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Experiences from Procurement of Integrated Bridge Maintenance in Sweden

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Abstract

The trend in many countries is to outsource maintenance with competitive tendering. The design of the tender is then a crucial issue. A new type of tendering contract, called "Integrated Bridge Maintenance", was introduced in one experimental area in Sweden. In this case bridge maintenance is separated out from the standard road maintenance contract. A pilot project has been running since 2004 for all bridges in Uppsala County with about 400 bridges. The experiences and lessons from this pilot project are presented here, and analysed from a transaction cost perspective. An important feature of the contract was that it contained a combination of measures that should be carried out and properties of the bridges that the contractor was responsible to maintain. This created a balance between predictability and flexibility for the contractor. The client was satisfied because of increased competence and a low price. The latter can partly be explained by the possibility for the specialised bridge crew to get additional work from other sectors. One problem was that some properties were difficult to measure, which led to some controversies. As information about old bridges always are incomplete a partnering structure need to be built into the contract. Experience has also shown that a conscious policy to maintain long run competition is important. The general conclusion is that the project was seen as successful and as creating more "value for money".

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