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Knut F. Samset, Gro Holst Volden  
Nils Olsson and Eirik Vårdal Kvalheim

## Governance schemes for major public investment projects:

A comparative study of principles  
and practices in six countries

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Knut F. Samset, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Gro Holst Volden, SINTEF

Nils Olsson, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Eirik Vårdal Kvalheim, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

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## English summary

This study concerns governance schemes for major public investment projects and how they are organized and practiced at state level today. Starting with the Norwegian scheme, often referred to as the State Project Model or the Quality Assurance scheme (Samset and Volden, 2013), similar schemes in five other countries are explored: the Netherlands, the UK, Sweden, Denmark and Canada (Quebec). Some have more than one governance scheme, for example, depending on the sector. The Danish scheme applies only to road and rail projects, and there is a separate scheme for ICT projects. By contrast, Norway and the UK have schemes that apply to all types of infrastructure investments. The UK scheme even applies to government transformation and service delivery projects. Common to all schemes investigated is that they are used for the overall management of large investment projects funded by the state, and applied to projects with high cost and/or complexity, or highly innovative.

This report starts by defining key concepts and principles related to project governance at state level, and explain the importance of the front-end phase and the role of the government. Thereafter, we present the governance scheme in each of the six countries, and the underlying stage-gate model as well as the involved parties and their roles, with special focus on the use of independent quality assurance in the process. We also present one project case per country to illustrate the application of the schemes. It should be noted that the study does not go further into the use of guides and standards or templates that normally also exist on a more detailed level in agencies involved.

There are many similarities between the governance schemes in the countries. For example, the respective governments have a central role, not least in making the choice of project concept. The number of project phases and decision points in the stage-gate models varies somewhat between the countries. In the Scandinavian countries, the requirements for independent quality assurance apply only to the front-end phases, before the projects are formally approved. In the UK the state may require independent quality assurance throughout the project and even in its operational phase.

In most of the countries a third party - independent of the political decision-maker and the agency responsible for delivering the project - has the role of adviser or quality assurer. In Norway and Denmark, private sector consultants

are used for this purpose, whereas in the Netherlands, Canada and the UK a separate public body is established. By contrast, in Sweden quality assurance is mainly an internal activity practiced in the existing agencies.

All schemes are of a fairly recent date, and it is too early to explore their effects and degree of success, which would have to be the topic of future studies.

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