SSS-CA

Short Sea Shipping Concerted Action

**Funding:** European (4th RTD Framework Programme)

**Duration:** Apr 1996 - Mar 2000

**Status:** Complete with results

**Background & policy context:**

Short-sea shipping (SSS) is emerging as an important point of the transport policy of the EU. As intra-European borders are rapidly dismantled and Eastern Europe gradually becomes more open, SSS is earning a prominent role. It has good potential for enhancing the EU's competitiveness, economic and social cohesion, and making mobility more sustainable. Consequently, there has been an explosive growth in SSS-related research since the beginning of the 1990s. SSS-CA is part of a wider attempt to survey all this work in order to identify the critical conclusions and pave the way for further research in the SSS field.

**Objectives:**

The objectives of SSS-CA were:

- to assess the state of the art of SSS,
- to synthesise all relevant research and other related work,
- to monitor related projects,
- to define pilot projects and demonstrators,
- to define criteria for interoperability and SSS logistical efficiency,
- to identify the key focal points for future development in SSS,
- to perform a comprehensive analysis of SSS statistical data.

**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:**

SSS-CA has produced three main results: i) a comprehensive database about the state of the art on SSS, ii) the formulation of the terms of reference for pilot projects in the area of SSS, and iii) an extensive statistical analysis of SSS flows in Europe.
The state-of-the-art database catalogues more than 450 projects, studies, papers, reports, and articles in the area of SSS, an unprecedented compilation of material in this area. An integrated dBase program has been created to easily enter, update, and retrieve the collected data and extract statistics and reports rapidly and securely.

Issues of project size, scope and validation criteria for possible SSS pilot projects have been discussed extensively. The analysis led to a comprehensive taxonomy of pilot projects, differentiated according to context, time horizon, commodity, discipline, and geographical area. A non-exhaustive sample of project validation criteria has been provided.

With the aim of monitoring the developments and trends within the SSS market and its sub-markets, SSS-CA has analysed a wide variety of statistical data on European shipping flows. Data sources included national and international statistics, port statistics from individual ports and data from shipping lines. Country-to-country matrices have been established, as well as more detailed region-to-region matrices. A number of discrepancies have been balanced out by means of cross-checks and ad-hoc algorithms based upon functional relationships and matrix operations. Advanced technologies have been recommended to improve the collection of SSS data.

**Policy implications**

The state-of-the-art study revealed significant fragmentation of R&D effort in the SSS field. Problems that are methodologically similar in many contexts have typically been addressed in isolation. In this regard, the SSS-CA database can help identify what has been done, what gaps exist, and what possible overlaps can be avoided. Continuous updating of the database is required, so that it does not become obsolete in the future.

The terms of reference for pilot projects formulated by SSS-CA could be useful to potential proposers of pilot projects, evaluators of proposals, Commission bodies overseeing research in this area, retained projects (in their validation phase) and evaluators of these projects (after they are completed). They have already set the stage for some important SSS projects in the Fourth Framework programme, with significant industry participation.

A clear understanding of the flow situation is essential for any policy aimed at shifting cargo from land to sea. The work on SSS statistics provides a picture of European intermodal trade flows for the first time as well as of the various methodological issues associated with developing such a picture. SSS-CA identified possibilities, but also substantial gaps and deficiencies regarding data availability and reliability.

**Related Projects:**

- ASDSS: Analysis of supply and demand of shipping services.
- BOPCom: Baltic open port communication.
- E-EIS: European economic impact study for the European shipping sector.
- EMMA: European marine motorways: the potential for transferring freight from road to high speed sea transport systems.
- Euroborder: The port as a hub in the intermodal chain.
- IPSI: Improved port/ship interface.
- SPHERE: Small/medium sized ports with harmonised, effective re-engineered processes.

**Documents:**

- [ssscata.pdf](mailto:ssscata.pdf) (Final report)

**STRIA Roadmaps:** Other specified

**Transport mode:** Water transport (sea & inland)

**Transport policies:** Decarbonisation, Societal/Economic issues