2020 Vision and Action Plan

August 2012

Contents

1. The Case for Change

1.1 AET was formed in 1998 and was born out of the European Transport Forum formally known as the PTRC Professional Association. AET is currently a small membership-led networking organisation that runs a highly-successful annual conference, European Transport Conference (ETC), through a mix of outsourced management services and the energy, commitment and donation of resources by its members. The Association has developed and grown over the last 14 years and has successfully delivered the aims of the two previous business plans.

1.2 It is, however, the degree of participation, energy and commitment of the membership and the dedicated hands-on management approach that is unique and that has kept the show on the road over the last 14 years. This is a huge strength for a not-for-profit organisation, and, whatever we decide to do in future, it needs to be maintained and built on. Significant growth could challenge the survival of this model and of the organisation as we currently know and appreciate it. The current model relies on willing volunteers – the Board, the Council Members, the Ambassadors and the Programme Committee Members. Taking on new initiatives, such as Theme Specific seminars and providing other products, could place a major strain on the capacity of the Association to deliver.

1.3 In order to realise our vision for 2020, there may be a need to change the structure of the Association and to increase our/its capacity to deliver a wider set of aims – such as a wider set of conferences/seminars/events, a wider range of services, increase the membership and widen the range of support and extend our influence – this would require an increase in the Associations capacity and, perhaps, a different way of working.

1.4 This vision for 2020 involves progressing in stages from the current organisation and capacity to one which, while still being driven and supported by its members, is able to deliver a larger range of services to those members. To deliver this the Association may need to increase its capacity to deliver, including the possibility of appointing permanent staff and securing additional resources to support governance changes.

2.   Vision Statement

BY 2020:

AET will be a key influencer, contributor to and shaper of the debate connecting transport policy, practice and research at the European level

AET will achieve this goal by;

♦   Bringing together researchers, policy makers and practitioners around ideas and visions of transport at European, national, regional and local level;

♦   Managing and influencing the debates on developments in and related to transport policy, practice and research;

♦   Building coalitions with like-minded organisations around shared objectives; and

♦   Articulating the shared perspectives and priorities of key stakeholders in politics, administration, business and academia.

AET will create outcomes by;

♦   Delivering a range of state of the art conferences, seminars and networking products;

♦   Presenting the facts on transport based on the leading-edge research of its members;

♦   Harnessing the full potential of electronic, web and social media;

♦   Promoting and disseminating the highest standards in published technical and analytical work; and

♦   Generating and commissioning high quality research from its members.

AET will involve and engage its members by:

♦   Being relevant to its membership, stakeholders and like-minded organisations;

♦   Recruiting a more diverse, inclusive and representative Europe-wide membership;

♦   Harnessing the motivation, energy and commitment of its members; and

♦   Achieving the highest standards of corporate governance for not-for-profit organisations.

3.   Future Products and Activities

EUROPEAN TRANSPORT CONFERENCE (ETC) – THE FLAGSHIP EVENT FOR AET

3.1   The European Transport Conference (ETC) is the flagship event successfully organised by AET since 1998. The unique format of the conference has proved very successful and, following 30 years of being held at various Universities in the UK, in 2003, moved to mainland Europe and now has an established programme of successively relocating to different locations in Europe on a three-yearly cycle.

3.2   AET will continue to develop and market ETC to be the leading "must attend" conference for all those interested in transport policy, practice and research, including relocating the conference on a three-year cycle to locations which inspire the objectives of the organisation.

3.3   In addition to ETC there is scope for AET to develop and market a range of other conferencing and networking events and products which would complement and strengthen the success of ETC, building upon the knowledge networks and capabilities of the membership.

3.4   With a strengthened and reinvigorated membership organisation AET could provide additional products and services that could enhance the membership experience and that could help shape and influence the debate on transport including:

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO BE PROMOTED BY AET

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	PRIORITISATION
Complementary Conferences and Events Develop complementary conference and workshop events in targeted locations in Europe, harnessing the cooperation of local members and professional organisations, the resource of specialist thematic committees and collaboration where appropriate with other like-minded organisations.	Green
Communications, Networking, Dialogue Harness the potential of new media, including social media, web-based and video communications technology to develop tailored networking, communications and information-sharing	Green

tools and opportunities which contribute to the achievement of the organisation's objectives.	Green
Develop a policy of active collaboration and cooperation with its major stakeholders and like-minded organisations to enhance dialogue and discussion on transport matters with a view to framing a debating space that highlights the importance of transport policy, practice and research and positions it at the heart of the European conversation. AET could play a leading shaping and influencing role in framing and managing this debating space, harnessing the resources and expertise of its members.	Green
Publication Publish the outputs of its conferencing events in a suitable affiliated journal, including papers and presentations using all appropriate media channels subject to copyright	Green
Publish and promote the collective expertise of its membership. The Specialist Committees will report on the state of the expert knowledge in their area on an annual/ regular basis and this will be published and used as a resource to promote the organisation and its conferencing events	Red
Commission Research Commission customised research on key emerging areas, which will be published and used as a resource to promote the organisation and its conferencing events.	Red
Training and Education Develop training and education resources and products that are tailored to the members' interests and that can be delivered in a targeted way to meet the needs of members.	Red/ Amber
Professional Accreditation Develop and promote a Europe-wide recognisable professional title – European Transport Professional (ETP), which will be awarded based on educational and professional achievement in contributing to the improvement of the interests of European Transport.	Red

	
Collaboration Collaborate with its stakeholders, including the EU Commission and national governments, to incentivise and encourage active involvement and support by national government departments and agencies of AET activities on a Europe wide basis and of specific conferencing events and opportunities.	Green
Creation of Research Networks Work to collaborate with its major stakeholders, including the EU Commission, to develop a research resource network or research observatory to explore key research themes, such as urban mobility, the role of transport in city competitiveness and transport in urban areas.	Green

Note Items in RED: Items were considered but will not be brought forward as a priority in the term of this plan.

.

4. Future Organisational Structure and Governance

4.1 As currently organised AET draws on the voluntary commitment and energy of its membership which ensures that the services offered are relevant and grounded in the needs of its membership. However the organisation, as currently structured, may well be challenged to continue to deliver the existing services in addition to meeting the ambitions of this new AET Vision.

4.2 It is therefore timely to consider the changes that may be required to enable the organisation to achieve its new vision and the steps that may be required to manage the processes of change in an orderly and inclusive fashion while retaining the voluntary commitment of all the members.

THE ROLE OF BOARD, COUNCIL AND SUPPORTING STAFF RESOURCES

4.3 In order to prepare for meeting the challenges of the future, AET should:

♦ Put in place structures of governance that are appropriate to managing and delivering change, including the recruitment of staff and additional resources, appropriate to support governance changes required to support the Board in achieving the organisation's vision;

♦ Identify and secure robust sources of funding to support the ongoing development and the achievement of the vision; and

♦ Adopt a governance model that is appropriate to the fulfilment of the organisation's objectives, the needs of its members and meeting and, where possible, exceeding all its legal, financial reporting, moral and ethical obligations.

DEVELOPING THE ROLE OF PROGRAMME COMMITTEES IN A WIDER AET

4.4 The existing ETC Programme Committees provide a membership asset that could be harnessed to deliver significant future benefits for the Association in supporting the realisation of the vision. There is an opportunity to reorganise the Programme Committees for example to develop specific outputs that could be used to highlight and promote the Associations objectives.

4.5 It is envisaged that the Board could support and work with existing Programme Committees to develop and lead new initiatives in specialist thematic areas. These committees would provide a membership-led resource to develop and inform a corporate view and position papers in relation to relevant expert subject matters, and they would report to the Board and Council on an annual basis. They could be supported by appropriate staff resources in carrying out their functions. The Board

could also form, as necessary, other Committees or Committee Structures, specific to the organisation of ETC and any other new activities that develop.

4.6   The Board would have to provide leadership in clarifying the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships within the organisation to ensure that the transition can be managed smoothly. The Board and Council should also consider how best to adapt their working arrangements, including the numbers of meetings required appropriate to the needs of a changing organisation and meeting all its governance responsibilities.

5.   A Road Map of Key Steps and Phasing

5.1   The Vision for AET will be best achieved by progressively scaling a Ladder of Ambition that traces the key challenges for the organisation and its membership. The active participation and contribution of an expanded membership to progress up the ladder of ambition will be critical to harnessing the motivational energy and commitment that is required to achieve the vision. A review of progress on the Vision should be reported to the membership on an annual basis.

5.2   Three major phases are foreseen in developing the organisation to address the challenges of change and to achieve the vision:

PHASE 1 - CONSOLIDATION AND PLANNING

5.3   In this initial phase AET should focus on:

- ♦ Increasing and broadening the membership,
- ♦ Improving the quality, management and effectiveness of current activities,
- ♦ Planning and putting in place the organisational changes required to move the organisation in the agreed direction of the AET Vision,
- ♦ Building support and buy-in from the enlarged membership and key stakeholders;
- ♦ Developing pilot experiments of new conference or networking products which should demonstrate the potential for expansion; and
- ♦ Securing a sustainable funding base for expansion.

5.4   The timing of the recruitment of appropriate staff resources may need to be linked to securing robust and sustainable funding.

PHASE 2 - DEVELOPMENT OF ENHANCED ROLE FOR AET

5.5   With a secure funding base and appropriate staff resources to support membership delivery of the vision, AET could then:

- ♦ Expand the range of its conferencing and networking products to meet the needs of a widened and more diverse membership,
- ♦ Develop its advocacy and influencing role through the publication and dissemination of its state-of-the-art expertise as expressed through the specialist thematic committees; and
- ♦ Collaborate with its major stakeholders at EU and national level to develop a pan-European research resource on urban transport.

PHASE 3 – EXPANSION TO MEET VISION

5.6 Working with like-minded organisations on agreed objectives, AET could then:

♦ Begin to shape and influence the debate on transport policy, practice and research;

♦ Through the evolving role of AET's conferencing and networking products in particular, include greater cooperation in terms of themes and timing with the activities of like minded organisations in order to reinforce key messages in the European transport debate;

♦ Through the Thematic committees, publish state-of-the-art summaries and position papers on transport issues on a regular basis;

♦ Develop and market the ETC as Europe's premier "must-attend" conference for a widened membership, including key decision makers and influencers at all levels;

♦ Ensure that the ETC and other conferencing products become the channel of choice for academics, business leaders, decision makers and members to publish launch or announce new ideas and initiatives on transport.

TIMING

5.7 The speed of progress up the ladder of ambition is a matter for the membership and is reliant on the openness to change and the willingness of the organisation to embrace a new vision and its ability to adapt as required to accommodate the envisaged changes.

5.8 The three major phases are envisaged to occur within the following time frames

♦ Consolidation and Planning 2 years

♦ Development of Enhanced Role for AET 3 - 5 years

♦ Expansion to meet Vision 5 -10 years

5.9 While it envisaged that the vision could be achieved within a 10 year timeframe, there are key milestones to be achieved within the initial phase which are critical to enabling the organisation to move to the later stages.

5.10 The Board and Council should adopt a realistic but stretching target programme for the achievement of the vision.

6. Key Actions

6.1   The key actions that are likely to be required to implement the vision commence with the adoption of this vision document as the agreed roadmap towards 2020.

6.2   The widespread publication and dissemination of the Vision amongst the membership and major stakeholders is likely to be very important for communicating our intentions, building internal support and preparing for change.

6.3   The key initial actions in the first phase should include:

♦   Clarifying the roles and strengthening the operation of the Council and Board, including increasing the capacity for decision making and implementing change (Q1 2012);

♦   Securing the continued success of ETC in terms of contract management arrangements, future venues, membership engagement and involvement, marketing pricing and positioning (Q2 2012);

♦   Outlining and implementing a plan for engaging with stakeholders and potential funders and secure a framework for funding expansion based on the Vision document(Q4 2012);

♦   Outlining and implementation of a plan for engaging with the membership to encourage even greater and wider involvement in the organisation's activities to ensure that all new activities are supported by sustainable levels of active member involvement (Q2 2012)

♦   Seeking formal affiliation with a suitable journal to raise AET's visibility and strengthen its attraction among its academic constituency (2013)

♦   Developing a range of new smaller events in new locations regionally scaled, harnessing the energy and commitment of local members, institutions and potential sponsors (Q1 2013);

♦   Establishing Specialist Thematic Committees based on the ETC Programme Committees and canvassing/recruiting from existing and future membership (2013); and

♦   Recruitment and appointment of appropriate staff and additional resources who will have the vision understanding and leadership ability to support the organisation in delivering the vision (2013).

7. Choices and Recommendations

7.1 AET has successfully organised the European Transport Conference since its establishment in 1998 and it has successfully delivered on its last Business Plan 2006 – 2010.

7.2 AET now has the opportunity to consider its current role, purpose and objectives as a membership-led organisation and to consider where the organisation will be, or where it could be, in 2020.

7.3 There is an opportunity for AET to raise the level of its ambition and to move to a new position as a key influencer, contributor to and shaper of the debate on transport policy, practice and research at a European and global level, thereby giving expression to the considerable knowledge expertise and vision of its membership in contributing to making a better society.

7.4 In the broadest terms there are three choices open to the Association:

♦ Do nothing and continue as we are; or

♦ Develop and expand working within the constraints of our existing context and resources as a membership-led organisation; or

♦ Implement a new Vision and plan by expanding our membership, activities and reputation to become a key influencer, contributor to, and shaper of the transport agenda.

7.5 There are risks associated with the first two options relating to the vitality, energy and continued relevance of a small membership-led organisation and to the third option in relation to securing the funding to employ staff resources together with related corporate responsibilities and risks to take us to the next level.

8. AET Action Plan

The Board of AET should, in the context of commencing the implementation of the AET Vision, pay particular attention to the steps outlined for Phase 1 – Consolidation and Planning.

8.1 To do this the Board should establish a dedicated resource to oversee the implementation of the action plan and allocate financial and personnel resources adequate to the task. For now and until it decides otherwise the AET Board will act as the dedicated resource. The first task of this group should be to establish and mobilise the required resources and agree qualitative and quantitative metrics to monitor progress including timelines and financial targets. The action plan will include the following principal elements:

A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

1   To tell everyone (members and stakeholders) about the changes that are coming and where AET is going

2   To explain the initial steps that are going to be carried out over the next while and what the next critical decision for them is going to be

3   To develop, craft and pitch the correct message to communicate the foregoing and to create a clear distinction between AET and ETC

4   To invite and encourage proactive feedback and response

AN INITIATIVE TO INCREASE, BROADEN AND DEEPEN THE MEMBERSHIP

1   Reviewing website and all promotional material to incorporate the vision, our aspirations and what we are doing to get there - review/update every 6 months

2   Supporting Ambassadors – targeted support to find out what more they need to promote AET and what would convince people to join us in preference to or as well as other networks.

3   Develop commitment to AET's vision and programme and articulate the opportunities to participate – in Council, in   Programme Committees including specific opportunities for seminars in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, and activities that will help broaden membership among young and female practitioners

4   Generate additional content material to:

a. Tackle age and gender balance
b. Convey why we are different, especially that the organization is member-owned and member-driven, and why we consider it important broaden our "base".
c. Convey to ETC Programme Committees the need to not only get a better geographical balance of papers but also to favour both young and female presenters.

AN INITIATIVE TO DELIVER NEW EVENTS AND NETWORKING PRODUCTS

1   Keep processes within AET efficient and monitor activities and effects

2   Move away from discussion forums and become more stringent/disciplined

3   We should have an objective and reasoning for each new product experiment or test case.

4   We should have a target group with clear expectations on both the 'client' and AET's side.

5   We should be aware of expected cost, income and risk, including non-monetary effort where voluntary work of AET members is involved.

6   Effects need to be measured and evaluated (by regular process including Board and Council), with the opportunity to modify approaches from the lessons learnt under a regular scheme.

7   Particularly attract practitioners (who, as corporate members, also create significant income)

8   Test networking through special interest forums on the website and occasionally through smaller events (e. g. along PC meetings)

9   Use a business case approach where organisational changes would requires AET financial exposure.

AN INITIATIVE TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT IN AET THROUGH THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEES WHICH WILL HAVE AN EXPANDED ROLE

1   The current Programme Committees will continue to be an important way for members to contribute actively to the planning and preparation of ETC and there is now an opportunity to develop and expand the roles of some Committees within a wider AET to take on and lead new initiatives;

2   To define the role of the thematically organised Committees in AET;

3   To support the committees in planning and preparing the future initiatives, events and products of AET;

4   To support these committees with appropriate full time or contracted professional resources as required in consultation with the Board;

5   To identify, clarify and recommend any necessary changes to fulfil AET's obligations and protect its liabilities to enable it to become an employer in due course;

6   To define the scope of the staff roles if required to support the Board in achieving the organisation's vision.

AN INITIATIVE TO ENGAGE AND COMMUNICATE WITH THIRD PARTIES WITH SHARED OBJECTIVES WITH A VIEW TO ESTABLISHING LONG TERM FUNDING PARTNERSHIPS

1   Identify and recruit additional expertise onto the Board in the areas of corporate not-for-profit funding

2   This person(s) would ideally have significant skills and experience in not for profit fund raising but also have knowledge experience and understanding of AET as well as knowledge and experience of the sectoral environment in which AET wishes to operate.

3   Appoint a dedicated working group to develop a long term funding strategy within one year. The working group should draw on the wealth of experience within AET including previous engagements with third party funders. Actions should include but not be limited to the following;
a. Identify a range of potential funders with similar or compatible objectives
b. Identify and implement a strategy for developing relations with new potential funders and strengthening relationships with existing potential funders
c. Prepare a concise focussed and fully costed business plan to outline what AET offers to potential funders
d. Engage in initial dialogue with a range of funders and identify the range of options that best support the achievement of the AET Vision
e. Report back to Assembly with costed and fundable proposals.

8.2   The Board should also report on progress on an annual basis to the General Assembly and at least twice yearly to the AET Council.