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Ex-post evaluation of Extra (1998-2002) and mid-term evaluation of ExtraWeb (2002-2006) under the Framework Contract for Impact Assessments and Evaluations (TREN/A1/17-2003).

Final Evaluation meeting 19.05.06



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# Presentation



- Objectives and scope of the project
- Presentation of the EXTRA and Extr@web projects
- Methodology
- Key findings
  - EXTRA
  - Extr@web
- Recommendations
- Final report
- Your comments to the report
- Other issues

# Objectives



## Objective:

- To provide the European Commission with an Ex-post assessment of the EXTRA project and a mid-term evaluation of the Extr@web project.
- To provide input for the negotiation of the EW II project

## Evaluation

- Initiated 7 December 05
- Evaluation process completed 13 March 06
- Some delays encountered during the evaluation process

# Scope of the evaluation



Overall focus of the study:

- Focus on the Extr@web (EW) project, little attention should be provided to EXTRA
- Focus on the utility of the Extr@web project in the light of the needs
- Focus of the contribution of the EW project to reaching the overall objectives set for dissemination and promotion within the 5FP
- Focus on cost-effectiveness of the Extra and EW projects
- Focus on providing recommendations to adjust and improve the EW II project

# Scope (cont.)



## Specific requirements:

- Assessment of the use and utility of the Extra and EW I projects as regards the information needs of the users;
- Project management and the input provided by external actors;
- The value added of the service provider in particular as regards the efficiency of data gathering and dissemination to facilitate the use of the information provided;
- The relevance of the project name;
- The potential overlapping/complementarily with CORDIS.

# Limitation of the scope



- No expert evaluation of the quality of the content;
- Our conclusions would be based on limited research;
- No assessment of the indirect impact. We would only analyse the perceived usability of the information;
- Only treated monitoring data would be used;
- Any analysis of the EXTRA project was conditioned by the availability of quantitative data and client satisfaction studies and/or other survey data.

# Method



- 3 step approach
  - Desk research
  - Data collection through surveys and interviews
  - Analysis of data, in the light of the EW II project to draw conclusions and recommendations
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- 2 Surveys
  - User survey
  - Benchmarking group survey

# Problems encountered



- Lack of monitoring data
- Lack of relevant benchmarking information (websites)
- Lack of a detailed breakdown of costs
- Lack of personnel availability (Cordis)

## Principal consequences

- No cost-effectiveness analysis
- A limited analysis of overlapping with CORDIS



# EXTRA



- Implemented from January 1999 till end October 2001
- Financed under the RTD Transport programme
- Set up in response to a perceived need at EU level for structured dissemination of transport research.

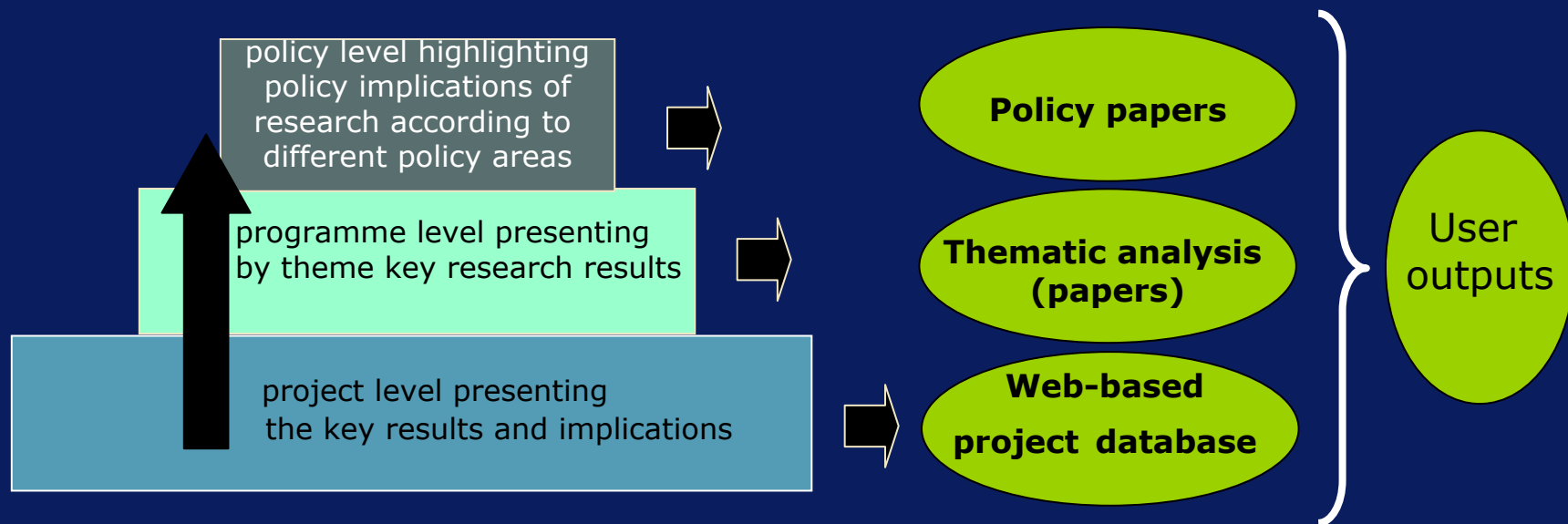
## Objectives

- To supplement existing dissemination activities by implementing a coordinated dissemination campaign across the RTD Transport Programme.
- To provide at programme level, structured research result information, designed to analyse modal and thematic issues, to establish links between research results and to promote the success of the Transport RTD programme.
- To pave the way for evidence based decision making by providing decision makers in the transport field throughout the EEA and CEEC with authoritative information on research results from across the whole of the Transport RTD programme.

Scope: Research projects financed under RTD Transport programme

# Implementation:

Research result information at three levels:



- Web-based Transport Knowledge Centre (TRKC)
- The project was managed by the EXTRA consortium

# Key findings – Extra



## Implementation

- The EXTRA project has been implemented globally as foreseen
- Provision of provided research result information at three levels (project, programme and policy level).
- The usefulness of the project has in particular been related to its capacity provide “basic” research project information
- The thematic papers presenting by theme at programme level key research results appear to have been globally less useful.

## Promotional activities

- Focus on promotion of the web-site
- Very limited data on the effectiveness of the promotional activities
- It appears that promotional actions were implemented unevenly across Member States
- The Commission appeared to play a key role in the promotion of the EXTRA project

# Extr@web



- Direct follow up of the EXTRA project
- Same objectives and the same overall approach to dissemination and promotion of research results
- September 2002 - End August 2006
- Financed under the Growth programme, Accompanying Measures (5FP)
- TRKC online in July 2004

Scope: EU and national financed research

Three principal changes from the EXTRA project:

- The scope is substantially larger
- The target group is wider
- The management structure is substantially different (Benchmarking and High Level Advisory Group)

# Extr@web



## 4 specific objectives of the EW project:

- to set up one common RTD result reporting scheme for reporting on transport research results (standard for Europe)
- to set up a consistent approach to dissemination based on a web tool, the Transport Research Knowledge Centre (TRKC) and flanked by an information service and a promotional strategy;
- to cover and disseminate a large amount of research results, stemming from both EU programmes and national programmes and to present relevant transport research programmes at EU and national level.
- to analyse transport research results, by project, by theme, and by policy area and to assess policy implications of carried out research.

# Key findings – Extr@web



## Framework of the project:

- The common RTD result reporting scheme has been implemented globally as foreseen
- A consistent approach to dissemination based on TRKC has been implemented (with some delay)

# Key findings – Extr@web



## Theme 1: Key user outputs and promotional activities

A range of key user outputs should be provided by the EW project:

- Information on national and EU programmes, provided in summary format by programme and in an overview format
- Detailed summary information on research results of EU and national funded projects by project
- Thematic analysis and policy analysis on research results and policy implications of completed projects by theme and by policy topics

# Key findings – Extr@web



## Theme 1: Key user outputs and promotional activities:

### Results

- At this stage of project implementation some but not all key user outputs has been provided
- Information on national and EU research programmes has been provided
- The user outputs currently missing (or uncompleted) are user outputs related to research results
- Basic project information on research results is to a large extent still to be collected and published
- Thematic analysis and policy analysis papers are only to be provided at the final stage of the EW project. However, papers are depending on the availability of the basic project information.



# Key findings – Extr@web



## Key problems encountered:

- Dispersed responsibilities for data collection , which is the backbone of the project
- Too optimistic expectations as regard the key stakeholders willingness to support data collection on a voluntary basis
- Too ambitious initial objectives regarding the number of projects which were to be covered by the project
- A data collection phase which was initiated late

# Key findings – Extr@web



## Theme 2: Use and utility of the Extr@Web project

- The TRKC web-pages are fairly well visited
- The TRKC is used by the users but more on an occasional basis than on a regular basis
- Information related to EU programmes and EU projects is substantially more searched for than information on national programmes and projects
- Project information, in particular information on final project results and links to final project reports are requested by the users
- The quality of the information provided is overall of good quality
- The results of both the user survey and the survey among the BG members, indicate that the overall approach of the EW project is of quality, and of use, but that the missing information hamper the overall usability and utility of EW

# Key findings – Extr@web



## Theme 2: Use and utility of the Extr@Web project

- There is a very large interest in additional information on issues such as
  - general updated information about transport research policy
  - information about new research programmes (e.g. 7th FP)
  - regular articles on transport topics
  - information on relevant calls for proposals
  - news on outcomes of transport research events

# Key findings – Extr@web



## Theme 3: Complementary between the EW project and other web-sites

- There appears to be little of cooperation between EW and CORDIS.
- There is only little evidence that the TRKC has been promoted by CORDIS

# Key findings – Extr@web



## Theme 4: Web-design, user friendliness and visibility

- The web-design and user friendliness of the web-site is perceived globally as satisfactory
- The “Extr@web” acronym is used but the project is not visible under this name
- Monitoring data does partly not exist and the quality is insufficient for satisfactory monitoring and evaluation

# Key findings – Extr@web



## Theme 5: Management and input from key stakeholders

- EW is based on the idea of decentralisation and assumed voluntary contribution from a variety of actors. This made the project vulnerable from the outset of the project
- Contribution at 3 levels: validation, data collection and promotion
- Support from key actors (BG, AG, Commission staff and RTD project coordinators) varied significantly
- BG support was very uneven
- Global (political) and specific support from the Commission was perceived as unsatisfactory and uncoordinated
- Support for promotion was limited

# Key findings – Extr@web



## Theme 6: Coherence between the implemented EW and the objectives set for the FP5 for dissemination and promotion

- The objectives set for EW fits well with the objects for the FP5 for dissemination and promotion
- EW attempts to provide a coherent and structured framework for dissemination and promotion of research results
- EW is perceived as a potential very valuable tool if implemented as foreseen
- It is too early to draw final conclusions regarding the projects overall contribution to objectives set for the FP5 for dissemination and promotion
- Yet, while EW has provided a structured framework for dissemination it has met substantial difficulties in providing timely access research results – which is a prerequisite for contributing significantly to objectives set for the FP5 for dissemination and promotion

# Recommendations – EW II



- The scope of the project needs to be clearly identified at the outset of the project
- Key milestones should be set for project outputs – in particular for user outputs need to be defined
- Roles of the different (non consortium) actors who are intended to contribute to the project should be clarified and agreed upon
- The Commission's contribution to the project should be reviewed and the Commission's role should be endorsed by the hierarchy
- Contacts should be taken with Cordis to ensure proactive promotion and avoid overlapping (given Cordis proposal to provide a similar service)



# Recommendations – EW II



- An effective monitoring system of the web-site should be implemented
- Use of the Extr@web acronym should be avoided
- An AG meeting should be organised in order to identify specific priorities and concerns among this group which should be taken into consideration when setting the final objectives for the EWII project

# Recommendations – EW



- Key support from the Commission services to the project should be ensured (in particular as regard data collection)
- A more proactive promotional strategy should be implemented in the final phase of the project

# Your comments to the report



And some technical issues

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