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era-net
Transport

How to design national research and innovation funding programmes geared to transnational cooperation

Anchor objectives on tn-cooperation in national policy frameworks

Breakdown of objectives to operative measures in programme funding frameworks and responsible institutions

Utilise existing flexibility in national rules

Neutralise/ overcome administrative barriers for tn-cooperation

Create an atmosphere where tn-cooperation is taken serious and entrusted



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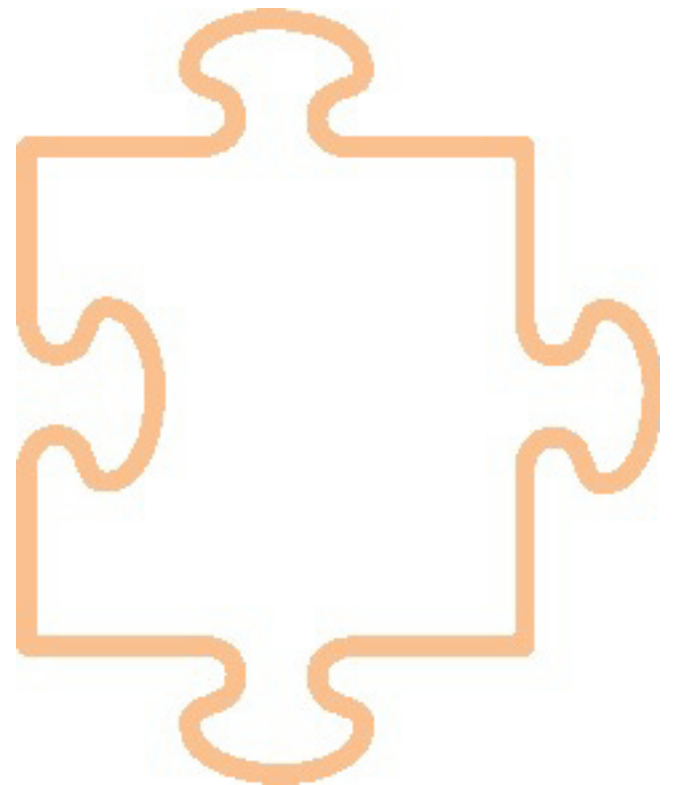
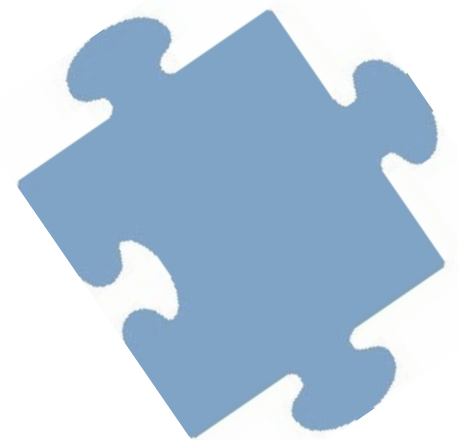
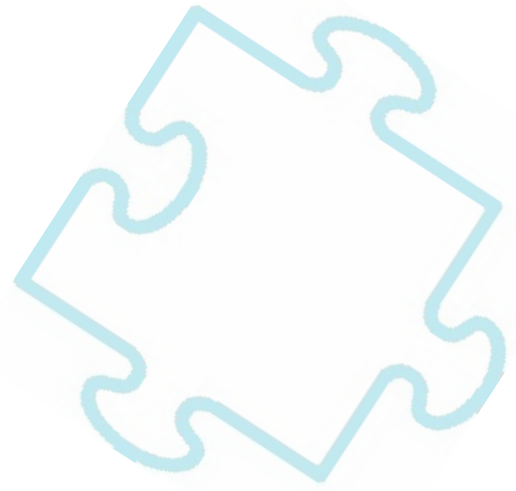
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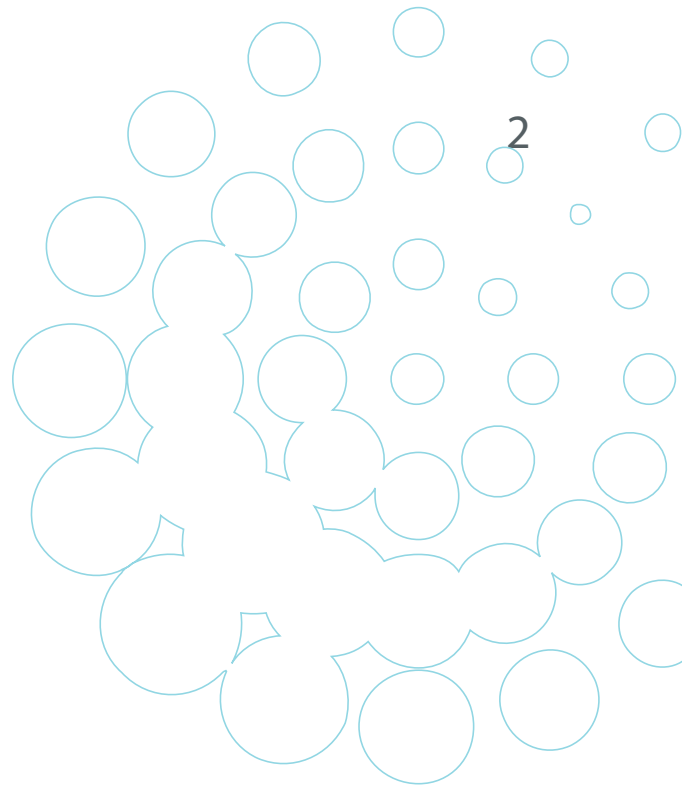
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- Basic information about ERA-NET TRANSPORT
- Action Groups
- Research calls
- Dates and events
- Latest news and links
- Links to other transport research related sites

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ERA-NET TRANSPORT in short



ERA-NET TRANSPORT brings together programme owners and managers of national transport research programmes from twelve countries, representing an annual public funding volume of around 300 million Euros.

The vision behind ENT is to supplement and enrich national transport research programmes through transnational cooperation.

ENT is based on the principles of:

- Voluntary participation
- Variable geometry of cooperation actions
- Acceptance of national and regional sovereignty
- Openness to new partners

Since 2004, ERA-NET TRANSPORT has facilitated several successful and valuable cooperation actions among national transport research programmes. The existing framework for trans-national transport research programming is presently being developed by:

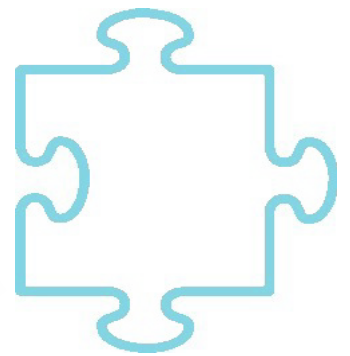
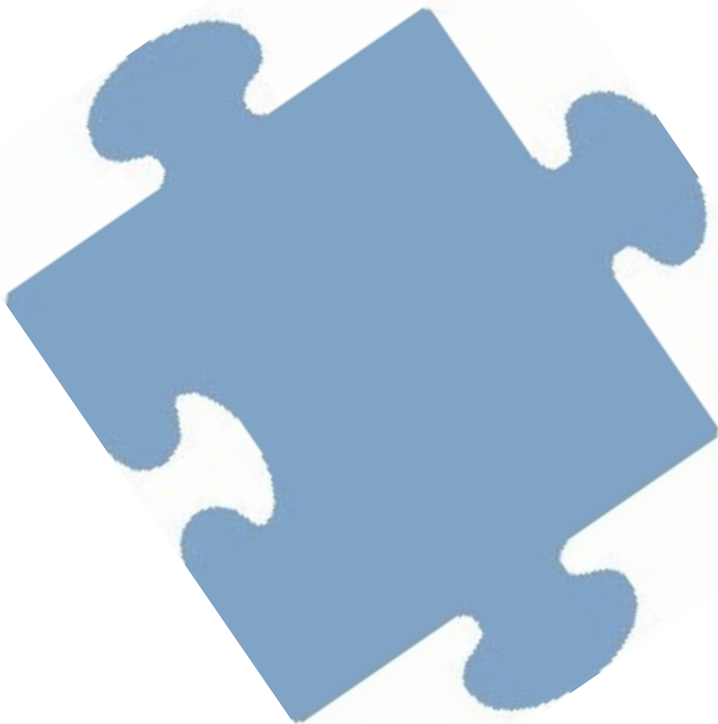
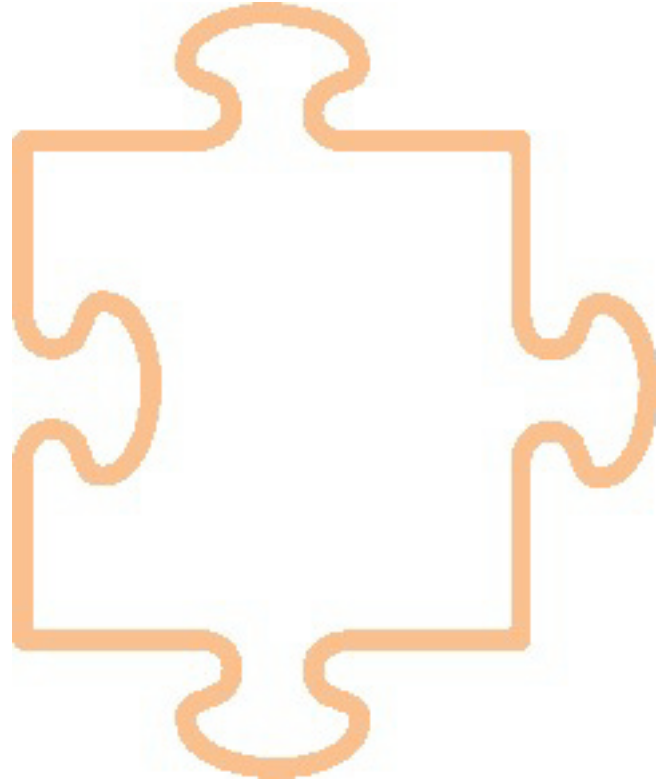
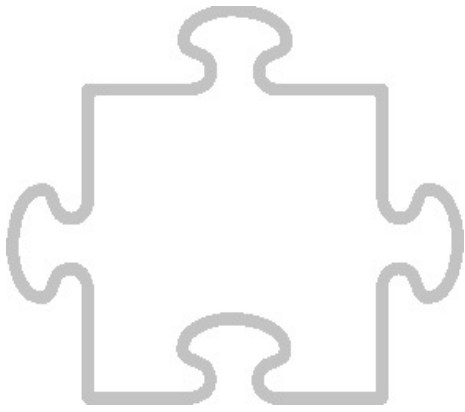
- Having more intensive and comprehensive cooperation actions between national research programmes with focus on joint calls and joint programmes
- Increasing the information and knowledge base of the network and enhancing cohesion among the network partners

- Streamlining support measures to ensure smoother processes both nationally and transnationally
- Developing the cooperation between national research programmes and EC research support schemes
- Actively contributing to the development of the European Transport Research Area
- Broadening the geographical scope by including more European countries in ERA-NET TRANSPORT

Summary

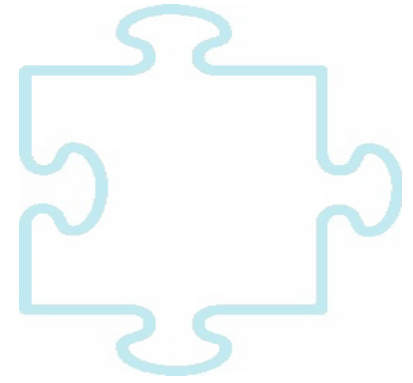
Short list of elements and practices to shape national programme frameworks for transnational funding cooperation

-  Anchor objectives on transnational cooperation in national policy frameworks:
 -  Use bottom-up dynamics of e.g. ENT cooperation actions to identify gaps in the national system related to transnational elements
-  Breakdown of objectives and policy aims to operative measures in programme funding frameworks and responsible institutions:
 -  Utilise examples of other countries
-  Create an atmosphere in which transnational cooperation is taken seriously and for granted:
 -  Find a person/team who promotes and “cares” for that but consider strategies to implement transnational elements on all existing structures on a self-enduring principal on the long term
-  Utilise existing flexibility in national rules / practices
 -  Try out new approaches on the transnational level. Reduce uncertainty by creating examples
-  Neutralise / overcome barriers for transnational cooperation
 -  Examine critical elements in the respective administrative rules and practices and engage updates according to practices in other countries (flexibility of the timelines for calls or continuous proposal submission options, budgetary spending practices, eligibility and peer-review criteria in calls, etc.)
-  Highlight added value of transnational funding cooperation
 -  Introduce promoting factors for transnational cooperation to motivate and assist the national research community in transnational activities
 -  Implement a comprehensive funding practice with integrated transnational components.
-  Restrict access to funds for purely nationally projects, if a clear added value can be expected under a transnational project setting.



Shaping national funding frameworks and governance systems

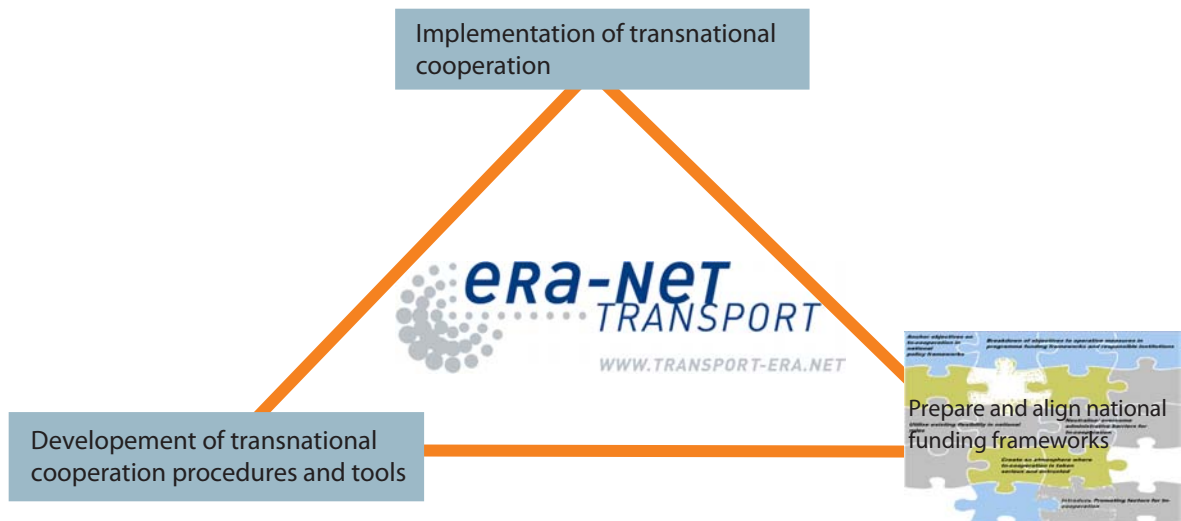
– a major pillar for transnational cooperation



Since 2004 ERA-NET TRANSPORT (ENT) has successfully established a platform to facilitate cooperative transnational research and innovation funding initiatives (transnational co-operation actions or activities). Creating suitable cooperation procedures, tools and operative support for implementing transnational cooperation actions can be considered two major cornerstones in the ENT concept. Since transnational cooperation

actions operate on the foundation of unique national funding architectures, the design of the national architecture holds the key to the success of this endeavour. Therefore, ENT is promoting a holistic approach towards transnational cooperation by encouraging and facilitating the preparation and alignment of national funding frameworks.

The ENT triangle: Components of the holistic approach to drive transnational cooperation through ENT



Various hindering factors for transnational cooperation in national funding architectures have been discovered over the runtime of ENT. But also a number of practical and structural changes can already be observed in ENT partner countries. New elements have been added or

traditional procedures have been modified to overcome cooperation barriers and promote transnational cooperation activities in transport relevant research funding. Practises we can learn from.

Pooling knowledge for mutual learning in national funding practices for transnational cooperation

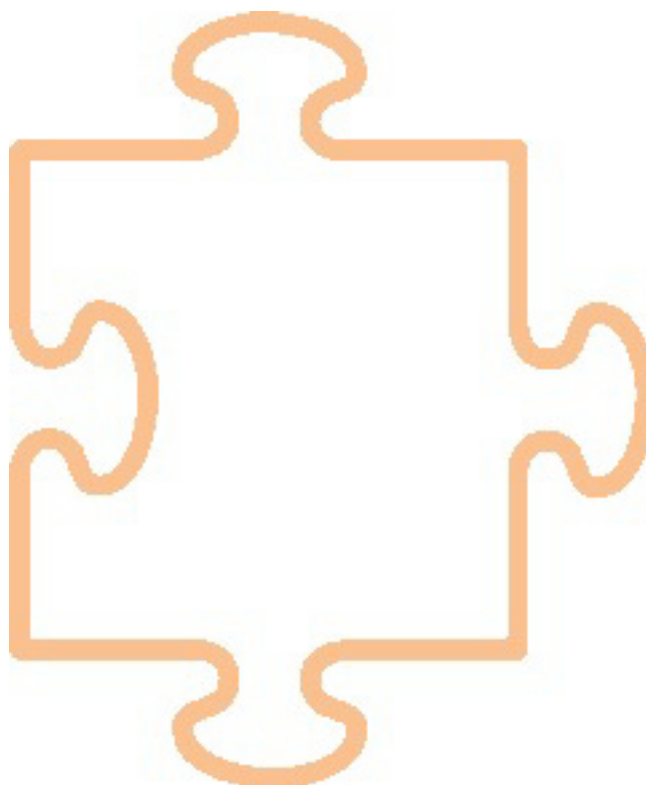
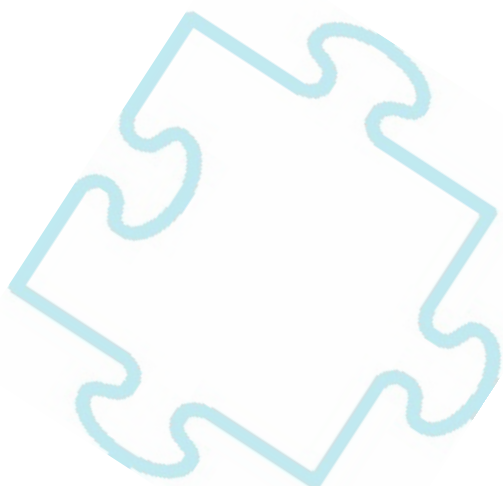
– the way forward

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 not only the progress in ENT countries in creating openness for transnational funding cooperation, but also represent practices and mechanisms, which 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.

The survey has been conducted in the context of ENT Work Package 2 task 2.3 (Best practice examples of programming open for transnational cooperation and targeted support to countries setting up new programmes) and has been supplemented by case studies of national programme frameworks based on a series of stakeholder workshops and interviews with Programme Owners and Managers (PO/PM) in Germany, France, Norway, Netherlands, Poland and Austria. These screening activities were focusing both on strategic components (transport research policy related subjects) as well as operative elements and procedures of national funding architectures by taking institutional settings into consideration.

Major findings will now be presented in an overview comprising some general conclusions and recommendations to deliver new ideas for shaping national funding frameworks. These findings can also be considered as pieces of a puzzle to highlight options for national stakeholders on (re)designing national frameworks. A reference to specific examples from the case study findings will be given. The intention of this brochure is not only to point out “what can be done”, but also sketching ways on “how transnational elements can be operationally designed”, as shown in the highlighted example boxes. Statements from Programme Owners and Managers will be presented to reflect progress in gearing national funding architectures and lessons learned out of the ENT process. Deeper insights in the mentioned national practices and additional first-hand information can be levied from the respective persons in the ENT network.

As a general conclusion the related discussion and self-reflection process with Programme Owners and Managers for preparing this report has raised their awareness for optimisation potentials and has already given a fresh impetus to better shape national architectures open for transnational cooperation.



Main elements to shape transnational cooperation in national frameworks



Anchoring transnational cooperation elements in national policy frameworks

There is a growing political awareness of the need for more transnational funding cooperation in general – and more specifically in transport related research and innovation funding – in many countries. Specific objectives have been introduced into policy documents to promote European and transnational research and innovation.

This trend is, however, triggered by different rationales of national strategies. Some countries more generally aim for improving the outcome of research by complement-

ing competencies and capacities of different countries. In other countries innovation and technology policies aim to pose as the major drivers to strengthen national competitiveness by pooling funding budgets as well as opening new cooperation networks and markets for the national research community. In many cases transnational issues have a strong thematic and/or geographical focus by addressing societal challenges and the border-crossing aspects of transport.

EXAMPLE

Transnational elements in national policy frameworks in ENT partner countries

- The proliferous integration of R&D&I activities in transnational cooperation activities in France
- The promotion of “extensive international cooperation” accompanied by annual guidelines from the ministries stressing international cooperation in Norway and the related “International Strategy” by the Norwegian Research Council
- National positioning in and active participation to shape the “European Knowledge Area” and the creation and integration of transnational innovation networks in transport technologies in Austria

Enrich and open national research policy through transnational cooperation

Anchoring transnational elements in national research funding policies and strategies lays the cornerstone for diffusing operational funding instruments with cross border components on an operative level. While strategic anchors of transnational cooperation in funding policies can be considered a catalyst for transnational activities from a top-down perspective, there is indeed evidence that transnational elements in national policies have also been influenced by bottom-up requirements out of experiences made in operative cooperation activities on a trial and experimental base. Pilot activities play a major role in detecting structural barriers for transnational cooperation in existing national governance systems and create the awareness for necessary changes.

Moreover, the dynamics of transnational pilot activities can have a bottom-up impact on national policy frameworks and practical needs derived out of the learning from pilot activities often provide convincing arguments for the responsible national policy makers to take transnational strategies into stronger considerations and to amend or up-date national policy frameworks. A solid cooperation umbrella like ERA-NET Transport has proven to support these initiatives by providing a visible, reliable and trustful foundation to eliminate doubts regarding the feasibility of transnational funding cooperation and motivates a critical mass of partners necessary to gain acceptance on the national level.

EXAMPLE**Pilot actions as initial element for enhanced national funding frameworks, ENT as a “quality label” to make cooperation more reliable**

To ensure a suitable German participation in the transnational Electromobility+ call a specific funding guideline was introduced in cooperation of two German federal ministries. The related process resulted in new forms of cooperation on the national level with a joint perspective on the transnational sphere, eliminated double work and established a pragmatic way of cooperation. The cooperation formerly initiated and tested by ENT has been considered therein as a trustful background structure and precondition for taking further steps.

Break-down of transnational elements to national funding instruments

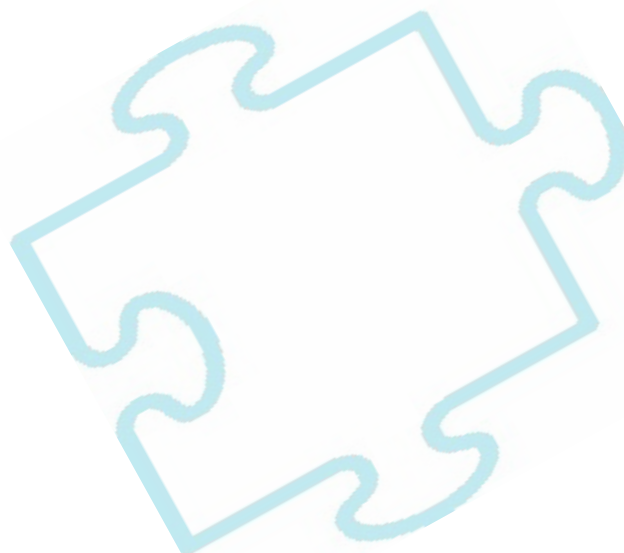
A consistent design of transnational elements implemented and embedded over all policy levels, related institutions and their respective funding instruments represents the core of an implementation strategy and poses as a precondition to earmark budgets for transnational funding cooperation. The composition of funding instruments should foresee at least a selective openness for transnational components like options to address specific issues on the transnational level or comprise stronger commitments for transnational activities with specific qualitative and measurable transnational goals.

These goals should – at a later stage – also be subject of monitoring and evaluation procedures to measure success rates.

The nature and extend of goals in national funding instruments broadly differs from country to country and from Programme to Programme. Most instruments address cross-border aspects at least on the thematic level. In some cases a specific percentage of transnational projects or a consideration in the composition of project consortia is foreseen.

EXAMPLE**Transnational goals in national funding instruments of ENT countries**

- Selective openness in the national funding programme to call for transnational projects in German innovation funding programmes
- More than 50% of the R&D projects should have an “international dimension” – criteria incorporated in Norwegian programmes
- Minimum of 5% of funded projects are expected to be transnational projects; minimum of 10% of the funded organisations are expected to be integrated in transnational cooperation networks at Austrian programmes
- Opportunity to integrate partners from other countries in nationally funded R&D projects if suitable and outlined in specific calls in France



Installing advocates to facilitate and promote transnational cooperation at the national level

Installing a comprehensive and consistent set of transnational elements and mechanisms cannot be done overnight. It is rather a continuous improvement process, which takes manpower and expertise. As the aspect of personnel engagement and motivation must not be underestimated a specific strategy has to be developed to convince and support the relevant stakeholders in transnational cooperation actions. Additional expertise

and manpower is especially important in an early phase of transforming a purely national oriented research programme to a programme open for transnational cooperation. In the long run, however, the strategy should foresee a diffusion of the whole system by empowering national Programme Owners and Programme Managers both as national and transnational advocates, possibly without the necessity of additional structures.

EXAMPLE

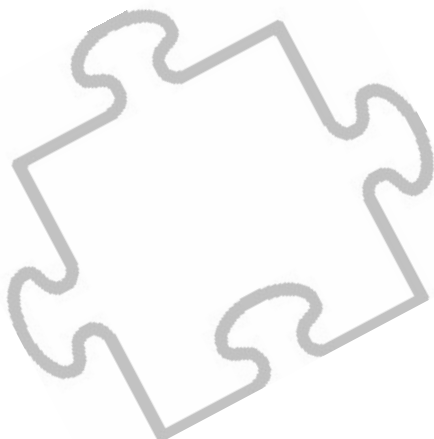
A dedicated job profile to promote transnational cooperation

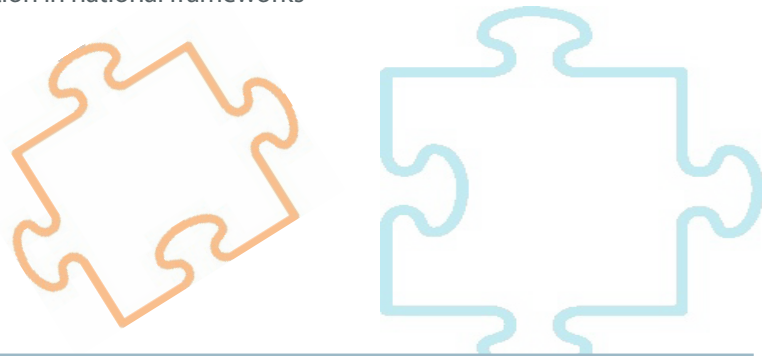
France has established a dedicated job profile of the “Scientific advisor Europe and partnerships” to promote international activities and to integrate transnational components into the national system. The advisor acts in an interface function between other countries, the national PO/PM and the national research community to support and advise in transnational affairs, ensure durability, as well as monitor the process and pool the generated knowledge.

Overcoming cooperation barriers by shaping national funding practices and procedures

A number of barriers can be imbedded in operative and administrative procedures. Some represent formal specifications incorporated in funding instruments or superior funding guidelines. Others are simply subject to non-formalised long-time practices and could be changed without significant administrative efforts. Experiences show, that transnational activities are often very suitable opportunities to test the flexibility of national frameworks. The findings can be used to highlight the need for an extended flexibility of PO/PM to be able to act in a transnational sphere, where also needs and requirements of other countries have to be taken into consideration.

Numerous changes have been observed in ERA-NET TRANSPORT partner countries. Changes that significantly have contributed to the elimination of cooperation barriers, open windows of opportunities and increase the efficiency of R&D projects with transnational components. Such as basic preconditions like call opening periods for proposal submission procedures in connection with the thematic framework or the budgetary spending periods, which tend to be stressed if cooperation with foreign funding bodies is concerned. Further call related barriers can be found over the whole process chain from eligibility and peer-review procedures as well as contract building. Required changes also need to be examined to benefit the research community by reducing the administrative burdens or the additional efforts needed for transnational project building.





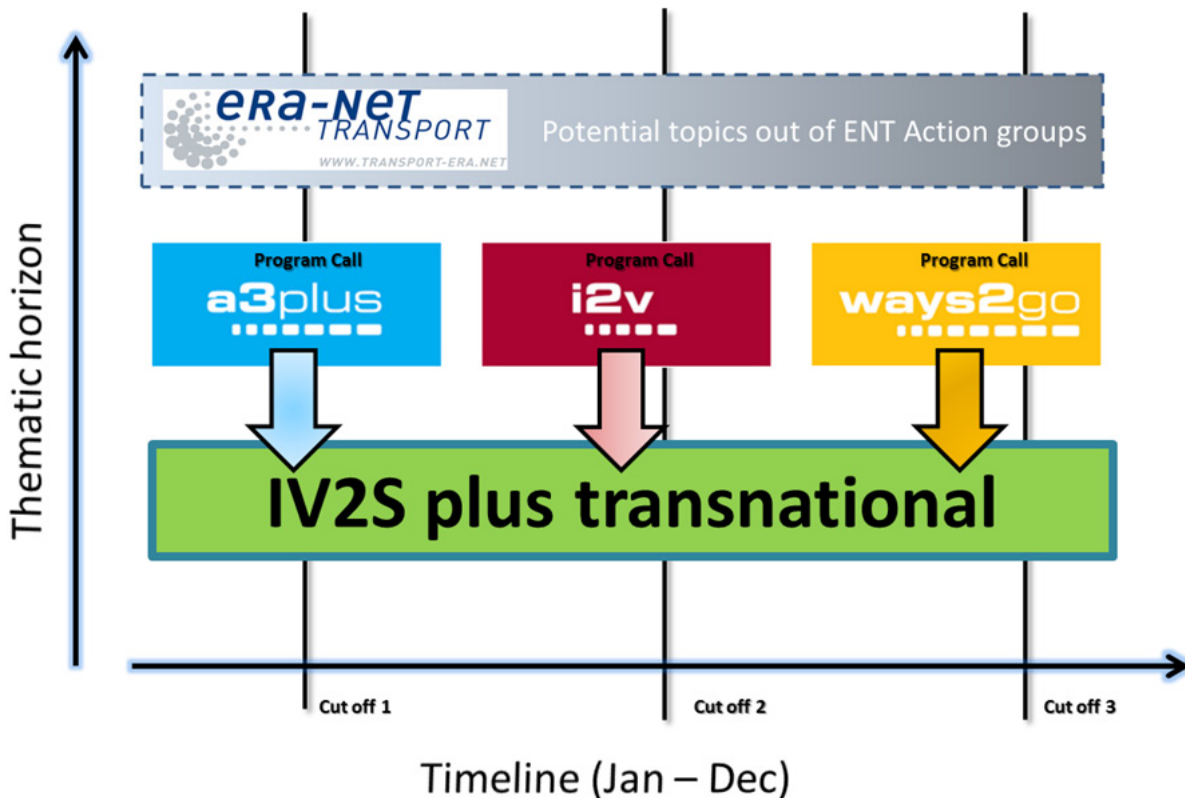
EXAMPLE

Flexible call timelines and proposal submission periods for transnational projects

Finding common timeframes for coordinated transnational calls require the flexibility to deviate from purely national call schedules or the introduction of instruments with continuous proposal submission periods. Germany provides, besides traditional calls, also an open framework for handing in transport related project proposals during the year both for national and transnational proposals.

Austria has installed an exclusive call for transnational research and innovation projects based on a continuous proposal submission period (IV2Splus-TN). Project proposals can be handed in year-round according to call topics addressed in the previous national calls of all transport related programmes (A3plus, I2V, ways2go) or according to additional topics addressed in related transnational activities out of ERA-NET TRANSPORT (ENT Action Groups). Three cut-off periods have been defined over the year with peer-reviews of the submitted proposals (see diagram below). These cut-off dates are expected to provide sufficient “fitting points” with peer-reviews processes in other countries, to enable researchers to design research projects accordingly. This design offers utmost flexibility in a trade off with the administrative burden to carry out the call for the funding organisation. It furthermore poses as a flexible instrument in terms of providing funds for participation in ENT cooperation actions.

Mode of operation of the continuous transnational call IV2Splus transnational scheme (IV2Splus-TN) in Austria



EXAMPLE

Promotion of transnational funding cooperation on the operative level of research funding

- Accept project proposals in national and English language to ease up the project preparation and proposal hand-in phase for the applicants and to avoid double work (Austria, Germany, Netherlands)
- Obligatory English language for scientific research projects to enlarge the access to knowledge on a transnational level (Norway)
- Accept submission of proposals via ENT's Electronic Proposal Submission System EPSS (practice executed in Electromobility+ from Austria, Germany, France, Norway, etc.)
- Peer-review and selection criteria "international cooperation" are used (weights depending on the relevance of the specific programme) to strengthen the position of transnational projects in Norway
- Financial backing for transnational networking activities like reimbursing of travel costs or financing pre-proposals for researchers to promote transnational funding in Norway
- Possible additional efforts of management and coordination can be considered in the funding for transnational projects in ENT and for the bilateral Franco-German scientific and technical research programme

EXAMPLE

Succeeding to overcome national budgetary spending restrictions

Earmarking national budgets is usually linked to restrictive periodic budgetary spending obligations which tend to be a problem if longstanding procedures in transnational cooperation activities need to be served. Due to the complexity of the process and the number of partners involved a fixed timeline cannot always be met and the related preparation and negotiation processes might conflict with the national budgetary spending periods. This can – in worst case – lead to the loss of national funding options, if the budget cannot be spent in the foreseen period. However, these problems can be overcome with a certain portion of creativity.

The ministry of IenM in the Netherlands found a practical way of transferring earmarked budget for the transnational call of "Electromobility+" from 2011 to 2012 by shifting the money to another department in 2011 with a kind of voucher system and shifting it back in 2012. This procedure ensures the availability of national budgets for transnational actions independent from the common budget periods and a significant gain of flexibility. Such kind of flexibility is more or less a precondition for transnational collaborations and participation in a framework like ERA-NET TRANSPORT.

Cross-border funding mechanisms for national programme architectures to allow spending national funding abroad

Most transnational cooperation actions in ERA-NET TRANSPORT have been based on virtual common pot funding models where cross-border funding of non-resident research organisations has not yet been an option or there was no need for cross-border funding procedures. In many cases national funding frameworks have a restrictive policy for cross-border funding, explicitly excluding related options. Especially programme frameworks dealing with innovation funding issues are very focused on resident organisations for competitiveness reasons of the national research arena. Even more often, however, national rules do not clearly describe related conditions, leave the responsible persons in a field of uncertainty and therefore prevent steps into this direction.

Nevertheless, cross-border funding options can be used to stimulate the competition among researchers or to bring in additional (foreign) expertise to the projects. They can furthermore open up new cooperation options for researchers with foreign partners, if adequate funding options are not available in the partner country. Some ERA-NET TRANSPORT countries have installed cross-border funding options or have more explicitly described and highlighted related options by outlining a certain set of conditions.

EXAMPLE**Outlining conditions and rules for cross-border funding**

Recently released funding rules of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) outline a portfolio of options to cross-border fund or finance non-resident organisations. These rules are applicable to all FFG managed funding programmes (including the relevant programmes for transport owned by bmvit) and provide a clear and reliable framework. This example also points out that even innovation triggered funding schemes can implement a useful framework for cross-border funding actions.

While subcontracts of foreign organisations up to 20% of the total project costs have always been possible, the updated regulations now allow a full partner integration of non-residents with a share of up to 20% of the total project costs. This option extends the possible involvement of non-residents also for applied research projects. A 100% financing of non-resident organisations is possible in contracted studies. The cross-border funding options are linked to the following conditions:

- The added value of the foreign partner(s) has to be explicitly explained in the proposal and acknowledged by the peer-reviewers
- An added value for the Austrian economy has to be viable
- Administrative rules and obligations of the FFG have to be accepted by the foreign partner country

National instruments open for cooperative transnational research without explicit cooperation actions – a long term perspective?

ENT Action groups have kicked off joint transnational cooperation actions in various ways by aligning national framework conditions according to the specific actual needs. In some cases this had led to durable changes of national frameworks capable for transnational cooperation. In a long term perspective the question can be raised, how national funding frameworks can be shaped to promote transnational cooperation projects without explicit coordination actions only with minor additional accompanying coordination activities and without har-

monised procedures between the respective Programme Owners and Managers. First trials carried out in ERA-NET TRANSPORT show, that significant barriers persist which cannot be resolved in a short term perspective. The experiences also show, that these barriers can hardly be overcome with advanced singular national instruments, but require joint efforts to open cooperation windows for the European research community on a lean and reliable base.

EXAMPLE**Interim experiences with Austria's IV2Splus-TN call as a pilot procedure to provide stand-alone funding options for transnational projects**

A two year pilot call with an exclusive budget of about 1,5 Mio. € per year for transnational projects has been launched in Austria (IV2Splus-TN). Besides having a flexible instrument for participation in joint actions out of ENT in place the objective was here to evaluate a suitable mechanism to fund transnational research and innovation projects without further coordination measures with other funding organisations and corresponding programmes and calls in other countries. The budget of this call is dedicated to resident organisations in Austria only which are asked to come forward with project proposals with strong transnational components. The foreign partners of the consortia are requested to bring their own funding/financing from the respective public funding bodies in their country. Projects require a positive evaluation in Austria and a funding commitment of the responsible funding organisation(s) in the partner countries. The relevant national funding procedures are not subject to a harmonisation process for a specific cooperation action.

Experiences of the two-year trial give evidence of problems for the researchers, to identify counterparts with access to corresponding funding mechanisms and instruments in their countries (and the required flexibility for such a project design) or point out significant administrative barriers in regards to the differences of national procedures. Positively evaluated project parts in Austria were frequently facing rejections of related project contributions in other countries or longstanding delays due to the respective national procedures.

Reflections and outlook of national Programme Owners and Managers

Five national Programme Owners and Managers share their insights on transnational funding activities.

STATEMENT



Evelinde Grassegger
Head of Unit for Mobility and Transport Technologies, Austrian Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology (bmvit)

Impacts of ENT activities on national funding architectures

Acknowledging the national sovereignty and respecting different national approaches is a guiding principal of ENT cooperation. A basic openness of national programmes and a certain degree of coherence between national funding systems, however, is a necessary prerequisite to promote transnational funding activities in a more efficient way in the future.

ENT has provided fruitful impetus for enriching Austria's national transport funding umbrella in various ways by enriching the scope both on thematic and on procedural level. The positive effect on the quality of national funding activities is evident. Beyond building the foundation for better transnational cooperation actions ENT also leverages the value of the funding programmes in national debates and enables us to gain valuable experiences with new procedural settings. On European level the introduced learning process kicked off by the best practice exchange carried out by ENT will – on a long term – automatically result into more coherence of national funding systems and has therefore to be continued and intensified in further ENT activities.

STATEMENT



Piotr Prycinski
Department for applied research programmes
Head of INFOTECH Section, National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR)

Transnational cooperation in CEE countries. Learning's from the Polish viewpoint

Transnational cooperation enables the National Centre to identify domains with significant potential for joint research actions and to access a pool of knowledge for enriching programmes on a national and international level. The Polish participation in ENT II benefits from theoretical and practical knowledge to shape new national programme instruments.

The mutual learning process points out obstacles for transnational cooperation and ways to overcome cooperation barriers in national funding mechanisms. A procedural problem with the Polish applicant e.g. appeared in ENT Action Group 19 (ENT 19), related to the interpretation of national eligibility criteria. Thanks to the learnings from ENT 19 we can improve the process of application and eligible check in new calls.

Experiences like this and best practice examples have already been applied in designing new programmes directed by the National Centre for supporting applied research in Poland.

STATEMENT



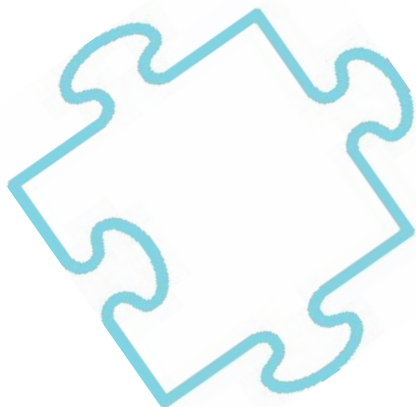
Ralf Engel,
Scientific advisor Europe and partnerships,
Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development,
Transport and Housing (MEDDTL)

Institutional support for transnational cooperation by the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development Development, Transport and Housing

The function of the “Scientific adviser Europe and partnerships” inside the Permanent Secretary of French Predit (Program on research and innovation in terrestrial transport) was created for the 4th edition of Predit in 2008, following a clear vision. The programme has to be more oriented towards European cooperation. Since then, a major focus was made on trans-national cooperation, via a strong engagement and implication in ENT and specifically by taking the leadership in the creation-process of the transnational ERA-NET plus project, Electromobility+.

The adviser function is directly associated to the Permanent Secretary of PREDIT. The objective of improving transnational cooperation was very dynamically integrated in the daily business and is now well acknowledged by the whole scientific network of Predit’s operational groups and beyond.

As a continuous challenge, the funding opportunities have to be further coordinated with the potential partner programmes in ENT – here the key issues are “pragmatism” and intercultural competency, for which ENT will stay a formidable platform.



STATEMENT



Peter Wilbers
Netherlands Agency

From transnational cooperation towards better national cooperation – Observations of an ENT Newcomer

Well founded intra-ministerial (trans-departmental) and inter-ministerial (between ministries) collaboration structures are crucial for successful transnational collaboration. Specific topics or the diversity of the related transport themes in ENT often affect responsibilities linked to policy fields of different departments or ministries and can come along with obstacles of a political competence, personal or budgetary nature. Tight collaboration on the national level is therefore a precondition for improved transnational interaction with other countries. On the other hand transnational cooperation actions can help to overcome national hindrances and lead to closer interaction between national stakeholders.

The scope for addressing transport relevant R&D&I topics might differ significantly in European countries. Diverse perspectives can inspire and encourage a broader understanding on national level. ENT as external impetus can be an important source for legitimization and acceptance by bringing themes into a transnational framework. Furthermore the national governance systems can benefit from good practices of other countries related to collaboration and interaction structures on the national level.

More than in the past national transport policies need to be based on a “transnational thinking and tuning” to better fit into a European context, for gaining national added value. The Netherlands are a passage country for which transnational collaborations regarding transport and mobility modes are a precondition for economic vitality. ENT offers a suitable and beneficial framework for that.

STATEMENT

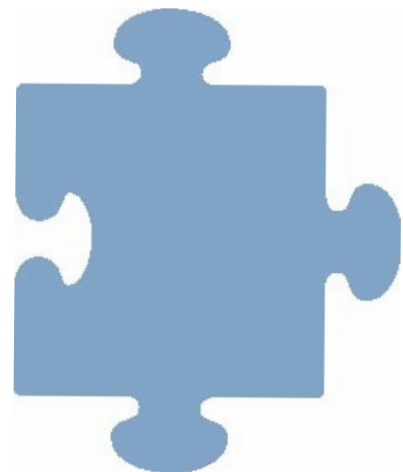
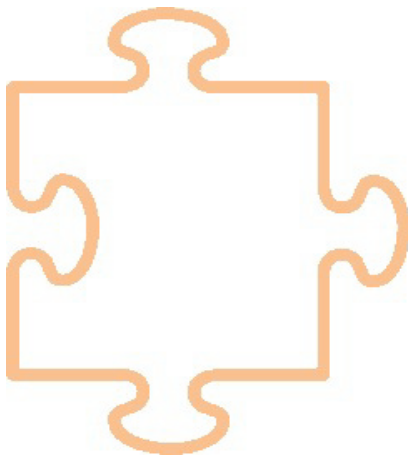


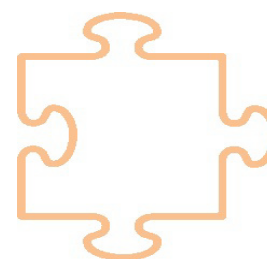
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National frameworks out of an operative angle from ENT cooperation

Transnational research funding cooperation can only be successful, if prevalent national funding frameworks can be fully exploited to utilise existing options to this end. But even rigid frameworks can often be amended quite easily by specific provisions allowing more flexible procedures to meet the needs of cooperative transnational approaches.

There is no point in playing a European game if everyone tries to impose its own national mind-set or rules. Previous experiences show that the openness for new approaches and short decision paths in the national system are major facilitators for smooth transnational cooperation activities. If there is a strong mandate and commitment for and a certain degree of trust at operative levels cooperation hindrances can often be overcome in a very pragmatic and elegant way to be continued and intensified in further ENT activities.




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