Council of Ministers

JOINT TRANSPORT RESEARCH CENTRE

EVALUATION / REPORT ON PROGRESS WITH THE CENTRE

Summary

This document was examined under item 5 "Points for Formal Decision" of the Agenda for the Dublin Council of Ministers.

Ministers noted the Summary and agreed the Proposed Actions.
Proposed Action

Ministers were invited to take note that:

– this Evaluation / report on progress with the Centre was requested to allow its consideration at the same time as the Joint Transport Research Committee’s proposed Programme of Work (2007-2009)

– the Evaluation / report on progress with the Centre outlined in this Executive Summary is supported by a more comprehensive Evaluation / report on progress with the Centre provided in the Reference Document [CEMT/CM(2006)23]

– the Centre’s mandate needs to be extended for a further three years to enable the proposed Programme of Work (2007-2009) to be undertaken.

Ministers were invited to:

– request OECD Council’s agreement to extend the Centre’s mandate for the next three-year period (2007-2009)

– agree that this Evaluation / report on progress with the Centre be provided in conjunction with the Joint Transport Research Committee’s Programme of Work (2007-2009), as support of the proposed extension of the Centre’s mandate.
EVALUATION / REPORT ON PROGRESS WITH THE CENTRE 2006

Purpose

In Moscow, Ministers welcomed the progress being made with the Joint Transport Research Centre and asked for a further evaluation (as well as proposals for work for the period 2007-2009) to be provided at the Ministerial meeting in May 2006.

This note responds to that request and provides a further report on progress with the Centre, while recognising it is still too early to undertake a full scientific appraisal or evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of the current Programme of Work (2004-2006).

Background

The Joint OECD/ECMT Transport Research Centre was set up by decisions of the OECD Council and the ECMT Ministers of Transport and began operations on 1 January 2004. All 50 OECD and ECMT member countries are full members of the Centre.


Progress

Current Work Programme (2004-2006)

The Committee’s current Programme of Work (2004-2006) is well advanced with considerable contributions to all the main areas of research set out in the strategic directions. Many Round Tables have now been completed and, in some cases, reports have been published. Work is continuing on the research Working and Advisory Group projects. Most of the projects and activities currently underway are expected to be completed during 2006 or early 2007 and the reports will then be finalized for publication.

More detailed advice on the research undertaken on the individual projects and activities and, where appropriate, on the findings and conclusions reached is set out in the Reference Document [CEMT/CM(2006)23]; this is intended to facilitate a broader assessment of the nature, quality and relevance of the work undertaken. The current position on the projects and activities is outlined in the Annex.

The forthcoming OECD/ECMT Symposium, to be held in Berlin in October 2006, will deal with the topical theme of “Benefiting from Globalisation: Transport Sector Contribution and Policy Challenges” and provide a key link between the current and the next Programme of Work.
Assessment of Progress

Given that it is too early to undertake a full scientific appraisal of all of the Centre's activities, the assessment of the progress in this report focuses on two aspects likely to be important to Ministers: the benefits of the merger of the OECD’s and ECMT’s transport research activities; and the policy relevance of the work and outputs to date.

Benefits of the Merger

The first Report on Progress with the Centre highlighted the early benefits of the merger of the previously separate OECD and ECMT transport research activities. The Joint Transport Research Committee has met on four occasions, setting ambitious standards for the work of the Centre. Motivation and participation by members continues to be high. The decisions taken by the OECD Council and the ECMT have been fully implemented. The new structures and a full complement of staff are in place and the new arrangements have proven to be productive.

There has been increased interest and participation in the projects and activities of the Centre, which in many cases have attracted high level and experienced research contributors from an increasingly broad range of member countries and partner organisations. In many cases, value has also been added by the increased range of member country research experience. Research Working Group meetings, Round Tables and events hosted by member countries have helped generate local interest and participation. Regional Round Tables organised in Greece and the United States and a workshop in Japan have helped expand the expert network in these regions.

The new Centre and its strengthened projects and activities have gained increasing prominence in a number of fields - particularly transport and trade facilitation, infrastructure planning and investment, road safety, and transport and growth.

Policy Relevance and Outputs

The projects and activities being undertaken concentrate on policy-relevant transport research issues that are currently on international and national agendas. Work is also addressing longer-term and cutting edge transport issues considered likely to appear on policy agendas in the years ahead. The research aims to seek better understandings of the issues and propose possible improvements in current approaches and arrangements that can be expected to contribute to improved outcomes in future.

Many of the topics being researched have been or are part of the material for Ministerial meetings. Examples include the findings of the research work on:

- “National Systems of Infrastructure Planning” - Ljubljana Ministerial Meeting.
- “Young Drivers”, “Speed Management” and “Achieving Ambitious Road Safety Targets” projects – Dublin Ministerial meeting, where contributions to the road safety Ministerial document are supported by related Reference Documents.
• “Tackling Traffic Congestion” and “Taxi deregulation” – Dublin Ministerial meeting, with contributions supporting the Ministerial paper on Sustainable Transport Policies.

A range of current research work is expected to appear on policy agendas in future years. This includes, in particular, work on Infrastructure, where work is being undertaken on: measuring the productivity effects of infrastructure; infrastructure pricing; and transport infrastructure investment, funding future infrastructure needs. There is also important work on the link between transport and international trade as well as on traffic congestion and corporate mobility management. In addition to these activities, the Centre has improved international coordination on accident data by taking over the operation of the International Road Traffic and Accident Database (IRTAD) database and continues to support transport research documentation through the International Transport Research Documentation (ITRD) system.

Communication

The ECMT and the JTRC Committee have clearly identified the essential role played by external communications in ensuring the relevance of activities and outputs, and have taken steps to improve overall communications activities.

Each Working Group has a specific communications plan which identifies actions that could be taken by Working Group members, JTRC Committee members and the Secretariat. Rapporteurs and participants in Round Tables and Symposia also contribute to promoting these activities and the Centre. The work of ongoing and completed research projects and activities have been communicated to policy makers and researchers through many different fora. Internally, ECMT Policy Working Groups and the Committee of Deputies have been kept informed of progress.

Furthermore, the Secretariat actively works to ensure the wider impact of research by way of the presentation of outcomes at international conferences; the publication of the results in scientific, refereed journals and books; and by making information available through the newsletters and web sites of international and multilateral organisations and national governments.

Next Programme of Work (2007-2009)

The proposed Programme of Work (2007-2009), which was developed in consultation with member countries and finalised by the Committee in March 2006, is outlined in the Executive Summary [CEMT/CM(2006)8] with more details on the projects and activities set out in a Reference Document [CEMT/CM(2006)22].

The Committee supports the High Level Group’s view that the Centre should play an important role in contributing to the substantive work of the new Forum. The Centre is ready to meet this challenge and its proposed work programme for the next three years has sufficient flexibility to respond to the themes selected for the future Ministerial Forums.
Extension of the Centre’s Mandate

The Centre was set up by a joint decision of the ECMT Ministers and OECD Council. The new Programme of Work (2007-2009) will also need to be approved by the OECD Council, which will also have to formally approve an extension of the Centre’s mandate.

At the same time, the opportunity will be taken to discuss some particular issues in relation to the Centre. These include OECD support for the new Forum as well as some budgetary issues that have arisen, such as the publications target, which has proved to be unattainable, the very high overheads paid by the centre to OECD and the 50/50 split on funding of the Centre.

Conclusion

The Joint Transport Research Committee considers that the Centre and its current work are continuing to make good progress.

The Committee of Deputies was satisfied with the Evaluation / Report on Progress with the Centre as outlined in Reference Document [CEMT/CM(2006)23].

With the support of Ministers, OECD Council agreement will be sought to the proposed Programme of Work (2007-2009) and the required extension of the Centre’s mandate for the 2007-2009 period. This Evaluation/report on progress with the Centre will be provided in conjunction with this request.
Annex

PROGRESS WITH THE CURRENT PROGRAMME OF WORK (2004-2006)

I. COMPLETED WORK*

A.I. The Limits of (De-) Regulation of Transport Infrastructure Services
A.II. Estimation and Evaluation of Transport Costs
A.III. Transport Infrastructure Charges and Capacity Choice
A.VII. National Systems of Infrastructure Planning
A.VIII. Transport Infrastructure Investment and Productivity
B.II. Deregulation of the Taxi Industry
D.I. Future Trends/Forecasts and Scenarios in Transport
E.I. Transport and International Trade
E.II. Transport and Decentralisation
E.III. Market Access, Trade in Transport Services, and Trade Facilitation

II. WORK IN PROGRESS

A.V. Economic Evaluation of Long Life Pavements: Phase II
A.VI. Transport Infrastructure Investment: Meeting Future Needs
B.I. Tackling Traffic Congestion in Larger Metropolitan Areas
C.I. Achieving Ambitious Road Safety Targets
C.II. Speed Management
C.III. Young Driver Risks and Effective Counter Measures
D.II. Corporate Mobility Management

Other Activities of the Centre

IRTAD International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis (IRTAD) Group
ITRD International Transport Research Documentation