

road ERA net

Coordination and Implementation of Road Research in Europe

Message from the Coordinator

Our first Plenary Group meeting was planned for the 22nd of April 2010 in Copenhagen. It was going to be a major success, with a number of distinguished speakers having committed to present their road research plans and their views for collaboration with ERA-NET ROAD.

Nature unfortunately decided otherwise as the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland disrupted air traffic over Europe. Some ERA-NET ROAD partners were stranded in Vienna where they had met under the aegis of CEDR, others where somewhere on the globe trying to get back home and all of us realised that we were not going to be able to reach Denmark. This led me to the decision to postpone the Plenary Group meeting. It was indeed a difficult choice, as a lot of effort had gone into defining, planning and organising the event. I would like here to thank our Danish colleagues for their commitment, their efforts and their grace when faced with the reality imposed on all by the ash cloud.

There is a silver lining in this story of course. While we were trying to reach our destinations by all means possible, I realised that whereas air travel can be hampered by weather conditions and rail travel can suffer from the weather or from industrial action, roads do show a great degree of resilience and are mostly open. This goes a long way towards underlining the usefulness to society of road related research.

Last but not least, please note that the first ERA-NET ROAD plenary group meeting is not cancelled; it is merely postponed, probably to a date in September. The exact date and location will be confirmed soon.



Patrick Malléjacq

Coordinator of the ERA-NET ROAD II project

Results of the ENR2 Call "SRO4 – Effective Asset Management Meeting Future Challenges"

ENR2 SRO4 "Effective Asset Management Meeting Future Challenges" is the third cross-border funded trans-national joint research programme with a duration of 3 years and a research budget of 2,65 MEUR. 13 National Road Administrations got together and agreed on the trans-national joint research programme. The funding NRAs are Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. They established a Programme Executive Board (PEB) to manage the programme.

The Call closed on the 12th of March 2010 and 20 project proposals were submitted. 20 different countries are part of these project consortia. The following table shows the frequency of countries on project proposals:

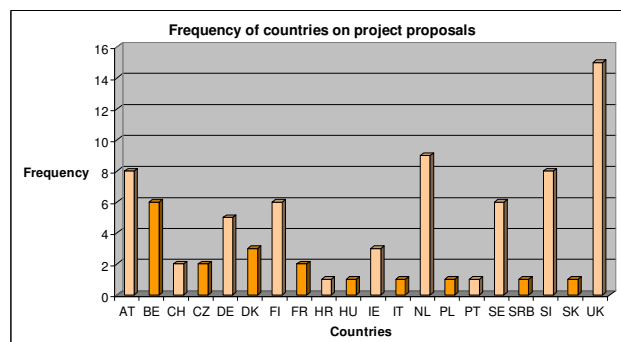


Image: ERA-NET ROAD II, WP1

The ENR2 SRO4 Programme Executive Selection Meeting was on the 8th/9th of April 2010 in Copenhagen at the Danish Road Directorate. The PEB jointly evaluated and selected 7 projects (of 20 proposals) covering the following objectives:

- A: Meeting stakeholders' requirements and expectations
- B: Understanding asset performance
- C: Development of suitable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the future



D: Framework for optimised asset management

The contract negotiations have started now and the projects will commence in June 2010.

Preparation for the 2011 Call!

Building on the collaboration of the NRAs within ENR2, and the successfully launched transnational calls on Climate Change, Road Safety and now Asset Management, ENR2 has started identifying needs for a next Call, tasked to open in January 2011.

On 15th April 2010 a CEDR TGR Programme Meeting took place in Vienna with the aim of identifying potential areas of trans-national collaboration and research. ENR's WP3 facilitated this Workshop. Members of CEDR's TGR group, their research programme managers together with all partners in ENR2 were invited.

That was a first step in establishing an environment in which national road research programmes are tabled, commonalities and duplication identified and opportunities for co-funded transnational research activities laid out and discussed with CEDR's TGR group. A next meeting is planned at the end of June 2010.

Road Research Access Facility: Users Group meeting

ERA-NET ROAD II is developing a Road Research Access Facility (RRAF), which is to collect information on road research (planned, ongoing and completed) from existing sources, such as databases and knowledge centres. This online system is to give the appearance of being a single database, but it will, in fact, mostly be making use of existing information.



Image: ERA-NET ROAD II; WP2

Development of the RRAF follows the steps:

- i) Define requirements for the RRAF
- ii) Develop the RRAF
- iii) Collect information
- iv) Embed the RRAF

Step i) was completed at the end of 2009. The results of this may be found in Deliverable 2.1: *Definition of Requirements for a Road Research*

Access Facility, which was submitted to the European Commission in December and is downloadable from the ENR website. Now, the development team, lead by ZAG (the Slovenian National Building and Civil Engineering Institute) has begun its work.



Image: ERA-NET ROAD II, WP2

As it is crucial for the RRAF to be accepted by the future users, a Users Group has been created, which is to follow the development and provide constant feedback. This group met for the first time at the beginning of April and provided initial feedback on the proposed work.

The group will meet several times until the completion of the RRAF, which is planned for October 2010. It will ensure that the development will in fact meet the users' requirements.

ERA-NET ROAD Plenary Group

In the last newsletter you read about the ERA-NET ROAD Plenary Group and its meeting, which was to take place on April 22nd 2010 in Copenhagen. Unfortunately, due to the conditions affecting air travel in Europe (as a result of the eruption of the Icelandic volcano) in the month of April, this meeting had to be postponed. **A new date has not yet been determined but will be publicized soon.**

The ENR Plenary Group will bring together the organisations involved in road related transport research in Europe including:

- programme owners and programme managers that are not part of ENR
- organisations that would like to learn more about ENR and might be interested in participating in collaborative research promotion by joint research procurement
- representatives from the European Commission
- relevant networks such as European Technology Platforms (e.g. ECTP and ERTRAC), structures such as ECTRI, FEHRL, FERSI, as well as other ERANETs such as ERA-NET Transport.

ERA-NETs on stage 2010: the annual ERA-NET Event

Once a year, the European Commission hosts an event by the name of "ERA-NETs on stage". This year's was on March 23rd and 24th in Brussels. ERA-NETs on stage is a two-day event, which brings together participants from all ERA-NETs.



Image: European Commission

Currently, there are approximately 70 ERA-NETs as well as several ERA-NET Plus covering many very different fields of research, such as tourism, health, chemistry and many more.

Participants from nearly all ERA-NETs and ERA-NET Plus were present at this event, including three ENR2 representatives.

"ERA-NETs on stage" provides a forum for communication for people working with the ERA-NET scheme. They are able to share their experiences, good and bad, through discussions and workshops and thereby learn a lot from one another.

Examples of the workshops that were held are:

- ERA-NET under FP7 – lessons learnt from the thematic integration
- Cross-border financing in times of economic crisis
- ERA-NET Plus – hands-on experience

Furthermore, the Commission presented the "3i" of the Spanish Presidency: Integration, Implementation and Inclusion and gave an introduction to NETWATCH, the European information platform on transnational R&D programme collaboration.

The full agenda as well as pictures and presentations from this informational event may be found under the following link:

http://netwatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/nw/index.cfm/static/event_4.html

TRA2010

This year's Transport Research Arena (TRA) will be held in Brussels from 7th to 10th of June. ERA-NET ROAD II will be very present at this event.

- ENR been invited to be presented at a session on Tuesday.
- ENR2 Coordinator, Patrick Malléjacq, has also been asked to chair an ERA-NET session on Thursday. Full details about this can be taken from the final agenda, once it has been published.
- ENR is organising an informal "questions & answers" session on Friday morning in order to help broaden the network of contacts and partners.

Full details about this can be taken from the agenda, once it has been published.

Furthermore, ERA-NET ROAD II will be incorporated into the CEDR (Conference of European Directors of Roads) stand, thereby being present at all times in the exhibition. The stand will be located at the back of the hall, near the poster sessions. Come visit us there if you wish to find out more about our project or want to network with people that are involved in it.

For more information about the TRA2010, please visit www.traconference.eu

Interview with a Research Provider:

Leif Sjögren, VTI, Sweden

Q: Who are you?

A: I am a researcher at VTI (The Swedish Road and Transport Research Institute). I have been employed at VTI since 1980 after my studies to a Master of Science in technical physics and electronics. During the



Image: Leif Sjögren

years, I have mainly worked with road surface characteristics and assessment of effects of road conditions. More precisely, how to measure condition and what indices should actually be used in the condition evaluation.

- Q: Tell us more about the work you have done.
- A: Safety is of highest priority in all road research. I am mainly working with road surface characteristics, which are one factor to consider when studying safety effects. More important is the alignment and the shape of the road. The idea to consider road surface characteristics and alignment together gave me an original idea to suggest a proposal aimed at black spot research. After having come up with this idea, there was a meeting, arranged by FEHRL, aimed at putting together members for common proposals to the ERA-NET ROAD call „Safety at the heart of road design“. At the meeting, the black spot idea was discussed and finally changed and instead led to a proposal aimed at self explaining roads, SPACE. A number of proposals were presented by the FEHRL group and I became the “commander” of SPACE, meaning Speed adaption control by self explaining roads.



Image: Space

Especially the possibilities to use VTI's advanced road simulator to evaluate different self explaining scenarios was interesting. Current work in the simulator has been on upgrading the sound and vision system to more realistic road situations using input from real roads. This really encourages the idea. For more information on SPACE visit its homepage: www.fehrl.org/space

- Q: How did you hear about the ENR call? Please provide input on the admin details, set up of the consortium, and tell us how easy it was to work with ENR.
- A: I regularly visit the ERA-NET ROAD home page and the FEHRL, of which VTI is a member, informs members of important calls. In SPACE case it was the FEHRL meeting arranged in Vienna by AIT (Austrian Institute of Technology) that led to 6 proposals. The consortium was formed of interested partners at the meeting and complemented with others from VTI's network of partners. I have a lot experiences with EU projects and, compared with this, ENR it is much less administration and prompt responses. Nevertheless, ENR's Program lead-

ers vary from call to call and this introduces some complexity since the financial process follows the leader's country's rules.

- Q: What benefits did you get from working with ENR?
- A: The network of contacts has increased and the contact with users of our research results is important.
- Q: As we all know road directors are very keen to put the research that they have procured to good use. So, how is your project being implemented?
- A: SPACE is built up to support the aim of implementation. Hopefully [by the end of the project in 2011], there will be a number of tools to support if, and how, a selected self explaining solution is suitable in a certain situation.

- Q: What are your plans for working with ENR again in the future?
- A: Almost the same procedure as with the creation of SPACE has happened in a new ENR call, “Effective asset management meeting future challenges”. A project called “Heroad”, Holistic evaluation of road assessment has been submitted with me as coordinator. Also in this case a meeting was arranged by FEHRL. “Heroad” was set up using email and phone meetings.

Coming up next

The **Transport Research Arena 2010** (TRA2010) will take place in Brussels from the 7th to the 10th of June. ERA-NET ROAD II will be very present there.

The **SRO4 Programme Executive Board** will meet again in the end of June 2010.

ERA-NET ROAD Plenary Group: next meeting to be determined.

The **next Newsletter** will be published at the end of July 2010.

This newsletter is a product of ERA-NET ROAD II and its objective is to disseminate information on ongoing activities in the project.

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