

TENDER- LOBBYING WORK FOR THE OSLO- GOTHERBURG RAILWAY STRETCH

The political cross-border organisation STRING is now looking to enter into a contract with an agency able to lift awareness around the need for an improved railway stretch between Oslo and Gothenburg, and putting this into a broader context to develop accessibility in the entire geography between Hamburg and Oslo. The ultimate goal is to influence decision makers to put this on the national agenda.

1: The issue

The current railway stretch between Oslo and Gothenburg lies along the ScanMed TEN-T corridor, and has been identified by the EU as a bottleneck to accessibility in the whole corridor. Travel times for train passengers on this route far surpass that of road transport - it currently takes twice as long for a freight train going from Oslo to Gothenburg, as it does for a lorry traveling by road. Similarly, cars can go around 30 km/pr.h faster than the train does on this stretch.

Of the seven trains daily frequenting the stretch in each direction, only three travel at full speed (around 85 km/pr.h). Furthermore, close to 97% of all freights between the two destinations are transported via road, with over 70% of lorries returning empty. This presents two main challenges; 1) rail accessibility and travel times on the entire TEN-T corridor, all the way down to Hamburg, becomes suboptimal; 2) the environmental effects of passenger travel in the stretch are far worse than with a well-functioning railway system. Hence, the bottleneck created by only having a single track between Oslo and Gothenburg is a huge infrastructural disadvantage for the entire TEN-T ScanMed corridor, prolonging travel times and hindering accessibility for the entire STRING megaregion (all statistics taken from the 2018 OECD Territorial Review: The Megaregion of Western Scandinavia)

2: Why does the issue need addressing?

Several OECD Territorial Reviews point out that innovative cities like Oslo, Gothenburg, Malmö, Copenhagen and Hamburg are still unable to compete on an international market when considered individually. If these cities are able to connect to each other, and to the hinterlands surrounding them in a joint geography, they reach a critical mass of around 12.8 million people. This increases competitiveness, along with the ability to attract more skilled labour, competencies and investments. To prevent that our four member countries fall behind the rest of the world in terms of growth and innovation, they need close relations with their neighbours to be part of a financial power centre. Economic growth and productivity are gathered in clusters, and in order to become an attractive megaregion, and to reap the benefits that come with this, we have to invest in infrastructure. As such, the infrastructural issues caused by the current Oslo-Gothenburg railway are not only a local or national concern – but a concern that is essential to address for the entire region between Hamburg and Oslo. This is becoming increasingly important to address in the light of the coming Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link, which will put a strain on the existing traffic net and heighten capacity issues in the stretch. Without a seamless and sustainable infrastructure system connecting the entire region, the positive effects of the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link are rendered weak.

The STRING region is already home to some of the most innovative cities, regions and businesses in the world when it comes to using, producing and exporting sustainable, green technologies. With the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link on its way, we are close to becoming an international centre for exporting and developing these kinds of

technological advancements - a Green Hub. This is however severely jeopardised, if the Oslo-Gothenburg railway stretch remains a bottleneck for the entire STRING megaregion. That is why all members of STRING, both Norwegian, Swedish, Danish and German agreed to include the issue as a strategic infrastructure priority in our 2030 Strategy.

The stretch between Oslo and Gothenburg needs double tracks to create economic growth and improve our environment. With continuously stricter EU and national emission goals, we are dependent on well-functioning rail traffic. We cannot stop travelling, but we can adjust our travel habits if given the right tools to do so. EVs and hydrogen cars are a huge step in the right direction toward cutting emissions, but they do not have the range or efficiency to replace traveling by air and quick trips between cities and rural areas. Nor do they solve the issue of road congestion. Pushing for new rail solutions is therefore the only sustainable alternative for mid-length travels.

3: Our aim

Our overall aim is to create a functioning megaregion, where investments, export and chain solutions benefit all our member countries. To get there, infrastructure is key.

An upgrade to double tracks on the railway stretch between Oslo and Gothenburg to improve travel times and facilitate a shift of freight and passenger transport from road to rail, creating a competitive and sustainable railway system, is essential.

Making rail travel between the two cities more competitive is far from unobtainable, but it does require an aspiration from Swedish and Norwegian politicians to transfer freight and passenger traffic from road to rail. This would be made more feasible, should the project also have the political support of the EU and other European countries. In order for rail travel to become a competitive and attractive alternative, travel times need to be reduced and tracks need to be capable of handling high speeds.

4: Deliverables

We need help to get clear facts, communicative messages and influence the political debate to say that this upgrade should be a key priority not only for Swedish and Norwegian governments, but for all of the EU alike. To get there, we will take the winning parties advice on actionable measures, but we currently envisage a public affairs contract entailing the following aspects:

- An analytical overview of the baseline – a written analysis on what the political climate on the issue is like in Sweden, Norway and the EU, what studies are already out there, and what is the current situation?
- Collate arguments on the benefits of investment in double tracks for the entire ScanMed corridor and the drawbacks the current situation will entail, focusing on the potential in tying the STRING geography tighter together. A broader take on the issue, the players and its relevance to the world around us in terms of business, inhabitants, labour market potentials, climate etc.
- A concrete lobbying plan of who needs to be reached and influenced with what messages and how. How do we build targeted communication towards decision makers as well as public opinion?
- Stakeholder analysis – who are key players to persuade and engage?
- Activities plan for meetings and events for 2020 until 2022.

- Media plan of how we can take a lead on the public and medial debate on this issue.
- The production of a communications package with key argument and statistics, making it possible for all relevant stakeholders to speak with one voice and pinpoint the same messages.

5: Timelines

We envisage the above mentioned lobbying work to take place during the remainder of 2020 until the end of 2022. Work should commence as soon as possible upon signing a contract, with the production of a lobbying plan guiding the entire further work, overview of the baseline and collation of key arguments taking precedence.

An overall plan for how to move the issue forward, encompassing the seven aforementioned deliveries and how these should be implemented and when, should be done and ready for implementation in May.

The tender needs to be received no later than April first 2020, 00:00.

6: Contact

Should this contract be of interest for your company to tender on, please submit your proposal for how you would tackle the assignment – as well as estimated costs broken down and reference projects - no later than April first, 2020, electronically to Rebecca Elliott aarr@stringnetwork.org at the STRING Secretariat. Please also feel free to contact her at aarr@stringnetwork.org or +45 2494 3885 should you have any questions or queries.

Please note that due to the geographical precedence of the area in questions, tenders need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the Swedish and Norwegian political structures and media outlets, as well as master a Scandinavian language in order to be considered.

7. Administrative Conditions

The contract will be awarded by the cross-border political cooperation STRING. STRING is legally a part of the Danish public authority, Region Zealand. Danish legal stipulations are therefore to be followed.

The selection of this contract will be made by STRING, together with partners from the following organisations:

- Västra Götalandsregionen
- The City of Gothenburg
- The City of Oslo
- The County Council of Viken

8. Demands and criteria

In order to be considered for this contact, tendering companies need to demonstrate solvency as well as suitability to the contract. Selection criteria will include, but not be limited to:

- Relevant and demonstrable previous experience of similar projects – at least three reference projects of similar character and content should be attached to the application.
- Tendering agencies must provide the name, CV and level of seniority members of staff that will actively be working on the project. This must also include and outline of the percentage of involvement from each team member.
- Fluency in written and spoken Swedish and Norwegian.
- Demonstrable links and previous collaborations with similar agencies in the other STRING countries; most importantly Sweden and Norway.
- Cost and value for money
- Time scale of delivery
- Concreteness and demonstrable knowledge of the current status and challenges presented in the tender.

8. Other Conditions

- Price stated in the tender shall include all activities and efforts tendered for.
- Submitted tender needs to account for a breakdown of costs –i.e. for consultancy services, travel, communication, overhead etc. The tender must include all foreseen costs.
- STRING reserves the right to extend the contract beyond the stipulated time frame should this be of mutual interest to both parties.
- We would like to receive the tender electronically, in English.
- The use of subcontractors or other agencies is accepted – as long as these are named and this is reflected in the overall pricing estimate in the tender.
- STRING reserves the right to withdraw the tendering process should one or any of these conditions occur:
 - Lack of competition
 - Unforeseen circumstances
 - Wrongfully stipulated assessment criteria leading to difficulties in assessing tenders
 - Prices being too high to award a contract.