

BOLOGNA : Mastering the environmental agenda is in our DNA

Bologna, Italy – 27 January, 2014– The Province of Bologna and Bologna Guglielmo Marconi Airport hosted between 13 and 15 January the eighth study visit of the Decarbonized Airport Regions project (dAIR). Regional planners, environmental specialists and experts from nine other regions came to explore the actions that the region and airport are taking at the moment to curb the impact of fossil fuels in relation to their airport.

The Province of Bologna already invested in a number of projects that are looking at decarbonizing the region and the airport area.

A people mover monorail project which would connect the airport to the central railway station in Bologna has been presented at the meeting. This project complements a comprehensive strategy for mobility, which include upgrades to the metropolitan railway service, public transport harmonization and integration, cycling mobility (the construction of bicycle lanes, both for workers and tourists is in progress) and the construction of motorways.

The dAIR project partners tested a range of electric innovative vehicles: a solar-powered motor scooter, an electric public bus, a lightweight electrically assisted bicycle created by Ducati, as well as a small electric car. They come as a demonstration of the innovation capacity of the region, since all of them were developed in the Bologna area.

“At the airport, we are always very keen to exchange knowledge and experience with other airports and regions. We appreciate learning from our colleagues in Europe and contributing to the knowledge building. I can say it is part of our DNA, of our way of working,” said Nazareno Ventola, Managing Director, Aeroporto G. Marconi di Bologna SpA. “Managing and mastering the environmental agenda is a competitive issue for us. By doing so, we address real business problems, because I believe sustainability is another facet of the business,” Mr. Vendola added.

The project will continue to identify problems and solutions in airport areas and will culminate with a series of documenters outlining the best practices identified. This helps public authorities and airport operators to understand the larger framework that is surrounding air quality at airports.

Decarbonated Airport Regions

a short introduction to the project

dAIR is an EU funded project where local governments together with airport operators work on converting airports into ecological and sustainable transport hubs, helping reduce CO₂ emissions. The project spans over a timeframe of three years of activities.

Throughout the project two main aspects will be in focus: *airport operator activities* and *surface accessibility*. The project also pays special attention to the involvement of business and R&D communities in creating well connected sustainable airports.

At and around an airport, there have been identified three main sources of carbon emissions:

1. The aircraft
2. The airport operations
3. Surface access to and from the airport

dAIR looks at how the carbon from surface access and airport operations can be reduced. These two together account for about half of the carbon footprint. Through study visits and workshops, as well as stakeholder forums, the 14 member organizations are able to exchange experience and see what reduction solutions are being used and have worked at other airports and how they could be applied to their own.

The importance of this project cannot be overstated at a time when airports in Europe find it hard to expand because their environmental footprint is being increasingly scrutinized by numerous authorities as well as the persons living in the vicinity. However, if there is willingness to reduce the carbon around the airport, the neighboring communities will begin accepting the airport as a necessary catalyst for economic development.

So far the results have been positive and ideas are surfacing on how to minimize the effect of the airport on the environment. The impact of geographical locations is being taken into consideration, also the necessity of having economically viable projects also influence the possibilities for successfully engaging stakeholders in working for CO₂ reduction.

Some of the concrete ideas that have been discussed in dAIR include hybrid buses to the airport, electric vehicles at the airport, better and more connected public transport and effective management of emissions from heating and cooling terminals.

The project partner regions of the D-AIR project are: City of Eindhoven, Eindhoven Airport N.V, Airport Regions Conference, Communauté d'agglomération Terres de France, Stockholm Public Transport Authority, Stockholm-Arlanda Airport/Swedavia, City of Leipzig, Mitteldeutsche Airport Holding, City of Vienna, Province of Bologna, City of El Prat de Llobregat, Transport Malta, Mazovia Voivodship and Prague Airport Region.

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