

Seven authorities were aiming for interoperability

We understood their objective

We helped create an interoperable public transport area for 1.1 million people in the department of Alpes-Maritimes (France).



We implemented the central system, mixed equipment and on-line ticketing

The department of Alpes-Maritimes has a population of 1.1 million and seven transport authorities that manage the networks in Nice, Cannes, Sophia-Antipolis, Menton and Grasse, along with the coaches operated by the Varmer bus company and the departmental council. Since 2005, these have been grouped within the Symitam (Syndicat Mixte de Transport des Alpes-Maritimes) the local private-public organisation which aims at interoperability all over the area. Nice, Sophia-Antipolis and the departmental council commissioned us to overhaul their fare collection systems.

The Challenge

The Nice urban area council wished to replace its existing contactless ticketing system, deployed in 1997 in its 330 buses and its tramway, with a new contactless solution complying with the latest French interoperability standards. The operator also wanted to offer users the possibility of purchasing and reloading their tickets online along with further options such as rolling monthly tickets. The departmental council, which manages 340 intercity coaches, wished to abandon its old paper tickets in favour of a mixed (magnetic and contactless) solution, capable in particular of interfacing with bus lines operating in urban areas. Lastly, the CASA, which operates 130 urban buses in Sophia-Antipolis, decided to modernise its fare collection system by moving directly from paper tickets to contactless.

The Solution

Since we had already created the existing ticketing system in Nice in 1997, the city council trusted us once again to develop and deploy a

new solution comprising a central system and mixed equipment, including 780 validators and 40 latest-generation portable reader/decoders. We completed deployment on time and the online services are now operational. The system, which is working initially with the existing card, is ready to handle the future interoperable one.

Furthermore, we equipped the 340 intercity coaches operated by the Alpes-Maritimes departmental council with PCE 415 vending and reloading consoles, capable of handling both the magnetic and contactless tickets used in the department. We also supplied 30 retailer machines for issuing contactless cards for schoolchildren. In the case of the departmental lines intersecting with buses of the Nice or Sophia-Antipolis urban networks, the console dialogues with a new-generation wide-screen on-board validator that accepts, in given areas, tickets issued by urban operators. Data are transmitted by secure GPRS to the 30-odd depots spread through the department.

Lastly, we equipped each bus in Sophia-Antipolis with a master validator that exchanges data directly with our own operation-support system and introduced 8 vending machines.

The Result

Nice, Sophia-Antipolis and the departmental council have improved the attractiveness and fluidity of their networks on a long-term basis and are ready to integrate the interoperable contactless card. When all the networks in the department have taken the same steps, it will be time for 1.1 million people to enjoy a unified travel area.



Sector: Local Government

Solution: Fare Collection

Clients: Nice Côte d'Azur urban area council (NCA), Alpes-Maritimes departmental council, CASA (Sophia-Antipolis)

Challenge: Assisting each network to develop its fare collection system while paving the way for interoperability

Result: Introduction of three complete solutions (central systems and equipment) that are both customised and fully compatible

Key Figures

NCA, Nice

- 330 urban buses
- 21 tramway stops

Conseil Général des Alpes-Maritimes

- 240 intercity coaches
- 100 school buses

CASA, Sophia-Antipolis

- 130 urban buses

“ACS, which had already deployed our existing ticketing system, proposed an effective and optimised solution. The example of Lyon also convinced us that they were able to carry out this type of development toward interoperability.”

Yvette Lartigau,
transport manager, NCA.

In a nutshell...

By implementing three major ticketing systems in this department, which counts seven operators with widely diverging

requirements, we paved the way for an interoperable urban and intercity transport system for over a million people.