# Harnessing innovation for smart transport networks

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Challenging times are ahead for Europe's transport network, with traffic expected to double by 2030. This increase is expected to have a knock-on effect on safety and the environment.

EU funding is helping countries use the best research and innovations to create a safer, less polluting and smarter European transport network. For example, MARKET-UP ('Transport Research Market Uptake') focused on understanding how to boost market take-up of new research breakthroughs and technologies.

The project also looked at the best ways to help smaller businesses and organisations get access to funding for research. The aim is to encourage

the commercialisation of new [transport](#) products, processes, materials, and services - ultimately improving European competitiveness.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis of the current state of transport research funding, MARKET-UP brought together scientific, industrial and innovation organisations from Portugal, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Slovakia and Hungary.

MARKET-UP coordinator, Daniela Carvalho from TIS - Consultores em Transportes Inovação e Sistemas, in Portugal - says the partners' in-depth analysis provides an overall picture of how research funding drives innovation in transport.

The team identified stakeholders and funding sources in each EU country. They analysed Europe's main transport modes - including air, road, rail and waterborne transport. They found that Scandinavian countries, northern European Member States, France and Italy appear to be at the forefront of transport research and technological development.

They also looked at seven case studies to establish the ingredients that have led to the success or failure of policies to stimulate innovation in transport. The case studies provided insight into what drives or hampers the take up of innovative transport technologies.

The partners noted that private sector investment in European transport research, development and innovation amounts to a healthy 90% of total average investment. European companies also invest far more than their foreign competitors.

While EU funding plays an important role in building competences in transport research across Europe, national programmes are key to achieving high levels of research.

The partners also found evidence to support the existence of a funding gap at an intermediate stage of the innovation process, between basic research and the commercialisation of a new product. This is a weakness that must be addressed by policymakers.

Ms Carvalho says: 'We also found that in most countries there is a lack of structured information on how to finance transport research and this appears to be an area where improvements need to be made. However, this project has successfully raised awareness on the importance of research funding instruments for incentivising the market uptake of transport research.'

This awareness of the challenges to be addressed will have a crucial role in shaping future research investment and innovation. Informed policymaking should encourage the participation of smaller businesses and organisations, which often do not have enough capacity to engage fully in research and development compared to their larger competitors, she adds.

Tapping the R&D potential of small businesses and organisations in transport will help drive future innovation and improve competitiveness.

A greater effort also needs to be made to orient research and development investment to achieve the aim of a smart, green and integrated European transport network.

  **More information:** www.market-up.org/

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