

enhancing public transport authorities in Europe



Towards a European model
for Public Transport Authority
as a key factor leading
to transport sustainability



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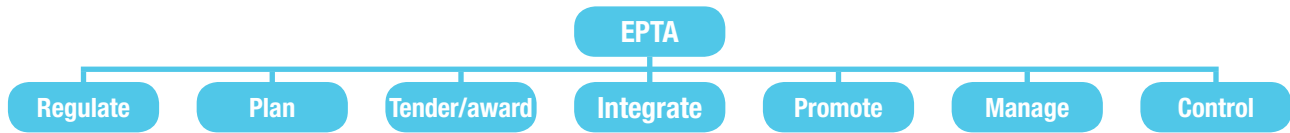
Objective and 7 key functions of EPTA

The overall objective of EPTA is the transfer of experience, knowledge and good practices about **Public Transport Authorities (PTAs)**. The focus within EPTA is to assist small rural areas and medium sized urban areas that are considering developing PTAs. This is aimed at increasing public transport sustainability by focusing on environmental, energy and economic aspects, through the identification of appropriate “model(s)” for a PTA as a powerful tool of governance.



The EPTA project identified **seven pillars (or functions) of a PTA model**:

- 1 Regulation** to be performed in close co-operation with the local government to allow the fulfilment of guidelines given by policy-makers
- 2 Planning**, which has a deep impact on transport services and is strongly linked to and influenced by other public planning (urban, social, economic)
- 3 Tendering and Awarding** which is a crucial point where a skilled PTA can establish criteria and grounds for fruitful co-operation with operators based on quality, efficacy and efficiency
- 4 Integration** as a strategic issue on intermodality and co-modality with potential to lead to sustainable transport solutions
- 5 Promotion** of public transport - a key tool to shift passengers from individual to collective, more efficient and sustainable modes of transport
- 6 Management** of the transport service contract(s) which requires experience and flexibility
- 7 Control and monitoring** is a delicate issue for a PTA. The cost of these activities should be reasonable and added value to end users should be proven.



The key concept is that these 7 activities could be concentrated in a **single body** able to support policy makers and involve relevant stakeholders. Within the project, a training of the partners was organised for each of them and an online training for anyone interested is available on the EPTA website: www.eptaproject.eu/. Good practices across Europe have been identified, collected and analysed in order to support the production of a feasibility study by each city and region in the project. The feasibility studies have either focused on one key function or combined several of them.



The role of a Public Transport Authority (PTA)

Public Transport Authorities makes the link between political decision-makers and the public transport operators. PTAs provide the framework to organise and coordinate the different mobility options across a defined geographical area in order to ensure delivery of efficient, comfortable, and high quality public transport. Whether an operator is public or private, the PTA role is to act within the public interest to ensure different modes are well integrated, affordable and accessible and to organise this in a manner which complies with strategic level goals and targets set by politicians.

PTA model in small and medium sized urban areas

The key question which EPTA aimed to answer was what is the most suitable model for PTA organisation and delivery for small and medium sized towns.

While PTAs in some large metropolitan areas have powers devolved to them by legislation enabling them to set policy specific to their jurisdiction with statutory powers of enforcement and autonomy to raise their own finance to fund services and PTA activities, smaller cities and rural areas do not have such powers. The result of this is that there is simply not the expertise and influence at the policy level, nor the financial resource and manpower at the operational level to take an active role in all required tasks.

Within EPTA, as well as investigating the suitability of different models of PTA structure in medium sized urban and small rural areas, the feasibility of various different functions within the EPTA pillars has been examined through 8 different feasibility studies. This led to a number of key findings:

- ▶ The level of involvement by the PTA needs to be based on the scale of the operation. In general, the larger the population covered, the more functions the PTA can take responsibility for.
- ▶ The contract design and award is key to PTAs of any size. This is where PTAs have the power to influence who operates the services and the way in which operators act.
- ▶ Medium and small sized cities do not have the resources to dedicate significant manpower to service promotions and monitoring and tend to focus on approval and supervision of operator-led monitoring of services and on activities related to integration between operators, modes and sectors.
- ▶ Medium and small city PTAs have little or no input to policy formulation as their planning is undertaken at a higher level (often national or regional government) and paid for through national or local government funding. It is therefore vital that there is better communication and integration between the PTA and these external departments at the planning stage. The EPTA project has identified the need for a more formalised mechanism by which local needs and concerns can be more strongly represented in the policy and planning process. The recommendation from EPTA is that a Policy and Strategic Level Planning Committee should be constituted. The make-up of this committee should consist of PTA representatives, national/regional government decision makers/politicians, locally elected politicians, local government officers as well as specialist groups of experts (e.g. University, Third Sector etc) to advise and feed into the planning and decision process.
- ▶ The Policy and Strategic Level Planning Committee could also preside over financing and fundraising/spending decisions, providing a democratic and locally accountable means of raising funding for public transport. The presence of locally elected representatives on the committee ensures local citizens' preferences are upheld. This could result in a more flexible and locally focussed funding stream which enables PTAs to better respond to the needs of their people rather than being restricted by national or regional funding constraints.

The findings from the EPTA project suggest that the most cost effective PTA structure for small and medium sized cities appears to be that of a decentralised agency which is contracted / commissioned by the regional or national government. The primary focus is then to provide approval and supervision of services and to facilitate/enforce integration between operators, modes and sectors. If the model of Figure 1 is adopted, including the formation of a Policy and Strategic Level Planning Committee, then the PTA can operate as an independent organisation with a number of advantages. The biggest of all is that the cost of PTA provision can be relatively modest since the staffing levels are much lower than those required for a large city PTA where involvement in service design, monitoring and promotion is generally much greater. The agency approach also allows for flexibility in staffing. The establishment of a Policy and Strategic Planning Committee, finally, removes the need for the PTA to have a top heavy management structure comprising of locally elected politicians since they sit on the committee alongside the PTA representatives rather than on a PTA board of directors.



Model for a PTA in medium or small city

EPTA Feasibility Studies



THEPTA (Greece): Tendering and awarding the bus transport services in Thessaloniki

The feasibility study developed by the Thessaloniki Public Transport Authority (ThePTA) builds on two key issues. First, ThePTA is currently undergoing a crucial transition stage, as it will be turned into a single European transport authority, collecting all seven competences foreseen by EPTA (Regulation, Planning, Tendering/ Awarding, Integration, Promotion, Management, Control). Competences of ThePTA will thus include full responsibility for formulating transport policy, pricing policy, parking and land use planning policy in the geographic Regional Unity of Thessaloniki. Many of the main functions of a PTA are already undertaken by ThePTA, however the contracting of service provision remained under the control of central Government and not with the PTA.

The EPTA feasibility methodology is focused on the one hand on establishing the legal and financial responsibility and organization framework for planning and managing public transport service contract(s) (EPTA High level functions) and, on the other, on creating an organization and operation reference model for answering the needs of small and medium-size towns (EPTA low level functions).

The key functions that the Feasibility Studies by the 8 involved cities have addressed differ depending on the size of the city. Large and medium-size cities focused their attention on the establishment of a new Public Transport Authority (PTA), on tendering and awarding procedures and on Service Contract. Smaller cities preferred to analyze issues dealing with service planning, integration and promotion.





Second, the service contract between the National Government and the current transport operator (OASTH), responsible for providing public transport services in Thessaloniki area, will terminate around 2019 leading to a transition from a PT system mostly based on monopolies and/or state concession, to a new one characterized by competitive tendering.

As a result, the main objective of the study was to identify different alternatives for tendering and awarding the bus transport services in the area of responsibility of ThePTA, namely the Regional Unity of Thessaloniki, through the analysis of the existing European and national legal framework and based on the local conditions, the existing knowledge and good practices. In parallel, the study aimed also to improve the skills of ThePTA in order to be prepared to meet the challenges of a deregulated public passenger transport market.

SRM (Italy): Design and Control of a Public-Transportation Service Contract

The Feasibility Study of SRM - Reti e Mobilità Srl, the Public Transport Authority of Bologna focused on the service contract with the Operator, with particular regard to the control of the service provided. It is in charge of the Authority to check if the Operator operates the contracted service in compliance with the standards of quality and quantity provided for by the service contract.

Controlling the quality of the service provided by the Operator is a very expensive procedure for the Authority, thus, in its study, SRM developed an ad hoc algorithm for the optimization of this activity, in order to maximize the number of controls performed in a specific time by each controller. The result is that the optimized procedure is able to increase by 50% the number of controlled services in the same time, when the control activity does not exceed 12 hours per day and by 30% when the control activity lasts more than 12 hours per day.

Furthermore, by applying the game theory between the Agency and the Operator, the optimal values of the penalties have been defined (penalties are included in the contract of service and are applied to the Operator when it does not provide the agreed service).

The algorithm developed in this study improved and optimized the procedures already used by other Authorities and it can, in turn, be used as a good practice for similar cases.





BRAŞOV (Romania): Structure and role of the Braşov Metropolitan PTA

The Metropolitan Agency for Sustainable Development of Braşov (AMB), is the associative body of the Braşov city region and the first organization to tackle metropolitan issues. After the improvement of the legislative framework for mobility in 2010, the Metropolitan Agency (AMB) is gradually taking over the role of Public Transport Authority, with the task of regulating mobility in the area as well as subcontracting public transport activities to licensed operators.

The feasibility study developed in the framework of EPTA aims at identifying the best approach for establishing a PTA for the Metropolitan area of Braşov, deciding on the functions it should perform taking account of the local and national legislation and evaluating financial and administrative / technical resources needed (i.e. setting up a separate body or creating a new AMB department).

The study revealed the following:

- The Romanian legal framework and the characteristics of the Braşov metropolitan territory allow for the setting up of a public transport agency.
- The current situation of public transport and the importance of this sector in economic and social development require the need to organize a public transport agency.
- The model provided by EPTA project partner SRM Bologna is a highly-functional one and it is transferable to the Braşov metropolitan area.
- Two fundamental aspects of the PTA will be to integrate service planning across the 16 member communities and to raise the standards of PT provision.

ALMADA (Portugal): Roles and Functions of the Municipality of Almada as a local PTA

Almada feasibility study focused on responding to the changes in the organisational structure related to the awarding and management of contracts and regulation of Public Transport being introduced in Portugal, and particularly in Lisbon Metropolitan Area. Until recently central government awarded and managed all PT contracts. Almada's feasibility study addressed the current and future functions that the Municipality of Almada may have and identified the conditions and criteria necessary for the creation of a local Public Transport Authority.





The concept of the “Mobility House of Almada”, based on the Local Energy Management Agency of Almada, AGENEAL, aims at establishing a platform where all urban mobility actors discuss their difficulties and share ideas and solutions to make Almada mobility more efficient and sustainable. Nevertheless, while the Mobility House of Almada can play a direct role in promoting local residents’ needs and in promoting soft modes of transport to local residents, it was found inadequate to combine regulatory and tendering functions with the concept envisaged for the Mobility House. This could undermine the necessary power of enforcement that a PTA must have.

Given that the Municipality of Almada already has a strong role and institutional weight, it decided to capitalize on these assets and develop a comprehensive study on the legal and institutional framework for the PT regulation in the country, and especially in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, to identify and define its future role as a PTA (regulation, planning, integration, management and control of services).



ALOT (Italy): *Business Plan for a PTA and Awarding the Service*

ALOT is responsible for the promotion of infrastructure, logistic and transport services in Eastern Lombardy, as well as for improvement of mobility. ALOT feasibility study investigates restructuring the territory from 4 Provinces (Brescia, Bergamo, Cremona and Mantua) into 3 PTAs with the resultant need for new tenders and contracts for PT provision.

Currently, the four provinces are responsible for commissioning Local Public Transport services and ensuring quality of services delivered. They provide many of the functions of a PTA but have limited involvement in provision of other modes and integration between modes and between Provinces. There is also little involvement in the higher level planning and regulatory aspects of PT provision.

ALOT produced two Feasibility Studies delivering a PTA strategy for East Lombardy.

The objective of the first Feasibility Study is creating a model of PTA which could be replicated and be part of the guidelines for decision makers. The result should be a model for a Multi Modal Transport Agency that aims to deliver higher quality and more adaptable public transport, while reducing the costs for supplying this service.

The objective of the second Feasibility Study is to identify the general aspects which define a good awarding model for the ALOT territory, and the specific aspects that can improve the model for the specific PTA within the regulations of East Lombardy.



ROGALAND (Norway): *Integration and simplification of the fare and ticketing system in Rogaland*

Excluding trains, Rogaland County Council (ROGFK) provides the functions relating to regulation, planning and much of the integration tasks associated with PT services, while the company Rogaland Kollektivtrafikk (also known as Kolumbus) is responsible for the daily operation of the public transport system in Rogaland. They act as the PTA for the region involved in the administration of PT services including, for example, promotion and information, minor changes to routes, negotiating contracts with bus and boat operators, and develop new products and solutions that make it easier and more attractive to travel by public transport. Kolumbus is owned by Rogaland County Council.

The complexity of the public transport provision which includes 4 modes of transport with 3 different operator ownership structures has made the task of providing integrated fares complex with many issues and barriers to overcome. In this framework the feasibility study carried out by Rogaland County Council focussed on possibilities and barriers for better integration and simplification of the fare and ticketing system for public transport in Rogaland. The study identified a number of specific, single initiatives to be considered by Rogaland County Council in order to achieve this goal. Until such time as a fully integrated fare and ticketing system is possible, a practical solution is to implement systems in which the fare structure appears integrated to the customer, through integrated PT products, but where ticket revenues are divided between different tariff authorities and PT operators.

RAZLOG (Bulgaria): *Bicycle Sharing System and Car Pooling System*

The only current form of public transport operating within the municipality of Razlog is a limited bus service. There is insufficient demand for commercial bus operations within the region and so the municipality is responsible for identifying the routes and timetables to provide minimal service standards. These are used to prepare the Terms of Reference for public procurement of the essential bus lines.

Thus, the need for and roles of a PTA is very different to that in a medium to large city. The municipality is therefore considering the introduction of a shared Public Bicycle System and organization of carpooling promotion measures. The EPTA feasibility study for Razlog assesses the demand and likely costs of introducing these 'soft' transport measures. This is moving out of the traditional focus of PTAs (providing public transport services) into the wider domain of providing alternatives to private car use.

While the feasibility study highlighted that the introduction of a bike sharing scheme and a formal car pooling initiative were possible, for these to be successful and well used careful planning would be required. As a result the feasibility study recommended the creation of a new active public transport management body involving all local stakeholders to plan, implement and manage the new services. It was considered more advantageous to establish a specialized NGO to handle the operation of the system in close cooperation with the municipality of Razlog.





PRAGUE SUCHDOL (Czech Republic): *Establishing more and better consultation with local partners and the public*

Prague Suchdol is a small municipal area within a much larger metropolitan PTA region. It currently has no involvement in planning and delivering public transport services in the district as this is in the remit of the Prague PTA. There are insufficient public transport connections from Suchdol to the city centre and bus transportation has reached its capacity limits. The proposals by the Prague PTA for changes to the transport infrastructure in the district are at odds with local politicians' views and local residents' needs. The feasibility study focuses on challenges emerging within the planning and policy process and addresses the question of how local needs can be voiced and better accommodated within the planning process of a large city PTA.

Prague-Suchdol's Feasibility Study significantly expanded cooperation between the Suchdol city district, including its main employer the Czech University of Life Sciences (CULS), and the Prague Metropolitan PTA (ROPID). The result is that during the drafting of planning and policy documents, the Prague PTA is now required to consult with the Prague Suchdol district and with the CULS. This change has helped the PTA understand that cooperation with local actors is a necessary condition for improving the quality and sustainability of public transport and improving standards of public transport. A procedure has been developed to more formally incorporate local considerations into the planning and policy making process.



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ROGALAND
COUNTY COUNCIL



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