

# Infra vation lessons learned

## The view point of coordinator RWS



Rijkswaterstaat  
*Ministry of Infrastructure and the  
Environment*

Cees Brandsen

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# What is Infravation?

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Transnational collaboration through pooled funds aiming to

- Accelerate and deploy promising innovations in the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges that
  - reduce costs and hindrance for road users
  - increase durability and sustainability
- By means of a transnational call for proposals
  - Infravation 2014 Call
  - 9.5 MEUR pooled funds
  - Budget from funding countries and European Commission



# Why Infra

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- Finding solutions for common challenges of road owners
- Through transnational collaborations
  - between contractors, research institutions and universities
- Pooling scarce resources and leverage effect
  - pooled fund: over 9.5 x 2 MEUR of results
- Top up EC
- Complementary transnational skills and view points



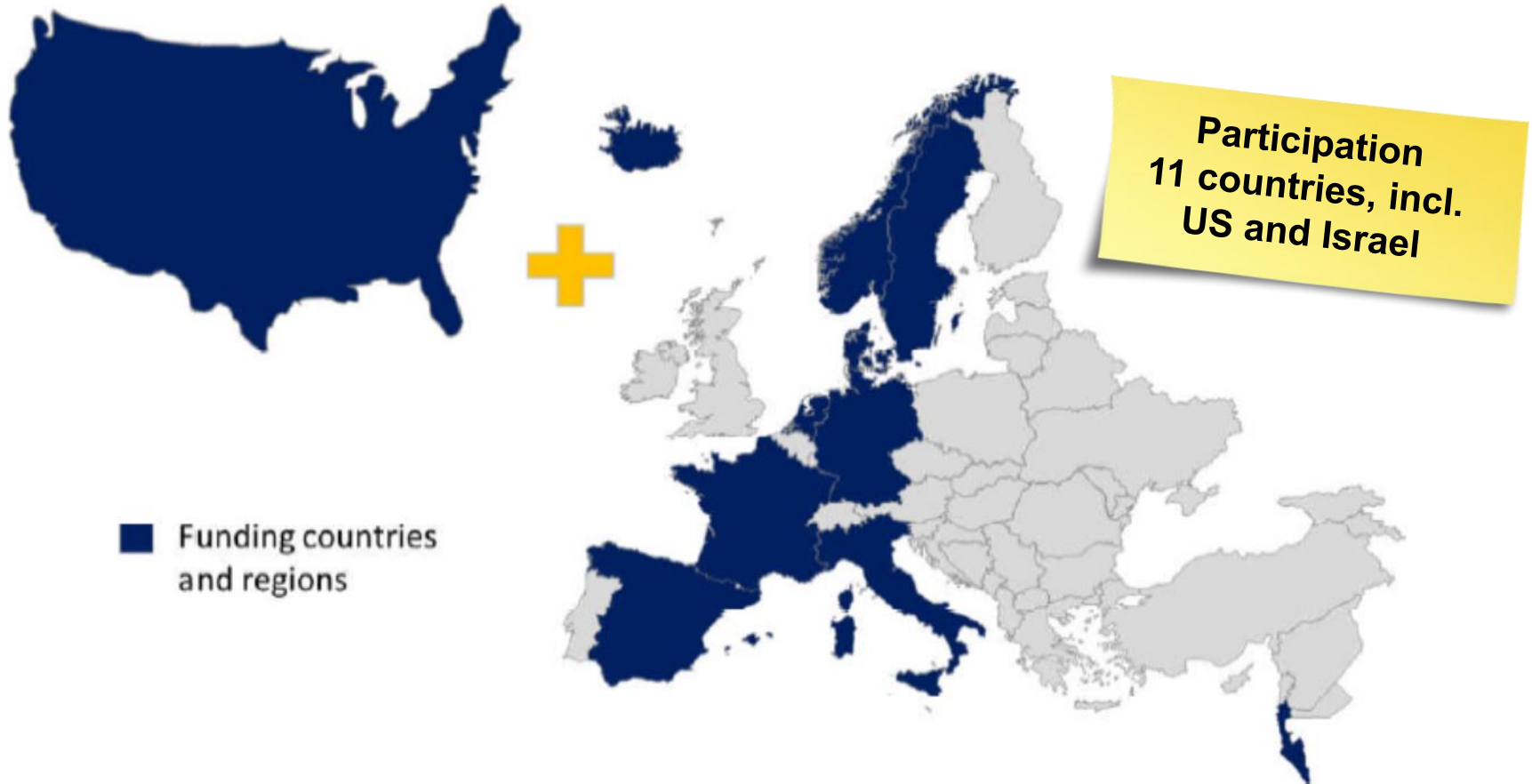
# Infra

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- A. Advanced predictive infrastructure performance processes
- B. Enhanced durability and life-time extension
- C. Rapid and non-destructive methods for routine quality and performance checks of materials and construction
- D. Keeping freight routes open through zero-intrusive maintenance
- E. Ensuring infrastructure performance under all weather conditions
- F. Resource and energy efficiency in road construction and maintenance (Eco-design)
- G. Virgin material reduction by substitution or recycling



# Infra vation funding countries/regions



# Infra vation unique features

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- Real common pot
  - 2/3 from national funders, 1/3 top up from Commission
  - central negotiation, contracting, monitoring and financing
  - budget 100% for research, all other costs in kind
  - applicants non-funding EU countries could apply too
- Extensive and detailed scoping, input for call content
- Selection best quality proposals
  - 2-Step submission and evaluation approach
  - Light proposals – full proposals



# Infra vation 2014 Call for proposals

- Great interest
  - 103 light proposals submitted
  - Assessment by delegated national experts
  - Selection 24 best proposals for full proposal submission
- Excellent proposals
  - 23 full proposals submitted
  - Assessment by independent international experts
  - 9 best proposals selected for funding
- Infra vation innovation projects
  - 2015: kick off Brussels 12-13 November
  - 2016: getting up to speed and first results delivered
  - **2017: demonstrations and test site visits**
  - 2018: delivery innovative solutions



# Infravation innovation projects

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- FASSTBRIDGE and SUREBRIDGE: reducing the LCC of steel bridges
  - SEEBRIDGE: using drones to map existing bridges in a BIM (building information model)
  - SHAPE: monitoring the strength of bridges using soundwaves
  - ECLIPS: injecting "microstructure" into concrete to realise phase transition to reduce cracking
  - HEALROAD: developing self-repairing asphalt
  - SEACON: using salt water in the production of concrete instead of fresh water
  - ALTERPAVE and BIOREPAVATION: finding better methods of recycling asphalt and eco-friendlier binding agents
- See [www.infravation.net/projects](http://www.infravation.net/projects) for more information about the projects





# Lesson 1

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## Legal issues and exchange rate

- Grant Agreement with project consortia and related general conditions are based on Belgian/Brussels law
  - To guarantee eligibility for EC funding
  - Difficult and occasionally impossible for US applicants to cope with
  - Disputes shall be submitted to Court of Justice in The Hague, nightmare for US legal officers who identified this as the International Criminal Court, which is not the case
  - It happened that US applicants started editing fixed general conditions
- Depreciation of euro and consequently less favourable exchange rate for US dollar was perceived as significant budget cut by US applicants



# Lesson 2

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## Application real common pot

- Current EC top up mechanism is not equipped to a real common pot
- EC top up is applied top down to the level of funding contributions: no top up for US contribution
- Should be applied bottom up to the level of financing of project applicants: no top up for US applicants
- US funding contribution could have completely gone to non US applicants: the EC top up for that amount would then not have been available for EU (associated) member states
- Experienced as application of top up exclusion twice



## Lesson 3

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### Applied two step approach works well

- Two step submission and evaluation allows for selection of best quality and most desired and relevant proposals
- Ensures support and commitment of funding providers
- Combination of evaluation of light proposal by national/regional delegated experts and evaluation of full proposals by independent peer review is seen as valuable
- Obligations for light proposal should be lighter: turned out to cost about the same efforts and time as for a full proposal



# Lesson 4

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## Appreciation applicants for extensive scope of call

- Call provided clear direction, guidance and details
- Investments of previously conducted scoping tours and scoping study for collecting input for the call appeared to pay back
- EC calls usually give far less direction, guidance and details: makes it difficult for applicants to anticipate expectations



## Lesson 5

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# Mechanism of real common pot and central negotiation, monitoring and financing works well

- Allows for full depletion of common pot and EC top up budget
- More transparent and clearer for funding providers and especially for coordinators and other applicants
- Uniform approach, procedures and contracts for all projects and consortia
- No parallel/double national/regional applications and obligations
- Can be easily reproduced for a larger volume



## Lesson 6

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### Clear communication from coordinator to (US) consortium partners is vital

- Rules of play should be made clear from the very beginning
  - Especially the ones on legal issues and general conditions, in particular to US applicants
  - Otherwise the risk exists that major hurdles surface only at the end of a negotiation and consortium building process
- ERALEARN 2020: Infravation has been studied as best practice (report available)



# Contact

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[www.infravation.net](http://www.infravation.net)



Rijkswaterstaat  
*Ministry of Infrastructure and the  
Environment*

Coordinator  
Call Manager

[peter.wilbers@rws.nl](mailto:peter.wilbers@rws.nl)  
[richard.vander.elburg@rws.nl](mailto:richard.vander.elburg@rws.nl)

