

Hitachi Rail's important step into the German interlocking market

February 3, 2022



Hitachi Rail's digital interlocking technology has passed an important milestone in Europe.

It has been proven in a series of functional and operational tests which were overseen by Deutsche Bahn and the German Federal Railway Authority – confirming they meet the country's rail standards.

Hitachi Rail says this is a major moment for the business in the German interlocking market.

While the company is well known as a major signalling provider, the tests confirmed that its technology was compatible with German SCI (Standard Communication Interfaces) which interface between the interlocking and operations control centre.

Having proved its ability to adapt its technology, Hitachi can partner Deutsche Bahn in its plan to modernise the signalling equipment of the entire network with Digital Interlocking and ETCS, over the next two decades, as part of the "Digitale Schiene Deutschland" (Digital Rail Germany) programme.

This is an important step in Germany's Fast-Track Programme, also known as "Schnellläuferprogramm"

(SLP), whose objective is to bring new digital solutions to the market in a very short time by simplifying processes and promoting close cooperation between supplier and operator throughout the project.

Hitachi Rail is specifically responsible for renewing and upgrading the signalling on the Gera — Weischlitz line in Saxony, which includes seven stations across 60 km of single track.

Frank Gülicher, head of digital planning and construction of infrastructure projects (Deutsche Bahn AG) and head of digital signalling and ETCS project portfolio (DB Netz AG) said: “With the SLP, we want to achieve a market expansion with higher capacities and to gather valuable knowledge for the rollout of ‘Digitale Schiene Deutschland’. With Hitachi Rail we have found a new partner for our programme to digitalize the German railway network. We are looking forward to a successful cooperation.”

The digital interlocking systems are a key enabler in the transition towards the digitalisation of rail transport. By fitting the latest interlocking technology to the SLP Gera-Weischlitz line, Hitachi Rail’s team in Germany will help its client to improve operational efficiency and reliability by reducing traffic disruption and delays for passengers and freight traffic based on the extremely high level of requirements in safety and availability at DB.

Alessandro De Grazia – managing director Hitachi Rail STS Germany, head of DACH region (sales & projects) said: “The achievement of this important milestone on the SLP Project Gera – Weischlitz line underlines the strong commitment of Hitachi Rail to play a wider role in the DSD programme and support DB as a trusted technology partner.”