

Report to Partnership Meeting 15 September 2017

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

SPARA 2020 Project Report



Northern Periphery and
Arctic Programme
2014-2020



EUROPEAN UNION

Investing in your future
European Regional Development Fund



Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the SPARA 2020 project that has secured funding from the Northern Periphery and Arctic Area INTERREG Programme with HITRANS as Lead Partner.

Project Overview

Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports (SPARA2020) is a 3 year, €2.4 million Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme Project, designed to address the challenges facing remote & peripheral airports. These airports are economically vital, providing accessibility & connectivity to residents. However, with low traffic volume, strong seasonality challenges and ageing aircrafts, these airports suffer relatively higher costs of operating safely & compliantly and inevitably require state subsidy/intervention. SPARA aims to maximise revenues at these remote & peripheral airports and increase their self-sufficiency and resilience long-term.

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

Project Partnership

HITRANS is the lead partner of the project, with other Scottish partners including the University of the Highlands and Islands and Robert Gordon University. Sweden is well represented with Trafikverket (The Swedish Transport Administration), Sundsvall-Timrå Airport and Storuman Municipality involved, and the Northern Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) of Ireland represent airports such as Donegal and Ireland West (Knock) in the project. Molde University College in Norway and the University of Sydney in Australia are also project partners.

Project Progress

Low Carbon Solutions

To support the feasibility of introducing electric taxis to Inverness Airport, HITRANS are assisting with the installation of rapid charge points at Inverness Airport and in Inverness City Centre. Inverness Taxis have been awarded a 7-year contract at Inverness Airport and are committed to

lowering their carbon emissions long-term by moving to a fully electric fleet. HITRANS have been working closely with HIAL and The Highland Council to identify suitable locations for the charge points and arrange site surveys to obtain installation quotes, and work is due to commence in September/October 2017. Inverness Taxis are keen to trial a wheelchair accessible EV, and Dynamo Taxi have been suggested as a potential supplier. Dynamo Motor Company have created a wheelchair accessible EV for taxi usage and are interested in bringing their model to Inverness. A one or two-day event for test drives has been suggested by Dynamo and will be organised in September 2017.

An agreement has also been produced between HITRANS and HIAL to enable the installation of fast chargers at airports in the HITRANS and NPA area to support the launch of electric car clubs. Installations are due to be completed by September/October 2017 at Inverness, Kirkwall and Stornoway Airport, at which point car clubs will have the ability to operate fully electric vehicles from these locations. E Car Club have already witnessed a strong interest at Inverness Airport, but are currently only able to offer 1 electric vehicle out of 11 due to a lack of sufficient charging infrastructure. These charge points should ensure that this service can be brought to the region and results can be shared across other remote & peripheral airports in the NPA area.

Non-Aeronautical Services

HITRANS are working with Irish partner NWRA on progressing the Non-Aeronautical Services work package. A report was produced for Oban Airport in 2016 noting several suggested improvements to enhance revenue streams. A suggested project for Oban Airport is improving the signage leading to the airport, with options currently being explored by HITRANS and Argyll & Bute Council. Improved advertising is also being explored, with pilots expected to run from Autumn 2017.

Social, Cultural & Economic

RGU have recently completed their report on the social and cultural importance of remote airports, which will be made available on the SPARA website. Strategies have also been developed to support public & stakeholder engagement, and worksheets have been created on utilising social media and exploiting off-peak airport spaces.

Molde University College (MUC) and Sydney University have developed a web-based airport benchmarking survey and have gathered responses throughout the summer, expecting to exceed their original target of obtaining data from 65 airports. A final analysis report will be provided to airports suggesting what might impact their cost efficiency with quantifiable actions.

UHI's Economic Intelligence Unit are creating a toolkit to enable those who do not have economic background or resources to create economic impact assessments. A case study is being developed at Wick John O'Groats Airport, with a passenger survey currently being conducted. EIU will provide an update on their work at the Wick John O'Groats Airport Consultative Committee meeting in September.

Partner Conferences / Communications / Project Management

The next SPARA Partner Conference will be hosted by Trafikverket & Storuman and will be held in Hemavan, Sweden, 13th-15th November 2017. Hemavan Airport is the test site for several SPARA projects in the field of remote towers, check-in and security technologies, and the conference will provide partners with an opportunity to witness these technologies first-hand and engage with project partners on experiences so far.

Filming commenced in August for the SPARA project video, and contributions are being sought from partners across all work packages. Filming will continue at the next Partner Conference in November, and RGU students will compile and edit the footage to create the final project video.

HITRANS is due to discuss the request for a project extension with the Joint Secretariat in September 2017. Good progress is being made across all work packages and HITRANS are confident that a time extension will significantly strengthen and enhance project outputs.

Newsletters are regularly sent to over 300 contacts within the Smart Peripheral Aviation Network (SPAN). Interested parties can sign up to SPAN newsletters and keep up-to-date on project progress on the SPARA website: <http://spara2020.eu>

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – The SPARA 2020 project has supported a number of RTS objectives, particularly in Aviation and Low Carbon solutions.

Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – SPARA 2020 is supporting broader policy work including the Inverness City – Region Deal Air Access work and the Islands Transport Forum.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – The project attracts a high EU intervention rate of 65% with match funding allowed for within the Research and Strategy Delivery Programme.

Comment – A significant element of the work in SPARA 2020 covers activity HITRANS would be delivering in any case meaning a significant amount of additional funding is being attracted to the Partnership.

Equality

Impact – Neutral

Comment – No impact on Equalities from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note the report.

Report by: Jayne Westbrook
Designation: European Project Officer
Date: 4th September 2017