



Corridor

Strengthening existing port-to-port ferry service

Rosyth - Zeebrugge

Definition of a corridor

Corridors are characterised by a connection between a region of origin and a region of destination. In the ideal situation a balance of flows in both directions is obtained. In the framework of Food Port, a **green** corridor is considered in a broad way. In terms of “sustainability” it combines on the one hand environmental and climate criteria and on the other hand economic (cost-efficiency) criteria. Setting up a corridor which is green in the (narrow) sense of being environmentally friendly, but not price competitive, will not be sustainable and could not be developed on a structural basis.

Map



Description

The Rosyth-Zeebrugge ferry service is the only direct link between Scotland and the industrial heartlands of Northern Europe. SEStran commissioned The Spyria Partnership to undertake a research regarding the ferry service, with a view to identifying actions that could enhance the long term viability of the service such as proposals for marketing, identification of potential funding sources or operational enhancements. Research findings suggest that the ferry service does offer efficiency and cost advantages over other alternative ferry services between the UK and continental Europe – as evidenced by current users. However, there are several key issues that need to be considered in improving the attractiveness of the service including:

- 24 hour access to Rosyth and Zeebrugge terminals;
- Revised timetable and quicker transit time;
- A higher level of frequency would enable customer requirements to be met;
- Significant cost advantage compared to alternative routes;
- Public confidence in the medium and long term viability of services.

General objectives

The project aims to present:

- A picture of current usage of the ferry service;
- A summary of the critical factors that were raised during stakeholder engagement;
- An overview of export and import sectors in terms of current performance, and the potential for increasing volumes from these sectors;
- Identification of actions that could enhance the long term viability of the service.





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Results

The Spyria Partnership has consulted a range of stakeholders (DFDS, the port operators and eight logistics providers/ hauliers, including users and non-users), with a view to developing an updated picture of the Rosyth – Zeebrugge ferry service. Two reports were conducted to review the business impact of the ferry connection, and presented during the two Business to Business events jointly organized by SEStran and West Flanders development agency - POM in 2011 (Brussels) and 2012 (Edinburgh) respectively.

From the pilot project undertaken a number of key areas have been identified where there may be potential to take action and enhance the future sustainability of the Rosyth – Zeebrugge ferry service:

- Continued lobbying with regard to the directive on sulphur emissions, both from industry players and politicians;
- Promotion of the benefits and economics of the service – particularly to non-users, with a view to growing volumes of direct Scottish imports. This was a key outcome from the B2B events;
- On-going development of business relationships between importers, exporters and logistics providers as new volumes are driven by new contracts and relationships;
- Better promotion / marketing and re-educating public perceptions about the service and its benefits;
- Improvement of service availability (e.g. adapting the timetable and transit times, and increasing opening hours at Rosyth and Zeebrugge port terminals).

Lessons learned

There are a number of generic lessons learned from this pilot project:

1. Transnational cooperation has been secured through the two jointly organized B2B events;
2. The importance of political support has been acknowledged during the project implementation and needs to be further promoted;
3. The public awareness of the importance of the service to regional economies in Scotland and West Flanders has been raised significantly;
4. The participation of the private sector has been more limited than expected, in particular from the food and drink industry itself;
5. A closer relationship between logistics providers and ferry operator has been developed;
6. Operation of the service should be designed to fit the business needs of targeted customers;
7. Encouraging collaboration and networking within the business community, especially importers and exporters, would be helpful for growing volume, and thereby to overtake the difficulties caused by the imbalance of trade.

Case initiated by



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