



Policy Briefing 3 – University of Applied Sciences Erfurt

1. The Promise of MaaS

Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is probably one of the most discussed concepts in the transport sector at the moment. The promise of an efficient, user-centred, inclusive and sustainable mobility service seems very tempting and is immediately associated with MaaS.

But what is MaaS in general? According to the MaaS Alliance, the European MaaS lobby association, MaaS is the fusion of different transport modes into one transport service through which different mobility services can be requested on-demand.

The focus here is primarily on bundling the various mobility services, which are purchased separately by the MaaS provider and then re-issued as a package, for example in the form of a mobility budget. This principle implies a move away from ownership-based and monomodal travel towards the use of different modes of transport that can be booked just in time from public and private providers.

In essence, the promise of MaaS can be broken down to two points: the increased focus of the product on the user and an increase in the efficiency of the overall system.

The basis for the idea of increasing user-friendliness assumes that people want to get from A to B in the most simple, flexible, convenient, reliable and affordable way. In addition, the focus is on ensuring that the user is always in control of his or her travel plans and can choose the best option for him or her, regardless of the provider.

The idea of increasing efficiency stems from the daily surplus of transport capacity that has remained unused until now. Both private and public means of transport move from A to B with often very low utilisation. A MaaS system holds out the prospect of both reducing the amount of space needed to ensure people's mobility and increasing the utilisation of the means of transport.



It remains to be seen which of the high expectations MaaS will be able to fulfil in the future.

2. Development of MaaS in Thuringia

With regard to the status quo of MaaS in Thuringia, the general situation of the mobility landscape should first be described. The status quo of the Thuringian mobility landscape can generally be described as very diverse. Various transport associations, interest groups and providers compete for the favour of customers who do not want to use their own car, which takes up the largest share of the Thuringian modal split. A MaaS offer, i.e. a multimodal platform that enables access to the services of various mobility service providers, does not exist. However, based on the broad range of mobility services offered in Thuringia, the potential for this is considered to be given.

Public transport in Thuringia is also very diversified and differently organised. In addition to the central transport association, VMT GmbH, there are numerous other associations, interest groups, public and private providers that provide train, tram and bus services in the region. In addition, the classic public transport offer is supplemented by various private sector providers offering taxis, shared cars, rental cars, shared bikes and e-scooters. However, the latter services are mostly only available in urban areas, whereas the rural areas of Thuringia remain underprovided.

Furthermore, a review of the transport policy seems interesting. The objectives of the Free State of Thuringia in the areas of mobility and sustainability can be found in the "Operational Programme of the Free State of Thuringia (2014-2020)" (OPT) of 2014, the "State Development Programme Thuringia 2025" (LEP) of 2014 and the "Local transport plan for local rail passenger transport in the Free State of Thuringia 2018-2022" (NVP) of 2018. In addition, the new Thuringian State Transport Programme is to be considered as soon as it is available.

Within the framework of the OPT, Thuringia has set itself the goal of reducing the annual CO₂ emissions of the transport sector by around 400,000 tonnes. To this end, financial support is provided for model projects in local public transport, for example. Model projects for the promotion of e-mobility, the creation of new transport concepts in rural areas and the establishment of intermodal transport chains are also explicitly mentioned.



In addition, the LEP formulates guiding principles for the development of Thuringia's transport infrastructure. For example, integrated transport development, resource-saving bundling of infrastructures and modal shift to environmentally friendly modes of transport are emphasised. In addition, flexible and alternative forms of service as well as new organisational solutions are listed as a possibility for ensuring accessibility even in sparsely populated, rural areas. In addition, special importance is attributed to the networking of the various modes of transport and the development of interfaces and transfer points.

The NVP specifically addresses the networking of different modes of transport, explicitly of local rail passenger transport (LPT) with long-distance transport, private transport, local road passenger transport (LPT) or within LPT. In addition to the planning and constructional networking, the linking of information systems is also stated as an objective. This can serve as a basis for the creation of multi- and intermodal mobility offers, even if they are not explicitly mentioned in the NVP.

With regard to a MaaS system in Thuringia, there are no concrete approaches in the programmes. The objective of the PriMaaS project in Thuringia is therefore to develop a professional basis in order to be able to anchor the topic in the local policy instruments in the future.

3. Highlights of the Event

The ongoing discussions around the various areas of MaaS continue to raise new and increasingly diverse questions: What is the EU's position on MaaS, is there an ideal operator model, what will be the impact of MaaS on travel behaviour and sustainable mobility?

The online event 'MaaS - A European Perspective' organised by the Transport and Spatial Planning Institute at the University of Applied Sciences Erfurt as part of the EU-wide research project PriMaaS, was dedicated to giving an overview of the status quo of the different areas of the MaaS landscape and tried to answer some of these questions. The event took place on June 22, 2021 starting at 10:00 am (CET) and was divided into three content blocks: Introduction, research and business.

First, a general introduction to the topic and the PriMaaS project was given and the European strategy for multimodal digital mobility services was presented by Victoire Champenois (Policy



Officer at the Unit of Sustainable and Intelligent Transport at the European Commission). In the research block, Dr. Jana Sochor (Senior Researcher at the Division of Design & Human Factors, Department of Industrial and Materials Science at Chalmers University of Technology) talked about challenges and opportunities of MaaS, Daniel Reck (Researcher and Lecturer at the Institute for Transport Planning and Systems at ETH Zurich) presented his findings on how MaaS influences travel behaviour and Prof. Dr. Maria Kamargianni (Associate Professor of Transport and Energy and Head of MaaSLab at UCL Energy Institute of the University College London) talked about the lessons learned from MaaS demonstrations around Europe. Finally, in the business block, Dr. Steve Cassidy (Co-Founder of Fusemobility), Sampo Hietanen (CEO of MaaS Global), Michael Kieslinger (CEO of Fluidtime Data Services) and Dr. Boyd Cohen (CEO of Iomob Technologies) introduced their companies' solutions and then together explored the advantages and disadvantages of the different operator models within the framework of a panel discussion.

A total of around 150 guests from 30 countries from all over the world were welcomed, which once again shows the relevance of the topic of mobility in general, but also MaaS in particular. The direct exchange with the speakers after the presentations was found to be very invigorating and the audience took up the offer to ask questions very actively. The panel discussion with four leading heads of the European MaaS scene was a great conclusion to the event. The Transport and Spatial Planning Institute at the University of Applied Sciences Erfurt is still very pleased about the lively interest and hopes that the professional audience will continue to be interested in the topic of MaaS.

3. Key Lessons of the Event

- MaaS has several key components (app, platform, bundles).
- If a MaaS service/business model does not work in one area, it does not necessarily mean that it will not work in another areas.
- Bundles (not pay-as-you-go) have the potential to induce changes in travel behaviour.
- Not one MaaS solution for all.
- The technology is a tool, not a goal.



- MaaS is a general concept that can be adapted to the needs of any local or national and international content.