

## Report to Partnership Meeting 8 November 2013

### EUROPEAN PROJECTS



Innovatively addressing  
the European Northern  
Periphery for a sustainable  
and prosperous future



Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
Forasaid na Ceann-Eileanachaidh 's na h-Eileanan Siar



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#### Journey Genie (Giant Puffin)

#### Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the TransTourism ERDF INTERREG IVB Northern Periphery Programme project TransTourism. Through the project HITRANS are developing our itinerary and journey planner which can be found at [www.journeygenie.co.uk](http://www.journeygenie.co.uk). It is designed to work on recent versions of browsers.

#### Background

TRANSTOURISM-Sustainable Transport in Rural Tourism Areas is a Northern Periphery Programme project with partners in Sweden, Iceland, Scotland, Eire and Northern Ireland. The project runs from 01 September 2010 until 30 September 2013

The project delivers two key priorities:

- Promoting innovation and competitiveness in remote and peripheral areas
- Sustainable development of natural and community resources

As part of this programme, HITRANS is leading a major project aimed at promoting public transport based tourism across the Highlands and Islands through the development of a new web and mobile based journey-planning portal. The project has secured the financing and partner support necessary for delivery.

#### Project Partners

The lead partner of TransTourism is the Swedish Transport Administration.

The other partners are: Municipality of Harjedalen (S) Destination Lofsdalen (S), Destination Funasdalen (S), Icelandic Tourism Research Centre, **HITRANS**, University of Ulster, Clare County Council, Action Renewables (Co Down NI).

Our local associate partners are: HIE, University of Aberdeen, Destination Loch Ness, Cairngorm Business Partnership, First ScotRail, Calmac, Stagecoach, VisitScotland, Traveline Scotland.

## **Journey Genie Synopsis**

Journey Genie (formerly Giant Puffin) aims to help visitors discover the many places they can visit by public transport, then help them plan their specific trip with ease and confidence. It pulls together all the public transport information that will allow them to discover their trip is possible, practical and offers sufficient interest to their needs. It takes existing transport feed information that is framed in terms only locals understand, and repositions it in terms that the visitor will understand. The goal is to help them realise there is an alternative to bringing or hiring a car, thereby supporting the future viability of many public transport routes.

The outputs consist of a website with static (and in a later phase user generated) content, a database driven application to search, plan and save journeys, and register for updates to those journeys – and a widget version of the application hosted on key partner websites. A mobile version of the full site recognizes if the user is accessing the Genie on a smartphone/tablet etc.

This project aims to relieve the constraints of current Highlands and Islands tourism/travel sites (either mode specific or simply very patchy in the information given) in order to provide visitors to the area with the opportunity to travel by public transport for a full multi-modal trip.

Currently, comprehensive single mode timetables provided by transport operators do not facilitate the creation of individually tailored itineraries taking in attractions/locations of choice, and are often too detailed for the visitors' needs. This project takes timetable data feeds - primarily from Traveline Scotland - one step forward, by "translating" them into a format that will be understood by someone unfamiliar with the area. Journey Genie builds on existing transport data feeds, but combines and provides a layer of interpretation onto existing data resources. It will present information in such a way that allows visitors who are unfamiliar with place names and specific stops, to query public transport journeys based on what they want to do.

As the mobile phone technology available for information dissemination develops, there will be an opportunity in the future to use the portal to give location aware information and real time journey planning information to people while they are on the move. This would prove very welcome in providing information to travellers in the event of missed connections or service disruption. This opportunity will be reviewed in the future as technology develops.

## **Journey Genie Project Objectives**

The project objectives are to help inspire visitors to plan and make trips by public transport with confidence – even though they don't know the area, let alone the specific names of bus stops or stations. This will thereby increase public transport usage, increase sustainable travel particularly to remote areas and facilitate easier getting about in the Highlands and Islands - particularly for visitors. The project portal, offsite app interface and mobile apps will:

- Encourage public transport usage (though it will not sell directly, the transport partners will do this)

- Provide confidence/inspiration that public transport is a viable option when visiting the area
- Interface with commercial transport operators – it is not being delivered in competition, but partnership with existing provision
- Promote public transport as valuable experience for visitors
- Deliver reliable well used search engine for public transport which will produce:
- More users on public transport
- Scope to influence public transport provision & protect vulnerable links

The project needs to demonstrate benefits to both tourism industry and transport operators – it must support existing activities rather than compete against them.

The project's scope covers the Highlands & Islands including Shetland and Arran/Cumbrae. An implicit goal of the project is that it will drive more visitors to Scotland and the Highlands & Islands once it becomes clear the area is a well-connected place. A further goal is to facilitate visitors in getting off the beaten track and encourage modal shift of transport in busier parts of the region.

## **Recent Developments**

### **Mallaig Conference**

HITRANS hosted the final TransTourism Conference in Mallaig on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013. 50 delegates attended the conference, which included study tours to Skye, Corrrour and Eigg to learn about the problems of transport and tourism in remote areas. The programme included the following presentations:

- Delivery of Transport in Scotland Ranald Robertson - HITRANS
- Tourism Scotland 2020 Marc Crothall – The Scottish Tourism Alliance
- NPP Transtourism Project Jan Lindgren – Project Coordinator Transtourism
- Genie-ethically Modified Transport Information Provision Frank Roach - HITRANS
- The Technology Powering the Genie Vicky Brock - Highland Business Research
- `Just the ticket': developing a strategy for sustainable tourism in Northern Ireland Derek Bond - University of Ulster
- Planning Transport for Tourism in Iceland Edward Huijbens – Icelandic Tourism Research Centre
- Roads to the Isles Sine Davis & Jule Bryce – Mallaig Tourism
- Transporting Guests in Ski Areas Petter Eurenus – Destination Funasfjallen
- Providing Public Transport Service in a Small Tourist Destination Hakan Hising – Destination Lofsdalen
- Developing an App for Tourism Carol Gleeson Clare County - Burren

- Impact on CO2 Emissions of the TransTourism Project Alex Bookless - Action Renewables

### Lessons learned from TransTourism – Extract from the final report

Development of the interactive web journey planner: Journey Genie

Purpose: journeygenie.co.uk provides an interface between public transport information and visitor information enabling the user to create, share and edit itineraries or follow suggested tours. This is designed to maximise use of existing public transport in rural areas, encourage the development of new ticketing products and secure services for local residents.



This picture symbolizes the importance of involving different actors with different responsibilities, competences and knowledge at an early stage. Together they managed to develop a functional and useful solution from a basic idea.

In this work they involved the organizations who have input data about tourism destinations, accommodation, public transport and actors who are involved in web development, media, public relations and social media. When starting a new project it's important to do an analysis of the market and find and invite relevant actors from the beginning.

It is also important that the lead public agencies, who are the funders, retain a tight control over direction and output in order to ensure on-budget delivery and ensure transparency of purpose and responsibilities while satisfying procurement audit requirements.

### JourneyGenie the product

The product is now available in final form. It has been delivered within budget. HITRANS received total funding for our work within TransTourism of €250k. This funding has been secured at an ERDF intervention rate of 60% with the balance being provided through our own contribution of £66k and a contribution of £20k from HIE

## JourneyGenie the future

The focus will now shift to the distribution of the widget to all stakeholders and operators, targeted promotional activity and working with VisitScotland to access dynamic attraction data when that becomes available, while further maintenance and debugging will continue. An approach may be made to potential funders to assist with this work.

## Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note the report.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Comment</b>
RTS delivery	√	This project fits well with a number of RTS Horizontal themes.
Policy	√	This project has integration and environmental benefits.
Financial	√	This project is fully funded
Equality	-	No impact on equalities issues.

**Report by:** Frank Roach  
**Designation:** Partnership Manager  
**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> October 2013