

FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

In the UK, Egis is known for being a heavyweight in railway design and construction. And PAUL STEPHEN finds out that the firm has a lot more to offer the rail industry

Egis is perhaps best known to RAIL readers for its role as a major design and engineering consultancy on a number of high-profile light rail (LRT) projects.

That is because, in the UK and Ireland, it is in this sector where it has secured some of its largest rail contracts to date, including Birmingham's light rail system extension within the Midland Metro Alliance.

In Dublin, Egis completed the engineering, procurement and construction management (EPCM) between 1994-2004 for the first two lines of the Luas, comprising 25km of track and 36 stations. It also produced the Invitation to Tender and provided additional support for the procurement of 32 tram sets.

Meanwhile, in the UK, it conducted in 2002 technical and environmental impact studies related to the Edinburgh tram project, and in the West Midlands it is the lead design partner of the Midland Metro Alliance that is delivering six LRT extensions since 2016.

But having already established a sound reputation as a leading project partner in Light Rail, Egis is now embarking on a new strategy in the UK to bring its much wider global capabilities to bear in all forms of rail, including support for all stages of project delivery from conception to commissioning.

With a company motto of 'creative for the long term', the rail division of Egis is part of an international group that offers engineering, project structuring and

operations services in a wide range of sectors including transport, water and energy. With more than 14,000 employees around the world, it recorded a turnover of more than one billion euros in 2016.

75% owned by one of France's largest financial institutions Caisse des Depots, Egis also has a strong track record in Project Structuring and turnkey solutions in road and aviation infrastructures. Egis is also developing road mobility and Asset Management Solutions. These successful experiences could potentially be applied in UK heavy rail as Network Rail commits itself for renewals and enhancements in Control Period 6, which should imply better focus on final client's satisfaction and, as a consequence, new business schemes to be set.

The rail division of Egis has more than 1,500 employees and a turnover in excess of 200 million euros, having worked on more than 12,000km of conventional and high-speed rail lines and 800km of light rail systems across the world. It now aims to become one of the global top five rail engineering providers.

"The rail division of Egis is part of a much bigger group which has been involved in some very significant engineering projects in the UK and Ireland," explains Illy Toiber, UK business development director at Egis.

"These include the new nuclear power station being built at Hinckley Point, the M25 concession and our aviation consultancy - Helios, while we are also



Egis provided preliminary studies and final designs for the first two lines of Dublin's LRT system, produced the ITT for rolling stock and supported its procurement. SOPHIE PERRILLAT CHARLAZ.

Ireland's largest motorway and tunnel infrastructure operator and maintenance provider.

"We also have some important rail contracts, such as the Midland Metro Alliance, but we see lots more growth potential in UK and Irish rail. As the largest French engineering firm with the largest French bank as a key stakeholder, we don't want to be seen as too niche because we have a much wider offer.

"Much of the business we've done so far in UK rail is providing engineering services to infrastructure owners, but we can also be involved through many other schemes including turnkey solutions."

"Having worked across the world and in the UK alongside some of the largest rail contractors and engineering firms we are known to be good project partners, but we aren't so well-known to the end clients as a total solutions provider, which is something we want to change."

International Commercial Manager Scott Kunitani adds: "We're not a conventional engineering company as we have been specifically created to deliver transport schemes including through public-private partnerships. Our ability to bring systems integration and part of turnkey solutions could also be very relevant, given Network Rail's new approach for CP6.

"Under the forthcoming CP6 framework we intend to bid for work, using our know-how from across the globe."

As part of Egis's strategy for the UK rail market, the company is seeking to expand on its design and consultancy credentials to reposition itself as a fully integrated provider of engineering and project management services.

This includes the installation of systems



Egis is a member of the Midland Metro Alliance that will deliver four extensions to the light rail system worth some £1.2 billion by 2026. WMCA.

and equipment for high-speed lines, from initial design through to handover and commissioning, as will be needed for Phase 1 of High Speed 2 once main construction work begins between London and Birmingham next year.

Egis's expertise in this field has been demonstrated in Morocco, where the company is part of a consortium constructing Africa's first high-speed line between Tangiers and Kenitra and is supervising civil engineering, track and catenary work, and the construction of depots.

Elsewhere in the world, Egis has an impressive amount of experience providing design, infrastructure, systems, testing and project management services on high-speed lines in a wide range of countries, including China, Thailand, Spain, Saudi Arabia and in its native France, on which it worked on several of France's high speed lines including South Europe Atlantic, Rhine-Rhone, East European, Bretagne-Pays de la Loire, South West and Nimes Montpellier.

It has also fulfilled design and build contracts on a range of LRT projects,



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Scott Kunitani, International Commercial Manager, Egis

including a 1.7km extension to Lyon's Line B that opened in 2013, and a 13km driverless metro line under construction in Rennes, which is scheduled to open in 2019.

It is also currently engaged in engineering, procurement and construction management (EPCM) on six lines of the Grand Paris Express Metro project to expand the French capital's public transport system.

Egis hopes that this will make it a strong contender for forthcoming LRT tenders in the UK and Ireland, including extensions to existing systems Edinburgh, and also the Dublin Metro North project, plus design and

build contracts for HS2.

Egis is also committed to making the industry more sustainable by supporting the pipeline of future talent in the industry, and by working hard to overcome one of the principal barriers to the wider deployment of LRT and high-speed rail: the cost.

Illy Toiber says: "We are actively supporting the new National College for High Speed Rail by providing lecturers with hands-on experience of various aspects of high speed rail. We also believe that through innovation we can deliver great cost savings." ■



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