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ERA-NET TRANSPORT II

Reporting

Project Information

ENT II

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TUV RHEINLAND
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GMBH
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Final Report Summary - ENT II (ERA-NET TRANSPORT II)

Executive summary:

ERA-NET TRANSPORT (ENT) is a network of national transport research programmes in Europe. In the current second phase of ENT (ENTII), which started in 2008 under the European Union (EU)'s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), the consortium comprises 12 European countries: Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and United Kingdom (UK). Within ENT, for the first time, the most relevant national transport research programmes - representing approximately - 300 Mio p.a. - were brought together in one network.

The vision behind ENT is to supplement and enrich national and regional transport research funding programmes through transnational cooperation, particularly in times of limited national budgets for research funding. By facilitating cooperation activities among publicly financed transport research programmes, ENT improves the outcome and quality of transport research and thus contributes to the European Research Area (ERA) for transport.

Since the very start of ERA-NET TRANSPORT in 2004, eleven transnational research funding initiatives with a total allocation of national public research funds to transnational cooperation projects close to EUR 50 million have been successfully implemented. The topics cover all modes of surface transport. The ERA-NET PLUS ELECTROMOBILITY+ is the by far largest cooperation action being initiated by ENT and an example for a further step in the cooperation of national programmes.

For setting-up and implementing joint transnational cooperation activities of transport research programmes, ENT has developed procedures, mechanisms and tools, which are continuously tested and refined based on the experiences made.

The ENT network is well embedded in the ERA for transport. There is a close collaboration between ENT and other networks and stakeholders in order to raise awareness of ENT activities and results and to exchange information and knowledge. Furthermore, ENT is open towards countries and regions that do not belong to the consortium. Contacts to further countries and regions have been established successfully, thus, broadening the geographical scope by involving new national and regional programmes

in ENTII activities and beyond.

Project context and objectives:

When the ERA-NET scheme was launched in 2002 as part of the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6), the ERA-NET TRANSPORT (ENT) project started in 2004 as a cooperation network of owners and managers of national research funding programmes.

During the first phase, ENT has carried out pioneering work in successfully facilitating cooperation and coordination of national research support programmes in the field of transport, where this is in line with national transport research policies. In the second phase, which started in 2008 under FP7, the ENT consortium comprises 12 European countries: Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and UK. Within ENT, for the first time, the most relevant national transport research programmes - representing approximately - 300 Mio p.a. - were brought together in one network.

The vision behind ENT is to supplement and enrich national and regional transport research funding programmes through transnational cooperation, particularly in times of limited national budgets for research funding. By facilitating cooperation activities among publicly financed transport research programmes, ENT improves the outcome and quality of transport research and thus contributes to the European Research Area (ERA) for transport.

In the second phase, ERA-NET TRANSPORT II (ENT II) can build on the existing ENT framework and instruments for transnational transport research supporting the owners and managers of national programmes. ENTII aims to considerably improve and intensify the level of cooperation among the participating national transport research programmes by means of further joint trans-national calls, including a large-scale call under the ERA-NET Plus scheme. In order to accomplish this aim, ENT further works towards a broad consensus at the national level to enhance trans-national research programme cooperation and to strengthen the cooperation among national research programmes. Moreover, it is foreseen to open up ERA-NET TRANSPORT towards new partner countries and to start dialogue on the future of ENT in the European Transport Research Area.

Project results:

Trans-national funding initiatives and calls

Since the very start of ERA-NET TRANSPORT in 2004 all in all 22 transnational cooperation groups - in ENT terminology called Action Groups - Action Groups have been set-up on various topics in all modes of surface transport. These have resulted in 11 successful transnational funding groups, which have led to joint research funding initiatives with a total allocation of national public research funds to transnational cooperation projects close to EUR 50 million. The ERA-NET PLUS ELECTROMOBILITY+ is the by far largest cooperation action being initiated by ENT and an example for a further step of cooperation between national / regional programmes. Without the support of ENT, it would be much more difficult to prepare such a large-scale measure.

Within the duration of ENTII, several trans-national action groups have been initiated in order to explore topics for the possibility for transnational funding cooperation. The already established action groups have continued through to the monitoring and evaluation phase within the ENT II duration and received support during the dissemination phase in order to ensure better end-use uptake of the research results initiated under the umbrella of ENT.

Beside of the implementation of small- and medium sized transnational calls, ENTII aimed to complement and step-up the level of cooperation among the participating national transport research programmes by means of an ERA-NET Plus call. ENT has supported the idea and the preparation of a position paper that formed the basis of the ELECTROMOBILITY transnational funding initiative, being set up as a joint call of national and regional programmes representing 13 European countries under the ERA-NET Plus scheme. The ELECTROMOBILITY call has been successfully launched in December 2010.

Instruments and tools for trans-national cooperation activities

For setting-up and implementing joint transnational cooperation activities of transport research programmes ERA-NET TRANSPORT has developed procedures, mechanisms and tools, which are continuously tested and refined based on the experiences made.

Identification and selection of themes

ERA-NET TRANSPORT develops and supports research programme cooperation on a wide number of areas within the field of transport. ENT supports this in two complementary ways.

In a pro-active way, ENT envisages to stimulate research programme cooperation and coordination on specific themes. Based on the results of the foresight study, which has been prepared by ENT consortium, themes were discussed in exploratory workshops. These workshops led to the identification of more specific and potential topics for trans-national research programming, which were further elaborated within the trans-national cooperation groups.

In a responsive way, ENT provides service on demand to the partners that are interested to initiate programme coordination and cooperation. ENT facilitates these actions by identifying possible partners in the participating countries. The following themes and topics were put forward by this responsive approach, which lead to a direct start-up of action groups.

Action groups

Due to the width of ENT's thematic scope the idea was born to operate with thematic sub-groups - so-called ENT action groups.

With regard to the narrow scope of many other ERA-NETs, the ENT actions groups can be seen as smaller and semi-autonomous sub-networks of ENT; a structure which is unique in the ERA.

The action group is the main operative structure to implement a common interest of national programmes into a joint action. This process is described in detail in the ENT Cooperation Action Handbook (deliverable 2.1).

In the founding and development process of transnational cooperation groups a team of support groups from various partner organisations is in charge of supporting these action groups in progressing towards the achievement of their objectives.

The support from ERA-NET TRANSPORT consists of:

- bringing together the programmes managers or owners willing to coordinate their policies and programmes,
- organising the meetings,
- supporting the consensus building on common objectives,
- screening the European and international research in the field in question,
- providing them with the guidelines for launching joint activities,
- facilitating the group in keeping on track,
- keeping the momentum and meeting the deadlines,
- helping in the drafting of the memorandum of understanding and of the text of the call,
- helping in overcoming administrative barriers as well as organising the dissemination of activities and results.

The support teams contributed to the successful implementation of trans-national cooperation actions within ENT.

Guidelines for transnational cooperation

On the basis of the experience gained with the action groups the Cooperation Action Handbook has been constantly updated and amended (deliverable 2.1). The handbook provides guidelines for preparing and launching a trans-national action to programme managers and owners and was designed to be easy-to-use. It contains standard procedures (timeline, milestones), templates for the successive documents to be produced and a reminder of the necessary ingredients for efficient preparation and implementation.

While the first edition of the handbook mainly focused on the two first stages (i.e. forming and storming stage), the 2009 update draws also on the experiences of action groups on the two next stages (norming and performing stage). Since 2010, a starter kit for quick-start and toolkit for action groups complements the handbook to an integrated and round package. The most recent update in 2012 considers the experiences from the preparation and implementation of the ERA-NET PLUS CALL ELECTROMOBILITY+.

Electronic proposal submission system (EPSS)

In order to improve the transnational call implementation ERA-NET TRANSPORT implements EPSS on the ENT website to be utilised particularly for large-scale transnational calls.

The EPSS has already successfully tested in the case of the proposal submission and evaluation phase of the ELECTROMOBILITY+ call. Further modules will be implemented for the transnational monitoring of the transnational R&D projects.

Potential impact:

Instruments and tools for dissemination of programme activities

Dissemination via newsletters, public events and personal contact is crucial for building awareness and visibility of ENT and to put the results stemming from ENT into use. ENT has over the years tested and developed different means of communication and dissemination, which have significantly enlarged the level of information available. In the following the most relevant means are presented.

ENT webpage

The ENT website (see <http://www.transport-era.net>  online) is an essential instrument for:

- a) ensuring an efficient flow of information among the members of the consortium and
- b) by providing information to stakeholders and public.

ENT newsletters

The ENT newsletter is prepared and circulated regularly to relevant national and regional programme owners, to other thematic and organisational networks and to relevant stakeholders. In addition, special editions have been prepared on the occasion of specific events, i.e. the announcement of new calls, targeted at national research communities to promote transnational funding initiatives under the umbrella of ENT.

Plenary group / ENT conference

A plenary group was introduced in the second phase of ENT in order to facilitate a structure and process for exchange with external stakeholders of transport research in Europe and to disseminate results. The plenary group meets once a year within the frame of the ENT conference. The plenary group comprises:

- programme owners and programme managers, who are not delegated to the ENT bodies;
- Associated Countries and organisations that would like to learn more about ENT and might be interested to represent a new country in the project in the future;
- European Commission (EC);
- relevant research policy networks such as ETPs, ECTRI, and other transport related ERA-NETs.

The meetings of the plenary group (December 2008 and 2009, January 2011, April 2012) were attended by about 50 persons each.

External networking

The networking activities aim at awareness raising and exchange with external stakeholders of the ERA for transport. This has been achieved during the ENT plenary group meetings / ENT conference as well as by presentations and personal contact at events and meetings as TRA, TRB and ERA-NET ROAD, EPTR, CAPIRE and the FP7 transport advisory group. The ENT network has developed close contacts to the EC and European Technology Platforms as ERRAC and ERTRAC, which is useful in the development of new cooperation actions. In addition, ERA-NET TRANSPORT has established close cooperation with ETNA, the European network of transport national contact points (NCPs).

Furthermore, ENT has been open towards countries and regions that do not belong to the consortium. Contacts to further countries and regions have been established due to the close cooperation with the ERA-NET Plus on electromobility, the plenary group and a dedicated reachout workshop. Greece has formally joined the consortium in 2009. Others have been involved as associated partners during ENTII and consider joining ENT network in the next phase.

Network effects of transnational cooperation

Before ENT was introduced, the national transport research programmes in most cases did not have a very close contact. Today the situation has significantly changed. There is a regular contact due to meetings of the ENT management group and high level group, the participation in action groups or at the ENT plenary group / ENT conference.

People working in national programmes know each other and have a much better status of information on situation or planned actions in other countries.

The involvement in the network provides ENT partners to:

- exchange on relevant developments
- to discuss scientific issues
- to exchange on technical issues of programming
- to elaborate coordination and cooperation of actions.

The network thereby has positive effects such as:

- improved scientific quality and basis of programmes;
- improved procedures;
- improved evaluation (by exchange of evaluators);
- improved information on other relevant developments in Europe and the world;
- enlarged critical mass through cooperation.

Specific effects and changes in national programmes

The frequent contacts and close cooperation amongst the ENT partners had a strong impact on national programme designs, contents and mechanisms.

Identification of good practices of national programming elements and procedures of transport relevant funding architectures with a significant impact on the capability to serve transnational cooperation actions has been harvested through a survey. The results reflect the progress in ENT countries in creating openness for transnational funding cooperation. Moreover, these practices and mechanisms identified can be transferred to other countries and institutions to redesign national funding instruments or to set-up new instruments open for transnational cooperation. In this perspective both, successful practices as well as practices, which have not (yet) proven to generate the expected effects, have been identified and can be taken into account as valuable experience.

A brochure on how to design national research and innovation funding programmes geared to transnational cooperation (deliverable 2.3) has been prepared to describe the feasible ways identified in order to encourage similar approaches in other countries. The brochure is available for download on the ENT website.

Furthermore, a list of options for national and regional programme representatives to improve the end-use and market uptake of transport research results has been prepared. The options relate to the establishment of call texts, contracts and to the administration of transport research projects as well as broader options to consider when promoting end-use of research results. Tolls are targeted at management of applied research projects typically organised through research calls including policy-oriented and technology-oriented research projects as well as demonstration projects.

Further effects

All in all, the above described ENT II activities and results contribute to achieve the following:

- Strengthening the foundation of ERA in surface transport through coordination of national and regional research programmes and development of policies for research and innovation.
- Intensification of trans-national research activities and coordinated activities as regards small and medium sized funding activities, but also in the preparation of large-scale initiatives like ERA-NET Plus.
- Strengthening innovation by exploitation of research results at national and European levels through contributing to common regulation and measures for better market penetration of research outcomes.
- Increased cooperation and coordination with respect to the implementation of existing and future Strategic Research Agenda by liaising with existing transport Technology Platforms.
- Strengthening cooperation with other networks and stakeholders.
- Continuation of the ERA-NET TRANSPORT cooperation beyond ENTII project.
- Broadening the geographical scope by involving new national and regional programmes in ENTII activities and beyond.

Project website: <http://www.transport-era.net> 

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List of ENTII partners (as of May 2012)

TUV Rheinland Consulting GmbH (TUV), Germany

Austrian Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology (BMVIT), Austria

Ministry of Transport and Communications (LVM), Finland

Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing (MEDDTL), France

Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMW), Germany

Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management (MinVenW), the Netherlands

Ministry of Transport and Communications (SD-NOR), Norway

Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems (VINNOVA), Sweden

Department for Transport (DfT), UK

The Danish Ministry of Transport (DKMT), Denmark

Federal Department of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC), Switzerland

Tetraplan A/S (TET), Denmark

National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR), Poland

General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT), Greece

Finnish Transport Agency (FTA), Finland

Ministry for Infrastructure and Environment (MinlenM), the Netherlands.

Related documents



Final Report - ENT II (Era-Net Transport II)

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