MERIDIAN Newsletter IX, November 2026

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Welcome to Cork

Throwback to the Steering Committee in Cork – On 6 October 2026, MERIDIAN partners gathered in Cork for the final Steering Committee Meeting.

Björn Siebert (Die Autobahn) welcomed all participants to the final MERIDIAN Steering Committee Meeting in Cork and presented the agenda.

Opening remarks were given by José María Díez (CINEA), Dr Achim Reußwig (Die Autobahn) and Robert Cazaciuc (Department of Transport).

José María Díez thanked the partners for their work. Dr Achim Reußwig highlighted the important contribution of the project and stressed that cooperation is essential. Robert Cazaciuc welcomed the participants to Cork. He referred to Ireland's EU Council Presidency and its motto "strength through unity", and to the goal of reducing road fatalities.

Björn Siebert noted that MERIDIAN has also addressed Smart Cycling, a topic that continues to gain importance. The work on Smart Cycling does not stop with the end of MERIDIAN but is being continued in the VERKKO Working Group 1.03.1. He also looked back on the many workshops offered and held within MERIDIAN, which contributed to knowledge building and networking among the partners. He expressed the hope that this exchange will continue in the future.

Björn Siebert then explained the organisation of the rest of the day. After the SCM, participants met at 16:00 in front of the Clayton Hotel Cork City for the bus transfer to the joint VERKKO & MERIDIAN social event. In the evening, a joint dinner at the Clayton Hotel Cork City marked MERIDIAN's five-year journey and its successful conclusion.

The MERIDIAN short film was shown during the dinner. Some final work on the film is still pending.

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WP1 Project Management

Natalie Strohschein presented the status of the MERIDIAN Milestones and Deliverables. Of the 140 Milestones, 81% have been reached and 19% are delayed. Of the 49 Deliverables, 65% have been completed and 35% are delayed.

According to the current partner forecasts, 36 Milestones and Deliverables are expected to be finalised by the end of the project, 20 of them in December 2026. Partners were asked to inform their NC of any expected delays as early as possible and to prepare the related Cover Sheets in good time.

Since the last SCM in Trieste, six Milestones have been reached. Two Deliverables were presented for formal acceptance: D3 (D1.03 – Proposal for a harmonised ITS benefit assessment methodology for ITS corridor projects) and D6 (D1.06 – Capitalisation 2 Report). The voting was conducted via QR code. All partners had received the Cover Sheets in advance. Both Deliverables were accepted with 26 votes in favour. As no objections were received from absent Steering Committee members until the vote, the Deliverables are considered unanimously accepted.

Björn Siebert presented the upcoming events.

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MERIDIAN Updates

Henri Schlüter gave an update on the financial status of the project.

CINEA has confirmed that RP02 has been finalised; only a few small costs were rejected. Taking the large pre-financing into account, the project has reached the 90% funding cap, so not all costs will be paid out immediately.The partners were provided with an overview of the RP02 payment amounts. The payment will be made by BMV this year as agreed upon by all partners.

According to CINEA, no amendment will be needed, as the same procedure as in CEF I will be applied. This means that 100% completion of the tasks is essential: budget can only be shifted into and out of tasks that are 100% completed. To our current understanding, this will be considered per partner specifically. Overall progress reporting should therefore reach 100% and be well explained. Shifts between cost categories are generally possible, and according to CINEA, subcontracting can also be shifted without an amendment. However, all changes, especially larger ones, need to be explained. CINEA is expected to apply simple procedures to determine the financing cap, thus we should keep reporting clear and simple, too.

For the project closure, a Final Report and a Final Financial Report are required. Costs need to be certified if the uncertified claims cumulatively exceed €650,000. Partners are to specifically take care that the CFS is done properly and reflects the audited/certified period on the document. Certificates with errors will negatively impact the financial reporting of the affected partner.

Partners were asked to report any major delays or underspending. Some partners can take over the underspending of others; thanks to the expected finalisation procedure, this can be allocated after finalisation, once the final figures are known.

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Task 1.05 – Evaluation

Luca Studer (Politecnico di Milano, on behalf of SINA S.p.A.) presented the results of the Final Evaluation Report. The number of evaluated implementations was reduced from 17 to 10.

For each implementation, the results were presented by impact area (safety, traffic efficiency, environment, modal integration), together with a cost-benefit analysis where data was available:

IT_AMLO (T5.05), Port of La Spezia: the average access delay at the Stagnoni Gate fell to 4.34 minutes, compared with about 31 minutes before (−86%).

IT_PAT (T4.15), “Viaggiare in Trentino”: total benefits of €371,000–641,000 were estimated over 33 months, mainly from time savings.

IT_PEAS (T5.06), Port of Trieste: the average gate transit time for loaded inbound trucks fell by 19% (from 4:06 to 3:19 minutes). No cost-benefit analysis was carried out due to missing data.

LV_LSR (T2.04), Latvia: 72 modernised counting points cover about 1,182 km of the TEN-T network. The benefits are indirect and were assessed qualitatively.

IE_TII (T4.07), Cork Jack Lynch Tunnel: the number of detected incidents rose from 92 to 636, the mean incident duration fell by 23.4%, and collisions per 100 million vehicles fell by 33.6%.

NL_MIN (T2.08), Data Turbo Pipeline: a faster incident response saves about 288,000 vehicle loss hours per year, with annual benefits of €4.3 million compared with costs of €0.8 million.

BE_FL (T3.01), Mobilidata: more than 80% of users found the services useful, informed drivers reduce their speed by about 4 km/h near hazards, and the benefits exceed the costs 16 to 25 times.

DE_AB (T3.02), C-ITS Road Works Warning: vehicles clearly reduce their speed after receiving the warning. A cost-benefit analysis is not yet finalised, as the roll-out was only completed in 2025.

DE_AB (T4.03), Strategic Corridor Management: Evaluation was carried out.

IT_AMAR (T5.04), Port of Ravenna, is also part of the evaluation, but no detailed results were presented.

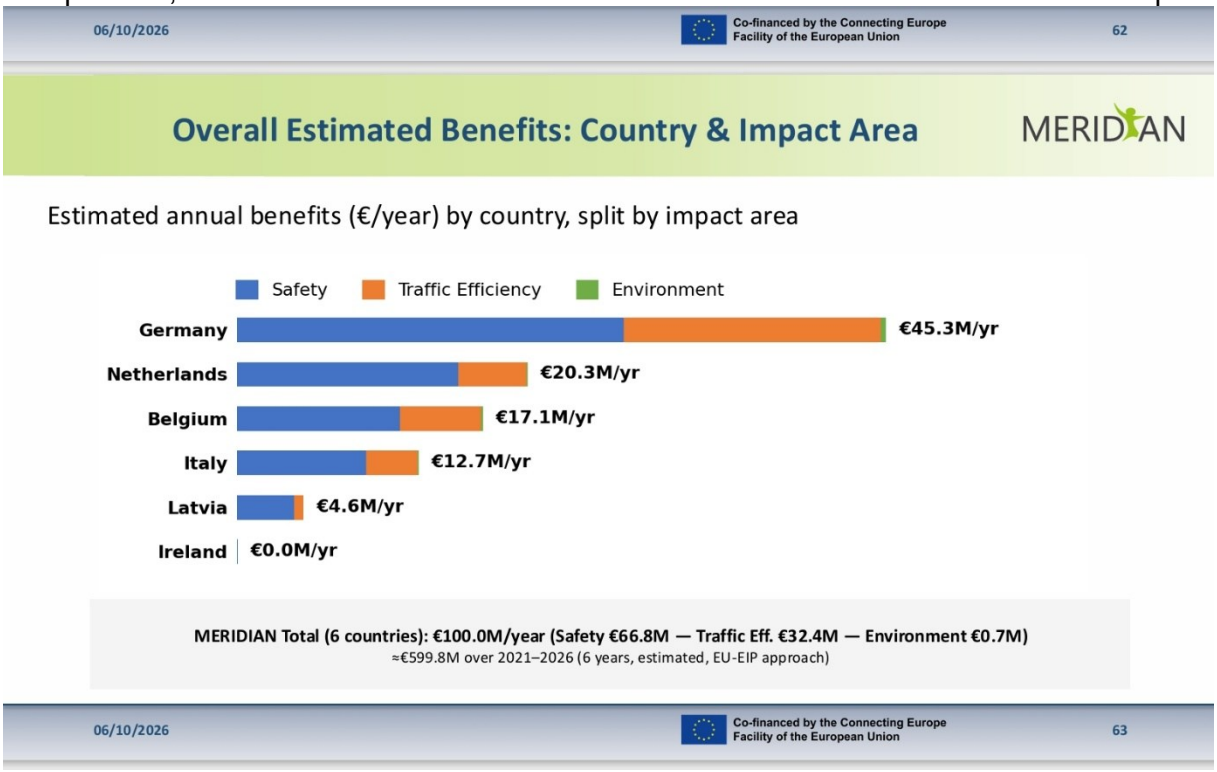
Finally, the overall estimated benefits for MERIDIAN were presented. Based on the EU-EIP approach, the benefits amount to about €100 million per year (safety €66.8 million, traffic efficiency €32.4 million, environment €0.7 million), or about €600 million over 2021–2026. With an investment of €131.5 million, this corresponds to a return on investment of about 16 months.

After the presentation, the influence of political interventions on traffic compared with the effects of ITS was discussed. It was also noted that the results of the individual evaluations cannot be directly compared with the overall MERIDIAN results.

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As planned, the feedback will be used to finalise the Final Evaluation Report.



MERIDIAN Implementation Success Pitches

Two Irish implementations were presented.*

Munya Mutyora (Arup) presented Task 4.07 "Deployment of ITS and C-ITS equipment at approaches to Cork's Jack Lynch Tunnel". The project covers 26.8 km of the N40, N25, M8 and N8. The ITS deployment was completed in 2022, and the C-ITS deployment is scheduled to be completed by December 2026. Since 2019, the number of detected incidents has risen from 92 to 636, the mean incident duration has fallen by 23.4%, and collisions per 100 million vehicles have fallen by 36.8%, despite traffic growth. The corridor has moved from passive monitoring to active traffic management.

*no monetised results yet

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Gorkem Yetik (Arup, on behalf of TII) presented Task 4.06 “M7/N7 ITS Deployments”. The 32 km M7/N7 corridor is one of the main routes into Dublin and carries more than 100,000 vehicles per day. MERIDIAN turns it into one integrated digital corridor with a fibre and wireless backbone, CCTV, VMS, ANPR and automatic incident detection, all connected to TII’s control centre. Three innovations were highlighted. First, the fibre is being tested as a traffic sensor (Distributed Acoustic Sensing) on about 13.5 km, a first in Ireland. Second, C-ITS roadside units cover almost the whole corridor. Third, ANPR cameras were tested for detecting wrong-way drivers. As ANPR produced too many false positives, the Irish wrong-way driver trials in VERKKO now focus on other technologies. Measured results will follow after the deployment.

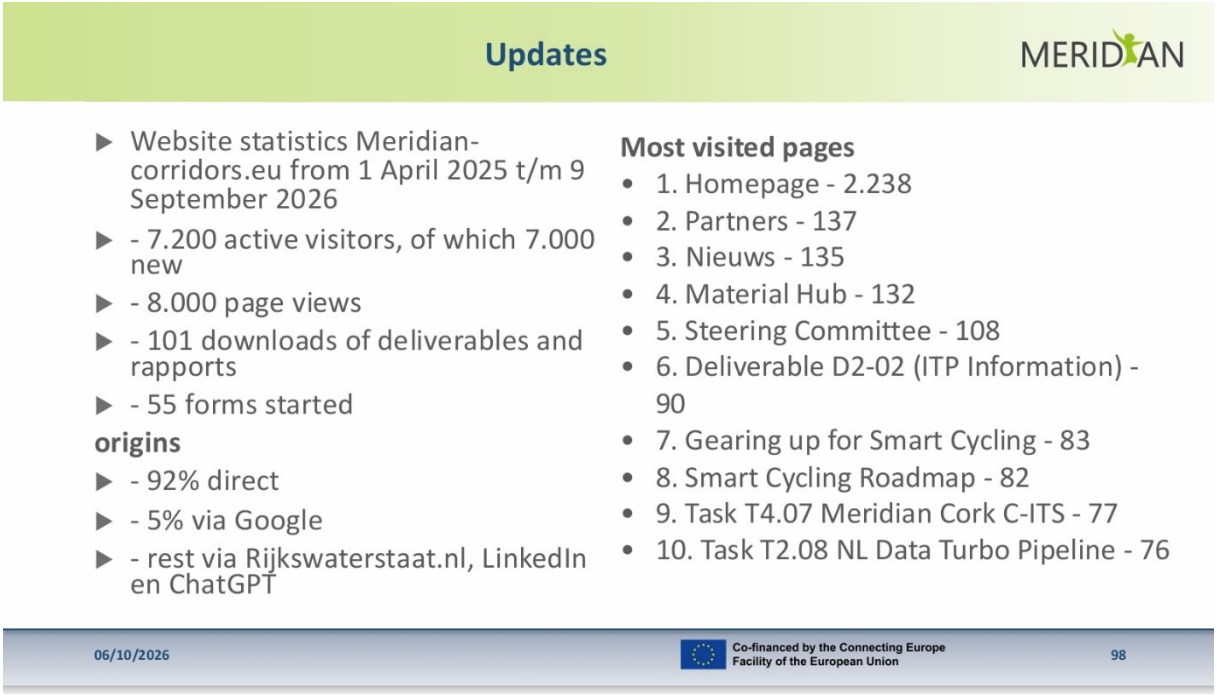


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Task 1.02 – Communication

Peter van Dop gave an update on the communication activities. Between 1 April 2025 and 9 September 2026, the MERIDIAN website had about 7,200 active visitors, 8,000 page views and 101 downloads of Deliverables and reports. Most visitors access the website directly; the website is also found via Google and AI tools such as ChatGPT. The LinkedIn page now has 108 followers (93 at the SCM in Trieste). The Deliverables have been uploaded to the website, and the website host has changed to designrs.de. This work will continue in the coming months, so make sure you check our website regularly. www.meridian-corridors.eu



Partners are invited to submit their projects on LinkedIn with the tag @meridian EU corridor.

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Task 1.03 – Cross Corridor Cooperation

Björn Siebert gave an update on cross-corridor cooperation. A joint statement of the corridor projects underlines that large-scale deployment of ITS and C-ITS, European cooperation and interoperable solutions remain essential. Events and status updates will continue to be shared, while other topics will be moved to VERKKO.

The joint statement was published in the week before the Connecting Europe Days in Brussels. In Brussels, VERKKO also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with C-Roads and MATIS 2, which was announced on LinkedIn.

Updates were given on related projects and initiatives: MATIS has a new project coordinator, and its amendment is still pending; MATIS 2 is in its starting phase. The X4ITS amendment, including a prolongation until August 2028, has been submitted to CINEA; the next X4ITS SCOM has taken place in Prague on 22 October 2026. NAPCORE is setting up the NAPCORE Academy and is focusing on multimodal and cycling data. TISGRADE is preparing pre-deployment validations, and C-Roads cross-border tests are taking place starting October 2026.
In addition, the European Commission's proposal for CEF 3 (2028–2034) was presented, which foresees €51 billion for transport, double the current amount, with a strong focus on cross-border corridors and military mobility.

It was asked whether the data from the MERIDIAN and C-Roads deployments is available on the NAPs, and what lessons have been learned. Björn Siebert explained that C-Roads puts the European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (EDIC) at the centre, and that delivery of data sets in a high quality to NAPs plays a more important role in other projects than in MERIDIAN. Nevertheless, MERIDIAN cooperates with NAPCORE to gather insights and give feedback where available.

Closing

Björn Siebert thanked all partners for five years of good cooperation, the Irish hosts for their hospitality, and all participants for their active contributions.

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Last words (Björn Siebert)

If someone asks me, "What has been achieved with MERIDIAN?" I would say: Just look around— it was about building and sharing knowledge. We had ports participating in a working group on truck parking to find solutions for their capacity issues. Representatives from road operators, regions, and ministries visited a port for the very first time. We tackled topics that weren't in the original Grant Agreement, such as "Smart Cycling." We even held workshops on AI back in2024 - at a time when the subject wasn't yet a major focus. Furthermore, there were workshops on cybersecurity, digital twins, multimodality, data protection and security, digital infrastructure, as well as funding eligibility and evaluation.

We covered a wide range of topics that matter to us all, in addition to the successful deployments carried out by the individual partners.

So, I thank you all:

Thank you for your passion

Thank you for your contributions

Thank you for your commitment

Thank you for your patience (especially when we had to wait for decisions from others) And thank you for your kindness.

Strength through unity



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A new chapter: VERKKO

As this was our final MERIDIAN Steering Committee meeting, we would like to take a moment to thank everyone who has been part of this journey.

Although MERIDIAN is coming to an end, the work and collaboration continue in a new chapter: VERKKO.

We invite you to stay connected and follow VERKKO through our website and social media channels, where you can find the latest updates, news and developments.

We look forward to continuing this journey together!

Stay connected. Follow VERKKO!

https://verkko-project.eu

LinkedIn: **VERKKO EUROPE**

Instagram: **@verkko_europe**



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