



**PRIORITY 6
SUSTAINABLE SURFACE TRANSPORT**

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Fact-finding and pre-feasibility study on extending the current scope of Shortsea Promotion Centres to encompass inland intermodal solutions¹ involving rail and inland waterway transport.

The movement of goods by Short Sea Shipping around Europe is growing at a steady pace and has, over the last decade, succeeded in keeping up with the rapid growth of road freight transport. Between 1995 and 2004 the growth rates of Short Sea Shipping and road were in fact equal, that is growth by 32 % in both cases. Rail and inland waterways reached more humble growth rates over the same period (6-7 %). Many potential customers (e.g. shippers and freight forwarders, logistics providers) remain sceptical or even unaware of the benefits of intermodal solutions and they do not sufficiently consider integrated intermodal solutions involving more than one mode in door to door service while designing their logistics strategies.

The time is optimum for the further development of intermodal solutions involving Short Sea Shipping, rail and inland waterways in good co-operation with hinterland haulage. The European Commission's White Paper on European Transport Policy describes intermodal transport as a solution. And, like all successful products in the competitive economic environment of today, intermodality needs energetic promotion to bring it to the attention of the market.

The European Commission has an established policy to promote Short Sea Shipping. One initiative that continues to be identified as a key strategy for promoting the mode is the Short Sea Promotion Centres (SPCs). These centres are driven by business interests, but remain impartial of specific interest groups, focusing on advising and encouraging existing and potential customers of the sector. To date SPCs have been established now in 20 European countries and together they form the European Shortsea Network.

It has been obvious that part of short-sea promotion has always been targeted towards the hinterland connections of Short Sea Shipping. Therefore, a high degree of expertise has already been gathered in the Shortsea Promotion Centres on landside intermodality. Since the initiative of promoting Short Sea Shipping through promotion centres is considered highly successful, it would be opportune to examine whether this initiative could be extended to promoting all intermodal transport in Intermodal and Shortsea Promotion Centres.

¹ For the purposes of this study, "intermodal transport" means the door-to-door carriage of freight by two or more modes of transport with a high level of interoperability and integration between them. This definition covers both unitised freight (including containers, swap bodies, trailers, semi-trailers) and bulk (both liquid and dry). This study can also suggest other definitions, if justified.

The purpose of this pre-feasibility study should be to:

To find out whether it would be feasible and create added value to extend the scope of Shortsea Promotion Centres to cover intermodal inland promotion.

- The study will collect factual information and examine the preconditions under which existing Shortsea Promotion Centres could extend their current mandate to cover the promotion of all intermodal transport through co-operation, co-ordination or extension of short-sea promotion towards the inland, assess the added value that this activity could have and set out the prerequisites (in terms of resources) and identify possible problems for such an extension.
- The issues should be approached from two sides. In some cases modal or intermodal promotion already exists at international or national or regional level (i.e. associations, organisations or the like that have the task to promote rail, inland waterways, intermodality, combined transport, relevant logistics etc.). In order not to duplicate this work unnecessarily, co-ordination and co-operation with existing promotion bodies should be taken as the starting point (N.B. duplication might also be beneficial in some cases). In other cases, landside promotion is missing or lacking and the viewpoint for this study should be the extension of Shortsea Promotion Centres to cover the missing areas.

For this, the study should:

- Establish an inventory of existing European organisations that have the task promote intermodal solutions (i.e. European associations, organisations or the like that have the task to promote Short Sea Shipping, rail, inland waterways, intermodality, combined transport, relevant logistics etc.)
- Establish an inventory of the promotion bodies for different modes and intermodal solutions operating at national level in European countries (i.e. national organisations, associations or the like that have the task to promote Short Sea Shipping, rail, inland waterways, intermodality, combined transport, relevant logistics etc.). This inventory should go beyond the maritime States and encompass, for instance, land-locked countries as far as feasible.
- Relay a reliable picture of promotion activities relating to intermodality at regional level without a need to make a comprehensive inventory. This work should cover the geographical scope of maritime States but also go beyond that.
- Assess the interest of the relevant State authorities and relevant industries to the aim of extending the scope of the Shortsea Promotion Centres to cover intermodal land transport and the level of support that could be acquired from them.
- Describe the scope, tasks and organisational structures of the above promotion bodies. Describe the size of these bodies and, as far as feasible, describe their financing mechanisms.
- Describe methods used by these different bodies to promote the relevant mode or intermodal solutions. Assess whether these methods could be used more widely across modes. Identify whether cases of duplication of efforts exist and whether this duplication creates added value. Could economics of scale bring about additional benefits?

- Assess how these bodies could work together and learn from each other to form an effective intermodal promotional network. Identify possible barriers to co-ordination and co-operation (such as the question of undesired feeling of competition that should be avoided).
- Identify the prerequisites and framework needed for successful co-ordination or co-operation (such as possible contractual framework).
- Identify the prerequisites and conditions for Shortsea Promotion Centres to carry out co-ordination and co-operation tasks across modes or, as the case might be, to extend their scope to cover inland intermodal promotion (e.g. human resources, financial resources, hardware).
- Assess the interest and willingness of the existing Shortsea Promotion Centres to extend their scope as described. Assess whether a critical mass of interest exists to make this extension feasible and viable. Assess the limits for such an extension of scope.
- Based on the findings, evaluate the role and added value (if any) that Intermodal and Shortsea Promotion Centres should and could have.
- Finally, based on the findings, the study should look at the willingness, feasibility and preconditions for the European Shortsea Network to extend its role as an umbrella organisation for the Shortsea Promotion Centres to cover landside intermodality.