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## International Case Studies for Scotland's Climate Plan

# Transporting flowers by rail, Netherlands

### Facts & Figures

97% of goods delivered on time, when carried by the GreenRail initiative

Carrying goods by road produces up to 76% more carbon emissions than rail freight.

Up to 50% cut in CO2 emissions achieved by the GreenRail project

More than 30 organisations working together, and with the Dutch government providing subsidy.

A 20% cost reduction across the whole transport chain

A commercial rail service, five times per week, from the flower markets of Venlo to the city of Milan.

### Overview

The freight industry plays a vital role in global, national and local trade, moving items around the world by air, sea, rail and road. However, in doing so it generates a significant amount of climate change emissions. Around 7% of Scotland's carbon emissions come from road freight, representing about a third of all transport emissions. Shifting freight from road to rail can cut carbon emissions by up to 76% and taking advantage of "intermodality" where different methods of transport are used together can create efficiencies and produce significant economic and environmental benefits.

This is one of two case studies that together showcase two examples of governments and industry working together to reduce carbon emissions, whilst making the freight industry more efficient.

### GreenRail - transporting flowers by rail

The Netherlands is one of the world's biggest producers and distributors of fresh flowers. Most of this produce is transported by road as they are highly perishable, however road freight is carbon intensive, producing 76% more carbon emissions than rail freight. GreenRail is a collaborative project which aims to develop trade routes by rail for fresh flowers between the Netherlands and other European countries, cutting emissions, costs and time.

In 2008, a coalition of growers, trade bodies and exporters initiated several pilot projects where floricultural goods were transported by rail from the Netherlands to several destinations in Europe, using existing publicly owned rail services. The success of these pilots led to the development of a commercial service for rail transport to Italy. This rail service now runs five times a week between the Dutch city of Venlo and Milan.

## Aims

GreenRail aims to demonstrate that rail transport is a reliable, more efficient, cleaner and cheaper alternative to road freight for the transportation of floricultural products. It aims to ease congestion, produce better working conditions and cut emissions, all while increasing the reach of the market for floriculture across Europe.

## How it works

GreenRail's main partners are FloraHolland and VGB, working alongside around 30 other growers, trade bodies and distributors. The project is subsidised by the Dutch government.

Exporters are supported by an independent partner for coordination and communication. In order to monitor the transport, a 'Track & Trace' system is applied. This is considered to be an important aspect in this collaboration, as it enables the coordinator to intervene quickly in case of potential problems or delays, and guarantees a high level of service. The project operates on state-owned rail infrastructure, making collaboration and communication between state rail agencies and project operators essential.

## Benefits

GreenRail has a strong track record in reliability with 97% of goods delivered on time. Conditions are monitored during the transport to ensure that the quality of the produce is high when it reaches its destination. The project has cut congestion, secured a larger sales market, produced better working conditions for employees and cut costs and emissions.

### Economic

The project has seen a 20% cost reduction for the whole transport chain between the Netherlands and Italy.

### Environmental

The project has seen up to 50% reduction of CO2 emissions by shifting from road to rail transport.

### Social

Consumers are able to access a wider range of high quality products at a lower cost while businesses are able to reach new markets. Employees enjoy better working conditions as the long drives and few rest breaks common in road haulage are not present in rail freight.

*"GreenRail is a breakthrough for sustainable transport in the horticultural sector, but needs besides process, technical and social innovation (mental shift) amongst all stakeholders and at all levels within their organisations. We have learned that freshness is a perception. Freshness of products is highly influenced by a good and well-conditioned supply chain."*

Edwin Wenink, Manager Supply Chain, FloraHolland

## For more information contact:

Edwin Wenink: [EdwinWenink@floraholland.nl](mailto:EdwinWenink@floraholland.nl) ; Anton Bril: [abril@vgb.nl](mailto:abril@vgb.nl)

