

Summary

This report presents current developments in the financing and organization of road and railroad systems in different countries. An overview of six countries, the USA, Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Norway and Finland, is provided. The description also briefly covers the current developments in the EU and Sweden. A general trend in many countries is that road pricing is becoming a more prominent part of the infrastructure financing and that alternative organizational forms, such as privatization, regionalization and public private partnerships (PPP), are more commonly employed.

In Sweden, the government has owned and financed the major roads and railroads since the nationalization process started at the end of the 1930s. Presently, the government's role as owner and financier is affected by the international changes in financing and planning. A general shift of responsibilities from the public sector to the private sector and within the spatial levels of the public sector is another aspect of challenges to the government's role. It is therefore important to take these developments into account when considering the government's future role in infrastructure projects.

In the report, I argue, that the Swedish government has to provide the road- and railroad systems with an effective and robust organizational and financial environment. Especially, the following issues for the organization and financing of the road and railroad systems have to be considered:

- The division of responsibilities between the government, the regions and the local governments
- Alternative financing measures in order to meet the development with shifting tax bases and to improve the efficiency in the systems
- The possibilities to organize transport infrastructure in more market like structures that enables innovation and reform

- The balance between welfare economic efficiency and possibilities to introduce stronger incentives for efficiency

The report provides a historical backdrop for understanding the development of the government's current role as owner and financier of transport infrastructure. A model is used for describing how this development has been influenced by technology, economics and politics, and how the balance between public and private ownership has changed over time. An observation is that the public ownership and policies over time have encompassed a number of inconsistencies. Management principles based on welfare economics and more organizational or business-oriented perspectives have varied in impact and importance.