

HST and IMPACTE Update Report for JEC

4th June 2008

This paper provides a short update on developments in the implementation of the HST and IMPACTE projects since the last JEC meeting in February 2007.

HST connect and integration

The SEEDA-led HST connect and HST integration projects are proceeding well, with investments across the five partner countries reaching fruition. Full partnership Core Executive Meetings for the projects took place in London in May 2008 providing opportunities for the partners to check progress in achieving investments and spending targets before the projects conclude in December 2008.

The HST projects organised a high-profile day at the Eurorail 2008 conference in Milan in late February, which looked at the issues in high speed rail development in Europe. The Chairman of SEEDA chaired the event. The event proved excellent in making useful contacts, especially with rails industry leaders, as well as raising the profile of the projects.

The HST projects held their final conference, "A High Speed Vision for the Future" in Church House, London on 22nd May 2008. A draft conference report is appended for your information.

Next steps

The coming months will see the publication of summaries of the research supported by the HST projects on the policy framework of high speed rail development, the effects of HST infrastructure investment and the connectivity issues to be tackled.

The SEEDA EID INTERREG team is clearly focussing the remaining months of the projects on ensuring successful achievement of projects investments and studies. We are organising Final Project Audits and the orderly documentation of all projects, culminating in submission of Final Reports and Claim by the due date of 31st March 2009.

IMPACTE (Intermodal Port Access and Commodities Transport in Europe) project

Further to the approval of a revised application, the project has been granted by the EU Interreg IIB NWE Steering Committee a time extension up to the 31st of December 2008 and a budget increase up to €16,230,060.

Since January 2008 the IMPACTE project includes, at SEE level, two new feasibility studies: "Rail connection to the Port of Dover GRIP stage 4" and "Leamington to Nuneaton GRIP stage 4". The latter, together with the "Southampton Tunnel" engineering study is part of the greater SMART scheme (Solent to Midlands Advancement of Rail Transport), implemented through a Public Private Partnership and which in October 2007 was allocated £ 42 m by DfT through the TIF-P funding. The research, which will be carried out by Network Rail -after signing a Grant Agreement with SEEDA in March-, has received a financial contribution from Advantage West Midlands.

Between February and April the project was presented to an international audience of distinguished experts in the transport sector, as well as shipping and port industry at the following conferences:

- "Eurorail", Madrid (Spain), February 2008 (sponsored by the HST projects);
- "Rail freight links between the Solent & the Midlands – the SMART IMPACTE project", Oxford Brookes University, organized by the Thames Valley group of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport - CILT, February 2008;
- "Sustainability in International Shipping, Port and Logistics Industries" - IAME 2008 conference, (China), April 2008

Preparations are being made for the final conference, which will take place on the 25th September 2008 at London City Hall. During such event, four studies and a brochure co-funded by the project will be distributed with the aim of both illustrating the results achieved through IMPACTE (small scale investments in Southampton, Portsmouth, Ramsgate, Calais, Zeebrugge, Oostende), and increasing awareness on the vital contribution of ports to the prosperity of the NWE economy.

The last payment claim to the EU Joint Technical Secretariat will have to be submitted no later than 30th of March 2009; therefore, all required steps to ensure a correct and effective closure, reporting and final auditing of the project are currently being taken.