



ACCESS2MOUNTAIN

**Sustainable Mobility and Tourism in Sensitive Areas of the Alps and
the Carpathians:**

REGIONAL AND NARROW GAUGE RAILWAYS – GOOD PRACTICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WP 4 | Act. 4.1

FINAL VERSION

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Please note:

The English version of the study „Regional and narrow gauge railways“ is a summary of 2 interim reports in German language. In these interim reports (author Otfried Knoll) additional, more detailed information is available. Please see <http://www.access2mountain.eu>

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Links and other sources are mentioned below the pictures or the relevant parts of the text

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Friendly train staff is still helpful for passengers of railways. Photo: Otfried Knoll

1. SUMMARY OF THE GOOD PRACTICE STUDY

The objective of the work package (WP) 4 – “Regional and Narrow Gauge Railways” is to strengthen small and narrow gauge railways by achieving a modal shift towards sustainable tourist mobility in regions with natural and cultural assets. The tourist market can contribute considerably to the revenues of regional railways, in some cases together with every day mobility and freight transport. To improve information how successful regional and narrow gauge railways in mountain areas deal with the challenges of the tourist market, in a first step a good-practice study on organisational, economic, traffic planning and tourism issues was elaborated.

Core questions of the study were how the regional railways win tourists as passengers, e.g. how they work together with tourism stakeholders and what their successful advertising strategies are. Moreover a lot of background information on regional and traffic data and conceptions, as well as on organisation, financing and decision making processes were collected to identify success factors and risks.

The findings of the good-practice survey are the base for recommendations with a focus on the market sector tourism. Supported by the recommendations of the good-practice survey, in the next working phase the Access2Mountain partnership, together with associated partners and external experts, will elaborate conceptions for sustainable mobility in tourism, ready for implementation. Regional railways should be an important means of transport in these conceptions.

The following summary report on work package 4 provides an overview of the results of the analysis of 18 regional railways and highlights core success factors, like good cooperation with relevant stakeholders (e.g. tourism, communities and regional authorities), professional marketing to address all interesting target groups, building up an image as a partner who ensures high quality services which meet the demand of actual passengers and contribute to win additional clients. Master plans are a suitable instrument for the coordination of all activities to turn regional railways into successful public transport companies on all relevant market sectors. In chapter 4 of this report the steps to a master plan are described in detail.

Finally in chapter 5 – illustrated by a photo-documentation - successful measures (“good practice”) are presented and described, to support and to encourage the implementation of successful solutions on regional railways in the Access2Mountain partner regions.



New trains for the Mariazeller Bahn , photo: www.noevog.at

2. INTRODUCTION: OBJECTIVES AND WORKING METHODS OF THE STUDY ON REGIONAL RAILWAYS

The Alps and the Carpathians as mountainous regions are ecologically sensitive, however they are also popular destinations for holidays and recreation. The passenger traffic of tourists – in many mountainous tourist regions more than 80 % of the guests arrive by private car for holidays – causes negative impacts on the environment, like traffic congestions, noise and air pollution. Therefore a core target of the project “Access2Mountain”, which is worked out in the South East Europe programme for transnational cooperation of the EU regional funds, is to develop solutions for environmentally sustainable mobility for tourism and also for the regional population in mountainous regions.

Successful examples all over Europe and also in oversea countries prove that regional railways can be a backbone of sustainable mobility in tourist regions and can also improve the mobility conditions of the region`s inhabitants. In a first step, case studies of regional railways, some of them circulate on narrow gauges, were analysed in order to identify their core success factors and possible problems. The findings will be an important basis for measures on regional railways in model regions of the project “Access2Mountain” in the Alps and in the Carpathians.

For a pre-selection of successful regional railways, which are suitable as case studies, the contracted consultant Otfried Knoll, assisted by the contracted young researcher Alexander Baumgartner and Ernst Lung from the partner bmvit started with a literature- and internet-based research. This first survey already proved that regional railways can succeed in the market of sustainable tourism. In discussions of the research team and based on suggestions of other experts the 18 case study railways were selected.

The next phase of the study was concerned with preparing a questionnaire focused on tourist activities of the regional railways. A core question of this analysis was how the regional railways win tourists as passengers, for example how they work together with tourism and what their successful advertising strategies are. The questionnaire also asked for statistical base information and activities to improve services for everyday traffic of the regional population (trips to work, to school and leisure traffic):

Such interesting background information is provided by :

- regional data (e.g. inhabitants, tourist data)
- transport data (e.g. schedules, connections, number of train passengers, user groups like tourists, commuters, school children or students)
- embedding in regional traffic plans with multimodal connections, incl. connection to long-distance trains and in some cases interregional buses (therefore a close cooperation with the WP 5, Intermodality is useful)
- costs for railway operating and investments (e.g. in tracks and rolling stock)
- financing, income structure (market revenues, support by public authorities)
- enterprise structure (focus on innovative/successful models, e.g. communities as owners)

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- marketing and information-concepts (tariff systems, embedding in regional tourist marketing, cooperation with other touristic railways)
- possibilities to carry bikes and small boats in trains, bike renting (including electric powered bikes)
- overview to the freight sector: The internet- and literature survey has already shown, that only for few of the analysed regional railways freight transport has a considerable importance.

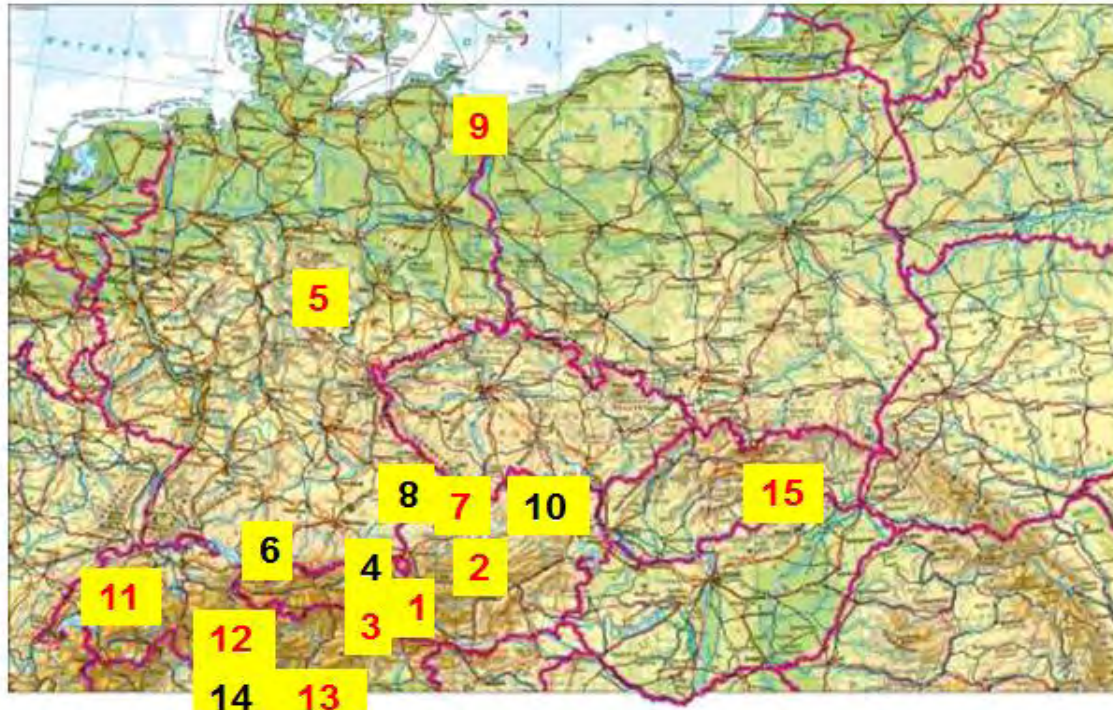
An English - and a German version of the questionnaire were worked out. Some responsible contact persons from the selected railways preferred phone interviews, based on the questionnaire. Several regional railways with interesting activities in the field of tourism were visited on the spot and analysed by the contracted expert Otfried Knoll.

All results that were available until November 2011 were filled in into an internal table, called matrix, to get an overview and to facilitate comparing the results for different railways. The “matrix” was an important base for the first interim report.



Enjoying nature and sustainable mobility, a trend which should be encouraged
Tatra Electric Railways, photo: Otfried Knoll

Overview of analysed railways



Fully analysed railway	1
Tourist analysis only	4

List of analysed railways

red = full analysis based on questionnaires black = selective analysis

Austria:

1. Pinzgauer Lokalbahn
2. Stern und Hafferl
3. Zillertalbahn

Germany:

4. Bayerische Oberlandbahn (BOB)
5. Harzer Schmalspurbahnen (HSB)
6. Hohenzollersche Landesbahn (HzL)
7. Ilztalbahn
8. Waldbahn

Czech Republic:

10. JHMD narrow gauge railway

Switzerland:

11. Chemins de fer du Jura (CJ)
12. Rhätische Bahn (RhB)

Italy:

13. Vinschger Bahn
14. Ferrovia Trento-Male-Marilleva

Slovakia:

15. Tatranská Elektrická Železnica, (TEŽ)

Spain:

16. Ferrocarril de Sóller SA (FS)

Great Britain:

17. Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Rail

USA / Canada:

18. White Pass /Yukon Railway

3. REPORTS ON ANALYSED REGIONAL RAILWAYS

This chapter gives a brief survey of the analysed regional railways and focuses on the important success factors, according to the objectives of the whole project “Access2Mountain” especially in the tourist market. In total 18 regional railways were analysed. At first our report presents the results of full analysis, based on the questionnaires, detailed phone interviews and on-the-spot visits. The following results of internet- and literature based analysis provide additional information on successful strategies and measures of regional railways on the tourist market.

Full analysis

3.1 Chemins de fer du Jura

The railway company Chemins de fer du Jura (CJ) operates in the north of Switzerland in the Jura region. Although the landscape is lovely, the rural Jura-region is not a top tourist destination in Switzerland. But the rail company, which is owned by the local authorities (Kantone) succeeded in implementing attractive programmes for short holiday excursions (one-day trips, weekends) based on suitable tickets for tourism (in addition to the valuable tickets of the Swiss Travel System) and innovative events for tourists, like a train “hijacking”, combined train and scooter tours or trips with historical rolling stock (steam trains, electric train “Belle Époque”).

The whole network is 85 km long, 74 km are narrow gauge (1 meter), only 11 km have the normal gauge of 1,435 m (line Porrentruy – Bonfol), a project is a third rail between Glovelier and the regional center Delémont to operate with direct trains between the western part of the network (with the city La Chaux-de-Fonds) and Delémont.

CJ and the Kanton Jura can be regarded as best practice for a public transport system in a rural region. Although the region is not densely populated (between 128 and 180 inhabitants per square km), a scheduled train service (“Taktfahrplan”) is offered. On most of the lines every hour a train is circulating in each direction and the trains are well connected with buses. Moreover a night service with buses is offered in the Kanton Jura, which is well accepted especially by young people.

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Typical for Swiss trains: Network marked on tables in the compartments (photo: Ernst Lung) and better visible map, source: Presentation of Georges Bregnard, director of CJ on 27th April 2010)

The CJ counted in the year 2010 approximately (appr.) 1,4 million passengers in trains, 400.000 of them belonged to the market sector tourism (Georges Bregnard, presentation 27th April 2010). Between 2004 and 2008 the number of passengers-kilometers of CJ increased by 30,3 % (presentation of regional public transport responsible David Asseo on 27th April 2010)

In CJ trains bicycles are carried for 5 CHF. The company also rents bicycles and e-bikes, that causes in fact – so the experience – a lot of work for the staff.

The CJ also carry freight, especially for waste logistics.



Train hijacking as an event for tourists

Freight logistics: Train with waste containers

Source of both pictures: Presentation of Georges Bregnard 27th April 2010

Further information is available at <http://www.les-cj.ch/>.

3.2 Harzer Schmalspurbahnen (HSB)

The HSB network is formed by 3 lines with a gauge of 1000 mm

	Passengers / year
• Brockenbahn 19 km	700.000 – 800.000
• Harzquerbahn 61 km	200.000 – 250.000
• Selketalbahn 61 km	appr. 100.000

The HSB are very important for tourism in the Harz Region in Germany. Especially the Brockenbahn to the highest mountain of Northern Germany (1125 m altitude) is visited by a high number of tourists. On all 3 lines steam trains are circulating, up to the Brocken steam locomotives are the rule. In the year 2006 on a closed track of the German Railways the HSB narrow gauge network was extended from Gernrode to Quedlinburg. The new destination the town of Quedlinburg, is world cultural heritage. From Nordhausen to Ilfeld, HSB and Stadtwerke Nordhausen provide trains for everyday-traffic, partially operated as tram-train sets. Special trams with an additional diesel motor beside the normal electric motor make possible attractive direct connections between the city centre of Nordhausen and Ilfeld, although the lines of HSB are not electrified. Appr. 10 % of the HSB passengers belong to the market sector everyday traffic.

HSB offer some advantageous network tickets and cooperate very well with tourist stakeholders. So the HSB-lines are part of many attractive tourist packages. Tickets up to the Brocken and back are rather expensive, because the demand there is very high. With the cheaper network tickets the HSB try to raise the interest also for the lines Harzquerbahn and Selketalbahn.

A success-story is the cooperation with a theatre on the top of Brocken; Goethe's Faust is presented there as rock opera and the combined tickets for train trips and theatre performance are a bestseller.

HSB offer shops in the historical city centres, called "Dampfladen" ("Steam shops"). These shops are situated near the points of interest for tourists. In these shops not only train tickets are sold, many souvenirs are available in addition.



Steam Shop = "Dampfladen"
Photos: Otfried Knoll



Travelling to Faust Rock Opera



2-System tram , type „Combindo“ on the diesel line of HSB and classic steam locomotive,
Photos: Ernst Lung



More information about the HSB is available at www.hsb-wr.de.

3.3 Iiztalbahn

The 49,5 km long normal gauge line connects Passau with Freyung. The everyday passenger traffic was closed in the year 2002. Since 2011 tourist trains circulate again on weekends in the summer season, based on the initiative of a private club with appr. 700 members. The club rented the railway line from the German national railway company DB and reconstructed it, so that passenger traffic is possible again after 9 years of closure. Until 2011 appr. 750.000 € were spent for the reconstruction. 11 Members of the club were trained as train drivers. The train units, type Regioshuttle, are rented from the Waldbahn, another railway company in Bavaria (see text section 3.17). Moreover a rail-bus ("Schienenbus"), constructed in the 1950-ies, and sometimes also nostalgic steam trains, rented from the Austrian Society for Railway History, are used.

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The timetable of the Ilztalbahn is focused on cyclists and hikers. In the train units “Regioshuttle” up to 20 bicycles can be transported (price 2 € for a one-way trip). Moreover the Ilztalbahn provides good connections to the Czech Republic with changing to busses. The “Donau Moldau Ticket” provides interesting possibilities to travel to points of interest in Czech Republic, e.g. to the old town České Budějovice. The price for a one-day-ticket is 24,-€ and for couples or families 39,-€. These attractive network-tickets are also sold for 4-days: prices: 40 € (single) and 63 € (couple or family). In the section Freyung – Röhrnbach in 2012 the Bayernwald and the GUTi network-tickets are also valid.

In the first season (2011) 28.000 paying passengers travelled with the Ilztalbahn during 34 days of service. The number of passengers depends on the weather: on sunny days up to 1.700 people took the trains, on rainy days only appr. 500.

In 2011 the club Ilztalbahn started successfully in the trans-border program Bavaria – Czech Republic of the European Union, a project to improve the trans-border public transport connections. Partners in Bavaria are also communities and the regional authority (“Landkreis”) Freyung – Grafenau. The total costs of the project are 2,3 Mio. €, 70 %, appr. 1,6 Mio. € are contributed from the EU regional funds. The national cost share for improvements of the Ilztalbahn is paid by the club, while the regional authority (“Landkreis”) finances the implementation of trans-border bus-services to the Czech Republic. The communities spend money for cycle-ways. Within the EU-project the club Ilztalbahn upgrades bridges for an axle-load of 22,5 tons to make the line also suitable for freight services.

The club Ilztalbahn also negotiates with the state of Bavaria (“Freistaat Bayern”) about financing on everyday traffic, as a first step during the summer seasons. The experience from the year 2011 shows that inhabitants of the Bavarian Wood like travelling with the Ilztalbahn to Passau for shopping. Between Passau and Freyung with a travel time of 1 hour 15 minutes the Ilztalbahn is 15 minutes faster than the buses.

The engaged voluntary activities of citizens for the reconstruction and operating of the Ilztalbahn were awarded by the government of Bavaria with the “Bürgerkulturpreis”.

Further information is available at <http://ilztalbahn.eu/> and <http://www.ilztalbahn.net/>



Reconstruction of the line, Regioshuttle and Schienenbus, Tunnel near Tiefenbach,
Source: <http://www.ilztalbahn.net>

3.4 Pinzgauer Lokalbahn

The narrow gauge railway (760 mm) connects Zell am See with Krimml, a village, which is famous for its high water falls. The line is 53 km long.

In the year 2008 the owner changed: The former owner, the national railway company ÖBB, gave the line to the country (Land) of Salzburg. The Land Salzburg is a shareholder of the Salzburg AG, which is also responsible for local and regional public transport. Since 2008, the Pinzgauer Lokalbahn, owned by Salzburg AG, is the operator of the narrow gauge railway.

In the year 2005 a flood of the river Salzach destroyed the Pinzgauer Lokalbahn between Mittersill and Krimml. The new owner of the infrastructure (Land Salzburg) and the Pinzgauer Lokalbahn could open the reconstructed railway line in the year 2010, the costs for the reconstruction after the flood amounted to 10,5 Mio.€. Summed up, 32,3 Mio. € were invested for upgrading the line and buying new rolling stock (railcars with low floor sections and new diesel locomotives)

The development of the number of passengers can be regarded as a success-story, it increased from 400.000 passengers to more than 800.000 in the year 2011.

Success factors of the “new” Pinzgauer Lokalbahn are:

- New, comfortable rolling stock, also with improved accessibility for handicapped people
- possibility to carry bicycles (tariff 2,50 €)
- co-operation with cable-car companies and new stops close to the stations of the cable-cars in the valley
- reliable access to the regional capital Zell am See, where the roads are often congested and it is also difficult to find free parking space
- attractive tariff system for tourists (e.g. railway trips included in ski passes and cheap weekend-tickets)
- friendly staff (conductors) on the trains
- coordinated timetables with buses
- co-operation with tourism-stakeholders and presentation of the railway offers on tourist websites
- high intensity of tourism in the region of Pinzgau: 95 overnight stays/inhabitant yearly
- nostalgic steam trains

The experience shows that half of the passengers come from the market sector tourism, while the other half belongs to everyday traffic (commuters 20 % and school children 30%). The Pinzgauer Lokalbahn also offers special packages for the leisure traffic of the regional population, like extra trains to ice hockey-games and other events in Zell am See.

Moreover Pinzgauer Lokalbahn is one of the few narrow gauge regional railway lines, which provides freight services. Normal gauge freight wagons (1435 mm) are loaded on special

transport units, called “Rollbock”. This service is regarded as a contribution to regional economic development and environment protection, however until today, freight services are not a “big business” for the new owner of Pinzgauer Lokalbahn.



Cyclists enter a new wagon with low floor section
Photo: Walter Stramitzer



Reconstruction works Station Mittersill
Photo: Ernst Lung



Winter on the Pinzgauer Lokalbahn (2011), photo: Walter Stramitzer

3.5 Rhätische Bahn

The Rhätische Bahn (RhB) operates on a narrow gauge network (1000 mm) in the Swiss Kanton Graubünden, the total length of all lines is 384 km. The most famous lines are Albula and Bernina, both were declared UNESCO-world cultural heritage in the year 2008. The Kanton Graubünden has 192.000 inhabitants, 33.000 of them in the capital Chur (source: <http://www.graubuenden.ch/zahlenfakten>).

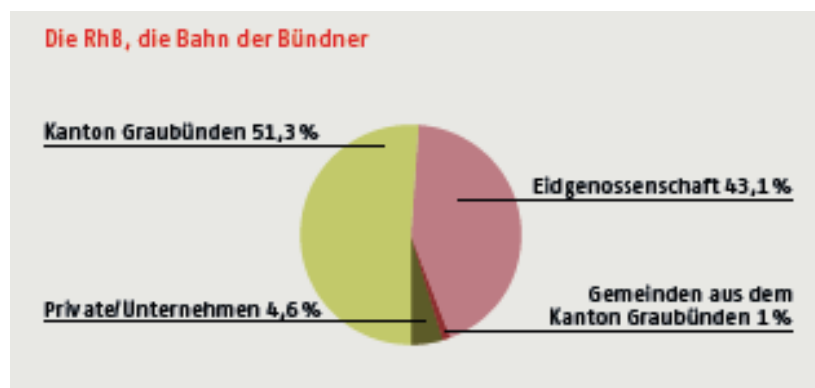
Graubünden is a top destination of tourism. In the last years appr. 6 Mio. overnight-stays were counted, appr. 47.000 guest-beds are available (Source: <http://www.gr.ch/DE/institutionen/verwaltung>)

The lines of the RhB have different functions. In the agglomeration of Chur the everyday traffic for commuters and young people in training is very important, other lines, especially Albula and Bernina are focused on tourist traffic. Moreover on the line from Klosters-Selfranga to Sangliains in Engadin the RhB carries road vehicles through the Vereina tunnel. This service in Switzerland is called "Autoverlad".

On all lines of RhB in the year 2010 a total of 10,4 Mio. passengers travelled, until 2010 the trend was going up (2005: 9,23 Mio. passengers). Due to the economic problems in Europe the number of passengers declined to 9,6 Mio. passengers in 2011. Tourism accounted for approx. 80% of RhB's total revenue from sold tickets.

The RhB has also a considerable performance in freight transport. In the recent years appr. 700.000 tons of freight were transported annually, with some peaks, caused by material from the Gotthard base tunnel. Also 20 feet containers are carried, e.g. for the super-market companies Coop und Migros. Traffic bans for heavy good-vehicles on Swiss pass roads are a market advantage for rail transport in Switzerland.

The following figure shows the structure of ownership of the RhB:



The shares are: Kanton Graubünden: 51,3 %, national public shares: 43,1 %, private 4,6 % and communities of Graubünden 1 %.

Source: <http://www.rhb.ch/Facts-and-Figures.87.0.html?&L=4>, brochure "Profil 2012"

The RhB benefits from a strong political commitment and although the cost pressure in Switzerland is growing as well, the future of the RhB is ensured. As the Swiss national railway company SBB operates in Graubünden only 19 km of lines, the RhB also has interregional transport functions and usually gets 85 % of the investments and operating costs refunded from the national budget. (Phone interview with Mr. Härtli, RhB)

Currently the most important project is the improvement of the scheduled timetable to the standard “every half an hour a train” on lines with the highest passenger traffic demands.

Investments in rolling stock

The RhB invests high sums to improve the infrastructure and the rolling stock, e.g.:

- 15 ALLEGRA train- units for 2 voltages (delivered until 2011)
- 5 train units for the local traffic (delivery in 2012)
- 7 articulated train units especially for tourist traffic on the Albula line with panorama wagons and playing compartments for children

Moreover, according to Swiss legislation, until 2014 (with few exceptions) at least one wagon in every train must be accessible for people with wheel chairs. Beside purchasing new rolling stock also the reconstruction of older rolling stock is also necessary.

Summed up, the current investment program of RhB for the rolling stock amounts to 310 Mio. CHF (appr. 258 Mio. €)

Source: <http://www.rhb.ch/Facts-and-Figures.87.0.html?&L=4> , brochure Profil 2012

Infrastructure Investments

Due to the high share of tunnels (115 tunnels, appr. 15 % of the network) and 592 bridges, the investments for the maintenance of the network are high. In 2011 137 Mio. CHF, appr. 114 Mio.€ were spent on infrastructure.

New infrastructure projects are a new Albula tunnel (costs 260 Mio. CHF , appr. 216 Mio.€) planned start in 2014 and a construction time of 6,5 years) and improved crossing stations.

Source: <http://www.rhb.ch/Facts-and-Figures.87.0.html?&L=4> , brochure Profil 2012

Some economic data

The RhB is one of few railway companies with a very transparent presentation of costs and revenues. All data are published in the down-load brochure “Rhätische Bahn – Profil 2012”. In 2011 the different revenues were based on:

38 % sold passenger tickets and incomes from freight transport

21 % public support for operating

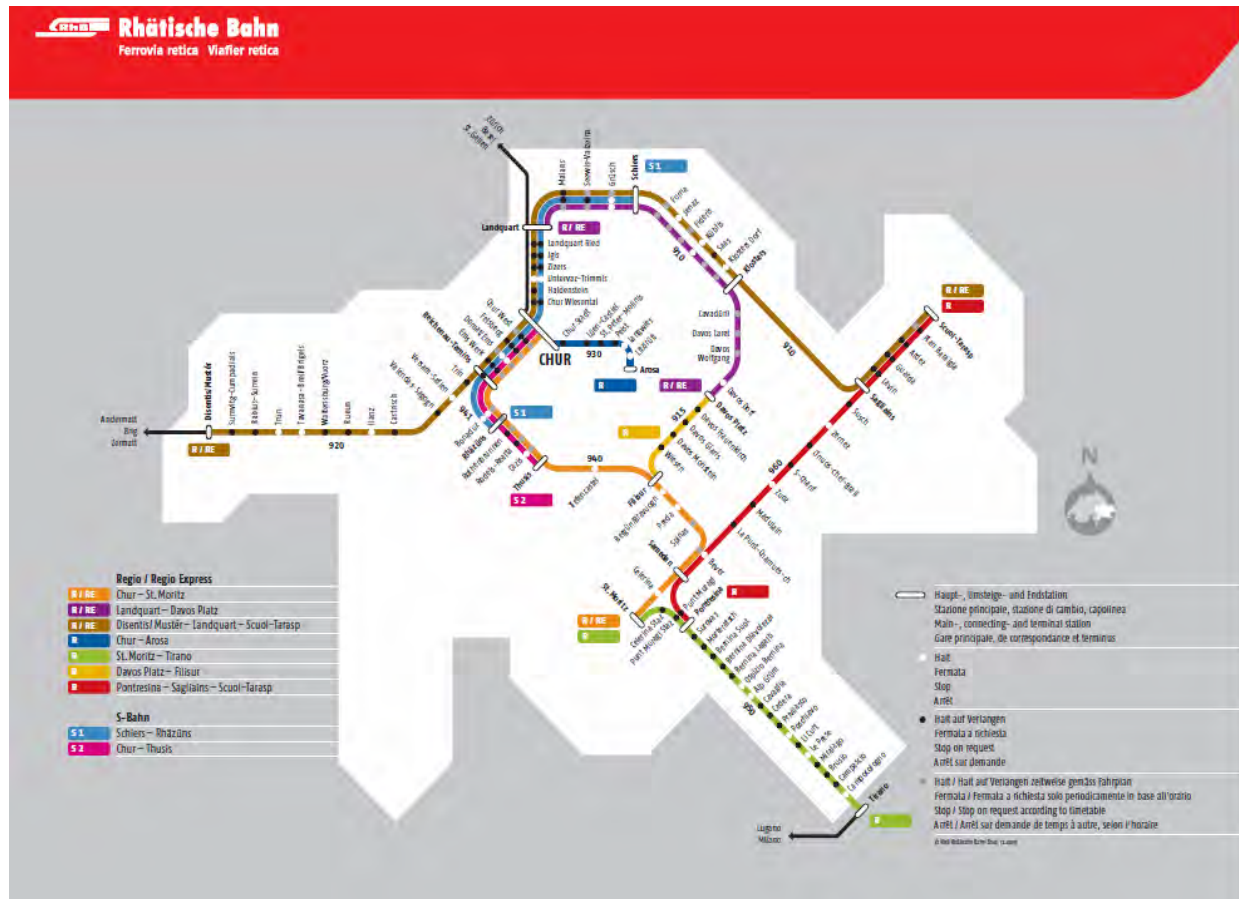
25 % public support for infrastructure

16 % other business (e.g. contracted performances of the RhB workshop for external clients like the train producer Stadler, revenues from advertising or from renting or selling real estate).

The sum of revenues of RhB 2011 was 336 Mio. CHF (appr. 274 Mio. €). Within the expenditures the share of the staff costs is 43 %. Summed up, costs and revenues are equal.

Source: <http://www.rhb.ch/Facts-and-Figures.87.0.html?&L=4> , brochure Profil 2012

Network of the RhB



Source: www.rhb.ch

Tariffs and special packages for tourists

The RhB have big experience with tourism and tourists can choose among many attractive tickets and packages:

- First of all, the RhB is fully integrated in the Swiss Travel system with the usual tickets of the national railway company SBB, e.g. Half Price Pass, Generalabo or Swiss pass.
- The RhB also offers all forms of luggage services which are provided by SBB.
- Regional passes are available for guests in Graubünden, with “Flexi Passes” the users can choose their travelling days during a longer period.
- Bicycles are transported in almost all trains, but at a rather high price (day pass for 18,- CHF, ca 14,7 €) , but valid all over Switzerland, in some tourist packages the bicycle transport is included.
- The RhB has out-sourced renting bicycles and electric bicycles.

Although the landscape and the world cultural heritage lines of Albula and Bernina are good reasons for travelling by RhB in any case, the railway company is very innovative in creating attractive packages, called “Steinbockstarke Bahnerlebnisse”, e.g.:

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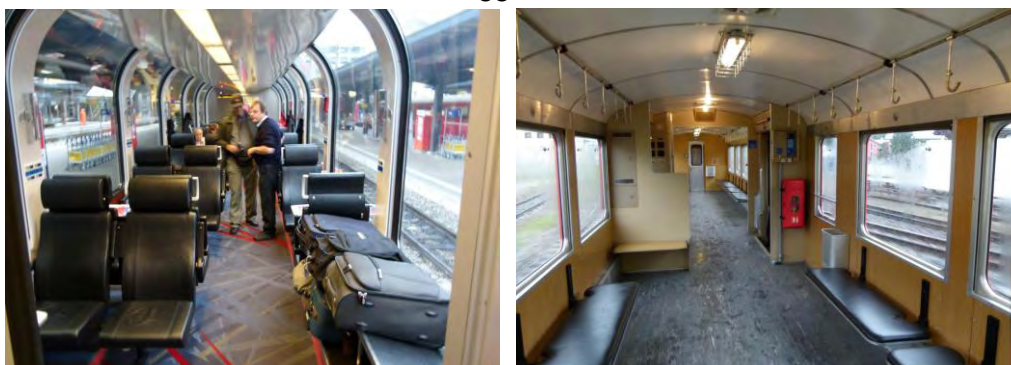
- Steam trains
- nostalgic electric trains with Pullman wagons from the “Golden Twenties”
- gourmet Trips
- providing a specific internet portal for (bus-) tour operators
- special tours for young people (teachers are invited to check the offers, free, if the school class or other groups book the excursion)
- excellent cooperation with tourist stakeholders
- worldwide advertising

On-trip information

At the stations of the RhB information displays are available, as well as connections to call responsible people for train operation and / or security.

Managing demand peaks

As usual in Switzerland enough older rolling stock is maintained to cope with peak demands. Moreover, the 2-voltage modern train-units Allegra are used more on the Bernina line in summer, where the demand in the warmer season is high, while during the winter the passenger frequencies from Chur to the ski resorts are bigger.



Panorama wagon with suitable space for luggage and bicycle transport wagon of RhB
Photos: Otfried Knoll



Allegra 2-voltage train
Photos: Ernst Lung



Pullman wagons



Historic locomotive “Crocodile”

3.6 Stern und Hafferl

The privately owned railway company with headquarters in Gmunden provides several rail services in Upper Austria (Oberösterreich). Our analysis focuses on 3 lines, where the share of tourist-traffic is notable:

- Attergaubahn Vöcklermarkt- Attersee, 13,3 km, appr. 260.000 passengers in 2011
- Traunseebahn Gmunden – Vorchdorf, 15,2 km, appr. 303.000 passengers in 2011
- Vorchdorferbahn Vorchdorf – Lambach, 14,7 km, appr. 181.000 passengers in 2011.

The Attergaubahn and the Traunseebahn have a gauge of 1000 mm, the line Vorchdorf – Lambach normal gauge (1435mm).

Strengths of Stern und Hafferl are:

- Innovative tourist offers at moderate costs, e.g. combination with culinary specialities, visits to a brewery, cultural heritage paths (celtic history), packages with ship excursions on the Attersee (Stern and Hafferl is also operator of the ships on the Attersee), training of hobby train drivers with certification, and others
- flexibility and know-how to introduce additional stops on demand at reasonable costs, in order to increase the passenger potential
- renting of low floor trams from Innsbruck to improve the comfort and to ensure the access for handicapped people and upgrading existing rolling stock to meet changed requirements
- multifunctionally trained staff to meet different demands of clients



Well equipped, modern looking stops contribute to increasing passenger volumes
Photos: Otfried Knoll



Winning passenger potentials at low costs

Further information is available at <http://www.stern-verkehr.at/sverkehr/>

3.7 Tatranská elektrická železnica (Tatra Electric Railways)

The network is appr. 40 km long and consists of the lines

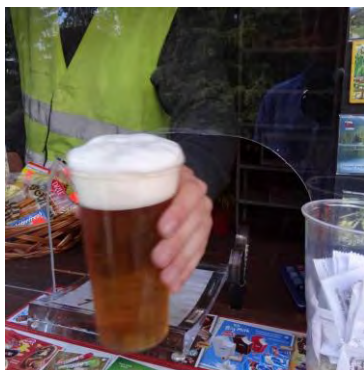
- Poprad – Štrbské Pleso,(29 km),
- Starý Smokovec – Tatranská Lomnica (6 km) and
- Štrbské Pleso – Štrba (4,8 km), rack railway

Tatra Electric Railways are operated by the Slovakian national railway company ŽSR.

Together, the lines carry between 1,5 and 1,9 Mio. passengers yearly, more than 50% of them are tourists. The tourist region Prešov counted 618. 000 visitors and more than 2 Mio. over-night stays in 2011.

All trains – with the exception of the rack railway- are low floor vehicles which are accessible for handicapped people and facilitate the transport of bicycles. Trains circulate every hour, at the same minute; e.g.: 7:08, 8:08, 9:08 until 20:08 (“Taktfahrplan”).

The ticket prices are low, compared with those other touristic lines in Europe. Moreover, combined tickets for sport- and cultural events are offered. In stations and kiosks refreshments and train tickets are sold.



Atn kiosk drinks, snacks and train tickets are sold

Low floor train with multi-purpose-compartment

Photos: Otfried Knoll

Further information to the Tatra Electric Railway is available at

<http://www.slovakrail.sk/en/vo-vysokych-tatrach>

<http://www.vysoketatry.sk/tatranska-elektricka-zelezniappr.phtml?id3=25218>



During the summer and even the winter time many passengers travel by Tatra Electric Railways
Photo: Otfried Knoll

3.8 Usedomer Bäderbahn (UBB)

Usedom is an island in the Ostsee (Baltic Sea) and its beaches are a top holiday destination in the summer season (up to appr. 150 overnight stays / inhabitant and year). In the year 1992 the network of UBB was in danger of being closed, but citizen initiatives were able to stop this plan.

However, since that time the UBB is a success story. The UBB is owned by national railway company DB, but for almost all decisions the regional headquarter in Heringsdorf on the island is responsible. The UBB GmbH was incorporated on January 1st, 1995.

Milestones of the development were:

- The opening of the new bridge in Wolgast which connects the UBB network on the island with station Züssow on the main rail line Berlin – Stralsund in the year 2000.
- Since summer 2000 new low floor diesel train-units, type GTW of the producer Stadler, are in service, currently 23 units circulate in the UBB network.
- In 2008, the line extension to Swinoujście (Swinemünde), nearby to the centre of this Polish town. This project was also supported by Interreg regional funding programs of the European Union.
- Based on a contract with the DB and the Land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the UBB provides also direct trains to Stralsund and Barth.

The management of the UBB underlines that it is a big advantage regarding flexibility and efficiency that UBB is still an integrated railway company with responsibility for infrastructure and operational services. The station buildings are owned and well maintained by the UBB, the communities are responsible for the user-friendly design of the places in front of the stations.

A strength of the UBB is the efficiency of the reconstruction works: Although the architecture of new or reconstructed railway stations is of high quality, the costs were reasonable. Furthermore the UBB trusts on proved signalling and safety technics.

Regional and Narrow Gauge Railways - Good Practice and Recommendations

Almost 70 % of UBB's passengers belong to the market sector tourism, where the UBB provides some advantageous offers:

- In all trains there are conductors who sell tickets, so the access to suitable tickets is simple. On the tickets, nice pictures are printed, which are changed after a certain period. Therefore these tickets are beloved of all passengers, many passengers collect them and some UBB-fans buy a whole edition at a high price. The backside of the tickets is used for advertising.
- Bicycle transport is possible, a one-day pass costs 4,50 € (appr. 46.000 bicycles were transported in the year 2010). Therefore the UBB joined the project "Usedom Rad", a network of all bicycle renting facilities on the island of Usedom, to shift the demand from carried bicycles in the trains to rented bicycles.
- Suitable passes for tourists (single, small groups, and families) are available.
- The UBB cooperates very well with tourist stakeholders and is itself member of the regional tourist-board, moreover, the cooperation with local decision makers is good.

The inhabitants of Usedom are informed by flyers / brochures about news of UBB, especially about change of timetables. Moreover, for commuters job tickets at a reduced price are available.

All measures combined together lead to a noticeable increase in the number of passengers: Only 260.000 passengers travelled with "old" UBB in 1992, in the year 1999 already 1,5 Mio. and in recent years appr. 3,6 Mio. passengers were counted.

The UBB tested also compressed natural gas (CNG) as fuel for train units, but the result was disappointing due to the high energy consumption for compressing the gas (from 5 bar to 400 bar in the tanks), moreover, the range with a tank filling was reduced by 25 % compared with diesel.

Future projects of the UBB are the extension of the network to the airport Garz, the construction of new crossing stations to make it possible that trains circulate every 15 minutes in the peak seasons, as well as the reconstruction of the line via the bridge of Karnin to shorten the travel time to Berlin to 2 hours.



New low floor train GTW 2/6 and old train units ("Schienenbusse"), photo: Otfried Knoll



Combined bascule bridge for rail and road in Wolgast, photo: Otfried Knoll

Further information at: www.ubb-online.de

3.9 Vinschgerbahn

The 59,8 km long normal gauge railway line connects Meran with Mals in the Vinschgau, a valley in the Alps. In the year 1990, the old Vinschgerbahn, operated by the Italian national railway company FS was closed. The reconstruction and the re-opening of the Vinschgerbahn is not only a success-story for rail-techniques and architecture, but also a great example of engagement by the regional population to influence political decisions concerning the reconstruction.

For the reconstruction of the Vinschgerbahn appr. 120 Mio. € were spent. In this sum the costs of low floor diesel train units (Type GTW) are included (costs of one unit 2,9 Mio.€). In a first step 8 units were bought and in a second step 4 additional train units. The biggest share of the finances came from the budget of the province of Südtirol /Alto Adige, the communities contributed by financing the reconstruction of the stations. The province regards public transport as an important task and has implemented a suitable administrative network to achieve these targets. The Südtiroler Transportstrukturen AG (STA) – owned by the province - is owner of the rolling stock. Most of the following information is based on a phone interview with the director of STA, Mr. Joachim Dejaco in November 2011.

The development of the number of passengers of the Vinschgerbahn is very positive: The Vinschgerbahn started after the re-opening with less than 2 Mio. passengers during a year and in the year 2010 already 3 Mio. passengers used the trains.

Every hour a train is provided, in times of bigger demand regio-express trains, which only stop at stations with higher frequency are added, especially to meet the demand of commuters.

Regional and Narrow Gauge Railways - Good Practice and Recommendations

The Vinschgerbahn is liked by the regional population (appr. 80.000 inhabitants, 38.000 of them in Meran/ Merano) and by tourists as well (more than 3 Mio. overnight-stays in the region). As a result the capacities of the trains are well used, commuters travel in the morning down to Merano / Meran and tourists up to the mountains, back in the evening. The bus-lines are well coordinated with the Vinschgerbahn, and take the passengers to their final destinations outside of the walking distance from the railway stations and back. Also a bus-connection to Zernez in Graubünden in Switzerland is very successful.



The low floor train-units GTW 2/6 ensure access for people in wheel chairs and also for bicycles, the large windows allow an excellent view on the landscape, photos: STA



Short ways between train and the bus to Zernez in Graubünden (Switzerland), photo: STA

The tariff-system for the whole province of Alto Adige / Südtirol is attractive for guests and inhabitants as well. The prices for Mobilcards for the whole province are as of February 2012 as following:

Mobilcard 1 day 15 Euro

Mobilcard 3 days 23 Euro

Mobilcard 7 days 28 Euro

Moreover, special Mobilcards including bicycle renting or visits to museums are offered.

Regional and Narrow Gauge Railways - Good Practice and Recommendations

An innovation in ticketing are the public transport passes based on chip cards, which ensure a best price calculation:

Tariffzonen	Südtirol Pass	with family tariff
1 - 1.000 km	8 Cent/km	6 Cent/km
1.001 - 10.000 km	4 Cent/km	3 Cent/km
10.001- 20.000 km	2 Cent/km	2 Cent/km
über 20.000 km	0 Cent/km	0 Cent/km

Although every train can carry up to 30 bicycles and the price of 4,-€ for a bicycle ticket is rather high, sometimes in the tourism seasons the capacity is not enough and bicycles are transported by trucks. Therefore new bicycle transport waggons should be constructed. Moreover, at 6 stations of the Vinschgerbahn bicycles and e-bikes can be rented and network-passes including bicycle renting are sold (“Bikemobilcard”).

Currently the Vinschgerbahn operates no freight trains, since capacities are needed for the passenger trains during the day. However, there are plans to transport fruits and the famous marble stone from Laas during the night.

A future project is the implementation of electric traction on the Vinschgerbahn. The estimated costs are 38 Mio. €.



New and reconstructed stations are user friendly and the quality of architecture is high. The communities on the Vinschgerbahn contribute to the maintenance of the stations.

Photos: Otfried Knoll and STA



Parole of citizens for the reconstruction of the Vinschgerbahn: No train – no votes ! Photo: STA

Summed up the Vinschger Bahn is a success story for the reconstruction of a regional railway in a region, where tourism is important. The success is based also on the engagement of the citizens and the communities for their railway.

3.10 Zillertalbahn

The 32 km long narrow gauge railway (760 mm gauge) connects Jenbach (Intercity stop in the Inn-valley, 35 km from Innsbruck) with Mayrhofen. The Zillertal is a top-destination for tourism (132 overnight stays yearly per inhabitant)

In the year 2009, the timetable of the Zillertalbahn was improved, so that in times of higher demand, every half hour a train connection is provided. Normally every train is accessible for handicapped people with wheel chairs, because wagons with low floor sections are used in every train unit. Tourists- and of course also inhabitants - can enjoy riding in nostalgic steam trains, carrying funny special wagons (e.g. the barrel wagon) with culinary offers.

A considerable success factor of Zillertalbahn`s business is the fact that the communities in the valley are share-holders and so they are interested in the economic success. On the other hand this ownership has the risk that communities with a low budget are interested in a quick success, but some developments in the rail sector need time.

The Zillertalbahn transports also freight and developed innovative technologies for the transshipment of freight. Unfortunately in the last year problems with the connections to long-distance freight transport on normal gauge came up (e.g. punctuality) and the possible revenues from timber transport are low.

Strengths of the Zillertalbahn which should be highlighted are

- The Zillertalbahn also provides bus services, the timetables of trains and buses are usually well coordinated.
- The co-operation with tourism and municipalities is very good, the Zillertalbahn is well represented in the relevant homepages and other media. The Zillertal AktivCard – a card which provides cost – advantages for many points of interest – is valid on trains and buses. Also Ski-passes include trips with the Zillertalbahn.
- Bicycles can be transported free - without supplement to the tickets. Moreover, the Zillertalbahn provides successfully appr.150 bicycles for renting.
- The Zillertalbahn has a comprehensive information policy. Newsletters are sent to all households, especially including information to changed or improved timetables. Moreover, important news are published in regional newspapers.
- The Zillertalbahn also provides on-line information on overhead displays at the stops and in the internet.

Regional and Narrow Gauge Railways - Good Practice and Recommendations

Gepplante Abfahrten Strass i.Z. Bahnhof

Freitag, 19. November 2010, 12:23 Uhr

Soll/Ist	Linie	Ziel
12:29 12:30	R 138 Regionalzug	Jenbach Bahnhof ZillertalBahn
12:31 <i>pünktlich</i>	R 143 Regionalzug	Mayrhofen Bahnhof
12:47	8330	Schwaz Schwimmbad/B171
12:53	8330	Mayrhofen Bahnhof
12:57	8329	Jenbach Bahnhof ZillertalBahn

ZILLERTALBAHN

- Abfahrtsstation
- Verkehrsmittel in Echtzeit geortet
- Symbol für Bus oder Bahn
- INFOZEILE

Departure list for the station Strass in the internet,
Photo: ZillertalBahn AG



low floor section with multi-purpose space to transport luggage and bicycles
Photo: Otfried Knoll



„Fasswagen”(buffet-car in a steam train of ZillertalBahn), photo: Otfried Knoll



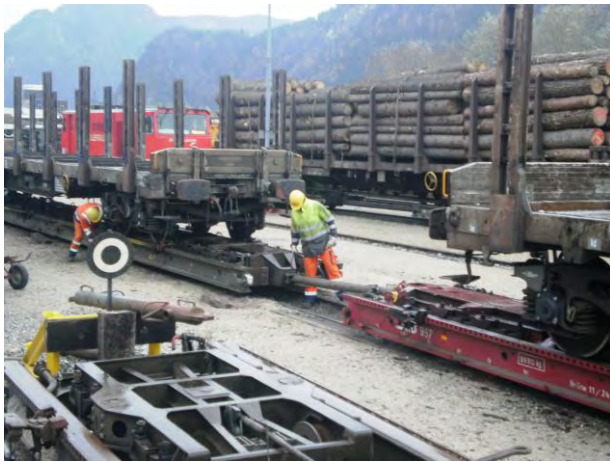
modern low –floor train unit, photo: Otfried Knoll



Selective upgrading of line by a second track
Photo: Otfried Knoll



Container frame on a narrow gauge “Rollwagen”
Photo: Otfried Knoll



Transport of standard gauge wagons on special units ("Rollwagen") of the narrow gauge and rolling down to the normal gauge rails, photos: Ernst Lung

Selective analysis

Selective analysis means internet and literature surveys, in some cases own information on the spot and/or personal contacts contribute to the results, but no answers in the questionnaire or detailed phone interviews were given by the railway companies.

3.11 Bayerische Oberlandbahn

The „Bayerische Oberlandbahn“ serves 2 core markets: everyday traffic for commuters from the south of Bavaria to Munich and leisure traffic from Munich to the lakes and the mountains in upper Bavaria. Usually the trains start with 3 units from Munich Hauptbahnhof (main station) to Holzkirchen, where the trains are separated. One train unit continues to Bayrischzell and the two others circulate together to the node Schaftlach, where the remaining two units are separated again, one unit then continues via Bad Tölz to Lengries and the 3rd unit to Tegernsee. Between Munich and Holzkirchen the trains are accelerated and don't stop in every station. Therefore the connections between Munich and the regions in Upper Bavaria are quite fast and comfortable, because no changes between trains are necessary. Travelling by Bayerische Oberlandbahn is in some connections faster than driving a car.

Other strengths of BOB are

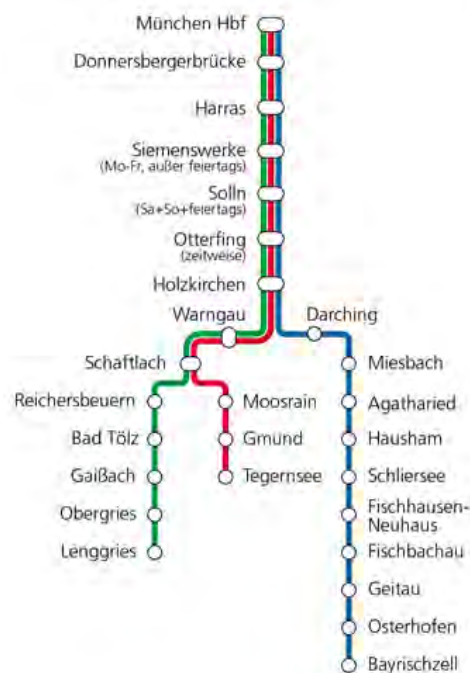
- possibilities to transport bicycles (one-day bicycle ticket for 4,50 €)
- a good passenger information system
- advantageous network tickets for different target groups
- cooperation with tourist stakeholders
- open discussion with passengers (formation of a passenger advisory for dealing with passenger`s demands, called "Fahrgastbeirat")

- marketing strategies also focused on the tourist market (The BOB has created a special brochure with leisure excursion recommendations, starting at the train stops).

In the year 2010 around 5 million passengers travelled in trains of the BOB. The total length of the network is 120 km.



Articulated low floor train of BOB,
Photo: Otfried Knoll



Network of BOB, source:
<http://www.bayerischeoberlandbahn.de>

Further information is available at the website <http://www.bayerischeoberlandbahn.de>

3.12 Ferrocarril de Sóller

This famous electric railway connects the capital Palma de Mallorca with Sóller, crossing the mountain chain Sierra Tramontana. The 27 km long railway line is situated in a nice landscape on the Spanish island of Mallorca and most of the passengers are tourists. As a future improvement it is planned to make the railway suitable for everyday traffic, especially by an enlargement as tram in Palma de Mallorca. From Sóller to Port of Sóller a tramway circulates on a 5 km long line. The tram and the train line have a gauge of 914 mm. In 2012 the rail line Palma – Sóller is exactly 100 years old. The tram will celebrate its jubilee in 2013. The company is privately owned. Most of the shareholders are citizens of Sóller.

The company Ferrocarril de Sóller is very successful in winning holiday guests as passengers, although the tickets are not cheap. A round trip from Palma to Port de Sóller by train and tram costs 28,-€. Frequently passengers come in bus groups to travel by the trains and trams. The rail company has good contacts to tour operators and the presentation in the internet is very

interesting (<http://www.trendesoller.com/en/cms.php>) and stimulates tourists to travel by tram and train.

The rolling stock for the railway line contains 4 electric powered railcars which pull up to 7 trailers. The tram in Sóller has 3 motor cars and several trailers, dating from the year 1913 and 5 additional historical trams were bought from the tram-company in Lisbon.

On the average more than 1 million passengers use the trains between Palma de Mallorca and Sóller per year.



Photo: Günther Rettensteiner



Photo: <http://www.trendesoller.com>

3.13 Ferrovia Trento-Marilleva

The electric powered narrow gauge railway (1000 mm) is 66 km long. In the year 2003 the line was extended appr.10 kilometers, from Malè to Marilleva. The reason for this investment was to improve the accessibility of the ski-resort Marielleva. The decision to extend the line was an important step to promote ecologically sustainable mobility in tourism. More than 75 % of the rolling stock are modern low floor train units.

Guests travelling by train to the ski-resort Marilleva get the train ticket refunded, if they buy a ski pass. In the summer the railway Trento-Marilleva is frequently used by cyclists, in one section of the line the transport of bicycles is free of charge.

On working days, 29 trains circulate in each direction, some of them only in the section Trento-Mezzolombardo. In this section the railway carries many commuters and school-children, up the valleys (Val di Non and Val di Sole) the main user group are tourists. More than 2 million passengers yearly travel with the Ferrovia Trento-Marielleva

This regional railway Trento-Marielleva is presented in the internet at
<http://www.ttesercizio.it/Orari/Ferrovia/Default.aspx>



Source: Presentation by Agostino Alessandrini
(Conference Salzburger Verkehrstage, Zell am See 17th October 2008)
<http://www.regionale-schienen.at/pdfReader.asp?link=pdf/6svt/referate/alessandrini.pdf>

3.14 Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways

Both nostalgic railways with a gauge of 597 mm are situated in Northern Wales. The Ffestiniog Railway is 22 km long and connects Porthmadog with Ffestiniog, the Welsh Highland Railway is 40 km long and circulates between Porthmadog and Caernarfon. Both narrow gauge railways were closed after the 2nd World War, a section of the Welshland Highland Railway already in the year 1939.

Voluntary teams of citizens reconstructed the Ffestiniog Railway between 1954 and 1982 and the Welsh Highland Railway between 1995 and 2011. The second project was supported by the regional funds of the EU.

Both railways operate with steam locomotives, focus on tourism and therefore they are a „must have seen” for all rail fans. Most members of the staff work on a voluntary basis, without a salary.

The trains carry bicycles if enough space is available (price 2011 £ 2,50). For passengers a one-day pass for each of the two railways and a 3-day pass for both railways are included in other regional passes, and passengers with the Brit-Rail-Pass get reductions.

Summed up the Ffestiniog Railway and the Welsh Highland Railway can be regarded as success-stories of voluntary activities by citizens to reconstruct regional railways..

More information is available at <http://www.festrail.co.uk> .



Steaming through the Vale of Ffestiniog



„Pullman Luxury“ wagon

Source of both photos: <http://www.festrail.co.uk>

3.15 Hohenzollersche Landesbahn (HzL)

The HzL operates in 3 networks:

- 5 lines of the Zollern Alb Bahn (Tübingen – Sigmaringen and Hechingen – Sigmaringen with daily services), 2 further lines only with special trains for hikers and cyclists on weekends, and the Schwäbisch Alb Bahn with only little passenger traffic, together 197 km
- the 3-er Ringzug network (including the cities Rottweil and Tuttlingen) with 124 km and
- the “Seehäse” Radolfzell – Stockach , appr. 17 km

The shareholders of HzL are the country (Land) Baden-Württemberg (72 %) and the regional authorities (Landkreis) Sigmaringen and Zollernalbkreis, each with 14 %.

The majority of the trains are operated by low floor diesel powered train units (type “Regioshuttle”). On the lines with higher frequency a regular interval timetable “Taktfahrplan”) is provided. Especially in the areas with higher population density along the 3-er Ringzug, new train stations were built and the number of passengers was successfully increased.

HzL is also successful in the market of leisure traffic by operating special trains for cyclists and hikers (e.g. “Naturpark Express Gammertingen – Zollhaus Blumberg”, where also special tickets for families are available).

On the Seehäse line between Radolfzell and Stockach train tickets are sold - in addition to the ticket machines in the stations - in shops near the stations, e.g. in bakeries, therefore for passengers the access to suitable tickets becomes easier.

In the year 2010 12,8 Mio. passengers travelled in trains of HzL, the “strongest” lines are the “Ringzug” and the Zollern Alb Bahn line 1, Tübingen – Sigmaringen, both with an average number of 12.000 passengers daily.

Moreover, appr. 484.503 tons of freight were transported by HzL in 2010 in 10.594 freight wagons. The HzL actively promotes access railways for freight customers.

(Source and further information: http://www.hzl-online.de/html/vorlagen/zahlen_fakten961.html)



Photos: <http://www.hzl-online.de>

3.16 Jindrichohradecké místní dráhy a.s. (JHMD)

The narrow gauge railway (760 mm) provides connections between Jindrichuv Hradec and Nova Bystrice (southern section, 33 km) and between Jindrichuv Hradec and Obratan (northern section, 46 km). In the northern section the everyday traffic is more important, in the year 2010 appr. 200.000 passengers were counted. The southern section is important for tourism, 40 000 passengers travelled with steam-trains in the year 2010. The society JHMD was founded in the year 1994 to avoid the closure of this interesting network.

JHMD is well integrated in the regional tourist conceptions. The region with a lot of small lakes is also called “Czech Canada”. Tourists are coming for hiking, cycling and water sports. JHMD has adapted a considerable number of old railway stations as holiday apartments, suitable for families and groups and succeeds in renting them to visitors. These guests are frequently using trains for their trips in the holiday destination. Transporting bicycles in the trains is no problem.

JHMD is also transporting normal gauge freight wagons, loaded on special narrow gauge transport units, called “Rollbock”. JHMD considers the freight transport as a service for the region, but not as very successful business.



Passenger Train on the Northern line
Photos: Otfried Knoll



Also small stops bring additional passengers

3.17 Waldbahn

The normal gauge regional railway in Northern Bavaria connects Plattling, a station on the IC line Passau - Regensburg – Nürnberg, via Deggendorf with Bayerisch Eisenstein. This line is 71,7 km long. Moreover, branch lines connect Zwiesel with Grafenau (31,5 km) and Zwiesel with Bodenmais (14,5 km). On the Waldbahn low floor train units (type regio shuttle) of the Regentalbahn company are in use. On the line Plattling – Bayerisch-Eisenstein a train is offered every hour, on the 2 branch lines at least every 2 hours. Also connections to the Czech Republic are provided. The transport of bicycles is possible.

Innovative for tourism traffic are the GUTi ticket and the Bayerwaldticket. The Bayerwald Ticket costs 7,- € for each person (2 children can travel with an adult person), the Bayernwald Ticket plus costs 14,- € and is valid for a bigger network. The GUTi (Gäste-Umwelt-Ticket) is a guest pass which allows the free use of the public transport in the region Bayrischer Wald during the stay.

See <http://www.bayerwald-ticket.com/guti/158/2530/>



Photo: <http://www.bayerwald-ticket.com/>

3.18 White Pass and Yukon Route Railway

The narrow gauge railway connects Skagway (Alaska) on the Pacific Ocean with Carcross in the Canadian territory Yukon. The region has a very low population density. Therefore almost all passengers are tourists, appr. 350.000 every year are counted.

The unique selling proposition of this touristic railway are cruising ships, which stop in the harbour of Skagway and bring a big number of tourists, who get impressions and the feeling of the “Wild West” in great comfort. Tourist packages with a lunch break on a mountain lake are very successful. Another important user group are hikers in the mountains.

Summed up White Pass and Yukon route railway is an example how regional, narrow gauge railways can benefit of special geographical and tourist conditions.



Passengers of a cruising ship make a train excursion



Steam train of Whitepass & Yukon Route in the style of „Wild West“

Photos: <http://www.wpyr.com>

4. STRATEGIC CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Main results and recommendations

The results of the current two working phases of the project show that success for regional railways – based on tourism is possible – but not easy to achieve, professional and well - coordinated activities are necessary:

Professional market presence and high quality of services

Successful railways win and retain their passengers by a professional market presence. It has become evident that the most successful railways (Rhaetische Bahn, Vinschgerbahn, Usedomer Bäderbahn, ZillertalBahn, Harzer Schmalspurbahnen...) have become high quality brand names themselves. As successful transport systems they influence the image of their region positively. This does not happen automatically, but is achieved by a variety of elements (vehicles, stations, communication strategy,...) that are adapted to each other strategically.

The generally positive outlook for tourism, especially in the field of specialised services for high value experience, is a great challenge for tourist railways. Given the ever-growing tourist markets, tourism and recreational facilities are particularly dependent on the wishes and needs of consumers and thus also on trends.

Only if we succeed in providing the clear strategic advantage of an always available means of transport, like a person's own car by raising supply and quality of experience, tourist-oriented railways in the increasingly competitive leisure market can be successful as a means of transportation. According to the slogan "more for less" in terms of time and budgets of leisure customers, the railways are certainly facing their great challenges. Against this background, the offer (train + additional services) should, as seen by guests,

- have a high recreational value and recreational benefits
- address a broad target group, and should be especially suitable for families
- offer good value for money.

Only a credibly quality-oriented railway will be partner of not only the tourist industry, but also of the entire population of a region. The focus of market-oriented tourist railways should therefore be on a balanced form of customers' and operator's needs. Even if this goal - from a business perspective - seems perhaps to be in conflict with the objective of an efficient railway operation, it will be possible only under this condition and in cooperation with the respective region to obtain the necessary financial support from funding agencies. Since many regional railways are major tourist infrastructure facilities, and since it is now recognized by everyone, that railway infrastructure, even under optimal management, cannot be fully financed, any such support will have to depend on quality criteria.

Guests of a region and passengers of a train always meet a service chain, consisting of individual services during their itinerary. Those services are defined to meet certain expectations,

suggested by market promotion. These expectations must be exceeded during the trip if visitors and recurrent word of mouth are desired. Railways and the regions are required to meet these expectations, or better still, to exceed them.

On the other hand, some regions expect their railways to bring the guests, without having to make a special effort themselves. Also the railways' frequently requested support from the communities, for example in the matter of station surroundings, is often met with counter-claims, resulting in stalemates. It will be a great challenge for actors on all sides to maintain a good climate in similar discussions.

Good practice examples for professional market presence and high quality of services are shown in the following chapters 5.5 "Marketing, easy access to tickets and information" as well as in 5.3 "Suitable infrastructure for the requirements of passengers" and 5.4 "Rolling Stock - suitable for the requirements of passengers".

Support by all relevant partners (regional and community policy, tourist associations and population)

Finally, the success of regional railways has almost always been brought about by the support from the region, the provinces, municipalities, tourist associations and, of course, by the population. Many of the proposed measures therefore require some basic declarations of several persons in charge since a long-term successful railway is neither the concern of individual persons, nor the concern of individual communities along the track. The initiative for a promising development of the program should become the project for a large group of inhabitants.

In any case, if the regional railways are to win attractiveness for everyday use, in addition to the railroad company and the support by the country donors, communities play an important role, e.g. by

- taking over the shaping and maintaining of station buildings (cleaning, snow removal)
- good integration of the railway stations in cycling and walking networks
- supporting the railways by providing and maintaining bike stands and park and ride sites
- offering ticket sales and mobility counselling at municipal offices
- offering parking management and access restrictions for vehicles in congested centres of larger communities.

From the data collected it can generally be concluded that railways in leisure and tourist traffic on the one hand see positive possibilities; on the other hand, general pressure on prices may lead to reduced offers, especially in times of requested leisure traffic (weekends, off-peak times). Traffic authorities but also the tourist businesses can - through targeted capacity orders - contribute to shape a customer-focused supply and counteract the otherwise impending withdrawal.

If politics is to be motivated for appropriate support at the start of such a transformation process, it is indisputable that the owners or operators of the track have to set substantial impulses in order to start a development of the railways towards sustainable marketability. However, it is also clear that this will not work without the full commitment to the railway by the population, the

community and especially the tourist offices in charge to motivate policy makers to provide financial support. The regions along the railway have to be active on their own. They must take initiatives themselves, promote and support development efforts. As a particularly drastic, but all the more easily remembered example, the parole of the Vinschgau population "NO TRAIN => NO VOTES" has almost reached cult status.

Of the strategies and approaches shown some are going to be more and some less appropriate to be implemented on other railways as well. The requirements from everyday operation, from demographic conditions and from property relations are too different to derive a patent procedure from them. As a common denominator it can be seen that the combination of vehicles – ambience – offer - customer loyalty results in that multi-dimensional perspective, which is necessary to meet the contemporary needs of customers.

The approaches in this paper considered from an exemplary point of view emphasize the need for a multi-dimensional unique characteristic in order to make a railway "charming" for a region. The desire of every professionally operated tourist facility to be unique, the pressure of competition as a consequence and the consequent over-stimulation, however force to set high standards. It is therefore by no means sufficient enough to employ a steam locomotive and leave the environment of the railway to its own resources.

Specific applications always require situationally adapted actions which are also aligned to the regional characteristics. In order to come to a feasible approach that is tailored to the particular railway, it is advisable to plan the attractivation systematically, to look at it in phases, and to set goals and measures for those phases. Not least, because the interaction of several actors simply requires a forward-looking risk assessment.

It is recommended to create a master plan for this multidimensional approach.

More information on good cooperation networks for regional railways is provided in the following chapters 5.1 "Sufficient support on all political levels" and 5.2 "Cooperation with tourism-stakeholders".

4.2 Master Plan

A master plan describes how an existing system must be changed to meet certain expectations. A master plan for making a regional railway more attractive will have to include objectives and measures, based on a vision developed by the region and the railway - for example, making the railway a flagship project with Unique Selling Proposition (USP) character. At first a model has to be formed which has to be operationalized by a guide to action. Ultimately the strategic objectives and operational programs, projects and activities should be defined - for example for the next 15 years - in this way.

Tasks of a master plan:

Usually there is a political decision to develop the regional railway in terms of an outstanding tourist project. This should also be necessary for the creation of a master plan laid down in the

long run to form a valid orientation for a particular and sufficiently specific sort of action. Such a definition is important because rail infrastructure and equipment are durable goods. The binding of the necessary resources requires "big" business decisions, which should be based on long-term strategy. For such a development, from medium to long-term processes, a master plan drafted on the basis of political commitments can give the basic frame of reference.

The object of the master plan is to illustrate goals and measures of corporate strategy in the course of time. Generally said, it is a program that determines with which method-portfolio a railway company is going to implement its business model in a competitive market. The degrees of freedom of implementing are influenced by budgetary, material handling and legal restrictions (ecology, preservation orders, conservation, national railway law, etc.) as well as by expectations of external bodies (municipalities, prospective use, and tourism).

A master plan, therefore, represents a scenario in which a politically expected / entrepreneurially desired goal has to be achieved, in which especially external requirements have to be met. In this sense a master plan should be suitable to represent the progress of the planned changes in several successive stages. It shall give information on the functional development of the regional railway in comparison to the observed (steady) state: Today - Level 1 - Level 2 - target state. In the course of this development procedures should be made clear and their application has to be documented. As a result, the master plan XY railways ultimately describes the developments and changes of the existing system (railway, environment, tourist companies, ...) in the course of time and under the given budget.

Methodology

To meet the requirements of owners, but also of the operational stakeholders (business areas of the railway, tourist organizations) and of system partners (municipalities, tourist operators), one or more target states will be provided in the planning process. Those would be based on some kind of "roadmap" which should serve as both a decision aid for future budgets as well as a cyclic activity plan.

Required determinations

At the beginning of the project "master plan regional railway" some determinations have to be taken in order to narrow down the vision / the mission statement / the mission. For example:

- Development opportunities, development goals, NON-goals
- development priorities, priorities for use of property
- development options
- handling of competitors
- viewing depth / implementation depth
- interfaces with the regional railway, contact partners at the regional railway

The previously developed mission statement marks the necessary vertices.

Opportunities and risks

Since any strategy is determined on the one hand by the strengths and weaknesses of the company and has to take its expectable resources into consideration on the other hand, a master plan must take into account opportunities and risks of the respective business environment .

As to the opportunities of a regional railway the following points can be mentioned:

- the reputation of the region in the international tourist market
- current trends in the tourist industry (such as hiking, mountain biking, trekking, ..)
- intact landscape, well-developed infrastructure
- existing cyclic schedules
- existing and expandable cooperation
- the articulated intention of the owner / decision maker for the professionalization of the railway company and its environment.

The risks are manifold and cannot be named universally. Examples would be:

- competition with other destinations
- lack of tourist mindedness
- competitiveness of rail transport with bus, boat and cars
- question of the permanent financing of railway operations
- geologically problematic track sections
- political influences.

Strategy

Every defined strategy in some way delimits an action program. In the strategy development the degrees of freedom of this delimitation have to be properly assessed and then confirmed. The degrees of freedom are usually in the nature of

- technical budget
- material handling
- corporate law
- railway law
- nature conservation law

Frequently additional protective provisions (e.g. conservation) are determined and therefore have to be considered as limitations. Here it is important to recognize all the responsibilities in time and bring the actors on board. If relevant institutions are left out this mostly results in unpleasant retro-effects which may at least cause delays.

Furthermore - in this case however, as a business decision - the behaviour pattern towards the competitors has to be defined. This includes the possible range of competition, imitation, differentiation, dominance or cooperation.

Elements of the master plan may include:

- environment (regional development priorities, communities, cooperation strategies ...)
- development of rail sites, guidelines for land development and -utilization, ...
- technical part (track, buildings, conservation concept for vehicles, workshops, ...)
- operational part (management strategy, timetable, special operations, personnel, ...)
- commercial section (supply and service levels, pricing, sales strategy, ...)
- creativity part (design quality, CI, CD, promotional policies, information systems, ..)
- communication Concept (make the market aware of USP, external and internal communications, partner communications, reporting, press).

5. EXPERIENCE FROM GOOD PRACTICE AS A CONTRIBUTION TO SUCCESSFUL SOLUTIONS

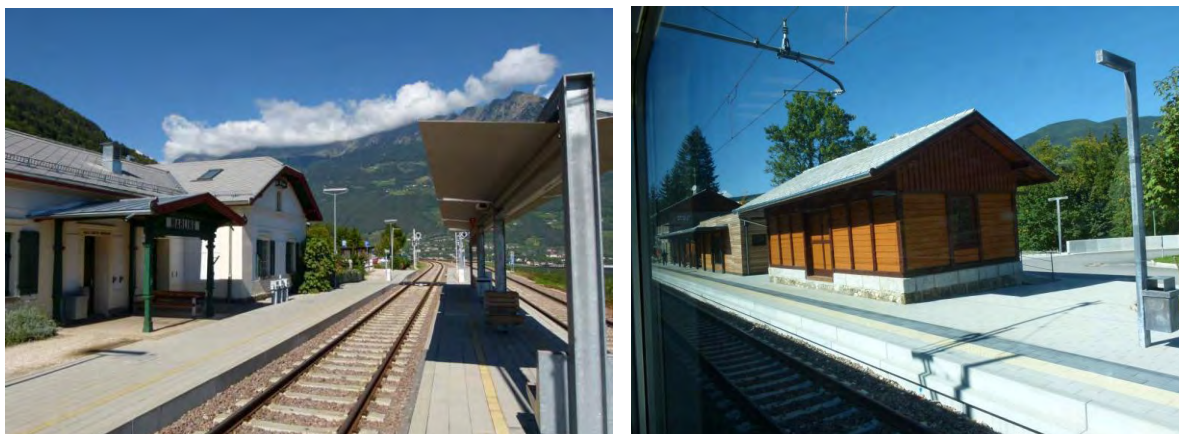
For the development and implementation of successful solutions experience from good practice is very valuable. During our common studies, we could identify important success factors for regional railways and draw strategic conclusions. In chapter 5 it should be shown in detail how success can be achieved. Most of the important success factors can be illustrated with suitable, typical pictures, but not all of them.

5.1 Sufficient support on all political levels

We found in our survey that all successful regional railways are supported by policy makers, not always without problems but summed up in a sufficient form. A core field is of course financing, integration of regional railways in regional and national traffic concepts. Especially for regional railways measures of municipalities are often contributions to win more passengers:

- contributions to the construction and maintenance of railway stations
- improve the accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists
- information policy
- mobility management activities to strengthen public transport
- land-use planning targeted on short ways to the railway stops.

Typical photos are the functional beautiful stations of the Vinschgerbahn in Alto Adige / Südtirol which were reconstructed with considerable contributions by the communities and moreover, they are maintained by the staff of the municipalities:



The stations of the Vinschgerbahn were renovated with considerable contributions of communities; moreover they are maintained by the communities. Former freight depots are frequently used as garages for bicycles to rent as the photo on the Pustertal - line in Südtirol /Alto Adige on the right shows. Photos: Otfried Knoll

Regional and Narrow Gauge Railways - Good Practice and Recommendations



Settlement development based on the accessibility by public transport: Example Linz Solar City
The station of a regional tram line is the centre of the Solar City.

Photos: www2.land-oberoesterreich.gv.at, Pertlwieser StPL and Ernst Lung

The development of regional traffic concepts usually is based on political decisions. A core question is how the role of regional railways is defined in the concepts: Are railways regarded as backbones of public transport or only as a less important tourist facility? Experience shows that the integration of regional railways in the entire public transport network and well-coordinated timetables are important to succeed. Buses or taxis connect the railways with remote areas and also with points of interest for tourists. So the number of rail passengers can be increased. The following map shows that in Alto Adige /Südtirol rail lines (including the case study Vinschgerbahn) are the backbone of public transport, supported by regional and local buses:

Railways are supported by regional- and local buses, network in Alto Adige / Südtirol



Railway lines are printed in blue, regional and interregional bus-lines in orange and local buses in yellow. Source: Draft Paper of the sub working group Urban Mobility to the transport group of the Alpine Convention, Synthesis report on urban and interurban mobility in the Alps, Rome 2012

5.2 Cooperation with tourist-stakeholders

Regional railways often provide a good accessibility to points of interest for tourists (towns which are a cultural heritage, national parks and other lovely landscapes). As the case studies show, many regional railways are interesting for tourists, in some cases – e.g. the railways via the Albula pass and the Bernina pass or the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen regional railways can be regarded as base for a unique-selling - proposition of a region.

A regional-economic study of the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen (HSB) came to the following results:

- + The activities of HSB induce 37 Mio. € regional economic revenues.
- + The HSB company benefits by 6 Mio. € and the other tourist stakeholders together get 31 Mio. additional revenues, because guests come in the region to travel with the HSB. This company has 230 employees, but more than 900 additional tourist jobs in the region are based on the HSB as point of interest in the Harz-region

(Source: <http://www.via-wilzschhaus.de/tourismusprojekt.php>).

In most of the case studies the cooperation between tourist stakeholders and regional railways is good, railway companies and tourism recognize that they can succeed together with interesting packages for different target groups in tourism. Improvements of the information to regional railways in regional tourist websites and also in printed media would be helpful in some cases.

An important condition for successful cooperation is, that the partners, tourist stakeholders and railway companies actively work on good cooperation solutions. The partners must not wait until the other partners start actions. In such cases it can happen that all are waiting and don't benefit from the chances on the tourist market. Marketing activities of regional railways will be described in section 5.5 in detail, but 2 activities to meet the demand of tourist stakeholders are mentioned as typical successful examples:

- The Rhätische Bahn provides a special web-portal for tour operators (also for bus tours) and specialised staff. Also special packages for school classes with their teachers are offered.
- Employees of the Pinzgauer Bahn visit hotel staff and inform personally about news of the regional railway – like improved timetables - or new tourist packages and distribute information material.

An attractive approach to shift the trips from guests in their holiday region from private cars to public transport is to accept guest- cards as ticket for the regional - and local public transport. Usually such guest-cards are distributed to all guests who stay over-night, frequently free of an additional charge. The price for the guest cards is already included in the costs of the accommodation. A very successful model is the Konus-Karte in the German holiday region Schwarzwald (state of Baden –Württemberg).

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In the Schwarzwald region 137 communities (around 90 % in the region) participate on the system of Konus Karte, but not all. Accommodation guests in Konus-communities get a guest pass with an additional sheet (copy of the registration paper) which is valid for the whole public transport system (except ICE, IC and EC trains). The KONUS-card is financed by a supplement to the price of overnight stays (actual 36 Cent, appr. 39 Cent with VAT for every night and every person). These 39 cents are available for using public transport, other offers are financed by the rest of the tourist taxes which are vary in the tourist communities in the Schwarzwald.

http://www.schwarzwald-tourismus.info/service/konus/was_ist_konus/uebersichtskarte

Also in Alto Adige /Südtirol some guest cards include travelling with regional public transport and have the function of Mobil Cards. An example is the Brixen Card which is financed by a supplement to the costs for overnight stays. (1,40 € + value added tax). Also some other regions follow the concept to include the whole public transport network in the offers of their guest cards. The Brixen Card in the year 2011 was used by appr. 50.000 guests and the feed-back is very good. (Source: Information by Christian Gasser, Brixen, via e-mail 27.2.2012 and

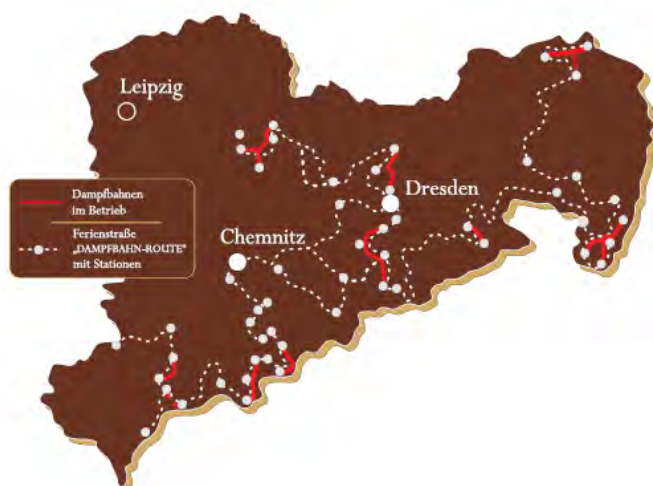
<http://www.brixencard.info/de/ihre-vorteile/inklusiveleistungen/mobilitaet.html>

Culture tourism can also be well combined with regional railways, as is shown by the already famous example of Goethe`s “Faust” on the mountain Brocken and travelling with the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen. Also excursion programs of Stern & Hafferl in the lake region of Upper Austria include cultural points of interest.

A very high level of cooperation of regional railway companies and tourist stakeholders are concepts to develop tourism, based on railways, as the two following examples show.

Dampfbahnroute Sachsen

The innovation of this tourist concept is the cooperation of more nostalgic steam- railways and with other points of interest for tourism, like historical buildings, museums, leisure facilities, e.g. swimming pools and recommendations for interesting tours. Not only rail enthusiasts are the target group, all members of families should enjoy holidays in Saxony (Sachsen).



Source: Newsletter of Dampfbahnroute

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For the marketing of all Dampfbahn-Route partners a common office was implemented. The marketing activities are very ambitious. Every year in February, just in time for spring tourist fairs, the route catalogue is published in an edition of 50.000 copies as guide for travel planning. Moreover a timetable book including railways, trams and ships on the river Elbe is published in an edition of 40.000 copies. Finally the website <http://www.dampfbahn-route.de> provides a lot of interesting information.

It is interesting that no public finances are used, the expenditures are covered by the partners (railway and tourist companies)

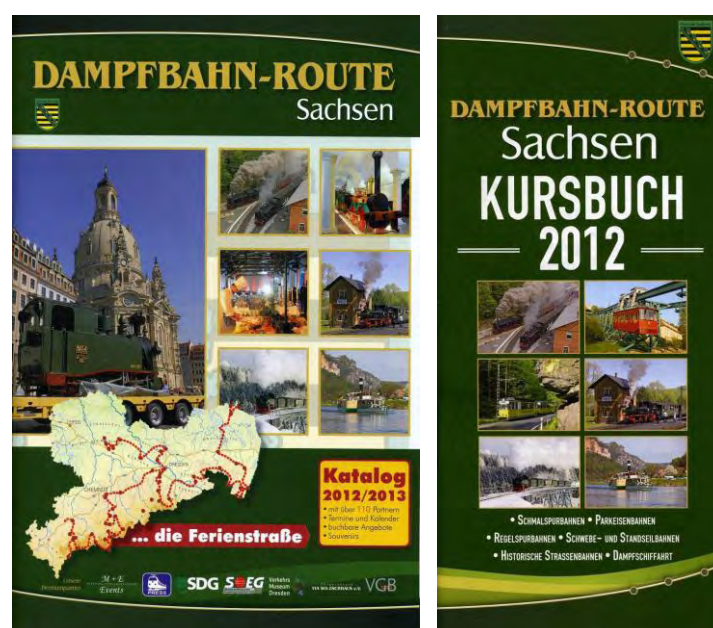
The common marketing proved to be successful, the number of passengers in the seasons 2009 to 2011 increased:

- Waldeisenbahn Muskau: + 11,3 %
- Zittauer Schmalspurbahn: + 6,3 % (although a flood in the year 2010)
- Transportmuseum Dresden: appr. + 33 %
- Döllnitzbahn: appr. + 36 %
- Parkeisenbahn Dresden: 275.000 passengers in the year 2011, achieved until 20. October 10 % more than in the previous best year 2008.

Also many others of the 109 partners benefit from the common marketing.

Source: Dampfbahn-Route, Newsletter 4.Quarter 2011

Common marketing strategies of regional railways, shipping companies, cable cars and other points of interest can be a success-factor in many regions, based on a high awareness of the strengths of regions and knowledge about the addressed target groups. Together the partners can achieve a unique-selling-proposition, which would not be possible in separate actions.



Catalogue and timetable book of the Dampfbahn- Route, source <http://www.dampfbahn-route.de>

Via Wilzschhaus

This tourist project is also implemented in Saxony. The area of the project is also covered by the area of Dampfbahn-Route. The innovation of the project Via-Wilzschhaus is that not only existing small railways are used for tourism, moreover in the project - step by step - small regional railways, which are no more in service, are to be reconstructed and in the last phase a new short narrow gauge line to the brewery in Wernesgrün is planned.

Regional railways are regarded as backbone of sustainable tourism. Via-Vilzschhaus follows also the successful strategy of Danpfbahnroute-Sachsen to establish an excellent cooperation-network with tourist stakeholders. An interesting brochure to the Via-Wilzschhaus project (Tourismusprojekt Schönheide/Carlsfeld und Umgebung) can be downloaded at <http://www.via-wilzschhaus.de/mediathek.php>. The study was also supported by contributions of the European Commission for the development of rural regions and by the state of Saxony.

As in the case of the Iltalbahn a private supporting club ("Förderverein") was established to encourage private investments as well.

The map shows the 4 construction phases ("Etappe"):



5.3 Suitable infrastructure for the requirements of passengers

The range of infrastructure measures is large, from small improvements in railway stations for better accessibility and more comfort for passengers up to big investments in new tracks and also in new lines.

In most of the reviewed cases the infrastructure measures are based on political decisions and financing by public authorities (national budget, budgets of regional authorities). Special cases are infrastructure investments by private clubs, as on the Ilztalbahn in Bavaria and the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways.



New station of the reconstructed Vinschgerbahn
Photo: Otfried Knoll



Voluntary work of club members on Ilztalbahn
Photo: <http://www.ilztalbahn.net/>

A fact which should be highlighted is that the share of regional railways with infrastructure investments during the last years is high:

- Ferrovie Trento – Marilleva: Extension from Malè to Marilleva (length 10 km) in the year 2003, the construction works started in 1997.
- Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways: Both narrow gauge railways were reconstructed by voluntary working rail enthusiasts, step by step from the 1950-ies up to 2009 (opening of Welshland Highway Railways on the Aberglaslyn pass
- Harzer Schmalspurbahnen: Extension from Gernrode to the world heritage city of Quedlinburg (length 8,5 km), the new line was constructed on a former normal gauge track, which was closed by the DB.
- Ilztalbahn: Reconstruction of the existing railway line which was closed by the DB in the year 1982 for the passenger traffic and 2001 also for freight transport. Based on the voluntary works of members of the Club Ilztalbahn in summer 2011 the reopening was celebrated.

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- Pinzgauer Lokalbahn: After a flood of the river Salzach in 2005 the line was reconstructed and also upgraded for higher speed, also some stations were improved. In September 2010 the whole line was reopened. The costs for the reconstruction were 10,5 Mio. €, the entire investments, including new diesel locomotives and wagons with low floor sections were 32,3 Mio.€.
- Rhätische Bahn: The biggest infrastructure project of the RhB was the 22,5 km long Vereina line, which connects Klosters with Sagliains in Engadin. The Vereina tunnel is 19 km long. The Vereina line was constructed between 1991 and 1999, the costs were 812 Mio. CHF, see <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vereinatunnel>. Current investments are focused on additional crossing stations and an important future project is the new Albula tunnel.
- Usedomer Bäderbahn: Also the recent history of this regional railway in the North East of Germany is characterized by investments: In the year 2000 the bridge in Wolgast was opened and after 45 years the railway net on the island Usedom is again connected with German rail network. In 2008 the extension to Świnoujście Centrum was opened.
- Vinschgerbahn: this regional line in Südtirol /Alto Adige is a success story of investment in the reconstruction of a regional railway line (investment for the reconstruction appr. 120 Mio.€ including new low floor train sets)
- Zillertalbahn: The core infrastructure investment was a selective upgrading of the line from 1 to 2 rails, so it is possible that every 30 minutes a train can circulate in both directions.

Summed up, 50 % of the analysed railway companies invested in big infrastructure projects to improve their services. Investments in regional railways are not exceptions, they are in many cases a core success factor.



Enlargement of the network of Harzer Schmalspurbahnen (HSB), photo: Otfried Knoll

5.4 Rolling stock suitable for the requirements of passengers

No other success factor of regional railways can be better shown with photos than suitable rolling stock. Important requirements for rolling stock are:

- easy accessibility for all passengers, also for handicapped people with wheel chairs and for passengers with heavy luggage,
- comfortable facilities to transport luggage and sports utilities,
- carrying bicycles,
- good view on the landscape,
- enough capacities to meet peak demand

For longer trips buffets or dining cars are helpful to improve the impressions of travelling by regional railways.

Easy Accessibility for all passengers:

Almost all new rolling stock for passenger traffic (except on lines with high platforms) provides at least low floor sections with the advantage of flat entrance without stairs. A bigger challenge is upgrading old rolling stock to improve the accessibility especially for handicapped people:



The 2 left pictures show the reconstruction of wagons of the Bregenzwaldbahn in a suitable historic style. A hydraulic lift for passengers with wheelchairs was added to the equipment. Inside the seats can be moved on “rails” to provide space for wheelchairs (see arrow). The picture on the right shows a mobile lift used by the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen.

Photos: Otfried Knoll

For new rolling stock on regional railways low floor trains and entrances without stairs is standard. The photos below show the GT2/6 low floor train units on the Vinschger Bahn:



Low floor train units and entrances without stairs, photos: STA

Comfortable facilities to transport luggage and sports utilities

In some tourist regions skis and other sport equipment is frequently transported in trains. Moreover, passengers who arrive in their holiday region or travel home, carry some luggage, frequently rolling suitcases. Comfortable facilities to carry luggage contribute that passengers feel well in the trains. If possible, it should be avoided that heavy luggage must be lifted up very high as in old trains. Some possibilities for comfortable luggage transport in trains are shown below:



Tatra Electric Railways with space for skis, luggage or bicycles
Photos: Otfried Knoll



Bernina Express Panorama wagon with luggage rack

The Matterhorn- Gotthard-Bahn (former Brig – Visp – Zermatt Railway) due to the fact that Zermatt is a car free village, is one of the few regional railway companies offering a special luggage service:



The luggage is transported on “Rollis” (small rolling luggage racks) and in special compartments of the trains, photos: Klaus Matzka and Otfried Knoll

Transporting bicycles

In almost all holiday regions bicycle tourism and wellness tourism in general are growing markets. Therefore possibilities to transport bicycles can be regarded as success factor for regional railways. As the capacities to transport bicycles in trains are limited, some regional railway companies provide bicycle renting stations or cooperate well with renting systems of other stakeholders.



Bicycle renting stations of the Vinschgerbahn (Source: STA)

Regional and Narrow Gauge Railways - Good Practice and Recommendations



Bicycle transport in the Pinzgaubahn
Photo: Walter Stramitzer



Multi-purpose space in the Vinschger Bahn
Photo: Otfried Knoll

Suspended bicycles save space in the wagons, but sometimes it is difficult to store bicycles with bags. The biking wagons of ÖBB – used in regional express trains - are a compromise:

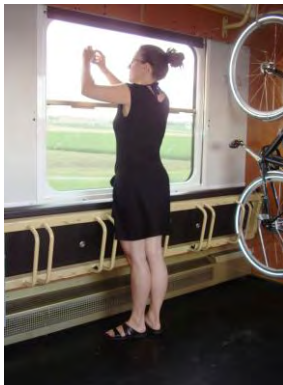


Photo: Ernst Lung



Source: www.argus.or.at

Good view on the landscape

People travelling by regional railways like watching the landscape from the train. This is regarded as a big advantage compared with travelling by car. So “panorama wagons” and on some lines also open “cabrio wagons” are appreciated by tourists as rail passengers.



Optimal view: Panoramic cars of MOB, source: <http://www.goldenpass.ch>



Watching the landscape in the panorama car of the “Bernina Express”

Photos: Otfried Knoll



Le “Train Jaune” in Southern France with “cabrio” wagon



“Cabrio” of the HSB

Photo: Otfried Knoll



Salon wagon of Mariazeller Bahn

Photo: Ernst Lung

Enough capacities to meet peak demand

Not all regional railway companies have enough capacities to meet peak demand. The Vinschgerbahn transported bicycles on special truck-trailers on the road, because the train units had not enough space to meet the peak demand of cycle-tourists. This solution was not welcomed by all passengers and the demand decreased.

Masters in managing peak demand are almost all Swiss railway companies, because they usually maintain older rolling stock in good condition to keep it available to meet peak demand. A symbolic photo shows a new low floor train unit, type “Allegra” pulling a considerable number of older wagons:



Older wagons enlarge the capacity of an “Allegra” train of the Bernina line of Rhätische Bahn on the Brusio viaduct, photo: Ernst Lung

Buffets and dining cars on rails

Most of the passengers in leisure and holiday traffic like drinks and the possibility to eat something. Many tourist railways offer buffets or dining cars. The “Zillertalbahn” in Tyrol owns a very special dining car:



Barrel wagon of the Zillertalbahn



A simple – but charming - form of enjoying passengers of the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen

Photos: Otfried Knoll

Freight transport

Although only few of the analysed narrow gauge regional railways offer freight services, some technical innovations should be shown:



Freight train of the Gotthard Matterhorn Bahn in Zermatt with containers and local distribution by electric powered light duty vehicles: a sustainable freight transport chain, photo: Otfried Knoll

The Harzer Schmalspurbahnen (HSB) use the system “Rollbock Vevey”, but currently the services are limited to transports within the company. On the “rollbocks” the wheels of the normal gauge wagons are fixed in the round forms left and right.



Photos: Otfried Knoll and Verkehrsbericht Tirol 2005 <http://www.tirol.gv.at>

5.5 Marketing, easy access to tickets and information

Although successful regional railways should be embedded in good cooperation networks, for basic requirements of (potential) passengers the railway companies have the biggest share of responsibility.

Marketing

A simple guideline is: Railway companies have to meet the demand of people, they must be in accordance with current and potential passengers. Railway companies must not wait for prospective passengers without marketing and information activities.

Therefore some regional railway companies send out newsletters, especially with information to improved timetables by mail to every household in the operating region, in some cases as attachments to regional newspapers. Also good contacts with media are helpful to inform passengers and target groups which should be motivated to become passengers.

As mentioned in chapter 5.2, tourist stakeholders are important partners to win holiday guests as passengers. A basic requirement is that in hotels sufficient information material to timetables, advantageous tickets and tourist packages is available. Very comfortable for tourists is the possibility to buy train tickets at the hotel reception desks.

A basic task of regional railway companies is providing interesting, useful information on their websites. For example in Austria in the year 2011 in 75 % of the households internet access was available, 32 % of the internet-users benefit of a mobile internet access.

Source: http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/informationsgesellschaft/ikt-einsatz_in_haushalten/index.html.

The photos below show examples of brochures of the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen which are distributed in hotels and also in the « Dampfpläden ».



Source: www.hsb-wr.de

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The presentation of regional railways on tourism fairs can catch the interest of additional target Groups, the photos below show brochures of the Wassertalbahn in our partner region Maramures in Romania:



Photos: Otfried Knoll

Also the regional population and guests, who come for an one-day excursion in a region, should be won as passengers, as the examples of combined tickets with ski-passes (Pinzgauer Lokalbahn) and an interesting one-day excursion program of Stern and Hafferl prove.

A successful low cost strategy to catch the interest of potential passengers, practice the “Waldviertler Schmalspurbahnen” in Lower Austria (Niederösterreich). The conductors distribute post cards with photos of this narrow gauge railway and motivate the passengers to send greetings to interested persons. If these addressed people become passengers of the railway during a period of 1 year, they participate on a competition and have the chance to win attractive prizes like holidays or cameras.



Photos: Otfried Knoll, based on materials of the railway companies



>>> WIR BEWEGEN MENSCHEN **stern hafferl** VERKEHR >>>

Sanftes Natur- & Kulturerlebnis
mit Bahn & E-Bike

Stift Lambach, Stiftskirche, Brauerei Eggenberg, Motorradmuseum

Buchbar von April bis Oktober, für Gruppen von 6 bis max. 20 Personen

Package railway and e-bike in Upper Austria, source: www.stern-verkehr.at

Depending on the addressed target groups, all information should be available also in often used foreign languages, at least basic information should be provided in English.

Easy access to suitable tickets

Very comfortable ways for tourists to buy suitable tickets are:

- + Public transport tickets included in guest passes (e.g. Brixen Card in Alto Adige/ Südtirol, Konus-Karte in the German region Schwarzwald),
- + Hotel receptions as selling points for public transport tickets.

Another comfortable access to tickets is ensured by friendly train-staff, selling tickets without supplements. Also user-friendly internet- or mobile phone applications can provide an easy way to buy suitable tickets, but especially elderly passengers prefer personal assistance by the railway company staff.

Therefore ticket offices are still important, but the revenue of sold tickets often is not high enough to be a commercial success for the railway companies and they are looking for additional functions of ticket selling points.

A very successful solution are the shops of the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen, called “Dampfläden”, which are based in the city centres, near the main points of interest of tourists and high frequencies of potential passengers. In the “Dampfläden” beside all train tickets a lot of nice souvenirs are offered from typical drinks and T-shirts to good railway literature, train models and of course the tickets for the famous rock-opera “Faust” on the Brocken mountain.

Regional and Narrow Gauge Railways - Good Practice and Recommendations



Children like the windows of the Dampfladen to watch model trains inside, photos: Otfried Knoll



The “Dampfladen”-assortment is big
Photo: Otfried Knoll



Preferred by passengers:
Friendly train staff, photo: Ernst Lung

Another successful way to sell tickets and more are mobility service centres, where all public transport tickets are sold and all information to sustainable mobility is given. The mobility center “Mobilitätszentrale Pongau” in Bischofshofen –shown below - sells also newspapers, drinks and snacks.



Source: <http://www.mobilito.at/kundenzentrum.htm>

National railway companies as well are looking for additional revenues in ticket offices, the ÖBB opened some “Bahn Stores”, where also food and drinks are sold:



ÖBB-Bahn Store, source: <http://konzern.oebb.at/de/Presse>

Information

Pre-trip information is an important contribution to successful marketing of railways, information to timetables, prices, suitable tickets are basic requirements by public transport passengers and were already mentioned under cooperation with tourist stakeholders and marketing. The examples below are focused on real-time on-trip information:



Information display of the Zillertal-Bahn, the actual information is also available at www.zillertalbahn.at and IT based information in a historical frame on a platform of Harzer Schmalspurbahnen, photos: Otfried Knoll

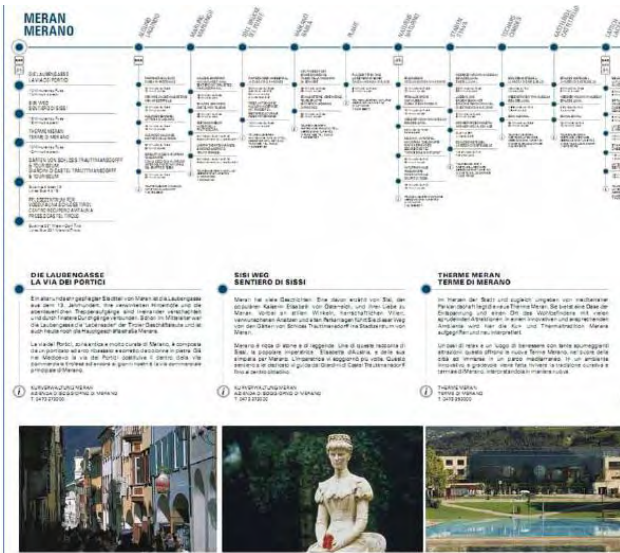
An important function of IT based information systems is to give an overview to connection on nodes and in case of delay if scheduled connecting trains and buses are waiting for changing passengers.

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As already mentioned, information should be available in all often used languages, at least basic information in English.



Information of Rhätische Bahn in Japanese
Photo: Otfried Knoll.



Information of the Vinschgerbahn
to points of interest near the stops, source: STA

NFCs (near field communication technologies) provide a simple and cost-efficient possibility of passenger information on remote bus- or train stops where displays are too expensive.



Source: <http://salzburg.orf.at/news/stories/2526792/>

The “Sargan Eight” in Southern Serbia is another example for success of regional railways under difficult conditions. The “Sargan Eighth” is a 760 mm – “Bosnian” – gauge railway, which was reconstructed during the recent years for tourist purposes. Few years ago that region suffered from a civil war, now visitors from many countries travel with the reconstructed narrow gauge railway. The line in operation crosses also the border to Bosnia and an extension there is planned.

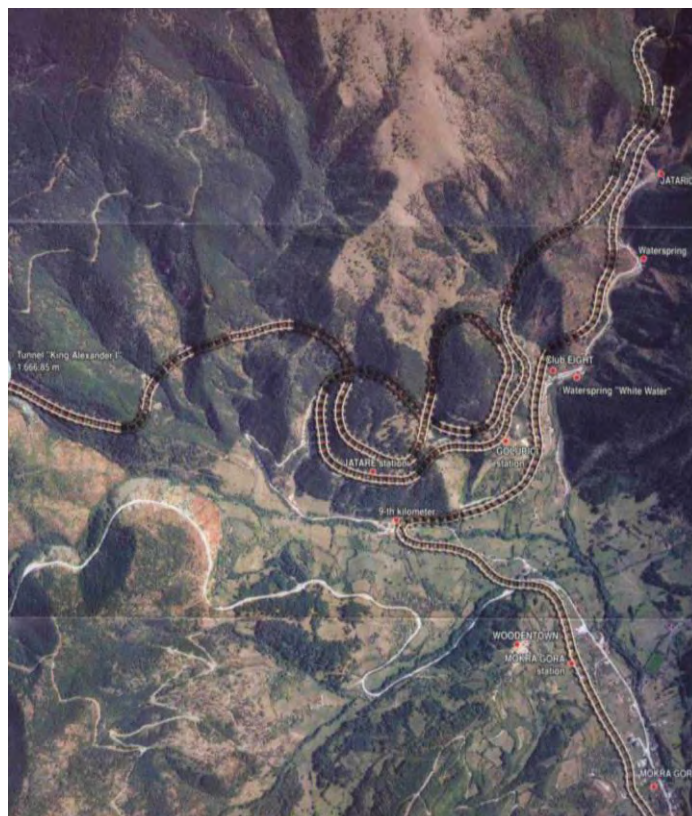
Regional and Narrow Gauge Railways - Good Practice and Recommendations

Therefore the “Sargan Eight” can be regarded as a project of peace and should encourage other ambitious people to consider regional railways as a chance for sustainable tourism.



On the left: People from many countries travelling with the “Sargan Eight”, on the right: The photo has a core message: Although new technologies facilitate some tasks of railway operating, ambitious staff of railways and other stakeholders are still a main success factor – as the friendly conductor of the “Sargan Eight”, who takes photos of his passengers.

Photos: Otfried Knoll



Map of the “Sargan Eight” line, photo: Otfried Knoll

ANNEX: PROJECT PARTNERS

Lead partner

U-AT - Environment Agency Austria, AT

ERDF partner

bmvit - Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, AT

ERDF partner

Gesäuse - National Park Gesäuse, AT

ERDF partner

Mostviertel - Mostviertel-Tourism Ltd., AT

ERDF partner

Miskolc Holding - Miskolc Holding Local Government Asset Management Corporation, HUN

ERDF partner

UNICAM - University of Camerino, IT

ERDF partner

EURAC research – European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano, IT

ERDF partner

CJIT Maramures - County Center for Tourism Information, RO

ERDF partner

ARR-KE - Agency for the Support of Regional Development Kosice, SK

20% ERDF partner

RARR-PL - Rzeszow Regional Development Agency, PL

10% partner

TIMOK -Timok Club, RS

10% partner

CFUA - Carpathian Foundation Ukraine, UA

The project enjoys widespread support at transnational, national and regional level: the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, Focal Points of the Carpathian Convention, European Federation of Museum and Tourist Railways, Ministries of Environment (AT, IT), Ministries of Transport (SI, PL) and other observers at the regional level of the project partners.

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