

Marco Polo II  
Call for Proposals 2013



## Introduction

The Programme, which has a global budget of €450 million, aims at achieving a traffic shift or avoidance that is a substantial part of the expected yearly aggregate increase in international road freight traffic, measured in tonne-kilometres, to modes of transport with lower external costs in which road journeys are as short as possible. The Programme supports actions to reduce road congestion resulting from freight traffic with a view of improving the environmental performance of the transport system and enhancing intermodal transport, thereby contributing to a more efficient and sustainable transport system which will provide EU added value without having a negative impact on economic, social or territorial cohesion.

## Actions

### Modal shift actions

- Focus on shifting as much freight as economically meaningful under current market conditions from road to short sea shipping, rail or/and inland waterways. They may be proposing start-up of new services or significantly enhance existing services. They shall be robust but not necessarily innovative: just shift freight off the road!

### Catalyst actions

- Change the way non-road freight transport is conducted in the European Union. Under this type of action, structural market barriers in European freight transport are overcome through a highly innovative concept: causing a real break-through. This is essentially done in three steps by applicants: first the barrier must be clearly defined, then a highly innovative solution presented, and finally a modal shift service of great growth potential for freight transport is proposed for timely implementation. Dissemination of results must be ensured within the duration of the EU grant.

### Motorways of the sea actions

- Offering an integrated service, which shifts freight from long road distances to a combination of short sea shipping and other modes of transport. Actions of this kind are innovative at a European level in terms of logistics, equipment, products or services rendered, imply high quality and frequent transport services, move frequently very large volumes of freight and include preferably, the use of the most environmentally friendly transport modes, such as inland waterways and rail for hinterland freight transport and integrated door-to-door services. Dissemination of results must be ensured within the duration of the EU grant.

### Traffic avoidance actions

- Integrating transport into production logistics: reducing freight transport demand by road with a direct impact on emissions. Actions of this type shall be innovative and shall not adversely affect production output and production workforce. Dissemination of results must be ensured within the duration of the EU grant.

### Common learning actions

- Enhance knowledge in the freight transport and logistics sector and foster advanced methods and procedures of co-operation in the freight market, with an overall objective of promoting intermodal solutions aiming at achieving modal shift or traffic avoidance.

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Under this type of action, improvement of co-operation and sharing of know-how is encouraged: training on how to cope efficiently and in a sustainable manner with increasingly complex transport and logistics solutions. Dissemination of results must be ensured within the duration of the EU grant.

## Budget

The budget available for the 2013 call for proposals amounts to **€66.7 million**, with which the Commission envisages to fund around 30 projects.

## Funding Conditions

- For Modal shift, Catalyst, Motorways of the sea, and Traffic avoidance actions the grant will be limited to 35% of the total eligible costs. Ancillary infrastructure costs are eligible up to 20% of the total eligible costs.
- For Common learning actions it will be limited to 50% of the total eligible costs.

## General Eligibility Criteria

- Uniqueness: the type of action for which a project is proposed must be clearly specified by the applicant. Each proposal can only apply for one type of action: there can be no mixing of action types for the same proposal.
- Transport Services: the proposal must concern transport services or logistics concepts in the market place, i.e. infrastructure, research or study projects are not eligible.
- European Dimension - Undertakings: an action can be submitted by either a single undertaking or by a consortium of undertakings established in **any EU Member State** or fully participating country. In case of actions submitted by consortia, one undertaking should be identified as the lead partner. The lead partner must be established in an EU Member State or in a fully participating country. An undertaking from a close third country may also be involved as an associated partner (not as a lead partner) to a project. If the envisaged route is located only on the territories of fully participating countries or only on the territories of fully participating countries and third countries, then at least one of the partners in the project consortium needs to be established in one of the EU Member States.
- European Dimension - Cost: the budget will only finance costs arising on the territories of the European Union or fully participating countries. Legal or natural persons established outside these countries cannot be the recipients of European Union funds under this call in a capacity of project partner. Their costs shall not be eligible. Furthermore, subcontracting to legal or natural persons established outside these countries shall be duly justified in view of the technical and economic necessity and may not be used to circumvent the eligibility rules applicable to project partners.
- Type of Legal Entity: all project participants must be legal persons. They must be privately or publicly owned commercial undertakings. Public law entities engaged in economic activities in accordance with their national laws are entitled to participate. Natural persons are not eligible. Project partners must prove the status of being a commercial undertaking, for instance by providing a VAT number or being listed in the commercial register.
- Start-up of action: the action must start the proposed service or activity between 1st October 2012 and 1st October 2014. No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

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## Specific Eligibility Criteria

All projects submitted for financing will have to comply simultaneously with all the corresponding eligibility criteria per type of action mentioned below:

### Modal shift actions

- Route: The envisaged route, from which transport is shifted by the action, must involve the territory of at least two EU Member States/other fully participating countries or the territory of at least one EU Member State/fully participating country and a close third country. Modal shift shall take place on the territory of at least one EU Member State or a fully participating country. To demonstrate that the route is international, the project partners and/or their subcontractors shall be responsible for the entire (international) transport where funding is requested.
- Duration: The action achieves its objectives within a period of a minimum of 24 months and a maximum of 36 months.
- Threshold: The minimum modal shift proposed by the action shall be an average of 60 million tonne-kilometres, or its volumetric equivalent, per year. In the specific cases of projects aiming at:
  - i. modal shift from road to inland waterways only, the minimum modal shift proposed by the action shall be an average of 13 million tonnekilometres, or its volumetric equivalent, per year;
  - ii. modal shift from road to Single Wagon Load traffic only, the minimum modal shift proposed by the action shall be an average of 30 million tonne-kilometres, or its volumetric equivalent, per year.
- Competition: actions will not lead to distortions of competition in the relevant markets, in particular between transport modes alternative to road transport alone or within each mode, contrary to the common interest. Exclusively for maritime proposals an additional assessment of the market situation and the related risks of undue distortion of competition is introduced in the proposals' evaluation process.

### Catalyst actions

- Route: The envisaged route, from which transport is shifted by the action, must involve the territory of at least two EU Member States/other fully participating countries or the territory of at least one EU Member State/fully participating country and a close third country. Modal shift shall take place on the territory of at least one EU Member State or a fully participating country. To demonstrate that the route is international, the project partners and/or their subcontractors shall be responsible for the entire (international) transport where funding is requested.
- Duration: The action achieves its objectives within a period of a minimum of 36 months and a maximum of 60 months.
- Threshold: The minimum modal shift proposed by the action shall be an average of 30 million tonne-kilometres, or its volumetric equivalent, per year.
- Competition: actions will not lead to distortions of competition in the relevant markets, in particular between transport modes alternative to road transport alone or within each mode, contrary to the common interest. Exclusively for maritime proposals an additional assessment of the market situation and the related risks of undue distortion of competition is introduced in the proposals' evaluation process.

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## Motorways of the sea actions

- Route: The envisaged route, from which transport is shifted by the action, must involve the territory of at least two EU Member States/other fully participating countries or the territory of at least one EU Member State/fully participating country and a close third country. Modal shift shall take place on the territory of at least one EU Member State or a fully participating country. To demonstrate that the route is international, the project partners and/or their subcontractors shall be responsible for the entire (international) transport where funding is requested. The Motorways of the Sea actions shall be consistent with the features of the Motorways of the Sea priority project defined in the framework of Decision no 661/2010/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union Guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network. Therefore, regarding projects within the EU, only those relating to the category A ports as defined in Article 12(2) of the said Decision (i.e. ports with a total annual traffic volume of not less than 1,5 million tonnes of freight or 200.000 passengers) will be eligible to Marco Polo funding under the Motorways of the Sea actions.
- Duration: The action achieves its objectives within a period of a minimum of 36 months and a maximum of 60 months.
- Threshold: The minimum modal shift proposed by the action shall be an average of 200 million tonne-kilometres, or its volumetric equivalent, per year.
- Competition: actions will not lead to distortions of competition in the relevant markets, in particular between transport modes alternative to road transport alone or within each mode, contrary to the common interest. Exclusively for maritime proposals an additional assessment of the market situation and the related risks of undue distortion of competition is introduced in the proposals' evaluation process.

## Traffic avoidance actions

- Route: The envisaged route, from which transport is avoided by the action, must involve the territory of at least two EU Member States/other fully participating countries or the territory of at least one EU Member State/fully participating country and a close third country. Traffic avoidance shall take place on the territory of at least one EU Member State or a fully participating country. To demonstrate that the route is international, the project partners and/or their subcontractors shall be responsible for the entire (international) transport where funding is requested.
- Duration: The action achieves its objectives within a period of a minimum of 36 months and a maximum of 60 months.
- Threshold: The minimum traffic avoidance proposed by the action shall be an average of 4 million vehicle-kilometres or 80 million tonnekilometres per year.
- Competition: actions will not lead to distortions of competition in the relevant markets, in particular between transport modes alternative to road, contrary to the common interest.
- Use of the EU grant: European Union financial assistance for traffic avoidance actions must not be used to support business or production activities which bear no direct relation to transport or distribution, and should not adversely affect production output or workforce.

## Common learning actions

- Duration: The action achieves its objectives within a period of a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 24 months.
- Threshold: The minimum grant threshold per action is €250,000.

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- Competition: actions will not lead to distortions of competition in the relevant markets, in particular between transport modes alternative to road transport alone or within each mode, contrary to the common interest.

### Eligible Costs

Eligible costs include the actual costs that are incurred by the beneficiary during the duration of the Project:

- Direct Costs: personnel costs, travel allowances and other direct costs and
- Indirect costs

### Deadlines

The closing date for submission of applications is **23 August 2013**. Successful applicants will be notified in December 2013. The contracts will be signed in the first half of 2014.

Website of the European Commission regarding the Marco Polo Programme

<http://ec.europa.eu/transport/marcopolo/>