

ORR survey

ORR, the Office of Rail Regulation in the UK, will soon be conducting a survey of current and prospective rail freight customers.

To be carried out on behalf of ORR by AECOM, the survey seeks to understand the needs of rail freight customers and the extent to which the industry is meeting them, test ORR's policies and decisions against end-user perspective, and explore if there is anything that ORR could or should be doing to fill any gaps.

This is the fourth ORR customer survey of the rail freight sector. The findings of its last one, also carried out by AECOM in 2009, were published in June 2010 and the findings can be viewed on the ORR website. □

project, which will increase container train capacity between Ipswich and Peterborough from 10 to 24 pairs a day and mean that trains between Felixstowe and the North and Midlands no longer have to go via London. Capacity will also be available for longer container trains. The project is currently with the infrastructure

Freightliner train on the single track stretch of the Felixstowe branch line. As things stand, the port is legally obliged to upgrade and double-track it by 2018



planning commissioner and is expected to go the Secretary of State for Transport for approval shortly.

All this work is due for completion in 2014. Under CP5 (2014-2019), NR wants to increase container capacity between Nuneaton and Felixstowe to 56 pairs/day by 2030.

Stretching a point

A key bottleneck, however, is a 7 km stretch of single track just outside the port between Trimley Station and Levington Bridge. This is outwith NR's remit. Instead, the port is obliged to double-track this line under the terms of the Felixstowe South Reconfiguration planning consent in 2008.

Phase one of the new container terminal has opened, but following various submissions in the past few years, Suffolk Coastal District Council has allowed the port to defer double-tracking the line, which would be very expensive, until the end of 2018.

Now Hutchison Ports (UK)'s CEO David Gledhill "has put the cat among the pigeons." Speaking at the NRT ground-breaking ceremony in March, he suggested that another way to increase capacity for container trains would be to discontinue some of the passenger services on the Felixstowe-Ipswich line and replace them

with a bus service. There is no doubt that some of the early morning passenger trains are poorly-utilised, but in overall terms the line accounts for 340,000 passengers a year.

Local observers believe that the

port is seeking an indefinite postponement of its obligation to double-track the short stretch. The port says it is trying to take the discussion forward in a constructive manner and now is the time to consider it.

The branch line between Ipswich and Felixstowe is part of the Anglia Rail franchise. This is up for review in 2014 and will then be (re) awarded for a further 15 years. Prospective franchisees will be reviewing services on the

Felixstowe-Ipswich line as part of their case to government and the port considers it can make a useful contribution to the debate. However, as one local councillor drily remarked, this is a debate entirely of the port's making. □

Keep intermodal on the ground

Two low cost horizontal transfer techniques for rail-road intermodal transport, one for non-cranable trailers (the vast majority of trailers!) and one for all kinds of containers and swap bodies - are gradually gaining credibility.

As previously reported, CargoBeamer has been selected by CCI Côte d'Opale Port de Calais as the rail hub for its new Calais Premier logistics terminal.

Located a stone's throw from the Channel tunnel terminal at Calais Fréthun and with direct access to the A16 and A26 motorways, Calais Premier has an overall footprint of 160-ha and the first phase will occupy 22-ha, including two state-of-the-art, 50,000 m² warehouses/DCs with 11m roof height. Planning approvals are expected later this year.

The narrow profile CargoBeamer terminal will be located between the two buildings and will be managed by CargoBeamer AG of Leipzig. DCB International, the developer of the logistics park, will have a ca. 20% stake in the rail terminal. It is claimed that a 700m long train (36 semi-trailers) can be exchanged in just 15 mins.

Hamburg trials
Trials have already been carried out on CargoBeamer bogies and platforms between Hamburg and Leipzig, as part of a regular Kombiverkehr train. However, the horizontal transfer technique was

not tested operationally, as Kombiverkehr picked up the non-cranable trailers using the "basket" technique developed in Hungary several years ago.

The selling point for CargoBeamer in Calais is that Calais then becomes a modal shift point for Great Britain o/d traffic using Eurotunnel's Le Shuttle Fret service or the Dover-Calais ferries. Calais Premier would be where the drivers would hand over or pick up loads to/from rail.

A CargoBeamer project with EU Marco Polo fund backing would connect Calais with Leipzig, where a prototype CargoBeamer terminal already exists, and subsequently onto points east, such as Mockava, on the Poland/Lithuania border.

GB-Ruhr market

Initially, however, a daily 700m train is planned between Calais and Hagen (near Duisburg). This will tap into the busy Great Britain-Ruhr market, where Channel Tunnel intermodal has failed so spectacularly (see *WorldCargo News*, January 2012, p22 for a review of the effects of Channel tunnel freight train tolls).

There has been some concern that Réseau Ferré de France (RFF), the French rail track authority, has been "dragging its feet" with CargoBeamer (search *worldcargonews.com* under "CargoBeamer"), but the CCI does not think there is a "hidden agenda."



A prototype CargoBeamer terminal has been set up in Leipzig

"RFF has a statutory mission to get freight onto the rails and is neutral when it comes to technology, so even if it's not French it's not an issue for RFF," said Franck-Edouard Tiberghien, the CCI's director of strategic development.

When it comes to semi-trailers and horizontal loading, SNCF Fret, which controls Lorry-Rail, uses the French-built Modalohr system exclusively. There are two Lorry-Rail services today - the original Aiton (Lyon)-Orbassano (Torino) link and the long-haul Perpignan-Bettembourg ((Luxembourg) service. A third service, Lorry-Rail Atlantique, is in the offing, connecting Paris with Montoir (St Nazaire), to link in with the Montoir-Gijón "sea motorway."

CargoBeamer Calais will be an open access terminal and Tiberghien believes the service

could prove attractive to a number of rail freight operators. Europorte (Eurotunnel group), Euro Cargo Rail (DB group) and VFLI (SNCF Geodis group) are all potential candidates, even if SNCF Fret itself is not interested.

At the moment, some structure gauge (*gabarit*) issues on the line out of Calais need to be checked, but a service should start in 2014 or 2015. CargoBeamer's director Dr Imad Jenayeh said that an agreement has been reached with a rail traction company to run a test train from Leipzig to Calais and back again.

CargoBeamer obtained its safety approvals from the German and Swiss rail authorities in September 2010 and May 2011 respectively and it also has TSI (EU) certification through Eisenbahn-Cert in Germany. In January this



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LENGTH	PAYLOAD	PLATFORM HEIGHT	GROUND CLEARANCE	WHEEL DIMENSIONS
20'	25 tons	690 mm	250 mm	405 x 220 mm
40'	60 tons	700 mm	240 mm	22" x 12" x 16"



Metrocargo was tested in Savona. (See WorldCargo News, August 2010, p25)

year CargoBeamer obtained approval from EPSF, the French rail safety authority, to use its prototype cars on the French network.

A distance of 525 miles (840 kms), Calais-Leipzig is easily within the compass of lo-lo intermodal. However, as a ferry port, Calais is a through port. A high speed terminal such as CargoBeamer is required to tap into the "mind set" of the Dover-Calais market, which is almost entirely driver-accompanied.

As noted, CargoBeamer does not have to sell itself as a British rail carrier. Trailers cannot be conveyed by rail in the UK, apart from via HS1. Europorte has just shipped a pilot train using Modalohr wagons and Class 92 locos from Antwerp to London

Barking via HS1. However, HS1 is a limiting case since not all freight wants to go to London Barking, which is in any case a "deadhead" for high cube freight.

Another point is that Calais Premier will provide SPLs and shippers supplying the huge London market with warehousing/DC space that is not available in SE England, where land is too expensive. Here will be a new facility with a rail option at Calais, creating new logistic opportunities.

Most of the freight on the Dover-Calais axis, whether ferry or Le Shuttle, has o/d points within a 300-mile dia. of the axis. Hence Calais-Hagen is a natural starter.

Long and short of it

The classic problem for lo-lo

intermodal remains that it relies on long distances transport to cancel the handling costs; relatively low cost horizontal transfer techniques can bring the distance threshold down, but they can also bring fresh thinking about what intermodal can achieve.

Two years ago, Metrocargo, developed in Italy by Iniziative Logistiche Srl (I.Log) and other partners, staged pilot tests near Savona backed by the Port of Savona itself and the EU VIT Project (*WorldCargo News*, August 2010, p25). CargoBeamer and Metrocargo use different physical techniques, but they are both automatic and can (un)load any wagon(s) in a train. The main difference operationally is that, like Modalohr, CargoBeamer is for trailers. Metrocargo is for containers and swap bodies.

Savona choice

The Port of Savona is interested in Metrocargo because it offers a promising solution as a main terminal operating concept. Metrocargo works under catenaries, so no shunting is needed. The intermodal railhead that will serve the 0.8M TEU/year automated container terminal to be developed by APM Terminals is set to be a Metrocargo operation, occupying an area of 500m x 50m.

The terminal is projected to cater for up to 40% of the marine terminal's throughput. This seems optimistic. However, the infrastructure cost is lower than lo-lo and handling is quicker. I.Log says that just five modules, operating on both sides of the line, can transfer 75-100 containers/hour.

Stop and go

I-Log also sees Metrocargo as a wayside terminal that occupies limited space and can be equipped to handle relatively few loads per day. The key is "stop and go." Instead of a train serving just two points A and Z, intermediate stops at F, M, Y, etc mean cargo can join and leave the train.

"It's fine having a service between Genoa and, say, Rotterdam," says I.Log's director, Ing. Fabio Tarantino, but there is only a certain volume that can use it. What about all the cargo that has origin/destination points along the line of route? At the moment intermodal rail has no way to accommodate this and there is no alternative to trucking."

Conventional intermodal cannot capture short haul flows, but

the "bus stop" concept has potential. A bus service caters for, say, 100 passengers on its journey across the city, but only 30 make the whole trip. This idea is not new to intermodal, but it has only existed on the fringe. It has always been associated with low cost horizontal transfer techniques scalable to small terminals and thus requiring only limited investment.

Request stops?

Furthermore, perhaps some of the intermediate bus stops could be "request stops." If, on a particular train journey there is no booking to take off or receive a load at a

particular lineside stop, the train does not need to stop.

At this stage I.Log is trying to encourage selected shippers and forwarders in Italy that rely on road haulage to try conventional intermodal to familiarise themselves and get to trust unaccompanied transports. In due course they could be converted to Metrocargo on designated trunk routes with intermediate terminal facilities. Certainly, I.Log is confident that Metrocargo can provide intermodalism with the flexibility that SMEs with limited and irregular volumes need.

A new way of thinking is also

needed. For example, how many "slots" is a stopping train? How do track authorities and network managers handle trains that stop on the main line to exchange loads. What is the level of security needed at lineside terminals. Are they manned only when a stop is scheduled? Can you justify a reach stacker to exchange containers between trucks and Metrocargo reception platforms?

There are no easy answers, but they are worth pursuing. Horizontal transfer is not a sufficient condition to win new business for intermodal, but it looks like it will be a necessary one. □

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Novatrans still in the mire

The outlook for SNCF Fret's combined transport affiliate Novatrans remains bleak. The 2011 accounts just signed off by the Board of Novatrans show that the operator lost €18.6M on revenues of €86.8M.

A return to financial equilibrium will require wholesales restructuring and a fresh capital injection of €42M, but as SNCF owns 96.39% of Novatrans' shares, this would primac facie amount to a state aid and would require approval from the EU competition authorities in Brussels.

Following January's call for expressions of interest, several proposals have been received, but they

are not considered workable in their present state and revised proposals have been invited to be considered at the next Novatrans Board meeting on 8 June.

At this juncture, a winding up and cessation of all activities by Novatrans cannot be ruled out, particularly given the fate that eventually befell another loss-making SNCF affiliate, Seafrance.

France's new President, François Hollande, has a more interventionist agenda than the Sarkozy government and will be giving a priority to jobs and investment by the state to get the economy moving, but the outlook for Novatrans still looks bleak. □

NEAT work in the Alps

The Gotthard Base Tunnel will generate the expected benefits for the Rotterdam-Genoa corridor, provided the existing gaps in the infrastructure in Switzerland and abroad can be overcome. That is the conclusion of European intermodal traffic operators, meeting at 45th general meeting of Hupac in Lugano in May. The new tunnel is one of the projects in

long, weighing 2000t, driven by a single locomotive [ie max 12% gradient] and capable of loading modern trailers 4m high," continued Bertschi.

However, the southern access routes to the base tunnel feature, on average, 575m trains, a P380 profile and a gradient of up to 21% on the route via Chiasso, which