



Ministerium
für Infrastruktur
und Landwirtschaft

Action Plan Thüringia

Part I – General information

Project: OptitTrans- Optimization of public transport policies for Green Mobility

Partner organisation:

Thuringian Ministry for Infrastructure and Agriculture

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): n.a.

Country: Germany

NUTS2 region: Thuringia

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Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- | | |
|---|--|
| | Investment for Growth and Jobs programme |
| x | European Territorial Cooperation programme |
| x | Other regional development policy instrument |

Name of the policy instruments addressed:

Operational

Programme Thuringia, Priority axis 3, Thematic objective 4, Investment priority 4e - Investment priority 4e - Promoting of low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular in urban areas, including the supporting of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and adaptation of measures to mitigate the impact of climate change 2021-2027 (action 1)

Public Road Transport - Financing Directive / Public Transport Law Thuringia (action 2)

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

The Free State of Thuringia has set itself the goal of reducing the country's carbon dioxide emissions by 400,000 tons by 2023. Since the transport sector is responsible for around 20 percent of emissions, there is great potential for savings here. At the same time, the structure of public transport in Thuringia is changing due to the completion of the high-speed rail connection Berlin - Munich and the growing importance of the ICE node Erfurt, along with a reduction in the number of long-distance rail services in other Thuringian cities (especially Jena and Weimar). Against the background of the still strong migration, especially of young people from rural areas towards urban centers and economically stronger areas, especially in southern Germany, the optimization of the low-carbon connection of rural areas is a major challenge for the Free State. The content of the project is an intensive exchange of experiences on questions of planning and organization of public transport in order to be able to present an action plan for all regions involved at the end of the first project phase. The action plan focuses on the ERDF funds still available in the current funding period.

The Thuringian Ministry for Infrastructure and Agriculture (TMIL) will lead the OptiTrans project as lead partner until December 2021, it will be responsible for the coordination of all activities and will represent the consortium consisting of partners from Estonia, Greece, Spain, Italy and Croatia in relation to the program structures.

In phase II (2020 and 2021), the partners involved mutually support each other in the implementation of their action plans and organize a closing event. This is planned in Erfurt and is also intended to show the influence of the project results on the new seven-year EU funding period that will then begin.

The current Regional Operational Programme Thuringia has been established within a participatory development process during the years 2012 and 2013. The OP Thuringia ERDF 2014-2020 was developed in accordance with the Europe 2020 strategy. Accordingly, the OP Thuringia ERDF 2014-2020 supports intelligent, sustainable and integrative growth, promotes the harmonious development of the European Union and contributes to the reduction of regional imbalances.

The OP Thuringia 2014-2020 builds on the success of the previous funding periods 2000-2006 and 2007-2013. In the period 2014-2020, the funding program is based on the regional needs of Thuringia were intensively examined as part of the program creation 2012-2014. All actions in the funding programme are based on fixed priority axes and investment priorities which cannot be changed during the seven years lifetime of the programme. Nevertheless developments on international and national level during this funding period will lead to adaptation measures for the upcoming Structural Funds programme to tackle new and/or emerging challenges (climate change, migration, demographic issues ...) and implement lessons learned from successful best practices already dealing with these challenges.

ACTION 1

1. The background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

During the project lifetime the example of the new build tram line in Granada was a good example how motorized individual traffic can be decreased by the introduction of a modern and energy efficient transport means for mass transport in mid-sized cities. The city of Tartu also introduced first thoughts to install one tram line running from the outskirts to the city center. During the presentation of the new Metro line as well as during the discussions and evaluations of the acceptance of the line by inhabitants and its positive influence on the daily traffic in Granada and its surrounding municipalities stakeholder were impressed and inspired by the success Granada made.

The overall and common understanding was that with the increase in capacity of tram systems, the growth of individual traffic as well as the necessary sealing of surfaces due to road construction can be limited. Positive effects are also to be expected with regard to noise emissions, particulate matter and NOx pollution. All of this contributes significantly to a green Europe.

Thus Thuringia during the last structural funds period started to invest in modern trams and enhanced the trams infrastructure system by several new lines in five mid-sized and larger cities (Erfurt, Jena, Gera, Nordhausen and Gotha) including a line connection the countryside to the city of Gotha. Recently the city of Mühlhausen also expressed their will to reinstall a tram system within their city limits.

In a recent report, the example of the cities of Erfurt and Jena proved that over the procured lifetime of the new vehicles an energy saving of 12.4 million kWh (Erfurt) and 6.65 million kWh (Jena) can be achieved. In this way, the requirements of the intervention guidelines for the PO2 that are relevant for the described subsidy item are expressly documented in terms of energy saving and resource efficiency.

The establishment of a regional funding scheme is to a high extent subject to national legislative, institutional, and financial framework conditions. In that respect the action cannot be directly related to a concrete funding scheme in any other partner region but in an adapted version and respecting the national and regional framework conditions funding schemes and other incentives might be the right tool to address these issues. Nevertheless, the learning process in OptiTrans has and will widely benefit the development of the funding scheme mostly by valuable lectures and training sessions held during the thematic workshops, which outlined current state of play and future developments in the field of ICT use for PT.

An important reference point is the training course given to OptiTrans partners and stakeholders in Granada on 20 September 2017, documented also in a Good Practice Dossier. This session gave an excellent overview on a wide range of policy improvements with good practice examples all across Europe. The action plan will be checked against this dossier to make sure the funding scheme addresses all important aspects of a low-emission and user friendly attractive PT system.

Digital networking of all areas of the economy and life is one of the most important challenges for the coming years. In the area of transport, this relates in particular to digital information and booking options for public transport services, the support of optimized timetabling, partially and later fully automated operation of vehicles. Parking space reservation and the collection of other digital traffic data as well as the development and use of digital services.

At present it is not possible to book the offer of public transport in Thuringia with one ticket electronically or in paper, as well as there is no option to link with further connected mobility offers, such as: Car sharing, cycling and pooling. The public transport providing companies so far are only networked in-house or/and via the data hub Thuringia which is used for timetable information.

The upcoming renewal and electrification of vehicle fleets would be a great opportunity to link digital networking with the modernization of operations and the creation of open data networks.

Thanks to digitization and the expected use of artificial intelligence, it will be possible for the first time to tailor the benefits of public transport to the needs of the individual customer.

Thus for the user the choice of the means of transport and a price-performance decision and at least the buying of the ticket should be simplified.

For the "last mile" of motorized individual transport, meaningful, cost-effective, alternative mobility offers should be provided via a navigation tool that is easy to use.

ACTION 2

The state funding for public transport also contributes to the fact that the local authorities provides demand oriented transport services in regional and local road passenger transport.

This is done on the basis of the Public Road Transport (StPNV) - Financing Directive according to which the transport providers can apply for financial support for a demand oriented transport service in the Public Road Transport.

In addition, based on this directive, the state of Thuringia is supporting the establishment and operation of so-called state relevant bus services.

Public Road Transport - Financing Directive

Directive for the promotion of a demand oriented traffic service in regional and local passenger transport in Thuringia.

According to the Thuringian Law on Public Transport, the authorities responsible for local and regional road passenger transport in accordance with this Directive and the administrative provision to § 44 Thuringian Landeshaushaltsordnung and in compliance with Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 1191/69 and (EEC) No 1107/70 (OJ L 315, 3.12.2007, p. EU) 2016/2338 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 (OJ L 354, 23.12.2016, p.22), are permitted to receive grants from the state for demand-based transport services ('financial assistance').

At the thematic workshop in L'Aquila (17-18 April 2018) Abruzzo region presented its New Regional Public Transport Plan, which applies basically an approach very similar to the intentions of the present action in Thuringia. Both regions dispose of urban centres as well as sparsely populated areas with weak transport demand. The envisaged solutions show a high degree of congruence, aiming at the establishment of a backbone PT network (express lines), the promotion of light rail

services in urban areas, and demand oriented road transport in rural environments. For the latter both regions foresee funding schemes targeted at local authorities, who are striving to improve their PT offer. The participation of the LP at the peer review allowed him to gain deeper insights in the organisation of public transport in Abruzzo and to identify touching points for future learning.

The aim of the funding is to support the municipal authorities in Thuringia in the provision of public transport (public transport) services, in particular to ensure a high quality of tram services and demand-oriented bus services, taking into account the development of residents or passengers.

Central connections should be strengthened or developed. The offer planning of the authorities is carried out as a task in their own sphere of activity.

Indicators used to assess the achievement of the objectives include, in particular, the traffic offered on the main lines in tram traffic (average number of trips per hour in the rush hour compared to the previous year), the range of services in bus transport including the development of alternative service offers (development of the number of timetables compared to the previous year) and the Development of transport services along state important road public transport axes (number of recognized bus routes compared to the previous year).

During the presentation of the approaches to ensure attractive and efficient mobility in rural regions, the stakeholders came to the conclusion that only the approach of a hierarchically structured public transport system with main lines and feeder lines and different demand oriented operating frequencies offers the possibility of making public transport attractive in rural areas. These approaches are now being piloted in both regions. In this case, the state relevant bus routes represent the first hierarchy level. Examples of local public transport in Thessaly show that a combination of passenger and freight transport can increase the efficiency of low-demand lines for the transport provider. Furthermore, the discussion came to the conclusion that customer information and a good time connection of transport modes are important for creating attractiveness and customer satisfaction. So-called mobility stations which are the interface between different modes of transport are a means of making local public transport more attractive.

2. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

Action 1

Action 1 aims at setting up two funding schemes: one for the renewal of the tram fleet and one for electronic booking/ticketing.

The fleet (rolling stock) of the five Thuringian tram companies is technically outdated, only in parts completely barrier-free and measured by current standards too energy and maintenance consuming, that means not nearly as environmentally friendly as possible today.

The current ERDF OP supported a first tranche of 14 trams worth € 15 million. This will be continued in the period from 2021 to 2027 for a further 35 trams.

Therefore a new funding scheme including technical specifications for the new trams and examples for the enhancement of the tram lines will be set up.

The replacement and extension of the tram fleet and infrastructure will result in considerable CO2 savings, as has already been proven in the first installment.

This is to be further strengthened by modernization and expansion of the current systems and combined to the efforts of CO2 reduced and motorized individual transport free city areas.

Financing only from state funds would be at the expense of urgent concomitant public transport investments, such as the creation of P + R stations, the barrier-free rebuilding of public transport hubs, linking points and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The eligible tram companies are economically efficient, so that the required own contribution to the financing can be regarded as secured. They have extensive experience in the funding process and are fully able to meet the obligations arising from the ERDF support.

An administrative agreement has been concluded with the Thuringian Investment Bank (TAB) to ensure swift processing the programme.

Thuringia wants to use the experience of the Transport Association Mittelthüringen (VMT) and introduce a uniform tariff system for the whole state of Thuringia, which enables the passenger to use city and regional buses, trams and local trains throughout the Free State with just one ticket which also is based on an electronic booking platform. This helps to create attractive offers and easy-to-understand passenger information. The offer consists of a transparent tariff, coordinated timetables, common conditions of carriage and a network-wide information system.

The main concern is to make local public transport more attractive for customers and thus to open up new customer potential. The Ministry supports the operators by setting up a new funding scheme.

During the thematic workshops in Tartu, Laquila and Granada, the topic of electronic ticketing and integrated tickets (one ticket fits all) was repeatedly the subject of lectures and discussions by and with external experts. These topics were also on the agenda during the peer review visits to Tartu, Baia Mare and Erfurt. The discussions led to the conclusion that integrated tickets and electronic booking services make local public transport more attractive.

Thuringia is encouraged by these suggestions and discussions to continue on this digital path.

The Thuringian Transport Association (VMT) has started to introduce a uniform ticket for all cities and counties which are part of the association and to sell it electronically (see: Best Practice Database). In the future it is intended to extend the experiences made in Central Thuringia to other counties and finally all of Thuringia. The Baia Mare Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association is also interested in benefiting from the experience of the VMT and wants to introduce an adapted system in their metropolitan region.

The main focus of the second funding scheme will be on electronic booking options for public passenger transport services (fare database), check-in / check-out for supply control and development of tariff offers, including the integration of bookable station-based mobility services.

The items to fund range from technical equipment for intelligent traffic systems to digital control and monitoring options, to the customization of software used or the connection to marketing platforms.

A combination and networking with individualized mobility services (such as taxi and car hire, as well as sharing or pooling services) should help to overcome technical and formal barriers and facilitate simplified accessibility to public or private transport services.

The eligible transport companies are economically efficient enough to be able to bear a significant share of the financing of the investments themselves. The main task will be to convince the transport companies that the introduction of the measure will be of economic efficiency because attractive services will create new customers.

For Thuringia particularly urgent is the electronic ticket and its establishment

To this end, all Thuringia public transport companies recently have agreed and want to introduce this step by step.

In this context, as well as in current working groups, the outlined funding objectives

have already been discussed with the potential partners and other civil society actors (such as passenger associations).

The funding of tram companies (also provided for as an ERDF measure, see Action 1) will bring additional synergies in terms of timetable stability and capacity planning through digitization. An important player and potential partner in the framework of ERDF funding and an innovation driver of digitization measures is the Central Thuringian Transport Association (VMT).

So the Thuringian Ministry of Infrastructure and Agriculture for the next programming period will adjust the successful funding scheme, to ensure electronic ticketing can be addressed.

Sufficient administrative capacity will already be available at Ref. 42 of the TMIL at the beginning of the next funding period. In concrete terms, two new positions were advertised in the unit, in whose job descriptions appropriate capacities are planned. This means that the subsidized object of promoting investments in modern energy-efficient trams can also be fully processed in the Ministry in the new ERDF funding period and should continue to be a transport sector due to synergies with the wider transport policy decisions and support measures be settled. Additionally the introduction of a thuringianwide electronic ticketing system will be pushed forward by the transport unit of the Ministry in joint collaboration with all regional and local transport providers. Thuringia is also part of the initiative to promote and establish this kind of system in whole Germany.

3. Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

The Thuringian Ministry for Infrastructure and Agriculture (TMIL) as the Administrative body will set up funding schemes based on the Operational Programme ERDF Thuringia 2021 – 2027. The Ministry is Member of the Group which is developing the new Operational Programme for the upcoming structural funds period. So TMIL will take care that there will be an Investment priority on funding of sustainable and ecological mobility.

The potential beneficiaries for the funding scheme listed below will support the ministry in providing up to date technical specifications which are needed to get the rolling stock which fits best to the existing infrastructural and topografic framework conditions and which fulfils the required energy saving potential.

Erfurter Verkehrsbetriebe (potential beneficiary)
Jenaer Nahverkehr (potential beneficiary)
GVB Verkehrs- und Betriebsgesellschaft Gera (potential beneficiary)
Stadtwerke Nordhausen (potential beneficiary)
Regionale Verkehrsgemeinschaft Gotha GmbH (potential beneficiary)

In the further course of the creation of the ERDF OP, the requirements will be specified and specific measures will be worked out in coordination with the transport companies (all licensed local transport companies, including the railway companies operating in Thuringia). This also includes further specific requirements like usability and simplified cost options.

In addition, the Central Thuringian Transport Association and all passenger associations and advisory councils based in Thuringia will be involved in the process of drawing up the funding measure as well as the technical specifications.

4. Timeframe

The action is planned in advance to the structural funds period from 2021 – 2027. So it is envisaged to set up the funding scheme based on the Operational Programme Thuringia latest till the end of 2020 so that the first applications for funding can be done at the beginning of the funding period. So the first step the ministry is involved is the development of the Operational Programme Thuringia 2021 – 2027 and after approval by the European Commission the responsible unit will prepare the new funding scheme.

Steps:

1. Collaboration in the Development of the Operational Programme Thuringia 2021 – 2027 (Timeframe: 2019 – 2020)
2. Set up of the new funding scheme (2019 – 2020)
3. Hiring staff to deal with application requirements and applications (2020)
4. Funding of approved applications (2021 – 2027)

5. Costs (if relevant)

The indicative cost to set up and the maintenance of the funding scheme will be approximately 240.000€ for two man years of staff involved in the process. These costs will be covered by the Ministry for Infrastructure and Agriculture in the normal financial framework of staff costs.

For the funding period from 2021 to 2027, the Thuringian tram companies in the five relevant cities have registered a total investment requirement of around EUR 187.755 million for tram vehicles and infrastructure, which cannot be covered by state funds alone.

So the funding will be financed as shared costs: 65% will be financed from the ERDF and the rest will be financed by the transport companies as own contribution.

According to current information, the anticipated total investment requirement for the second funding scheme amounts to approx. EUR 25 million and has so far been based on own valuations or extrapolations.

Action 2

Public Transport - Financing Regulation

Since 2017, the Free State of Thuringia will introduce "state relevant bus routes". They should connect small and medium-sized cities directly with each other. An interchange to the train must be possible.

The Free State of Thuringia has set up criteria for "state relevant bus routes ". During the next years they should be should state wide and as comprehensively as possible.

Beyond the few big Cities in Thuringia a continuous public transport offer on weekdays, weekends and holidays should be established. The Thuringian Ministry for infrastructure and agriculture which also is responsible for traffic has identified about 60 existing Bus routes as "state relevant".

It promotes public transport authorities, which according to request and examination meet specified criteria listed below.

Issue of funding (General directive)

Gratuities will be granted for the provision of adequate public transport services in the tram, urban bus and regional bus services, provided that the beneficiaries are liable for public service obligations under Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 due to

compensation granted to transport undertakings.

Grants are granted for:

- 1) provision of demand oriented public transport services (basic funding),
- 2) special bus routes operating on the state wide road public transport axes defined by the Ministry of Transport using certain special criteria.

In accordance with § 42 "Passenger Transport Act", licensed lines are permitted in the branches of tram, city bus and regional bus traffic. In this case, city bus services are lines that are operated within a city area or to the neighbouring communities. The permission as a city bus service still requires the exclusive application of a city tariff on the entire route. In case of doubt, the ministry responsible for transport decides on the assignment.

Grant requirements

The condition for providing the grant is that

- the transport companies carry out scheduled traffic in accordance with the Passenger Transport Act
- the ministry responsible for transport has got a public transport plan from the authority responsible for regional public transport which updated according to the requirements of § 5 (6) of the Thuringian law on local public transport,
- the granting authority no later than 30 June gets the data from the profit and loss account for the regular service of the previous year, as confirmed by an auditor / tax consultant, in accordance with Appendix 4 of the public service undertakings providing public service obligations

for routes that cross the state border, the beneficiary receives the subsidy of routes outside of Thuringia, provided that beneficiaries are the authorities responsible for local passenger transport pursuant to § 3 (1) No. 2 and 3 of the Thuringian Law on Local Public Transport, which encumbers charges resulting from public service obligations pursuant to Art. 3 (1) and (2) of Regulation (EC) No. 1370 / 2007.

The grant is granted annually by the Ministry responsible for transport in addition to the grant according to Section 1) for bus routes or sections of bus routes along state-defined road public transport axes. These are so called "state relevant bus axes".

State relevant bus routes are those lines that offer direct bus services between Central Places with a defined minimum supply quality on axes designated by the Ministry of Transport. In exceptional cases, the axis is limited to the connection between a central location and a public transport node. The travel time on the state relevant bus route must usually be less than the travel time, which - if available - would be required with a regional train connection.

Only road public transport are financed, which serve the connections listed in Annex 1 without any change and meet the following requirements:

- a) state relevance of the road public transport axes,

- b) minimum operating frequencies and timetable integration (bus to bus)
- c) timetable integration (bus to train)

a) They must be scheduled services that provide connections without interchanges between nearest middle centres, intermediate centres with sub-functions of an upper centre, regional centres and / or places in the national interest in accordance with the state development program of Thuringia 2025.

An additional precondition for financing is that the rides operate on bus lines approved in accordance with § 42 "Passenger Transport Act" and serve the respective state-relevant road public transport axle without any change. A continuation of the respective line beyond the start and end point of the respective axis is permitted, but not eligible in the sense of state relevant bus lines.

In exceptional cases, to avoid competing public transport offers or to save travel time, the end of the axis is not set at a central location but at an intermediate public transport hub.

b) the respective bus route, has to guarantee a continuous public transport service from Monday to Friday with at least eight integrated pairs of journeys, on weekends and public holidays with at least four integrated travel pairs.

c) The journeys concerned must be linked to the offer of the regional public rail transport in at least one central location, at least one connection point or at the public transport connection points referred to under a).

The most important option for the timetable link is that of the possible timetable variants by which the more important travel chains can be provided.

The transitional period between scheduled trips must be sufficient (minimum transition time at the point of attachment), but not more than 15 minutes.

A traffic connection of one state relevant bus line with another state relevant bus lines - where available - and at intermediate points with the regional public rail transport is desirable.

The responsible authority commits itself that the requested bus service on the relevant connection will be maintained for at least one timetable year. One timetable year is the period between two main European timetable changes.

6. Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

Transport authorities are the Free State of Thuringia represented by the Ministry of Transport for the rail bound regional public transport, the counties and county-free cities for the road bound regional public transport, the large district towns according to § 6 para 4 of the Thuringian municipal regulations for city traffic, as far as the city councils have made this decision.

The transport authorities can use third parties (e.g. bus companies) to carry out their

duty.

7. Timeframe

The planning of the action was done in 2016. The directive was published at the end of 2016. First applications for funding were evaluated 2017. In 2017 first routes have been established. 2018 the network of state relevant lines has been enhanced by further routes. The process will keep ongoing until all 60 routes which have been identified by the Ministry of Transport will be implemented.

Development of the "state relevant bus routes" (2016).

Set up of the new funding scheme (2016 – 2017)

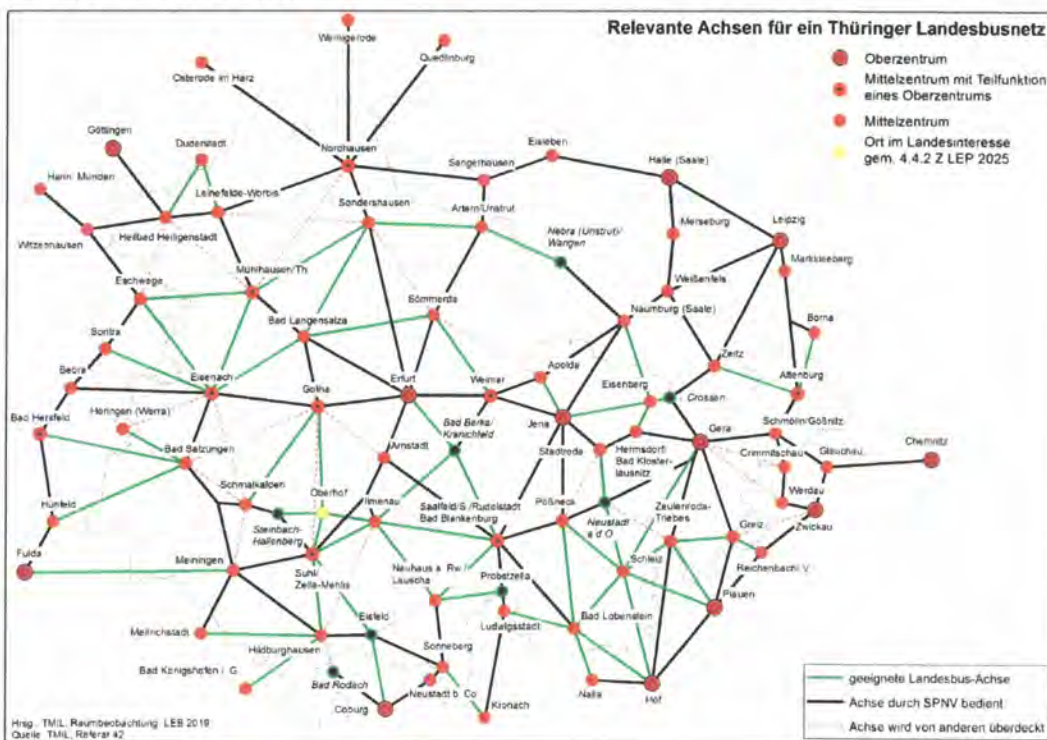
Hiring staff to deal with application requirements and applications (2017)

Funding of approved applications (2017 – 2021)

- 2017 funding of 14 Busroutes
- 2018 funding of 18 Busroutes
- 2019 funding of 22 Busroutes

In the medium term, it is planned to expand the country-relevant bus network to up to 60 routes and also to improve it qualitatively (frequency of use).

The state relevant bus routes have been derived by the Ministry for Infrastructure and Agriculture (see Fig.)



Bus operators now have to apply for the respective bus routes and after the got them have to serve them under the conditions mentioned above.

8. Costs (if relevant)

The indicative cost to set up and the maintenance of the funding scheme will be approximately 120.000€ per year for staff involved in the evaluation and implementation process. These costs will be covered by the Ministry for Infrastructure and Agriculture in the normal financial framework of staff costs. According to current information, the total investment spend so far was 1.3 Mio. Euros in 2017 and 1,74 Mio. Euros in 2018. So far 36 routes have been established.

The amount of the additional allowance per transport authority for the state relevant bus lines is based on the approved timetable kilometres of all journeys or journey sections.

This is based on the timetable kilometres of the timetable valid on 15th December of the previous year pursuant to § 40 (2) Passenger Transport Act.

Journeys on the route in question that do not meet the conditions described above are not taken into account when calculating the grant.

The subsidy rate is € 0.50 per timetable kilometre.

Each year at the earliest possible date the transport authorities will receive information from the granting authority on the expected amount of the donation from the state.

The associations of the transport authorities and the transport companies are informed annually about the result of the distribution of the allowance according to a distribution key set up by the Thuringian Provincial Administration Office.

The amount of the subsidy per transport authority for city bus and regional bus traffic is calculated according to the approved timetable kilometres per business branch (tram, city bus, regional bus). The basis for this are the timetable kilometres per branch of operation of the timetable valid on 31 August of the previous year pursuant to § 40 (2) Passenger Transport Act. It also includes on-demand transport according to § 42 Passenger Transport Act (e.g. call-collecting taxi, call bus). In the case of on-demand transport, the grant is calculated on the basis of 35% of the confirmed timetable kilometres of the approved timetable.

The funding will be financed through the state own money which has been reserved in the financial framework for 2020-2022.

Date: 24.4.20

Signature: 

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Stamp of the organisation (if available): _____