

t ransporting European research into a new era

“ It is a challenge to generate co-operation activities in a consortium consisting predominantly of national ministries and with such a strong political leverage like ERA-NET TRANSPORT ”

Please note that this fact sheet replaces the previous one, known as ERA-NET Transport, and included in Series 1 of this publication

Efficient transport systems are central to Europe's single market. But most countries still view their transport networks – and transport research – from a national perspective. Since January 2004, ERA-NET TRANSPORT has been promoting co-operation between national transport research programmes, leading to economies of scale and greater overall effectiveness. Coordinating activities include the production of procedural guidelines based on a thorough analysis of existing programme management and the experience of several bilateral initiatives, and the development of a shared research agenda. Joint activities will mark the culmination of the ERA-NET's initial actions, and the beginning of sustained coordination of national transport research programmes at the European level.

Step into a railway station in any of Europe's capital cities and you will find international destinations on the departure board. Similarly, as you drive on Europe's motorways, you will see the names of foreign cities on the signposts. The free movement of goods and people across national borders in the EU means that countries cannot consider their transport systems in isolation. Increasingly, transport research requires a similarly European approach.

Tunnel vision

Transport research covers topics that range from intermodality of logistics, freight transport and traffic modelling to vehicle safety and land use planning. The relative importance of these different subjects varies considerably between countries, depending on national priorities, but a review of national research programmes across the whole of Europe reveals some convergence. European transport policy would benefit from a better overview of transport research, from local to global levels.

The ERA-NET TRANSPORT aims to take advantage of both these opportunities. First, it will build up efficient transnational research co-operation through the opening up of national programmes and the development of joint calls, procedures, programming and project management. Second, the network

will provide politicians, civil servants, and industrial and academic policy-makers at both national and EU levels with better access to the work of the research community. These objectives match the main concepts of the ERA-NET scheme, namely the opening up of national research programmes to outside participants and the development of research strategies at a European level.

Building bridges

The ERA-NET TRANSPORT is built on the strong foundation of the European Platform for Co-operation and coordination of Transport Research (EPTR). This consortium has identified four areas of research – road safety, freight and logistics, policy monitoring, and intelligent transport systems – where further co-operation in strategy would be advantageous. EPTR has already organised workshops at which national programme managers have come together to share ideas and explore how co-operation could proceed. The project, which involves ministries and other organisations from 11 countries, takes the work of EPTR to the next level. Its ultimate ambition is to establish an efficient instrument for common research programmes on topics with shared priority among all members, with joint calls and shared evaluation systems. To reach this goal



Coordination Action ERA-NET TRANSPORT



“ With the first Action Groups getting together to coordinate research activities within their specific fields, we can see a new future emerging for European transport research ”

Full title:
ERA-NET TRANSPORT

Research field:
Transport

Coordinator:
Germany: TÜV Management Systems GmbH

Partners:

- Austria: Austrian Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology
- Belgium: Federal Public Planning Service Science Policy
- Denmark: Ministry of Transport
- Finland: Ministry of Transport and Communications
- France: Ministry of infrastructure, transport, housing, tourism, and the sea
- France: ISTED Institut des sciences et des techniques de l'équipement et de l'environnement pour le développement
- Germany: Federal Ministry of Education and Research
- Germany: TÜV Management Systems GmbH
- Netherlands: Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management
- Norway: Ministry of Transport and Communications
- Poland: Ministry for Scientific Research and Information Technology
- Sweden: Swedish Agency for Innovations Systems - VINNOVA
- UK: Department of Transport

Further information:
Mr Oliver Althoff,
TÜV Management Systems GmbH
Am Grauen Stein,
DE-51101 Cologne
Fax: +49 221 650 35 115
e-mail: oliver.althoff@de.tuv.com
website: www.transport-era.net

Duration:
4 years

EC funding:
€3.89 million

Project reference:
CA 517834

the network is conducting a step-by-step convergence strategy, which will be progressively extended to additional countries.

The road to success

In the first instance, the ERA-NET TRANSPORT is developing models for future co-operation at programme level. These procedural recommendations cover methods for proposal evaluation, project monitoring and joint financing, as well as addressing wider issues such as intellectual property rights. The guidelines are based on in-depth analyses of current programme management practices and existing co-operative research. A number of successful co-operative partnerships already exist, including the German-French DEUFRAKO framework, formal and informal information exchange systems among Nordic countries, and a bilateral agreement between Germany and the Netherlands. Belgium's transport research programme is also open to non-Belgian researchers, although their participation in projects is limited in scope. Another important activity will be to develop recommendations on setting up national research programmes that are structurally open to cross border co-operation, using the Polish and Danish partners' programmes as test beds.

With guidelines in place, ERA-NET TRANSPORT will work towards a common strategic research agenda. It will map the

transport research activities of Member States and other European and international groupings and identify the future research topics that are most appropriate for integration.

After two years of 'theory', ERA-NET TRANSPORT will move to 'practice', putting its procedures and shared vision to the test. This process could begin with the simple clustering of existing projects under the ERA-NET banner, but the launch of joint projects and eventually joint programmes is also planned. The network will monitor and evaluate the success of these practical experiences in co-operation and assess their impact on national and European transport research and policy planning.

Nations in the driving seat

Retained autonomy is one of the founding principles of ERA-NET TRANSPORT. The group does not intend to take over the administration of national research programmes, nor to dictate research priorities. Instead it will coordinate national research activities in line with each country's interests and competences. The group is based on a mutual trust that is expected to grow over time.

Nevertheless, the network does anticipate that its coordination activities will gradually become more extensive, and the partners certainly expect them to last beyond the initial funding period of the ERA-NET scheme.