

**Report to Partnership Meeting 27 November 2015**

**EUROPEAN PROJECTS**

**SPARA 2020**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update Members on the progress made in developing the SPARA 2020 INTERREG IVB Northern Periphery Programme project that has secured funding from the Northern Periphery and Arctic Area INTERREG Programme with HITRANS as Lead Partner.

**BACKGROUND**



Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports 2020 (SPARA 2020) is a Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme area project aimed at addressing some of the special needs of the smaller civilian airports in the region. This three year €2.4 million project brings together a range of public authorities, academic institutions, airports, SMEs, and specialists to focus on the particular challenges of airports serving remote and peripheral areas.

The Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020, is funded by the ERDF, and more generally aims to help peripheral and remote communities on the northern margins of Europe to develop their economic, social and environmental potential.



**Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme**  
2014-2020



**EUROPEAN UNION**

Investing in your future  
European Regional Development Fund

SPARA2020 has been designed both to address the region's needs, but also to explore issues that have resonance beyond Northern Europe, and to develop outputs that will deliver enduring benefits after the project concludes in May 2018.

HITRANS is the lead partner. Other Scottish partners include the University of the Highlands and Islands and Robert Gordon University whilst Sweden is well represented with Trafikverket (The Swedish Transport Administration), Sundsvall *Timrå* Airport and Storuman Municipality. The North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) of Ireland will represent airports such as Donegal and Ireland West (Knock) in the project. Molde University in Norway and the University of Sydney in Australia are the other project partners.

**BUDGET AND WORKSTREAMS**

The project budget allocation is listed in the table below:

Partner	Budget
The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership	€494,253.21

<b>(HITRANS)</b>	
<b>University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)</b>	<b>€350,216.16</b>
<b>Robert Gordon University (RGU)</b>	<b>€180,797.00</b>
Trafikverket (Sweden)	€250,008.58
Sundsvall <i>Timrå</i> Airport (Sweden)	€357,143.00
Storuman Municipality (Sweden)	€379,871.00
North and West Regional Assembly (Ireland)	€234,306.80
Molde University (Norway)	€115,500.48
University of Sydney (Australia)	€60,000.00

The Highlands and Islands area will benefit significantly as all the Scottish activity in the project will have a focus in the region.

The project will include work on Innovative Technologies to improve airport performance and control cost. These involve a close examination of Remote Air Traffic and Remote Security technologies as well as distributed training, benefitting in essence from broadband and communication technology advances. With the support of Eurocontrol the project will also examine the business case for Airport Collaborative Decision Making (lite), as suited to the smaller airport (and budget) context

Mindful of aviation's carbon footprint two work strands have been developed to foster more sustainable energy use in the sector. Low carbon fuel airport surface access demonstrator trials are being developed by HITRANS in partnership with their member Councils, Energy Savings Trust and Highlands and Islands Airports at airports in the Highlands and Islands. These are designed to be low carbon exemplar projects on how to decarbonise links from the airport to its local population centre and it is hoped this will include support for electronic bus operation on airport service, EV car hire and EV / Hybrid Taxi roll out to serve airports. The business case for offering biofuels to incoming aircraft at the region's airports will be examined in some detail learning from some pioneering work at Karlstad Airport in Sweden. HITRANS Officers have held a number of useful meetings as part of the scoping work on the individual pilot projects that we will deliver in our area. These meetings have been with Orkney Islands Council, HIAL, Energy Savings Trust and Transport Scotland.

Based upon the recognition that the performance of many peripheral airports' scheduled traffic is structurally constrained by their small catchment size, significant budget has been assigned to examining non aeronautical sources of income and diversification of roles for these facilities. A whole gamut of possibilities will be examined and best practice will be publicised and disseminated, and some more in depth pilot projects will be undertaken. Optimising an airport's role as an employment cluster will be explored extensively. The location selected for these activities are Ireland West (Knock), Donegal, Inverness and Oban. HITRANS have been working with North West Regional Assembly (who are leading this work package) on the development of a consultancy commission related to this work package. We have also held discussions with HIAL and Argyll and Bute Council on where this could focus at each airport.

The project also intends to examine in some detail the distinct socio-cultural role that airports play in the Northern Periphery and Arctic area and also to refine and improve economic impact assessment methodologies of SPARA airports with a view to better guide future public investment. This will include studies led by RGU at airports in Ireland, Scotland and possibly Sweden.

## PROJECT Launch

The SPARA 2020 Project was officially launched in Scotland on 14 October 2015. The launch event took place at Inverness Airport and HITRANS were delighted to welcome Derek Mackay MSP Minister for Transport and Islands to preside over the event. Mr Mackay welcomed the project and recognised that the project's focus on improving performance and supporting airports to be smart and sustainable was very welcome. A press release was issued following the event and this is included within Appendix A of this report.

## PROJECT OFFICER

The main recommendation sought in reporting on SPARA at the last Partnership Board meeting was approval to commence the recruitment process for a SPARA 2020 EU project officer. Officer commenced this process in partnership with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar immediately after the last Partnership Meeting and after advertising the post through [www.myjobsscotland.gov.uk](http://www.myjobsscotland.gov.uk) we were pleased to appoint Miss Jayne Westbrook to the role. Miss Westbrook had previously been employed by the Partnership as Graduate Business Support Officer through the Adopt an Intern Programme. Miss Westbrook started her new role on 2 November 2015 and her contract will cover to the end of the SPARA 2020 project on a 25 hour per week basis.

In the future SPARA 2020 reporting will be provided to the Partnership Board by the SPARA 2020 Project Officer.

A press release was issued to raise awareness of the appointment of the SPARA 2020 Project Officer and this is included in Appendix of this report.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:-

1. Note the report.

Risk	Impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	This work supports RTS objectives.
Policy	√	This work is designed to support delivery of our Aviation policy.
Financial	√	HITRANS share of SPARA 2020 project costs in 2015/16 and 2016/17 is included within the Business Plan. This project will attract ERDF funds at an attractive intervention rate.
Equality	-	No impact on Equalities issues.

**Report by:** Ranald Robertson  
**Designation:** Partnership Director  
**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
**Background papers:** Appendix A – SPAR 2020 Press Releases

## Appendix A – SPARA 2020 Project Publicity

Issue Date: Thursday 15 October 2015

### Scottish Minister launches HITRANS rural airports project

HITRANS, the regional transport partnership for the Highlands and Islands, is spearheading a significant European-funded project to assist and develop rural and remote airports with use of new technologies.

SPARA 2020, which stands for Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports, is a three-year €2.4 million Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme area project. It brings together a range of public authorities, academic institutions, airports, small businesses and specialists to focus on the particular challenges of airports serving remote and peripheral areas.

The aim of the project is to heighten awareness of the importance to rural and remote communities of local air services and to use innovative technologies to make them as cost effective and environmentally friendly as possible.

HITRANS, which represents Councils serving the Highlands, Western Isles, Orkney, Moray and Argyll and Bute, is the lead partner. Other Scottish partners include the University of the Highlands and Islands and Robert Gordon University whilst Sweden is represented with Trafikverket (The Swedish Transport Administration), Sundsvall *Timrå* Airport and Storuman Municipality. The North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) of Ireland will represent airports such as Donegal and Ireland West (Knock) in the project. Molde University in Norway and the University of Sydney in Australia are the other project partners.

SPARA 2020 was launched by Scottish Minister for Transport and the Islands Derek Mackay during a visit this week to Inverness Airport, Dalcross.

He said: "Air services have a vital role to play for remote communities across Scotland so this project, looking at how we can help develop our airports in remote and rural areas, is very welcome. The focus on improving performance and making them more cost effective is incredibly important as we look to continue to provide the best possible service to communities that depend on these transport links.

"The project will also look at how we make remote and rural airports more environmentally friendly, investigating new and innovative measures to reduce their carbon footprint. The Scottish Government continues to do everything we can to support communities in the Highlands and Islands and our recent action to increase the Air Discount Scheme from 40 to 50 per cent underlines that commitment. I wish HITRANS success with the project and look forward to seeing the findings."

HITRANS Chairman, Councillor James Stockan said: "We are absolutely delighted to be leading on this exciting project and we will be appointing a project officer very soon to drive it forward with our partners. Airports play a hugely important role in the economic wellbeing of our rural and remote communities. They are a lifeline for our residents and vital for our local businesses. This project will hopefully strengthen the role that they play by identifying ways of operating in a more eco-friendly and cost effective way."

The project will include work on Innovative Technologies to improve airport performance and control cost. This will involve a close examination of Remote Air Traffic and Remote Security technologies as well as distributed training, benefiting from broadband and communication technology advances.

Mindful of aviation's carbon footprint, two work strands have been developed to foster more sustainable energy use in the sector.

Low carbon fuel airport surface access demonstrator trials are being developed by HITRANS in partnership with their member Councils, Energy Savings Trust and Highlands and Islands Airports (HIAL) at airports in the Highlands and Islands. These are designed to be low carbon exemplar projects on how to decarbonise links from the airport to its local population centres. It is hoped this will include support for electric bus operation, EV car hire and electric/plug-in hybrid taxis roll out to serve airports. The business case for offering biofuels to incoming aircraft at the region's airports will be examined in some detail learning from some pioneering work at Karlstad Airport in Sweden.

The project also intends to examine in some detail the distinct socio-cultural role that airports play in the Northern Periphery and Arctic area and also to refine and improve economic impact assessment methodologies of SPARA airports with a view to better guide future public investment. This will include studies led by RGU at airports in Ireland, Scotland and possibly Sweden.

-ends-

Note: The Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020, is funded by the ERDF, and more generally aims to help peripheral and remote communities on the northern margins of Europe to develop their economic, social and environmental potential.

Issue Date: Monday 2 November 2015

## **HITRANS appoints officer to spearhead rural airports project**

HITRANS, the regional transport partnership for the Highlands and Islands, has appointed a project officer to spearhead a significant European-funded project to assist and develop rural and remote airports with use of new technologies.

Jayne Westbrook took over this week as Project Officer of SPARA 2020, which stands for Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports - a three-year £1.8 million Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme area project.

Jayne, who will report to HITRANS Director Ranald Robertson, has been working as a Graduate Business Support Officer with HITRANS for the past six months. She attended Nairn Academy and graduated with a 2:1 MA Honours in Business Studies from the University of Edinburgh.

Jayne said: "I am delighted with my appointment to co-ordinate and support the delivery of this exciting Euro project. Airports in rural communities are a lifeline for our residents and vital for our local businesses. This project will hopefully strengthen the role that they play by identifying ways of operating in a more eco-friendly and cost effective way."

Mr Robertson said: "We are delighted with Jayne's appointment – a fixed term two year contract during which time she will work with our partners to drive this project forward. She has the skills, dedication and drive that we are looking for."

SPARA 2020 brings together a range of public authorities, academic institutions, airports, small businesses and specialists to focus on the particular challenges of airports serving remote and peripheral areas.

The aim of the project is to heighten awareness of the importance to rural and remote communities of local air services and to use innovative technologies to make them as cost effective and environmentally friendly as possible.

HITRANS, which represents Councils serving the Highlands, Western Isles, Orkney, Moray and Argyll and Bute, is the lead partner. Other Scottish partners include the University of the Highlands and Islands and Robert Gordon University whilst Sweden is represented with Trafikverket (The Swedish Transport Administration), Sundsvall *Timrå* Airport and Storuman Municipality. The North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) of Ireland will represent airports such as Donegal and Ireland West (Knock) in the project. Molde University in Norway and the University of Sydney in Australia are the other project partners.

SPARA 2020 was launched by Scottish Minister for Transport and the Islands Derek Mackay last month.

The project will include work on Innovative Technologies to improve airport performance and control cost. This will involve a close examination of Remote Air Traffic and Remote Security technologies as well as distributed training, benefiting from broadband and communication technology advances.

Mindful of aviation's carbon footprint, two work strands have been developed to foster more sustainable energy use in the sector.

Low carbon fuel airport surface access demonstrator trials are being developed by HITRANS in partnership with their member Councils, Energy Savings Trust and Highlands and Islands

Airports (HIAL) at airports in the Highlands and Islands. These are designed to be low carbon exemplar projects on how to decarbonise links from the airport to its local population centres. It is hoped this will include support for electric bus operation, EV car hire and electric/plug-in hybrid taxis roll out to serve airports. The business case for offering biofuels to incoming aircraft at the region's airports will be examined in some detail learning from some pioneering work at Karlstadt Airport in Sweden.

The project also intends to examine in some detail the distinct socio-cultural role that airports play in the Northern Periphery and Arctic area and also to refine and improve economic impact assessment methodologies of SPARA airports with a view to better guide future public investment. This will include studies led by RGU at airports in Ireland, Scotland and possibly Sweden.

-ends-

Note: The Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020, is funded by the ERDF, and more generally aims to help peripheral and remote communities on the northern margins of Europe to develop their economic, social and environmental potential.