

Report to Partnership Meeting 24 November 2016

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

SPARA 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on the progress made in developing the SPARA 2020 INTERREG IVB Northern Periphery Programme project that has secured funding from the Northern Periphery and Arctic Area INTERREG Programme with HITRANS as Lead Partner.

BACKGROUND



Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports 2020 (SPARA 2020) is a Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme area project aimed at addressing some of the special needs of the smaller civilian airports in the region. This three year €2.4 million project brings together a range of public authorities, academic institutions, airports, SMEs, and specialists to focus on the particular challenges of airports serving remote and peripheral areas.

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



**Northern Periphery and
Arctic Programme**
2014-2020



EUROPEAN UNION

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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 in May 2018.

HITRANS is the lead partner. Other Scottish partners include the University of the Highlands and Islands and Robert Gordon University whilst Sweden is well represented with Trafikverket (The Swedish Transport Administration), Sundsvall *Timrå* Airport and Storuman Municipality. The North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) of Ireland will represent airports such as Donegal and Ireland West (Knock) in the project. Molde University in Norway and the University of Sydney in Australia are the other project partners.

BUDGET AND WORKSTREAMS

The project budget allocation is listed in the table below:

| Partner | Budget |
|--|--------------------|
| The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) | €494,253.21 |
| University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) | €350,216.16 |
| Robert Gordon University (RGU) | €180,797.00 |
| Trafikverket (Sweden) | €250,008.58 |
| Sundsvall <i>Timrå</i> Airport (Sweden) | €357,143.00 |
| Storuman Municipality (Sweden) | €379,871.00 |
| North and West Regional Assembly (Ireland) | €234,306.80 |
| Molde University (Norway) | €115,500.48 |
| University of Sydney (Australia) | €60,000.00 |

The Highlands and Islands area will benefit significantly as all the Scottish activity in the project will have a focus in the region.

The project will include work on Innovative Technologies to improve airport performance and control cost. These involve a close examination of Remote Air Traffic and Remote Security technologies as well as distributed training, benefitting in essence from broadband and communication technology advances. With the support of Eurocontrol the project will also examine the business case for Airport Collaborative Decision Making (lite), as suited to the smaller airport (and budget) context.

Mindful of aviation's carbon footprint two work strands have been developed to foster more sustainable energy use in the sector. Low carbon fuel airport surface access demonstrator trials are being developed by HITRANS in partnership with their member Councils, Energy Savings Trust and Highlands and Islands Airports at airports in the Highlands and Islands. These are designed to be low carbon exemplar projects on how to decarbonise links from the airport to its local population centre and it is hoped this will include support for electronic bus operation on airport service, EV car hire and EV / Hybrid Taxi roll out to serve airports. The business case for offering biofuels to incoming aircraft at the region's airports will be examined in some detail learning from some pioneering work at Karlstadt Airport in Sweden.

Based upon the recognition that the performance of many peripheral airports' scheduled traffic is structurally constrained by their small catchment size, significant budget has been assigned to examining non-aeronautical sources of income and diversification of roles for these facilities. A whole gamut of possibilities will be examined and best practice will be publicised and disseminated, and some more in depth pilot projects will be undertaken. Optimising an airport's role as an employment cluster will be explored extensively. The location selected for these activities are Ireland West (Knock), Donegal, Inverness and Oban. HITRANS are working with the Northern Western Regional Assembly (who are leading this work package) to conduct Audits of the four airports and identify suitable pilot projects for implementation.

The project also intends to examine in some detail the distinct socio-cultural role that airports play in the Northern Periphery and Arctic area and also to refine and improve economic impact assessment methodologies of SPARA airports with a view to better guide future public investment. This includes studies led by RGU at airports in Ireland, Scotland and Sweden.

PROJECT PROGRESS

The SPARA2020 work packages are progressing well, with HITRANS maintaining regular communication between project partners to ensure overall progress and that each work package meets its project deliverables. Project reporting is currently ongoing, using the electronic monitoring system (eMS) to submit 6-monthly partner reports and expenditure claims. First Level

Controllers have begun certifying partner claims, with our overall progress report ready to send to the NPA for verification.

Jayne Westbrook attended the NPA Conference and Lead Partner Seminar in Akureyri, Iceland, on 28th & 29th September 2016. The Conference, titled 'Arctic Boost', discussed how cooperation programmes can contribute to economic development in the Arctic; gathering projects and representatives from different programmes, international organisations and stakeholders. The Lead Partner Seminar discussed ongoing NPA projects and addressed different project implementation topics, such as reporting, eligibility, communications and eMS. The event provided Jayne with an opportunity to meet our Desk Officer, Kirsti, to discuss project progress so far.

Non-Aeronautical Services

HITRANS have been working closely with NWRA on progressing the Non-Aeronautical Services work package activities. After completion of the tender assessment process, ALG were awarded the contract to perform audits of 2 airports in Scotland (Inverness and Oban) and 2 airports in Ireland (Donegal and Ireland West Knock). The aim of this activity is to examine how public service airports are managing their current non-aeronautical activities, and identify opportunities to diversify income based on the individual characteristics of each peripheral airport. After a successful inception meeting held between HITRANS, NWRA and ALG in February 2016, ALG have now completed 3 of the 4 reports following site visits of all airports earlier this year. NWRA are now compiling best practice non-aeronautical activities from airports across the NPA programme area, and are identifying pilot projects to implement and evaluate at these airports.

Low Carbon Solutions

HITRANS is progressing with their Low Carbon Solutions work package by working with Energy Saving Trust and Orkney Islands Council to secure an extended demo of a LEAF electric car for taxi usage in Kirkwall. Another avenue HITRANS is exploring is the possibility of installing electric bikes at Barra Airport, with application to other airports if successful, including Tiree and Benbecula. HITRANS is also looking to support a bid with E-Car Club to EST for EV Charging Points for least 4 Highlands & Islands Airports, with the aim for HITRANS to assist with service maintenance costs & support additional airport charging points.

Partner Conference

SPARA partners recently met in Molde, Norway, to learn and share experiences so far and highlight potential future opportunities. Svein Brathen, our partner in Norway, hosted an inspiring conference that will help to shape our work locally to address the shared challenges faced across the NPA area. A full write-up of the conference will be shared on our project website in the coming weeks, which can be accessed at: <http://spara2020.eu>.

The next partner conference will be held in Knock, Ireland, on 16th & 17th May 2017.

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 very high EU intervention rate of 65% with match funding allowed for within the Research and Strategy Delivery Programme.

Comment – A significant proportion 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:-

1. Note the report.

Report by: Jayne Westbrook
Designation: European Project Officer
Date: 16th November 2016