

News

EC adopts €1bn Shift2Rail research project

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THE European Commission (EC) has adopted the seven-year €1bn Shift2Rail public-private partnership (PPP) research project designed to increase passenger and freight traffic within the European Union.

Under Shift2Rail, the EC will more than triple its funding of railway research to €450m between 2014 and 2020 compared with €155m for the previous period. This will be matched by €470m from the railway industry.

Manufacturers Alstom, Ansaldo STS, Bombardier, CAF, Siemens, and Thales together with infrastructure managers Network Rail in Britain and Trafikverket in Sweden have already pledged a total of €270m.

Shift2Rail has ambitious targets as it aims to cut railway life-cycle costs by 50%,

double capacity, and increase reliability by up to 50%. By doing this, the EC believes rail can increase its share of passenger transport, which has remained fairly constant at 6%, and reverse rail's decline in freight market share which has dropped from 11.5% in 2000 to 10.2% today.

The research will focus on five areas:

- the development of a new

generation of high-capacity rolling stock

- developing intelligent traffic management and control systems
- providing reliable, high-quality infrastructure while at the same time reducing track noise, cutting costs, and developing intelligent maintenance
- providing integrated ticketing and journey planners

using innovative IT, and

- improving logistics and intermodal freight.

Shift2Rail will pool the resources of virtually all European railway suppliers to accelerate the development of new technologies and bring them to market, while operators and infrastructure managers will try to ensure that research is aimed at providing what they need.