

Report to Partnership Meeting 24 November 2017

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

SPARA 2020 Project Report



Northern Periphery and
Arctic Programme
2014-2020



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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 (SPARA) 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. SPARA 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, HIAL and

The Highland Council have identified suitable locations at Inverness Airport and Inverness City Centre for rapid charge points, and quotes from installers are being received. All quotes are expected to be received by December 2018 with installations due to begin immediately following the selection of a chosen supplier.

A date has been secured in January 2018 for Dynamo Taxis to visit Inverness to offer local taxi drivers the opportunity to test drive their wheelchair accessible electric taxi. Local taxi operators and drivers from surrounding areas will be contacted to arrange test drives to maximise this opportunity, with several companies already showing an interest in trialling the EV. Some technical issues over the last few months delayed installations for E-Car Club charge points, but work is now back on track to enable fully electric car club vehicles operating from the airport from early 2018.

SPARA Roadmap

The upcoming SPARA Partner Conference in Hemavan will offer an opportunity for Trafikverket to present their latest version of the SPARA Roadmap – a future scoping exercise looking at the sustainability of remote airports across different milestones to 2050. A session will be held at the conference to obtain feedback from partners, with Trafikverket having already consulted various expert stakeholders from industry & academia to produce their report. Feedback from partners will be used to create the final version of the Roadmap due for completion by February 2018.

Social, Cultural & Economic

RGU have completed their report on the social and cultural importance of remote & peripheral 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. A further worksheet on how to exploit social & cultural capital has been developed by RGU ready to present at the upcoming SPARA Conference. Completed versions of all worksheets & templates will be made available on the SPARA website.

Over the summer, Molde University College and Sydney University launched a web-based airport benchmarking survey and have so far obtained 60 airport responses, with additional responses expected over November and December. The partners now have a sufficient sample to begin their DEA/benchmarking analysis to create a final analysis report for airports, suggesting what might impact their cost efficiency with quantifiable actions.

UHI's Economic Intelligence Unit are also progressing well with their case study of Wick John O'Groats Airport. The EIU surveyed all passengers going through the airport over a two-month period and are also interviewing local businesses to assess the level of impact the airport brings to the area. The case study will assist with creating a methodological toolkit to enable those who do not have economic background or resources to create economic impact assessments. The EIU attended the Wick John O'Groats Airport Consultative Committee meeting in September to provide an update to local stakeholders on work so far.

Partner Conferences / Communications / Project Management

The next SPARA Partner Conference is to be hosted by Swedish partners Trafikverket & Storuman Municipality in Hemavan, Sweden on 14th & 15th November. Hemavan Airport is the test site for several SPARA projects in the field of remote towers, check-in, sensing and security technologies, and the conference will provide partners with an opportunity to witness these

technologies first-hand and meet experts in the field. A full write-up of the conference will be published on the SPARA website later this month.

The SPARA Project Officer and Communications Officer attended the NPA Annual Conference & Lead Partner Seminar in Galway in September 2017, bringing together approved projects in the NPA Programme 2014-2020 and focused on project communications. The SPARA partners contributed by providing video footage of project outcomes and discussing the benefits the project brings to the people of the NPA region. The Annual Conference addressed Blue Growth as its main theme, with topics such as entrepreneurship & innovation related to fisheries and aquaculture, environmental protection and maritime & coastal tourism. The venue was the Marine Institute in Galway which plays a national coordinating role in the Atlantic Strategy.

HITRANS submitted their request for a project extension to the Joint Secretariat in October 2017 following an information session held at the Lead Partner Seminar in Galway. Good progress is being made across all work packages and HITRANS are confident that a time extension will significantly strengthen and enhance project outputs. An outcome is expected in December 2017.

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 several 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
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Date: 13th November 2017