



THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

CONSULTANTS BRIEF

STRATEGIC SEA CROSSINGS IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES (2005 – 2025)

1. **HITRANS** is a voluntary partnership comprising Argyll and Bute Council; Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; Highland Council; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Highlands and Islands Public Transport Forum; North Ayrshire Council (Arran and the Cumbraes); Moray Council; Orkney Islands Council; Scottish Council Development and Industry; and Shetland Islands Council.
2. Its objects are to undertake research and gather information about the transport needs of the region; to prepare and keep up to date a regional transport strategy endorsed by all the partners; to implement regional transport projects; to act as the strategic consultation body on behalf of the partners; and to establish a dialogue with government, users and operators.
3. The **Regional Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands** was approved in 2003. It contains the following priorities for transport on the strategic sea crossings in the region:
 - ? Discounted fares and reduced freight tariffs;
 - ? Replacing vessels with faster/novel craft;
 - ? Fixed links to replace ferries and reconfiguring routes to provide shorter crossings;
 - ? Improving the quality of interchange facilities at ports;
 - ? Through ticketing and better information;
 - ? Improved frequency and convenience of schedules.

The Study

4. The Study will be in two parts.
5. **Part 1** will be an overview of the existing ferry networks serving the region. This will include a description of the current networks in terms of ownership, schedules and vessels; ferry carryings; an indication of current subsidy for running the service;

and an assessment of key future thresholds when vessels or other major infrastructure will require replacement.

6. **Part 2** is the main focus of the study. The commission is for consultants to report on development opportunities for realising the priorities listed above on the strategic sea crossings, not the whole network overviewed in Part 1, focussing on the period up to 2025 and taking account of the times when major assets such as vessels or terminals require replacement. We are seeking innovative solutions with reference to best practice elsewhere, particularly Scandinavia. The strategic sea crossings are:

- ? Shetland to the Scottish Mainland
- ? Orkney to the Scottish mainland
- ? Shetland to Orkney
- ? Hebrides Calmac network
- ? Clyde crossings serving Arran, Bute and Dunoon

Long term strategic assessment of the Orkney and Shetland internal ferry systems is being undertaken by the Islands Councils. Consultants must have regard to the emerging findings of these assessments. There are a number of other studies underway, including a ferry fare mechanisms study in the Western Isles, and route appraisals in the Hebrides which the consultants require to note.

Methodology

7. **Part 2 of the Study** should follow the STAG pre-appraisal methodology with four clear stages:
 - ? Information gathering and analysis of problems and needs looking forward to 2025.
 - ? Setting planning objectives with reference to the HITRANS strategic priorities in 3 above.
 - ? Identifying development opportunities.
 - ? Testing opportunities against the planning objectives and recommending preferred solutions and ways forward for more detailed consideration.
8. **Stage 1**, the analysis of problems and needs will require the preparation of an issues report. There should be no need for substantial new survey. It will require collation of studies which are in progress or which have been completed recently. It will also require consultation with operators, councils and economic development agencies, and representatives of the main user groups. The issues report should include a broad analysis of:
 - ? The main ferry needs of each island community and the various user groups such as hauliers, commuters, car users, tourists, and those needing access to essential services. Looking to 2025 adequacy of vessel type, frequency of service and integration at ferry ports should be considered.
 - ? The impact on social and economic development arising from ferry charges for passengers and freight, reduced winter services and inconvenient timetabling and frequency.

9. **Stages 2 and 3**, setting objectives and identifying development opportunities will require involvement of the client group and key stakeholders. Therefore at least one full day must be allocated for in depth structured discussion with this group. A report on the outcome of this stage will be presented to the client group.
10. **Stage 4**, an options appraisal with recommendations for preferred solutions to take forward for more detailed consideration must be fully documented in a final report with a broad estimate of the costs of implementation. The prospects for route development and reconfiguration, fixed links and the ways of reducing freight and passenger charges, must be included in this options appraisal.

Study Management

11. The study progress will be managed by the HITRANS co-ordinator. The Client Group which will oversee the study will comprise officials from HITRANS. The Consultant will report to the client group at key points during the work at inception; at the end of Part 1 with an overview report; at the end of stage 3; and to present the Stage 4 report.

Timetable

12. The Study will commence in March 2005 and should be completed by October 2005.

Personnel

13. Consultants should have proven world wide experience of developing solutions to improving sea crossings by ferry or fixed link, particularly experience of systems in Scandinavia. A good knowledge of the economics and operational characteristics of the Highlands and Islands ferry system is essential. The consultant must allocate time to senior experienced personnel to make a full contribution to the study.

Selection

14. Shortlisted consultants will be selected by interview, which is a crucial part of the selection process. Assessment will be primarily on the experience of the team relevant to this study; the understanding of the brief and proposed methodology; the authority level of team members; and the general flair demonstrated in addressing the special requirements of the study (target date for interview is 9/10 February 2005 in Inverness).

Budget

15. A planning budget of £50,000- including expenses (exc.VAT) has been set for this project.

Tenders

16. Tenders should be returned to HITRANS Co-ordinator (two paper and an electronic copy) by 5pm on Monday 24 January 2005, with the following information:
 - ? Name of tenderer and contact person
 - ? A statement of understanding of the project.
 - ? A statement of the proposed method for undertaking the project.

- ? Details of projected outputs.
- ? A project execution plan and programme with key milestones.
- ? A cost profile and tender price indicating staff costs, daily rates and numbers of days allotted to each task by each member of the team, and expenses.
- ? Details of previous experience of team members.
- ? Staff CVs.

Note that the HITRANS will be the client and the standard Scottish Executive conditions for research and consultancy contracts will apply to this project.

Howard Brindley
HITRANS Co-ordinator
December 2004