

CALL TEXT for SURPRICE: Sustainable mobility through Road User Charging

The Danish Ministry for Transport, the Finnish Ministry for Transport and Communications, The French Ministry for Environment, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea (MEEDDM), The Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems (VINNOVA) and the Swiss Federal Roads Office (FEDRO) invite research proposals in the field of Road User Charging.

The vision of the trans-national call is to support a long term sustainable transport system in Europe and enable sustainable mobility. Much work has been done in order to reduce negative external effects from road transport. Nevertheless further efforts are needed to curb the growing emissions from transport and to lessen the negative effects of congestion. One of the potential tools is pricing instruments as Road User Charging (RUC).

Presently the development of road-pricing instruments has been focused on freight transport. The aim of this call is to create the knowledge needed to develop road user charges for passenger vehicles. Various European programmes and countries have launched research initiatives to develop methods, technologies and regulations for common use. A joint research initiative will strengthen research activities in the field, thereby creating synergies and added value for policy making and adaptation of RUC throughout Europe. Joining research initiatives and drawing on the best research capacities in Europe will ultimately lead to better research and ensure better use of the research resources in the field.

The key objectives of the joint research call are to

- produce new and innovative scientific knowledge within the research field to improve the basis for policy making in the field of Road User Charging (mainly for passenger vehicles)
- build on disciplinary strongholds of the various European research communities invited and thereby ensure knowledge development and sharing
- create a strong interdisciplinary approach to research questions of Road User Charging
- build on the elements of Road User Charging that are of common interest across Europe

Thematic focus and research scope

The overall theme of the call is to promote trans-European research into new and innovative scientific knowledge in the research field of Road User Charging. The focus is on passenger vehicles, but relevant issues for freight transport may be incorporated.

The call is based on true cooperation across borders to build on shared European research competence. And proposals should draw on European research excellence and cooperation.

The joint call covers both policy and technology oriented research and development (R&D). A number of pressing issues have been identified that can be addressed

- (i) **Acceptance** of Road User Charging systems by the public and by commercial road users
- (ii) **Interoperability** of road user systems amongst the European countries
- (iii) **Legal framework** conditions for road user charging systems that are non-country specific
- (iv) **Impact** analysis and methodology to create the basis for the political decision making process

The outlined thematic focuses are further described in Annex 1.

Economic framework

The national funding organisations will jointly provide funds of up to € 1.14 million to support the call. Funding may also be directed through merging of already ongoing research projects into the call.

Funding is made available from national funding organisations (see table below). The funding will be organised as a “virtual common pot”. Thus, successful partners will be funded by their respective national funding body. The general principle is that activities funded should support genuine European cooperation, i.e. a fair distribution of tasks (and funds) between partners is encouraged.

Table: Funding 2010-2013

Participant name	Country	Funding €
Ministry of Transport ⁽¹⁾	Denmark	140 000
Ministry of Transport and Communications	Finland	200 000
French Ministry for Environment, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea	France	200 000
The Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems - VINNOVA	Sweden	500 000
Swiss Federal Roads Office (FEDRO)	Switzerland	100 000
Total		1 140 000

Note 1: Funds will be provided through the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation

As the programme is financed through national programmes in the participating countries some restrictions may occur due to national directives or limitations by the financing national programmes. For further information about national limitations, please consult your national contact.

Eligible activities may comprise combinations of direct collaboration costs, such as:

- Joint research activities
- Network and mobility costs
- Personnel costs of researchers, including PhD and Postdoc fellowships
- Dissemination costs
- Extra management costs
- International scientific conferences (participation and/or organisation)
- Meeting costs - direct costs for conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops
- Travel expenses according to governmental rules of the home country
- Smaller equipment costs
- Other costs

Call conditions

The call is open to researchers and research groups within the funding countries Denmark, Finland, France, Sweden and Switzerland. However participation of researchers/research groups from other countries on specific parts of the proposed project is encouraged. Especially researchers from the following countries playing a supporting role in the SURPRICE consortium: Germany, Norway, The Netherlands or United Kingdom.

The main applicant must be an institution/organisation/legal entity in one of the funding countries. Projects must include partners from *minimum two* of the funding countries. Extra credit will be given to consortia consisting of further partners from the above mentioned countries.

Application procedure

Projects will be selected in a one-step application procedure. An extended electronic form available on www.transport-era.net is to be used. The official language of the project is English, and all report should be made available in English.

A Joint Evaluation Group will review the scientific quality and the impact of the full proposals and rank the incoming proposals. The national members of the Joint Evaluation Group may wish to include external expert reviews or representatives from other national funding entities. The final decision on which projects will receive funding will be made by the national funding bodies. Projects can start when the funding decisions have been made and contracts signed in spring 2010.

The Joint Evaluation Group consists of both national representatives of the national funding bodies supporting the call (Denmark, Finland, France, Sweden and Switzerland) and one national representative pr. country from the supporting countries in SURPRICE: Norway, Germany, The Netherlands and United Kingdom.

Evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria for the proposal are

Formal requirements

- The formal applicants must represent an institution/organisation in Denmark, Finland, France, Sweden or Switzerland with the responsible person mentioned by name
- The proposed project team must consist of a consortium with at least two different countries represented (Denmark, Finland, France, Sweden or Switzerland)
- The budget share of each main partner should be of such a nature that it represents a true cooperation

Quality of the proposal

- Pertinence to the scope and objectives of the programme
- Quality and originality of the research idea and the outlined hypotheses
- Scientific quality and innovativeness of the research plan as well as feasibility
- Quality of the documentation of state-of-the-art within the proposed research field
- Level of interdisciplinary interaction between different fields of research
- Dissemination and implementation, including plans for communicating results

Quality of the project team

- Competence, potential and expertise of the applicant/consortia
- Competence of the applicant(s) and project management e.g. the extent to which the project leader has the knowledge and experience required and his/her general qualifications to lead and organise an international project
- Scientific excellence of the partners involved

As a general rule the application should follow good research ethics and take into consideration ethical questions of relevance to the project.

Deadlines for the call

Full applications must be submitted no later than 16.00 CET on **18 February 2010** using the SURPRICE proposal template provided.

For questions about the call, please contact the SURPRICE secretariat

Tetraplan,

Ms. Anette Enemark, phone: +45 3373 7137

ae@tetraplan.dk

National contact points

Denmark

Danish Ministry of Transport, www.trm.dk

Ms. Karoline Lolk, phone +45 3392 3321

klo@trm.dk

Finland

Ministry of Transport and Communications, www.lvm.fi

Mr. Tuomo Suvanto, phone +358 9 160 28551, mobile +358 40 777 8127

tuomo.suvanto@mintc.fi

France

Ministry for Environment, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea (MEEDDM)

Mr. Gérard Brun, phone +33 (0)1 40 81 64 18

Gerard.Brun@developpement-durable.gouv.fr

Sweden

The Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems (VINNOVA), www.vinnova.se

Ms Christine Wallgren, phone +46 8 473 3009

Christine.Wallgren@VINNOVA.se

Switzerland

Swiss Federal Roads Office (FEDRO), www.astra.admin.ch

Mr. Andreas Gantenbein, phone +41 (0)31 322 94 37

Andreas.gantenbein@astra.admin.ch

Annex 1

THE THEMATIC FOCUS OF THE JOINT CALL

SURPRICE: Sustainable Mobility through Road User Charging

The aim of the joint European call is to support the decision-making process of introducing national Road User Charging schemes. Consortia are encouraged to build on existing studies and knowledge to strengthen the joint European knowledge-base. Consortia are thus encouraged to ensure broad dissemination of the research results, both within the research community and on policy level.

The following themes are identified, and examples of joint project ideas are described under each theme.

i. Acceptance

The acceptance of a road user charging scheme seems to vary depending on a number of factors. Experiences indicate that the pre-conditions, the system design as well as the planning process are important for the acceptance, but better knowledge on the importance of the different factors is needed, e.g. concerning:

- The amount of the problems (e.g. congestion, air pollution) that the scheme is supposed to reduce
- The objectives specified for the charging scheme
- The predicted (or experienced) impacts of the scheme (congestion, environment, accessibility, equity etc.)
- The credibility of the predicted impacts (calculations or full scale experiments?)
- The scope of the system (size of area, type of vehicles, type of roads etc.)
- The level of charge
- The complexity of the system (from the users' point of view)
- Linkage to other services (e.g. use of the public transport system)
- Use of the revenues (financing roads or public transport, reducing other taxes etc.)
- Involvement of the public in the planning process

ii. Interoperability

The EU Directive 2004/52/EC requires the implementation of the EETS (European Electronic Toll Service) within the next three years. Impact analysis of the directive would be of importance. The analysis could include issues such as:

- The predicted costs for the operators and the users (complexity versus production volumes)
- The predicted impacts on innovation and market development (e.g. the room reduced by standardisation and harmonising)
- The consequences of the practice of not charging foreign cars

iii. Legal framework

Although the legislation differs within the EU countries there are many general legal issues that are not country specific. The following ones exemplify issues that have a substantial impact on system design and feasibility and are worth to be studied with an international perspective:

- *Equal treatment*: To what extent can different user groups be treated differently in terms of toll tariff (and discounts), user processes, equipment functionality, customer service offers, etc. where user groups might be e.g. national and foreign users, frequent and infrequent users, equipped and non-equipped users

- *Legal status of a toll:* What legal constructions are available for a road usage charge/fee/levy/tax? What are the consequences for Value Added Tax, for legal procedures for complaining and escalating? Who can have which powers for enforcement?
- *Compliance checking:* Who can legally be entitled to check on the road-side and to which extent (camera monitoring the traffic, automatic license plate reader, short-range radio interrogation of passing equipment, stopping of vehicles)
- *Privacy:* what data have to be considered private and under what practical circumstances? Can privacy be ensured by institutional barriers or are physical barriers to data access required? Under what circumstances can privacy be lifted? Who has to decide on this?
- *No barriers to trade:* European law forbids any barriers to trade. To what extent are measures like mandatory equipment for tolling, like deposits for equipment, like minimum fees to be pre-paid, etc. to be considered barriers to trade

iv. Impacts

Predicting the impacts of a road user charging scheme is an essential part of the planning process and forms the basis for decision on implementation. In order to ensure sensible decisions the predictions should be scientifically based and have a high degree of credibility. Although a lot already is done within this area there is still some work to do, e.g.:

- Study and compare impacts on transport, congestion, environment, accessibility, equity, economy, land use etc. of (planned or implemented) schemes in different countries (Finland has already started such a project on km-based tax.)
- Analyze the need for development of models specifically for predicting the impacts of road user charging, taking relevant possible short and long term adaptations into account
- Analyze to what extent experiences from one country/city are transferable to another

Budget

The applied amount should reflect the level of planned activities. Please note that the budget may be adjusted according to available national funds. And that the Joint Evaluation Group might recommend merger of proposals. Funding decisions will be made by spring 2010.

Current knowledge base

At European and national level a number of research projects drawing on current know-how and knowledge has been carried out. Consortiums are strongly encouraged to build on existing knowledge and to focus on conclusions and recommendations relevant in all European countries. Several sources of information can be utilised such as

- www.curacaoproject.eu/
- www.transport-research.info/web/