



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



OPTITRANS

BAIA MARE PEER REVIEW

12-14 NOVEMBER 2018

REPORT

Version 1
Date: 08 Oct 2018

Peer reviews

Each region/country will be peer reviewed by a small group of other regions/countries

- *Who: 4-5 persons representing different partner territories (OptiTrans project managers and external stakeholders)*
- *Preparatory half-day training in Berlin (4th September 2018)*
- *Before the visit:*
 - *team members get to know each other and exchange via Skype or similar*
 - *baseline study provided by reviewed partner as starting point*
- *During the visit...*
 - *arrival day dinner with local project manager and selected stakeholders*
 - *interviews and small workshops with local stakeholders (minimum: researcher, business representative, public authority representative) and those responsible for the implementation (management) of the selected policy*
 - *review team may split up to cover more*
 - *final day: public presentation and discussion of peer review findings*
- *After the visit:*
 - *team review members elaborate a joint report summarising the review*
 - *production of recommendations for the reviewed territory/partner*





- *side effects include better knowledge about another partner territory's good practices and challenges – and possibilities to transfer successful approaches*


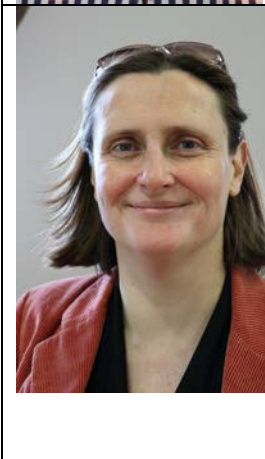
*Following the peer review visit, a comprehensive written report should summarize the review's implementation, describe the learning effects of the participants and give recommendations to the policy actors of the visited and reviewed territory. The report is elaborated under the responsibility of the peer review team leader, usually a member of the OptiTrans project team, with all other peer review team members as well as the project manager of the local partner in the reviewed territory contributing. Those having participated in peer review visits will brief the local project manager and their own Stakeholder Support Group about their findings abroad to share their learning. The report is drafted in English language and **must be available at the latest four weeks following the peer review. Its length should be around 10 pages (content, without index, open page, etc.) and photos and presentations used during the visit should be added as an appendix.***

A Peer review overview

A.1 Peer review team

Brief presentation of the peer review team members:

	<p>Klaus Bongartz, Erfurt (Germany) <u>OptiTrans technical project responsible. Project Partner</u></p> <p>Born in 1967. Dr. rer.nat. 1990--1996 Study of Geography at the Rheinischen-Friedrich- Wilhelms-Universität Bonn. 2001 PhD in Geoinformatics at the Friedrich-Schiller University Jena. Since 2009 Referent at the Thuringian Ministry of Infrastructure and Agriculture, Service Agency Demographic Change and EU-Projects. Lead Partner of Interreg B Projects EURUFU, ADAPT2DC and SubNodes and of the Interreg Europe Project OptiTrans. Fluency in English language; experience in Geoinformatics, demographic change and public transport activities.</p>
	<p>Ariane Ruff, Bad Salzungen (Germany) <u>Interreg OptiTrans Stakeholder. Wartburg County , REsponsible for Public Transport planning.</u></p> <p>Born in 1972. Ariane Ruff studied Geography at Potsdam University in Germany. From 2000 until 2015, she conducted research and teaching projects at the University of Erfurt and Nordhausen University of Applied Sciences, focusing on sustainable land management and renewable energy potentials. In 2017, she received her PhD at the University of Liechtenstein. Currently, she is head of a working group in the planning office of the Wartburgkreis, responsible for regional development and public transport.</p>
	<p>Rein Haak, Tartu (Estonia) Born in June of 1960. Higher education (MSc) from Estonian University of Life Sciences – Agronomy, Environmental protection. Rein is working in Tartu City Government since 1999 (head of the environmental service) and from 2001 acting as a head of department of communal services. Responsibility areas: public transportation, traffic, greenery, waste management, environmental issues, public lighting, administration of roads, city cleaning. In last decade involved in different transport related EU projects: BusTrip, Baltic Biogas Bus, Active Access, BSR Electric, SmartEnCity , CyclUrban, SUMBA, OptiTrans fulfilling different tasks.</p>
	<p>Madis Oona, Tartu (Estonia) Born in January of 1966. Higher education (MSc) from Estonian University of Life Sciences, faculty of mechanics and specialty: mechanization. Since 2006 Madis is working in Tartu City Government in the department of communal services as a specialist and senior specialist of public transport. Main tasks : planning and daily management of public transport in the city (routes, schedules, permits, ticketing issues etc.). Long term experiences in planning of schedules and routes, in procurement of public transport services). Involved in different transport related EU projects: BusTrip, Baltic Biogas Bus, BSR Electric, SUMBA, OptiTrans fulfilling different tasks.</p>

	<p>Üllar Kaljuste, Tartu (Estonia) Born in August of 1971. Higher education (MSc) from Estonian University of Life Sciences, faculty of mechanics and specialty: Head of Machinery Park. In 1999 – 2006 Üllar was working in the company AS Connex Tartu as a technical director and member of the board. From 2006 until now Üllar is working in the public transport company AS SEBE. Starting from the position of the head of repair workshop Üllar is reaching by now the position of the member of the board and is fulfilling tasks of the manager of public transport in Tartu City. Long term experiences from planning and daily management of public transport.</p>
	<p>Irene Sigismondi , Abruzzo Region (Italy) Dr.Irene Sigismondi, graduated in Law in 1995 (LUISS Univ. Rome) and obtained a Ph.D., in law and information technology in 2003 (Sapienza Univ. Rome), She combines her professional experience as attorney at law and management consultant, with research and teaching collaborations with Universities and Research Institutions, focusing on the field of innovation and law within different sectors. She has been fellow at the YCIS - Yale Center for Internet Studies, research post-doc at IRSIG-CNR Institute of the Italian National Center for Research, and since 2011 she is fellow at the NCTDR, National Center for Technology and Dispute Resolution in USA. She is currently working as external expert for Regione Abruzzo (Italy) in a EU funded Project related to transport and innovation and was delegated by the Head of Service and Project Coordinator, Avv. Paola Di Salvatore, to participate to this Baseline Study Peer Review Committee.</p>

A.2 Peer review implementation

Annexed to this document information about the Official Agenda and the “Feedback Form for Peers” will provide clear information and evaluation of the activities carried out during the peer review visit.

B Characteristics of Public Transport Policies for Green Mobility in rural areas

As presented to the Millenium Center III Baia Mare during the open session at the 15th of November, the Peer review team has reached the following general conclusions regarding the development of public transport policies in the region of Baia Mare Metropolitan Area:

1. At the moment there is no clear national strategy to promote Public Transport and Green Mobility at State level. At National level, a law is in preparation but its content is not yet publicly available, neither by the Baia Mare Metropolitan Area Association, nor by the peer review team. Only a **National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania for 2013 – 2020 – 2030** exists, in which pubic transport is one of the features.

Thus, Baia Mare Metropolitan Area Association together with other Metropolitan Area Associations is promoting a better public transport policy on State Level. Nevertheless at this level there are some issues to be solved on coordination of policies in some aspects, and mainly on improving cooperation between different policy levels.

2. As for county level, the **Northwest Region Development Strategy 2014 – 2020 and the Maramureş County Development Strategy 2009 – 2014** aims at increasing the accessibility of the region and the mobility of its inhabitants, goods and information. To achieve this goal, three directions are being developed: making a sustainable transport system and ensuring access and integration in major transport networks at EU and international level. These strategies seem to focus more on road development than on development of PT. Thus for the peer review team at the moment there is no clear strategy to promote Public Transport and Green Mobility. Problem is, that county level has no specific administrative competence. This impacts on public transport decision making, which is organized by municipalities giving licences to private companies, without any formal coordination among each other.
3. Speaking about the Baia Mare City or Metropolitan Area, it's clearly trying to coordinate at least with seven surrounding Municipalities. Nevertheless, the financing of the services by Municipalities was not satisfying. The new contract will fix the duties and the payment of the served Municipalities.
4. Concerning working commuters, special so called industrial lines have been established towards the industrial zones of Baia Mare. Tickets for employees are provided and bought by companies. Number of users unfortunately is not clear.

At the current stage, the main actions to improve mobility that have been recently outlined/introduced, are being developed, or are in an advanced phase of development are:

- Extension of the trolley bus line by eight kilometres.
- Improvement of pedestrian zone in Baia Mare City centre. Already developed for a little part, more to be implemented in the coming years.
- New bike/pedestrian lane planned along the shore of the river Sasar crossing the whole city centre and maybe connected to the Municipality of Baia Sprie. Planned for the next five years.

- Modernization of public transport bus fleet. All in all 33 new trolley busses, hybrid busses and Euro 5 diesel busses will be bought. Public procurement is ongoing; operator Urbis SA will take control of new busses in summer 2019.
- Redesign of bus routes to increase its effectiveness as well as the time length of service and frequency.
- Establishment of a bus lane with priority on main boulevards of Baia Mare city.

Main barrier for the development of PT in sparsely settled areas of the Baia Mare Metropolitan Area, is a combination of low population density, scattered network of villages and still strong habits of the population to be car users (e.g. parents take pupils to school at very low distances). One approach could be to develop a hierarchical system of buslines with main routes on hourly trips than feeder lines from the region to the main lines and last but not least demand responsive services that serve very small villages. All in all we got the impression that the willingness of administration and providers is there, but money and common financing of services seems to be the main problem.

Finally, main actors and driving forces that control mobility policies within the are the ones stated in the Baseline study:

- State controls the national policies, legal framework, roads design, construction and maintenance, train network and roiling stock, as well as county budget for public transport. But since the national transport law is pending it seems to have a less important and less active role in the region.
- The Baia Mare Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association takes the money of the City and surrounding Municipalities, applies its policies, and tenures the operation of the public transport services. Unfortunately there seem to be no real contract or something binding so that some Municipalities refuse to pay. This problem might be solved with the new contract which is under development.
- Baia Mare City is of course a very important actor as is the main attraction pole of the region, with most of the population and with its own budget and policies to promote green mobility.
- Urbis SA the is the only PT provider and operator
- Contracting authority – I.D.A. Baia Mare Metropolitan Area.

C Good practices

Unfortunately, during the peer review the different good practices already identified in the OptiTrans project baseline study were introduced during several interviews, but we had no real time to discuss the effects of the good practices. All good practices are endeavoured to improve the efficiency of public transport activity, to improve the quality of services and travel relations, and to prepare future investments in public metropolitan transport system.

Testing electric busses

During 2015, for a week, the operator tested an electric bus of Turkish origin, but the results were unsatisfying because of the flaws. In March 2017, the operator carried out a second test with a Solaris Urbino 12 bus, which was the “Bus of the year” in 2017. The power supply was done at the headquarter of the operator via a plug – in system, using the conventional electrical equipment available on the bus. Depending on the routes travelled, the Urbino 12 bus made almost 190 km with one supply. The bus was closer to meeting the operating requirements, but more autonomy was still needed between refuels.

The third test took place in the winter of 2017. The test was performed on an electric SOR bus, having an autonomy of 280 km for extra – urban routes and 240 km in urban routes. Its capacity of up to 85 people or 92 people for the 11 metre model bus is comparable to a classic 12 metre bus model.

GPS mounting and probes for all busses

In order to improve the monitoring of the position and movement of busses and stopping diesel leakage, S.C. URBIS S.A. installed in 2014 GPS devices and lithrometric probes in the bus tanks on all its busses. Thus, there is a real – time monitoring of the km travelled as well as fuel consumption.

Video cameras on all busses

Another measure took by the operators was mounting video cameras on the fleet to monitor passenger’s access to the means of transport, to avoid unpleasant situations when boarding and getting off the busses, and to increase the safety of travellers during their travel. By making this investment, the operator wanted to ensure a high level of safety for the passengers and to increase attractiveness in public transport.

Passenger surveys on the quality of public transport

S.C. URBIS S.A. operator conducts online surveys on different aspects of the quality and satisfaction level of the provided transport service. Thus, we can observe the interest of the operator to quantify the passenger’s satisfaction and provide services at the best quality possible. This action, along with the permanent improvement of the website to provide transparency and information for the users, are important steps taken by the operator to observe the monitoring indicators of the service. This has made S.C. Urbis a highly ranked transport service provider with several diplomas.

Adapting the on – demand transport offer by monitoring the flow of passengers

By using this method, the operator aims to maximize the efficiency of the service, thus organizing its activity to achieve a satisfying transport offer. Between 2014 and 2017, the operator periodically monitor the flow of passengers, especially on the metropolitan routes outside Baia Mare, in order to optimize the routes and reduce the expenses. The monitoring was done using own personnel (controllers) and after the monitoring, proposals were made to the contracting authority – I.D.A. Baia Mare Metropolitan Area.

Software to improve operational and financial management

Through own efforts, the operator has developed a series of computer programs dedicated to transport activity and adapted to their own needs. An example is the program for calculating roadmaps and management of the activity of the drivers.

In order to improve the operational process, S.C. URBIS S.A. has developed a software to improve roadmap calculations and keep track of drivers. Similar examples are the programs keeping an evidence of the elderly people benefitting from discounts and free rides in public transport, the evidence of fixed assets etc.

Display of the transport schedule in each bus stop in Baia Mare

In all bus stations in Baia Mare, the schedule for all routes was displayed, both for working and non – working days.

This measure is primarily intended to inform passengers about the public transport schedule to increase the attractiveness and predictability of the service. The contracting authority can also monitor the quality indicators such as delays on the route and even passenger's complaints regarding delays. This measure aims at improving the image of public transport and bring the young generation closer to it.

D Policy context

The OptiTrans project addresses one specific policy instrument in each participating territory, being in Baia Mare region Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan. Thus, the peer review team learnt the following things about it:

- a. The main objective is to rise the use of green means of transport with improvement of rolling stock / bus fleet. The main policies are developed within Baia Mare city as main attractor centre and seven surrounding municipalities.
- b. Speaking about the city, different measures will be implemented in a midterm perspective such as purchase of hybrid busses, bike lane along the river, bus lanes on main boulevards (according to speech from the Vice mayor of Baia Mare).
- c. For the peer review team most of the planned actions are targeted on efficiency and not directly on green mobility.
- d. Additionally these policy changes are mainly anticipated by the institutions that are in decision-making power. No real public participation in decisions on PT seems to be in place.

- e. Speaking about policies, there are no real indicators how the improvement of e.g. air quality, increasing number of customers ... will be measured.
- f. Mainly the actions taken now seem to be in the right direction to achieve better services. Nevertheless it would be better to think more in the needs of users to implement improved solutions. A multimodal approach still is lacking behind.

E Interviews field trip

On the first day, the participants discussed issues related to the Baia Mare Metropolitan Area baseline study on public transport, after which they had the chance to talk with two stakeholders in the project: the Projects Department of Baia Mare City Hall and the Transport Department of Baia Mare City Hall. A representative of the Project Department presented how the city hall improved the public transport system by extending the trolley line in the Vasile Alecsandri 2 neighbourhood through an EU funded project, and how future plans include buying, also on EU funds, a number of 33 vehicles to be used in public transport in Baia Mare city. The main issues which the second project wishes to resolve are reducing emissions to achievable levels through new technologies especially hybrid and partial vehicles (for trains with a daily distance below 150 km) and to provide an upgraded fleet with easier access to public transport for users. Another project to be implemented by Baia Mare City Hall related to public transport is implementing an e-ticketing system and upgrading the current bus stations.

On the second day, the participants started the morning with a visit to the headquarters of the public operator S.C. URBIS S.A., where they exchanged good practices and ideas with the General Director and the Technical Director. After the discussions, the participants were taken to the station where the trolley lines are powered with electricity, which was also made through an EU funded project. Later, the participants went to the periodical technical inspection station belonging to the public transport operator, which is the only one in the country having trolley lines inside. At the same location is the maintenance and washing station for the fleet of the operator.

The next location of the meeting was at Baia Sprie City Hall, a city located 10 km away of Baia Mare, which is also in the metropolitan transport system. There, the representatives of the project partners had the chance to talk to the Mayor regarding the existent situation of the public transport system and what are the future plans of improving and upgrading it. Baia Sprie City applied for funding on the same financing source that Baia Mare City applied on, the Regional Operational Program 2014 - 2020, in order to purchase new hybrid and electric means of public transport. Baia Sprie City Hall is also a stakeholder in the OptiTrans Project.

F Recommendations

At the end of the peer review, and considering the policy context, the main actors' ability and will to promote policy changes, and the knowledge about good practices and the knowledge about the real world situation in Baia Mare and Baia Sprie, team review members are impressed about the general good situation of the region, and the future actions already planned. Nevertheless, some improvements are identified, and the following recommendations are given:

- to become clear about the commuter situation in the Metropolitan area it would be important to make a survey about the commuters – which transport modes do the use and how can their habit be changed - and their real transport needs
- to make public tenders and contracts more easy Baia Mare Metropolitan Association together with other Metropolitan Associations should lobby that national as well as regional regulations should be set up to regulate directly the framework conditions for public transport based on EU relevant regulations.
- based on the experience of the peer review team the reviewed partner should take care about the funding system used to promote and sustain public transport, it should be planned to introduce a system which in the mid-term becomes self-sustaining; at the moment most measures are paid by European funds
- to make public transport more attractive and effective more restrictions for motorized individual transport have to be introduced e.g. higher Parking fees, less parking space in the city center, bus lanes, traffic light with priority to public transport
- to establish bicycle traffic as one means of the public transport chain, attractive and safe cycle lanes should be built in the city centre and towards neighbouring Municipalities or suburbs of interest (Baia Sprie). Topography and distances within city centre qualify Baia Mare for this
- Threshold for air quality should be introduced in City and regional planning
- a transparent and easy to use ticketing system should be introduced reducing the fragmentation of tariffs that is rather awkward and is not clear if it is actually efficient in terms of revenues for S.C. Urbis S.A.
- at national, regional level the existing railway network should be enhanced concerning quality and speed a huge amount of regional traffic could be avoided using the train system (connection to airports of Tăuții Măgherauș and Cluj)

G General remarks

Finally the peer review team members also have collected remarks about the general situation and their impressions:

Intermodality Bus/Rail:

- Regional busses end at the railway station or nearby, no transport to city centre
- no tarif transition to Citybus, no coordinated timetable
- > thus no real Intermodal hub

Jobtickets:

- very good initiative from the Industry to create and pay job tickets, good for commuters and providers

Public transport offer:

- no hierarchical transport offers planned
- Services in Bedienung in rush hours demand oriented
- in sparsely settled regions services are depending on the willingness of the municipalities to pay

Connection to cycle traffic:

- so to say unavailable

Challenges:

- high number of available parking lots in city centre, relativ small commuting times by car
- > good and easy accessibility by car
- all in all decreasing public transport users (Reason: demographic change, Suburbanisation)
- > same Problem like in Germany, problem will increase, Duty of spatial regional and city planning!

Potential solution: Reduction of parking space in City centre, higher parking fees, Buslanes on main roads, higher Taxes on old cars etc.

+ enhancement of public transport: Intermodal hubs, minimization of transfer times between modes E-Ticketing in combination with an Vereinfachung Tarifsystem etc.

Target groups:

- mainly pupils, commuters
- so far no touristic offers
- so far no specific offers for leisure time activities?
- so far no specific offers for retired people?

Tarifs:

- in Baia Mare free PT for pupils and seniors, this does not in Baia Sprie
- > this seem to be problematic for peripheral regions because ticket prices depend on number of users and services depend on the financing will of municipalities

H List of bibliography

- Baia Mare Baseline Study
- OptiTrans database of Good Practices
- Presentations given within the peer review by local stakeholders

I Annex section

- Agenda of peer review visit
 - Peer Review Presentation
 - Lists of participants
 - Photos taken during the peer review
 - Trip to Baia Sprie resume
-
- ANNEX 1 - Feedback of Peers_OptiTrans
 - ANNEX 2 - Checklist_OptiTrans