

Vipari

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Vipari started as an EU- project 1999, but is now part of the public transport in the town of Jakobstad in Finland. Vipari has about 40 000 customers of all ages, and both the city administration and the customers seem to be satisfied with the service. Vipari busses are small busses that transport customers from door-to-door and can be ordered like taxis. The Vipari project was awarded with a man-made climate prize from the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities in 2012, due to transportation with small busses being more environmentally friendly than transportation by private cars.

Picture 1 Vipari bus. Source: The town of Jakobstad 2018.



Preconditions, inspiration, nurture

Vipari started in 1999 aiming to address the issue of poor public transport connection in Jakobstad. There were no major obstacles during the service development and implementation, because the need for public transport was so urgent. At first, the taxi drivers were sceptical, but not after they realized that there is no competition threat from Vipari. In general, the service is well accepted by the locals. The transport solution is intended for all those in need of transportation in Jakobstad.

Implementation

The town of Jakobstad implements and provides the service, and also administers and monitors the service. The town of Jakobstad is buying services from a private transport company called Ekman.

Vippari doesn't have fixed timetables or fixed bus routes. Five busses operate on weekdays from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m.

After the end of the EU funding the service is funded by the town of Jakobstad (largest share of funding) and by the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and Environment. Vippari transport service does not receive any subsidies or other external public or private funding.

Enablers and Barriers/ Bottlenecks:

At first Vippari was viewed as transportation for the specific group of people, e.g. with social or economic problems. This constraint was overcome thanks to the efficient communication and marketing, and different groups of people started to use Vippari. Today, there is a higher demand for Vippari services than can be provided, so that the service is not marketed.

The interviewed contact person emphasizes the significance of the software solution. The well-structured and functioning software guarantees a well-functioning service for both users and service providers.

The outcomes, effects and further development

The town of Jakobstad does not actively follow how Vippari is being used and by whom. However, according to the interviewee, Vippari is regularly used by the inhabitants, including children, the elderly and disabled, as well as tourists. The people who use Vippari are mainly satisfied. When it comes to further development, the town of Jakobstad has to consider updating the software.

References

Christina Lind-Kangas, interview, May 2018

The town of Jakobstad (2018) Available at: <https://www.jakobstad.fi>