

# TCR boosts telematics GSE fleets

*In Spring this year, TCR Group announced two important partnership deals it had agreed as part of its ongoing effort to further develop the telemetry capability it offers with its full-service GSE rental*

On 11 April, Brussels Airport-headquartered TCR announced that it had partnered with Targa Telematics of Italy, a major player in car rentals and shared mobility. Targa Telematics is providing its expertise and technology in terms of the management, maintenance, monitoring and pooling of ground support and service vehicles.

The Targa Telematics digital platform is described by TCR as "well-proven" in terms of its capability to manage large vehicle fleets, and the company has also been "a pioneer in airport telematics". Similar to the benefits of car sharing – the area on which Targa Telematics has traditionally focused – its platform will enable customers who operate GSE to monitor their vehicles and other motorised assets in real time, thereby improving operational efficiencies, optimising maintenance programmes and enabling sharing by different operators.

The platform offers a digital record of vehicle performance, useful for ensuring regulatory compliance in operations. According to TCR: "These features will be integrated with TCR's competencies, such that in addition to offering operating lease services, TCR will open logistics and operational sites at all major airports to support and maintain vehicles used by customers."

Tom Bellekens, TCR's chief operating officer, noted: "I strongly believe that this partnership has been possible because we both have the same high-level quality expectations and a continuous improvement approach to optimally serve our customers. The important scalability of the TCR Targa Telematics' offer is key in order to respond to our customers' ambitions and deployment plans for this type of solution."

Nicola De Mattia, CEO of Targa Telematics, commented: "We will work together to implement new business models with positive impacts on the rates of use of vehicles and on safety, having already gained experience on large-scale projects, and will provide not only telematics but also smart mobility and pooling for airport vehicles, from the simplest to the most complex."

"Combining our capacities, we will work together to develop the sector and open up new markets, where often the use of these technologies has not been started yet," he added.



Tom Bellekens, TCR Group's chief operating officer

## SENSOLUS COLLABORATION

In another development, on 12 April, TCR confirmed that it had partnered with Belgian company Sensolus to launch a new GSE telematics system for non-motorised GSE. Sensolus has, said TCR, "a proven track record in telematics' technologies on non-motorised assets".

Its telematics, like those of Targa, facilitate monitoring, planning and reporting, thereby helping to reduce operational costs, increase efficiency, and improve safety, regulatory compliance and availability of GSE fleets, TCR pointed out.

Bellekens said that Sensolus proved during a trial phase its strong expertise in telematics...

and the fact that it has a proven scalability in its product.

"After the recent contract signed with Targa Telematics for motorised GSE, TCR becomes by this the only GSE provider on the aviation market offering a telematics solution which fully answers the ground handling operators' needs for all types of GSE, both motorised and non-motorised," he remarked.

Kristoff Van Rattinche, CEO of Sensolus, added: "Our tracking solution that includes both easy-to-install hardware and user-friendly software for unpowered assets will be a plus for TCR's customers who want to increase fleet efficiency and safety."

"Furthermore, the aviation industry is not new for us as we have experience in the aircraft manufacturing sector for the Airbus Group. We have the capacity and experience to manage large amounts of assets and the first projects done for TCR are very positive."

## PRIORITISING TELEMATICS

Benoit de Borman, TCR's operations director, tells *Airside* about the history of TCR's focus on telematics capability. In fact, TCR was a pioneer in terms of considering the potential of the technology for GSE fleets, he recalls, having begun as long as 15 years ago to delve into the possibilities offered by the technology.

But, both because the technology wasn't then yet mature and because TCR's own customers generally hadn't at that time realised the potential value of telematics, the company took the decision that – at least for the time being – it would set aside its developmental work in this area.

Two to three years ago, however, the strategic focus on

this capability was resurrected by TCR, as its customers began to ask for telematics to form an integral part of the company's full-service offering, and as the technology proved itself as a significant value-add for GSE fleet operators.

Taking into account its experience of more than a decade previously, TCR took the decision to partner with experts in telematics, and began an intensive programme of market research to identify the appropriate technologies and their providers. The company considered nearly 20 such providers, de Borman confirms, not just in Europe but around the world. An extensive testing phase of hardware and software was then initiated in relation to a short-list of potential partners.

Any future partner(s) had to be experienced in the field, with a well-proven product, he says. Their solution(s) had to be both reliable and scalable, the latter critical given the size of the TCR GSE fleets operated by some of its customers.

Targa Telematics is a "very reliable partner" with well-established expertise in providing telematics capability



TCR operations director Benoit de Borman

for large vehicle fleets. It has very reliable hardware, data platform and back-end processes, de Borman remarks. Meanwhile, Sensolus offers a reliable and cost-effective solution that does not require a large amount of battery power – vital considerations in respect of huge non-motorised GSE fleets, where high-cost systems would be prohibitive, as would large batteries that need to be frequently replaced.

"We strongly believe in both Targa Telematics and Sensolus to be long-term partners and for their telematics systems to be regarded as industry-leading solutions," de Borman adds.

The data provided on GSE so equipped – location, status (availability and whether the equipment is in use at a given time or not), geofencing and shock detection are basic elements of the motorised telematics solution – will not only allow fleet operators to optimise the day-to-day operational value of their equipment, but they also represent big leap forward in terms of ramp safety, de Borman says. ■