

*Standing Committee on International Cooperation (A0010)
Caroline Almeras and Christos Xenophontos, Co-Chairs*

Promoting International Cooperation and Collaboration in Transport Research

GEORGE A. GIANNOPOULOS, PH.D., *Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece*¹
O. A. ELRAHMAN, PH.D., *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, USA.*²

HISTORY/BACKGROUND

The vision of the Standing Committee on International Cooperation is a world where the global transportation community of research and practice is seamlessly interconnected. In such a world, there is a universal access to quality transportation data and information as well as to best practices and success stories. All countries participate collaboratively in building knowledge that is necessary to sustain effective, environmentally friendly, and efficient transportation systems. Transnational resources, information, and expertise are shared, and directed toward advancing mutual goals, and filling common gaps.

Formerly, the Standing Committee on International Activities, the Committee sought to encourage internationalization across national borders. The inception of the Committee was a recognition of the reality of global interconnectedness and the need for a global response to transportation problems. The renaming of the Committee in 2013, to the Standing Committee on International Cooperation (A0010) was driven by the acknowledgement that the committee needs to not only support TRB in advancing its strategic goal of mainstreaming an international perspective into transportation research, but to also encourage cooperation and collaboration across borders. These two goals were adopted as integral to leveraging resources, avoiding duplication, and maximizing return on investments of research dollars. The Committee recognized the power of collaboration across border lines and re-directed efforts to emphasize the need for everyone in the international transportation community to bring their expertise, resources and knowledge together to address the enormous challenges that lie ahead.

ADDRESSING GLOBAL CHALLENGES TO COLLABORATION: MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE TO DATE

International cooperation in transport research mandates developing research governance and institutional structures that facilitate seamless creation and sharing of knowledge, technologies and innovations. Effective collaboration on international research, however, suffers from procedural barriers, shortages of research funding and disparities in research governance. Moreover, the trend of increased importance and commitment to international cooperation activities is currently being somewhat dimmed by the reversal of globalization policies by certain governments and the policies of protectionism drawn around national markets and economies. Nevertheless, lurking economic crises facing many countries and governments still incentivize research cooperation.

The TRB Committee on International Cooperation sees its role as a catalyst in mobilizing the TRB community to address global transportation challenges and barriers to collaboration across borders.

The Committee has consistently and effectively served as a resource to TRB and the global transportation community on the nuts and bolts of cooperating and collaborating across borders and shared best practices and strategies to overcome barriers to collaboration through the following activities:

- a. Maintained a website used by a great number of visitors annually to access a clearinghouse of information on transportation cooperation and collaborations across national borders.
- b. Advised the TRB Executive Committee's International Cooperation Task Force.
- c. Organized the highly popular International Reception, during the Annual Meeting. Approximately 250 international participants, participated in the reception annually. International participants have the chance to meet and network with TRB officials, committee members and chairs, and other participants.
- d. Conducted workshops, meetings, and sessions that disseminate research results, advance technology transfer and promote international cooperation and networking. These events reached approximately 500 persons annually. A complete list of meetings and workshops is in the footnote below.¹
- e. In addition to meetings and workshops organized at the TRB Annual Meeting, the Committee also consistently organized mid-year meetings outside the US in conjunction with major events and Conferences so as to increase the exposure and visibility of the Committee to international audiences. These meetings drew more than 70 participants annually.²
- f. Organized for the first time in the 2018 TRB Annual Meeting, a matchmaking event was held to introduce researchers and scholars and provide opportunities for seeding and fertilization of research cooperation. The event was organized in cooperation with the US's National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA). Some 120 participants participated in that event.

¹ Examples of events, workshops and meetings include: (a) "Transport impacts of the economic crisis" - co-sponsorship with ABE10 and ABE20; (b) "Reviewing progress and achievements on EU-US transport research collaboration", workshop in cooperation with ECTRI to mark the 10th anniversary of the MOU between the TRB and ECTRI (the European Conference of Transport Research Institutes); (c) "Avoiding the unmanageable: mitigating impacts of the transport sector to climate change, the role of transport policy research." - co-sponsorship with A0020T (special task force on climate change and energy), climate change, energy, and sustainability (AF0003), environmental maintenance (AHD10-2); (d) "International collaboration in research in the presence of knowledge and resources asymmetry" in cooperation with the ABE90 (Transportation in the developing countries); (e) "Transport research governance, private sector involvement, and research implementation with focus on the Asia-Pacific region", (during the World Conference on Transport Research in Shanghai, China, July 2016); (f) "Facilitation of international freight transportation: the contribution of international transport research", (during the World Transport Conference in Beijing, China) co-sponsorship with the urban freight transportation committee and the TRB freight group; (g) "From transport research to innovation: case study-based presentation of US and international experiences" - co-sponsorship with ABE70, ABG10, and ABG30.

² These mid-year meetings were held in: Rio de Janeiro, in 2013 (in conjunction with the WCTR - World Conference on Transport Research); Paris, in 2015 (in conjunction with the Paris pre-Conference on climate change); Shanghai, in 2016 (in conjunction again with the WCTR); Beijing, in 2017 (in conjunction with the World Transport Conference - WTC); and Vienna, in 2018 (in conjunction with the TRA 2018 Conference).

- g. Developed some 10 reports and magazine articles promoting international transport research cooperation and understanding.³
- h. Promoted operationalization of the memoranda of understanding signed by TRB and international organizations such as the European Conference of Transport Research Institutes (ECTRI), China Highway and Transportation Society (CHTS), World Road Association (PIARC), and International Transport Forum (ITF).
- i. Partnered with other TRB committees through participation in the annual meetings of these committees, co-sponsoring of events during the Annual Meeting and encouragement of joint webinars and/or teleconferences.⁴

EMERGING ISSUES & TRENDS

We feel that the increased demand for international cooperation in transport research will continue in the near and medium-term future in spite of the global trend of placing constraints on international trade and economic cooperation. Thus, the Standing Committee on International Cooperation (A0010) needs to consider a number of emerging issues in order to maintain its effectiveness in supporting TRB's international activities and continue to enjoy a renowned standing in the international transportation community. With the TRB seeking greater internationalization of its activities and mission, the Committee on International Cooperation needs to serve a dual strategy of centralization and mainstreaming. This strategy includes the following:

- a. A mainstreaming strategy which would require that each TRB standing committee integrates an internationalization objective into its mission and operational plan. In such a strategy, a select number of TRB committees would be asked to have a member designated as a liaison with the International Cooperation Committee.
- b. A centralization strategy, which would strengthen the role of the Committee on International Cooperation by focusing its mission and strengthen its ability to monitor the mainstreaming of international perspectives within each of the TRB committees and integration of such perspectives in all their operations. This strategy would mean that the mission of the Committee on International Cooperation would be more focused on providing a focal point for international cooperation, offering guidance to

³ Examples include: (a) Special issue, in the Journal *Case Studies on Transport Policy*, entitled: "Global Strategic Management in Transportation R&D Cooperation". This was a collaborative effort to which many members and friends of the Committee contributed. The Special Issue breaks down the complexities of global collaborations in transport research and examines strategic management of these alliances; (b) A report entitled: *International Collaboration in Transport Research and its Implementation: Governance, Private Sector Involvement, and Implementation Issues with Focus on the Asia-Pacific Region*. The Committee contributed to producing this report which was authored by a working group consisting of a small number of the Committee's members; (c) An extended version of the previous report published by Springer as a book entitled: "*Publicly funded Transport research in the P. R. China, Japan and Korea: Policies, governance and prospects for cooperation with the outside world*"; and (d) Recommendations on international cooperation issues, submitted to the TRB's Task Force which was set up by the TRB's Executive Committee in September 2015. The recommendations were compiled and submitted by the International Cooperation Committee's co-chairs.

⁴ More consistent liaison and cooperation has been achieved with the following TRB standing committees: Conduct of Research ABG10; Technology Transfer (ABG30); Freight Transportation Planning and Logistics (AT015); Urban Freight Transportation (AT025); Global Road Safety (ANB101(8)); Women's Issues in Transportation (ABE70); and Transportation Education and Training (ABG20).

other committees and co-sponsoring activities of other committees to enable the integration of an international lens.

Other issues, needs and gaps that exist in advancing international transport research cooperation today, can be summarized in two broad areas, those that are short-term and those that are more long-term or strategic in nature.

Short-term:

- Identify opportunities for joint or cooperative research programs with international research funding agencies. On this front, strengthening existing partnerships and exploring new frontiers will be critical. Issues to be faced are: merging international sources of finance for research programs, developing common administration and monitoring procedures, setting global research themes, and establishing benchmarking rules for conduct and implementation of research outcomes.
- Encourage more short visits by foreign researchers and/or students to TRB events and TRB publications.
- Create more opportunities for “virtual” events with worldwide audience via teleconferencing tools. TRB is already very active on this front through the many webinars and other virtual conferencing events that it organizes or supports.
- Identify critical international cooperation issues for TRB. These issues could be identified through information exchanges, workshops, seminars, or surveys.
- Identify champion organizations that would build capacity for cooperative international research such as by creating an International Transport Research Cooperation “Observatory” whose goal would be to collect, maintain, and revise reports on transport research needs and priorities around the world, and establishing benchmarks for international research conduct and implementation.

Long-term, Strategic:

1. Harmonization, partial at least, of international research program governance, funding and management structures.
2. Formulation and introduction of some guidelines or “standards” for international research programs and funding.
3. Creation of a “neutral” observatory for the monitoring and promoting organization international cooperative research work and performing the necessary groundwork for such cooperation.
4. Creation of a permanent mechanism for monitoring trends and transport research needs of international importance.
5. Improvement of human resources (especially in the countries receiving research funds from others).
6. Harmonization of “institutional cultures” of the research performing organizations so as to align to a strategic typology, featuring attention to global challenges and extensive networking.

ALIGNMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES WITH TRB’S STRATEGIC PLAN AND OTHER TRB COMMITTEES

The current TRB Strategic Plan includes seven strategies along with a list of proposed action items. Most of the items align fully or partly with international cooperation activities. Table 1

outlines the international cooperation implications and relevance for each of the Strategies of the TRB Strategic Plan.

Table 1: International activities implications of the seven Strategies of the TRB Strategic Plan

A/A	Strategy Name	Key contents / Action items	International Activities implications
1	Develop and implement processes to identify and address emerging and critical transportation issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annually designate one or more “hot” topics 2. Develop and implement action plans to address each hot topic 3. Involve other NRC units to help identify and address these issues 	<p><i>“Transport research Cooperation activities” can provide the basis for several such “hot topics”.</i></p> <p><i>The Committee can help the TRB Executive Committee in developing and implementing a specific action plan to address such topics along the lines of the main goals for TRB’s international goals. International</i></p>
2	Involve a broader cross section of stakeholders and constituencies in TRB programs and activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a strategic review of TRB’s sponsor and affiliate programs 2. Pilot and seek continuing funding for roundtables to bring together constituencies that depend on one another but that do not frequently mix to discuss issues 3. Take actions to involve DoT CEOs and other agency leaders to a greater extent in TRB activities. 4. Provide incentives to facilitate the involvement of non-traditional stakeholders 5. Reach out to other US and international Organizations to help address emerging and critical issues systematically 6. Proactively pursue avenues to involve other units of the NRC in TRB programs and activities. 	<p><i>Action items 2, and 5 are directly relevant to international cooperation activities.</i></p> <p><i>A major task of the international outreach of TRB would be (as item 5 says) to reach out to other international organizations to help “address emerging and critical issues systematically”.</i></p>
3	Conduct strategic reviews of the portfolio of TRB legacy programs and products and introduce new activities to meet critical needs in today’s marketplace	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the research and policy studies programs managed by the TRB 2. Survey attendees after the 2015 TRB Annual Meeting to identify opportunities 3. Conduct evaluations of the value, quality, and timeliness of TRB legacy publications 4. Continue to evaluate and evolve the TRR 5. Review TRB’s processes and timelines for paper submissions, peer reviews, etc. 6. Develop and implement a TRB training program to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of transportation research program managers. 	<p><i>Implementing TRB’s policy to promote transport research cooperation at global level is a major component of TRB’s legacy programs and products.</i></p> <p><i>A substantial demographics of TRB Annual meeting participants are international and the percentage increases every year.</i></p> <p><i>Action item.6 is particularly relevant.</i></p>

A/A	Strategy Name	Key contents / Action items	International Activities implications
4	Apply more systematic approaches for identifying and tracking the impacts of TRB's research programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct periodic stakeholder surveys for each major TRB program, to solicit feedback on, and examples of, the impacts of these programs. 2. Expand efforts such as Research Pays Off series, the Key research achievements, etc. 3. Augment programs such as TRB-state DoT partnership visits the ACRP Ambassadors program 4. Request recipients of research funds to report on the benefits 5. Implement strategic approach to communicate the impacts of TRB research programs to TRB stakeholders. 	<p><i>All action items of this Strategy relate more to US programs and activities.</i></p> <p><i>They would, however, be equally relevant to international programs and activities once such activities start taking place systematically.</i></p>
5	Strengthen the long-term financial stability of TRB by augmenting traditional federal sources of funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursue funding from a broader range of sources 2. Offer more private sector funding opportunities in conjunction with the Annual meeting and other Conferences 3. Seek direct funding from agencies for Cooperative Research Programs activities 4. Offer pooled funding arrangements to state DoTs and other stakeholders to support TRB activities. 6. Implement capital budgeting processes for selected larger multiyear investments. 	<p><i>International activities can be used to “augment” the traditional sources of financing of the TRB.</i></p> <p><i>Two such sources of finance could be:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>implementing program management and / or evaluation activities on behalf of interested foreign governments (who will provide the necessary funding),</i> b) <i>Providing training to foreign entities to research governance issues.</i> <p><i>There will certainly be more sources and opportunities that could be defined here, in a more systematic international activities Action Plan.</i></p>
6	Develop and implement coordinated approaches to communicate information on TRB activities and products that address emerging and critical issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement a marketing plan for each TRB policy 2. Coordinate the roles and messages across TRB communications outlets 3. Accommodate the increasing reliance on electronic communications and social media 4. Enhance TRB capacity to deliver webinars 5. Produce easy-to-understand communications that provide overviews of TRB and its programs. 	<p><i>No direct relation to international activities here but item 4 can leverage international training and know how transfer programs.</i></p>

<i>A/A</i>	<i>Strategy Name</i>	<i>Key contents / Action items</i>	<i>International Activities implications</i>
7	<i>Provide TRB staff with the knowledge, resources, and tools necessary to meet and exceed the expectations of TRB stakeholders and customers</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the NRC to rationalize the software and information infrastructure 2. Implement and advance software applications for volunteer engagement management and for paper review and Annual Meeting planning 3. Develop and employ succession plans and scenarios for senior leadership positions including training in administration and leadership. 	<i>No direct relation to international activities</i>

¹George Giannopoulos, Ph.D., Immediate Past Co-Chair, TRB International Cooperation Committee. Transport Planner, Professor emeritus. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Member Academy of Athens, Greece.

²O. A. Elrahman, Ph.D., Immediate Past Co-Chair, TRB International Cooperation Committee. Senior Research Scholar, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Center for Transportation Infrastructure and Environment, NY, USA.

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