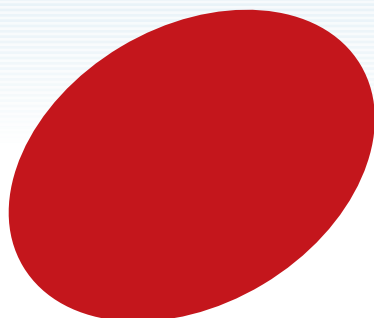


## NICHES+ Champion City Region Artois-Gohelle

Implementing travel training for  
older people in public transport



# The Region and NICHEs+

## The project

NICHEs+ is a FP7 co-ordination action aiming to network key actors actively engaged in developing **innovative urban transport concepts** and to facilitate the co-ordination of their activities across Europe. The project duration is from 2008-2011.

Artois-Gohelle is a Champion Region within the project that aims at implementing travel training for older people in public transport. This document summarises an **implementation scenario** that gives advice on how to realise the given concept in the specific context of the city. This also provides an example to other cities interested in the uptake of the measure.

## The region

**Artois-Gohelle** is a region located in northern France, which is characterised by a disperse polycentric settlement structure with many small towns and villages. The “**urban heart**” of the region is formed by the cities Lens (35,000 inhabitants) and Liévin (32,500 inhabitants). The region is a **former coal mining area**, which is struggling with structural change and a high unemployment rate. Urban regeneration and renewal is therefore a key policy objective, in which attractive and accessible public transport services also play a role.



**City of Liévin**

Photo: SMT

## The innovative concept

The Syndicat Mixte des Transports Artois-Gohelle (SMT), which is the local transport authority of the region, intends to implement a **travel training scheme for older people in public transport**. This will take place in cooperation with the local bus operator Tadao and builds on experiences of a successful training scheme in Salzburg, Austria.

The **aim of the training scheme** is to enable older people to use public transport independently, by overcoming psychological barriers (fear of falling, security, self-confidence) and by showing them how public transport works (where to buy the ticket, find the transport stops, etc.). This is not only a transport policy, but also deals with social inclusion and health aspects.

The implementation of the training scheme has already been confirmed. First training sessions are planned for spring 2011.



**Travel Training in Salzburg**

Photo: StadtBus Salzburg

## The Challenge

Mobility in the region is still heavily focused on the use of the private car (66% modal share). **Public transport is only used for 3.5% of all trips.** Currently the public transport services are based exclusively on a bus network and some special transport services. A tram project is on the way to establish a new link between the major agglomeration poles.

SMT is working hard on making public transport more attractive to potential users. One challenge is the currently still **poor accessibility of the bus services.**

As **accessibility has been addressed only very recently** in Artois-Gohelle, only one third of the fleet consists of low-floor buses. In addition, most of the bus stops are not very accessible for users with mobility impairments (e.g. wheelchair users, people with prams, older people with mobility impairments, visually impaired people).

The **French Accessibility Act** from 2005 requires local transport authorities to make public transport fully accessible by 2015. In response to this, SMT developed an accessibility scheme with a comprehensive strategy to enhance the accessibility of public transport in the region over the coming years. Travel training is part of this strategy.



**Bus service in Artois-Gohelle**  
Photo: SMT

*"It is the empowerment of local actors, who typically lack technical and financial resources for the implementation of seamless accessible transport networks for our inhabitants, which is key to the successful implementation of our Accessibility Scheme. We do not just want accessible buses (and soon tramways) – we also want to encourage local decision makers to adopt the "Accessible for All" principle throughout the area served by the local public transport network, and eventually more widely."*

**Jean-Luc Wery, President of the SMT Artois-Gohelle, Mayor of Sains-En-Gohelle**

## The Vision

SMT has the vision to remove accessibility barriers in the bus network and to plan the new tram line in a way that ensures **"accessibility for all"**. This broader vision of accessibility is not limited to public transport services and stops, which are in the direct responsibility of SMT, but includes the whole **seamless travel chain from door-to-door.**

SMT also wants to **remove psychological barriers** through soft measures as travel training for older people and, at a later point, other marginalised target groups. Accessibility should become a key element of a **high quality public transport** service in the region.

For the wider accessibility scheme SMT has set **ambitious objectives for the year 2015.** This includes, amongst other things, improvements in the accessibility of bus stops, a 100% low floor bus fleet, better passenger information about accessibility of the public transport services, and soft measures to address psychological and cognitive barriers.



# The Good Example

## Travel training for older people in Salzburg, Austria

Older people are an **increasingly important user group** in public transport. The ageing of society poses new challenges to public transport operators to ensure that this customer group is provided with a high quality service. Falls and accidents are a serious threat to older people during public transport trips.

In order to **encourage older people to use buses and to give them tips and tricks on how to prevent accidents**, the Salzburg bus operator (StadtBus), in co-operation with the local interest group ZGB (Centre for Generations and Accessibility, Salzburg), started a training scheme for older passengers in 2004.



### Training session in Salzburg

Photo: StadtBus Salzburg

The participants of the training are invited in small groups to the bus depot, where a bus is made available for the **training session**. Additionally a transport **safety handbook** was published and a variety of other marketing measures were introduced to address the target group of older people.

Travel training for older people has been successfully established in Salzburg. Many older people now feel safer using the bus, and do so more frequently.

The scheme did receive positive feedback from the users and international attention from others that want to learn from the experiences. The concept has been constantly refined over time.

Travel training is part of a **broader strategy to address older people as valuable customers of public transport**. Other measures include a mobility day, which is an exhibition around mobility of older people and related services.

**Driver training** is another part of the strategy to ensure that bus drivers are responsive to older people's needs.

Within NICHES+ an intense **exchange between Salzburg and Artois-Gohelle** took place to develop a tailored training scheme for the French region.

A **toolbox for travel training and driver training** that has been developed by StadtBus Salzburg is available from the website of the European AENEAS project (Mobility of older people): [www.aeneas-project.eu](http://www.aeneas-project.eu)

### Contact in Salzburg

Angelika Gasteiner, StadtBus Salzburg  
e-mail:

[angelika.gasteiner@salzburg-ag.at](mailto:angelika.gasteiner@salzburg-ag.at)

*"The demographic change forces public transport companies to adjust their services to the specific needs of older passengers. Travel training helps to keep and gain senior citizens as clients, prevents accidents and enables older persons to stay mobile and take part in life."*

**Angelika Gasteiner,  
Customer Service & Marketing,  
StadtBus, Salzburg**

## The user needs

The target group for the travel training scheme in Artois-Gohelle are clearly the **older seniors, age 75+**.

This group needs **empowerment** to use public transport on their own. The training should concentrate on what they still can do on their own and enable a safe and convenient trip. While the focus is on older seniors, the training should **also be open to “younger old” trainees**. The age groups should not be divided as they can learn from each other, thus a heterogeneous age mix in the training group is no problem.

A small **survey on the needs of older people** in the region was carried out as preparatory work. The respondents mentioned a range of difficulties in terms of physical accessibility of public transport (e.g. risk of falling), how-to-use skills (e.g. how to find the right bus line) and social issues (e.g. giving up the car as a sign of ageing). These issues will be addressed in the training.

SMT has already been in touch with **older people associations** in the region, which are very interested in the offer of travel training. They will be further involved in fine-tuning of the training scheme.



**Bus stop in Lens**

Photo: SMT



**Accessible model bus stop in Liévin**

Photo: SMT

## The key stakeholders for implementation

The **local transport authority SMT** and the **transport operator Tadao (Keolis)** are the key players for the implementation of the travel training scheme.

**SMT** made the training scheme a requirement in the last tendering round for the bus service operations in the regions. The transport authority also makes available the necessary financial means and is in charge of the strategic development of the training scheme.

The marketing department of the public transport operator **Tadao** provides staff time and prepares and carries out the actual training sessions.

Important **co-operation partners** are the **older people associations** in the region, which have a multiplier function and give important feedback for the fine-tuning of the training scheme.

The **local media** will also play an important role in promoting the new travel training offer and in raising awareness for the mobility needs of older people.

# The Transferability Potential

## The transferability to Artois-Gohelle

The good practice case of the travel training scheme for older people in Salzburg has been the key reference for the transferability analysis that supported the development of a tailored approach for Artois-Gohelle.

The transferability of the scheme is considered to be relatively easy.

**Supportive factors** are:

- **Favourable strategic context** – legal obligation through French Accessibility Act 2005 and full commitment to develop an accessibility scheme strategy.
- Travel training as **low cost measure** that can easily be covered from SMT's accessibility funds.
- Availability of required **resources and skilled staff** at SMT and Tadao and close cooperation between the two partners.
- **Flexible step-by-step implementation** that enables an initial small training scheme to be extended in size or target groups later.

While there are no severe constraints, some aspects require **special attention**:

- Still **relatively poor accessibility of public transport system** in the region can be an obstacle for frail old people (e.g. relatively few low-floor vehicles, many bus stops that are not well accessible).
- Wider **marketing strategy** for older people as a next step.
- **Bus driver training** as an important complement, as problems with drivers can ruin the self-confidence and trust that has been gained through a training scheme.



**Non-accessible bus stop in Sallaumines**

Photo: SMT

## The general transferability of travel training for older people

Travel training for older people, but also for other target groups, such as children or people with special needs, is an **easily transferable measure**. The implementation is not very costly, can be done in relatively short time, and works with a small and efficient project team.

The concept is a **valuable complement to other activities** that enhance accessibility to public transport and could become a mainstream measure all over Europe.



**NICHES+ transferability workshop with participants from Artois-Gohelle and Salzburg**

Photo: Rupprecht Consult



## The measure justification

Demographic change and the **ageing of society** are posing new questions to the region of Artois-Gohelle. SMT as the responsible public transport authority recognises the **importance of older people as a user group for public transport**. Accessibility is a key issue for this group. While the improvement of the physical accessibility of rolling stock and bus stops is planned in the accessibility scheme, travel training can play an important role as a soft measure that removes **psychological barriers** and fosters **independent mobility** of older people. As a relative low cost measure travel training nevertheless can have a direct impact on the trainees' life (e.g. independent mobility, enhanced safety). Furthermore the activity shows that SMT and Tadao care about this user group. This also can **provide image gains** for public transport among all customers.

## The implementable measure

The travel training scheme that **will be implemented in 2011** in Artois-Gohelle will be very similar to the training activities in Salzburg.

**Key tasks for developing a tailored training scheme will be to:**

- **Develop a brochure with hints for older people on safe use of buses.** This will be disseminated to older people and will also include contact information where personal advice on journey planning and other questions can be obtained.
- **Set-up a travel training course** format for older people similar to the one in Salzburg (see page 3), including a training session at the bus depot in a protected environment and a practice ride in the real bus network with an interchange. The training content is building on the experiences from Salzburg, with a focus on safety issues and creating self-confidence to independently use public transport.
- **Involve older people associations and other multipliers** (e.g. health services or commission for special transport services). This is crucial to reach the potential trainees and collect feedback for the fine-tuning of the training scheme.
- **Develop marketing activities to directly reach older people** and make them aware of the available services, for example putting up an information stand at a market or sending information to subscribers.
- **Improve driver training.** A very important field as one bad experience that an older person has with a driver can ruin the success of a whole training session. The driver training should not only address technical questions but aim at a change of awareness and mentality when dealing with customers.
- **Guarantee smooth internal communication** between the local transport authority (SMT) and the operator Tadao to ensure that older people as users of public transport are addressed with a sound strategy.
- **Work with media** to make the training offer known, including a press conference with local decision makers for the first training.
- **Tailor Tadao service shops and public relations to older peoples' needs.**
- **Identify easy improvements of vehicles and at stops** such as lower benches, handrails or specially marked seats in the buses for older people.

Finally all measures need to be implemented in a **coordinated strategy** that aims at making public transport more attractive to older people.

# The Implementable Measure

## The finances

Travel training can be considered as **low cost measure**. Nevertheless specific resources are needed and so it is imperative to define where they will come from.

The travel training scheme is part of the service contract between SMT and Tadao to carry out public transport services in Artois-Gohelle. The amount of 10,500 EUR has been allocated for preparing the training (e.g. brochure, video). 7,096 EUR have been budgeted for carrying out 8 training sessions per year.

The following **resources** will be required:

- Staff time at SMT and at Tadao
- Budget for promotional material (e.g. brochure, video, leaflet, gadgets)
- Costs of training (e.g. transport of older people to training venue, catering)
- Identification of easy improvements of vehicles and at stops

## The timing

Travel training can be **implemented relatively quickly**. The preparatory work in Artois-Gohelle needs only a few months. The development of the brochure and promotional material has to be carried out on time before the training.



**New intermodal bus station at Lens railway station**  
Photo: SMT

## The long-term perspective

While sufficient resources have been made available by SMT for carrying out a travel training scheme till 2015, the responsible actors should also strive to develop a **comprehensive long-term strategy for older people in public transport**. This is needed to make public transport services more attractive to this target group and to enable more people to use regular bus and tram services (instead of Proxibus special transport services).

If the travel training for older people is successful, it is also intended to introduce **further training offers for other target groups** such as visually impaired or illiterate persons in Artois-Gohelle.

**Monitoring and evaluation** should be built into all activities to ensure that the measures are on track. This can include simple tools including surveys with the trainees.



**Mobility day for older people in Salzburg**  
Photo: StadtBus Salzburg



Travel Training for older people is an **effective measure** to enable and encourage older people to use public transport.

The low costs of implementing a scheme and the comparably simple set-up makes it **highly transferable**.

The experience from Artois-Gohelle shows that it is extremely valuable and saves a lot of time to **look at successful examples** like Salzburg and to learn from them. This can be the basis for developing a tailored travel training scheme for the own city or region.

The project team that prepares and carries out the training activity needs to be **highly committed to work with the target group of older people**, which sometimes requires a lot of patience and sensitivity.

Finally, travel training should be integrated into a **wider strategy to make public transport more attractive and safer to use for older people**. This includes other measures such as driver training, mobility day events or better bus stop and vehicle accessibility.



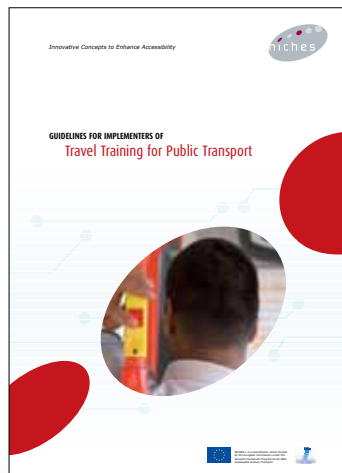
**Trainee in Salzburg**

Photo: Rupprecht Consult

## Check list

The following check-list summarises **key aspects for implementing travel training for older people in public transport** and intends to give the reader advice on whether the concept is suitable for the own context.

Check list	
City size	No restrictions
Key conditions for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated will and motivated team to improve accessibility to public transport with "soft measures" for older people</li> <li>• Back-up from decision makers in public transport operator organisation and/or local authority</li> <li>• Close communication with trainees and interest groups in developing and fine-tuning the training concept</li> <li>• Kick-off funding to get a scheme started and long-term commitment to keep it running</li> </ul>
Resources	Comparably cheap measure that can be developed in stages from a small scheme to wider activities. Mainly staff costs plus moderate costs for marketing material.
Implementation time	Depending on scheme, planning time and preparation of training materials can take a few months up to a year. Quick implementation.
Stakeholders involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport operators and authorities (e.g. in Artois-Gohelle the local transport authority SMT and the operator Tadao)</li> <li>• Interest groups/ older people associations</li> <li>• Local authorities can play a role (e.g. financial contribution)</li> </ul>
Undesirable secondary effects	none



For further details on how to implement travel training for older people and other target groups please see the **NICHES+ Guidelines for implementers** (available from [www.niches-transport.org](http://www.niches-transport.org)).

The more detailed **full version of the Implementation Scenario** for Travel Training for Public Transport in Artois-Gohelle is also available on the NICHES+ website.

### *Photo on title page*

Stadtbuss Salzburg and SMT Artois-Gohelle

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[www.niches-transport.org](http://www.niches-transport.org)  
[www.osmose-os.org](http://www.osmose-os.org)