

Associated British Ports (ABP) Ships Timber to Troon

Partners: ABP

Environmentally-sound, the 'timberLINK' Project by Freight by Water member **ABP** at its Port of Troon (Ayrshire), was designed to ship timber and other forest products by sea as opposed to road. timberLink is a leader in its field and has saved around 6.2 million road miles so far, which equates to saving approximately 16,8000 tonnes of CO² emissions.

timberLINK was awarded a £4.4 million Freight Facilities Grant (FFG) by the Scottish Executive in 2000 to help establish the trade which now ships in excess of 100,000 tonnes of timber a year around Scotland. Logs are shipped by the 1200-tonne *Red Baroness* from the four ports of Ardrishaig, Campbeltown, Portavadie and Sandbank (Argyll) and hubbed at Troon, where the timber is then forwarded to local wood-processing plants including Egger at Auchinleck, Caledonian Paper and Mairs Sawmill (both in Irvine) and Wilson's Sawmill in Troon.

By shipping the logs, some 25,000 lorry journeys have been prevented on the road network between Argyll and Ayrshire, including the busy tourist routes on the Argyll Peninsula and the A82 through Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

The sustainable component of the timberLINK project was initially supported by the Scottish Executive, which actively encourages the transfer of freight from roads onto rail and water via their FFG scheme. More recently, the responsibility for the timberLINK service has been taken over by Forestry Commission Scotland under the umbrella of a Public Service Contract. The rail and water FFG schemes are capital grant schemes designed to assist companies that want to invest in the necessary facilities for water transport.

Award	Amount of Award	Date Awarded	Average Lorry Miles to be removed in Scotland each year
Associated British Ports	£4,410,000	Feb 2000	1,000,000

(Source: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/52995/0048982.pdf>)

Stuart Cresswell, ABP's Port Manager for Troon, said:

“timberLINK has been an incredible success since it started in 2000 and is now one of the Port of Troon’s most important business ventures. As well as benefiting the environment by taking lorries off the road, we are also glad to be in a position to facilitate and, therefore, support this fundamental Scottish industry.”

Matt Jukes, ABP Port Director, Short-sea Ports, said:

“ABP controls a network of strategically placed short-sea ports all around the coast of the UK. Wherever possible, we are keen to promote the waterborne transit of freight between such ports, rather than by road. The timberLINK initiative is a perfect example of how short-sea shipping, through tailored logistics solutions, can benefit a wide range of different parties.”

Derek Nelson of Forestry Commission Scotland said:

“The timberLINK initiative helps reduce the number of lorries traveling on fragile rural roads and has been very successful since its introduction. It has provided a valuable solution for the transportation of timber.”