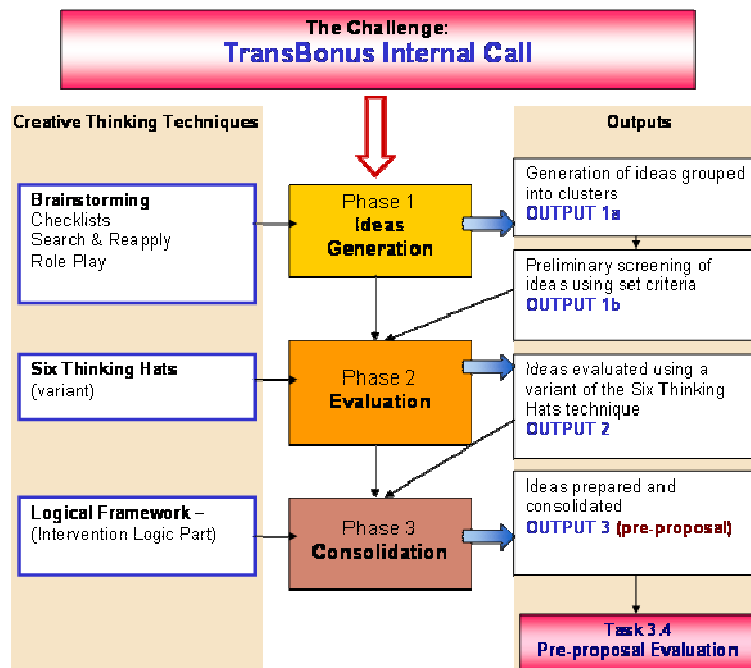


TransBonus

Transport EU-Western Balkan Network for Training, Support and Promotion of Cooperation in FP7 research activities



This is an extract from:

Ideas generation Events Methodological Guidelines

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I R M
INTEGRATED RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



Contents Table

- **Introduction**
- **Objectives of Ideas Generation Events**
- **Basic Principles of Creative Thinking**
- **Criteria used for the selection of Creative Thinking Techniques**
- **Methodology adopted in TransBonus**
 - **Step-by-Step Approach to generate FP7 Proposal Ideas**
 - **Recommendations on guiding Creative Thinking**
 - **Recommendations on Group Set-up**
 - **Identifying the Outputs of each Phase**
- **Recommendations on Logistics**
- **Proposed Schedule for Ideas Generation Events**
- **Recording the Outputs of each Phase**
- **Reporting on Ideas Generation Events**
- **References**

Appendices

- **A - Reporting Templates**
- **B - European Technology Platforms:
Priority Research Areas**
- **C - FP7 Research Priorities in Surface Transport**
- **D - Logical Framework Matrix**

Introduction

Efficient transport is a fundamental condition for sustainable wealth and prosperity in Europe. It provides European citizens, societies and economies with essential resources and means of mobility. The ability to move people and goods quickly and efficiently is central to the European goal of a strong and dynamic, knowledge-based economy.

The three surface transport modes – road, rail and water-borne generate 11% of the EU GDP employing some 16 million people. Efficient surface transport is a critical economic factor, supporting competitiveness, global export and employment.

However, the European transport sector is growing rapidly, with far-reaching implications. The growing demand in freight and passenger transport, resulting in increased pollution and congestion, is raising major challenges for both the environment and society. Transport activities are a major contributor to environmental pollution and have an important impact on climate change, accounting for more than 25% of all CO₂ emissions.

The European Commission is working towards a form of mobility that is sustainable, energy-efficient and respectful of the environment. EU transport policies aim at fostering clean, safe and efficient travel throughout Europe, underpinning the internal market of goods and the right of citizens to travel freely throughout the EU. Radical solutions are required, highlighting the essential role of research.

Transport research moves Europe forward in different ways. It leads to new products, processes and services, improving industrial efficiency and providing a competitive edge for Europe in the global transport marketplace. At the same time, it addresses infrastructure, mobility patterns and human factors that are specific to Europe itself, helping to improve the daily lives of ordinary citizens.

Achieving maximum European research power requires the development of common and coherent views among stakeholders. The setting up of ‘Technology Platforms’, including ERTRAC (road), ERRAC (rail) and WATERBORNE (water), represents a real innovation in EU research policy, bringing together all interested parties in a particular transport mode. These ‘Technology Platforms’ have been major contributors to defining the EU’s future transport research strategies. Under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), the European Commission is supporting research towards safer, ‘greener’ and ‘smarter’ pan-European transport systems that will benefit all citizens, respect the environment, and increase the competitiveness of European industries in the global market.

The establishment of the European Research Area (ERA) has resulted in better pooling of dispersed resources and expertise and has allowed the undertaking of more substantial and more rewarding research initiatives. Through co-operative action, efficient knowledge sharing and pooling of resources (both within and outside the Union), Europe is creating a critical mass of ideas and solutions, strengthening European excellence while helping to steer the world towards a safer, cleaner and more prosperous transport future.

The Balkan region forms an integral part of the European transport network. The opening of the European Research Area (ERA) to third countries is a strategic objective of the European Union. As the Western Balkan Countries (WBCs, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) have been offered the prospect of EU membership, their future integration into the ERA is seen as a key priority. Many initiatives are supporting the aim to stimulate the realization of the full research potential in the Balkans by

unlocking and developing the existing research potential and helping to successfully participate in research activities at EU level.

Within the above scenario TransBonus aims to increase the competitiveness of the Balkan transport sector by stimulating innovation, cooperation and integration of the WBCs in the ERA. Funded in part by the European Commission, TransBonus considers that one of the opportunities for research centres of competence in the WBCs to fully integrate within the ERA is to take advantage from an active participation in the RTD and innovation instruments offered by the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).

The overall objective of the TransBonus Coordinated Action is to improve and promote scientific and technological cooperation opportunities between Europe and the WBCs in the area of Surface Transport. The project seeks to establish an EU-Balkan Transport network of researchers and universities in order to enlarge research capacity, in terms of improving their research programmes, and scientific and technical human resources. The cooperation and knowledge transfer between the more experienced EU partners and the Western Balkan partners will strengthen the research capacity in the WBCs, thus making the whole innovation process smoother. Training and support in FP7 knowledge and practices, creative thinking and networking will enhance the readiness of the Balkan transport research community to prepare cooperative activities and joint RTD proposals.

To achieve the above goal, TransBonus includes the organization of 10 Ideas Generation Events (IGEs), which are scheduled to take place in the Western Balkan partner countries and Bulgaria from October 2009 until May 2010. The purpose of these IGEs is to stimulate and collect a critical mass of innovative transport RTD ideas, which could then be developed into potential FP7 research proposals. The present methodological guidelines foster the creation of new research ideas for the transport sector and have been developed in order to guide the organization of the IGEs. The methodology draws on the successful experience gained in a previous FP6 project, namely Fashion to Future (F2F), which focused on innovation in the textile sector and where IRMCo developed a similar methodology which supported the organization of 45 IGEs in 18 countries, resulting in the creation of over 400 new ideas. The present IGE methodology specifically addresses the scope and objectives of the TransBonus project while integrating the best practices and lessons learnt in the F2F project.

The present guidelines provide detailed information on the scope, design and expected outcome of the IGEs, which together with the TransBonus Internal Call for Proposals, constitute the TransBonus Project Lab. These guidelines have been published on the occasion of a training workshop for the WBC partners organized in Malta by IRMCo as task leaders for the Ideas Generation Events methodology. We hope these guidelines will facilitate the employment of a common approach and help in ensuring the success of these events.

Josianne Vella, IRMCo, May 2009