



THE NEW EUROPEAN TRANSPORT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

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Received 2004-02-29; accepted 2004-04-15

Abstract. In the beginning of 2004 two European organisations - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and European Committee of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), established the Joint OECD/ECMT Transport Research Centre. The mission, main areas of research activities and projects of new European research centre are described.

Keywords: transport, research centre.

1. The mission of the Joint OECD/ECMT Transport Research Centre

In the beginning of 2004 two European organisations - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and European Committee of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), established the Joint OECD/ECMT Transport Research Centre. On 10-11 February in Paris there was a first meeting of this new European transport research centre.

The Mandate of the Centre is as follows: the Centre shall promote economic development and contribute to structural improvements of OECD and ECMT economies, through co-operative transport research programmes addressing all modes of inland transport and their intermodal linkages in a wider economic, social, environmental and institutional context.

The purpose of this Centre will be to merge the ECMT's research activities and OECD's Road Transport Research Programme and provide a much wider international forum devoted to research and related discussions on surface transport with a new intermodal perspective. Ministers look for synergies and economies of scale, within the existing budgetary contributions of ECMT and OECD member countries. Reports and other products of the Research Centre's activities will be submitted to the Transport Ministers of ECMT and Associate Countries in an enlarged Council of ECMT. The work and operation of the Centre will be reviewed regularly to optimise its effectiveness.

2. Major areas of research activities

The proposed strategic directions for the Programme of Work of the Joint Transport Research Centre have been developed taking into account a range of relevant considerations, including: advice from Transport Ministers and ministries in member countries; the views expressed by ECMT's Economic Research Committee and the OECD's RTR Steering Committee; the transport policy objectives of member governments and their assessments of emerging issues; other work being undertaken by ECMT (including through its policy working groups) and OECD; and the transport-related work of other international bodies. The main research areas are set out below.

2.1. Infrastructure

The management and operation of infrastructure, the related regulatory frameworks across transport modes and the impacts of infrastructure construction on transport demand are permanent policy and research concerns.

The technical and economic characteristics of infrastructure as an essential input to transport activities can hinder competition between providers of infrastructure services. A strong transport policy role is required to develop and implement infrastructure technologies that improve the quality and reduce the cost of the services. Moreover, regulatory policies have to guide management and operations of providers to ensure that investment planning, financing and pric-

ing achieve the maximum benefit for the users of infrastructure facilities. This holds for public and private providers as well as for public-private partnerships. In the case of congestion, investment, pricing and regulatory measures have to balance the costs and benefits of reducing congestion. Furthermore research is required on approaches to infrastructure provision and technologies that improve the quality and reduce the costs of services. The Transport Research Centre will take a strong role in investigating these areas and contributing to developing policy designs to address these problems.

2.2. Operations of transport services

The need for efficient transport services, including international services that are not hampered by different standards are prerequisites of modern transport policies. In this regard, a constant emphasis will be placed on intermodal links and possibilities between inland transport modes and with international transport services.

Among the issues to be investigated are the following. Transport and logistics firms might gain competitive superiority from the size of their logistic networks. The resulting size advantage of individual firms tends to reduce the number of competitors, with negative effects on the intensity of competition and consumer benefits. Technical standards have to ensure the interoperability between different territorial transport systems and between different modes. In setting standards transport policy has to strike a balance between the benefits of interoperability and the costs of restricting technological change and responses to changing economic conditions over space and time. The Joint Transport Research Centre will identify and help to develop policies for all the modes to benefit from network advantages without curtailing competition. How new technology can help address these issues will be a feature of the work.

2.3. Transport safety and security

Transport safety and security are the next priority areas of transport policy and research:

a) Transport safety

The risks in transport systems and the imperfect ability of users and operators to control them lead to enormous health and monetary costs. Among the most important sub-areas of research are technical research to reduce accident risks and analysis of particularly high risk groups (e.g. young drivers).

Measures like the provision of information, education and the design and control of technical equipment and infrastructure have a major role in this area of research.

b) Transport security

The Centre will examine, in follow-up to work

underway in OECD, ECMT and elsewhere, how research can contribute in this important new area. Similarly important is the research into improving security measures for the transportation of goods and passengers in ways that do not unduly impact on the efficiency of the system.

2.4. Environmental costs and sustainability

Transport is a key to economic growth and social cohesion. At the same time, it has significant health and environmental impacts including problems of noise, pollution, global warming and depletion of resources. Transport policies have therefore an eminent role in achieving sustainable growth.

Policy measures have to reduce the overuse of non-renewable resources, avoid costs being transferred to future generations and minimise the environmental damage resulting from the construction and use of transport systems.

The activities of the Transport Research Centre should support transport policy in designing and implementing technologies that save resources and reduce environmental costs, in the form of health and property damage. It will investigate and propose fiscal and regulatory measures to ensure that the private transport costs of individual users reflect the environmental costs and the future scarcity of the inputs of transport services. It will examine how transport can contribute to achieving a sustainable society.

2.5. Globalisation, trade and spatial effects of transport

Transport systems are a major determinant of international and interregional flows of goods and services. The Centre will examine the interrelationships between growing trade and transport. Transport policies of national governments, regions and communities impact on the economies of other jurisdictions at all levels.

The activities of the Centre will have to support the co-ordination of local policies to achieve overall efficiency and sustainability of transport systems across different jurisdictions. This includes the co-ordination of transport policies that help to take account of the induced relocation of firms and households which in turn influences the pattern of urbanisation. Research should also study the interaction of transport with land use and housing based on the effects of agglomeration economies and proposes improvements in urban transport policies. The Transport Research Centre has to support the co-ordination of local policies to achieve overall efficiency and sustainability of the transport systems across different jurisdictions.

3. Programme of work and reporting

The strategic directions and programme of work for the Centre will be the responsibility of the Joint Transport Research Committee.

The Joint Transport Research Centre will pursue its work in co-operation with both ECMT and OECD member countries. The Joint Transport Research Centre will also aim to contribute to the roles of these organisations in shaping globalisation for the benefit of all and in co-ordination between national governments and international organisations.

Research projects will focus on transport policy issues in a global perspective. This includes special technical research and research in countries at greatly differing levels of economic prosperity.

The work of the Transport Research Centre will not concentrate narrowly on Inland Transport but, where it is helpful, include the interconnection of Inland Transport with Air and Sea Transport, while avoiding overlap with specialist organisations such as IMO or ICAO. Researchers involved in the Transport Research Centre's activities will produce papers and contribute to discussions as experts. The work should take a long-term view, should research and discuss transport policy in a broad perspective without being confined to disciplinary boundaries of government portfolios. Discussions of planning and evaluation topics will include the process of political decision making as an object of study. The research outcomes will be published in the established publication series to maintain their high respective reputations.

To ensure that work and outputs are of high quality, an evaluation mechanism will be set up, involving regular appraisal, by member countries and outside experts, of the work of the Centre.

A communications strategy will be introduced so that the outputs of the Centre find their way to the widest possible audience. A variety of working methods will be used, including ad hoc working groups with specific timelimited mandates, Round Tables of invited experts and other methods as deemed appropriate.

4. Major projects and activities

The major projects and activities to be undertaken depend on a number of considerations, including their priority, the availability of member country expertise and the limitations imposed by resources.

Overall, these activities concentrate on policy-oriented research, with a focus on possible improvements in:

- Transport infrastructure – including infrastruc-

ture investment, planning, development and regulation as well as impacts on economic development and productivity.

- Traffic congestion in larger metropolitan areas.
- Road safety – researching measures to protect vulnerable young drivers, manage speed and achieve road safety targets.
- Transport's contribution to sustainable mobility – and a sustainable society.
- Transport's interaction with international trade, regulation, the spatial effects of transport and the relationships between decentralisation and transport.

The activities now included respond to the greater diversity in policy, issues and regions of the larger number of member countries.

The listing of major projects and activities proposed for the Joint Transport Research Committee's Programme of Work (2004–2006) includes the next projects and activities:

A. Transport infrastructure

- Regulation and Fiscal Measures
 - The Limits of (De-) Regulation of Transport Infrastructure Services
 - Empirical Approaches to Cost Observation in Order to Regulate Firms
 - Transport Infrastructure Charges and Investment Capacity Expansion
 - Effectiveness of Regulatory Institutions: Appointments versus Elections
- Technology and Innovation
 - Economic Evaluation of Long Life Pavements: Phase II
 - Transport Infrastructure Investment: Private-Public Partnerships
- Planning and Evaluation
 - National Systems of Infrastructure Planning, Funding and Evaluation
 - Transport Infrastructure Investment and Productivity
 - The Role of Maintenance versus New Investment for Productivity Effects of Infrastructure
 - Cost-Benefit Analysis and Secondary Effects of Transport Policy

B. Transport operations

- Tackling Traffic Congestion in Larger Metropolitan Areas
- Privatisation of Urban Public Transport

C. Transport safety

- Achieving Ambitious Road Safety Targets: Economy-Wide Benefits, Strategies and Actions

- Speed Management
- Young Driver Risks and Effective Counter-Measures
- Insurance and Accident Risks

D. Environmental costs and sustainability

- Future Trends/Forecasts and Scenarios in Transport
- Sustainable Surface Transport Policies

E. Globalisation, trade and spatial effects of transport

- Transport Costs and Their Impact on International Trade
- Transport and Decentralisation
- Trade Liberalisation and Transport
- Transport Costs and Regional Concentration
- Transport, Urban Form and Economic Growth

D. Projects and activities in reserve

- Strategic Performance Indicators and Road Sector Performance
- Long Range Transport Plans: Early Evaluations of Transport Improvements
- Performance-Based Standards for the Road Sector

5. Outreach

ECMT and OECD recognise the importance of outreach activities and encourage outreach to non-member countries. The outreach activities undertaken by the Joint Centre will aim to transfer knowledge and experience to less developed and developing countries. As the Programme has limited resources, such outreach activities will be undertaken subject to member countries assuming a leadership role as well as financial and organisational responsibility for the activity or event. The Centre will work co-operatively with other organisations which are able to make a useful contribution to the diffusion of the Centre's work and publications on a world-wide basis.

References

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