

Note to Administrative Board 17th November 2009

This (word) document shows the amendments agreed in June track changed in [blue](#) and the proposed further November amendments as track changes in [red](#) in the text Part of the Work Programme. It includes the original, June and November revised budget tables to enable easy comparison and should be read in conjunction with the attached excel file. In the excel file the amendments to the original tables are **highlighted in yellow** with text which has been deleted ~~struck-out~~ and the replacement **in bold and underlined**. The reasons for the changes are in a column at the end for the information of the Board.

It is proposed that, subject to Board approval of the changes, the PDF "glossy" version of the Work Programme (attached for reference) will be amended and placed on the Agency Web site. It is not proposed to reprint the paper copies of the original version of November 2008.

Work Programme 2009

Introduction

The European Commission's 2001 Transport White Paper "A time to decide" envisaged the revitalisation of the rail sector by the adoption of two complementary mechanisms, the opening of the market to competition and the creation of an integrated European Rail Area by means of common authorisation processes, common technical specifications and a common safety regime. These mechanisms are intended, in parallel with a policy of placing users at the heart of transport policy, to create a modal shift towards rail by improving rail's competitive position in comparison with other modes of transport.

The policy appears to be working and the rail sector is becoming something of a success story with the earlier decline in market shares reversing in many countries and forecasts for significant growth appearing. The scale of this future growth will be to a large extent influenced by the competitive position of the sector.

In 2009 the Agency's contribution to the competitive position of the sector is expected significantly increase. Several of the early activities such as the Rolling Stock TSIs, common safety methods and certification of maintenance workshops will come to fruition and scope of TSIs will, where beneficial, be broadened to include the entire European railway network.

As a result of the new legal framework introduced by the changes to the scope of Directives in 2008 the scope of the Agency's activity will also widen. All vehicle authorisations whether new or upgraded, on-TENS or off TENS, TSI conforming or non-conforming or for the first or a subsequent Member State will be covered by the Interoperability Directive and "Cross acceptance", overseen by a new unit of the Agency created in 2008, will apply in respect of the elements of authorisation not covered by TSIs. The Agency's role in respect of ERTMS is also broadened by the changes.

2009 will also see the specification, implementation and management by the Agency of a substantial platform of diverse, but linked, databases and registers. By using databases describing the nature of individual assets (infrastructure and rolling stock registers), records of certification and authorisations, and surveys carried out by the Agency and other bodies the Agency will be able to develop an understanding of the nature and characteristics of the entire European railway system which will be an essential basis for effective decision making in the future.

Much of the regime foreseen by the directives and elaborated in detail by the Agency in its recommendations is now in the process of implementation. Working with its sector partners and the National Authorities the Agency will facilitate that full benefit is gained from the initial practical experience to ensure that the objectives of the directives are met in particular that interoperability, mutual recognition and a common approach to safety are achieved most effectively. The Agency has a particular role to play in facilitating the coordinated and consistent application of the directives and ERTMS specifications along corridors.

Finally, 2009 sees the challenge of a move of location to a new purpose-built building across the road in Valenciennes. Not only is this necessary to accommodate the increasing workload but it will also deliver a much better working environment for our staff.

All this activity will be carried out by the Agency within the framework of the "better regulation" initiative and the relevant rules and procedures applicable to European Agencies.

With a staff of approximately 146 in 2009, the European centre of rail competence, first envisaged in the 1996 paper on the revitalisation of rail, and given legal basis in the 2004 regulations, will in 2009 reach maturity.

**Marcel Verslype,
Executive Director**

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3 European Railway Agency core objective and role

The Agency's core objective and role is strictly defined Article 1 of Regulation (EC) No 881/2004. It is:-

“to contribute, on technical matters, to the implementation of the Community legislation aimed at improving the competitive position of the railway sector by enhancing the level of interoperability of railway systems and at developing a common approach to safety on the European railway system, in order to contribute to creating a European railway area without frontiers and guaranteeing a high level of safety”.

This is reflected in our vision and mission statements.

Our vision

We contribute to the creation of an integrated European railway area where Railway Undertakings can run trains and organise their transport services freely, safely, effectively, and without interruption. The objective is to allow the rail transport sector to realise its inherent competitive advantages in relation to other transport modes.

Our mission

The main task of the Agency is to prepare new and updated legislative acts for adoption by the European Commission (“the Commission”), after a positive opinion from the Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee of Member States established by Article 21 of Directive 96/48/EC (the RISC Committee), and to give other technical support to the Commission. The activities carried out by the Agency aim at:

- Developing a common approach to safety, safety regulation and accident investigation, in particular by harmonisation of safety assessment methods, safety targets and safety certification conditions.
- Improving the interoperability of the European rail system by developing the conditions for the free and uninterrupted movement of trains through technical and operational harmonisation, including conditions for mutual acceptance of railway vehicles.
- Facilitating the exchange of information within the railway sector by networking with national bodies, providing registers and databases, issuing reports and giving guidance on the implementation of the regulatory framework.

4 ERA priorities for 2009 and associated risks

The Agency works under the basis of Directive 2004/49/EC (the Safety Directive), Directive 2007/59/EC (the Driver Licensing Directive) Directive 2008/57/EC (the Interoperability Directive), and Regulation (EC) No 881/2004 (the Agency Regulation), complemented by more detailed mandates and task requests that are delivered to it by the Commission from time to time.

Key priorities for 2009 will be to deliver quality results on the important pre-existing work streams that come into fruition in 2009. In parallel it will be essential to make good progress on the new initiatives brought about by the changes to the legislation listed above that are expected to come into force in late 2008. The initiatives on type approval, cross-acceptance, certification of Entities In Charge of Maintenance, ERTMS and the databases are high priorities for our stakeholders. Finally, the facilitation activities performed by the agency, so essential for building understanding and trust between the National Safety Authorities, will play a critical role.

It is essential to note, however, that this work programme has been compiled upon the basis of the text of the Interoperability Directive of 17th June 2008 and the proposed amendments to the Safety Directive and Agency Regulation voted on by Parliament on 10th July 2008. It is also based upon the assumption that the budget will be made available to carry out all the tasks foreseen within these proposals, including the new tasks mentioned above. Should either of the legal basis or the necessary budget not be in place in time, then this work programme may need to be amended.

Risks to success are mainly derived from the need to establish and secure budget in good time to enable the right specialist recruitment to take place. Furthermore, in a growing rail sector, the Agency is in competition with many other actors for the expertise that it requires and experience shows that it is not always possible to attract the necessary calibre of staff upon first application. This presents a significant risk not just in the operational areas, where expertise of the right calibre is rare, but also in the administrative activities where expertise is extremely mobile.

Managing the work

It is clear that it is possible that the overall requirements of the directive and the regulation, the sum total of the mandates, the expectations of the stakeholders, the increase in the proportion of “open ended” or “on request” work carried out by the Agency and future requirements may, in 2009, either exceed the quantity of resource available in total or the resource available in a particular subject area. To manage this risk it will be necessary to:

- prioritise,
- make best use of technical expertise available from the sector,
- balance use of internal staff with the use of contract staff and consultants.

When demand arises for work that is not funded the Agency will determine the most appropriate course of action consistent with its objective. This will include, as envisaged in the Agency Regulation, consideration of the possibility of charging for services provided by the Agency.

5 Working Method

To ensure an integrated approach at working level, although each activity is allocated a lead unit for administration, the internal working groups incorporate experts from all relevant units and activities.

The Managers' Steering Committee

The Executive Director, together with the group of managers' steering committee, will:

- Develop and adopt the long term plan of the Agency taking account of the ongoing need to support the harmonisation of decision making, close open points, adapt to scientific and technical progress and take account of market trends. More precise mission statements will be developed for particular area of activity.
- Act as the coordinating body for all the Agency's units and working groups.
- Develop guidance and training for Agency Staff and Working Party experts in
 - the principles and processes underpinning the Interoperability and Safety Directives,
 - non technical or safety issues (e.g. economic analysis),
 - working methods, meeting management, consensus building etc.
- Act as a forum for prioritisation and risk management in respect of the activity of the Agency.
- Act as the focus for exchange of views with external organisations (inputs to and outputs from ERA) in respect of the overall activity of the Agency and particular activities that are not specific to a particular working party.
- Act as the internal review body for draft recommendations.

The Agency will continue to work through the formal Working Parties prescribed by the directives and regulation. These will be supported by several informal groups.

- Survey groups will deal with generic functions (e.g. economic evaluation).
- Restricted groups will deal with specific horizontal interoperability and safety issues.
- Interface groups will deal with specific interfaces covered by two or more working groups.
- Smaller task forces, emanating from working groups, will be established to carry out specific tasks such as the drafting of documents.

Transparency

Transparency is an essential prerequisite of the working method of the Agency.

Documents adopted by the Agency, in particular Recommendations to the Commission and Technical Opinions, will be made available on the public website according to the rules on access to documents adopted by the Administrative Board.

In accordance with the requirements of article 3 of the Agency Regulation that the work of the Working Parties shall be transparent, records of Working Party meetings and working documents will be made available to all members of the relevant Working Party, persons nominated by the representative bodies to coordinate their relationship with the Agency, and persons nominated by the representative bodies coordinators as their members' contacts for interoperability and safety matters. Members of the Network of National Safety Authorities will have access to documents of all Working Parties for which they have the right to appoint members.

Participation & Decision Making

Working Parties shall be managed on a collaborative basis with the expectation that all members shall contribute to the development of the documentation in proportion to their expertise and relevance of the output to their representative body and its members.

Agreement within Working Parties shall normally be reached by consensus but, in the event of sustained failure to achieve consensus, the Agency shall request the parties in disagreement to document the case for their position and, taking account of the relative merits of the different options shall make a recommendation. The Agency shall document the different positions and the justification for its recommendation in the report that accompanies the final recommendation from the Working Party.

Support for Operational Activity

It is the role of the transverse functions of the Agency (Administration etc) to support and facilitate the operational functions in their achievement of the Agency's mission whilst at the same time maintaining compliance with European Community (EC) regulation and internal control requirements. All activities of the Agency will comply with the relevant EC rules and Regulations.

Internal Quality Control

To ensure quality and consistency all Agency activities covering more than one operational unit's area of expertise involve staff from all the competent units and all recommendations whether or not they involve more than one unit are subject to an internal review by all units before their final sign-off by the Executive Director.

6 Budget foreseen for 2009

Original Version

ERA STRATEGIC PILLARS	TA	CA	SNE	Title I (analytical breakdown)	Title II	Title III	Total Budget
I. Operations							
a. Activities							
Safety	30		3	3.114.307		1.200.000	4.314.307
Interoperability	31			3.032.117		1.262.000	4.294.117
ERTMS	13			1.271.533		915.000	2.186.533
Economic Evaluation	8	1		880.292		150.000	1.030.292
Cross acceptance	9			880.292		330.000	1.210.292
b. Operational expenditures						1.166.000	1.166.000
II. Management & Administration							
Directorate	9	1		978.102	100.000		1.078.102
Administration	32	3		3.423.357	2.297.000		5.720.357
Overall totals	132	5	3	13.580.000	2.397.000	5.023.000	21.000.000

Revised Version - June 2009

ERA STRATEGIC PILLARS	TA	CA	SNE	Title I (analytical breakdown)	Title II	Title III	Total Budget
III. Operations							
a. Activities							
Safety	29		4	2.981.694		1.200.000	4.181.694
Interoperability	30			2.960.373		1.262.000	4.222.373
ERTMS	12	1		1.282.828		915.000	2.197.828
Economic Evaluation	6	1		690.754		150.000	840.754
Cross acceptance	7		2	750.754		330.000	1.080.754
b. Operational expenditures						1.343.000	1.343.000
IV. Management & Administration							
Directorate	8	3		1.085.470	100.000		1.185.470
Administration	32	5		3.651.127	2.297.000		5.948.127
Overall totals	124	10	6	13.403.000	2.397.000	5.200.000	21.000.000

Further Revised Version – November 2009

ERA STRATEGIC PILLARS	TA	CA	SNE	Title I (analytical breakdown)	Title II	Title III	Total Budget
V. Operations							
a. Activities							
Safety	29		4	2.841.760		1.494.000	4.041.760
Interoperability	30			2.847.684		971.000	4.109.684
ERTMS	12	1		1.233.996		640.000	2.148.996
Economic Evaluation	6	1		664.460		100.000	814.460
Cross acceptance	7		2	708.960		265.000	1.038.960
b. Operational expenditures						1.790.850	1.378.850
VI. Management & Administration							
Directorate	8	4		1.139.075	70.000		1.209.075
Administration	32	6		3.607.065	2.687.000		6.319.065
Overall totals	124	12	6	13.043.000	2.757.000	5.260.850	21.060.850

7 Pillars, Activities

The Agency's 2008 Work Programme is divided in two strategic pillars covering several fields of activity. These are

- I. Operations**
- II. Management and Administration**

7.1 Pillar 1 – Operations

7.1.1 Introduction

The Agency's operational activities are its *raison d'être*. In carrying out these activities it occupies a unique position as the only meeting place for all the sector actors and has sole responsibility in the context of the functions and powers assigned to it.

Agency activities are of two different natures. In many cases, such as the drafting of TSIs or the creation of Common Safety Methods, the Agency is tasked with the development of recommendations for secondary legislation. In other cases the Agency's role is of a facilitative nature with the objective of promulgating guidance, disseminating information, experience and best practice or facilitating the convergence of national decision making.

In any given subject area the overall objective is often most effectively delivered by a mixture of these approaches.

7.1.2 Safety

Safety Assessment

Following the completion of the recommendation on the 1st set of Common Safety Methods, delivered in December 2007 to the Commission, the Agency will develop the second set of CSMs covering methods to check that the structural subsystems of the trans-European high-speed and conventional rail systems are operated and maintained in accordance with the relevant essential requirements. This is to be distinguished from the work, the Agency will perform in 2009, on the further development of the 1st set of CSM. This will consist to develop further the concepts of significant changes, of assessment bodies and of risk assessment criteria and to take into account the potential feedbacks from first implementations of the first set of CSMs. During 2009, the Agency will support the dissemination and implementation of the CSMs according to the progress of the adoption of the regulation...

Based on the recommendation on the calculation, assessment and enforcement methodologies to be used in the framework of the 1st set of Common Safety Targets, the Agency will deliver in 2009 the 1st set of values on National Reference Values and Common Safety Targets and start the development of the 2nd set of CSTs.

Assessment on safety related issues will also be carried out for different technical disciplines e.g. related to RID, ERTMS/ETCS or Interoperability in cooperation with different Sectors or Units within the Agency.

Safety Certification

In accordance to Directive 2004/49/EC and the respective mandate issued by the Commission the Agency will recommend in 2009 methods for assessing the conformity with requirements in safety certificates and safety authorisations. In addition the Agency will begin evaluating the development of safety certification and drafting a strategy towards a single Community Certificate. The Agency will also prepare a recommendation on a certification system for Entities in Charge of Maintenance for railway vehicles.

Future standards on Safety Management Systems addressed to the railway sector may bring additional benefits. To ensure the development of such standards in consistency with the above mentioned methods for conformity assessment the Agency will follow-up the work carried out by standardisation bodies and other stakeholders regarding the development of respective standards for Safety Management Systems in the railway sector.

The Driver Licensing Directive required the Agency to draft until end of 2008 a series of proposals regarding the certification of train drivers, which will be followed up by assistance of the Agency to the Commission and stakeholders of the sector during 2009 and thereafter.

Safety Regulation

During 2009 the Agency will continue with the evaluation of how National Safety Rules (NSRs) are published and made available in the Member States. Furthermore the Agency will provide assistance to the Member States on questions arising from the notification of NRSs and evaluate how these rules have been classified and registered in the public database provided for this purpose by the Agency. At the request of the Commission, committees and regulatory bodies the Agency will prepare technical opinions and continue to participate in the RID committee. The Agency will also assist the Commission in the evaluation of the implementation of the Railway Safety Directive in national law in the Member States.

Safety Reporting

To facilitate the exchange of experience between National Investigation Bodies (NIBs) the Agency will organise and support the network of NIBs in the development of harmonised methods and approaches for accident investigation and for common principles on drafting and follow-up of recommendations issued by NIBs. The Agency will begin preparation of the biennial report 2010 on safety performance in the EU. The work will also include the follow-up to the adoption of the recommendation on Common Safety Indicators issued in 2008 within the Member States and the co-operation with EUROSTAT in order to promote the consistency and quality of the data collected by EUROSTAT and the Agency.

Horizontal Safety Activities

The Agency will continue during 2009 to support the National Safety Authorities (NSAs) on harmonising decision making principles and on exchanging best practices. During 2009 four plenary meetings will be organised to inform and to consult the NSAs about the Agency activities on the field of safety, interoperability, ERTMS and cross-acceptance. Besides this networking, the organisation of taskforces for the annual reports and the ERTMS focus group to develop harmonised approaches will still continue. The peer review activity on part A safety certification of railway undertakings to promote mutual trust between NSAs will also be supported by the Agency. The cooperation between NIBs and NSAs will be further developed during 2009, especially on the field of safety recommendations and urgent safety notices.

7.1.3 Interoperability Unit

Drafting and Revision of Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs)

The Agency is required to produce proposals for new TSIs and to revise already adopted TSIs as identified in the two mandates given by the Commission C(2006) 124-final of 9 February 2006 and C(2007) 3371-final of 13 July 2007 pursuant to Art. 6 of the Interoperability Directive.

The remaining activities related to drafting new conventional rail TSIs will involve the following subjects: Passenger Carriages, Traction Units and Telematics Applications for Passengers.

The revision activities will first of all cover the following TSIs (revision of which commenced in 2008):

- Conventional rail TSIs: Freight Wagons TSI, and Operations TSI

Other TSIs will be revised according to the needs and as requested by the Commission:

- Conventional rail TSI Telematics Applications for Freight.
- High-speed rail TSIs: Operation TSI, Infrastructure TSI, Energy TSI, Rolling Stock TSI.
- Common high-speed and conventional rail TSIs: Noise TSI, Safety in Railway Tunnels TSI and People with Reduced Mobility TSI.

Technical Coordination

To support the development of the TSIs and ensure their efficient implementation, the Agency will continue to coordinate its TSIs related activities with the standardisation bodies, the bodies notified according to Article 28 of the Interoperability Directive (NoBos) and the NSAs.

The technical coordination with European standardisation bodies will ensure consistency between the TSIs drafting process and the standards development. When necessary, the Agency will make requests for development of new standards according to the general mandate to the standardisation bodies given by the Commission.

The coordination with the notified bodies will provide valuable feedback how to improve the conformity assessment of interoperability constituents and verification procedure for subsystems.

The cooperation with the NSAs on interoperability matters will help harmonise their decision-making principles and establish a mutual trust between them.

In addition to this, the Agency will support TSI implementation by providing when requested by the Commission, its technical opinions on critical errors, interpretative questions, derogations and refusal of placing in service of vehicle by NSA. The Agency will also carry out a technical examination of the new national technical rules submitted to the Commission.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Interoperability

The Agency will publish every two years a report on progress with interoperability. The first biennial report will be produced in [March-September](#) 2009. It will analyse a set of indicators to evaluate the European implementation of the TSIs and the overall progress towards interoperability.

Vocational Competences

The Agency will continue the activities related to vocational competences on common uniform criteria and the assessment of staff involved in the operation and the maintenance. In this respect attention is drawn to the development of common criteria regarding examiners and examinations, to the specification of minimum language competences a driver must have regarding the operational language as well as to the development of a system of accreditation of training centres.

Furthermore the Agency will deliver the report on the profile and tasks of other crew members performing safety-critical tasks to the Commission by June 2009 and initiate a structured cooperation amongst Member States in the implementation of the Driver Licensing Directive.

As foreseen by the Driver Licensing Directive Member States may request a cost-benefit analysis in regard to the application of the Directive provisions on drivers operating exclusively on national services of one Member State. The Agency will carry out such cost-benefit analysis upon request of the Commission on the basis of specific task requests that comply with article 37(5) of that Directive.

Registers and Databases

The interoperability database will be integrated in the Public Database in the first ~~quarter~~ semester of 2009. At that time, the NSAs will start to provide the required electronic data. The database will be made available to the public in the second ~~quarter in semester of~~ 2009. In respect of interoperability, the users will have access to the following information:

- the EC declarations of verification of subsystems;
- the EC declarations of conformity of constituents available to the national safety authorities;
- the national rules notified to the Commission;
- ~~the European register of authorised types of vehicles.~~
- the register of requests for changes and planned changes to ERTMS specifications;
- the register of vehicle keeper markings kept by the Agency in accordance with the TSI on operation and traffic management.

The database will also provide links to the ~~national vehicle register~~ European Centralised Virtual Vehicle Register (ECVVR), the European register of authorised types of vehicles (ERATV) and to the register of infrastructure registers (RoI) when they are ready.

~~In 2009, the Agency will make a proposal to change the content of the rolling stock and infrastructure register to take account of revision of the respective TSIs. The implementation phase will start after the decision of the RISC. The implementation of the rolling stock register will be used as a basis for the European register of authorised types of vehicles.~~

7.1.4 ERTMS Unit

The Agency will exert its role as the system authority for the specifications for the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) both for the European Train Control System (ETCS) and the European railway radio system - GSM-R.

It will manage the change control process for the ERTMS specifications and the configuration control of the reference baselines, ensuring their quality and completeness, and taking particular account of their relevance for safety-critical applications and the imperative to ensure full interoperability. This will include the maintenance of the ETCS version currently in force, and the development of a validated and stable set of specifications for the new ETCS Baseline 3, compatible with the current version as required separately by the Interoperability Directive and the expected changes to the Agency Regulation.

The Agency will start the examination of the procedures for verification and placing into service of ERTMS, with appropriate Working Parties with Notified Bodies and National Safety Authorities. When examining the placing into service, cooperation and coordination between the ERTMS and Cross Acceptance Unit will be ensured. It will also coordinate the work to assess the effectiveness of the test and certification processes.

The Agency will start the evaluation of the possible impact of the Commission Decision of 23/4/2008 and of the mechanism to be envisaged to facilitate the migration of ETCS projects to full compliance with said Decision, based on the information to be notified by the Member States no later than December 2008.

In 2009 the Agency will directly produce or supervise the production of the first draft of the System Requirement Specifications (SRS) for the ETCS Baseline 3, taking into account the results of the feasibility study on the formalization of the specifications. Immediately after this, the Agency will draft the specifications for the ETCS Engineering Rules, and the report on the test interfaces.

In this context we welcome and appreciate the commitments made by the sector and the Commission in the recent ERTMS Memorandum Of Understanding signed on the 4/7/2008 which are essential to enable the Agency to deliver according to expectations.

The Agency will also in 2009 issue-prepare the intermediate report, to be issued in 2010, on the revision of the TSI CCS for the High Speed and the Conventional Railway system, addressing the resolution of TSI Open Points in cooperation with the activities on Cross Acceptance .

7.1.5 Cross Acceptance Unit

A new activity for the Agency that started in 2008 and will get fully under way in 2009 is that of Cross Acceptance. Until all TSIs are complete and all subsystems comply with TSIs, there will be a need for National Technical Rules and all vehicle authorisations will be based upon a confirmation that the essential requirements have been met by a combination of checks against European rules (TSIs) by a European Notified Body and checks against national rules by a body designated by the Member State.

It is the task of the Cross Acceptance Unit to facilitate the mutual recognition of these national rules, national checks and national authorisations. Work in 2009 will follow three themes; facilitating a common understanding of the processes to be applied for vehicle acceptance, producing recommendations in respect of the parameters to be checked for acceptance and facilitating the mutual recognition of national technical rules by the production of the first draft of a document cross-referencing the equivalence of the different national rules.

7.1.6 Economic Evaluation Unit

The Economic Evaluation unit assesses all Agency recommendations, regarding expected costs and benefits these recommendations may generate. This activity is carried out in close cooperation with the Working Parties of the Agency, since proper economic assessment can only be based on sufficient technical understanding. The objectivity of the assessments carried out is ensured by the early drafting and

publishing of methodology documents, long before the Working Parties come to conclusions. The explanatory parts of impact assessment reports provide to a large audience, as we hope, a proper understanding of the recommendation as well as of the general objectives of European railway policy.

The Economic Evaluation unit will now capitalize on its well-established methodologies, and focus on improving its perception by the stakeholders involved by making an efficient use of the wealth of facts and figures they provide to the Agency. The Database for Rail Economic Analysis Management (DREAM database) project is a step into that direction, footing on previous work done by the former European Association for Rail Interoperability (AEIF). This database will be the subject of a feasibility study in 2008, and is conceived as the aggregation of already available, but scattered, data.

The Economic Evaluation Unit will further continue to contribute to assessments organized by the Commission, upon request. Though incidental, these tasks present an excellent opportunity to share best practices.

7.2 Pillar II - Administration & Support Services

7.2.1 Communications and Corporate affairs

In 2009, the focus of the external communications programme will be on proactive relations with the railway specialist press, with advertising campaigns in specialist press and a visit of specialist journalists to the Agency. A press and media monitoring contract will help track the Agency's message in relevant magazines and newspapers, as well as keeping staff informed of developments in the sector. There will be continued development of the public website and extranet. As the communications needs will increase in parallel to the changing mandates of the Agency, emphasis will also be put on providing high quality internal communication and publications services, including continued development of the intranet. To better interact with stakeholders, the Agency will be present with a stand, information material and access to experts at two to three major international conferences.

7.2.2 Human Resource

The recruitment function will also in 2009 be of vital importance. It is essential that new posts are promptly filled and it must also be expected that, as the Agency matures, the turnover of staff will increase. In addition 2009 is the year when the first tranche of contracts for temporary agents is up for renewal. In this context consideration will need to be given to what extent use shall be made of the possibility of employing experts for up to eight years provided by the anticipated amendments to the Agency Regulation.

The introduction of an IT solution to facilitate the management of Human Resources should enable the Agency to streamline many administrative procedures, improve the quality of the support provided and at the same time make better use of resources. Already, the Agency has adopted a significant number of the rules required for the proper implementation of the Staff Regulations. With the additional staff recruited in the course of 2008, it is the aim to put in place all rules relevant for the Agency during 2009. In addition, an extra effort will be made to improve the documentation and implementation of internal procedures.

Based on the experience from 2008 the staff appraisal and reclassification procedures will be improved providing expert advice and guidance notably in the planning phase of the performance management process. Streamlined job descriptions, more specific job-oriented objectives and extra emphasis on training needs will be adopted as part of these improvements.

7.2.3 Finance, Accounting and Procurement

Following the planning made by the Commission, the ABAC accounting system will be introduced in 2009. This means that all staff involved in its use will need to undergo training. As this is likely to happen in the course of the year a major effort will have to be made to reduce the impact on the daily work.

In co-operation with the Internal Auditor the work on improvement of the financial administration in general will be given high priority together with the implementation of the provisions of the new framework Financial Regulation to be adopted in 2008.

Depending on the available solutions, it is intended to put in place an application to support the procurement function during 2009.

7.2.4 Information Technology

The IT sector faces the challenge of putting in place a number of new IT systems to be used by staff both within the Agency and more broadly by the Member States and Railway Sector. It must also maintain a high level of performance of the IT systems used for the daily work of the Agency (e-mail, finance, HR etc)

A key challenge for 2009 is the maintenance and enhancement of existing databases and registers and the setting up of the new databases and registers required by the amended directives which include the Virtual Vehicle Register, the Register of Authorised Types, the registers of verification declarations of subsystems and declarations of conformity of interoperability constituents, the registers of licences, safety certificates and accident investigation report, the registers of national rules, the register of ERTMS change requests, and the register of Vehicle Keeper markings. This will be done in parallel with improvements to the Agency's collaborative spaces (the web site, extranet and internet) which are to be integrated with the Agency's document management system.

7.2.5 Premises and Facilities

The new headquarters in Valenciennes will be ready at the beginning of the year. This will lead to a very considerable and critically needed improvement of the physical working conditions for the staff. A major challenge in this context will be to make sure that the interruption of the daily work caused by the removal will be kept at a minimum. At the new premises there will also be much better facilities for arranging external and internal meetings, providing training etc. The increasing number of normal working party meetings, however, will need to continue to be held in Lille where it is expected that the extension with another meeting room in 2008 shall suffice for 2009.

Part 2 - Table of Activities by task