

4.1 Final publishable summary report

- An executive summary (not exceeding 1 page).

DETRA – Developing the European Transport Research Alliance

Summary for the full period, M1-28, 1 June 2010 – 30 September 2012

Developing the European Transport Research Alliance (DETRA) was a strategic project between key transport research organisations to make an analysis of the state of the European Research Area (ERA) development within the transport domain. The concept of DETRA derived from the 2008 Lyon Declaration whereby the signatories, ECTRI, FERSI, FEHRL, EURNEX, HUMANIST, ISN and NEARCTIS, committed themselves to work together on the deepening of the European Research Area (ERA) objectives in transport, in order to address the Grand Challenges. From this commitment, the objective grew to create the European Transport Research Alliance (ETRA) that would strengthen the transport domain. The key priorities of this Alliance would be to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in the domain and develop a common understanding and approach to reduce fragmentation and overcome barriers.

The results of the DETRA project have been based on consultations and inputs from main stakeholders and experts to provide a series of key deliverables setting out the current situation, the identified barriers and recommendations for the next generation of the Transport ERA (ERA-T). Each of the six key ERA themes was examined in detail:

“Mobility for researchers” examined how to develop a new generation of transport researchers in Europe, increase their skills, improve their employability and favour their trans-national mobility in a multicultural and multidisciplinary context. This included the analysis of actions conducted in Europe regarding training and mobility in the transport domain and subsequent recommendations for improvements that will help in the shaping of future EC programmes in this domain. More specifically actions included the design of a European PhD in transport, organisation of an “ad hoc” training programme and setting up a dedicated mobility web portal in transport research.

“World-class transport Research Infrastructures” built on previous work undertaken in projects such as TREE₁ (Transport Research Equipments in Europe). The task analysed European and international RIs, future demands and missing gaps and opportunities. Recommendations were developed for four research infrastructures.

“Strengthening research institutions” focused on how transport research organisations have already adapted to the ERA objectives and the actions still to be taken to develop excellent research organisations (scientific excellence, relevance excellence, governance excellence) providing high quality services for the Knowledge Triangle (research, education, innovation).

“Sharing knowledge” examined how knowledge is currently shared between public research organisations and industry in the transport sector and with the general public and civil society organisations. This included the processes for sharing and the institutional bottlenecks. The role of standardisation as both a barrier and enabler was considered and recommendations for sharing knowledge produced.

“Optimising research programmes and identifying priorities” benchmarked relevant transport-related research programme roadmaps on national, European and international levels and, in conjunction with key stakeholder representatives, presented a joint research programme for pan-European adoption and its key priorities. The optimisation of research programmes and priorities considered the instruments fitting with the various stakes of the knowledge triangle.

“International cooperation” examined the overall status of the ERA for international transport research. The scope, status and success of international transport research cooperation were examined. The task defined the barriers and constraints, best practices and perspectives in the context of the future ERA. Finally recommendations for ERA supporting world-class research within international transport research cooperation and prioritisation of mutually-agreed research topics.