



VILNIUS, LITHUANIA

## SWOT Analysis

### Background/context

Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania, the country's administrative, social, cultural and economic centre. The city has 554,400 inhabitants and Vilnius County 847,754. At 360 hectares, the old town is one of the largest historic centres in Eastern Europe. The city centre's buildings were constructed during different centuries and therefore comprise a mixture of architectural styles, including gothic, baroque and renaissance. The old town is on the UNESCO World Heritage List. While this makes the city very interesting for tourists it also presents problems for the planning of its transport system.

The main operator for public transport is the municipal enterprise Susisiekimo Paslaugos. Founded in 1998 on behalf of the city council, it operates a transport network with 72 km trolleybus lines and 343 km served by regular buses. It operates 20 trolleybus routes with 259 trolleybuses and 77 bus routes with 300 buses. Every day it carries over 800,000 passengers, or some 335.2 million passengers per year.

Information about the public transport system is provided in numerous ways. Timetables and information about ticket fares and the public transport network can be found at bus stops, in leaflets and brochures, in the public transport vehicles themselves as well as on the homepage of the operator. An innovative way to provide information is by short text messages or WAP on mobile phones.

### Case description

A SWOT analysis concentrates on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for a specific topic. In this case it concentrates on transport and public transport issues in Vilnius. Basic driving powers have to be identified and concentrated on. The main idea is to get a picture of the actual situation and to gain knowledge regarding possible developments and potentials.

#### STRENGTHS

Which are the core competences of public transport or of the general transport situation in Vilnius?

- Experience of organising carriage of passengers
- Development of ecosystem
- A decreasing accident rate
- Ensuring passengers' safety
- Regularity

#### WEAKNESSES

Weakness includes factors which detract public transport or the general transport network from its aimed objectives. Which are weak points and should be improved?

- Aging vehicles
- Insufficient financing of public transport

- Incomplete legal basis
- Insufficient competition among public and private operators
- Imperfect ticket system
- Loss of positive public image

#### OPPORTUNITIES

To recognise opportunities of the transport situation in Vilnius and its public transport, trends have to be revealed.

- To ensure equal competition between public and private operators
- Improve flexible ticket system
- Optimisation of network
- To use international financing for renewal of public transport vehicles
- To improve reliable local financing for public transport
- To improve good contracting between operator and local government
- To improve image of public transport

#### THREATS

The difficulties public transport and transport in general in Vilnius face have to be considered in this section.

- Government institutions that solve public transport problems from political rather than economical point of view.
- Increasing debts of municipal operators
- Principles of improving legislation basis are vague
- Big demand of investment in public transport renewal, management, improving of quality, etc.

### Costs and financing

Little financing is available for the implementation of the SWOT analysis.

### Results

To improve the quality of public transport the operator designed a survey that has been carried out annually since 2005. Passengers are asked at public transport stops and via the Internet about their trips, transfers, tickets, travel time, comfort and mobility on a daily basis. The data is used to improve the public transport network and timetables, as well as to get to know the customers' requirements. According to the respondents, improvements are needed most in punctuality, reliability, travel time, comfort, network and passenger information.

The share of population owning cars has increased in recent decades. In 1995, just 191 people out of 1,000 owned a car. In 2007, 533 out of 1,000 were motorised. A survey showed that more than 50% of those surveyed believed traffic jams were the main transport problem. By comparison, only 18% thought deficiencies in the health care system was the main problem.

To deal with traffic jams, the company operates a number of special public transport lanes. This enables buses to bypass slow or standing traffic.

### Enhanced SWOT Analysis

Translate into tasks for the Project Plan		Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	How do I use these strengths to take advantage of these opportunities?	How do I overcome the weaknesses that prevent me taking advantage of these opportunities?	
Threats	How do I use my strengths to reduce the likelihood and impact of these threats?	How do I overcome the weaknesses that will make these threats a reality?	



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### Problems

Problems encountered regarding the implementation of the SWOT analysis in Vilnius were mostly caused by the low quality of public transport in the city and limited financing from government.

### Transferability and success factors

SWOT analyses can be used in a multitude of situations and based on different data sets. The systematic approach in Vilnius helped to plan a series of targeted measures to overcome the identified threats.

### Lessons learnt

The main lessons learned from the SWOT analysis in Vilnius were that public transport stakeholders have to concentrate on their experience and that even if funds are limited quality improvements and image improvements have to go hand in hand. It is neither sensible nor possible to concentrate on one issue alone. All strengths have to be developed in parallel.

### References and contacts

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