

PRIME Meeting no 12
15 June 2018, Amersfoort, NL

Annex to item 5 – Strategic Discussion II: Research & Innovation

Innovation Programme 3: presentation on testing facilities
(extract from the minutes of the 23.03.2018 S2R Governing Board)

– For information –

"Following the observation by the Governing Board in 2017 that the increased Technology Readiness Level (TRL) in the IP3 topic required the use of infrastructure testing facilities, whilst availability of rail infrastructure testing facilities is limited in Europe and entails significant costs, a request was formulated by the Governing Board to IP3 to analyse available testing facilities in the EU. As a consequence, Innovation Programme 3 (IP3) undertook a high-level inventory of the following facilities: rail skills centre, track test centre, digital railway twin, wheel-rail test rig, test track and vehicle-track interaction test rig. IP3 actions for the next steps for a 'world class' test facility will involve confirming test facility requirements with key stakeholders, in-depth analysis of existing databases, a feasibility study including financial feasibility, a gap analysis against anticipated demand, reviewing opportunities to upgrade to a higher TRL, and finally refining capital costs and confirming the funding mechanism.

The Industrial Spokesperson emphasized that most test facilities in Europe are around TRL 3-4, with no equivalent to the Transportation Technology Centre (TTC) - owned by the U.S. Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in Pueblo, Colorado - which was designed specifically with a vision for enhanced capability. It was underlined that the need for these facilities will nevertheless increase, in light of the enhanced needs for digital modelling and numerical simulations. The Executive Director reacted by suggesting the inclusion in the Annual Work Program 2019 of a study on a business model for a EU testing facility, looking at the positive experience from the use of the U.S. Transportation Technology Centre (TTC), involving a combination of public and private funding in the post 2020 Multiannual Financial Framework.

Furthermore, it was suggested that the scope of a testing facility could extend beyond infrastructure components to cover vehicles, and that the geographic coverage of the current inventory should be expanded. The States' representatives group input was requested in this respect.

The Commission (DG RTD) informed the members of the progress on a current Staff Working Document on research facilities opportunities for EU in general – highlighting the issues for the upcoming Framework Programme 9, and the questionnaire to collect the needs for testing research facilities. Input was requested in this respect.

Next steps

The members of the Board agreed to request the States' Representatives Group to pursue further analysis of existing test facilities, to include vehicle testing facilities and to share the current findings with the Commission services, and to forward DG RTD's questionnaire. The Governing Board of June 2018 will analyse further progress on this issue.

- **PRIME members are asked to discuss the necessity and options for setting up an European test centre.**