The development of a multi-standard approach to Rapid Charge networks.

In 2013, the Rapid Charge Network project, was awarded funding from the European Union's TEN-T programme to develop the first multi-standard rapid charging network.

The project was a first in many ways but primarily because it brought together four major manufacturers to discuss and investigate ways they could work together to break down barriers to EV adoption.

The network of 74 charge points, which runs through the UK and Ireland, will all be multi-standard equipped with CHAdeMO, Combo2, and AC connectors, in order to serve all rapid-chargeable EVs currently on the roads in Europe.

Olivier Paturet, General Manager, Zero Emission Strategy, Nissan Europe, tells us why he felt the multi-standard approach was the correct way to go:

Q.

Nissan has been installing rapid chargers throughout Europe for many years now. Why did you decide to open up the networks to other manufacturers?

A.

Nissan has been installing Quick Chargers in Europe because our view is that firstly we must ensure that the Nissan LEAF is a viable replacement to an ICE vehicle. In order to do that, we recognised that there was naturally some anxiety from the drivers point of view about being able to do the trips that they needed to do. Rapid charge point networks allow us to provide our drivers with an increased level of confidence and show them that it is possible to charge and travel long distances.

Most EV OEMs came to the same conclusions and the move to multi-standard was rather easy from a strategic standpoint. But what accelerated the process was the point of view of the site owners where the chargers were installed. Their view is that they wanted to limit the disruption and occupancy on the ground. Access to high value locations is difficult and costly and it was not possible to have one Quick Charger for each EV brand. Even worse would have been the idea of a dedicated or private network for each brand. Instead if one charger was capable of servicing all EV it was definitely the best solution for the investor or site owner. This thinking has pushed the agenda and has accelerated the deployment of multi-standard chargers.

74 CHARGE POINTS
A network of multi-strandard charge points across the UK and Ireland

1,100km COVERAGE
Covering 1,100km of major spine roads.

THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS
Linking five seaports and five airports. major spine roads.

4 LEADING MANUFACTURERS
The support of four major vehicle manufacturers.

Q.

How did the conversations start? And how receptive were the other partners initially?

A.

The conversations started informally around projects like Green emotion www.greenemotion-project.eu, and materialized in the development of common projects. All EV OEM partners were actually eager to move forward, and investors wanted to have the stability and consensus required before spending money, so this move really came at the right time for them.

Q.

What have been the main challenges to introducing multi-standards throughout this project?

A.

The main challenge was to convince people internally within the OEM groups that quick charging (standards) was not linked to a brand (and a competitive advantage) but rather should be seen as part of a generic promotion of EVs and would only succeed if a collaboration was promoted.

Q.

The multi-standard approach is now being rolled-out in similar projects in France and Austria, will that build on the learnings from RCN?

A.

Yes, absolutely, the Rapid Charge Network was the first time that the four EV OEMs agreed and signed a consortium agreement towards the deployment and co-financing of multi-standard charging, a landmark in the industry. This year, European funding has been allocated through the TEN-T programme to other similar multi-standard network programmes including the Project Corridor in France, the CEGC (Central Europe Green Corridor) project in Austria and surrounding countries as well as the ELECTRIC (Electric Clean Transport Road Infrastructure Corridor) project from Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany. We are already in discussion on how we can share our learnings and collaborate in future.

Q.

In your opinion are multi-standard charge points the future for rapid charge networks?

A.

Multi-standard rapid charge networks are the future for our roads and they will contribute enormously towards the development of EV sales. Quick charging networks are becoming visible and the challenge now is that they are fully inter-operational.

So e-roaming is our next topic….

FIND OUT MORE: www.rapidchargenetwork.com

Industry Partners

NISSAN BMW ESB RENAULT VW

Supporting Partners

Zero Carbon Futures

Newcastle University

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