



The EU-funded Smart-Rail project opens doors for cooperation and use of new business models by implementation of client-oriented rail solutions on European corridors

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Today the Smart-Rail project launches its website (www.smartrail-project.eu) and invites stakeholders in Rail Freight Services to participate in the continuous improvement tracks managed by the project. The three-year innovation project entitled: "Smart Supply Chain Oriented Rail Freight Services" – Smart-Rail - aims to make the European rail freight services more client-oriented and therewith improve their performance. The focus will be on improvements in wagon load services, reliability despite (un-)planned obstructions and a control tower for shippers. For this purpose it is important that railways get better integrated with other transport modes which would lead into one single and seamless transport solution.

The current European rail freight market is a complex system as it involves a great number of different public and private stakeholders that have to synchronise their activities. Smart-Rail takes the role of initiator and orchestrator for the improvements to be implemented. Infrastructure managers, rail operators, terminal operators and freight forwarders jointly manage the operations of running trains from A to B aiming for the lowest possible cost. The low costs are a strong point for the shippers that currently make use of rail transport. However, also other aspects play an important role in the decision process for new market segments that currently have a preference for road transportation. For example, reliability of the service, or in other words the predictability of the arrival time of the cargo, has for many shippers a high value. Also reduced lead times and flexibility of the service, in terms of possible departure time and availability of capacity, are service aspects for which the shippers, and implicitly final consumers, are willing to pay a higher price. This implies that services that have an improved performance on these aspects as well are provided in order to gain market share.

In summary the Smart-Rail activities involve:

- developing methods to increase flexibility and cooperation both within the rail sector itself and in relation to other stakeholders in the supply chain;
- empowering the rail sector in terms of connectivity, organisation, flexibility, and new service design, in order to be ready for current and future challenges, and;
- testing these methods in day-to-day operations in the continuous improvement tracks and aiming to extend them to the rail sector as a whole.

In this way, Smart-Rail delivers the required solutions to integrate rail transport better into unified transport solutions and it also delivers real, operationalised examples of these solutions.

The three continuous improvement tracks perform the following implementations:

- improved organisation of wagon-load trains on two European corridors (several options still open);
- improved reliability by real-time solutions for planned and unplanned obstructions on the corridor between Rotterdam and Genoa;

- improved visibility of a Control Tower for a group of shippers on two corridors (UK-Poland and UK-France-Spain/Italy).

A diversity of external stakeholders is already participating and using the opportunity to be part of this improvement process by bringing their own requirements and ideas. New stakeholders with an interest in one or more of the improvement tracks are cordially invited to join the activities of the project, for instance by participation in expert sessions or sharing of data. Registration as interested stakeholder can be done on the website, where also additional information on the improvement tracks can be found.

Smart-Rail receives a total of €6 Mio funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme and will run up to mid-2018. The project will be carried out by a group of 19 rail operators, supply chain partners, research organisations, and information technology companies. Smart-Rail is coordinated by TNO with support of management and communication partner Uniresearch.

Website: www.smartrail-project.eu