

## IPP Technical Evaluation

US Partner: American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA)  
NIS Partner: Russian Association of Territorial Bodies of Highway Administration (RADOR)  
Location of site visit: RADOR Offices, Moscow  
Date of Visit: Wednesday, October 16, 1996  
Date Report submitted to IREX:

Evaluator met with:

Alexander Afanasiev, RADOR General Director  
Anna Tsaplina, Chief, Foreign Economic Relations Division, RADOR; Russian Project Manager  
Fedor Grishin, Computer Specialist, Tver Highway Commission; RADOR Information Committee  
Nikolay Dyomoshkin, staff, Head of Information Department

### **A. Discuss the strongest aspects of the technical and professional work being done by this partnership.**

1. One of the strongest aspects of the work being conducted by the partnership has been in the exchange of information through Russian training in the United States and American participation in the Russian road conferences.

Three Russian delegations will have visited the United States by the completion of the program in the Spring, 1997. These visits have been highly beneficial to the Russian participants. Especially helpful has been gaining an understanding of how ARTBA operates, how the American highway system is managed and maintained, and how it resembles and differs from the Russian system. One particularly important lesson cited by RADOR management was lobbying. They were able to observe ARTBA's effectiveness in lobbying government. There are, presently, few models for this in Russia.

Russian participants also cited information about state and local highway administration, and visits to construction sites as most beneficial.

2. Five interns were sent to the US to intern in the ARTBA offices. This exposed them to the daily working of an American trade association and in general of an American office. They were particularly impressed with American filing systems. RADOR staff also cited ARTBA management training and materials as the most valuable assistance they have received.

3. ARTBA provided a copy of Principles of Management of Associations to RADOR. This was translated into Russian and was highly praised by RADOR management. RADOR has adapted an organizational structure similar to ARTBA's. RADOR has adopted a system of committees for various areas such as Information, Maintenance and Repair, and Legislation. Member territories comprise the membership of the committees, and each committee is staffed by a RADOR staff member.

4. Two American delegations visited Russia in June and September 1996. These involved technology sharing and networking. In Tver, Russian and American highway company heads met. Relationships were established and at least one joint venture was initiated.

5. RADOR has recently been actively involved in lobbying the Federal government on behalf of its members. A proposal in the Duma would change the distribution of tax dollars to roads, and RADOR is supporting a maintenance of the status quo because it allows for broader revenue collection for roads.

**Discuss the weakest aspects of technical and professional work being done by this partnership.**

1. Computer communications at present can only access half the RADOR member territories (oblasts, krais, independent republics), and only ten territories are actively participating in the E-mail service. Many smaller territorial agencies have no local link up with Internet, and therefore will face expensive long distance telephone charges to use the Internet. Nevertheless, plans for an extensive computer Internet communications system are being pursued. E-mail training is conducted each week at the RADOR offices on the day the Information Committee is meeting. Also, training is being planned for a conference in November 1996.

RADOR is also researching the development of a homepage site on the Internet. They observed the ARTBA home page and see its benefits for distributing information. Feor Grishin, member of the Information Committee and computer specialist from Tver, is personally researching this at present. This still presents the problem of being accessible only to those who can access the web through Internet, and not all E-mail services provide for this, particularly in Siberia.

RADOR is still considering how best to utilize the funds budgeted to ARTBA for implementation of the computer communications system. As of today, however, five computers have been installed at the RADOR office. There is, however no final plan for the distribution of the remaining computers and other equipment that could be purchased.

Also of note, the Russian National Highway Department is requiring each territory to establish computer communications capability and a computer telephone-accessed "server" to allow the national Department and other territories to access mandated territorially-maintained data bases through each territory's server. This at present is in the planning stage and is slated for implementation in mid or late 1997. This raises questions as to how this will impact RADOR's computer communications strategy.

2. There is too heavy a reliance on computer E-mail and home page as the primary focus for future communications. The computer communications issue appears to dominate the Information Committee, pushing other information distribution and sharing methods and issues to the side.

3. RADOR is more reactive than proactive in its work. Its present focus is primarily reactive, such as helping territories lobby the national highway ministry for changes in rules, financial distribution formulas, and norms, upon which finances are awarded. Not that responding to member requests is wrong. RADOR, of course, must first be responsive to immediate member

needs and demands. This is the primary focus of a trade association. But RADOR is a hybrid, an association of governmental highway agencies, and in this type of association, it is especially important that efforts be made to assure a continuing focus on innovation and the search for new and better products and techniques for its members. Systemic changes are necessary to assure a continual, proactive role for RADOR, while it continues to address members' immediate needs. Viewed another way, RADOR needs an active, ongoing R & D (research and development) function built into its structure. This is particularly important at this present time in Russia.

4. Translation of American technical literature to Russian has not progressed beyond RADOR organizational needs. To date, Principles of Management of Associations and the ARTBA Constitution have been translated. No technical materials supplied by ARTBA have been translated to date, according to Anna Tsaplina, Chief, Foreign Economic Relations Division.

5. No attention is being paid to the greatest need in Russian highway construction: a financing vehicle for long term debt financing of capital projects and equipment acquisition, such as the role performed by bonding in the US. Also absent is encouraging private highway development, as is the case with the Dulles toll road in Northern Virginia, which is privately owned.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

1. Efforts need to be made to facilitate getting more of the territories on-line and trained in computer skills. This is a high priority at RADOR and is being addressed by them. In the meeting with the evaluator, they stressed that they have the necessary computer knowledge and do not need assistance from ARTBA in technical assistance or training, but they do need the money for the purchase of equipment. However, they still do not have a final plan for the distribution of equipment to be purchased.

Fedor Grishin is a computer specialist with the Tver Highway Commission and involved in RADOR Information Committee, and is a strong advocate for the information highway approach to communications. It is a good idea but leaves out many of the small territories with little or no computer expertise.

ARTBA could help by working closely with RADOR on developing a plan to get all members on line, and to address the problem of the smaller members located in remote areas of Russia, particularly Eastern Russia and Northern Siberia.

The computer networking issues should be assigned to a special team charged with addressing this issue and terminating upon implementation of a viable system. The same people presently involved could serve on the team. Also, this would free the Information Committee to address its attention to a more holistic approach to the information and communications issues.

2. The Information Committee should develop a proposal for a holistic communication plan and present it to the Executive Committee. First, the plan should identify what are the communication needs of RADOR, such as late breaking news, routine information sharing, new techniques or products on the market, staff reports, information for smaller agencies, or technical assistance to members.

Second, the plan should highlight the resources available, including the computer E-mail concept, in addition to the ongoing articles in the “Automobile Highways” magazine, and the new newspaper being developed. It should be clearly understood what the communication goal is for each vehicle.

In addition, ARTBA should help RADOR develop a newsletter and a vehicle for periodic, topical communications and information to its members on breaking news items, innovations, and inventions. This could be a topical bulletin or fact sheet.

3. There is an institutional absence of a team, committee, or other body, or a staff person dedicated to exploring innovations and new methods, processes, equipment, etc. ARTBA and RADOR should consider creating an R & D focused body, a committee, team, or perhaps an “institute,” to research new ideas, inventions, techniques, and share these with the members and/or refer them to the Legislative Committee for possible suggestions to the national government.

4. Russian delegations to America and participants in Russian conferences with American counterparts, overwhelmingly have cited technical information as a primary need. Yet RADOR has placed a low priority on translating information on these new technologies. ARTBA’s approach to this in earlier reports has been to point out the absence of funds for translating this kind of information. What ARTBA could do is help RADOR develop a system for reviewing English language technical information, ascertaining what should be translated, and make that information available to interested members. A fee could be assessed for the information to cover translation costs.

5. As stated above, one of the major problems facing Russian highway construction and major equipment acquisition efforts is the absence of debt or bond financing of capital improvements. In meeting with RADOR staff and officers, I realized they had no exposure to or knowledge of this. All capital projects now proceed on a pay-as-you-go basis. As a result, very little of the needed road construction or reconstruction and equipment replacement can take place. Also, capital project construction is stretched out over several years, not because of inferior materials or construction techniques, but rather, due to the necessity of multi-year funding of large capital projects.

ARTBA could provide a major service to Russia by working with RADOR to introduce the concept of bonding and working with the federal government to create the necessary enabling legislation to make it possible. At first reaction, one might say this is an issue for national finance reform and outside the scope of this project. However, this issue is at the center of highway development, and RADOR must be a primary advocate for it. It would be hard to imagine the American highway system without bond financing.

**B. What do the Russian partners see as the “criteria for success” for their partnership project activities? How close are they to attaining them?**

The RADOR leadership considers the partnership efforts to be near completion. They see the Russian delegation visits to the United States and American highway experts' visits to Russia as key elements of the project. They also see the internships at ARTBA as very important to RADOR's efforts. They see management and lobbying techniques taught them by ARTBA as most important. In addition, the development of the computer networking system is an important criterion.

At this time, the project has attained all these criteria with the exception of lobbying expertise and establishing the computer system.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

Evaluator's recommendations regarding the computer issue are stated above. Regarding lobbying, RADOR staff and officials told the evaluator that they think the federal government does not see them as experts in the highway management realm. ARTBA should assist RADOR in developing a plan to expand its image as highway experts in the appropriate ministries of the federal government. This could include direct, regular mailings such as newsletters, special bulletins and fact sheets to key officials, articles in major newspapers, and television coverage of conferences and press conferences.

### **C. Describe the technical merit and appropriateness of the following program components:**

#### **1. Training**

As described above, the training conducted in the US was highly rated by the participants. It focused heavily on ARTBA, which was beneficial to the delegations. It gave them a model for the way a trade association should function. Examples from these trips were referenced in meetings with the evaluator by several people.

It was also described to the evaluator that some attendees from the territories have implemented management changes learned on their visit. They have also researched products they learned of and techniques they learned about. The one lesson most cited was lobbying. This is being actively pursued by RADOR and the highway agencies.

RADOR has also developed training sessions scheduled at its periodic national conferences. Attendance at ARTBA conferences was a definite model and inspiration for this. Evaluating this training was beyond the scope of this evaluation.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

RADOR should consider developing an annual lobbying strategy, including the goals of its lobbying efforts for the year. This would assist RADOR with a planned effort that would tend to

focus RADOR on better planned positions and less on reactive lobbying alone. This will contribute to RADOR's image as a professional organization, as it is seen as an ongoing advocacy and think tank organization, as well as a membership organization.

## **2. Products**

As stated above, there have been few translations of technical documents.

RADOR has developed an E-mail communication service.

RADOR continues to offer national and regional conferences for its members, including sharing of new innovations and providing special training.

RADOR is developing a homepage, a newspaper, and a publishing house.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

Again, RADOR needs to increase translation of timely, technical information. It also needs to expand its methods for sharing information with its members and others.

## **3. Resource and Learning Centers**

Not applicable

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

## **4. Consulting Services**

Not applicable

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

**D. What additional technical assistance do you believe the Russian side could use to improve their work in general?**

As stated above:

ARTBA should work closely with RADOR in developing a plan to get all members on-line, and to address the Internet communication problems of the smaller member agencies, located in remote areas of Russia, particularly in Eastern Russia and Northern Siberia.

To further improve member communications, ARTBA should help RADOR develop a newsletter and a vehicle for periodic, topical communications and information to its members on breaking news items, innovations, and inventions. This could be a topical bulletin or fact sheet.

ARTBA and RADOR should consider creating an R & D-focused body, a committee, team, or perhaps an “institute,” to research new ideas, inventions, techniques, and share these with the members and/or refer them to the Legislative Committee for possible suggestions to the national government.

ARTBA should help RADOR develop a procedure for reviewing English language technical information, selecting what should be translated, and making that information available to interested members. A fee could be assessed for the information to cover translation costs.

It would help RADOR achieve a more proactive approach if ARTBA would work with RADOR in conducting a strategic planning session to provide an annual or biannual work plan for the organization. This planning process should include the full participation of the Board of Directors.

**E. What new directions do you see as a natural follow-up for this project? Are there others working in this sector that this group might contact and/or collaborate with?**

ARTBA could provide a major service to Russia by working with RADOR to introduce the concept of bonding and work with the federal government to create the necessary enabling legislation to make it possible. USAID may be funding another project assisting the federal government in restructuring Russian financing and taxing policies. USAID should be contacted to discuss this possibility. Regardless, ARTBA and RADOR should become involved in this effort, due to bonding’s critical role in highway construction, reconstruction, and equipment purchases.

**F. How do you assess the partnership's sustainability plan? What is your sense of how close the partners will be to meeting these goals?**

The Sustainability Plan includes ARTBA materials being provided to RADOR, including training curricula and videotapes, continuation of delegations to and from the US, and shared space on the ARTBA and RADOR homepages. The activities in the Sustainability Plan that will provide the primary contributions to future survival, however, are its membership expansion plans, and sale of translated technical materials.

Members pay dues, and with the potential of expanding the membership of 46 to include another 50 territories, RADOR will, in all likelihood, have a steadily growing income stream over the next several years.

In addition, RADOR has developed a publishing house which, if managed properly, can provide a reliable income stream as well.

Sale of products, such as translated technical reports can provide a flow of additional income to RADOR, and provide needed information for member territories.

#### **G. Other Comments:**

1. Valery Nozdrachev, president of RADOR, was in Israel and therefore could not be interviewed. Evaluator met with Alexander Afanasiev, RADOR General Director, in his absence. His comments have been incorporated in the report above. However, IREX did request a specific discussion on US-based training, how it is being applied by the participants and what the long-term benefits to RADOR are.

Afanasiev felt the participants were exposed to new approaches and are now exploring new methods, techniques, and equipment, thanks to the US training. They also were able to see an American trade association in operation and now are implementing many of the management practices of the ARTBA organization. RADOR, as mentioned above, has also adopted a structure modeled after ARTBA.

The Russians are very proud people. It was difficult for them to acknowledge the effect ARTBA has had on their organization. It was obvious, upon visiting the office and witnessing the operations and examining the organizational committee structure, that ARTBA has served as a highly respected model for them.

2. The evaluators received no examples of RADOR members utilizing ARTBA memberships. This may be due to the communication problems facing RADOR or the inability of members to access possible services or benefits because of communication or language barriers.

3. The RADOR evaluation was hindered by the celebration of the 250th anniversary of roads in Russia, a celebration RADOR helped sponsor, with a major dinner held at the Palace in the Kremlin. The evaluator was given a generous five hours of time by RADOR staff and officials, in which a great deal of information was received. However, follow up telephone calls were not returned.