



Star-Net Transport

European Network to Support
the Sustainable Surface
Transport SMEs

Why Surface Transport?

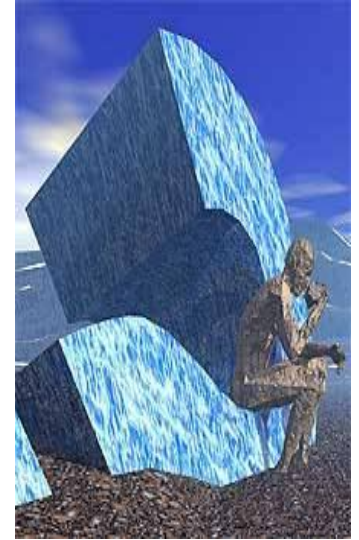
- The **surface transport** sector is crucial for European economy and employment
- **Surface transport account for**
 - 11.0 % EU GDP
 - 16.0 million jobs
 - 25% of EU CO2 emissions
 - EU new members
 - + 25% of land surface
 - + 20% population



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Where to go?

- ✓ Big crisis => **Big innovations**
- ✓ Sustainable technology is not a matter of taste or trend but about **economical survival.**
- ✓ Research programmes should focus more in **industry knowledge needs** to assure **long term sustainability and competitiveness** of R&D project



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Sustainable surface transport

- The transport sector struggles to address its **structural problems**,
 - mainly on energy supply & GHG emissions issues,
 - ... despite major efforts and notable progress...
- Focused **applied R&D** in the transport sector
 - ...addressing these problems
 - ...disruptive innovation
- Innovation is done **mostly in SMEs**, but funding is going to big companies



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The Project rationale

The background

The low figures on SMEs participating in European Programmes requires a permanent effort.

The context

EU SMEs face huge difficulties to be competitive in a global economy

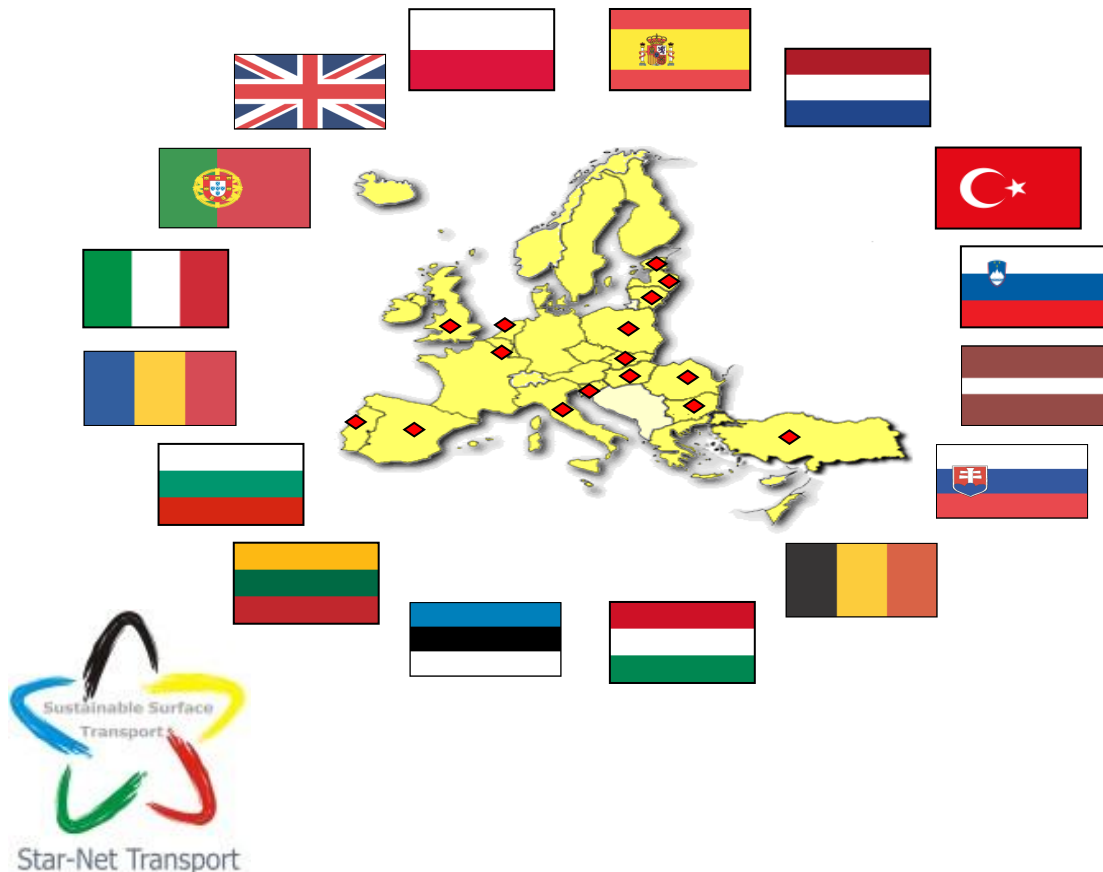
The Rationale

Star-net intends to develop a consolidated structure to support SMEs participation in the FP7 Programme



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The Project in brief



Star-Net Transport
European Network to
Support the Sustainable
Surface Transport SMEs

• **Call: FP7-SST-2007-RTD-1**
Support Action
Duration: 30 Months
Overall Budget: about 1 M€
16 experienced partners
from 14 countries

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The Consortium



COORDINATOR

INOVA+ – Innovation consulting, Portugal.
Project coordinator: Pedro Soutinho

PARTNERS:



CIDAUT – Research and Development Center in Transport & Energy, Spain.



IPPT PAN – Institute of Fundamental Technological Research, Poland.



PSTP – Poznan Science and Technology Park, Poland.



CFA – Cliff Funnell Associates, United Kingdom.



UNIZA – University of Zilina, Slovakia.



SEPC – Social and Economic Development Centre, Lithuania.



NKTH – National Office for Research and Technology, Hungary.



CLEPA – European Association of Automotive Suppliers, Belgium.



EMEC – European Marine Equipment Council, Belgium



APRE – Agency for the Promotion of European Research, Italy.



URTP – Romanian Association of Public Transport, Romania.



TUBITAK – The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, Turkey.



ARC FUND – Applied Research and Communications Fund, Bulgaria.



GIZ ACS – Automotive Cluster of Slovenia, Slovenia.



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Partners' Competencies

- Transport Associations
- Consultancy companies
- Industrial clusters
- Universities
- NCP's
- Co-ordinators FP6



Join forces to establish a permanent network to support SME participation in FP7



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The Project Goals

Strengthening the competitiveness of Surface Transport SMEs.

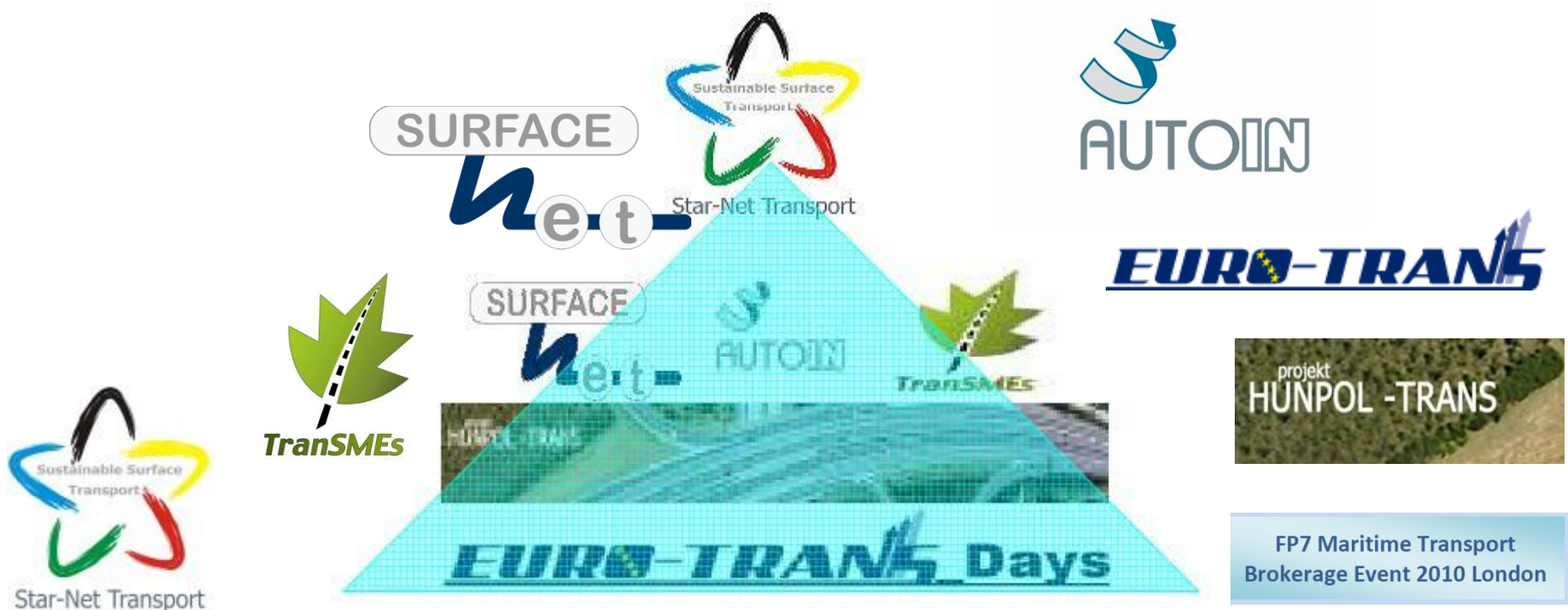
- By increasing their participation in the EU programmes
- By fostering their innovation activity.
- By providing an tools and services on a collaborative network at European level.



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Clustering of FP6 Projects

- The Star-net Project will exploit **synergies between the 5 projects from FP6-SSA.**
 - To identify best practices and pit holes!



The Project Objectives

Facilitate the **participation of SMEs** in FP7 by:

- **Identifying the barriers** to SME participation in SST collaborative projects.
- Implementing a full range of tailor-made **Services and Tools** for Transport SMEs.
- Identifying potential cooperation partnerships through **Technological Audits**.
- Building **SMEs profiles** to involve them on the supply chains of transport key players.
- Analyze and disseminate **existing RTD results**, establish links between companies with similar or complementary needs.



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Star-Net Services in 2010

Ideas identification

Technology audit

Coaching session

Organization of infoday about
FP7 and CIP

Ideas matching

Partners search

Company visit



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Main Results

- Analysis of SME performance in the last FP6 and FP7 calls
 - 22 coordinators interviewed
 - 40 Research results identified and disseminated (10 IPs, 30 STREPs and 10 CRAFTs projects)
- Workshops on FP7 participations
 - 16 Local Workshops organised
 - 3 European Events
- Face-to-face meetings
 - 420 Company visits
 - 420 Advise sessions
- Identification SMEs' competencies and ideas
 - 100 technological audits performed
 - 70 proposal ideas identified
 - 100 SMEs profiles built and disseminated
- Support to proposal submission
 - 30 proposals submitted to FP7 using Star-net assistance



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Main conclusions

Most of the coordinators mentioned that SMEs were included because of **their specific knowledge or expertise in a certain domain** and that SMEs are deemed necessary for the project: because they are **innovative, close to the problem, quick to react to changes**.

Also the short ways of communications with **SMEs and their easy way of decision making was appreciated**.

The feedback from the coordinator was very positive, with 50% indicating **they were more likely to continue their cooperation with SMEs**.



Barriers indentified

Non-financial barriers indentified:

- **SMEs' lack experience in the bureaucracy and administrative procedures of EU projects**
- **Limited resources for proposal writing**
- Uncertain protection of the **ideas generated by the SME (IPR)**
- **Limited networking (internationally in particular).**
- Different rules applied in National and EU projects **increase complexity and requires more resources**
- Many Surface Transport SMEs have no R&D departments but **they innovate as well.**
- The time it takes from **idea to results is too long** for the expectations of the SME



Financial barriers indentified:

- The bank guarantees that were required under FP6, considered as a barrier as well, has been **already removed in FP7**
- SMEs **cash-flow problems** (time from idea to advance payment)



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Recommendations I

- **Increase support from programme managers and facilitators**
 - Better communication channels, innovative support tools.
- **Create financial incentives** for SMEs to **proposal submitting**
 - SMEs could get paid for the writing effort if their submitted proposals reached a certain threshold on the ESR
- **Promote the inclusion of SMEs in consortiums**
 - Increasing the rate of EC funding if the consortium includes SMEs (big companies have a reason to include SMEs in their consortiums)
- **Simplify de participation rules**
 - Harmonize rules and reporting of National and EU projects (as SMEs tend to start by National projects before moving into EU projects)
 - Reduce complexity of the administrative procedures and bureaucracy (a burden always referred by SMEs)
 - Reduce fragmentation of programmes



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Recommendations I

- **Clarify IP rights in projects.**
 - Through normalized CA's and simpler rules.
- **Support exploitation of research results**
 - Financing the conversion of research results into products and promoting the market uptake
- **Clear separation between R&D and Innovation programmes**
 - A lot of Surface Transport SMEs don't make much R&D but still some of them are quiet innovative. (the Craft programme if the almost the only one available and it is becoming outdated for the actual SMEs' needs)
 - Programmes should be more **client/market oriented** in line with the SMEs objectives



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Thank you!

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