



## E18 Growth corridor between Koskenkylä and Vaalimaa

**Could a road development project produce direct and clear benefits for the companies and municipalities within the project's scope of influence and for the entire region more efficiently, so as to improve the opportunities for competitiveness, economic growth and well-functioning everyday life in a sustainable way?**

### Current status and challenges

The Koskenkylä–Vaalimaa section of E18 was selected as the target area for the experiment because of the many opportunities it offers. Planning of the easternmost section of the motorway is still underway, and the construction of the Koskenkylä–Kotka section was launched recently. Passenger traffic originating in Russia is already showing strong growth. Russia's future WTO membership and the possibility of visa free travel between Russia and the EU will accelerate this growth even further. The motorway, the large customer potential, the "green motorway" and the "intelligent transport concepts" associated with the road combined with the excellent connections to ports offer companies and municipalities an attractive operating environment with an exceptional number of development opportunities. The E18 road corridor has good potential to develop into a significant, well-functioning transport corridor between the EU and Russia with a high standard of services.

### Experiment

The experiment was implemented as an extensive, cross-administrative process together with the Regional Council, municipalities and businesses in the area. The process took the form of small groups and workshops, involving the participation of some 100 people. Responsibility for the practical leadership of the project was assumed by the ELY Centre of Southeast Finland, and the steering group included representatives of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the Ministry of the Environment, the Finnish Transport Agency, the Finnish Transport Safety Agency, the ELY Centre of Uusimaa and representatives of the Regional Council of Kymenlaakso and municipalities. During the experiment, principles for coordinating the operating conditions for land use, housing, transport, service structures and industries in a sustainable manner were outlined, the participants' joint view on developing the growth corridor in the target area was drafted, and the actors drew up a manifesto on the progress and follow-up measures of the project. The project will not require additional central government investments compared to the current plans, as the "beneficiary pays" principle will be applied to new needs. The old road's new role as a section of the development corridor enabling a variety of activities was recognised, and more attention should be given to this role in the future.

A marketing video was released on the growth corridor, the concept will be presented on international forums, and funding for promoting the project will be applied for from

such sources as the Transport and Logistics Partnership programme of the EU's Northern Dimension.

### Key results

The opportunities associated with E18 were recognised; it has potential to develop into a growth corridor in the target area and into an interesting and important traffic corridor between the EU and Russia in general. Drawing on intelligent transport solutions in the E18 growth corridor will create an opportunity for Finnish ICT companies to implement advanced intelligent transport services and to market their expertise. The green aspect brings the corridor opportunities for developing new business as well as offering elements of eco-efficiency and sustainable use of natural resources. In an ideal situation, the corridor will produce the energy it needs from renewable energy sources – wind, solar power and geothermal heat. A joint manifesto on the objectives and follow-up measures of the project was adopted by actors in the area. The businesses in the area, municipalities and the Regional Council will continue the planning and implementation of the growth corridor project together with the ELY Centre and the Finnish Transport Agency.

### Conclusions and follow-up measures

As the outcome of the experiment, a new mode of operating was found, in which transport administration together with other branches of administration and actors in the area can more efficiently create opportunities for the competitiveness, growth and development of businesses, municipalities and regions. The application of this practice should in the future be considered in the planning and implementation of transport solutions of public importance.

The success of the close cooperation in the three areas of responsibility of the ELY Centre, which assumed the role of the contracting agency in this experiment, shows that the ELY Centres have good capacity for acting in a more versatile and stronger role, bringing together a number of different administrative branches and promoting regional development. Developing the E18 corridor into a significant growth corridor between the EU and Russia will bring new, international business and jobs to Finland.

### Government policy:

As a joint venture between several countries, an E18 growth corridor project will be launched (Oslo–Stockholm–Turku–Helsinki–St. Petersburg). Its aim will be more efficiently to generate opportunities for services and business that support the growth and development of the area through a new type of cooperation between the public sector and businesses.

Cooperation between different areas of responsibility of the ELY Centres will be reinforced, and their expertise ensured in order to make more efficient use of the ELY Centres' role as comprehensive regional experts in business, transport and the environment.

