

Report to Partnership Meeting 3 February 2023

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

EU Funding Consolidated Update

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on HITRANS involvement in European funded projects. This includes programmes Interreg North Sea Region, Interreg Northern Periphery & Arctic, Interreg VA Cross Border, Interreg North West Europe and Horizon Europe. Feedback is welcome on additional information that might be helpful to include in the projects log.

OVERVIEW

HITRANS is currently involved in six active European projects, as well as providing support to the Low Carbon Travel & Transport (LCTT) projects. The Appendix includes details on all projects including status, timelines, description of main activities, a Gantt Chart showing involvement into 2023 and a consolidated budgets table. Amounts have been converted into GBP using the European Commission's official monthly exchange rate. As of January 2023, HITRANS total budget for European projects is £ £4,372,387.

KEY UPDATES

The **PAV** autonomous vehicle project continues to operate at Inverness Campus. Having now had a period of ongoing operations, surveys will be launched with the public to gather views and perceptions around autonomous vehicles and obtain opinions for future use cases. In addition, we are extending the track to include more of the area that can be operated autonomously around Inverness Campus, with the view to assist traffic needs for staff and patients attending the new National Treatment Centre.

We are also contributing to the AV Business Case report with partners in Almere and Varberg, analysing the cost-benefits of operating autonomous vehicles on a variety of routes and studying best practice around Europe.

In Orkney, we are extending our trial on Papa Westray until the PAV project ends on 1st March. This location has been selected due to the success so far and the potential to deliver goods between the market and the shop using a vehicle that has a higher payload, therefore acting as a good use case for the future. This will move us closer to establishing how these small AVs can work in remote and rural areas.



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Return route from Inverness Business & Retail Park, Eastfield Way to UHI Inverness

Timetable runs 10.00-16.20
(leaving Eastfield Way at 10.00),
Monday-Saturday
Travel Time: 10 minutes each way

Please note the service does not run between 12:20-13:00



The engagement work as part of our autonomous vehicle pilot was supported through the **Ride-2-Autonomy** project, which ended in November 2022. A final conference was held on 17th November to showcase the various AV pilots that have been trialled across the consortium and share lessons learned.

The **eHUBS** project is progressing well, with new HI-BIKE stations having launched and further developments in aspects such as shared eCargo bikes and car club vehicles at hub locations. We are also delighted to welcome Chris Finlay who has joined us as Mobility Hubs Project Officer and who will be leading on our work in the eHUBS and Smart Cities projects.

FASTER continues to progress on time and to budget. Since choosing Scottish Power as our Supplier, we have held an inception meeting, drafted a schedule of works and are currently finalising the contract for signing. There has been a slight delay as Scottish Power responded to our request for a more thorough maintenance programme via their sub-contractor, Swarco, however this has not impacted the progress of work. We have also accepted 10/14 SSE quotes. SSE quoted timeframes include a lead time and works time, rather than just a works time, which has given some leeway in our schedule to complete leases, licences & Planning Permissions on 3 sites in Argyll and Bute before installation starts on site in summer. The Minute of Agreement between each Council and HITRANS, containing a lease and licence template, have now been finalised and are in the process of being signed.

NEW PROJECTS

The **RURALITIES** project, funded by Horizon Europe, has now commenced, with a formal kick-off meeting having taken place in Bratislava on 20th-21st October. The project is a vast consortium

comprising of 54 partners from a range of countries, and focuses on 'climate smart, ecosystem-enhancing and knowledge-based rural expertise and training centres'. These expert learning centres will be validated and delivered via real-scale practicing in 6 EU-based "lighthouses" simplified rural socio-ecological systems (SIMSES), with HITRANS role being one of these 'lighthouses' focusing on rural transport. The project will last 5 years. Due to the delay finalising the UK's formal association to the programme with the EU, guaranteed funding is being provided by UKRI in place of Horizon Europe while the process continues. The application for this funding has been successful that will ensure activities can continue as planned. Our budget is €361,000 and is 100% funded. We are now moving this project forward with the assistance of UKRI.

We are actively exploring future **Horizon Europe** funding opportunities, with several upcoming calls focusing on Smart Mobility and Connected and Autonomous Vehicles. We will build on our successful relationships formed through previous and ongoing Interreg and Horizon projects to submit proposals for funding, all of which are expected to be at 100% funding rate.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – HITRANS EU project work supports several RTS objectives, particularly in the field of low carbon transport.

Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – HITRANS EU project work supports broader policy work in a variety of ways, including making areas better connected and rural areas more accessible, and conducting research to assist with policy development.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – HITRANS EU projects bring large investments to the area at attractive intervention rates, ranging from 50%-100%.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – A large proportion of EU project work is targeted at improving the availability and accessibility of transport services in the HITRANS area, such as increasing the number of publicly available charge points, trialling new transport services in rural areas and introducing low carbon transport services.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to:-

1. Note the report.

Report by: Jayne Golding
Designation: Projects and Policy Manager
Date: 24th January 2023

HITRANS European Projects Log

Approved Projects

Project Title	Description	Programme	Status	Timeline	HITRANS Activities	Lead
Smart Cities	50/50 partnership with The Highland Council to deliver the Smart Cities programme for Inverness	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	Ongoing Phase 1 & Phase 2	2018 - June 2023	<p>Phase 1: Completed</p> <p>Phase 2 Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>(Ongoing)</i> Vehicle Management System (VMS) & Ferry Information Signs: the proposal has been approved with a total budget of £500k. Work is currently ongoing to install the 3 new signs, and Part 2 of the project focusing on improved passenger transport information kicked-off in Autumn 2022. We are currently reviewing a budget change that will focus on improvements to information that will help to inform passengers of last-minute cancellations. 	NM/JG
G-PaTRA	Green Passenger Transport in Rural Areas HITRANS are project partners working with lead partner RGU to accelerate the use of zero emission vehicles and vessels in public transport	Interreg North Sea Region (NSR)	Ongoing	Oct 2017 – June 2023	<p>WP3 Accelerating the use of zero emission vehicles and vessels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HITRANS is piloting an electric bus in rural Morayshire with Moray Council – services started Jan 2019 - An evaluation of the pilot & associated carbon reduction emissions is being completed using results from a metric spreadsheet, capturing passenger numbers, total KM travelled, charge point use and any operational issues - Due to Covid-19 the route served by the electric bus service was suspended for a period, with the bus instead being used on the Kingston service which it performed well on – it has since resumed its original route - The final report on the business case for battery-powered trains from Wick-Thurso has been produced and is available on the HITRANS website - The project will contribute funds towards a study on hydrogen for rail 	JG/RP

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The e-bike pilots launched in Jan 2020 in Aviemore, Grantown-on-Spey and Fort William – the project was paused for a period due to Covid-19, but the e-bikes were offered to key workers as a means of transportation and proved extremely popular – future phases focused on wellbeing by advertising the bikes through local partners, including GP practices - Additional project budget and extension time has enabled us to launch DRT pilots across the region, with the contract awarded to Liftango 	
PAV	Planning for autonomous vehicles by local authorities	Interreg North Sea Region (NSR)	Ongoing	Sept 2019 – March 2023	<p>WP1 Project Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HITRANS is lead partner with a proportion of budget being contracted out for project management services - The contract for project management & communications support was awarded in 2020 to Bax Innovation Consulting following public procurement <p>WP4 Pilot Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HITRANS is running a passenger AV pilot at Inverness Campus - The service officially launched October 2022 and will run until the project ends in Spring 2023 - Also running micro-AV trials in Orkney to test the technology in a logistics setting, with vehicles being trialled in Stromness, Papa Westray and Graemsay 	JG/RR
FASTER	Project between NI, Ireland & Scotland to install EV rapid charge points in the Interreg VA programme area	Interreg VA – Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)	Ongoing	Sept 2020 – Oct 2023 (likely further extended to Dec 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project will install 73 EV rapid charge points across the Interreg VA programme area of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland to increase the number of publicly accessible rapid charge points - HITRANS will install 24 x 50kW charge points across the West Highlands & Islands – the HITRANS proportion of the Interreg VA programme area - Procurement for the charge point installations is now concluded, with installations taking place throughout 2023 	GR/JG

eHUBS	<p>Develop electric mobility hubs in cities</p> <p>An existing project that HITRANS were invited to join – the project has already had success launching eHUBS across different cities in Europe</p>	Interreg North West Europe (NWE)	Ongoing	April 2021- March 2023	<p>Implement eHUBS in & around Inverness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HITRANS main activities in the project are to implement shared e-bike hires, e-cargo bikes, electric car clubs and Mobility as a Service in and around the city of Inverness - The hubs will be launched from Summer 2022, featuring a combination of the above mobility modes - Hi-Bike will see an expansion as part of the project - Match funding has been obtained by EST and Transport Scotland - We have now recruited a Mobility Hubs Project Officer who will lead on this work 	CF/JG
RURALITIES	Climate smart, ecosystem-enhancing and knowledge-based rural expertise and training centres	Horizon Europe	Approved 2022 – currently in setup phase	2022 - 2027	<p>RURALITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expert learning centres will be validated and delivered via real-scale practicing in 6 EU-based “lighthouses” simplified rural socio-ecological systems (SIMSES) - HITRANS role will be one of these ‘lighthouses’ focusing on rural transport - Due to the delay finalising the UK’s formal association to the programme with the EU, guaranteed funding is being provided by UKRI in place of Horizon Europe 	JG/RR

EU Projects – Budgets

Status	Project Title	Programme	HITRANS Budget	Intervention Rate	HITRANS Contribution	Leads
Approved	Smart Cities (Phase 2)	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	£500,000	70%	£150,000	NM/JG
	G-PaTRA	Interreg North Sea Region (NSR)	€ 699,874	50%	€ 349,937	JG/RP
	PAV	Interreg North Sea Region (NSR)	€ 1,027,339	50%	€ 513,670	JG/RR
	FASTER	Interreg VA SEUPB Cross-Border Programme	€ 1,675,703	85%	€ 251,355	GR/JG
	LCTT	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	£135,000	n/a	£135,000	NM/VT
	eHUBS	Interreg North West Europe (NWE)	€ 456,783	60%	€ 182,713	CF/JG
	RURALITIES	Horizon Europe	€ 361,000	100%	€ 0	JG/RR
	TOTAL £	Exchange Rate January 2023	£4,372,387		£1,434,078	

EU Projects Gantt Chart – to 2023

	2017				2018				2019				2020				2021				2022				2023					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Ongoing																														
Smart Cities																				Dec								Jun		
G-PaTRA																			Jun									Jun		
PAV																							Sep				Mar			
LCTT																														
FASTER																											May			Dec
eHUBS																												Sep		
RURALITIES <i>Continues to 2027</i>																														
Previous																														
SPARA																														
INCLUSION																														
MOVE																														
Str. Combined																														
R2A																														

NB:

	Original project duration
	Project extensions