

Centrico BRIEFING NOTE

Using ITS to manage Europe's busiest roads



Cross Channel Information Services Project

SUMMARY

The Cross Channel Information Services (XCIS) project concerns improving travel information services for all cross channel travellers, in particular the freight industry. It aims to provide seamless relevant high quality travel information services to help travellers crossing the Channel.

INTRODUCTION

Cross Channel traffic has grown in recent years. In 2004 over 21 million people travelled via Dover or through the Channel Tunnel.

In the same year more than 3 million trucks and nearly 5 million cars crossed the Channel through the Dover straights.

These volumes of traffic reflect the growing importance of the link between the UK and mainland Europe for trade and tourism.

One of the results from the increasing levels of traffic is the need for better information on service conditions covering ferries and trains and about travel conditions in the destination countries.

The services that the project is developing also contribute to efficient long distance travel through cross-border data exchange and traffic management collaboration.

Key objectives of the project are to improve Cross Channel Traveller Information Services by:

- making best use of existing infrastructure to gain early achievements;
- bringing the stakeholders together to develop sustainable solutions;
- providing the data needed for emerging information services;
- developing long term solutions using new technologies; and
- evaluating traveller reception to improved information, the effect on service expectations and future requirements for integrated services.

EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS

The French motorway operator SANEF runs a radio service that broadcasts travel news on 107.7FM. The service broadcasts information in English every 30 minutes.

To increase awareness of this excellent service the project arranged for promotion of the service offered by 107.7FM to be shown to travellers waiting for ferries. Since September 2001 the signs have been showing information about the SANEF 107.7FM motorway radio.



Eurotunnel promote the 107.7FM service on their Variable Message Signs and in the departure letter handed to customers at check-in.

As a result of the feasibility study that looked at the extension of the SANEF radio service 107.7FM, a

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two month trial was carried out in 2003. The Highways Agency provided SANEF with traffic information about English roads that was disseminated by the 107.7FM service informing motorists and freight drivers traveling to England about major incidents in Kent.

The XCIS actions have significantly increased awareness of the 107.7FM service. This illustrates the effectiveness of such initiatives.

The XCIS designed a leaflet for motorists and the freight industry as a guide for foreign drivers crossing the Channel to England. This contains translations of the English VMS settings. Since the summer of 2002 operators including Dover Harbour, P&O Stena Line, SeaFrance and Eurotunnel have distributed the leaflets to inbound traffic.

SANEF, a motorway operator in Northern France now plan to produce a corresponding leaflet translating French VMS settings into English.

SHARING INFORMATION

A DATEX (Data Exchange) connection between France and England is operational. This allows the Highways Agency to receive electronic data on traffic conditions in France. The English French connection is only the second cross border DATEX connection within the CENTRICO area.

The data from France as well as the Highways Agency's real time information websites and trafficmap are being promoted and their potential for improving their operational management are being explained to relevant operators, service providers and the freight industry. All travellers will benefit from the improvements made possible by this international information exchange.

NEXT STEPS

In 2004, over 3 million trucks crossed the Channel through Dover Straits. The freight industry has been identified as major user of the cross-Channel routes. Therefore the project is focussing on freight requirements for Cross Channel Information Services.

In this context the project will also look at long distance traffic combining STREETWISE and CENTRICO tasks.

SAPN is planning to expand the Freight Portal (www.freteuroservice.com) to areas beyond the

French borders. The XCIS project has now implemented an extension for the coverage of the southern half of England in the portal, which became live in March 2005. A further extension to Flanders went live in April 2006.

Following the successful trial on the extension of the SANEF radio service 107.7FM, the Highways Agency currently plans to expand this service to a one-year pilot. Travelers will be informed about large incidents in the Kent area and on the M25 before crossing the Channel through a regular 'English bulletin' on the French radio 107.7FM.

The provision of information terminals and displays on cross-Channel ferries and in the port areas is under consideration.

The potential for real-time information about roads in France on Variable Message Signs at Dover Harbour and Eurotunnel is being investigated. The operational and organisational issues have to be addressed first.

THE PARTNERS

Highways Agency, French Ministry of Transport, Flemish Ministry of Transport, SANEF and SAPN, Dover Harbour Board and Eurotunnel.

The project is co-funded by the Euro-regional project CENTRICO (within the European Commission TEMPO Programme).



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Supported by the European Commission DG TREN-TEN-T

