



IRF Working Group "Roads & the Environment"

Kick-off Meeting – Geneva, 5th July 2007

MINUTES

Participants

Dimitris Mandalozis, Attikes Diadromes S.A., Greece - Chairman
Sibylle Rupprecht, Director General, IRF Geneva
Anna Plancherel, Colas – Switzerland
Yvan Ramel, ERTEC – Switzerland
Laura Streeter, Caterpillar – Switzerland
Robert Thiel, Caterpillar Switzerland
Michel Bernhard, IRF Honorary Life Member
Susanna Zammataro, IRF Geneva

Points addressed

1. Rationale of the Working Group
2. Expectations and feedback received by members
3. Identification of priorities and planning of activities

1. Rationale of the Working Group

Sibylle Rupprecht welcomed – as Director General - the WG members in the premises of the IRF Geneva Programme Centre. The chairman of the WG, Dimitris Mandalozis from Attikes Diadromes S.A. (Greece) made a brief introduction recalling some of the reasons presented in the draft terms of reference for having such a WG. He stressed in particular the need for an increased cooperation and exchange of information between members in order to be able to tackle more efficiently the challenges ahead for the road sector. He underlined that the variety of IRF membership was the richness of the organisation and expressed the will to make the WG function as a real platform for dialogue providing concrete outputs.

2. Expectations and feedback received from members

Recalling that more than 20 members have expressed the will to get involved in the WG and put forward suggestions on priority topics to be addressed (see documents circulated), the chairman gave the floor to the participants in order to introduce themselves and have an exchange of view on their respective expectations. The representative of ERTEC S.A. – a civil engineers office working 50% for COLAS – reported on their will to enhance their capacity to face new environmental challenges and better meet their clients' needs. In the light of this, they are building up an environment department focusing in particular on CO₂ emissions and more in general on energy consumption both on the production side and on the management one. The representative of Caterpillar reported on the efforts done at different stages within the company in order to address environmental issues. The question being for them to find out how to ameliorate the manufacturing and the services offered to clients thus developing new business opportunities. He also underlined their interest in CO₂ emissions and in carbon offsetting. Sibylle Rupprecht made some clarifications on this point reporting on the wish of IRF to treat this issue separately - for the time being - since other CO₂ projects are in the pipeline. More over, the complexity of the subject calls for intensive preparatory work before it can be brought to the WG.

3. Identification of priorities and planning of activities

The chairman reminded the group that rather than an ideological approach promoting environmental mitigation regardless of the real cost and outcome, the aim of the WG was to identify and develop efficient solutions that could bring real improvements in the environmental performance of the road sector. The representative of Caterpillar underlined the necessity to address concrete issues like: how to help customers quantify the water needed to compact the material on the road; how to develop a simulation that could show the consumption of fuel during the use of a machine, etc.

Recalling the priority topics suggested by the WG members, Mandalozis proposed that as a first step attention should be given to three themes: 1) water management; 2) materials; 3) noise. He put forward the idea of collecting - through members - information on these topics that could help identifying the problems, showing examples of action taken, analysing problems that still had to be faced.

The objective is to have a chance to explore these matters further in specific discussion meetings and to be able afterwards to come up with recommendations. Michel Bernhard stressed the need to look at these issues not only from the construction side since this was also a problem of road use. The chairman specified that under "water management" one should look at the problem of accidental spillages, water evacuation in case of heavy rain, use of de-icing materials, risk management procedures, waste water treatment, rain water collection, etc. As to the "materials", attention should be given to the problem of waste management, recycling of pavements, use of certain kind of solvents in roads marking, etc. He underlined that "noise" was a problem to be faced in the design, construction and use of roads.

Decision

The group had decided to proceed as follows:

- Members will be asked to submit contributions (problems to be faced, solutions already in practice, difficulties encountered in applying such solutions, etc) on three identified priority themes:
 - 1) water management
 - 2) materials
 - 3) noise.
- The secretariat of the WG will be in charge of collecting the contributions from members.
- The collected material should be the basis for in depth discussions to be held at specific meetings. Experts may be invited to the latter in order to enhance the discussion and examine these issues more in details.
- Conclusions emerged at these discussion meetings should help the WG to elaborate recommendations.

Action

The secretariat of the WG will inform all the members on the decision agreed upon at the kick-off meeting and ask them a feedback on the three priority themes.

Annexes: Agenda; Draft ToR; List of proposed topics; List of topics suggested by members; List of WG members