Oslo–Randstad corridor will largely take place within the framework of the EU-financed projects GreCOR, COINCO North II and Green STRING Corridor. In conjunction with the Demonstration Day in December 2012, some 20 partners in countries along the corridor signed declarations of intent with regard to cooperation aimed at developing the corridor. A proposal has been presented for an action plan on the possible ways to continue this effort and the proposal will now be discussed with a view to agreeing on a joint action plan that a large number of stakeholders along the corridor can support. The work will then commence on carrying out the action plan, wherein the stakeholders are responsible for implementing their commitments.

Management of a green corridor is being revised

Within the framework of the government commission, a proposal for a “model for corridor establishment” has been developed, which has now been applied within the GreCOR project for the Oslo–Randstad corridor. One important question in this context is how a green corridor should be managed and what a management structure would look like. A study on this subject has been initiated through a PhD project at the Luleå University of Technology.

Continued work on establishing the Narvik–Naples corridor

Through participation in the project Bothnian Green Logistic Corridor, work has already begun on the northern part, from Narvik down to Mälardalen. For the remainder of this corridor, contacts have been established with the European Commission and a number of partners along the route. The aim is to create a joint project and apply for funding from the EU’s TEN-T budget in order to obtain resources for its implementation. It could then represent a parallel to GreCOR for the eastern corridor.

Green Corridors – a continuous endeavour

The idea is for Green Corridors to be an ongoing process aimed at promoting greener and more efficient transport. The green corridors should be monitored through annual conferences, even after the government commission has been concluded. At these conferences, follow-ups of all parties should be conducted in order to ascertain whether they have fulfilled their obligations, as well as the demonstration of new innovations that could further improve the corridor when it comes to climate-friendly initiatives and logistics. The work should constantly be evolving, and more detailed proposals on how the efforts can continue are found in the final report of the government commission.
Green Corridors in the Baltic region

As part of the government commission, focus has been placed on the western corridor, Oslo–Holland, and the eastern corridor, Narvik–Italy.

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Read more about the project and access the entire final report at:
www.trafikverket.se/green-corridors