

# **ERA-NET TRANSPORT**

## **Options to improve the end-use of research results**

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This is a list of options for national and regional programme representatives to consider for improving the end-use and market uptake of transport research results. The list relates 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.

The options above 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.

The options to consider are:

- Let demand steer the question to be researched
- Ask for a business case and promote the operationalisation / demonstration of results
- Establish incentives to involve end-users from the beginning of the research projects
- Look for clearly defined post-project implementation activities
- Establish options for supplementary funding for dissemination activities
- Establish incentives for project management to focus on end-use of research
- Ask for results communicated in a non-technical language and promote the use of communication channels targeted at end-users
- Consider using intermediate organisations to bridge the gap between research and the end-use / the market
- Establish alternative carrier paths for researchers
- Encourage an open access approach to publicly funded research

The findings in this paper are derived from a comprehensive analysis of four case studies carried out under the umbrella of ERA-NET TRANSPORT (ENT). The case studies are:

- ARTISTS, Link & Place (UK)
- Mistra, Soundscape Support to Health (SE)
- SimConT (AT) and
- Transumo, Spitsmijden (NL)

For more information please see the full summarizing report including the framework document and the four case studies: ERA-NET TRANSPORT (2010). "Improve end-use of research results". Deliverable 2.4. Tetraplan A/S. Copenhagen. [www.transport-era.net](http://www.transport-era.net).

Also findings from an ERRAC study on how to embed market uptake in research projects is included in this paper: European Rail Research Advisory Council (ERRAC). "How to embed market uptake in research projects", available from [www.errac.org](http://www.errac.org).

## Option

*Let demand steer the question to be researched*

*Look for projects aimed at solving strategy issues of general acknowledged interest*

*Ask for a business case*

*Promote the operationalisation and demonstrations of results*

## Elaboration

The need for answers is the central goal to steer at when defining research questions. Research projects should focus on issues of true significance to the end-user.

Such a focus will ensure that the research is something that the end-users need, e.g. by filling a gap or solving a practical problem.

A latent idea and easy-to-understand research concept can be central for the use of the research results.

Attention should also be paid to the political, public and/or private support of the concepts, since timing is central for the use of new knowledge/services.

Ask for written business cases from the start of the research projects. Writing a business case early provides valuable focus by:

- Eliminating projects that will never make much sense to the end-users anyway
- Helping to define who will benefit from the results
- Giving valuable input to the implementation / dissemination plan

Promoting a self evaluation process amongst the research teams can also be considered as a mean to emphasise the user's point of view, e.g. by explaining how to use the research via a story line, examples, product scenarios, use cases, etc.

Generally ask for research results that are operationalised and immediately useful for the end-users. Also consider promoting demonstration projects – the applied measure can illustrate the usefulness of the research results. Training sessions is another possibility.

Promoting a full scale view of the use of research can also lift the utilization of research; including the technology applied / policy recommendations, the environmental and economical aspects, the political reality, etc.

## Option

*Involvement of all the right stakeholders*

*Incentives to involve end-users from the beginning of the research projects*

## Elaboration

End-users should be encouraged to participate in the research teams and be responsible for input, conclusions and presentation of results, since dialogue has an impact on the content and thus the use of the results.

The involvement of end-users from day one can ensure that:

- The user requirements are included when defining the research questions
- The results are interpreted and operationalised by the users
- The personal and recipient organisations are prepared for the uptake of the new knowledge

Involvement of end-users could be supported by a framework in the research programme, which make it 'a normality' for project consortia to include end-users from the beginning, e.g. by being an eligibility criteria or by putting a strong emphasis on the issue in the evaluation process. One could also consider allocating a percentage of the budget for the participation of practitioners, industry, etc.

If direct involvement of stakeholders in the projects is not practical then:

- Analyse who the key stakeholders really are – it needs to be stakeholders who will implement the results
- Consider a key stakeholder steering group, e.g. an existing industry group or a policy forum
- Plan for hand-over post research projects to key stakeholders

*Clearly define post-project implementation activities*

*Networking and dissemination activities*

It is crucial to have an effective and realistic post-project implementation plan asking: who, how and when. The responsibility for dissemination and exploitation should be planned.

All means of traditional dissemination activities including formal and informal networking during the lifespan of the research project should be encouraged. For instance, by using eligibility and evaluation criteria actively to focus on dissemination and end-use.

Funding bodies should also consider means to promote the use of expert boards, knowledge portals, user-workshops and other initiatives supporting networking, public relations and dissemination activities. Favourable conditions to improve the stakeholders interest in implementation, e.g. via a project champion promoting the results after project end, is another option.

Generally speaking, it is recommended to emphasise dissemination and use activities in the evaluation criteria of project proposals, e.g. by rewarding the use of an out-reach plan for the period after the finalisation of the research project.

## Option

## Elaboration

*Supplementary funding for dissemination activities and dedicated focus on end-use*

The gap between research and the end-users could be bridged by allocating supplementary / flexible funding of demonstration projects or dissemination activities. Supplementary funding for networking activities is also an option, e.g. support to establish an arena where researchers and end-users can meet.

A two-step financing procedure could be a possibility with a first step for carrying out the actual research and a second step focusing on activities related to dissemination and utilization of the results.

Ensuring ownership of research projects by end-users is another important aspect, e.g. by reserving resources for the participation of stakeholders in research projects or other means of interaction with researchers.

*Focus on dissemination activities and end-use of research by project management*

Promote the appointment of a dedicated project manager to mediate and motivate partners and stakeholders to ensure the progress of the project and the usability of the results. Consider allocating specific resources for project management to bridge the gap between researchers and end-users by mediating continuous interaction. And establish incentives for project management to focus on dissemination and end-use of research, e.g. by making stakeholder participation a central evaluation criterion.

*Communication in a non-technical language*

Funding institution should emphasize that research results are readable and easy-to-understand with specific conclusions and recommendations.

*Communication channels targeted at end-users*

Communication channels targeted at end-users, e.g. practitioner's journals, business magazines, etc., should also be considered – too much research tends to end up in scientific journals.

Generally speaking, easy-to-understand communication is essential for lowering the barrier between the producers and users of research.

*Intermediate organisations to bridge the gap between research and the end-use / the market*

Such an organisation could arrange conferences, support specific topics of research, coordinate trans-national research cooperation, and establish lighthouse projects / demonstrations / pilots to facilitate the uptake of new ideas, support and service programme owners in defining research areas as well as ad hoc consultancy for programme owners.

*Alternative carrier paths for researchers*

To increase the use of research results in the longer run, promoting alternative carrier paths and incentives for researchers, who want to work more hands-on with practitioners, the industry, etc., could be a way.

*Open access approach to publicly funded research*

Publicly funded research should be accessible for the public. An open access approach towards research results could be an eligibility criterion for receiving public funding.