



1. Introduction

Burgas is the second-largest city on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast, the fourth-largest in Bulgaria: population of 200,271 inhabitants and the largest municipality in south eastern Bulgaria, area 512,324 acres. It is the capital of Burgas Province and an important industrial, transport, cultural and tourist centre. The Municipality consists of city of Burgas, a smaller town and 12 villages.

The city is located at the western point of the large Burgas Bay and surrounded by the Burgas Lakes. The Wetlands are highly recognized for their significance to biodiversity and as a resource pool for various products utilized by people.

Burgas is an important industrial, commercial, transport and tourist centre.

The economic potential of Burgas ranks second among Bulgarian municipalities.

There are more than 16,000 companies operating in the municipality. The LUKOIL Neftochim Burgas is the largest oil refinery in south eastern Europe and the largest industrial enterprise. The Port of Burgas is the largest in Bulgaria, and the Airport is the second-most important in the country. Burgas is the centre of the Bulgarian fishing industry.

The internal and external accessibility of Burgas by car is good, there are two highways connecting Burgas to the capital and to other cities, located on the Black sea coast and one railway station.

The management of the internal public transport system is submitted to the municipal public transport company, but the policy of transportation is implemented by the City Council through three divisions of the Municipal administration: Urban Planning, Economic Activities and European Policies.

Currently the Municipality of Burgas implements Integrated urban transport project developing a dense network of high speed bus lines, parking areas and bicycle lanes. There are over 60 000 000 Euros provided for the municipal budget for implementation of the new transport policies of Burgas in 2013.

2. Process

2.1 Preparing for the assessment

Burgas Municipality - a partner in EcoMobility SHIFT project, was prepared to run the internal assessment. The general political support for the development of EcoMobility is provided by the endorsement of “Burgas Municipality strategy for the Sustainable Energy development 2011-2020”, which accents heavily on the development of means of low-emission transport. Due to previous experience, such as developing energy efficiency strategies and preliminary studies over the PT, the authorities possess all the data needed to run the evaluation in the municipality. The working group consisted of experts on urban planning, road safety and transport management. Leader of the working group - Mrs Ruska Boyadzhieva, has a broad experience in urban traffic projects as project leader of the Integrated Urban Transport Project of Burgas. Mrs Nelia Dineva a trained auditor, advised the self-assessment process.

2.2 The self-assessment

In order to quickly obtain the information required for the assessment, the working group members divided into smaller groups. During the second workshop information was presented and each indicator was discussed in order to be evaluated. The last meeting run as discussion and vote on the indicators by the members of the working group.

Data over the first group of indicators “Enablers” was collected by urban planning experts in association with experts from Euro integration Department. There was enough information to score the results, according the prescription of SHIFT framework.

Data over “Transport system and services” and “Results and impacts” indicators was available as a result of the preliminary study over the integrated urban transport project of Burgas. To score the results some specific information on the local environment was needed, but it was submitted by the municipal environmental department. Representatives from non-government organizations also provided a valuable output submitting information about the local cycling community and disadvantaged people.

In three sessions the working group of Burgas Municipality succeeded to collect data and reflect over the results. The entire group together with external experts and one trained auditor discussed the indicators and score the final result over each one of them, according the instructions of SHIFT framework.

2.3 The external audit

The external audit took place in the period 24 - 28th September 2012.

3. Results

3.1 Overall result

The available data that used both: the municipal experts and the external auditor of the city, results in approximately equal final score, received through the self-assessment and the audit report. Burgas achieved score 64%. Applying the city profile factors did not change the overall score.

To run the audit the auditor reviewed official statistics, provided by the city authorities and the public transport operators and written expert judgments for the indicators where quality assessment was required. No revision or editing of the collected data was necessary.

As the audit report identified lower score over several indicators than the self-assessment auditor had to defend his position to the working group.

3.2 The Enablers: internal municipal processes

Although Burgas receives a low score over the indicators, connected to the development of municipal strategies, measuring and evaluation in the field of transport policies, in the last 5 years the administration works hard to overcome the lack. The city regularly conducts surveys and analysis of the public opinion, complaints and recommendations from cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users. The “Burgas Municipality strategy for sustainable energy development” is the document that outlines the policy of the city in the field of EcoMobility, sustainable energy development and reduction of greenhouse emissions in general. The strategy has been developed as a result of the implementation of the project Sustainable now and has been adopted by the city council. It is a relatively new document (in force since 2011) but some of the measures defined in it have already been put into action. Municipality of Burgas implements several projects to increase the accessibility of the urban area, to expand and upgrade the bike lanes network, to renovate and improve the attractiveness of PT. Burgas is doing well increasing the administrative capacity by implementing specific measures and adoption of best practices for the benefit of future urban planning. There are several areas of urban planning, where municipality achieves the best results incorporating systematic policy, targeted funding and participation of citizens, such as: management of parking areas, improving the accessibility of the environment and improvement of the PT network.

3.3 Transport Systems & Services: the measures taken

Burgas has a lot of work to do to reduce the need of travel. Planning and construction of the central city areas in the last few years increase the options of non-car traveling, but still 58% of the trips of people living in Burgas are made by car. There is an increasing share of public transport by 5%, compared to the previous year, but the car still remains the dominant mode of transport, with the bicycle transport still taking an insignificant share.

The City Council has approved some strategies for sustainable urban development, currently implemented by the municipal administration. There are some restrictive measures and some supporting measures to encourage citizens to leave the private cars.

Burgas Municipality has introduced paid parking – Blue Zone in the central areas of the city. This restricts the access of cars to the main administrative and market area, turning it immediately into pedestrian zone.

The local PT company is owned by the Municipality, has its own budget and receives donation from the state authorities.

With the current implementation of Burgas integrated public transport project the Municipality is introducing an improved, optimized, more attractive and accessible public transport scheme and service to the local community, guests

and tourists of the city. The project will introduce a Bus rapid transit lane that will provide a priority to the public transport and will make it faster, attractive, and affordable, thus increasing its popularity and preference among the local community. In addition, the project will expand with 20,2km the current bicycle lanes infrastructure building an entire cycling network connecting the peripheral residential areas with the central city areas that will further support the introduction of a public bike sharing system that will start functioning during the summer of 2013.

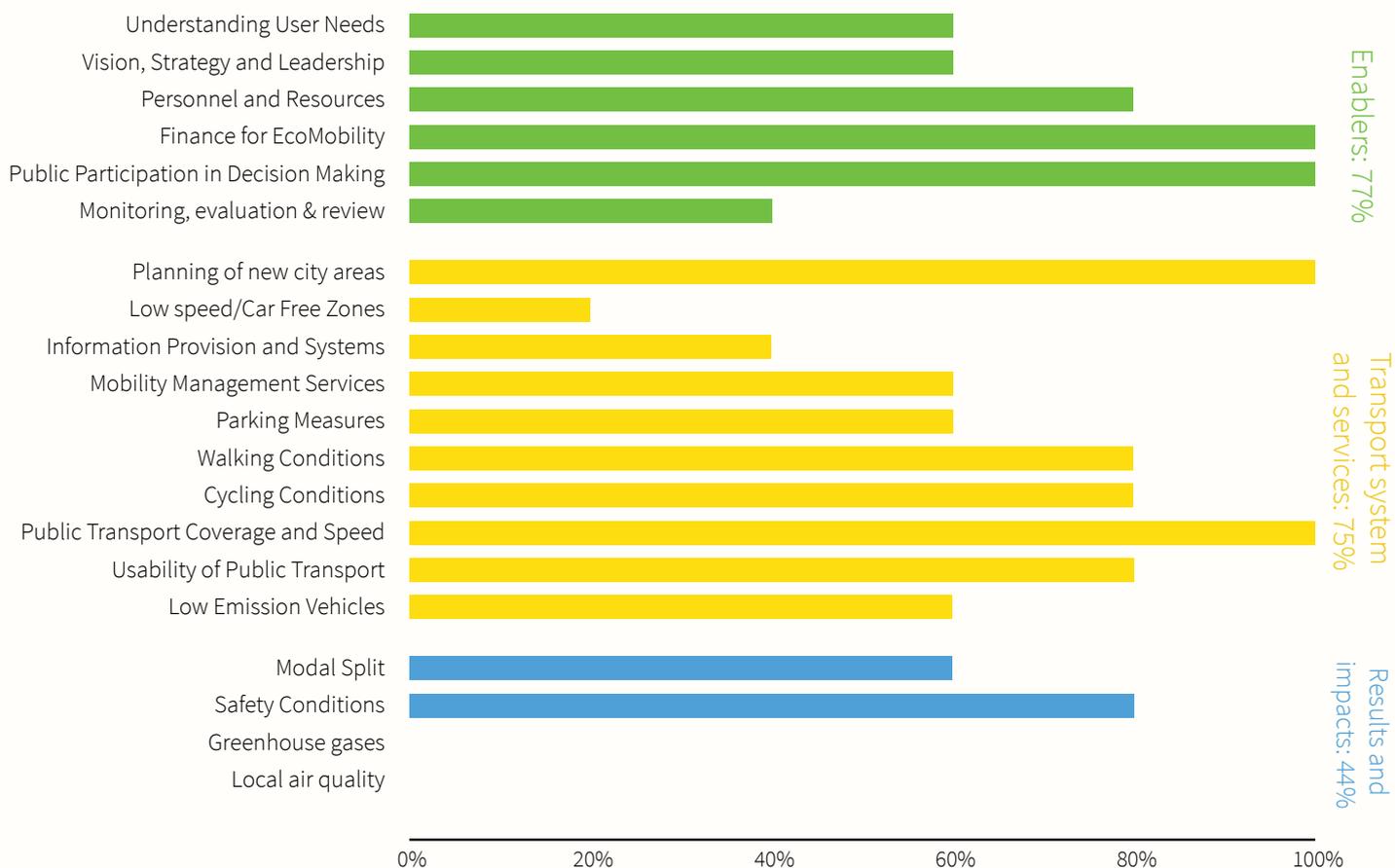
A special service available to disadvantaged people is “Ring and Ride”. Burgas has made serious social costs of transport services “Carriage of persons with reduced mobility” and “Transportation of children with disabilities.” During 2012 the service was provided 20,431 times to handicapped persons and 6,600 times to children with disabilities. In fulfilment of its social policy Burgas annually provides funding to alleviate the cost of transport of certain groups of people: students, mothers of many children, citizens over 65 and over 70 years, people with disability over 50% and 71% node, suffering from diabetes and Parkinson’s disease and others. In 2012, this activity has spent more than 2 million Euros.

The overall score, achieved for transport systems and services, although their scope is still small, has given Burgas the chance to be awarded a label. Still several recommendations are needed: Burgas has to work more to balance the planning and implementation of measures to promote cycling as a truly ecomobile mode of transportation.

3.4 The Results & Impacts: the long term effects

Municipality of Burgas implements a long term effects policy in the field of Ecomobility by implementing infrastructural improvements in the urban area and the PT network. Specific measures are undertaken to improve the situation, described by each indicator in this criteria. Implementing the Municipal strategy for sustainable energy development and the project Burgas Integrated Urban Transport will lead to several long term effects: lower emissions of greenhouse gases, better quality of local air, increasing the number of passengers in the urban PT network and change in the percentage distribution of the modal split. The only indicator which cannot be directly influenced by local policies and strategies is the air pollution, caused by the cars running on state highways and industrial pollution, that despite the efforts of local authorities will continue to affect negatively the air quality.

EcoMobility SHIFT Result for Burgas, Bulagria

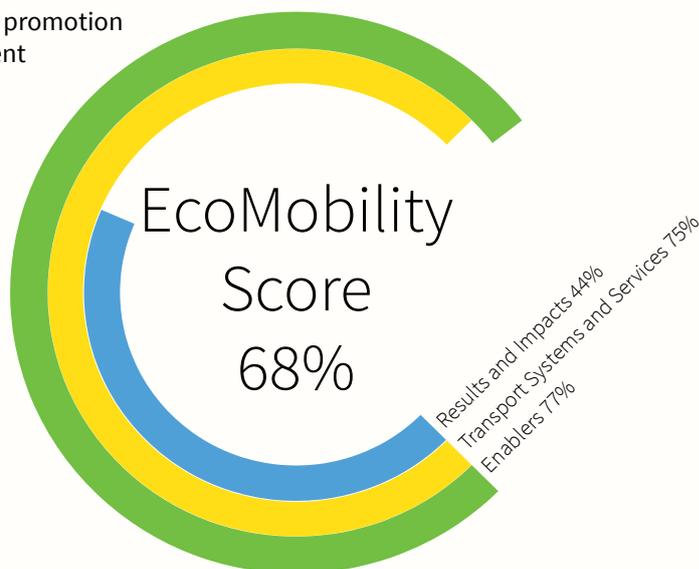


4. Evaluation

The municipal staff was prepared to apply the EcoMobility SHIFT scheme. The interest of non-government organisations to participate in the evaluation process shows strong connection between the local authorities and the associations of citizens of Burgas. During the assessment process both sides put efforts to collect the data necessary to correctly evaluate all the indicators represented in the SHIFT framework.

General conclusion of the audit report is that the EcoMobility and promotion of alternative means of transport are key points in the development of all plans for future development of Burgas. The city is actively participating in various initiatives for reduction of greenhouse emissions and promotion of ecomobile means of transport. Although the local authorities are doing their best to provide conditions for the development of ecomobile urban environment, the full results are yet to be seen. Some of the key projects that will realize the targets set in the strategic documents are still in the implementation phase.

Overall, Burgas made revision of existing documentation checked the relevance of the research data, received during former surveys, made monitoring over the implementation of the measures included in the municipal sustainability plans. The assessment itself was very useful for fixing the level of the performance of the municipality transport policies and policies regarding accessibility of urban areas. The score received by the Municipality shall serve as a feedback for future measures for improvement of the situation in terms of indicators that have received critical notes during the assessment.



About EcoMobility SHIFT

EcoMobility SHIFT is a total quality management scheme for cities, with an assessment and an external audit. During the assessment stage, 13 criteria are assessed using 28 indicators. A municipal stakeholder group evaluates the effectiveness of a city's sustainable transport policies and actions in terms of environment, accessibility, safety and equity. It is the first scheme of its kind to include all of the following three elements: the policy environment (Enablers), the actual measures (Transport Systems & Services) and the effects of these on the transport system (Results & Impacts). For each indicator, descriptions of performance levels on a scale of 1 to 5 help the group to discuss and decide using quantitative and qualitative information. The resulting 28 levels of municipal performance are given a weight and grouped into criteria before being added up to an EcoMobility score.

For more information on EcoMobility SHIFT:

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