

Report to Partnership Meeting 15 September 2017

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

G-PaTRA Green Passenger Transport in Rural Areas

SUMMARY:

To provide Members with an update on a successful application to Interreg VB North Sea Region. Programme priority 4: Promoting Green Transport & Mobility for the project G-PaTRA that seeks to deliver a number of Green Passenger Transport solutions in rural areas. HITRANS element of the overall project amounts to €466,000 over the next three years.

Background and Project Overview

Following an initially unsuccessful application, a revised application was submitted for the project G-PaTRA Green Passenger Transport in Rural Areas with a new consortium led through Robert Gordon's University as lead partner was submitted in January 2017.

The key objectives of the project are to:

- Enhance the capacity for authorities to reduce CO₂ from remote, rural and Island transport by embedding more zero emission vehicles in rural transport systems and improving, optimising and better integrating available passenger resources.
- Identify green, innovative, integrated transport services and new organisational and ownership models to allow transport operators to deliver on the project aims of providing a sustainable rural public transport network.

HITRANS will lead Work Package 3 which seeks to accelerate the use of Zero Emission vehicles and vessels. This will involve the implementation of a specific lighthouse project and two business case studies. The lighthouse project involves a new scheduled bus route using an electric bus within the Moray area of the Cairngorm National Park. This lighthouse project will be used to demonstrate and evaluate innovative low carbon transport solutions in a rural context. In addition to this Hitrans will also undertake two case studies which will develop a strategy for refueling cell vehicles from renewables.

Goals of Project

1. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
2. Enhanced access, mobility and social inclusion
3. Reduced per passenger subsidy costs
4. Modal shift

Other innovative projects will be trialed by the project partners, each addressing one or more of the project aims.

Rather than addressing a specific issue in a specific locality, each pilot will contribute to a transnational understanding of the:

- wider rural public transport supply chain
- inter-relationship between the four goals and the most effective combination of pilot interventions.

The project will develop indicators to quantify the impact of pilot projects against *business as usual*. Provisionally, the four primary indicators could be:

- CO2/ passenger km
- Passenger numbers (as a proxy for mobility, access and social inclusion)
- Subsidy/passenger journey
- Modal share.

G-PaTRA will consider the barriers to, and opportunities for, scaling up pilot interventions across Europe. Guidance will be produced in order to maximize transferrable innovation.

Workshops will be organised where stakeholders will be identified from existing networks, related projects, academia and other rural and island municipalities. A legacy collaborative network will be created, underpinned by the development of an online knowledge sharing and stakeholder engagement platform.

Partners

| Beneficiary Name | Legal status | City/Country |
|--|---------------|------------------------|
| Robert Gordon University (Lead Partner) | public | Aberdeen, Scotland |
| Office for Regional Development Leine and Weser Region | public | Hildesheim, Germany |
| Alborg Universitet | public | Aalborg, Denmark |
| Universit t Groningen | public | Groningen, Netherlands |
| Province of Groningen | public | Assen, Netherlands |
| HITRANS | public | Inverness, Scotland |
| Aberdeenshire Council | public | Aberdeen, Scotland |
| Taxi stop vzw | public | Ghent, Belgium |
| More og Romsdal Fylkeskommune | public | Molde , Norway |
| Urban Foresight (England) | Private (SME) | England |
| Province Drenthe | public | Assen, The Netherlands |

HITRANS Workstreams:

HITRANS have applied to undertake projects up to a value of €466,000 over the next three years with the primary project involving the deployment of an electric bus on a local service within the Moray area of the Cairngorms National Park.

The intervention rate from the North Sea Region InterReg programme is 50% and requires 50% match funding to be met through contributions from HITRANS and the local authority where the pilot project will be implemented. HITRANS will seek to use the successful application to draw in additional match funding that could be used to enhance the core deliverables identified in the project and to offset the level of local contribution required.

Green Bus Fund

The Scottish Government's Green Bus Fund is managed by Transport Scotland with the aim of the fund being further support the roll out of low carbon buses across Scotland.

Bids can be made to the Scottish Green Bus Fund for a grant to help buy new Low Carbon Emission Buses (LCEBs) – both double decker and single decker buses, including midi-buses (but not minibuses). The Scottish Green Bus Fund is a Challenge Fund with a fixed budget of around £3 million in the financial year 2017-2018 and has the following criteria:

- Grants will be offered to successful bidders for up to 80% of the price differential between a LCV and its diesel equivalent
- No more than £1m will be offered to any one bidder (though joint bids can be submitted for more than £1m)

HITRANS were notified by G-PaTra Lead Partner - Robert Gordon University - that the INTERREG North Sea Region had approved the project for funding on 26 June. Reflecting on this good news officers recognised that an opportunity existed to apply to the Scottish Government's Green Bus Fund with the G-PaTRA project providing our match funding towards the purchase of an Electric Bus for the pilot project being delivered in Partnership with Moray Council. This would enable the purchase of a bus rather than a short term lease for a period of less than 36 months which was all we could achieve through the G-PaTRA project.

The deadline for applications for the seventh (2017/18) round of the Green Bus Fund was 30th June. This meant officers from HITRANS and our project partner Moray Council had to submit a bid that same week to optimise and lock down the benefits we would test through G-PaTRA. In the event a bid was submitted on 30 June by HITRANS for Green Bus Fund support for 80% of the cost differential between the electric and diesel equivalent Optare Solo bus already investigated for the G-PaTRA project. If successful this application will £127,066 from the Green Bus Fund to support the purchase of an electric bus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to note the report.

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – The G-PaTRA project will support a number of RTS priorities relating to Public Transport and Low Carbon solutions.

Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment – The G-PaTRA project will support a number of RTS objectives particularly relating to Improving accessibility and social inclusion in rural areas.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Comment - An initial allocation for the project has been identified in the 2017/18 Business Plan but avenues for additional match funding will continue to be explored.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – HITRANS support for innovative rural public transport solutions helps improve access and opens up employment opportunities in some of the regions most vulnerable areas

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