

SIPTRAM Project Update

Sustainability in the Urban Public Transport Market

Issue 4: 2005

Environmental and Quality Performance of Public Transport

A European survey to evaluate the environmental and quality standards in urban public transport was sent out in October 2004 to over 2000 local authorities and transport operators covering 27 European countries. The purpose of the survey was to gather information from transport authorities on the:

- use of public transport
- vehicle fleet environmental standards
- quality standards
- social issues
- public transport subsidies

The survey results will provide European cities and regions with information on how their public transport systems are performing in comparison to others and identify good practice examples. Responses from the survey should also provide the European Commission with an improved understanding of how effective local action is in dealing with environmental performance and quality standards in public transport and will be able to contribute to the Commission's future thematic strategy on the urban environment.

The results will also detail information on the criteria used by authorities to implement measures to improve the environmental performance and quality standards of their public transport system. Over 175 surveys have been returned to date. The report is due out in March 2005.

If you would like further information or a copy of the results when they become available please send an email to siptram.survey@iclei-europe.org

German Good Practice Guide

The popular Good Practice Guide - 'Better Public Transport for Europe through Competitive Tendering' developed in the SIPTRAM project is now available in German *Gute Beispiele nachmachen - 'Zukunftsfähiger öffentlicher Nahverkehr für Europa'*. A number of requests have been made for the guide to be translated into German; SIPTRAM project partner Verkehrsclub Deutschland (VCD) carried out the translation.

To download a copy of the guide from VCD's website please refer to the following link:

http://www.vcd.org/themen/download/Gute_Beispiele.pdf.

To obtain a paper copy of the guide, please contact Michael Müller on e-mail Michael.Mueller@vcd.org

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Social criteria for public transport services

The third and final multi-stakeholder roundtable for the SIPTRAM project was held in Aix-en-Provence, France on the 15 October 2004. The meeting brought together key stakeholder groups, such as trade union representatives, representatives of local public transport companies and legal experts, to discuss social criteria to include in the procurement of public transport services through the competitive tendering process.

Discussions were centred around social considerations for public transport employee working conditions, for example, transferring employees from one transport operator to another, and issues concerning users of public transport services, such as access and accessibility, and integrated and fair pricing systems. A discussion paper on the work carried out is currently being finalised and will be available on the project website in early 2005.

For more information or a copy of the discussion paper please contact Amalia Ochoa, email: amalia.ochoa@iclei-europe.org

Hidden Subsidies for Motorised Private Transport

The work on analysing hidden subsidies in motorised private transport is now complete. Work has been ongoing since November 2003 in Graz (Austria), Ferrara (Italy) and Genève (Switzerland). Results show that authorities are heavily subsidising motorised private transport, as was the case in the German project carried out by ICLEI in 2001. Total subsidies range from EUR 80 to EUR 250 per inhabitant, with an average of about EUR 145. The full details of the study will be available in the form of an information leaflet in early 2005.



The work has involved investigating the different cost centres of local authority budgets. Cost centres that include large expenses/income on items that can be

connected to private car traffic are identified and included into a questionnaire. The questionnaire is then sent over to the responsible officers in the administrative departments in order to clarify the exact expenses/income that can be attributed to the private car. In addition to rather obvious activities, such as street construction and maintenance, expenses for car traffic can also be found, for example, in the maintenance of green spaces (especially alongside streets), the promotion of the local economy, (such as parking space and street access created to access a new industrial site) and the provision of parking spaces for public buildings.

One of the difficulties encountered was that whilst many cost centres have a clear connection to car traffic, they do not purely serve motorised street traffic, for example, the case of signpost maintenance. This was solved by estimating a percentage of the amount attributable to car traffic, the estimation was then provided by the responsible person dealing with the budget.

As well as investigating hidden subsidies, this initiative also aims to raise awareness about how much local authorities spend on motorised private transport and to start a political discussion on the topic. The general public, including local authorities, should be made aware how car traffic is heavily subsidised by local authorities especially in light of the ongoing debate of subsidising public transport. In order to reduce subsidising car traffic, and in order to influence the modal share in favour of environmentally 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 European Commission proposes in its 2004 thematic strategy on the urban environment.

For more information contact Vivien Führ e-mail: vivien.fuehr@iclei-europe.org

Competitive Tendering on the Views of NGOs

A series of mini-workshops specifically targeting NGOs have been undertaken to raise awareness on sustainable urban public transport. The objectives of the workshops were to introduce the SIPTRAM project, assist NGOs to develop materials that can be used to encourage local politicians to sign the SIPTRAM commitment document and get their views on competitive tendering. . Main outcomes of each workshop are as follows:

London, United Kingdom, 28 May

Deregulation in the UK exists outside of London and local authorities are effectively powerless to set ambitious standards for their public transport systems. The discussion in the UK is relevant to a smaller potential market concerning Park-&-Ride services that local authorities do control. It is important for local authorities to establish a good relationship with their public transport companies, build up trust and create a dialogue to improve better environmental and social standards as is the case in Brighton and Nottingham. Furthermore, large employers/enterprises that provide their own bus services (e.g. Oxford Brookes University) could also benefit.

Gent, Belgium, 4 June 2004

Key points raised by the participants are that they thought controlled tendering in Delhen and in Flanders is working well despite the European Commission perceiving them as a monopoly. Public transport in Brussels is currently working at full capacity, however, social issues are not taken into account, and Delhen may have to be disbanded in the future. Controlled competition is therefore seen as an interesting idea that could help improve public transport.

Rome, Italy – 21 June 2004

There was agreement at this workshop that the quality of life could be improved through controlled competition. However, as Italy is a complex country where many differences exist between its regions. Rome's public transport system is neither under market control nor publicly owned. One problem across Italy is the unclear division of responsibilities when it comes to public transport. History has shown that increased fares of public transport in Rome has not led to an increase in the service quality, and it is doubtful as to whether liberalisation will lead to an improved service. Italian towns tend to opt for the most financially affordable option, which makes it harder to improve services and standards in general - can you put a price on enhanced air quality was one of the key questions raised?

Utrecht, Netherlands, 8 July 2004

In response to the current review of Dutch transport law (Dutch Transport Act 2000), Dutch NGOs are taking action to improve chain mobility and making public transport cleaner. Nevertheless, there are two principal concerns, lack of money and lack of co-operation between public services and transport operators. Bus services and shorter less important train lines have already been opened up to controlled competition. Twelve 'concession givers' (local authorities) currently exist in the Netherlands, however, smooth links between these different regions do not really exist. The 'G4' (Amsterdam, Den Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht) are opposed to tendering their transport services, even though it will be required to do so by law from 2007/09. Environmental concerns are not explicitly mentioned in the Dutch Transport Act of 2000 and there is a general need to overcome the perception in the Netherlands that public transport is dirty and noisy.

In summary, it is clear from the workshops that there exists a greater interest in the topic of competitive tendering as one of the tools for achieving a higher standard of living in cities. The workshops have generated significant commitment to the subject of sustainable public transport.

For more information on the workshops please contact Dudley Curtis from T&E, email: dudley.curtis@t-e.nu

Making a Commitment

To assist in achieving sustainable urban transport in your area you can sign the SIPTRAM commitment document on the following website: <http://www.increase-public-transport.net/index.php?id=717> or download a copy of the document sign it and send a copy to Mark Hidson, ICLEI European Secretariat, Leopoldring 3, 79098 Freiburg, Germany. Signing the document will only commit you to bringing the opportunities of competitive tendering to the attention of your local authority. Your authority can then consider improving environmental and social standards in urban public transport.

Below you can find a list of people/organisations that have already registered their commitment. Will you be the next?

Related Public Authority: Comune di Genova

Signatory: Arcangelo Merella

Function: Assesore alla mobilità urbana

Related Public Authority: Innsbruck City Council

Signatory: Gerhard Fritz

Function: City Councillor

Related Public Authority: Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council

Signatory: Hannu Penttilä

Function: Executive Director of Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council

Related Public Authority: Kongress der kommunalen ÖPNV-Beauftragten

Signatory: Hans-Joachim Ritter

Function: Sprecher der BundesAG der kommunalen ÖPNV-Beauftragten

Related Public Authority: Stadt Köln

Signatory: Manfred Waddey

Function: Vorsitzender des Bau- und Verkehrsausschusses der Stadt Köln

Related Public Authority: Stadt Frankfurt (Oder)

Signatory: Martin Patzelt

Function: Oberbürgermeister

Related Public Authority: City of Helsinki

Signatory: Pekka Sauri

Function: Deputy Mayor

Related Public Authority: Nikolaev City Council

Signatory: Vladimir D. Chayka

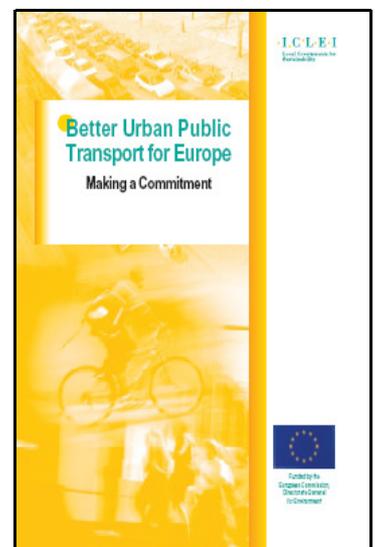
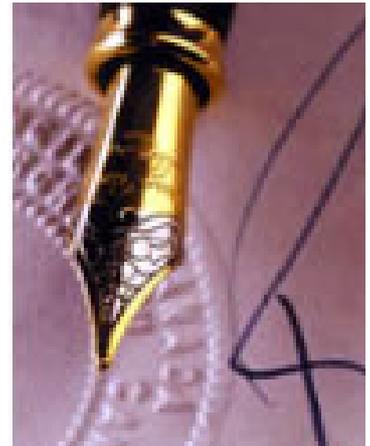
Function: Mayor of Nikolaev

Related Public Authority: the Master Plan Organization of Thessaloniki as well as the Supervising Board for the Public Transport

Signatory: Yiannis Toskas

Function: Transport Planner

For further information on the commitment document or how you could improve urban public transport through competitive tendering please contact Mark Hidson e-mail: mark.hidson@iclei-europe.org or tel: +49 (0)761 368920.



Giving public transport users a voice

VCD organised a one-week event in Heidelberg, Germany, in July 2004 to survey public transport users and pedestrians about their opinion on the quality of Heidelberg's public transport system.

Several VCD staff addressed public transport users, handing out flyers and postcards, which included several questions about the quality of local public transport. A prize incentive was used to motivate people that completed the cards. Some 250 questionnaires have been returned to date.

The event was supported both by the local public transport company and the City of Heidelberg. All comments were passed onto relevant stakeholders.



Michael Müller (VCD) at the Heidelberg event

Results

- When users were asked why they used public transport service, the most popular response was because of the environmentally-friendliness of the service (62% of responses).
- Having a relaxed trip into the city instead of driving by car and/or searching for a parking place was the second most popular response (55% of responses).
- Aspects that could be improved included offering more trips during the night or on the weekend (70% of responses) and offering more affordable fares (44% of responses).
- Customer rights is also a topic of importance with 40% wishing to receive compensation for late arrivals or cancellation of trips.
- Friendlier service and more comfortable buses and trams were also suggested.

Please contact Michael Müller for more information, email: michael.mueller@vcd.org

European Transport Conference, Strasbourg

ICLEI were selected to present the work of the SIPTRAM project at the European Transport Conference, which took place 4-6 October 2004, Strasbourg, France. Delegates came from 27 countries and enjoyed more than 220 presentations from researchers and transport practitioners. SIPTRAM was presented in the Public Transport workshop where over 50 people attended. The title of the paper presented was 'Competitive tendering as an instrument to improve environmental and quality standards and cost effectiveness in urban public transport'.

If you would like a copy of the paper please contact Mark Hidson, email: mark.hidson@iclei-europe.org



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