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Report to Partnership Meeting 21 April 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 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, Gantt Chart, and a consolidated budgets table. Amounts have been converted into GBP using the European Commission's official monthly exchange rate. As of April 2023, HITRANS total budget for European projects is £ £4,356,137.

KEY UPDATES

The **PAV** autonomous vehicle project continues to operate at Inverness Campus. We are running surveys with the public to gather views and perceptions of the trial, plus general views on autonomous vehicles and ideas for future use cases. In addition, NAVYA were onsite at the Campus over a 2-week period in March mapping a track extension to include more of the area that can be operated autonomously, in addition to offering transport for staff and patients attending the new National Treatment Centre.

We featured as part of a UHI and Skills Development Scotland STEM Equity Project at Inverness Campus on 10th February. The focus was on inspiring young women into a career in STEM, with several pupils from local schools invited to visit the AV and provide an opportunity to ask questions and learn about the technology. We also engaged with students and the public at the Sustainable Travel Event at Inverness Campus on 30th March.

We hosted the final PAV Conference in Inverness on 23rd February. The meeting gave an opportunity to recap on final deliverables for the project and showcase our pilot to partners. The conference also included a site visit to the Stagecoach Depot to learn about the new electric vehicle fleet.

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. We have selected a few routes around Inverness, with assistance

from The Highland Council and Stagecoach, to analyse the impact of AV deployment in these areas and any future considerations we might need.



Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Driverless Machiney

HITRANS
THE HIGHLAND INSTITUTE FOR TRANSPORT AND RURALITY

We want to hear your feedback on Scotland's first driverless bus. Simply follow the QR code to open our survey.



The **eHUBS** project has suffered a few setbacks following Bewegen's financial issues. This has resulted in the scaling down of support services and not being able to fulfil orders, including our shared eCargo bikes. We are currently exploring alternative options to utilise our existing eCargo bikes fleet in Inverness with smarter booking systems. For Hi-Bike, proposals are being reviewed for the management and maintenance of the scheme to ensure this can continue to operate successfully. We have also been preparing for hosting the final event for eHUBS in May in Inverness.

For **FASTER**, two sites were required to be dropped due to costs being significantly higher than estimated for civils works. The two sites will be replaced by an additional charger at each of the Ballachulish & Portree sites, and two new chargers at Dunoon. Installations for charge points will begin shortly.



The **RURALITIES** project, funded by Horizon Europe, has now commenced. HITRANS is receiving its funding through UKRI while the UK's formal association to the programme is being finalised. HITRANS is a member of the Executive Project Board and attended the first meeting in Brussels on 21st March. We are leading one of the six SIMSES lighthouses across Europe (simplified rural socio-ecological systems), with our lighthouse focusing on rural transport. We are working closely with other UK partners, Earthwatch UK and ASPIRE, as we start to identify the specific theme and needs of our lighthouse project.

FUTURE PROJECTS

We are actively exploring future **Horizon Europe** funding opportunities, with several upcoming calls focusing on Smart Mobility and Connected and Autonomous Vehicles. We are part of a consortium bid being submitted later this month focusing on this theme, with 100% funding from Horizon if successful.

We are also engaging with Scottish Enterprise and HIE on what the future of Interreg funding could look like for Scotland.

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
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Date: 6th April 2023