

The project ECORails: Energy efficiency and environmental criteria in the awarding of regional rail transport vehicles and services

1.) Starting situation and outcome of the project

Regional rail transport for passengers possesses inherent advantages for an efficient energy use and high eco friendliness. However, the competing transport modes have made substantial progress during the last decades while rail transport has not yet realised all its potentials in terms of energy efficiency and environmental performance.

Public Transport Administrations (PTAs) play a key role today, when it comes to quality and environmental improvements of passenger rail transport. Tendering, other types of awarding and Public Service Contracts (PSC) are good instruments to enhance the environmental and energetical performance of rail transport, but the PTAs need expertise and guidelines in order to successfully include environmental criteria in their awarding procedures.

The project ECORails consists of 14 European PTA, research institutes and consulting companies (coordinated by TSB-FAV), from six countries (Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Hungary and Romania). The main purpose of the project is to commonly elaborate guidelines which enable PTAs to set realistic environmental criteria for contracting services or procuring rolling stock, focusing on energy efficiency. An advanced draft of these guidelines are planned to be published at end of May 2010. Four regional PTAs from Berlin, the Oresund region, Brescia and Timisoara, representing the different legal and market approaches in Europe, will test the appropriateness and manageability of the ECORails guidelines on the basis of real-life awarding documents.

2.) Context of the project and first results

Besides own research activities, ECORails will use considerations, definitions and results of previous and currently ongoing technological projects like EVENT, PROSPER and Railenergy in order to enable and encourage the European PTAs to use the results of these projects.

The PTAs who intend to use environmental criteria in their awarding procedure should be aware of at least four mantraps which could question the success of a particular awarding project.

(1) The European and national legislation should be considered in order to avoid legal disputes about the correctness of the tendering or direct awarding procedure. In general, there are no major obstacles for using environmental or energy efficiency criteria, but wording, definitions and assessment procedures must respect the principle of non-discrimination.

(2) Innovation needs time. Neither train operating companies (TOC) nor vehicle manufacturers can adequately respond to ambitious environmental requirements when they are confronted with them in a tender surprisingly and within a timeframe of only a few months for preparing a bid. ECORails will show options to solve this problem.

(3) The PTA needs to define requirements, targets and incentive schemes in terms of energy efficiency, noise and pollutant emissions. They need to define their criteria realistically and appropriately in terms of potentials and methodology. ECORails will discuss and present topics, criteria, technologies and operational measures of high potential and priority, thus providing helpful information for environmentally committed PTAs.

(4) Environment-friendly and energy-efficient vehicles and services often need additional investment costs which are not always balanced by saving operational costs. Thus environmental criteria for awarding may lead to increased costs per train kilometre. On the other side risks for public budgets can be avoided by using such criteria. These risk may arise from increasing energy prices, but also from the consequences of the Environmental Noise Directive and the Air Quality Directive. These issues should be considered when compiling awarding documents and defining weighting or incentive schemes.

3.) Content of the presentation

The presentation will comprise the following topics:

- The ECORails consortium, concept and approach of the project
- Environmental performance and energy efficiency of regional passenger rail transport
- Potentials, options, technologies and solutions for improvement
- The role of PTAs: different situations and approaches in Europe
- Ways to include energy efficiency criteria in awarding procedures
- Structure and approach of the ECORails Guidelines
- Presentation of the four test sites
- Open questions and further activities

The ECORails project is financed by the EU within the programme “Intelligent Energy for Europe” (IEE). The duration is from May 2009 until June 2011. More information is available on www.ecorails.eu.

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Allianz pro Schiene

Allianz pro Schiene is the German alliance for the promotion of environmentally friendly and safe rail transport. It unites 17 non-profit organisations: environmental organisations, consumer groups, automobile clubs ACE and ACV, the three rail unions as well as professional associations of the rail sector. Its member associations represent more than 2 million individual members. Allianz pro Schiene is supported by 96 companies operating in the rail sector. Allianz pro Schiene is responsible for the Work Package “Dissemination” within the ECORails project.

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TSB-FAV

TSB-FAV is an initiative of the Berlin Technology Foundation Group with core competence to foster new technologies and innovative approaches for transport economics together with science and economy. TSB-FAV manages the Cluster Transport and Mobility in the scope of the coherent innovation strategy of Germany’s capital region. TSB-FAV coordinates the ECORails project and organises the Berlin test application of the Guidelines.

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