

SIPTRAM Project Update

Sustainability in the Urban Public Transport Market

Issue 3: 2004

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Time for Action

Increasing the capacities of public transport in European cities is one of the key challenges to sustainable urban development. While this insight is mostly undisputed among European local politicians, in reality we are far from meeting this aim – on average the EU saw a decrease from a 13% share of public transport passenger journeys in 1980 to less than 10% today. In contrast to this, an increase of 30% is needed by 2010 to keep the share of public transport at the same level as the increase in car journeys. Committed high-level political support and sufficient action on the ground to increase the capacities of public transport are missing.

As part of the Sustainability in the Public Urban Transport Market (SIPTRAM) project a document called ‘Better Urban Transport – Making a Commitment’ has been produced. The document aims to encourage mayors, councillors or senior managers of transport authorities and organisations to sign up and inform their authority or organisation of the opportunities to improve public transport. The document details the urgent need to improve public transport and offers suggestions on how to do this.

One of the key approaches outlined in the document is competitive tendering. This combines elements of competition with effective regulation to ensure high quality and social standards. Technically competitive tendering means the awarding of an exclusive right to operate a route, or a network of routes, to an operator (or possibly a consortium) following a competitive process. The authority may also grant subsidies to the successful operator in compensation for the fulfilment of public service requirements. The approach has been successfully implemented in Scandinavia where the City of Göteborg (Sweden) has achieved a 7.5% increase in passenger numbers and a decrease in public subsidies by 30%.

Gerhard Fritz, City Councillor from Innsbruck City Council was the first person to sign the document. Councillor Fritz stated “*Public transport is one of the most significant sectors to consider in creating a sustainable urban environment. The SIPTRAM commitment document provides an ideal opportunity for transport authorities to consider new ways of increasing passengers numbers, improve cost efficiency and improve social and environmental standards in public transport.*”

The document is available in five languages English, German, French, Spanish and Italian. If you would like a copy of the document or more information contact Christoph Erdmenger, Director of Sustainable Procurement, e-mail christoph.erdmenger@iclei-europe.org, tel: 0049 761 / 368920 or visit <http://www.increase-public-transport.net>. You can also download the document or sign up online at <http://www.increase-public-transport.net/index.php?commitment>.



Multi-stakeholder Roundtables on Urban Public Transport

Two roundtables on Sustainable Urban Public Transport and Competitive Tendering have taken place within the framework of the SIPTRAM project. The roundtables provide a link between local transport authorities from cities and towns and other professionals working in the area of urban public transport.

Roundtable 1: technical standards and new developments in vehicles and infrastructure, Berlin Germany, 13 February 2004.

Participating in the event were representatives from industry, national government, transport authorities, local transport companies and NGOs who together discussed recommendations on technical standards to include in tender documents. Discussions focussed on criteria for noise and emission levels when tendering new buses, as well as measures for emission reductions of older vehicles. There was a clear preference to ask for the EEV (Enhanced Environmentally Friendly Vehicles) standard, when purchasing new vehicles whilst the importance of using particulate filters when retrofitting older vehicles was particularly underlined.

The EEV standard has already been required in the latest tender in Göteborg. All buses have to fulfill EEV for particulate matters and NOx have to be reduced in several steps from EURO 3 to EEV by 2010.

Requirements for bus emissions in Göteborg (Contract September 2003)		
Net	Particulate Matters (PM)	Nitrogen Oxids (NOx)*
Regional bus net	0,02 g/kWh (= EEV)	6,0 – 3,8 g/kWh
City net (Part 1)	0,02 g/kWh (= EEV)	5,0 – 2,0 g/kWh
City net (Part 2)	0,02 g/kWh (= EEV)	4,0 – 2,0 g/kWh

* Average values for the fleet in yearly steps 2004 to 2010, correspond to a reduction from Euro 3 to EEV

Roundtable 2: achieving higher quality and environmental standards in public transport, Brussels, Belgium, 1 April 2004.

During this event, representatives from local transport companies, service suppliers, NGOs, the European Commission and national governments focussed on good quality aspects, since it was generally agreed that the premium result, in terms of environmental benefits, could be achieved by persuading people to switch from car use to public transport. However, it was thought that attracting passengers can only be achieved by providing a quality public transport service. It was agreed that requirements in the tender should allow operators a significant degree of flexibility in how they achieve the required results. Other key points discussed included environmentally conscious driving, renewal of fleet vehicles and disposal and reduction of CO₂ emissions.

The outcomes of these roundtables are two guidance documents for tendering authorities, giving assistance on how to design a tendering procedure. Documentation from these events is available on the SIPTRAM project website: <http://www.increase-public-transport.net>. Alternatively, please contact Vivien Führt at: vivien.fuehr@iclei-europe.org.

New look for SIPTRAM Website

The SIPTRAM website has been redesigned and updated.

The website has the latest news to motivate action towards sustainable public transport. Documents produced as part of the project can also be downloaded, including the good practice guide for detailed information on successful cases in Europe, press releases and details of events. Notes from National Networking Meetings on Sustainable Urban Public Transport are also available. You can also make a commitment to improve urban public transport online.

The website is in English and some information has been translated into German, French, Italian and Spanish.



National Networking Meetings on Sustainable Urban Public Transport

German National Meeting, Berlin, 10 February, 2004.

The meeting was held at the Verkehrsverbund Berlin-Brandenburg and was attended by 28 people. It was chaired by the Chief Executive of VCD journal 'fairkehr', and was opened by Michael Muller (VCD) and Christoph Erdmenger (ICLEI). The first presentation by Marcel Gorter from the consulting company Kompetenz Center Wettbewerb (KCW) dealt with recent developments in the EU legal framework on public transport services. Oliver Mietzsch from the German Local Authority Association for Cities (Deutscher Städtetag) explained a different framework condition set by the EU, namely the Air Quality Directives. Hermann Blümel from the consultancy 'Mobil21', presented a German demonstration project on environmental standards. Thomas Kortmann, HJS who produce filter systems, explained about the opportunities to retrofit EURO 1, EURO 2 and EURO 3 buses with so called CRT-filters. The view of transport authorities was presented by Bernt Hüsken from the Region of Hannover and Carola Negura from traffiQ in Frankfurt am Main.



Hans-Werner Franz, Managing Director of the transportation association of Berlin and Brandenburg (VBB)

In the discussions the first question highlighted how practical environmental standards are. It was pointed out that cities have to understand that sometimes the latest technology is not available for all bus types. More generally it was questioned, whether the complex political interconnections in Germany would prevent any positive approach in tendering public transport services. Another prominent discussion point was the social dimension of the competitive tendering. While it was acknowledged that in Sweden the wages of bus drivers are currently rising due to the higher demand, many public employees would still have to earn less than they do today.

Italian National Meeting, Ancona, 12 March, 2004.

28 employees from both local transport authorities and local transport companies discussed issues linked to competitive tendering with special attention given to the national context. Some interesting insights from the Italian meeting are that there is currently a lack of integrated planning for transport in cities, therefore competitive tendering may not be the most appropriate instrument to increase and improve urban public transport. According to discussions there has not been any planning for the last twenty years in Italy. Since 1997, it is forbidden for municipalities to make debts in order to pay the deficit of municipal agencies for public transport. Since this was the usual practice, a crisis of public urban transport in Italy was the consequence. There was a general view that *competitive tendering* can be a useful tool if planned properly and if the framework at each level (local, regional, national, and European) is clearly defined.

Franco Fiorenza, a lawyer who has followed several competitive tendering processes closely in Italy, gave a presentation on the Italian legal framework. He explained that the legal framework in Italy is not at all clear or transparent. With the modification of the Fifth Title of the Constitution, in 2001, issues under the exclusive legislative competence of the Central Government have been explicitly defined and those not mentioned have been left to the legislative competence of the Regions, including public transport.

Every region has drawn up different laws on transport and given different interpretations. A later reform has introduced the competitive principle in this sector. It is up to the public administrations to decide who can participate in the tendering procedure, and to evaluate the tenders afterwards. Some Italian cities are currently preparing for competitive tendering or have already gone through the process with positive results. Experiences from the municipality of Crema and Brescia were presented.

Minutes of the Italian and German meetings will be made available on the SIPTRAM project website: <http://www.increase-public-transport.net>.

Spanish National Meeting, Barcelona, April 30, 2004

The meeting was jointly organised by ICLEI and the City of Barcelona, and brought together 26 representatives (although there were more than 40 registrations) from various local transport companies, local authorities, NGOs and consultancy firms. The meeting was chaired by Txema Castiella from the Environmental Education and LA21 Department from the City of Barcelona, and was opened by Domènec Cucurrull, the Head of the Environment Department, of the Province of Barcelona. The first presentation about the SIPTRAM project was undertaken by Amalia Ochoa from ICLEI.

Examples of sustainable urban public transport were then presented. The first of these was done by Yrjö Judström from the City of Helsinki, who presented the famous Helsinki Bus Case (background and results). This presentation sparked a round of questions mostly concerning the choice of contract award criteria, the bonus points scheme and the relatively short contractual period (between the City of Helsinki and HKL). Subsequent discussions demonstrated that local framework conditions in Spain, in terms of contractual periods, are very rigid and closed, protecting local transport companies from competition. Two Spanish examples were then presented by: Jordi Vendrell, Head of the Environment department from TMB (the City of Barcelona's main metropolitan public transport company), and Javier Conde Londoño, Head of the Mobility Department for the City of Madrid.

From the presentations and discussions at the workshop, it appears that competitive tendering of public transport services is not taking place at the Spanish local level. The advantages of adopting a model similar to that used in some Scandinavian countries was generally well received by those participants from an environmental background. However, a more conservative (and quite sceptical) view was maintained by the public transport experts, especially when considering the much shorter contractual periods (5-7 years, as presented by Yrjö Judström from Helsinki and recommended by the European Commission). Examples of sustainable public transport initiatives, such as the use of alternative fuels and environmental tendering criteria, e.g. from TMB, were also presented and discussed.

Minutes of the meetings will be made available on the SIPTRAM project website: <http://www.increase-public-transport.net>.

Hidden Subsidies

The work on analysing hidden subsidies in car traffic is nearing completion. Work has been ongoing since November 2003 in Graz, Austria, Ferrara, Italy, and Geneva, Switzerland.

The work has involved analysing the different cost centres of local authority budgets. Cost centres that include large expenses and incomes on items that can be connected to car traffic are identified and included in a questionnaire. This questionnaire is then sent over to the responsible treasurers in the administrative departments in order to clarify the exact expenses/incomes that can be ascribed to car traffic. In addition to rather obvious activities such as street construction and maintenance, expenses for car traffic can be found, for example in the maintenance of green spaces (especially alongside streets) and the provision of parking spaces for public buildings.

One of the difficulties is that whilst many cost centres have a clear connection to car traffic, they do not only serve motorised street traffic, for example the maintenance of signposts. As a solution, the percentage ascribed to car traffic has to be estimated by the person dealing with the budget.

The study is expected to be completed within the next month, however, signs show that authorities are heavily subsidising motorised private transport, as was the case in the German Hidden Subsidies project carried out by ICLEI in 2001.

As well as investigating hidden subsidies, the aim of this initiative is to raise awareness and to start a political discussion on the topic. The focus of public awareness is mainly on subsidies for public transport and many people are unaware that local authorities heavily subsidise car traffic. In order to reduce subsidies towards car traffic and to influence the modal share in favour of environmental friendly public transport it may be necessary to implement a coherent approach to mobility related expenses and charges in urban areas. This could be achieved through setting up local sustainable urban transport plans, as the Commission proposes in its thematic strategy on the urban environment in 2004. **For more information contact Vivien Führ e-mail: vivien.fuehr@iclei-europe.org.**



German Good Practice Guide

The Good Practice Guide - 'Better Public Transport for Europe through Competitive Tendering' developed as part of the SIPTRAM project is now being translated into German. The guide has been very popular and a number of requests have been made for the document to be translated into German. The Verkehrsclub Deutschland (VCD) one of the SIPTRAM project partners is now having the guide translated into German.

To reserve a copy of the guide, please contact Michael Müller on e-mail Michael.Mueller@vcd.org or telephone + 49-228 985 8569.

In Brief

A breath of fresh air

European federation for Transport and Environment (T&E) together with the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) has published a fact sheet on the "European Clean Air Directive". Information is given on the new emission limits for Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x), Particulate Matter (PM), Sulphur Oxides (SO_x) and Lead (Pb). As transport is the most important source of these pollutants the fact sheets offers measures to reduce the impact of motorised transport at municipal level. You can download the fact sheet from the T&E website: www.t-e.eu. A German version is also available at www.vcd.org.

Impacts of climate change on transport

The United Kingdom Department for Transport (DfT) has published a report which sets out the key impacts that climate change could have on transport and makes recommendations to ensure that DfT and others are ready. The main areas for action identified in the report are: major and minor roads, rail and coordination. It can be downloaded from: http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_science/documents/page/dft_science_027568.hcsp

European Transport Conference, 4-6 October 2004, Strasbourg, France

The European Transport Conference is the focus of the activities of the Association for European Transport. Each year, the Conference attracts new delegates who find that it is a unique event in Europe: a "meeting of minds", where transport professionals come together to keep up-to-date with policy issues, research findings and best practice across a broad spectrum of transport issues. The conference is for policy makers, engineers and planners, researchers and academics, local and central government officers, public transport planners and operators, providers of technical advice and consultancy and those who evaluate and finance projects. The booking form and general details of the Conference are available from Sally Scarlett: info@aetransport.co.uk, <http://www.aetransport.co.uk>.

'Towards Carfree Cities IV'

The World Carfree Network is organising an international conference called 'Towards Carfree Cities IV', 19-24 July 2004, Humboldt University Berlin. This conference brings together people from all over Europe and the World to present practical alternatives to car use. For more information please visit <http://www.worldcarfree.net/conference/programme.php>.

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