

**Minutes of Meeting – Extraordinary meeting of the Scientific Committee
of Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking**

Project	SC	Date/Time	17 February 2022
Meeting Type:	Scientific Committee	Location:	Online meeting

Summary of the Meeting

1 Introduction and welcome of the SC members

The Chairperson welcomed the participants and thanked for their attendance to the extraordinary meeting of the Scientific Committee under the Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking. She underlined that the purpose of the extraordinary meeting was to conduct a discussion on the Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking Work Programme 2022-2024 from a perspective of the scientific advice.

The theme of the meeting has been agreed with no AoB introduced.

2 Work Programme 2022-2024 – view of the Scientific Committee

The Executive Director thanked the participants for the availability to attend the meeting and discuss the work programme. He reminded that the draft Work Programme 2022-2024 had been dispatched to the members of the Scientific Committee on 8 February 2022, subject to adoption by the Governing Board on 1 March 2022. He indicated the necessity to adopt the Work Programme 2022-2024 at the March Governing Board meeting in order to launch programme activities of the Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking. As stressed, after the formal adoption of the Work Programme by the Governing Board, the JU would launch a call for proposals (expected to be launched on 10 March 2022). The Executive Director highlighted the role and importance of the opinion of the Scientific Committee on the work programme. He also reminded that both the Multiannual Work Programme and Work Programme 2022-2024 had been published on the Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking’s website.

The Executive Director briefly overviewed the key documents to be adopted by the Governing Board on 1 March 2022. He stressed that the documents had been dispatched to the consultation, including the Commission, industry members, Scientific Committee, and the States’ Representative Group. As indicated, the Master Plan – to the content of which the Scientific Committee had also contributed with their comments – has been adopted by the College in the European Commission earlier this week.

The Executive Director presented and overviewed the Multiannual Work Programme (MAWP), with focus on structure, logic behind it, the organization of the work in the System and Innovation Pillars, and budget allocated. The Executive Director highlighted that the Work Programme 2022-2024 has been designed based on the MAWP and it has framed the general objectives of the MAWP into a call for proposals.

Professor Juan de Dios Sanz Bobi asked about the methodology behind and relations between the calls. He asked about the limits between the first call and consecutive calls (e.g. in terms of activities, TRL levels).

The Executive Director explained that the MAWP has demonstrated the general objectives of the Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking programme, while the WP has translated the objectives into call for proposals. As stressed,

the Governing Board would assess the implementation of the programme in 2025 in terms of delivery of the results and objectives (with consultation of the SC and SRG) and revise the work programme accordingly. The expected revision is foreseen before the launch of the second call for proposals. The Executive Director explained the target of 2025 to assess the programme and propose a revision. He briefly commented on timeline, indicating that with signature of grant agreements in 2022, the project would be launched in end of 2022 with the first reporting period in February 2024. The second-year reporting is, accordingly, planned for February 2025. Given the information from two reporting periods, the Governing Board would be in position to evaluate the programme and take a decision on the revision expectedly in last quarter of 2025.

The Executive Director presented and discussed Work Programme 2022-2024, with focus on the structure, operational activities, budget, and Annexes (*for details please refer to presentation*). He paid the attention of experts to the Annex 7, containing the text of call for proposals. He reminded that similarly to the MAWP, the WP has been launched for consultation, including Governing Board members, the Scientific Committee and the SRG. The Executive Director underlined that the JU would conduct calls in an open call scheme, therefore, there will be no additional eligibility criteria beyond the general criteria of Horizon Europe. He reminded that the JU members, if awarded grants, would contribute to the JU also with IKAA as foreseen in the Single Basic Act, with the overall result of a reduced funding rate at 45%. The Executive Director discussed in detail the plan for launching procurement procedures under EU-Rail programme, including the call for experts to join System Pillar of the JU. He invited the Experts to consider their applications once the call has been launched. For the core-programme calls for proposals, the Executive Director presented the timeline of their launch. He underlined the scope of the two calls to be launched in 2022, the conditions of calls, criteria for evaluation of proposals, and the funding rates available. As stressed, the March call would be launched to select the projects in flagship areas 1-6, and the second call for proposal would cover the scope of flagship area 7 and exploratory research. In terms of the funding, the Executive Direction mentioned the questions raised by some universities and research institutions about the Horizon Europe rules that foresee 100% of funding for non-profit entities. He stressed that this issue would require further analysis and explained the reason behind the 60% funding rate (for the JU members, the net rate will be 45% due to obligation of providing IKAA).

Professor Juan de Dios Sanz Bobi asked for clarification if the EU taxonomy regulation would be applicable to the activities of the JU, and if so, to what extent. Wawrzyniec Perschke (DG MOVE) will consult DG RTD and deliver an official answer in writing. He confirmed the ongoing discussions on the taxonomy regulation in the Commission. He also commented that the likelihood that the application of taxonomy would block any programme activities in JU is relatively low.

The Chairperson, Professor Angela di Febraro, asked about possibility for the members of the Scientific Committee to participate to the JU calls. The Executive Director stressed that due to readoption of the S2R GB decisions related to the Scientific Committee, the Rules of Procedure of S2R Scientific Committee have been extended to the current SC. In accordance with Article 11(6) of the SC RoP:

Members of the Scientific Committee must refrain from participating in the preparation of any proposals for calls launched by the S2R JU, or from taking part in the activities to be co-funded by the Joint Undertaking. This does not prevent the organisation that directly or indirectly employs the person from participating in the preparation of any proposals for calls launched by the S2R JU, or from taking part in the activities to be co-funded by the Joint Undertaking.

The Executive Director highlighted that in case any member of the Scientific Committee would express his/her interest in contributing to the call proposals, the JU should be informed in order to assess the potential conflict of interest. He also reminded that conflict of interest would materialize in the moment of signing grant agreement between the JU and the successful applicants.

In terms of the functioning of the Scientific Committee, the Executive Director informed that the Governing Board would take a decision on the type of the scientific advice needed for the Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking programme. For timeline, he proposed to have an initial discussion among the Scientific Committee, then to raise the item during the 3rd Governing Board meeting in June 2022, and formally take a decision at 4th Governing Board meeting in November 2022.

The Executive Director informed the experts that his intention would be to engage more the members of the Scientific Committee into the discussion on the exploratory research, for instance, preparation of the list of topics for exploratory research (e.g. hyperloop, block chains, PhD studies).

He also stressed that year of 2022 would be a transitional period to set up the JU bodies and structure the organization. He stressed the importance of stable scientific advice to guide the programme activities of the JU.

The Chairperson, Professor Angela di Febraro, referred to the bad experience from the first years of the Scientific Committee under the Shift2Rail JU programme. She indicated that similar approach to the SC should be avoided under the EU-Rail.

Professor François Lacôte congratulated on the work programme. He referred to the chapter 7 on innovative and new systems and the references to hyperloop. He commented briefly on hyperloop and asked if there has been any available study on impact assessment in this respect. The Executive Director stressed that the JU had not conducted any studies on its own. He referred to the study conducted by Zeleros, one of the Hyperloop Promoters. He also commented on the challenges related to hyperloop and its development, including the progress on the technology development. Professor Juan de Dios Sanz Bobi also commented on Hyperloop, describing the general concepts behind it, along with the evolution and challenges. He referred to the work of the JCT20 on hyperloop to which he has participated.

Professor Chris Nash commented on the business cases and KPIs. As stressed, the issues had been not properly analysed under Shift2Rail programme, and similar problems have been emerging from the EU-Rail programme. He also asked if the business cases would be coordinated by the System Pillar. Wawrzyniec Perschke (DG MOVE) stressed that in terms of KPI, the Commission would work closely with the JRC and DLR to show more broadly the impact on the society. For business cases, he confirmed that the Commission has been looking at the case, which would also be relevant for the Deployment Group once established, and for TSI revision.

Professor Corinna Salander asked about the deadline to deliver comments to work programme and the procedure of gathering the experts' comments.

The Executive Director pointed to 23 February 2022 as a deadline for sector's comments. He indicated that the comments would be consolidated and send out to the Governing Board before its meeting on 1 March 2022.

3 AoB

The next meeting of the Scientific Committee is planned for 8 July 2022.

The Agenda and any relevant document will be distributed in advance of the meeting.

Action nr.	Action	Related Topic	Due date	Action Owner
1	SC comments on draft Work Programme 2022-2024	Item 2	23 February 2022	SC