

SCOR: AASHTO's Advocate for Research

In December 1987 the AASHTO Policy Committee/Board of Directors created a new Standing Committee on Research (SCOR) to elevate the position of research, development, and technology transfer within AASHTO's committee structure. SCOR replaced the AASHTO Select Committee on Research, which was concerned primarily with administration of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program. In addition to administering the NCHRP, the new SCOR has the responsibility for carrying out the following functions:

- Encourage and assist other AASHTO committees and subcommittees in identifying research needs and defining an overall research agenda for highway and transportation from the perspective of AASHTO's member departments.
- Review, observe, and encourage effective use of the federal-aid highway program's HP&R funds and recommend an appropriate level of funds for research.
- Serve as a forum, coordinator, and advocate for highway and transportation research by AASHTO, its member states, and others.
- Review, monitor, and coordinate each of the national programs of highway research within AASHTO, including NCHRP, HP&R, SHRP, and FHWA contract and staff research.

SCOR members are appointed from the four AASHTO regions, and a recently created Research Advisory Committee, representing all member departments, advises SCOR on NCHRP's annual research program and other matters, as well as research in the various transportation modes, and helps AASHTO member departments play an effective role in transportation research. Membership consists of two chief administrative officers and two engineers or research specialists from each region, two representatives from FHWA, and one chief administrative officer and research specialist from the Canadian provinces. Ex officio, nonvoting members are from the American Public Works Association, National

Association of County Engineers, U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior.

At its first meeting in 1988, SCOR members reviewed transportation research being conducted in all modes and discussed a plan of operation after hearing presentations on the Nationally Coordinated Program of Highway Research, NCHRP, SHRP, NHTSA research, private sector activities, the Highway Research Coordinating Council, the University Transportation Centers program, and the Technology Transfer Centers. When SCOR met later in 1988 to plan the fiscal year 1990 research program for NCHRP, two new initiatives were high on the agenda: modal research activities and liaison with other AASHTO committees. Contact has been established between SCOR and each of the AASHTO modal standing committees. The committees have been encouraged to identify their research needs and make them known to SCOR.

Although, with the exception of the highway research conducted by NCHRP, SCOR does not control the use of research funds in other modes, it is possible that it may find means to finance some high-priority projects, either by using pooled funds or by encouraging other sponsors to conduct the studies. Links between SCOR and AASHTO committees are being created to ensure that they benefit from the research conducted.

During the first half of 1989, SCOR engaged in a major effort to determine the desirable scope, scale, organization, and funding for future transportation research and recommend appropriate action by AASHTO. With the expiration of current federal-aid highway legislation in 1991, SCOR has determined that the most pressing need for AASHTO is to be prepared to influence federal legislation that will determine the future of highway research; nevertheless, it is equally important to consider sources of funding *other than federal* and evaluate research needs in modes *other than highway*.

SCOR's Agenda

Two concerns have dominated SCOR's agenda since 1988: (a) technology transfer and other mechanisms for promoting innovation in the transportation industry and (b) funding for highway and transportation research following the expiration of the 1987 Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act. These and other concerns are being addressed in a report prepared by SCOR, *AASHTO Strategy for Research, Development, and Technology Transfer*, which evaluates the issues that will affect the future of highway and transportation research and recommends positions for AASHTO. Following approval by the AASHTO Policy Committee, the report is expected to be available later in 1989.

In carrying out its NCHRP responsibilities, SCOR occasionally holds workshops to assist in identifying and ranking specific research. NCHRP staff convenes the workshops by inviting experts from government agencies, private organizations, and academia to identify specific research needs. These workshops are described in the following article "NCHRP Workshops Develop Projects."

Another initiative undertaken by SCOR has been the design of a research program (NCHRP Project 20-24) to address the problems faced by top managers in conducting the operational and planning functions of state highway departments. The changing character of state departments of transportation and the short tenure of chief administrative officers have mandated research identified and guided from a top management perspective. Project 20-24 is described in the article "Top Managers Get Help."