PROJECT

SITPRO

Study of the Impacts of the Transport RTD Programme

Funding: European (4th RTD Framework Programme)
Duration: Dec 1998 - Aug 1999
Status: Complete with results

Background & policy context:

The European Union's Fourth Framework Programme of Transport Research and Technological Development (RTD) includes more than 280 projects. They span strategic research, integrated transport chains, rail, air, urban, waterborne and road transport. Their objectives are to support the achievement of Community policies, including the Common Transport Policy, and to enhance the quality and capacity of the research capability in Europe. At present, the impact achieved by these projects following their completion is not always clearly seen.

Objectives:

SITPRO aimed to develop and apply a method to assess the impacts of the Transport RTD Programme, and identify ways in which these impacts can be enhanced.

Related Projects:

- EXTRA - Exploitation of transport research.

Parent Programmes:

FP4-TRANSPORT - Specific research, technological development and demonstration programme in the field of transport, 1994-1998

Institute type: Public institution
Institute name: European Commission; Directorate-General for Energy and Transport (DG TREN; formerly DG VII)
Funding type: Public (EU)

Partners:

NA

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Key Results:

The 'research impact pathway' is the key concept developed in the project, and describes the mechanism by which the ultimate impacts of RTD are eventually reached. Since many impacts of research (including work within the Transport RTD Programme) do not necessarily materialise for several years, assessment of progress along the pathway has to substitute for an assessment of real-life impacts. The stages of the pathway are:
• production of research outputs;
• dissemination outside the immediate project environment;
• exploitation or use of the output;
• policy-relevant impacts on society in the longer term.

Evidence suggests that the strength of the relationship between the promoters and the users of the research is a key determinant of the rate of progress through these four stages. Thus, where the few target users are involved in the project, impacts can occur easily and quickly. This is typical of rail and air sector research. In contrast, where there are many potential stakeholders (the majority of whom do not know of the project’s existence), the barriers to exploitation are greater. This is the case for much of the strategic and urban research.

1300 institutions participated in the Transport RTD Programme. Evidence was found for widespread collaboration being promoted, with partners planning to work together, again both within and outside the Framework Programmes.

For most of the projects sampled, it was too early to tell the extent to which real-life impacts had occurred or would occur. Much dissemination had taken place. However, users and national representatives perceived poor availability of project results and interim outputs to be a major problem.

At the project level, the most credible and robust indicator of project performance is the exploitation to date (relative to expectations). Evidence of exploitation means that the outputs have a value, which can be verified.

Policy implications

The key recommendations of the SITPRO study for RTD management are:

• Require the research impact pathway to be set out at the project’s inception.
  ◦ Check the mapping between project objectives, Programme objectives and potential impacts.
  ◦ Check the feasibility of the impact pathway.
  ◦ Require the objectives, indicators and targets for project exploitation to be defined.
• Encourage links with target users for those projects that have a limited set of stakeholders.
  ◦ Include some target users in the consortium.
  ◦ Require formal liaison with target users that allows them to influence project output.
• Minimise barriers to dissemination and exploitation for those projects that have a wide range of stakeholders.
  ◦ Provide the infrastructure for web-based access to project deliverables at a Programme level, and provide a structured information system to help potential users determine what research may be useful to them.
  ◦ Make deliverables available during the course of each project.
  ◦ Encourage dissemination to the research community, as well as workshops and networking for more in-depth investigation by lead users.

Documents:

🔗 sitpro.pdf (Final report)
STRIA Roadmaps: Other specified
Transport policies: Decarbonisation, Societal/Economic issues