



Star quality

Urban Freight Logistics in Europe are getting green, efficient and smart. Cities and regions are increasingly engaging with operators to improve urban logistics and municipalities have become an important stakeholder, as **Dagmar Röller** reports

Along with other Councils in the UK and the EU, the city of Edinburgh has tough air quality targets to meet. Edinburgh's issues relate to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particles, eg PM10, a significant proportion of which have been attributed to the volume of diesel-engined vehicles operating on its roads. The City of Edinburgh Council is pursuing a range of measures to improve air quality, among them ECOSTARS: committed to voluntary measures, the scheme allows the Council

to reach out to fleet operators, promising significant improvements.

The city's ECOSTARS scheme promotes more efficient and cleaner freight and passenger transport vehicle movements by providing recognition, guidance and advice to operators of vehicle fleets. Edinburgh introduced the free, voluntary scheme in January 2012.

ECOSTARS schemes rate vehicles and operating practices using simple star rating criteria, to recognise levels of environmental and energy savings

performance. Operators then receive tailor-made support to ensure the fleet is running as efficiently and economically as possible, to help them progress to higher ratings within the scheme. Scheme membership, in return, provides visibility and publicity for the joining fleet operator whose operational and environmental profile will be raised, particularly in the eyes of other operators, customers, and local communities. Across Europe, ECOSTARS fleets include bakery companies, newspaper distributors, tour

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operators, public transport, waste collection fleets, public fleets and many more. ECOSTARS allows the Council to tackle both freight and passenger fleets in one single scheme.

ECOSTARS assessment criteria are based on engine EURO standards plus alternative fuels use and operational enhancement. All ECOSTARS schemes across Europe apply common scheme standards, which have been developed and guided by a European reference group of stakeholders. This allows national companies to be a member of for example ECOSTARS Edinburgh and also any of the six other UK ECOSTARS schemes in whose area they operate.

“ECO Stars” was first created for the South Yorkshire Transport Plan Air Quality Steering Group, and launched in 2009, as part of a regional Air Quality Initiative. The ECOSTARS Fleet Recognition Scheme was subsequently developed to provide public recognition

for operators of commercial vehicles who are actively taking steps to improve efficiency, reduce fuel consumption and reduce their impact on local air quality, including maximising carbon savings. “To make a significant impact on air quality in Edinburgh and to preserve our city for future generations, we need operators to take responsibility for the emissions their vehicles generate”, said then-Councillor Gordon Mackenzie at the Edinburgh scheme launch.

CITIES PLAY A RISING ROLE IN URBAN LOGISTICS

Four years later, there are now 13 cities and regions in six countries operating ECOSTARS schemes. Seven of them have been established within the ECOSTARS Europe project, co-funded by the European Commission’s Intelligent Energy Europe Programme along with further support for the original South Yorkshire (UK) scheme: Edinburgh (UK), Parma

(IT), Rotterdam (NE), Southeast Sweden (SE), Ostrava (CZ), Cantabria (ES) and the Basque region (ES). These seven schemes together currently have 157 scheme members with 13,150 vehicles. They target to cover almost 30,000 vehicles, and a 112,005t CO₂e/year reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as of 2014. It has been found that the most significant impact in a short timescale is made through fleet renewal. Roadmaps, as developed for each ECOSTARS fleet, indicate the most appropriate actions for the operator to improve vehicle performance and operations.

The timing for the take up of ECOSTARS schemes is not a coincidence. In the past five years cities and regions have played increasing roles in urban freight logistics. Following early fore-runners, cities all across Europe now include freight and logistics in their urban mobility planning. Rising numbers of projects demonstrate the active involvement of municipalities, bring innovation and authorities together, and value the cities’ views for research pilots. The EU co-funded project SMARTFUSION for example places cities in the centre of debate: It started off with an extensive consultation of cities and stakeholder, one of the sites being the city of Berlin. Based on the consultation and the demonstrations the project determines the critical success factors for more sustainable vehicle operations and logistics. The Smart Urban Freight Designer Tool will finally allow urban policy makers to analyse the benefits of green vehicle technologies in their city-regions.

Another example is the full-electric van, developed in DELIVER, which is currently experiencing intensive up-scaling to a meaningful size. This adaptation to actual practical needs acknowledges the Advisory Board’s input, consisting of DHL and the cities of Amsterdam, Berlin, London and Rotterdam.

The city of Rotterdam with its zero emission strategy for city logistics left the “spectator role” far behind already a long time ago. Instead, Rotterdam expresses its findings and needs on European level



Inaugural members at launch event of ECOSTARS Edinburgh on 26 January 2012 where DHL received a five star award (left) Photos: ECOSTARS Edinburgh



Cantabria ECOSTARS launch; ECOSTARS sticker on ALSA bus in Cantabria, Spain (below) Photos: CTL Cantabria

Gunvor Munck (left), Manager Director of Börjes Koncernen, receives the ECOSTARS fleet assessment certificate

Photo: ESS



through its membership in Polis, the network of European cities and regions on transport innovation, and is clearly thriving towards a facilitating and leading role in urban logistics. The city implemented night time delivery with noise constraints, promotes clean procurement and demonstrates electric freight vehicles within FREVUE. Rotterdam also set up an ECOSTARS scheme to engage with fleet operators, and will link incentives to scheme membership. This includes creating a group of five ECOSTARS front-runner operators, which will be invited to engage in a discussion with the authorities. The exchange is intended to enhance mutual understanding of both sides, to exchange sustainable innovations and to improve services for sustainable logistics. Other incentives Rotterdam is considering include to link ECOSTARS membership with time window regulations.

FIVE STAR SERVICE

However, European cities kick off from very diverse conditions. ECOSTARS Ostrava in the Czech Republic for example welcomed its first five stars operator just recently. FRAMA CZ s.r.o. is a company which provides services since 1990 in freight transportation both in domestic and international markets. The company is certified by ISO: 9001 since 2000, cooperates in a long-term horizon with a Volvo supplier and all drivers are regularly trained in eco-driving through the regional Chamber of Commerce. An active real-time monitoring system of vehicle and driver behaviour is in place that allows immediate improvements. This demonstrates the differences ECOSTARS Ostrava experiences between operators of freight and of public transport services: Turnover of commercial freight vehicles is faster and the fleets are newer compared to public transport fleets, which are dependent on public resources for investment and operation.

While in some ECOSTARS schemes fleet operators are afraid to join for the risk to be labelled with low star ratings, high ratings have become the average elsewhere and fleet operators show inter-



One of the Rotterdam ECOSTARS Hybrid vehicles is a clean garbage truck

est in gaining additional tangible benefit from their association with the local authority.

UNDERSTANDING THE OPERATOR

The new solutions currently taken up in urban freight logistics respond to tough air quality targets, increase energy efficiency and reduce fuel consumption. It is the quicker introduction of more environmental friendly vehicles and, in consequence, improvement in air quality, operating practices and possibly noise emission, which led municipalities to set up schemes like ECOSTARS. Fermin Llaguno-Mazas, General Director for Transport in Cantabria explains why his region runs ECOSTARS:

“While we are talking about a key sector for economic growth in Europe we cannot forget that road transport is a major source of emissions and energy consumption and increasingly expensive. ECOSTARS should allow us to combine growth with sustainability and raise awareness among producers on the impossibility of dissociating these two terms.”

It is also the establishment of new channels to actually meet with vehicle operators that municipalities are looking into. Edinburgh’s ECOSTARS team, therefore, holds regular meetings with members to discuss topical issues and learn how the operators feel they could work with the Council to improve their environmental performance in the city.

To stimulate discussion, the Council develops presentations and discussion sessions to enable sharing of best-practice and provide a forum to discuss key cur-



FRAMA CZ s.r.o. company, the first 5 star operator of ECOSTARS Ostrava at the certification ceremony in the Ostrava town hall during the city council. *Left:* Dalibor Madej, vicemayor of the Statutory City of Ostrava. *Right:* Roman Frank, founder and managing director of FRAMA CZ s.r.o.

Photo: Petr Havránek, Statutory City of Ostrava

rent issues. “Through these sessions we have gained an insight into the world of fleet operators, their needs and priorities. Feedback about the scheme and meeting outcomes will be presented to the Council’s Transport and Environment Committee. We feel that ECOSTARS is allowing us to engage more meaningfully with fleet operators on a voluntary basis and has demonstrated its effectiveness in securing improvements that will benefit air quality in Edinburgh”, says Ann Connolly, ECOSTARS manager of the city of Edinburgh Council.



Dagmar Röller is Communications Manager at Polis. ECOSTARS Europe is a 3-year project funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) II Programme and started in June 2011.

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