

Technical Committee: C.3 Managing Operational Risk in Road Operations

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Executive Summary:

Technical Committee C.3 Managing Operational Risk in Road Operations held its fifth meeting and in Rome, Italy from 5th to 7th May 2010. The purpose of the meeting was to continue with the work programmes of the three working groups and finalise the plans for the Technical Committee's 2nd International Seminar to be held in China in November 2010. Work is progressing with the output of the three working groups which is:

- a study of risk management systems principles and techniques for the management of safety on road with the aim of producing a practical guide for road sector practitioners.
- a collection of case studies that demonstrate the application of risk assessment techniques with particular reference to the impact of climate change.
- to develop recommendations/guidelines on how to respond to and address the public's perception of risk.

The Italian hosts organised a Risk Management workshop which was held on the 7th May 2010 with approximately 60 local participants in conjunction with the members and guests of the TC. There were 14 presentations provided during the workshop which highlighted the level of maturity of the Australian and New Zealand road safety institutional understandings in comparison to the Italian road safety understandings.

The draft program for the Technical Committee's 2nd international seminar to be held in China, between the 9th – 13th November 2010, (including TC meeting) was agreed with TC presentations confirmed.

Background:

The Technical Committee C.3 was created from a review of the work undertaken in the previous work cycle by TC 3.2 Risk Management for Roads. The purpose of the fifth meeting was to:

- Discuss the work programmes and plan for outputs required between now and the next meeting
- Continue with the planning for the 2nd international seminar and outline of program
- arrange the time and place for the next meeting.

I attended the fifth meeting in Rome on 5th to 7th May 2010 as the member representing Australia and New Zealand. C.3 has approximately 53 members with 23 members attending the 5th meeting, Jean-Francois Corte, PIARC Secretary General and Mozelle Morrison, PIARC Technical Advisor and 11 guests.

Work Program:

The three issues that C.3 has agreed to investigate that align with the PIARC Strategic Plan are:

C 3.1 – Introduce risk management techniques in the road sector

The group discussed the structure of the final report and reviewed the case studies of good practice collected to date. It was agreed that while there would be a focus on road safety the broader issue of risk management across road network operations would be incorporated in to the final report. There was some discussion on how the final report will complement and build on the work of the last cycle which had only just been finalised (2010). The consensus was that the draft report would build on and not repeat the work of the previous cycle.

C 3.2 – Risks associated with natural disasters, climate change, man made disasters and security threats

The Group has been focussing on highlighting case studies to identify and manage/mitigate risks resulting from natural disasters and climate change. A draft web based tool box had been developed to provide access to the 114 natural disaster and 12 man made disaster case studies. There was discussion with PIARC about whether the web based tool-box should be developed centrally or undertaken within work groups.

C 3.3 – Social acceptance of risks and their perception

The Working Group's output will focus on recommendations/guidelines on how to respond to and address the public's perception of risk (which is often different to the reality). There was discussion with PIARC to ensure that the social acceptance of risk and its application in relation to road safety campaigns did not overlap with the work of other Safety TCs.

Italian Risk Management Workshop:

There were 14 presentations made comprising of both international and local contributors. The presentation covered the scope of the TC and included Italian civil protection risk management, impact of climate change on road network operations, risk management of seismic events within Italy, risk management of mega projects in Sweden, Italian road safety and risk management practices and risk perceptions and homeostasis.

Of special interest was the Italian road safety and risk management presentation which indicated that Italy was on target to reach a 50% reduction between 2001 and 2010 – currently at 43% in 2009. The improvements were linked to the introduction of driver licence penalty points, increases in speed control infringements, investment of 1.2 billion Euros in road safety treatments and increasing public awareness. It was noted that there has been a push to improve institutional arrangements including better data analysis.

One presentation on risk homeostasis by a local contributor was suggesting that as measure are implemented to improve safety that road users were using up the increased levels of safety. Of concern was the conclusion that there was no correlation between seatbelt legislation and reductions in fatalities and serious injury.

2nd International Seminar – China

Development of the 2nd international seminar to be held in Beijing, China 11th to 13th November 2010 continued. The draft program of the seminar was agreed including the presentations to be made by the Technical Committee members.

Meeting outputs:

Achievements of the fourth meeting:

- Continued development and plan for the next stages of the Work Group's programs.
- Agreement on the draft program for the 2nd international seminar to be held in China.
- Confirmation of the locations for the remaining meetings, 6th China in conjunction with 2nd international seminar 9th – 13th November 2010; 7th, Kyoto Japan April 2011.

Each Working Group presented the work plan to provide other members the opportunity to provide comment and input – there were no changes required to the proposals.

Learnings for Australia and/or New Zealand:

The most significant learning is that the road safety focus, based on the presentations provided by the local contributors, appeared still very much to focus on behavioural countermeasures to improve road safety outcomes. While there were interventions relating to speed and road infrastructure improvements it did not appear to be in any particular framework such as the Safe System Approach. While the Italians have made good progress with improving road safety outcomes it is felt that the adoption of the Safe System Approach would be very beneficial for the Italians. Therefore the learning is that Australia and New Zealand are fortunate to have adopted the Safe System approach to ensure the focus is on all elements and that countermeasures are in the context of the human fallibility and tolerance to force.

Dissemination:

All reports from C.3 will be circulated to Austroads Council member, observers, programme managers and assistants, member contacts and other PIARC technical committee representatives and be placed on the Austroads website.

Conclusions and recommendations:

The C.3 work plan remains topical and highly relevant to member activities and complementary to the work of Austroads.

Exposure to the perspective of the Italian presenters was informative if only to highlight the level of maturity of the Australian and New Zealand road safety institutional understandings.