



International Approaches to Rail Devolution: A Comparative Study

A report produced by Rail Delivery Group



About Rail Delivery Group

Rail Delivery Group (RDG) partners with Britain’s train operators to put customers at the heart of everything we do, delivering essential services and dedicated experts who keep the nation’s railway running efficiently.

Our railway connects people and places, creates jobs, boosts the economy, and provides a greener way to travel. Anyone who has travelled by train or booked a journey for friends or family, will have used our services. We are integral to the running of the railway and play a crucial part at every stage of the customer journey.

From journey information, reservations and Railcards to improving performance, safety and accessibility, we drive the services and people that keep the railway moving – making sure we are delivering a better railway for all our customers, now and in the future.

As we embark on a new era for rail, we are enabling important changes to the structure of the industry and how we run the railway to meet customers’ needs. It is now more important than ever that we make sure our services can be relied upon by our customers to get them where they want to be, when they want, and to drive the economic growth the country needs.

Contents

1. Purpose	4
2. Executive Summary	8
3. Introduction	14
4. Comparative Metrics	20
5. Country Summaries	26
5.1. Germany	28
5.2. Sweden	32
5.3. France	36
5.4. Italy	40
5.5. Spain	44
6. Themes	48
6.1. Funding and contract model for devolved rail services	51
6.2. Geographical alignment of network to devolved authority	56
6.3. Service specification	60
6.4. Fares and ticketing	66
6.5. Station facilities and services	70
6.6. Rolling stock provision	74
7. Definitions and Glossary	80
Acknowledgements	89

Purpose

This report considers the devolution models for passenger rail services across five European countries. It has been prepared for Rail Delivery Group by Vectura Advisory.



In October 2024, Rail Delivery Group published *'How rail systems work around the world – a comparative review of international approaches'*.¹ This review was widely seen as a helpful overview which looked at key components of five different rail systems around the world. Given the current devolution agenda within the UK Government, the passing of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act, and the progression of the Railways Bill, it is timely to review different approaches observed from other European rail systems and identify relevant learnings.

Accordingly, Rail Delivery Group commissioned a deep dive into the devolution aspect of railway systems to provide a comparative analysis of the different approaches to devolution of passenger rail services.

At the outset it must be highlighted that this is a summary report, and complex issues have necessarily been simplified to focus on key characteristics and approaches. Railways are by their nature a system; it is therefore important that the different models and approaches are seen in context and how they interact with the system as a whole. The report does not make recommendations on the suitability of different models, nor suggest which examples represent best practice that should be adopted. It does however set out case study examples or approaches that could be considered further.

Consideration of the different approaches to the organisation and development of passenger rail services in the future design of GBR (Great British Railways) may be valuable, but any temptation to “drag and drop” should be resisted as individual components must be seen as part of an overall system, with different key parameters and requirements. Each country has adopted a different approach, and the value of each approach must be viewed in the wider context. Accordingly, a view on transferability and relevance to GBR needs to consider the respective models overall, rather than considering an individual component in isolation.

The 2024 Rail Delivery Group report *'How rail systems work around the world – a comparative review of international approaches'* included a consideration of devolution models for passenger rail services, but this was only one aspect of how international comparator rail systems were organised.

This earlier report also considered the wider structure of rail networks including the split of responsibilities between Infrastructure Managers (track) and Railway Undertakings (operators); the nature and role of the Competent Authority (specifying authority); the nature of operating contracts, whether they were competitively tendered, concessions, and the role of the operator in delivering the service specification.

One of the important differences which was highlighted in the previous report was the definition and distinction between Public Service Obligation (PSO) and commercial (open access) services. The GB contract structure was unique in including long-distance intercity services within the tendered contract model, while in the other countries reviewed the long-distance network was provided on a commercial, open access, basis even where the network remained provided by the state-owned incumbent operator. Accordingly, PSO services, operated under a contract from the Competent Authority, are predominantly limited to regional and urban services, which in turn potentially facilitates regional devolution.

In this report we focus on the models for the devolution of passenger rail services, building on our earlier work, and only refer to the wider rail system to provide context and clarity. The report is written to be read as a standalone document, however readers who are less familiar with the organisation of European rail systems may find reading the earlier report helpful.

References in the report are to the GB rail network, i.e. excluding Northern Ireland. This is deliberate. The organisation of Northern Ireland's railways is different to the rest of the UK, and the creation and authority of GBR does not include Northern Ireland.

The information shared in this report has largely been taken from publicly available sources. It has been supplemented by in-market knowledge of the report author and from discussions with in-market experts during the production of this work. The contents of this report (including all values) were completed in the first half of 2026.

¹ How rail systems work around the world – a comparative review of international approaches. <https://www.raildeliverygroup.com/publications/13055-international-comparison-report-web/file.html>

Definitions

The terminology used by authorities and industry parties in European countries at times differs from the terms used frequently in the GB rail sector. The phraseology used frequently is derived from the definitions used in EU legislation.

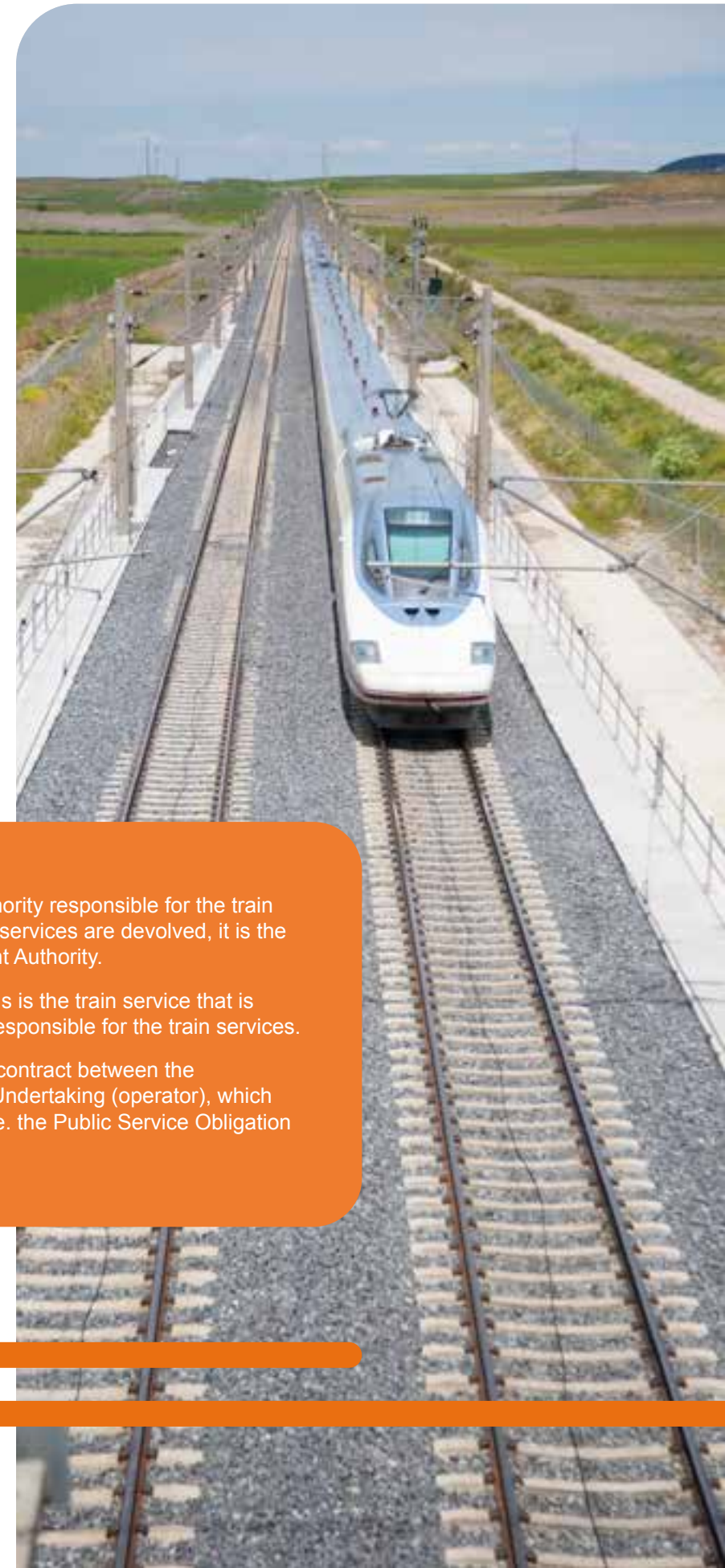
In compiling this report, the “standard” terms used within the EU rail sector have been used, reflecting the descriptions and definitions in place in the relevant countries. While these terms are also used within the GB rail environment, they may not be the terms most frequently used.

‘Section 7 of this report sets out Definitions and Glossary sets out the key terminology used and their definition, but at this stage the following definitions relating to train service specifications and requirements are highlighted.

Competent Authority: The public authority responsible for the train services. Where responsibility for train services are devolved, it is the regional authority who is the Competent Authority.

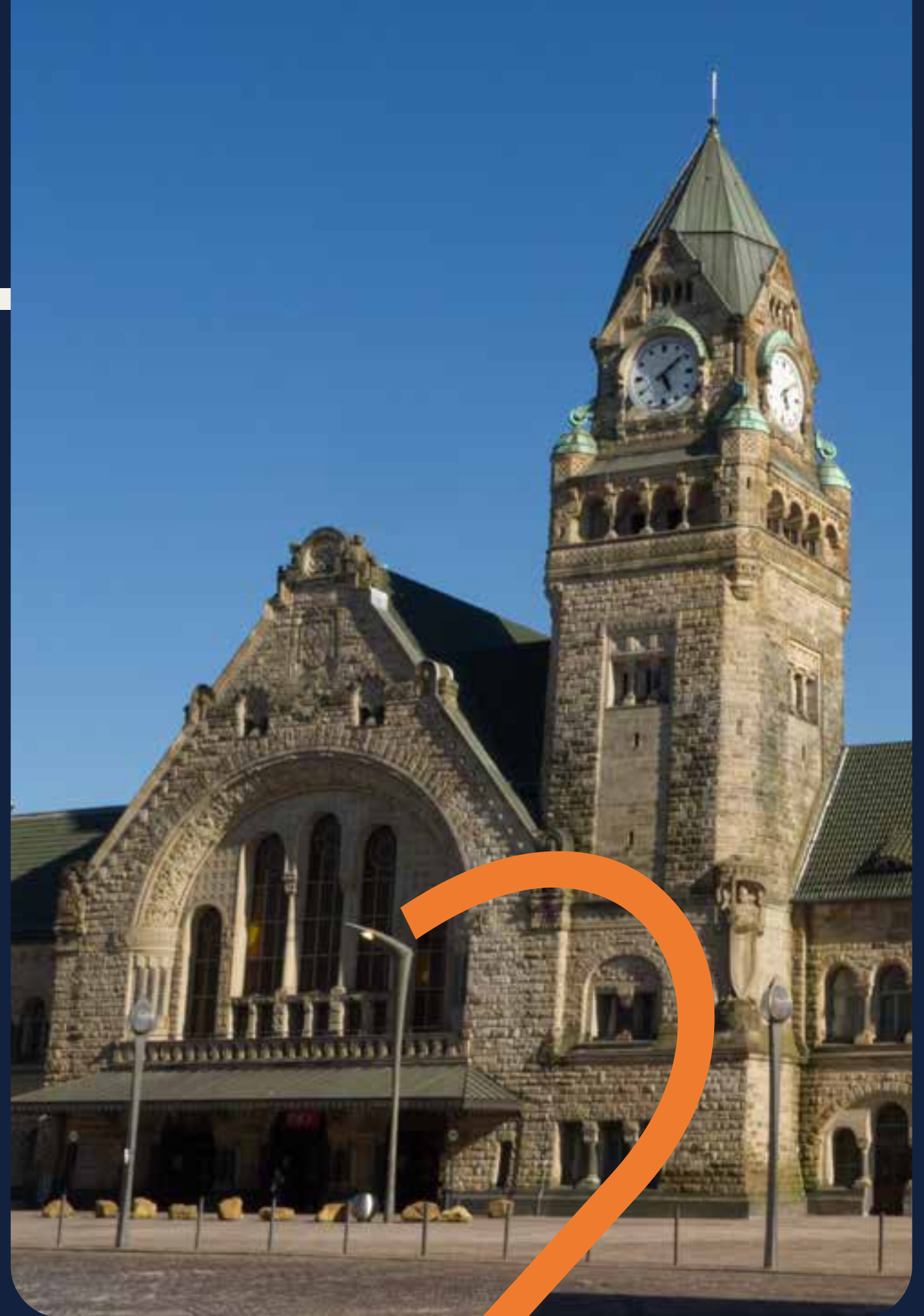
PSO – Public Service Obligation: This is the train service that is specified by the Competent Authority responsible for the train services.

PSC – Public Service Contract: The contract between the Competent Authority and the Railway Undertaking (operator), which includes the services to be delivered i.e. the Public Service Obligation (PSO).



Executive Summary

This report has been commissioned by Rail Delivery Group to provide a comparative review of the different approaches to devolution of passenger rail services. It considers the arrangements for the devolution of passenger rail services in Germany, Sweden, France, Spain and Italy, focusing on where responsibility for the specification, funding and delivery of rail services have been devolved.



As Great Britain transitions to GBR, it is timely to review different approaches towards devolution of passenger rail services by drawing on the recent experience of other European countries and identify relevant learnings.

This report is intended as a contribution to the emerging landscape of devolution and can inform industry wide forums. The report and its findings have been communicated to key industry groups that RDG delivers for its members and wider sectoral representation, including the Planning Oversight Group and the International Policy and Engagement Group, to inform consideration and discussion across the sector.

Devolution of responsibility for regional passenger rail services is observed across many European countries, however the level of devolution, model for delivery, and maturity of devolution is subject to significant variability. This comparative review considers five countries, which have been chosen to illustrate the different approaches to devolution and different levels of maturity in regional specification. This informed the choice of countries for the study. Furthermore, while national models of rail devolution are evident, there are also different models within each country.

Despite the different approaches observed, the principle of devolved management of rail services is clear and the specification, procurement and management of Public Service obligation (PSO) services is increasingly undertaken at a regional, not national, level.

For the countries selected for this review, Germany and Sweden have established and mature devolved models for PSO services, with a very limited role for national government. Specification and management of regional rail services is undertaken by regional Public Transport Authorities (PTAs), who take cost and revenue risk. This approach is also seen in France and Italy, albeit the devolution of rail services is less mature than in Germany and Sweden; both countries are in an earlier stage of devolved specification and competitive tendering of PSO services by regional authorities. While less established, there is a clear direction of travel towards regions having an increasing role as they build experience and competence.

Spain continues, at the current time, with a nationally specified Public Service Contract (PSC), however the recent devolution agreement with the Basque region, and ongoing discussions on the arrangements on the expiry of the current agreement, give an expectation of further devolution to regional authorities.

This contrasts with the UK where devolution of rail services is more limited. Moving forward the Railways Bill provides a statutory framework for devolution to local authorities, aligned to the 'right to request' process outlined in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act. As a result, GB rail may need to consider models for future devolution of rail services, however it must be noted that this report does not consider the future operating model for GBR nor how devolution may be applied in a GB rail context.

While no single model for the devolution of passenger rail services is observed within and across the countries reviewed, we can draw some high-level observations, outlined over the following three pages.

Service specification and service provision



1. Regional and urban services are designated PSO, while long-distance services are commercial

There is a very clear distinction between the definition of commercial and PSO passenger services. Commercial services are delivered through an open access model, even where the long-distance network has remained an effective national monopoly. The UK model of specifying and tendering long-distance services is not the norm. The designation, specification, procurement and management of PSO services therefore relates primarily to regional and urban services.

2. PSO services are specified by devolved authorities

Service specification, train capacity, service quality, branding and control of rolling stock are in most cases all determined by the devolved authority.

The decision on the approach and model to adopt is determined by the authority, and therefore there are regional variations in contracting models within each country, and there is not a single, standardised contract model across each country. Regional, rather than national, brands predominate.

3. PSO services are tendered under a concession model

Operating contracts are predominantly competitively tendered by the regional authority, which is a legal requirement under the EU's (European Union) 4th Railway Package². In all countries, apart from Spain, the concessions are regionally focused.

The specifying authority defines the services to be provided and associated quality standards. The operator delivers to this specification.

² The 4th Railway Package is a set of 6 legislative texts designed to complete the single market for Rail services (Single European Railway Area). Its overarching goal is to revitalise the rail sector and make it more competitive vis-a-vis other modes of transport - https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-modes/rail/railway-packages/fourth-railway-package-2016_en

Funding of rail services

4. Devolution of specification is accompanied by devolution of revenue and cost risk

Revenue risk is devolved.

There is an increasing move to concessions where revenue risk is fully with the devolved authority.

Cost risk is devolved.

Funding of rail services comes from local budgets; operating contracts transfers cost risk to concession operators.

In general, European regional authorities have greater revenue raising powers than seen in GB and/or there is a defined allocation of central funding supporting provision and funding of rail services (and other services). This supports local decision-making on service specification and accountability for the costs of service provision. This reflects the prevalence of decentralised government models in other countries compared to the UK – accompanied by greater devolution of financial powers.

Who decides and arbitrates

5. There is clear separation between the devolved authority as the specifier and the Infrastructure Manager.

There is a clear distinction between the role of the specifier (devolved authority) and the capacity allocation process (infrastructure manager or separate agency). Our comparators provide no example where this is done by the same body.

The GBR integrated model where the functions of the Competent Authority to specify and procure services, combined with the functions of the Infrastructure Manager, is not observed in any of the comparator countries.

This reflects the requirement under European law for the separation of the Infrastructure Manager from Railway Undertakings, but also the separation of service specification from infrastructure management.

6. Arrangements between devolved authorities are agreed on a bi-lateral basis

Where political boundaries do not align with rail networks, service specifications, fare structures and funding requirements are generally agreed on a bi-lateral basis between regional (transport) authorities. There are no national frameworks, and each regional (transport) authority may enter into different arrangements.



Fares, rolling stock and stations

7. Fares and ticketing are set a regional level

Integrated, inter-modal ticketing is the norm, with regional fare structures. Unlike GB, a national regulated fares model is not observed elsewhere based on the countries reviewed.

Decisions on fares (both ticket types and level of fares) are typically devolved to regional (transport) authorities.

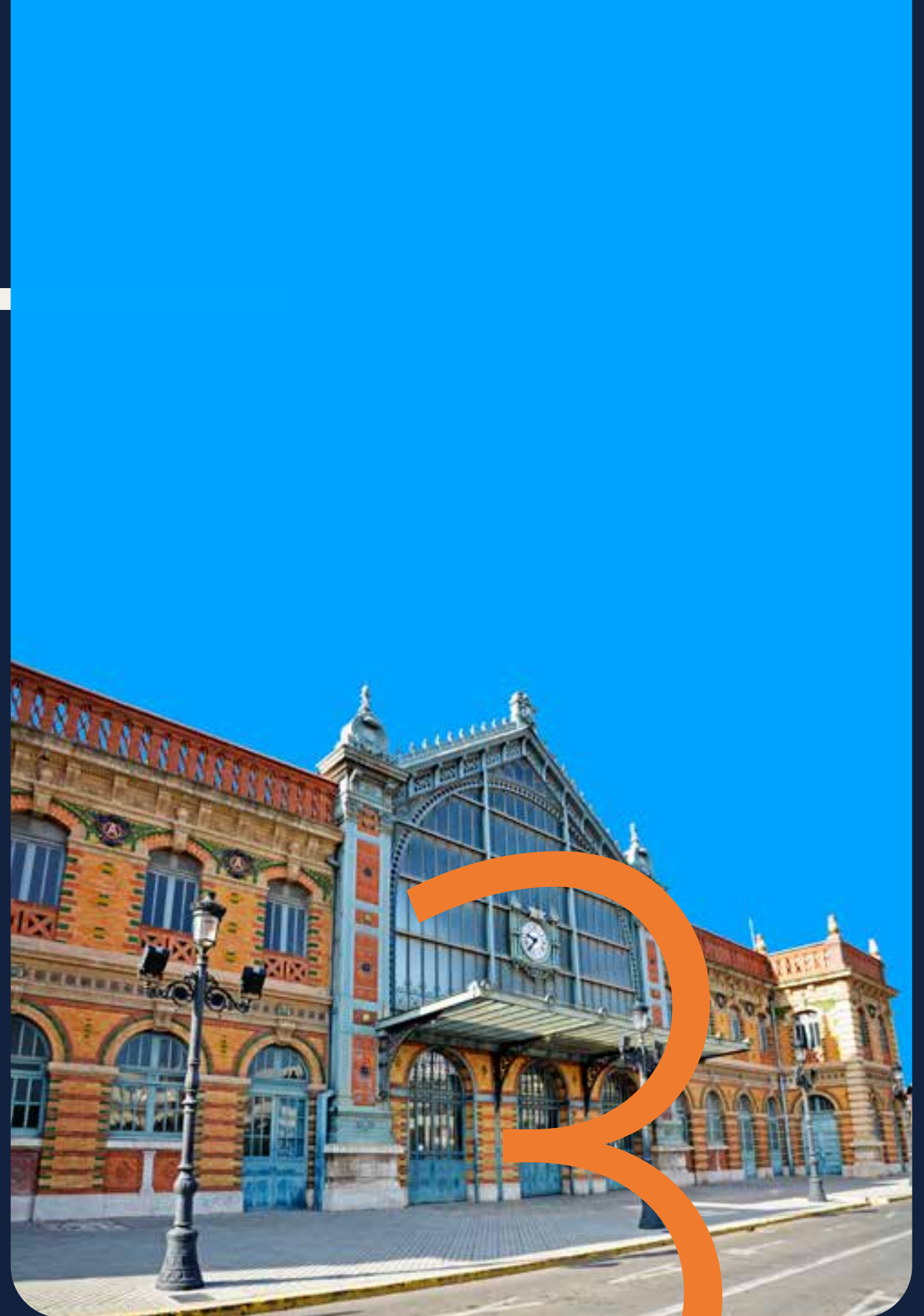
8. Control of rolling stock supports devolved specification of rail services

The comparators show that there are different approaches for the ownership of rolling stock. Control of, or assurance of, availability of rolling stock by the devolved authority is integral to devolution of service specification.

9. Stations

Station ownership and management models can vary within each country, with multiple station ownership models, especially in Sweden. Station management may be undertaken by the infrastructure manager or the devolved authority. The GB station leasing model is not replicated in this review's comparators.

Introduction





The GB rail system is currently in a period of transition. The Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Act was passed in 2024, and passenger train operating companies are progressively transferring to public ownership.

At the time of writing this report (June 2026), the Railways Bill is proceeding through the parliamentary process, targeted to receive Royal Assent by the end of 2026. This legislation will pave the way for the establishment of Great British Railways (GBR), as well as changing the legislative and regulatory framework that governs the GB rail industry.

The GB rail network is characterised by a relatively high level of centralised control and specification. As this report shows, comparable European networks have a more progressed model of devolution of the management of rail services than seen in the UK. Currently responsibility for passenger rail services is devolved to the Scottish and Welsh governments, Transport for London have responsibility for the Overground routes and Elizabeth Line, while more limited devolution exists in the West Midlands with the Collaboration Agreement between the DfT (Department for Transport) and the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE). The formal statutory role for other regional authorities is more limited, notwithstanding established engagement between regional authorities and the rail industry.

The current government's legislative agenda, in addition to the reform of the rail sector and the establishment of GBR, also includes a move towards a transfer of power from central government to regional combined authorities. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act, which received Royal Assent at the end of April 2026, sets out the legislative provisions to achieve this objective. The legislation contains a right to request for the local commissioning of local rail services.

Considering local commissioning, or devolution, of rail services will be an important factor in the design of GBR. The future model will need to consider how GBR can deliver its leadership role for the rail industry, including decisions on the most appropriate use of network capacity and management of passenger rail services, within a framework which will facilitate the potential local commissioning of passenger rail services.

Devolution of passenger rail services to regional authorities is more common in European rail systems. This may provide valuable learning and is the context in which this report has been commissioned and produced. It examines different models of rail devolution, considering the different models observed in the countries included in the study, and the different levels of maturity in each country.

This report does not consider the future operating model for GBR, except to the extent of noting the interrelationship between the Railways Bill and the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act, and that there is the potential for a greater role for devolved combined authorities in the future.

International comparators

The report examines the model for delivery of rail service in five European countries, focusing on where responsibility for the specification, funding and delivery of rail services have been devolved. Devolution of responsibility for regional passenger rail services is observed across many European countries, however the level of devolution, model for delivery, and maturity of devolution is subject to significant variability.

The countries selected for this report have been chosen to illustrate the different approaches to devolution and different levels of maturity in regional specification, and this informed the choice of countries for the study.

The countries considered are:



Germany: There is an established model for the devolution of the specification and procurement of passenger rail services to the 16 regional states, delivered through their 27 regional transport authorities. Other parts of the rail system, including the infrastructure, remain managed at a national level.



Sweden: There is an established model for the devolution of the specification and procurement of passenger rail services to the 21 regions (counties), delivered through their regional transport authorities. Other parts of the rail system, including the infrastructure, remain managed at a national level.



France: The 13 regions are responsible for regional rail services. The devolution of responsibility is still relatively recently established and the approach of the different regions is still evolving. Each region has adopted a different approach, with some regions proactively progressing competitive tendering of PSO services in their region, while others continue to maintain a single contract with the state-owned operator *SNCF Voyageurs*.



Italy: The 20 regions are responsible for regional rail services, with each region entering into individual contracts for PSO services in their region. Most contracts remain provided by direct award. Operation is predominantly by the state-owned operator, *Trenitalia*, while in some regions there are small municipally owned operators, generally providing services in partnership with *Trenitalia*.



Spain: Regional and urban (*Cercanías*) services are mostly provided under a single national PSO contract let by the Ministry of Transport which runs until 2027. Since January 2025, responsibility for services in the Basque region have been devolved to the regional government. Discussions are ongoing regarding devolution of services to other regional authorities and the contract arrangements for services after the expiry of the current national PSO contract.

These countries therefore provide a representative sample of those where devolution of passenger rail services to regional authorities is embedded and established. Some feature mature transport authorities who are experienced in managing the complexity of rail operating contracts, and others are progressing from a centralised approach of the management of passenger rail services towards one where the regions will have an increased role.



Legislative frameworks

The changes in legislative and regulatory arrangements that will apply to the GB rail network once the Railways Bill becomes law will introduce significant differences between the GB rail network and networks in EU countries.

European rail systems are governed by a series of EU Railway Packages (made up of Regulations, Directives and Implementing Acts) which have been designed to open the European rail market to competition, improve interoperability and safety, and ensure fair and non-discriminatory access to the network.³ This includes a requirement for separation between the Infrastructure Manager (track) and Railway Undertakings (operators), and an obligation for the competitive tendering of PSO services.

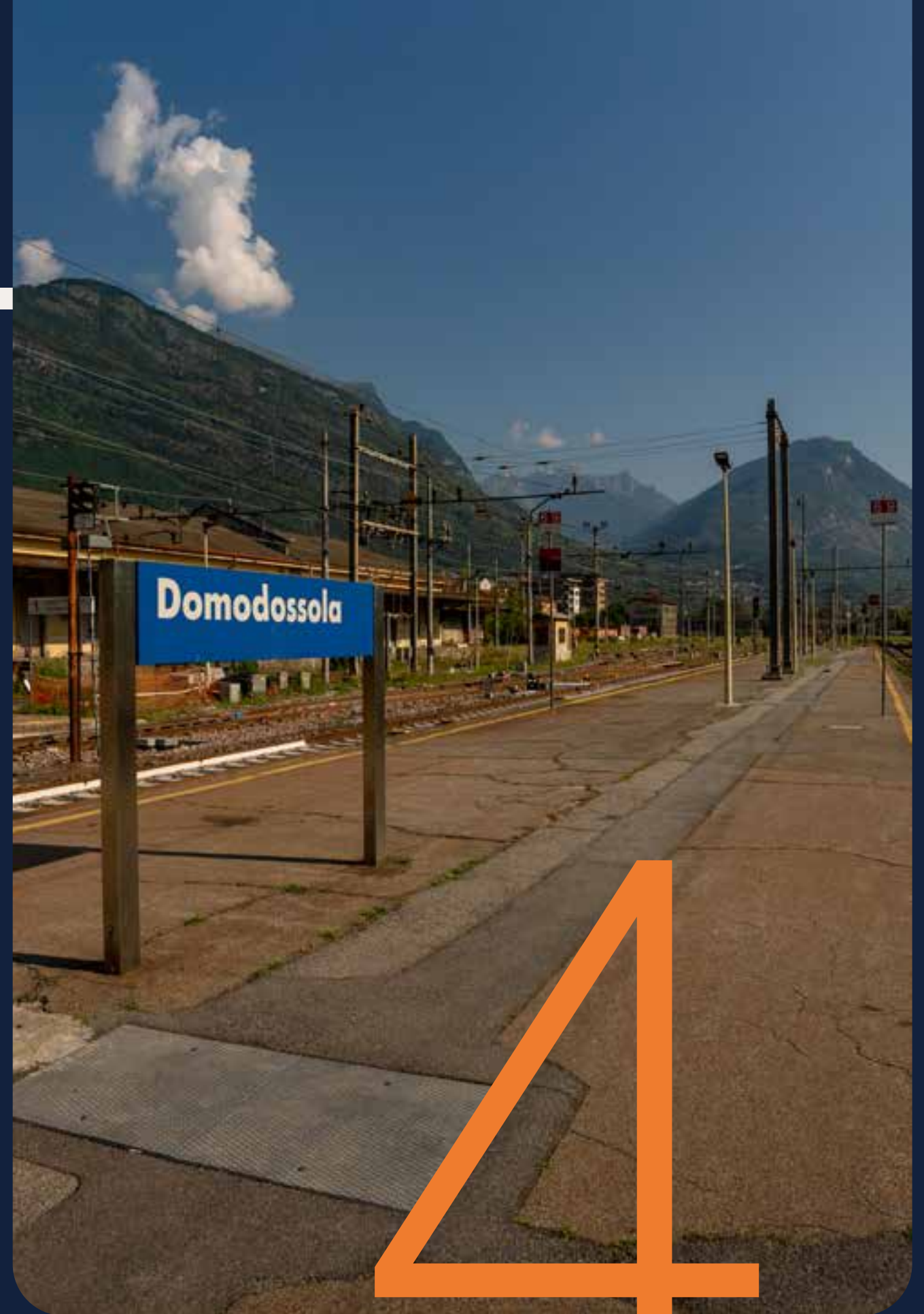
They have been agreed at a European level and each EU country has been responsible for its transposition into national law and application on their respective rail systems. This has resulted in differences in detailed application between countries. There is not a single model, and each country has developed its own approach, reflecting interpretation, characteristics of respective networks, political organisations and priorities, albeit within a common EU framework. It is worth noting that UK rail privatisation (enabled by the Railways Act 1993) predated the EU Railway Packages. This has meant there were fewer subsequent changes to GB rail than in other countries when the Railway Packages were agreed, as key measures including separation of the Infrastructure Manager track) and Railway Undertaking and tendering of passenger services had already occurred.

Following the UK's exit from the EU, most legislation relating to rail remained in place unchanged, with limited legislation changes arising from the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023, and the replacement of EU Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs) with National Technical Specification Notices (NTSNs).

Therefore, while this report identifies approaches to the devolution of passenger rail services in comparator European countries, the legislative and regulatory framework supporting these models will be significantly different from the new GB model with the introduction of GBR. The applicability of these findings needs to be considered in this context. At the same time, it is important to understand what learning can be applied, and that the 'right to request' provisions for local commissioning of passenger rail services in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act may result in a greater level of devolution in the GB rail sector than previously seen.



Comparative Metrics





European railway networks differ significantly in size, utilisation and level of passenger usage. There is no straightforward method for fully normalised comparisons, however, a qualitative and quantitative approach can provide some useful context and enables some high-level comparisons to be drawn of key differences and similarities between networks, which can help put devolution models into context. However, it is important to note that comparative railway statistics do not in themselves provide evidence of the relative performance of the railway systems, given the variability in characteristics and structures.

The quantitative comparative data used in this report are taken from the IRG-Rail annual Market Monitoring Report, with data taken from the 14th annual report which was published in April 2026.⁴ IRG Rail (Independent Regulator Group Rail) is a grouping of over 30 European regulatory bodies. The ORR (Office of Road and Rail) are a member of IRG Rail and therefore comparable GB rail data is reported.

However, the definitions used for internal GB industry reporting may vary from the definitions used for the data shown in the IRG-Rail Market Monitoring Report. Accordingly, the values shown in the data table may differ from published data from DfT, Network Rail, ORR and other industry sources. Furthermore, IRG-Rail data for network size and journey lengths are published in km, likewise financial information (including for the UK) are published in Euro. The figures shown below are transposed from the IRG Rail report as published and therefore remain in km and Euro.

Comparative data by region is not published for rail at a European level. Individual countries publish national reports, but the data definitions and datasets are not comparable. Therefore, to maintain comparability, no attempt has been made to show data at the level of a devolved authority, the data shown remains at a national level.

Table 1: Rail network size and utilisation

The table below sets out key comparative metrics considering the size of the respective national networks, their utilisation, and the level of operational performance achieved.

						
	Great Britain (GB)	Germany (DE)	Sweden (SE)	France (FR)	Italy (IT)	Spain (ES)
Rail route length (route km)	16,331	38,855	10,902	27,110	18,369	15,669
Route length by country size (route km per 100 km ²)	6.70	10.87	2.68	5.91	6.08	3.10
Route length by population density (route km per 10,000 inhabitants)	2.36	4.65	10.30	4.10	3.11	3.19
Network usage density (train km per route/km per day)	92	79	42	46	57	35
Share of passenger services (% of operated train km)	94%	78%	78%	88%	87%	88%
Passenger train punctuality (T-5)	91%	82%	87%	89%	82%	81%

The GB rail network is comparably sized (by route length) to the comparator countries, albeit France and Germany have a larger network length. While the data is presented at a national level, we can draw some key comparisons which provide context to the consideration of the management of the network, and therefore implications for the devolution of passenger rail services.

Relative to its geographical size, the UK network is long, but comparing the route length by population density, the network is relatively small. This is reflected in subsequent metrics i.e. that the UK rail network is comparatively highly utilised in terms of number of trains and passengers. This is also reflected in the network density, with GB having the highest number of trains per day per route km by a considerable degree, with Germany having the next highest network utilisation. Interestingly, despite the GB network's high utilisation, GB rail records the highest level of train performance.

The UK network is also the most passenger-focused network of the countries we are considering with passenger trains accounting for 94% of all train km, a higher percentage than for the other countries considered in this analysis.

This has consequences for the potential devolution of passenger services, as the high intensity of GB rail utilisation incorporates service patterns with a high level of interconnectivity between long-distance and regional services. As a result, regional and urban rail services often serve multiple population centres, and relatively few services are operated within a single Mayoral Combined Authority.

This pattern is less pronounced in the comparator countries with the Rhine-Ruhr conurbation in Germany probably the only comparable region with this interconnectivity of service patterns.

⁴ <https://irg-rail.eu/irg/documents/market-monitoring>

Passenger usage

The table below considers passenger numbers and the relative proportion of PSO services.

Data is not published in a comparable form for the number of services and passengers provided by devolved authorities. Nevertheless, taking PSO services as a proxy gives a good estimation of the relative proportion of services provided by devolved authorities.⁵ With respect to the comparators, all services provided by devolved authorities are designated as PSO.

Table 2: Passenger usage

						
	Great Britain (GB)	Germany (DE)	Sweden (SE)	France (FR)	Italy (IT)	Spain (ES)
Passenger train km (million train km pa)	515.2	872.0	129.9	399.6	334.8	175.3
Passenger km (billion km pa)	64.0	112.0	13.6	107.8	54.7	36.1
Percentage of PSO services (train/km)	98%	81%	49%	70%	71%	58%
Percentage of non-PSO services [commercial / open access] (train/km)	2%	19%	51%	30%	29%	42%
Passenger km per passenger train km	124	128	105	270	164	206
PSO Passenger km per PSO Passenger train km	121	93	117	146	118	138
PSO revenues from fares (Euro cent per passenger km)	21.23	7.69	-	8.62	6.54	2.25
Share of PSO revenues from fares	71.4%	26.3%	-	19.8%	25.5%	7.4%

The UK is an outlier in terms of percentage of PSO services as a consequence of the designation of long-distance services as PSO. Higher passenger-kilometres in France, Italy and Spain reflect the scale of their high-speed networks. This is also reflected in the percentage of PSO services measured, with lower values due to the relative size of their high-speed networks and distances operated by services on these routes. Sweden has a lower figure reflecting the commercial provision of long-distance services and relative concentration of PSO services around urban centres, reflective of the lower levels of longer regional PSO services.

Germany has a higher proportion of PSO services, reflecting the larger regional networks across the country which link regional cities.

The UK is also an outlier when considering PSO fares revenue, with a significantly higher percentage of revenue per passenger km. This is in part due to the inclusion of long-distance services as PSO.

⁵ Most long-distance services in all comparator countries are provided on a commercial basis, and therefore are not designated as PSO. While a small number of long distance services on secondary routes in France, Italy and Spain, and night trains in Sweden, are designated PSO, these represent a small proportion of all services operated. The percentage of PSO services is a reasonable approximation to urban and regional services for comparative purposes.

Models of rail devolution

The table below sets out a qualitative assessment of the organisation of the comparative networks, and the approach to the devolution and tendering of services.⁶

Table 3: Models of rail devolution

						
	Great Britain (GB)	Germany (DE)	Sweden (SE)	France (FR)	Italy (IT)	Spain (ES)
Level of political devolution						
Level of rail devolution						
Competitive tendering of PSO services						

Before considering rail devolution, it is helpful to consider the overall balance between national and regional government, and how this compares between the UK and the comparator countries.

The UK, especially in England, is characterised by strong central government, with most policy frameworks being set at the national level. Regional authorities, while having important delivery responsibilities, have limited revenue raising powers. The devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have significant devolved responsibilities, albeit taxation remains mostly set nationally. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act can be expected to increase devolution to English combined authorities.

In contrast, Germany's and Sweden's regions have extensive devolved revenue raising powers and responsibility for domestic policy, including transport. The French and Italian regions are also increasingly responsible for key areas of domestic policy, again including transport. Spain has the most centralised structure of the comparators but also has autonomous regions including the Basque region and Catalonia.

The level of fiscal and political devolution is reflected in the level of rail devolution observed, with established devolution of regional passenger services in Germany and Sweden, and increasing roles for regions in France and Italy. Rail devolution in Spain is more limited but recent developments point to further devolution in the future.

Finally, a similar pattern is seen in considering comparative tendering of rail services as required under the 4th Railway Package. There is an established mature market for rail tendering in Germany and Sweden, undertaken by regional authorities, and a move towards competitive tendering in France and Italy, though regional, direct awards still predominate. Spain retains a single national direct award PSC, but this is expected to change in the next few years.

⁶ The colour coding is a qualitative assessment, to visually represent a scale of 1 to 5, with the dark green ticks representing a 1 i.e. a high level of political or rail devolution, or established competitive tendering of rail services, light green (2) and yellow (3) representing less established levels or still developing, while orange (4) indicates limited political or rail devolution, or to date no competitive tendering of rail services but with a future intent, while red (5) shows the GB position where PSO services are not competitively tendered under GBR.

Country Summaries

In this section we consider the key characteristics of each of the country's rail system and the model for the devolution of passenger rail services. A short summary of the organisation of each country's rail system is provided, however the focus of the country overviews is to provide a description of the organisation and provision of PSO passenger services and the extent that they are provided under a devolved model.⁷ This overview provides the context for the subsequent section, which takes a comparative review of specific aspects of rail devolution models.

⁷ A more detailed description of the organisation of the rail systems of France, Germany, Spain and Sweden is provided in the earlier RDG report *How rail systems work around the world – a comparative review of international approaches* published in Autumn 2024 <https://www.raildeliverygroup.com/publications/13055-international-comparison-report-web/file.html>





Germany

There is an established model for the devolution of the specification and procurement of passenger rail services to the 16 regional states, delivered through their 27 regional transport authorities. Other parts of the rail system, including the infrastructure, remain managed at a national level.

- The Federal (national) government allocates funding to each of the 16 regional states for regional public transport under a defined formula. Individual regions may supplement this funding.
- Service specifications are set by the PTA, typically defining the parameters of the timetable structure (frequency, journey times, calling patterns) but the operator will develop the detailed timetable.
- Where services cross from one PTA area to another, generally one PTA will lead and agree the funding and specification with the neighbouring PTA.
- The PTA sets the fare for the geographical area they are responsible for. Tickets are valid for the PTA region or short distances outside. The PTA takes revenue risk.
- Rolling stock is provided by a mix of in-house lessors and third-party ownership models supported by PTA backed guarantees.

Activity	Organisation
Competent Authority (Tendering Authority)	27 PTAs who let the operating contracts. There are 16 states, some have a single PTA for the state, others have multiple PTAs.
Railway Undertaking (Public Service Contract (PSC))	<i>DB Regio</i> continue to provide around 60% of tendered services Other major operators include <i>Transdev</i> , <i>BeNex</i> , <i>Netinera</i> , <i>HLB</i> , <i>National Express</i> , <i>ÖBB</i> .
Infrastructure Manager	<i>DB InfraGo</i> – single infrastructure manager for the whole country, established in 2024 with merger of <i>DB Netz</i> and <i>DB Stations und service</i> divisions. Fully owned by <i>DB AG</i> .
Capacity Allocation	<i>DB InfraGo</i> - Capacity allocation is undertaken on a train priority basis with cross-border services having highest priority, then long-distance services, then regional services. An international service therefore has higher priority than a regional service operating in a standard clockface pattern.
Regulator	<i>Bundesnetzagentur</i> (Federal Network Agency) – competition authority for energy, telecommunications, postal services and railways, responsible for ensuring non-discriminatory access to rail network. <i>Eisenbahn-Bundesamt</i> (EBA) – safety and licencing authority
Rolling stock	There are multiple ownership models. The majority of rolling stock used on regional services is supported by the PTA either through direct ownership, through an in-house lessor, or via third-party ownership backed by PTA financial guarantees. Some rolling stock is provided under a Rosco lease model or is owned by the operator



The German PSC market is characterised by the federal make-up of Germany with the tendering of regional passenger services undertaken by PTAs. Responsibility for regional transport is fully devolved to the 16 states, which are managed through Public Transport Authorities (PTAs). There is a very limited role for the national government.

The number of PTAs per state as well as the size of their area of responsibility varies considerably, between one (e.g. Bavaria or Schleswig-Holstein) and five (Saxony). The smallest PTA authority is responsible for about 2.2 million train km, while the largest oversees more than 128 million train-km.

The 27 PTAs are responsible for the specification, procurement and monitoring of regional passenger rail transport (PSO). They are all members of the Federal Association of Local Rail Transport (*Bundesverband SchienenNahverkehr*).

The national network is characterised by interconnected, cross-country routes connecting major cities, reflecting the population distribution. The long-distance services connecting the major cities are operated on a commercial (open access) basis by *DB Fernverkehr*, with *Flix Train* also providing some commercial services.

Major cities have urban *S-Bahn* networks, with comprehensive regional services linking secondary cities and towns. These services are designated as PSO and come under the responsibility of the PTAs.

The regional passenger rail market is liberalised, with competitive tendering of regional PSO services, undertaken by the PTAs. Concessions are typically for a single route or series of routes, and each concession is accordingly much smaller than GB operating contracts.

The PTAs are responsible for service specification, typically defining the parameters of the timetable structure (frequency, journey times, calling patterns) but the operator will develop the detailed timetable.

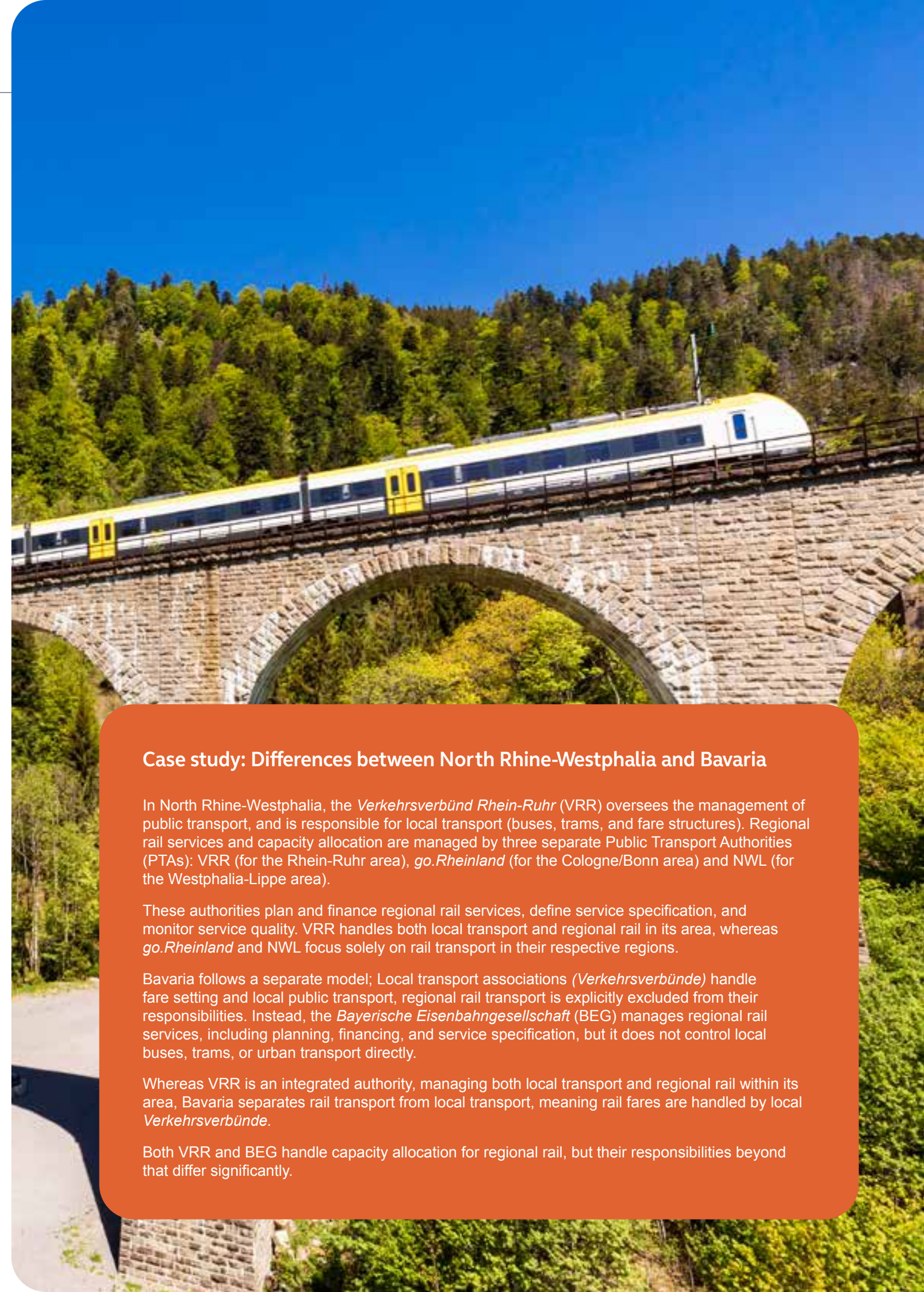
The Federal (national) government allocates funding to the states for regional public transport under a defined formula. Individual regions may supplement this funding.

The organisation of public transport in Germany varies significantly between states. Depending on the PTA, some PTAs are responsible for all aspects of public transport (buses, trams, city fare structures), while in other regions this is delegated further to local transport associations.

There is no single tendering model. Each PTA undertakes procurement in a different manner and with a different model, though there are several similar approaches. Different models may be seen within each PTA.

Where services cross from one PTA area to another, generally one PTA will lead and agree the funding and specification with the neighbouring PTA. The other PTAs may be co-signatories to the contract where services cover more than one PTA area, or may choose to have the contract managed by the lead PTA.

The PTA sets the fare for the geographical area they are responsible for. Tickets are valid for the PTA region or short distances outside, with the PTA taking the revenue risk.



Case study: Differences between North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria

In North Rhine-Westphalia, the *Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Ruhr* (VRR) oversees the management of public transport, and is responsible for local transport (buses, trams, and fare structures). Regional rail services and capacity allocation are managed by three separate Public Transport Authorities (PTAs): VRR (for the Rhein-Ruhr area), *go.Rheinland* (for the Cologne/Bonn area) and NWL (for the Westphalia-Lippe area).

These authorities plan and finance regional rail services, define service specification, and monitor service quality. VRR handles both local transport and regional rail in its area, whereas *go.Rheinland* and NWL focus solely on rail transport in their respective regions.

Bavaria follows a separate model; Local transport associations (*Verkehrsverbünde*) handle fare setting and local public transport, regional rail transport is explicitly excluded from their responsibilities. Instead, the *Bayerische Eisenbahngesellschaft* (BEG) manages regional rail services, including planning, financing, and service specification, but it does not control local buses, trams, or urban transport directly.

Whereas VRR is an integrated authority, managing both local transport and regional rail within its area, Bavaria separates rail transport from local transport, meaning rail fares are handled by local *Verkehrsverbünde*.

Both VRR and BEG handle capacity allocation for regional rail, but their responsibilities beyond that differ significantly.



Sweden

There is an established model for the devolution of the specification and procurement of passenger rail services to the 21 regions (counties), delivered through their regional transport authorities. Other parts of the rail system, including the infrastructure, remain managed at a national level.

- Rail services are funded from regional taxation (the counties have local tax raising powers), there is no central government subsidy.
- The PTA specifies the detailed timetable and train formations to be operated. The operator role is limited to resourcing the service.
- Where services cross from one PTA area to another, generally one PTA will lead and agree the funding and specification with the neighbouring PTA.
- The PTA sets the fare for the geographical area they are responsible for. Tickets are valid for the PTA region or short distances outside. The PTA takes revenue risk.
- Rolling stock is owned and managed through a national PTA owned lessor.

Activity	Organisation
Competent Authority (Tendering Authority)	21 PTAs / counties, which let a total of 12 regional rail operating contracts.
Railway Undertaking (Public Service Contract (PSC))	Four companies provide PSC rail services - SJ, VR Sverige, Transdev and Vy Tåg. Long-distance (intercity) services are provided on a commercial basis by SJ, VR (formally MTR Express) and Snälltåget. Trafikverket (Swedish Transport Administration) is responsible for the night train PSC.
Infrastructure Manager	Trafikverket - responsible for all of Sweden's transport infrastructure including rail, roads, shipping and aviation. It is an agency of the Ministry of Infrastructure. Jernhusen - separate state-owned business which owns railway property assets including main stations and maintenance depots.
Capacity Allocation	Trafikverket - responsible for capacity allocation and traffic management.
Regulator	Transport Styrelsen (Swedish Transport Authority) – primarily a safety regulator, an agency of the Ministry of Infrastructure.
Rolling stock	Transitio – lessor established by the PTAs to own and manage rolling stock used on PSC services, who lease trains to operators either directly or via the PTA. Certain regions, e.g. Skåne and Stockholm, own rolling stock directly, Transitio manage these fleets on behalf of the PTAs.



Responsibility for the provision and funding of regional passenger services is entirely devolved to the 21 counties of Sweden. There is no role for central government in the specification of PSO passenger rail services.

Since the Sweden 2010 Transport Act, there is a requirement for each of the 21 counties in Sweden to have a PTA. They are responsible for the procurement of all public transport and regional transport plans.

The PTAs are responsible for all regional services, which are provided under a tendered public service contract model. Sweden has an established liberalised passenger market with competitive tendering of rail services for over 25 years. All PSO services must be competitively procured, and direct awards are not allowed.

There are 12 regional operating contracts on the national rail network, with a further two self-contained networks in Stockholm region (Stockholm Metro, and *Roslagsbanen*).

The 21 PTAs are responsible for the 12 national network PSCs, all of which have contract areas covering more than one PTA region. A single PTA will normally lead on procurement of the PSC. The PSC model varies by PTA and contract.

Rail services are funded from regional taxation (regions have local tax raising powers), there is no central government subsidy. There is not a standard model, and each PTA takes responsibility for their region. The rail contract areas all cross regional boundaries. Where services cross from one PTA area to another, generally one PTA will lead and agree the funding and specification with the neighbouring

PTA. The PTAs are responsible for agreeing the service specification and funding of services on a bi-lateral basis. There is no national overseeing body or standard template agreement. However, co-operation is mature and *Svensk Kollektivtrafik* (the association of Swedish PTAs) provides an important co-ordination role.

The PTA is responsible for the service specification, customer offer and fares. This includes the detailed timetable and train formations to be operated. The operator role is limited to resourcing the service. They also make the rolling stock available to the operator. The operator is therefore essentially a delivery agent for the PTA. Regional PSC services account for around 90% of passenger journey's but only about 50% of passenger km.

Ticket types, pricing and validity are determined by the PTA. The PTA sets the fare for the geographical area they are responsible for. Tickets are valid for the PTA region or short distances outside. The PTA takes revenue risk. There is no national fares regulation, the impact on regions budget is the (effective) control mechanism. Ticket validity across PTA boundaries is agreed on a bi-lateral basis.

Long-distance passenger services are provided under an open-access commercial model. PTAs have no role in service specification, and PTA tickets are not valid on the commercially operated long-distance services, and vice versa. Point-to-point ticketing is available but priced as separate legs. The exception is the provision of night trains, which are procured and managed by the national infrastructure manager, *Trafikverket*.



France

The 13 regions are responsible for regional rail services. The devolution of responsibility is still relatively recently established, and the approach of the different regions is still evolving. Each region has adopted a different approach, with some regions proactively progressing competitive tendering of PSO services in their region, while others continue to maintain a single contract with the state-owned operator *SNCF Voyageurs*.

- Rail services are funded by the regions who receive a defined share of national funding, as well as through local taxation.
- Service specifications are defined by the regions at a high level, and the operator (SNCF) develops the timetable structure. It can be expected that the French regions will become more prescriptive.
- SNCF have restructured their operating businesses, so that management organisations and responsibilities are aligned with the respective region.
- SNCF continue to take revenue risk on regional PSCs and set fares. This is expected to change.
- Rolling stock remains predominantly owned by SNCF but the French regions are starting to establish in-house ownership models, including transfer of existing SNCF fleets to regional ownership.

Activity	Organisation
Competent Authority (Tendering Authority)	13 regions who are responsible for regional rail services in their region. <i>Direction générale des infrastructures, des transports et des mobilités</i> (DGITM) is responsible for long-distance, cross-country PSC services.
Railway Undertaking (Public Service Contract (PSC))	<i>SNCF Voyageurs</i> continue to operate nearly all PSC services under a mix of direct award and competitively tendered contracts. <i>Transdev</i> have been awarded two regional contracts.
Infrastructure Manager	<i>SNCF Réseau</i> : responsible for providing access to the rail infrastructure, including allocating capacity and setting infrastructure fees; managing network traffic; maintaining and renovating infrastructure; and expanding and developing the network. It is 100% owned by <i>SNCF Group</i> . <i>SNCF Gares et Connexions</i> : Responsible for the management and operation of all railway stations on the French rail network. It publishes and charges regulated access fees to Railway Undertakings for use of stations and their facilities.
Capacity Allocation	<i>SNCF Réseau</i> – responsible for capacity allocation and traffic management.
Regulator	<i>Autorité de Régulation des Transports</i> (ART): responsible for approving regulated charges for access to the network, promotion of market opening, and monitoring financial and operational performance. Also responsible for the airport, motorway, rail and coach transport sectors.
Rolling stock	<i>SNCF Voyageurs</i> – continue to own nearly all rolling stock. Certain regions are establishing their own internal leasing platforms for the future ownership of rolling stock.

The level of devolution and the maturity of the regions is not as developed as in other comparators, and SNCF continue to dominate. Responsibility for regional rail services is fully devolved to the 13 regions, however their scope and involvement in the management of rail services is continuing to evolve.

In France, responsibility for passenger services varies by its type and designation:

	Long-distance			Regional and urban	
Types of services	High speed: TGV	LD: Thello, Intercities	Interregional: Intercitiés	Transilien	TER and local services
Designation	Commercial open access	Commeicial open access	PSC	PSC	PSC
Awarding authority	None. Regulation by ART		DGITM	Ile de France (Paris region)	Regions

Since 2017, PSO (TER regional and suburban) services have been the responsibility of, and are funded by, the 13 regional authorities. The funding for regional passenger rail mostly comes from central government, with each region receiving a defined share of national funding under a predetermined formula, as well as funding through local taxation. The transfer of responsibility for regional PSO services was accompanied by the transfer of existing funds, but no additional funds were provided at this time.

The funding provided by the national government is split into separate cap ex and op ex budgets and must be used accordingly. Funding to deliver the existing services or for service improvements must be met by the region to the extent the costs are not covered by the national government allocation. The region is responsible for specifying the services it wishes to procure – and meeting the cost of provision. French regions have local tax raising powers and may choose to allocate local taxation to transport and rail services.

Each region enters into a separate PSC for provision of services. DGITM remain responsible for the long-distance services designated PSO. *SNCF Voyageurs* continue to dominate, operating virtually all PSC services, despite the introduction of competitive tendering in some regions. Single direct awards between regions and SNCF until recently remained the norm.

In most cases these have remained a direct award with *SNCF Voyageurs* which covers all services within the region. This situation is now changing with the regions progressively competitively tendering PSCs. New PSCs may be route based rather than a single contract for the entire region.

There is competitive tendering of PSCs by regions: to date only *Region Sud* and *Grand Est* have concluded a competitively awarded PSC with a party other than *SNCF Voyageurs* (in both cases to *Transdev*).

Some direct awards contain provisions for the restructuring of services into ‘lots’ for competitive tendering, while others make no provisions for future tendering.

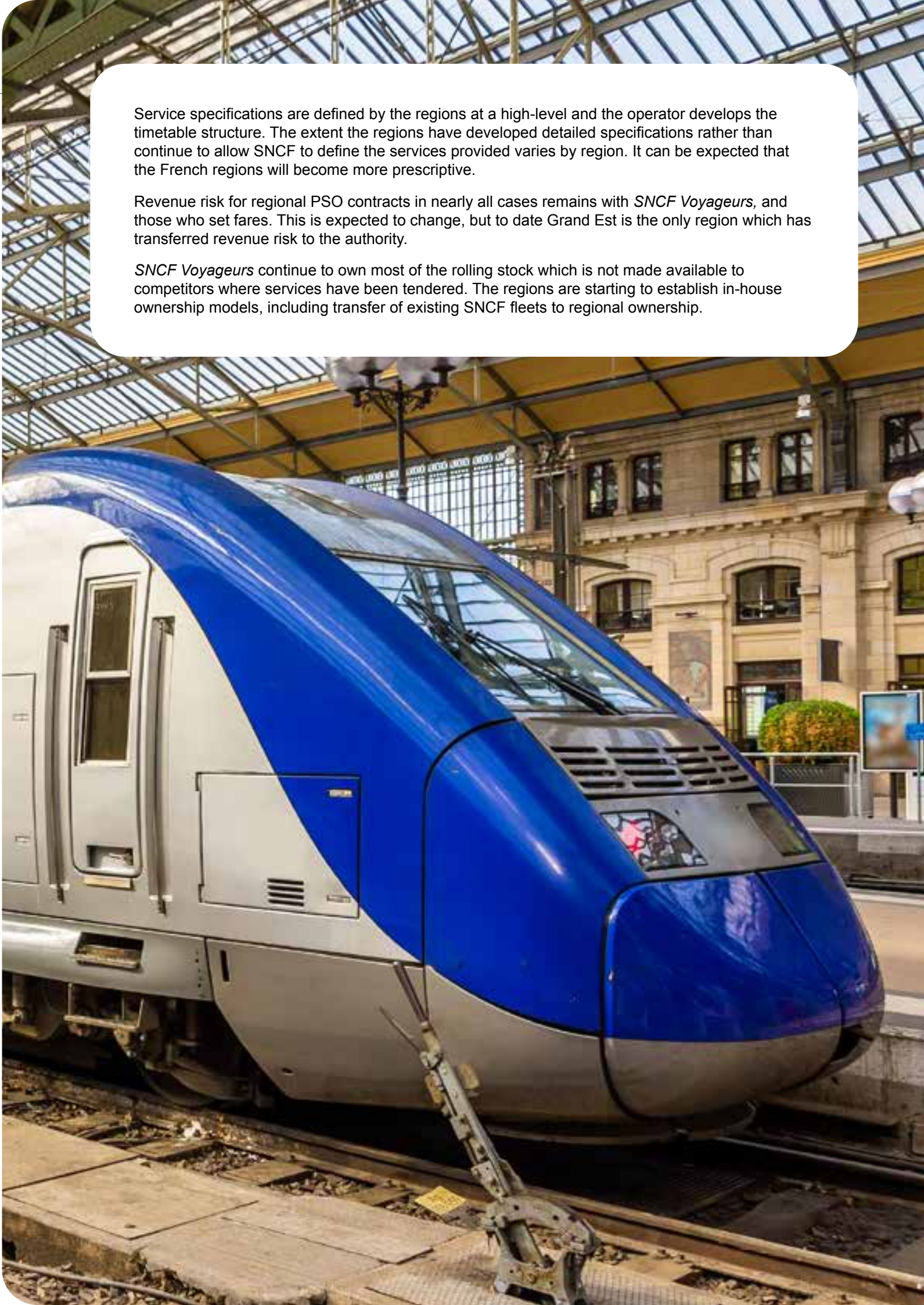
SNCF remains a single business, retaining a dominant position across all parts of the French rail sector. It is structured into separate Infrastructure Manager and Railway Undertaking divisions, which are managed under a single holding group. Devolution has however resulted in SNCF restructuring their management organisations to align with the respective region and the political boundaries.

High-speed TGV services, and some long-distance services, are provided under a commercial open access model.

Service specifications are defined by the regions at a high-level and the operator develops the timetable structure. The extent the regions have developed detailed specifications rather than continue to allow SNCF to define the services provided varies by region. It can be expected that the French regions will become more prescriptive.

Revenue risk for regional PSO contracts in nearly all cases remains with *SNCF Voyageurs*, and those who set fares. This is expected to change, but to date Grand Est is the only region which has transferred revenue risk to the authority.

SNCF Voyageurs continue to own most of the rolling stock which is not made available to competitors where services have been tendered. The regions are starting to establish in-house ownership models, including transfer of existing SNCF fleets to regional ownership.





Italy

The 20 regions are responsible for regional rail services, with each region entering into individual contracts for PSO services in their region. Most contracts remain provided by direct award. Operation is predominantly by the state-owned operator, *Trenitalia*, while in some regions there are small municipally owned operators, generally providing services in partnership with *Trenitalia*.

- Responsibility for regional PSO services lies with the 20 regions. Rail services are funded by the regions, who receive funding from the national government, as well as through local taxation.
- *Trenitalia* continue to run nearly all PSO services, which they operate under direct award contracts with each region. To date only Piedmont region has competitively tendered PSCs.
- Service specifications are set by the regions which define schedules, frequencies and quality standards. The operator develops the detailed timetable.
- Revenue risk remains with the operator.
- The size of rail services varies significantly by region, ranging from large networks centred on the major cities to rural regions with sparse rail services.
- *Trenitalia* is part of FS Group (*Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane*), the infrastructure manager, RFI (*Rete Ferroviaria Italiana*), is also part of FS Group. Rolling stock remains owned by *Trenitalia*.

Activity	Organisation
Competent Authority (Tendering Authority)	The 20 regions are responsible for regional rail services in their region. Each region has a single PSO contract apart from Trentino-Alto Adige which has a separate contract for each of the two provinces in the region. The national Ministry of Transport is also responsible for a PSO contract for the long-distance services that are not operated on a commercial basis.
Railway Undertaking (Public Service Contract (PSC))	<i>Trenitalia</i> continue to operate nearly all PSC services, nearly all of which have been awarded under direct awards. <i>Trenitalia</i> is fully owned by FS Group. In certain regions there are small, municipally owned operators, generally providing services in partnership with <i>Trenitalia</i>. Piedmont is the only region to have undertaken competitive tendering, and one contract has been awarded to a party other than <i>Trenitalia – Arenaways</i>.
Infrastructure Manager	RFI (<i>Rete Ferroviaria Italiana</i>): responsible for the management of the national rail infrastructure including traffic management; maintenance of the infrastructure; upgrades and renewal of the infrastructure; design and implementation of the timetable; management of stations; operation of train ferries between the mainland and Sicily. RFI is fully owned by FS Group.
Capacity Allocation	RFI – responsible for capacity allocation and traffic management.
Regulator	<i>Autorità di Regolazione dei Trasporti</i> (Transport Regulation Authority) is responsible for ensuring fair and non-discriminatory access to rail infrastructure; defining the criteria for setting access charges to the infrastructure; defining the process for the allocation of capacity; defining minimum service levels i.e. definition of PSO services (in conjunction with the regions and Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport); and agreeing the criteria for tenders and award. It is also responsible for airports, ports, motorways and taxis.
Rolling stock	<i>Trenitalia</i> continue to own nearly all rolling stock used on PSO services. Discussions are ongoing regarding establishment of a leasing company for PSO services but this has not yet been implemented.



Italy has a very clear distinction between commercial and PSO passenger services. There is a comprehensive commercial long-distance network centred on the high-speed network with two established operators. *Trenitalia* which provides services under the *Frecciarossa* brand, and *Italo* which commenced operations in 2012 and now has circa one third of the market share. While commercial services account for 28% of passenger km, by passenger journeys PSO services dominate, comprising over 90% of journeys undertaken.

Regional PSCs are funded and are the responsibility of the respective region - albeit with central funding allocated to the region. To date, direct awards are the norm between regions and *Trenitalia*.

Italy has 20 regions, and under the constitution each region has a considerable level of autonomy. Article 117 states the regions have exclusive legislative power with respect to any matters not expressly reserved to state law. In practice the level of autonomy is more modest with around 80% of tax revenues discharged by the national government. This includes funding for rail services. Nevertheless, while not formally a federal country like Germany, there is a greater role for regional government than seen in the UK.

- PSC contracts in Italy are organised into 22 separate contracts.
- 19 regions have a single PSC for the services in their region.
- Trentino-Alto Adige has a separate PSCs for Provincia di Bolzano and Provincia di Trento.
- A national PSC for long-distance services which are not operated on a commercial basis.

There is significant difference in the size of the operating contracts and regions. Lombardia, the largest region, is responsible for 2,173 trains per day, while in contrast Valle d'Aosta operates 44 trains per day, and the smallest region Molise only 28 trains.

Seven regions (below) account for the vast majority of passenger journeys, and likewise for train km, though the differential is less when reflecting the higher passenger volumes in the larger regions.

- Lombardia (Milan)
- Lazio (Rome)
- Campania (Naples)
- Toscana (Florence)
- Piemonte (Turin)
- Veneto (Venice)

Regional railway services in Italy operate under Public Service Contracts (PSCs) between individual regions and *Trenitalia*. These contracts outline the obligations of *Trenitalia* to provide specific services, including schedules, frequencies, and quality standards, in exchange for financial compensation from the regions. The compensation covers operational costs not met by ticket revenues, ensuring the sustainability of services that are essential but may not be commercially profitable. Revenue risk remains with the operator.

Currently most PSCs remain provided by direct award, with operation predominantly by *Trenitalia*.

In certain regions there are small municipality owned operators, generally providing services in partnership with *Trenitalia*, for example in Lombardia the operating contract is with *Trenord*—a joint venture of *Trenitalia* and FNM (the regional municipally owned operator).

To date, only Piemonte has undertaken competitive tendering of PSC contracts. *Arenaways* commenced operation of one PSC in January 2025. They sourced their own rolling stock.

Spain

Regional and urban (*Cercanías*) services are mostly provided under a single national PSO contract let by the Ministry of Transport which runs until 2027. Since January 2025 responsibility for services in the Basque region have been devolved to the regional government. Discussions are ongoing regarding devolution of services to other regional authorities and the contract arrangements for services after the expiry of the current national PSO contract.

- The national PSO contract with Renfe is procured by the Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility, and the level of specification input from the regions is limited. It is a directly awarded single national PSC operated by *Renfe Viajeros*. The contract specifies the services to be operated and the rolling stock to be deployed.
- Funding comes from the Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility, and revenue risk remains with the operator.
- In 2025, responsibility for services in the Basque region were devolved but continue to be operated under the national PSC. The separate metre-gauge lines in the autonomous regions of the Basque region and Catalonia are part of the national network, but the services are managed by the respective regions.
- Within the national PSC are the *Cercanías* commuter services, including the large Madrid network, as well as regional and inter-regional services on the Iberian and metre-gauge lines.
- The arrangements for future PSC contracts remain under discussion, further devolution may be an outcome.

Activity	Organisation
Competent Authority (Tendering Authority)	<i>Ministerio de Transportes y Movilidad Sostenible</i> (Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility) is the counter-party for the national PSC with <i>Renfe Viajeros</i>. Since January 2025, responsibility for services in the Basque region have been devolved but continue to be operated under the national PSC with the Ministry remaining as the Competent Authority. There are separate networks in Catalonia and the Basque region outside the responsibility of the national PSC.
Railway Undertaking (Public Service Contract (PSC))	<i>Renfe Viajeros</i> operate the national PSC. This contract is a direct award. <i>Renfe Viajeros</i> is fully owned by <i>Renfe Operadora</i>, which also has rolling stock, maintenance and freight divisions. <i>Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya</i> (FGC) provides certain services in Catalonia and <i>Euskotren</i> provides certain services in the Basque region on the metre-gauge networks. These operators are owned by the respective regions, and the services they provide are outside the national PSC.
Infrastructure Manager	<i>ADIF</i> (Administrador de Infraestructuras Ferroviarias) is the Infrastructure Manager responsible for the management of the <i>Red Ferroviaria de Interés General</i> (RFIG) (General Interest Rail Network) which includes the Iberian gauge network and the narrow gauge (metre-gauge) lines, including tracks, signalling and stations. The High-Speed network forms part of the RFIG but is managed separately.
Capacity Allocation	<i>ADIF</i> is responsible for capacity allocation and traffic management.
Regulator	<i>Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia</i> (CNMC) (National Markets and Competition Commission) is responsible for ensuring equal market access conditions for all the operators; the correct application of track access charges; resolving conflicts between ADIF and rail companies, including track access capacity; and to advise on rail transport matters, especially regarding the development of an open and competitive rail market. Its remit also covers aviation, energy, telecommunications, media and the postal service.
Rolling stock	<i>Renfe Alquiler de Material Ferroviario</i> owns all rolling stock operated by Renfe, and therefore all rolling stock used on the national PSC. It is a separate division within <i>Renfe Operadora</i>, and makes the rolling stock available to <i>Renfe Viajeros</i> via internal leasing arrangements.



Spain has a clear distinction between PSO and commercial services. Most services, except those operating on high-speed lines, are classified as PSC and receive subsidies from either the national or regional governments. These include regional and inter-regional services, *Cercanías* commuter services, and services operating on metre-gauge lines. Some long-distance services on the Iberian gauge, where parallel high-speed lines have not been constructed, also operate without subsidies. According to data from the CNMC, PSO services accounted for a substantial 92.2% of the 532.99m passengers carried by rail in Spain in 2023, equating to 65% of passenger-kilometres.

Renfe Viajeros operates nearly all regional and urban rail services. Limited services are operated by regionally owned separate Railway Undertakings in the autonomous regions of Catalonia and the Basque region. These are all provided under direct award PSO contract, and to date there are no definite plans for the competitive tendering of these services as required under Regulation 13770, 4th Rail Package.

Services on the mainland of Spain are provided by a single national PSC, except for the metre-gauge networks in the Basque region and Catalonia, where the services are provided by *Euskotren* and FGC respectively. The services subject to PSO owned by the General State Administration are governed by a public service contract signed on 18th December 2018, with a duration of 10 years, extendable for an additional 5 years.

The existing PSC between the state and *Renfe Viajeros* specifies the services to be provided, including routes and frequency, and the rolling stock expected to be used for these services. It also outlines the quality commitments required from *Renfe Viajeros*, which affect the calculation of compensation. Some regions, such as Catalonia, have additional contracts with *Renfe Viajeros* that allow them to amend the national PSCs service quality and ticketing provisions.

In November 2024, the Spanish government formalised the transfer of the management of *Renfe Viajeros Cercanías* services in the Basque region to the regional government. This agreement stipulates that the Basque government will assume the state's position in the existing contract with *Renfe Viajeros*, the operator responsible for these *Cercanías* services.

Despite the limited devolution of powers, regional governments play a significant role in specifying and funding PSC services. They receive allocations from the national government to finance these services, ensuring that regional connectivity needs are met. The level of devolution varies between regions, with some having greater autonomy in terms of service specification and procurement, while others remain more reliant on centralised control. Regions may also contribute additional funding from their own budgets for services tailored to local needs. Funding arrangements are structured to ensure that operators are compensated for the costs incurred in providing these essential services. Under the single PSC, regions generally do not have the authority to independently specify services, as the national government governs the provision of these services.

The current PSC expires in December 2027. It is understood that the Spanish government is preparing to initiate the tendering process and a draft ministerial order has been prepared, but to date, this remains a draft ministerial order. The CNMC recommended in 2024 that an official announcement and timeline be published by authorities, the schedule has not yet been published and remains under consideration.

The arrangements for providing rolling stock in future competitive PSC tenders have not yet been defined. All rolling stock currently used on PSCs is owned by *Renfe Alquiler de Material Ferroviario*.

Themes

In this section we consider six aspects of rail devolution in more detail, providing a comparative analysis by each theme, rather than a detailed description by country.



We consider:

- 
Funding and contract model for devolved rail services
- 
Geographical alignment of network to devolved authority
- 
Service specification
- 
Fares and ticketing
- 
Station facilities and services
- 
Rolling stock provision

For each theme we provide a short summary of the key observations, followed by a comparison of how different aspects of each theme are delivered, and then case studies looking at aspects in more detail. The case studies cover each of the countries but it should be noted that they are focused towards Germany and Sweden - reflecting the greater devolution in these two countries.

The summary tables are designed to provide a high-level summary overview only of the arrangements in each country. As such the description is concise and therefore may not reflect the full complexity of the issue or the variations in approach that may be in place.

6.1. Funding and contract model for devolved rail services

Devolution of rail services needs to consider both the local specification and management of services but also how services are funded i.e. the extent local funding for rail services is from local taxation or from wider government funding.

Devolution of rail services in the compared countries is generally accompanied by greater regional control of public finances through either local tax raising powers and/or agreed formulas for allocation of funding. In all comparators this creates a greater link between the service specification and the funding of rail services than seen in the UK.

Funding of rail services, including revenue and cost risk, is with the PTA or regional authority, and they are responsible for funding shortfalls.



					
	Germany (DE)	Sweden (SE)	France (FR)	Italy (IT)	Spain (ES)
Funding of devolved rail services (national / region)	Central government fund regional transport authorities which provide most of funding. Some local funding.	Services fully funded by regional authorities from local taxation. No central funding.	Central government provide funding to regions for rail services. Some local funding.	Central government provide funding to regions for rail services. Some local funding.	Regional services funded by national government, except in Basque region. Regions make contribution to national funding
Revenue risk for devolved services	Mostly concessions with PTAs taking revenue risk.	Full revenue risk is held by devolved tendering authorities.	Revenue risk mostly remains with operator (SNCF). Move towards regions taking revenue risk.	Revenue risk is with operator.	Revenue risk is with operator.
Funding of Infrastructure Manager	DB InfraGo receives income from Federal funding, as well as from access charges.	Trafikverket receives income from national funding, as well as from access charges.	SNCF Réseau receives income from national funding, as well as from access charges.	RFI receives income from national funding, as well as from access charges.	ADIF receives income from national funding, as well as from access charges.
Contract model for devolved services	Each authority is responsible for contract model. No national template.	Each authority is responsible for contract model. No national template.	Each authority is responsible for contract model. No national template.	Each authority is responsible for contract model. No national template.	National contract, except for Basque region.

Case study 1: Allocation of German federal funding to Länder for regional transport

Funding and financial risk management for devolved rail services in Germany depend on a mix of federal and regional contributions. PTAs receive financial support from the federal government via the Regionalisation Funds based on passenger volume and regional needs. The German constitution provides that the Federal Government must allocate a proportion of federal tax proceeds to the states to fund public transportation and the amount of federal subsidies (*Regionalisierungsmittel*) to be allocated to each state for a five-year period. This funding must be used for regional rail services.

Devolved rail services are primarily funded through these federal Regionalisation Funds, supplemented by regional contributions. The funds are allocated based on passenger demand and regional needs, with multi-year settlements ensuring financial stability. While central government provides the bulk of funding, PTAs are responsible for managing financial planning and contract execution to ensure efficient use of funds

PTAs manage financial allocations and contracts, ensuring stable operations while mitigating commercial risks. The balance of cost risk between PTAs and operators varies depending on the contract model and funding structure.

PTAs generally bear cost and revenue risks, though a small number of contracts transfer limited revenue risk to operators.

PTAs generally mitigate financial exposure through leasing models which link the rolling stock to the concession, and transfer cost risk to operators for staffing and train maintenance.

This approach allows PTAs to focus on service planning and quality control while leveraging private sector expertise.



Case study 2: Funding rail services from local taxation in Sweden

The Swedish counties and municipalities are responsible for the funding and delivery of most public services, including public transport. The obligation on counties for public transport is set out in the Transport Act 2010, this includes funding of rail, light rail, tram, metro, bus and taxis.

There is no central government funding for regional transport, and all funding for regional rail services comes fully from the regional authorities.

All services are competitively tendered on a gross cost basis. The PTA takes full revenue risk. Rail contracts are let on a fixed price, subject to annual indexation. Pricing is on the basis of price per train km, there will normally be an ability for the PTA to flex the train km operated within defined upper and lower limits. The cost risk is with the operator.

Across Sweden ticket revenue is estimated at around 50% of operating costs, though the ratio of revenue to operating costs varies significantly by contract, with the operating subsidy funded by the PTAs, who in turn are directly funded by the counties.

Swedish counties have considerable degree of autonomy and independent powers of income tax. Decisions on the level of funding for regional rail services (and other public services) are linked directly to the locally set level of income tax.

National funding for rail services is limited to specific infrastructure projects, which are also part funded by the PTAs and counties.

Case study 3: Devolution settlement for rail services in Basque region of Spain

Spain until recently has operated all PSO services under a single contract between the national transport ministry and *Renfe Viajeros*. This situation changed with the transfer in January 2025 of responsibility from the national government to the Basque region for regional services around Bilbao and San Sebastián. This was the first instance of devolution of national network services to a regional authority.

As part of the transfer *Renfe Viajeros* continued as the operator of the services, with its existing PSO contract continuing until its scheduled expiry in December 2027.

The Basque regional government is now responsible for the development of timetables, fares structure and developing plans for other improvements to services. It is understood that future funding of the regional rail services will become the responsibility of the regional government. As part of the transfer arrangements the region will cease to pay the central government the current €92.7m which is used to finance the suburban services.

However, the transfer was also accompanied by the establishment of a €400m fund set up by the national government which will be used for investments in replacing around half the train fleet (25 train sets), to be procured by the regional government, and improvements to the infrastructure and services. The investment programme will be overseen by a commission including representatives of the regional government.

The infrastructure will continue to be owned and managed by the national infrastructure manager, *ADIF*.

The arrangements for the replacement of the operator from 2028 onwards have not been confirmed, but it can be expected that the regional government will be the Competent Authority and be responsible for the procurement of the operator.

Regional governments in Catalonia and Andalusia have also expressed interest in the transfer of responsibility for regional services, but as of writing no further devolution has taken place.



6.2. Geographical alignment of network to devolved authority

Rail networks and service patterns do not necessarily align with political boundaries or functional economic areas. This is an important issue for the devolution of rail services to regional authorities as the geography of natural or efficient operating units may not align or serve multiple political regions.

An absence of a clear alignment between regional political boundaries and passenger rail service patterns can be observed in all the comparator countries, though the separation between long-distance services and regional services discussed previously mitigates this issue to some extent. Nevertheless, cooperation and collaboration between regional (transport) authorities is necessary. Arrangements for agreeing service specifications and associated funding in the comparator countries are mostly agreed between authorities on a bi-lateral basis – there is not a single national framework. This means different arrangements may be in place between regional (transport) authorities; in some cases there are multiple models for the same authority.

In Germany and Sweden, one PTA generally is the lead PTA and agrees specification and funding with a neighbouring PTA. In other instances, there is a joint contract between PTAs and the operator.

In France, SNCF have restructured their operating businesses, so management organisations and responsibilities are aligned with the respective region.

Italian regional services are specified by the respective region. There is a separate national PSO contract for long-distance regional services which limits the number of services serving multiple regions, but there are cross boundary services.

Spain, except for the Basque region, remains specified on a national basis.



					
	Germany (DE)	Sweden (SE)	France (FR)	Italy (IT)	Spain (ES)
Competent Authority	Regional PTAs	Regional PTAs	Transport departments in regions. A small number of services managed nationally.	Transport departments in regions. A small number of services managed nationally.	National Transport Ministry, except for Basque region.
Alignment between Competent Authority and political region	PTAs aligned with <i>Länder</i> . Some states have multiple PTAs	Each county has a PTA.	The regions are the Competent Authority	The regions are the Competent Authority	Only in Basque region
Alignment of Competence Authority geography with rail network	Rail network not aligned with PTAs / <i>Länder</i> , but in many cases services are centred on a PTA / <i>Länder</i>	All rail contract areas cover multiple PTA areas	Relatively limited inter-regional services limits number of cross boundary services	Rail network not aligned with regions, but in many cases services are centred on a region	Only in Basque region
Specification of cross boundary services	Agreed on bi-lateral basis	Agreed on bi-lateral basis	Agreed on bi-lateral basis	Agreed on bi-lateral basis	n/a
Funding of cross boundary services	Agreed on bi-lateral basis	Agreed on bi-lateral basis	Agreed on bi-lateral basis	Agreed on bi-lateral basis	n/a

Case study 1: Rhine Ruhr Express services in Germany serve multiple transport authorities

The Rhine-Ruhr region in Germany is one of the most densely populated areas of Europe, and while it is made up of individual cities and towns, in many regards it can be understood as a conurbation of over 10 million inhabitants, with no single city dominating. The largest four cities in the region are Cologne, Düsseldorf, Dortmund and Essen.

The region is all within the federal state of North Rhine Westphalia, but is served by three separate PTAs, reflecting the political focus of the different cities within the region: NWL centred on the Ruhr, VRR centred on Düsseldorf and *go.Rhineland* centred on Cologne.

The rail network is a complex matrix, with many lines having a combination of regional and urban services, sharing tracks with long-distance passenger and freight services.

The three PTAs within the state of North Rhine Westphalia have jointly procured operating contracts to run regional express services under the RRX (Rhine-Ruhr-Express). There are parallels with the UK TransPennine Express network where regional express services are overlaid on the local services, with a core central route serving multiple destinations. The RRX core route is between Dortmund and Cologne with a service every 15 minutes.

The network has been tendered under three separate operating contracts, with a common rolling stock used across all operating contracts. The rolling stock was procured as a separate contract, including 15 years maintenance by the operator. Siemens were awarded the contract for 84 Desiro High-Capacity train units.

The VRR PTA is the lead PTA for the RRX services, but all three PTAs jointly specify the services.

The service specification needs to reflect the complexities of rail operations in the region, and the mixed traffic nature of the routes. The services are operated under a distinct brand, and ticketing is integrated into the wider regional ticketing structures.

Case study 2: Öresundståg linking Denmark with Sweden

In Sweden, rail networks are not aligned with the regions, the PTAs work together to manage services. There are 12 tendered regional rail contracts which are overseen by the 21 counties and PTAs. The operating contract boundaries are not aligned with the county boundaries, with all operating contracts crossing regional boundaries.

The lead PTA will agree the service specification and funding with neighbouring PTAs on a bi-lateral basis for each route that crosses a boundary. Therefore, a PTA may have different arrangements with each neighbouring PTA. In all cases the PSC area extends into multiple counties.

In most instances, there is a lead PTA responsible for the procurement, specification and management of the operating contract. The specification and funding of services that cross county boundaries is agreed on a bi-lateral basis. There is no overseeing authority or standard arrangement for agreeing the cooperation and associated funding.

Four contracts, e.g. cross-border *Öresundståg* services, are let and managed by joint ventures between PTAs, with one PTA as the lead authority.

Öresundståg which crosses the *Öresunds* bridge is procured by *Skånetrafiken* (the Malmö region PTA) in coordination with *Blekingetrafiken*, *Hallandstrafiken*, *Länstrafiken Kronoberg*, *Västtrafik*, *Kalmar Länstrafik*, and the Danish Civil Aviation and Railway Authority.

Case study 3: French political regions are not aligned with rail network

France is organised into 13 regions, with an increasing level of responsibilities for public services managed at the region level, compared to the historic central government and local departments. The current structure of 13 regions dates from 2016. The consolidation of regional administrations into the current regional structure has been accompanied by devolution of powers to the regions, and a gradual move towards increasing regional tax raising powers.

Public transport is managed through the regional government administration structure. Separate PTAs under the regions have not been established, and therefore the management of rail services is integrated into the overall regional administration. There is not a common model for how the regions organise the management of rail services.

The regions are not aligned to the rail network, but most regional services are within a single region. The French network is characterised by relatively limited inter-regional services aside from long-distance services to Paris. This limits the number of services that cross regional boundaries.

Specification and funding for services that cross regional boundaries need to be agreed between the respective regions.

One consequence of the devolution of responsibility for rail services to regions is seen in the changes to the management structures of the rail sector, with SNCF, who remain the dominant organisation, aligning their organisation to the regions. For example, *SNCF Voyageurs* have restructured their operating businesses, so that management organisations and responsibilities are aligned with the respective region and the political boundaries, while across the *SNCF group* budget and business planning timescales have been changed to be aligned to the respective regions.

High-speed services are provided on a commercial basis by *SNCF Voyageurs* and the regions do not have a role in their specification or funding. TGV tickets are separate to regional tickets, and TGV services do not provide capacity for regional services.

Cross-country services are very limited, compared to the UK, and are the responsibility of the national transport ministry (DGITM), who are responsible for their funding, specification and procurement.



6.3. Service specification

Regional and urban services are all operated as PSO services. The PSO requirement is specified by the Competent Authority and set out in operator PSCs. The level of specification varies by country and contract, but in all cases the core service to be operated is defined by the Competent Authority.

Service specification for regional and urban PSO services is devolved to regions and PTAs in all the comparators apart from Spain.

The Swedish PTAs provide the most detailed specification, typically specifying the detailed timetable and train formations to be operated. The operator role is limited to resourcing the service.

In Germany, the PTA will (typically) set out the parameters of the timetable structure (frequency, journey times, calling patterns) but the operator will develop the detailed timetable.

In France, Italy and Spain, the service specification is less detailed, though the core parameters of frequency, journey times and capacity are defined. The Railway Undertaking (operator) has a greater role in developing the detailed timetable structure, within the defined specification. It can be expected that the French and Italian regions will become more prescriptive and detailed in future service specifications.

While regional PSO services have been devolved, in Sweden, France and Italy there remain limited PSO services specified at a national level. In Sweden the long-distance night trains are specified and procured at a national level, while in France and Italy non-commercial long-distance services are subject to a separate nationally specified and procured PSC, albeit these PSO services make up a small proportion of long-distance services, the majority of which are provided on a commercial basis.

Capacity allocation remains with the Infrastructure Manager in all cases, who is responsible for resolving conflicts between service specifications set by Competent Authorities and capacity sought by other parties either open access (commercial) operators (both passenger and freight) or other Competent Authorities.

The process for allocating capacity in the event of competing requests is defined in Network statements or equivalent documents. The priority for requests varies by country, but in all cases follows a defined decision criterion.

In all cases within the comparators studied, control of the infrastructure remains with the Infrastructure Manager. There are no examples where control of the core national network has been devolved to regions or PTAs.

The levels of performance and service quality to be achieved are set out in all PSCs. The level of detail and requirements vary by contract, but the underlying set of performance measures required by the operator are similar, and consistent with those seen in UK contracts. Bonus and penalty incentives apply in all contracts, the scale of the incentive regimes varies.

The branding of services varies by country and contract. In Sweden each of the operating contracts is run under a PTA specified brand which the operator must comply with. Regional services in Germany are increasingly operated under a PTA or state brand, though in some instances operator specific brands continue. It can be expected that PTAs and *Länder* will move to defined brands and operator brands will be phased out. The *S-Bahn* brand has been retained for all large city networks. Regional brands are increasingly being adopted in France and Italy with the operator brands becoming secondary. *Renfe* continues as the national brand in Spain for regional services, with *Cercanías* used as the brand for urban services, akin to the use of *S-Bahn* in Germany.

					
	Germany (DE)	Sweden (SE)	France (FR)	Italy (IT)	Spain (ES)
Devolution of regional PSO service specification	Regional PTA	Regional PTA	Region	Region	National Ministry
Residual national PSO after devolution	No	Night trains specified at national level	Non-commercial long-distance trains remain responsibility of National Ministry	Non-commercial long-distance trains remain responsibility of National Ministry	n/a
Level of service specification	Service pattern specified. Operator to develop detailed timetable	Detailed specification. Detailed specification.	Service pattern specified. Operator to develop detailed timetable	Service pattern specified. Operator to develop detailed timetable	Service pattern specified. Operator to develop detailed timetable
Capacity allocation	Infrastructure Manager	Infrastructure Manager	Infrastructure Manager	Infrastructure Manager	Infrastructure Manager
Detailed timetable design	Railway Undertaking (operator)	Railway Undertaking submits timetable to IM but role essentially limited to resourcing stock formations	Railway Undertaking (operator)	Railway Undertaking (operator)	Railway Undertaking (operator)
Operational performance	PTA sets performance targets in contract	PTA sets performance targets in contract	Region sets performance targets in contract	Region sets performance targets in contract	National Ministry sets performance targets in contract
Service Quality	PTA sets service quality level to be delivered in contract	PTA sets service quality level to be delivered in contract	Region sets service quality level to be delivered in contract	Region sets service quality level to be delivered in contract	National Ministry sets service quality level to be delivered in contract
Branding	Varies – some PTA specified brands, other allow operator brands	PTA specified brand	Regions starting to develop local brands	Regions starting to develop local brands	Branding remains with Railway Undertaking



Case study 1: Detailed specification for Pågatågen services in Sweden

The tendering authorities in Sweden set a detailed service specification to be delivered by the operator. The operator is required to deliver this specification. During the tender process the bidders are not expected to propose alternative service patterns or changes to the timetable. The assessment of the tenders is undertaken against how the specification will be met, not against alternatives or variations to the service specification.

For example, the transport authority for the Skåne region in Sweden, centred on Malmö, *Skånetrafiken*, sets a detailed service specification for the regional services in Skåne, which are operated under the brand *Pågatågen*. *Skånetrafiken* owns a fleet of 99 Alstom 4-car Coradia Nordic EMU trains which are maintained at a purpose-built depot. The full fleet is leased to the operator for the duration of the operating contract. The operator is responsible for the resourcing of the service specification using the train fleet.

Skånetrafiken sets the timetable specification. This includes the service frequency, calling pattern, hours of operation on each route. The specification covers all trains to be operated. It also includes the minimum capacity to be provided on each individual service i.e. whether the service is to be operated by a single, double or triple unit. The operator is responsible for resourcing the timetable, both rolling stock and traincrew, and agreeing the track access agreement with *Trafikverket*, the Infrastructure Manager.

Therefore, while the operator remains responsible for finalising the timetable to be operated, in practice the timetable is defined and times of trains fixed by *Skånetrafiken* given the level of detail in the service specification.

Case study 2: Capacity allocation in Germany

The German rail network is predominantly mixed traffic, with regional and urban PSO services sharing access to the infrastructure with international, long-distance and freight services.

Capacity allocation is undertaken to a defined criteria which favours international cross-border and long-distance services ahead of regional services. This creates a point of tension for PTAs and often limits optimal slots for regional trains.

The capacity allocation process is undertaken by the Infrastructure Manager, *DB InfraGo*. The decision criteria process is set out by the Regulator, the *Bundesnetzagentur*.

Services are predominantly planned around a repeating timetable basis, regional services frequently are scheduled around the *DB Fernverkehr* (intercity) timetable with booked connections at key interchange nodes.

Conflicts over capacity are managed through timetable coordination, but competition remains, especially on busy corridors. There are limited dedicated high-speed lines, but most corridors are shared multi-user between long-distance, regional and freight services, with clear parallels to the West Coast mainline.

PTAs have some influence on infrastructure planning by identifying needs and co-financing projects, but *DB InfraGo* and the federal government control major upgrades. Funding comes from federal budgets, state contributions, and EU programmes, with *DB InfraGo* overseeing implementation.

Infrastructure performance is an increasingly high-profile political issue in Germany, with *DB InfraGo* under pressure to improve performance while addressing the challenges of infrastructure unreliability and congestion on multi-user key corridors. The Rhine-Ruhr conurbation has been particularly subject to this poor performance and operational challenges.



Case study 3: Provision of new rolling stock to improve service quality in Italy

Responsibility for regional services in Italy is with the respective region. While *Trenitalia*, to date, continues to operate nearly all PSO services under direct awards, each region has entered into separate contracts for the services in their region.

A number of regions entered into new contracts directly with *Trenitalia* prior to the 2023 deadline for the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering for PSO services, as required under the 4th Railway package. These series of contracts included the requirement for *Trenitalia* to procure and fund new rolling stock to improve the quality of services. The requirement to introduce new rolling stock was set by the respective regions, as part of their specification of quality in the new contracts. It is understood that provision exists to also transfer ownership of the rolling stock to any successor operator in the event that this is not *Trenitalia*.

Examples of new rolling stock procured and introduced under this approach include:

- Lombardia: 214 new trains at a cost of €1.7 billion.
- Liguria: 48 new trains at a published cost of €390 million.
- Piedmont: 71 new trains at a published cost of €950 million.
- Trentino Alto Adige, Province of Trento: 13 new trains at a published cost of €178 million.
- Friuli Venezia Giulia: Complete regional fleet renewal at a published cost of €400 million. completely renew the regional fleet by 2025.
- Veneto: 78 new trains to be introduced at a published cost of €1 billion.

Case study 4: Integrated branding in Baden Württemberg Germany

There is established tendering of regional services in Germany and these are undertaken by the regional transport authorities (PTAs) for the respective states. Competitive tendering resulted in the introduction of operator specific brands, as each operator chose their respective brands, most notably on rolling stock. There has been a move in recent years by PTAs to introduce a unified brand for all services operated in their region. Each state or PTA has introduced its own brand i.e. the unified brands are bespoke to each region, they are not a national brand.

In 2017 the PTA for the state of Baden-Württemberg introduced the unified *bwegt* brand to be applied to all public transport in the state. The brand reflects the state colours of black, white and yellow. Following the decision to introduce a single brand, it has become a contractual obligation in all train operating contracts that this brand must be applied to all rolling stock used to operate services. Detailed brand requirements are defined, to the level of where on the seat moquette the logo must be positioned to ensure they are in the same place on every seat. The operator may apply its own logo to the exterior of the trains, however the size and location are defined, and are very secondary to the PTA brand.

The brand applies to all aspects of rail service provision, for example to ticket machines.

Baden-Württemberg has expanded the use of the brand across all transport modes, with tendered bus services also using the *bwegt* brand, creating a unified public transport brand across the state.



Case study 1: Regional fares set by Tariff associations in Germany

Public transport ticketing in Germany is highly decentralised, with each city and region having its own fare system. This means that passengers must navigate different ticketing rules and apps when traveling between cities, even within the same PTA area.

The creation of uniform fares and coordinated timetables, as well as the implementation of service offerings in transport areas, requires cooperation between local city authorities, transport operators and PTAs. The networks established to facilitate this cooperation are called *Verkehrsverbünde* (integrated transport networks).

Verkehrsverbünde offer unified tickets for buses, trams, metro, and regional trains within their respective area, set the fares for regional tickets that cross multiple areas, based on zonal pricing. However, these networks are not nationwide, each region has its own system, meaning crossing from one region to another requires different tickets, and each *Verkehrsverbund* has its own fare rules.

Verkehrsverbünde and operators use revenue-sharing models based on passenger travel data. There is no single model for revenue allocation. Methods used include: passenger counts and surveys; Km-based distribution, where revenue is divided based on the distance travelled in each region; pre-defined revenue-sharing agreements between neighbouring *Verkehrsverbünde*. For example, the *NRW-Tarif*: In North Rhine-Westphalia, multiple transport associations participate in a state-wide fare system, where revenue is pooled and then redistributed based on ridership and distance travelled in each area.

The recent introduction of the *Deutschlandticket* (a season ticket valid on all regional transport across Germany, but not long-distance services) is simplifying travel options and creating a default national product for longer distance regional journeys replacing season tickets.

Case study 2: Reisplus – linking local and long distance ticketing in Sweden

In Sweden regional ticketing is the responsibility of the PTA, and there is a separate ticket arrangement for each PTA. The PTA is responsible for the level of fares and the type of tickets offered. Tickets are fully multi-modal and valid across all forms of regional public transport.

PTAs are also responsible for the sale of tickets, PSC operators do not sell tickets. Digital tickets, predominantly by mobile app, is the norm.

PTA tickets are however only valid on regional services. There is not a national fares structure or national ticket regulation. Commercial tickets are not valid on regional (PSC) services.

While each PTA is responsible for ticketing in its respective area and are sold separately by each PTA, all PTA tickets use a common digital standard. *Samtrafiken* is the national ticketing and sales association. It is owned by all the regional public transport authorities as well as many of the commercial transport operators with national traffic. It has established a common back-office ticketing platform across Sweden, including acting as national “clearing house” and setting common ticketing standards and technology platform.

Validity and pricing of tickets from one PTA region to another is by agreement between the PTAs. Where a journey continues across a PTA boundary the respective PTAs will agree whether a jointly priced ticket option is available or whether two separate tickets are required. In most cases where a route crosses a boundary a single ticket will be available; this may not be the case where a change of train is required. There is no national body overseeing this process.

Through ticketing is available under the brand ‘*Resplus*’. While retailed as a single product it is separate ticket components presented to the customer as a single through ticket.

For example, a passenger undertaking a journey from Skåne county (Malmö region) to Stockholm county (region) may purchase a single *Resplus* ticket. The pricing of this ticket is made up of three separate elements, a Skåne regional ticket, a single leg priced long-distance service on a commercial open access long-distance service from Malmö to Stockholm, and a Stockholm regional ticket. *Samtrafiken* provides the common back office and revenue allocation to allow the retailing of a single ticket to passengers.

Case study 3: Bespoke cross county boundary tickets to Ikea in Sweden

As described in the case study 2, each Swedish PTA sets its own fares, and for journeys that cross PTA boundaries in many cases it may be necessary to purchase two separate tickets. In other cases, a jointly priced ticket will be agreed.

Skånetrafiken set regional fares for the Swedish county of Skåne. The network is centred on the city of Malmö, with several smaller cities and towns including Lund. In many cases the travel-to-work journeys are within the county of Skåne, and therefore the number of journeys across county borders are relatively small. The exception is to the town of Älmhult which is just over the border from Skåne, in the county of Kronoberg.

Ticketing in Skåne is zonal, with zones ending at the county border. *Skånetrafiken* makes it clear to those purchasing tickets that they are only valid to the county border, and if your journey is to a station in another county you need to buy a separate ticket.

In Älmhult is the headquarters of Ikea, and as a result there is a significant commuter flow from Skåne to Älmhult. Therefore, *Skånetrafiken* have made the decision to include Älmhult within their zonal tickets, so that journeys can be undertaken with a single ticket and within the same zonal pricing structure.

This arrangement is a bespoke agreement between the counties of Skåne and Kronoberg. It reflects the mature relationship between the PTAs and their willingness to agree bespoke arrangements where travel patterns cross county borders. The agreement is entirely voluntary, there is no ticketing regulation that obliges PTAs to offer cross border integrated ticketing.

6.5. Station facilities and services



There are multiple station ownership and management models in each country. Ownership and management of larger stations is typically with the Infrastructure Manager, but smaller stations may also be owned by regions, PTAs or other parties.

Devolution of train service specification has not been replicated to the same extent for the management of stations, apart from in Sweden.

In general terms, major stations have been developed in a similar way to the UK, however smaller stations have (typically) more basic infrastructure with fewer staffed stations, especially in Germany and Sweden. The UK model of the operator leasing stations from the Infrastructure Manager is not replicated. Arrangements for the management of stations varies, but generally there is a more limited operator role.

Germany (a division within the Infrastructure Manager *InfraGo*), France (*Gare et Connexion*) and Sweden (*Jernhusen*) have separate business responsible for stations, while in other comparators ownership and management of stations is predominantly with the respective Infrastructure Managers, RFI and ADIF.

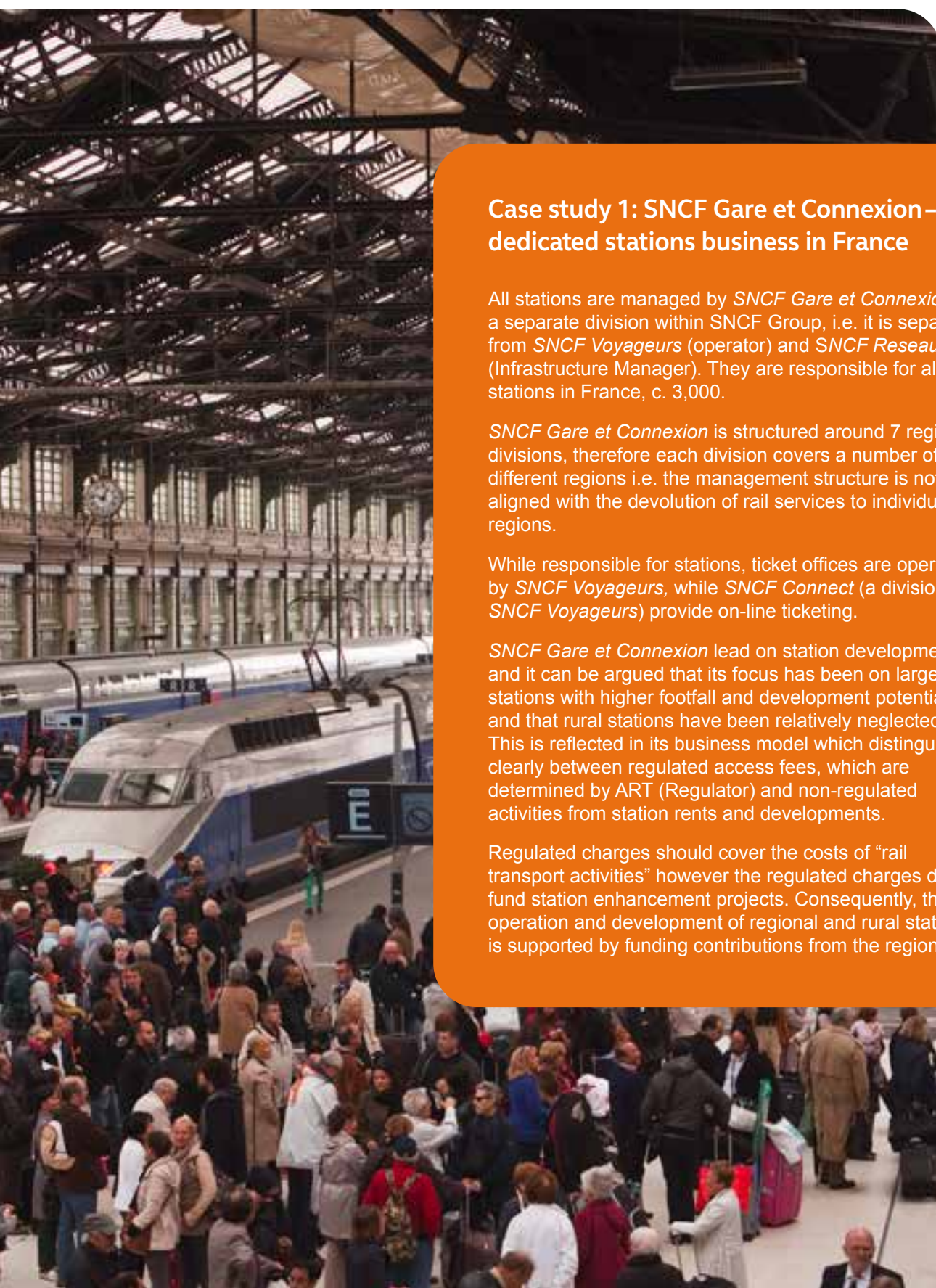
In Sweden, Jernhusen manage and develop the rail property estate. When initially established they were responsible for all stations in Sweden, but over time they have divested ownership of smaller stations to third parties, including PTAs, local authorities and local businesses. This has meant that that many stations are now under the direct management and ownership of the PTAs. The PTAs however generally manage the stations separately to the operating contracts.

Sweden is also notable for the absence of ticket offices. SJ, the legacy long-distance operator no longer provides any ticket offices and now requires customers to use digital channels. PTAs provide sales offices for regional sales only at a limited number of stations. Tickets may also be bought at convenience stores where the PTA has set up agreement.

In Germany, *DB InfraGo* (Infrastructure Manager) is responsible for all stations, and operates a separate stations division. Large stations are managed similar to Network Rail managed stations in GB, with arguably less focus on rural stations.

In France, all stations are managed by *SNCF Gare et Connexion*, a separate stations division, while in Italy and Spain responsibility for stations is with the Infrastructure Manager.

					
	Germany (DE)	Sweden (SE)	France (FR)	Italy (IT)	Spain (ES)
Station ownership	Predominantly <i>BD InfraGo</i> – Infrastructure Manager	Separate property business <i>Jernhusen</i> own larger stations, smaller stations owned by local parties including PTAs	<i>SNCF Gare et Connexion</i> – dedicated stations business	RFI – Infrastructure Manager	ADIF – Infrastructure Manager
Customer Information Systems	<i>DB InfraGo</i>	<i>Trafikverket</i>	<i>SNCF Gare et Connexion</i>	RFI	ADIF
Ticket office provision – regional stations	Specified by PTA, generally provided by operator	Staffed ticket offices the exception, limited provision by PTAs	Operator - <i>SNCF Voyageurs</i> .	Operator – <i>Trenitalia</i>	Operator – <i>Renfe Viajeros</i>
TVM provision – regional stations	Specified by PTA, generally provided by operator	PTAs	Operator - <i>SNCF Voyageurs</i> .	Operator – <i>Trenitalia</i>	Operator – <i>Renfe Viajeros</i>



Case study 1: SNCF Gare et Connexion – dedicated stations business in France

All stations are managed by *SNCF Gare et Connexion*, a separate division within SNCF Group, i.e. it is separate from *SNCF Voyageurs* (operator) and *SNCF Reseau* (Infrastructure Manager). They are responsible for all stations in France, c. 3,000.

SNCF Gare et Connexion is structured around 7 regional divisions, therefore each division covers a number of different regions i.e. the management structure is not fully aligned with the devolution of rail services to individual regions.

While responsible for stations, ticket offices are operated by *SNCF Voyageurs*, while *SNCF Connect* (a division of *SNCF Voyageurs*) provide on-line ticketing.

SNCF Gare et Connexion lead on station development, and it can be argued that its focus has been on larger stations with higher footfall and development potential, and that rural stations have been relatively neglected. This is reflected in its business model which distinguishes clearly between regulated access fees, which are determined by ART (Regulator) and non-regulated activities from station rents and developments.

Regulated charges should cover the costs of “rail transport activities” however the regulated charges do not fund station enhancement projects. Consequently, the operation and development of regional and rural stations is supported by funding contributions from the regions.

Case study 2: Transfer of station assets by Jernhusen in Sweden to regional partners

In Sweden, a separate property business, *Jernhusen*, was established with responsibility for all stations, terminals and maintenance depots. It is a property development company, as well as a station manager, and leads on developments of land around the railway estate. Its responsibility for stations covers both their management and future development.

When the business was established in 2001 it had responsibility for all stations in Sweden. Over time their focus has increasingly been on the larger stations, and the business has undertaken a programme of diversification of station ownership. This means that the ownership and management of stations is the responsibility of a range of different parties.

Jernhusen now own and manage 35 stations, out of a total of 491, and manage the waiting facilities in 135 further stations which are owned by other parties, through a subsidiary *Svenska Reseterminaler*.

For the stations they are responsible for they have developed a stations model and quality regime which covers all aspects of the station, their facilities, and the passenger experience.

Jernhusen has progressively sold its interest in smaller stations to PTAs, local authorities, and private local parties. This has created a range of different station owners, there is not a common standard for station facilities or customer provision.

Each PTA takes the lead for defining the service standards for stations in their region and oversee the management of the stations. At a regional level therefore station management is led by PTAs, who work within the variety of ownership models. The management of the stations is generally also managed separately from the operating contracts by the PTAs.

Case study 3: Migration of ticket sales away from station ticket offices in Sweden

There has been an almost complete migration away from the provision of station ticket offices in Sweden. This means that stations are predominantly unstaffed, with customer service staff only at the larger stations.

There are no ticket offices in the whole country for long-distance services, passengers are required to use digital channels. SJ, the legacy long-distance operator, has closed all the ticket offices it previously provided. There are no regulatory provisions that require ticket offices to be provided.

Responsibility for regional ticket sales is with the PTAs. Operators do not offer ticket sales. PTAs provide a very limited number of sales offices for regional sales, which are for multi modal tickets, these may not be at the station. Tickets may also be bought at convenience stores where the PTA has set up agreement.

The use of station ticket vending machines is very limited. Ticket purchasing is primarily via mobile app and travel cards.

6.6.Rolling stock provision

The ownership and provision of rolling stock is a critical issue for specifying services to be operated, and for the allocation of rolling stock to operators.

The move to devolution and control of regional rail services has been accompanied by the development of regional ownership and control of rolling stock. Regional control of rolling stock has enabled PTAs to specify how trains are to be deployed. This control of rolling stock has been accompanied by underwriting financial guarantees.

The UK leasing market is not replicated, in part because no transfer of legacy rolling stock to lessors occurred. PTAs have developed models to separate the ownership of rolling stock from operators. This facilitates tendering of services and ensures transfer of rolling stock at contract end.

In Germany, there is a mix of in-house lessors and third-party ownership models supported by PTA backed guarantees. In Sweden, the PTAs have established in-house lessors to fund and own rolling stock.

French regions are starting to establish in-house ownership models, including transfer of existing SNCF fleets to regional ownership.

Trenitalia continue to own all rolling stock used on PSO services, increasingly new rolling stock is funded by third-party funding, supported by guarantees from *Trenitalia*. All PSO rolling stock is proposed for transfer to new state-owned leasing business. It is understood that recent procurements of new rolling stock by *Trenitalia* for directly awarded contracts also include provisions for its transfer at the end of the contract term.

Renfe in Spain continues to own all rolling stock used on PSO services however this is owned through an in-house leasing division, *Renfe Alquiler de Material Ferroviario*, who make the rolling stock available to the operator.

					
	Germany (DE)	Sweden (SE)	France (FR)	Italy (IT)	Spain (ES)
Rolling stock ownership	Mix of PTA ownership, leased with funding and usage guarantees, and operating leases. <i>DB Regio</i> retain ownership of legacy fleets	All rolling stock used on regional PSO services is owned and managed by <i>Transitio</i> , a PTA owned lessor	<i>SNCF Voyageurs</i> continue to own most rolling stock used on regional services. Regions are looking at models to transfer ownership	Majority owned by <i>Trenitalia</i> . Announced plans to transfer to new state-owned lessor, not yet enacted.	All rolling stock owned by <i>Renfe Alquiler de Material Ferroviario</i> . Internal leasing to operating business.
Allocation of rolling stock to operating contract	PTA owned and controlled fleets allocated to operating contract. Operators may procure or provide rolling stock for some contracts	PTA allocates rolling stock to operating contract	Currently with operator (<i>SNCF</i>). As new vehicles are procured they will be expected to be allocated to specific operating contract	Operator led	Operator led
Procurement of new rolling stock	Depends on PTA and contract. May be led by PTA or by operator	Undertaken by <i>Transitio</i> on behalf of PTA	Regions will be responsible. They may decide to procure directly, via their in-house lessors (where established) or request operator to lead.	Led by operator. Requirement agreed with region.	Currently led by operator.
Funding of new rolling stock	Third-party funding, in most cases supported by PTA guarantees	Third-party funding backed by PTA provided usage guarantee	Future model(s) remain under development.	Currently third-party funding secured by operator	TBC
Maintenance	Mostly undertaken by operator, but OEM maintenance starting to be more common. Operators have invested in new maintenance facilities.	Generally undertaken by operator. PTAs have invested in new maintenance facilities.	<i>SNCF</i> continue to have near monopoly on maintenance facilities, third party access to facilities has been limited	<i>Trenitalia</i> continue to maintain all the rolling stock.	All maintenance undertaken by <i>Renfe</i> within a separate division of the business.





Case study 1: Comparative funding models for German PTAs

DB Regio retained ownership of all regional trains at the start of market opening 25 years ago, which was perceived by other operators and PTAs in giving DB a significant incumbent advantage in tender competitions. In response, German PTAs have taken an active role in ensuring availability of rolling stock either through developing financing support models and/or publicly owned train pools, which now predominate in the PSC rolling stock market.

Each PTA has developed their own approach, sometimes with multiple approaches within their area, with the common objective of promoting competition for operating contracts through non-discriminatory access to rolling stock for all bidders.

The provision of regional passenger rolling stock does not follow a standard model. Different models used by PTAs include in-house ownership, PTA owned lessor, funding/usage guarantees, operating leases. Independent ROSCOs also offer operating leases where they can compete with PTA funding support.

The level of funding support varies by PTA and is linked to the extent an individual state is able to provide supporting guarantees. PTAs in the former East are less able to offer funding guarantees than those in the West and South.

Depending on the operating contract, bidders may be able to choose between different models for the provision of rolling stock, whereas for other contracts the rolling stock to be used is specified by the PTA, or the funding model for procuring new rolling stock is mandated.

Where new trains are required, the bidder will typically lead the procurement on behalf of the PTA, even where the ownership of the trains will be with the PTA.

In most cases the operator is responsible for train maintenance, though there are instances where the PTA has procured maintenance as part of the procurement of rolling stock.

Case study 2: Transitio Sweden

All rolling stock used on tendered services is either owned directly by a PTA or by the jointly owned lessor, *Transitio*.

Transitio is a lessor and asset manager set up and owned by 20 of the 21 counties. It was established as a single country-wide lessor and asset manager for PSO rolling stock owned collectively by all the PTAs. It provides asset management expertise for all fleets and predominantly owns the rolling stock used in tendered contracts. Certain counties, Skåne and Stockholm, own rolling stock directly, with *Transitio* providing asset management.

Transitio procures and funds rolling stock on behalf of the PTAs and leases the rolling stock back to the PTAs. *Transitio* raises third-party funding, backed by PTA guarantees for the lease payments. It can achieve competitive funding rates given the PTA guarantees, who are in turn owned by the counties. The funding rates reflect the credit rating of the counties.

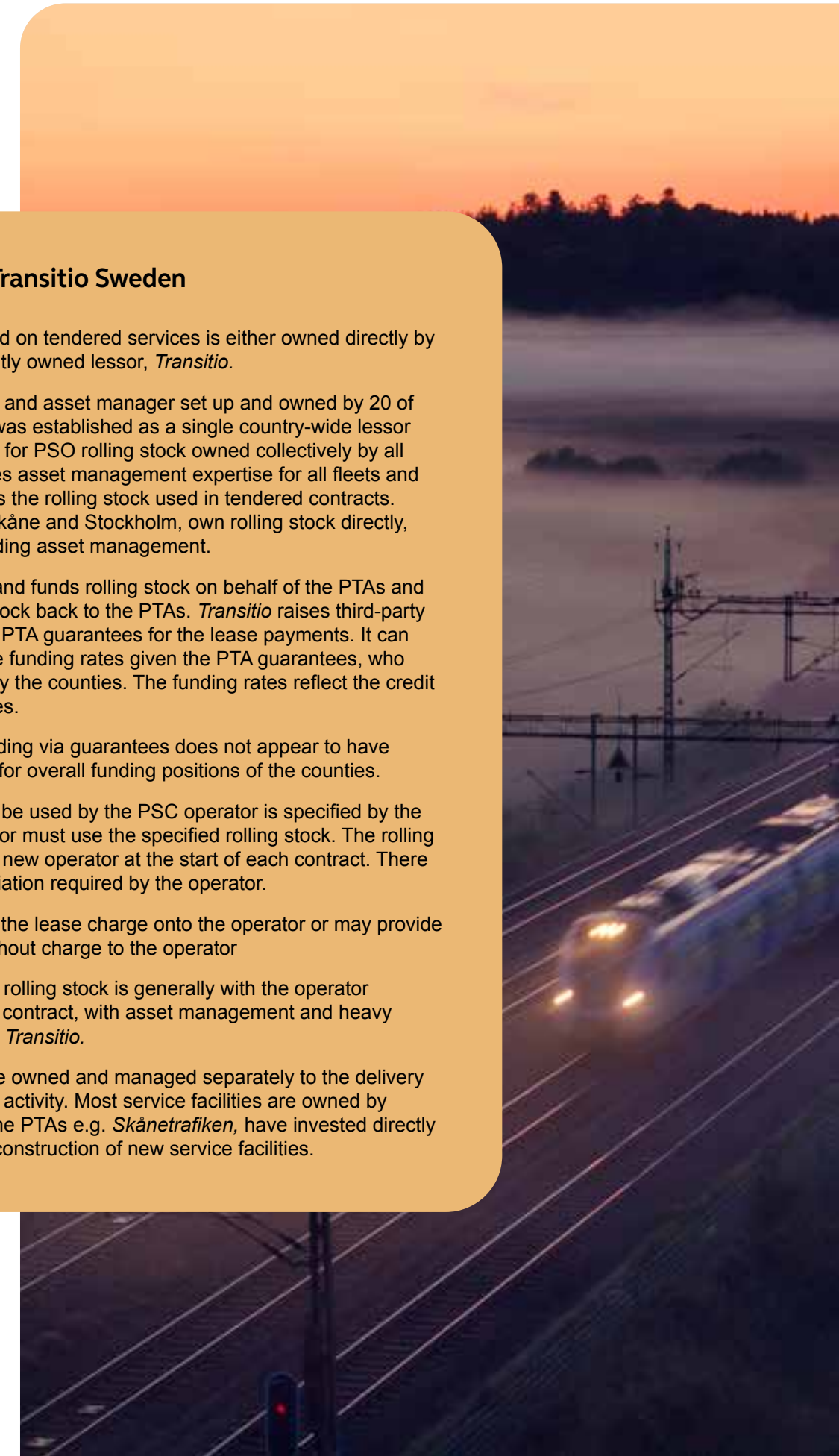
Underwriting of funding via guarantees does not appear to have caused any issues for overall funding positions of the counties.

The rolling stock to be used by the PSC operator is specified by the PTA and the operator must use the specified rolling stock. The rolling stock transfers to a new operator at the start of each contract. There is no lease renegotiation required by the operator.

The PTA may pass the lease charge onto the operator or may provide the rolling stock without charge to the operator

Maintenance of the rolling stock is generally with the operator for the term of their contract, with asset management and heavy maintenance under *Transitio*.

Service facilities are owned and managed separately to the delivery of the maintenance activity. Most service facilities are owned by *Jernhusen*, but some PTAs e.g. *Skånetrafiken*, have invested directly in the funding and construction of new service facilities.



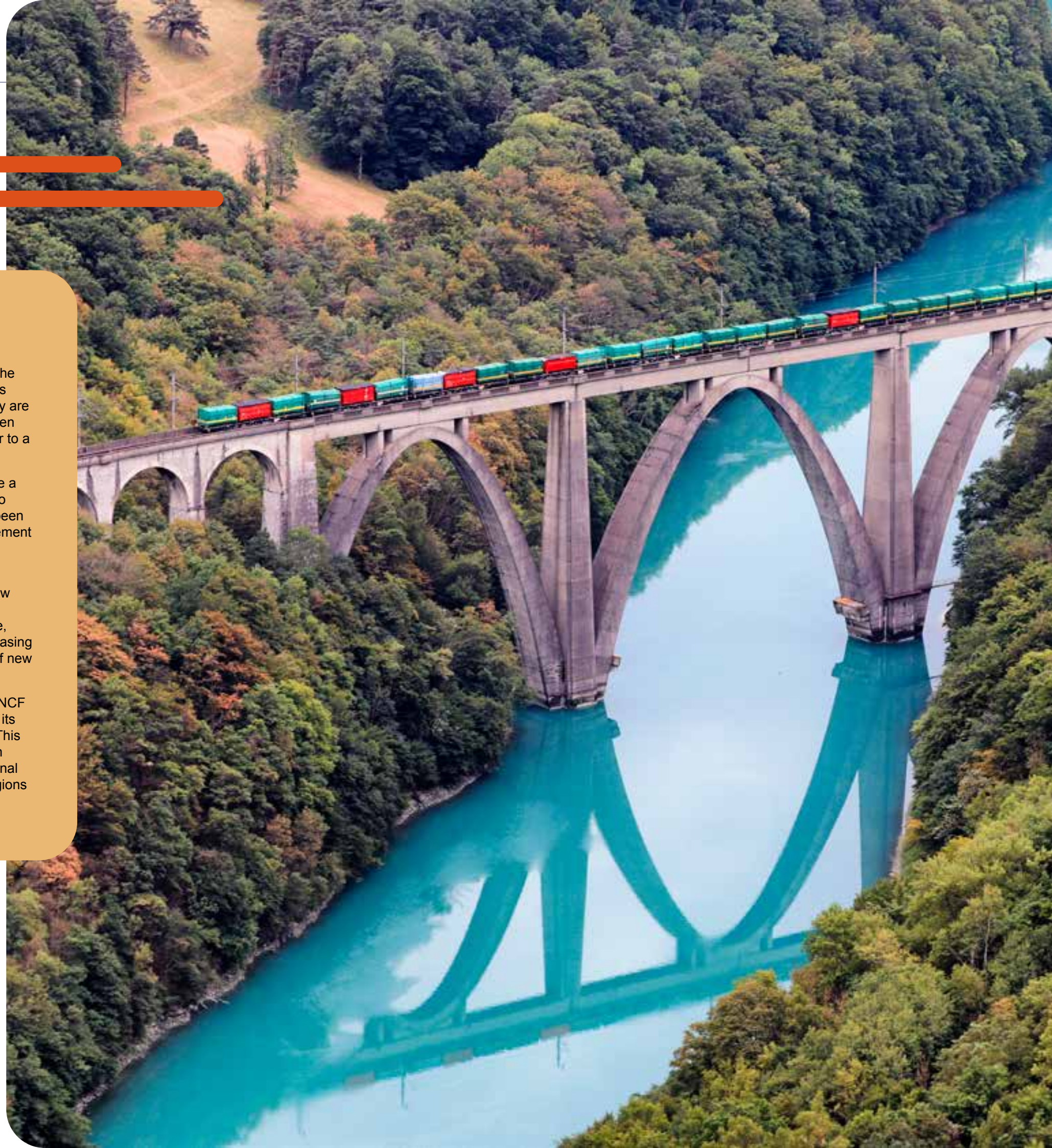
Case study 3: Transfer of SNCF rolling stock to regions

While responsibility for passenger rail services is with the French regions, the specification of train services and provision of those services is dependent on the availability of rolling stock. The ownership of rolling stock used on PSO services has remained with *SNCF Voyageurs*, as well as the service facilities where they are maintained. This rolling stock has not been made available to other bidders when PSCs have been competitively tendered, and the rolling stock does not transfer to a new operator.

The absence of third-party ownership models for rolling stock is perceived to be a significant contributory factor for the very limited award of operating contracts to parties other than *SNCF Voyageurs*. The only two PSO contracts which have been awarded to an operator other than *SNCF Voyageurs* have required the procurement of new rolling stock.

As a result, some French regions are starting to establish in-house ownership models to fund the transfer of the existing TER fleet and the procurement of new trains. They would be responsible for its allocation to operating contracts and the fleet's long term asset management. To date four regions (Hauts-de-France, Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, Nouvelle Aquitaine and Occitanie) have established leasing companies to fund the transfer of the existing TER fleet and the procurement of new trains.

The plan is for the existing regional rolling stock fleets to be transferred from SNCF Voyageurs ownership to the respective regions. They would be responsible for its allocation to operating contracts and the fleet's long term asset management. This has not yet occurred, in part due to the complexity of this transfer and condition liabilities, as the underlying condition of much of the rolling stock used on regional services is poor – both by age and presentation to the passenger – and the regions currently need to direct any funding for improvement to an effective monopoly supplier.

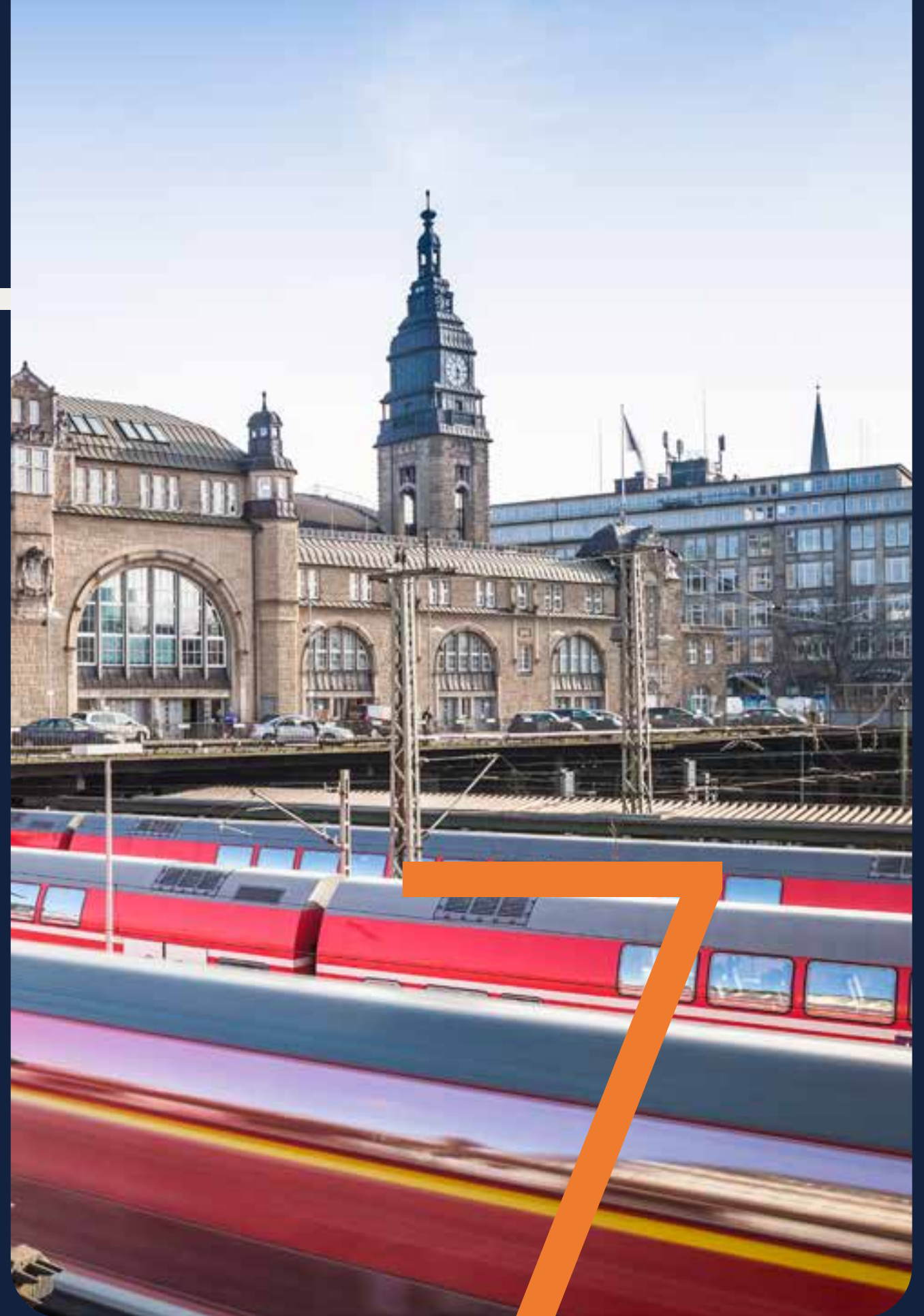


Definitions and Glossary

The terminology used by authorities and industry parties in European countries at times differs from the terms used frequently in the UK rail sector. The phraseology used frequently is derived from the definitions used in EU legislation.

In compiling this report, the “standard” terms used within the EU rail sector have been used, reflecting the descriptions and definitions in place in the relevant countries. While these terms are also used within the UK environment, they may not be the terms most frequently used.

We have provided a summary of the key definitions and terminology used in the report below, and an interpretation of them to put them into the UK context.



Definitions

1st Railway Package (2001)	Provisions included the requirement establish separation between the Infrastructure Manager and the Railway Undertaking functions.
2nd Railway Package (2004)	Provisions included establishment of common regulatory framework for rail safety and the opening of the rail freight market to competition.
3rd Railway Package (2007)	Provisions included the liberalisation of international passenger services.
1st Railway Package Recast (2012)	Provisions included strengthening non-discriminatory access to the rail network and specific measures on non-discriminatory access to service facilities, as well as strengthening the requirement for separation between the Infrastructure Manager and the Railway Undertakings, and for the independence of regulatory bodies.
4th Railway Package (2016)	Provisions included the “technical pillar” to establish interoperability, and the “market pillar” requiring the opening of domestic traffic to competition, and the requirement to competitively tender all PSO services from December 2023 onwards.
Competent Authority	The public body responsible for the specification of PSO services and ensuring their delivery. In the UK context this would be the Secretary of State.
Infrastructure Manager	The body responsible for the operation and control of the rail infrastructure. In the UK this is Network Rail.
PSO – Public Service Obligation	The train service to be delivered. Defined in Regulation 2016/2338 as part of the 4th Railway Package. It establishes the principle that passenger rail services should be provided on a commercial basis, and should only be designated PSO if the market cannot provide. Where services are designated as PSO, competitive tendering should be the norm, and direct awards should be the exception.
PSC – Public Service Contract	The contract between the Competent Authority and the Railway Undertaking, which includes the services to be delivered i.e. the Public Service Obligation (PSO)
PTA – Public Transport Authority	In the context of this report these are the regional bodies responsible for rail services. In many cases they are also the Competent Authority. PTAs referenced in this report typically have greater powers than UK PTAs and are more akin to TfL or Transport Scotland.
Railway Undertaking	Railway operators, either commercial passenger operators or PSO operators. The definition also includes freight operators. In the UK we generally refer to TOCs and FOCs.
Service Facility	Rolling stock maintenance depot. In Europe the term service is used, while we use depot in the UK.

Glossary

ADIF (Administrador de Infraestructuras Ferroviarias)	Spanish Infrastructure Manager
Arenaways	Railway Undertaking. Operator of PSO contract in Italy
Autorité de Régulation des Transports (ART)	French Rail Regulator
Autorità di Regolazione dei Trasporti (Transport Regulation Authority)	Italian Rail Regulator
Bayerische Eisenbahngesellschaft (BEG)	PTA for German regional state of Bavaria
Bundesnetzagentur (Federal Network Agency)	German Rail Regulator
Bundesverband SchienenNahverkehr	German Federal Association of Local Rail Transport (Association of PTAs)
bwegt	Regional brand for all public transport in the German state of Baden Württemberg
Cercanías	Urban services serving major Spanish cities
CNMC (Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia)	Spanish competition authority, who is also the Rail Regulator
Competent Authority	The public body responsible for the specification of PSO services and ensuring their delivery. In the UK context this would be the Secretary of State.
DB AG (DB)	Deutsche Bahn – state owned railway company in Germany. It is structured into different businesses, each operates independently of each other
DB Fernverkehr	Railway Undertaking operating commercial long-distance services. Owned by DB AG
DB InfraGo	German Infrastructure Manager. Owned by DB AG

BD Netz	Former German Infrastructure Manager, became part of DB InfraGo
DB Regio	Railway Undertaking operating PSC contracts. Owned by DB AG
DB Stations und Service	Former DB stations business, became part of BD InfraGo
BeNex	Railway Undertaking. Operator of PSO contracts in Germany
DGITM	Direction générale des infrastructures, des transports et des mobilités (French National Transport Ministry)
Deutschlandticket	German wide season ticket valid on regional train services
Eisenbahn-Bundesamt (EBA)	German safety and licencing authority
English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill	Legislation currently going through parliament that will increase the level of devolution to regional and local authorities, which includes a right to request local commissioning of rail services i.e. statutory provisions for rail devolution
Euskotren	Railway Undertaking in Basque region, Spain
Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya (FGC)	Railway Undertaking in Catalonia, Spain
Flix Train	Open Access Railway Undertaking in Germany. Part of Flix Group
Frecciarossa	High-Speed services operated by Tenitalia
FS Group (Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane)	Italian state-owned railways
go.Rheinland	German PTA covering part of regional state of North Rhine-Westphalia
Grand Est	French region
HLB	Railway Undertaking. Operator of PSO contracts in Germany
Infrastructure Manager	The body responsible for the operation and control of the rail infrastructure. In the UK this is Network Rail.
Italo	Italian open access high-speed operator
Jernhusen	Owner of Swedish stations and Service Facilities

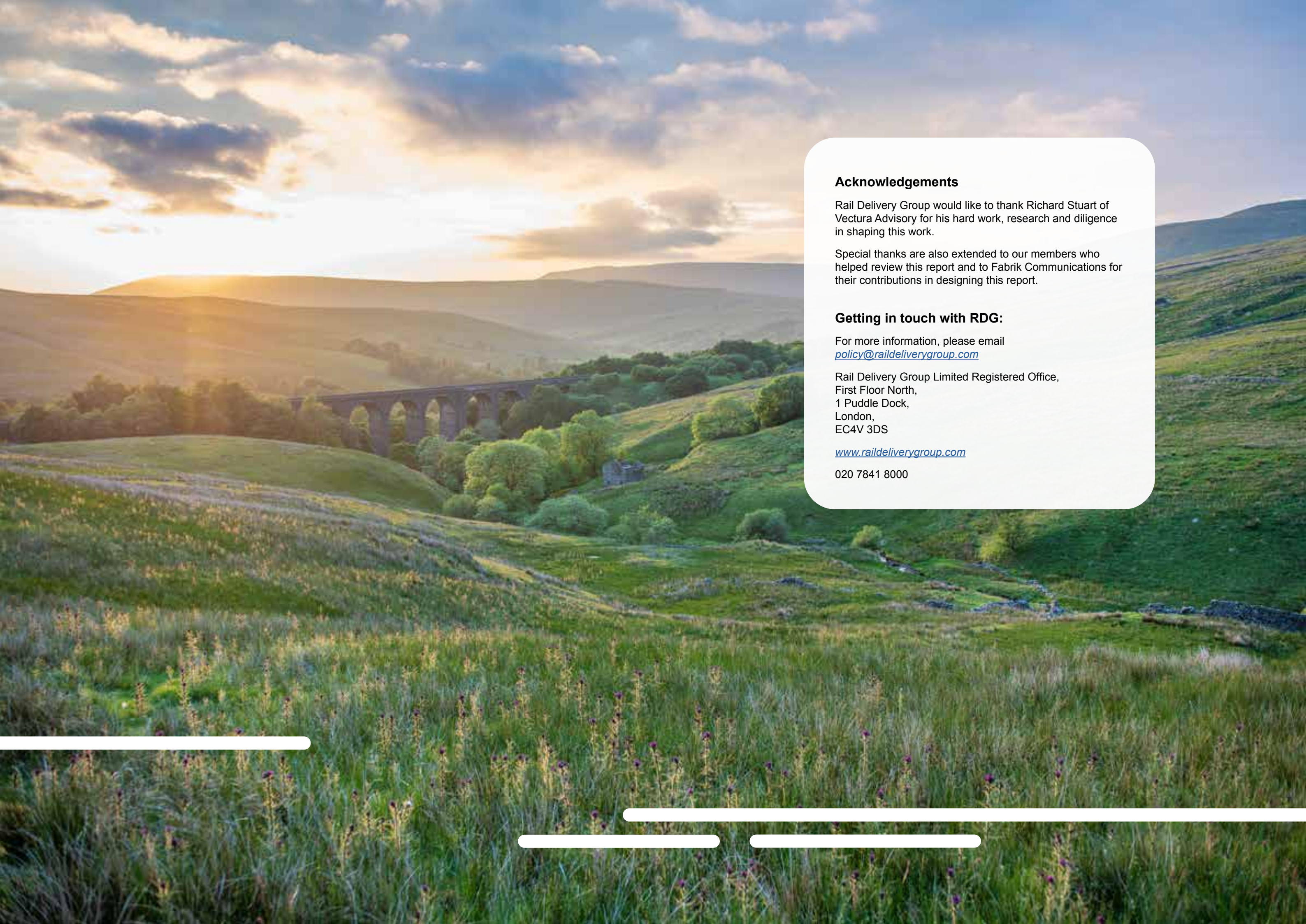
85

Länder	German regional state
Ministerio de Transportes y Movilidad Sostenible	Spanish Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility (National Transport Ministry)
National Express	Railway Undertaking. Operator of PSO contracts in Germany. Part of Mobico Group
Netinera	Railway Undertaking. Operator of PSO contracts in Germany. Owned by FS Group
NWL	German PTA covering part of regional state of North Rhine-Westphalia
ÖBB	Austrian state-owned Railway Undertaking. Also operator of PSO contracts in Germany
Öresundståg	Swedish regional operating contract, including services over Öresunds bridge to Denmark
Pågatågen	Swedish regional operating contract centred on Malmo
Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Act 2024	UK legislation enabling the transfer of TOCs to DfTO ownership
PSC	Public Service Contract – the contract between the Competent Authority and the Railway Undertaking to deliver the Public Service Obligation
PSO – Public Service Obligation	The train service required to be delivered. Defined in Regulation 2016/2338 as part of the 4th Railway Package. It establishes the principle that passenger rail services should be provided on a commercial basis, and should only be designated PSO if the market cannot provide. Where services are designated as PSO, competitive tendering should be the norm and direct awards should be the exception.
PSC – Public Service Contract	The contract between the Competent Authority and the Railway Undertaking, which includes the services to be delivered i.e. the Public Service Obligation (PSO)
PTA – Public Transport Authority	In the context of this report these are the regional bodies responsible for rail services. In many cases they are also the Competent Authority. PTAs referenced in this report typically have greater powers than UK PTAs and are more akin to TfL or Transport Scotland.

Roslagsbanen	Self contained rail network in Stockholm
Railways Bill	Legislation currently going through parliament that will establish GBR, and change the legislation that governs railways in the UK
Railway Undertaking	Railway operators, either commercial passenger operators or PSO operators. The definition also includes freight operators. In the UK we generally refer to TOCs and FOCs.
Red Ferroviaria de Interés General (RFIG)	General Interest Rail Network – Spanish rail network
Region Sud	French region
Regionalisierungsmittel	German federal government allocation of national funding to regional states for the funding for public transport
Renfe Alquiler de Material Ferroviario	Division of Renefe Operadora, which owns rolling stock
Renefe Operadora	Spanish state-owned railway, which has Railway Undertaking, rolling stock, maintenance and freight divisions.
Renfe Viajeros	Railway Undertaking division of Renfe Operadora, which operates commercial services and national PSC
Resplus	Swedish combined regional and long-distance ticket
RFI (Rete Ferroviaria Italiana)	Italian Infrastructure Manager – part of FS Group
S-Bahn	Description of city rail networks in Germany, used in major German cities and conurbations
Samtrafiken	Swedish national ticketing and sales association
Service Facility	Rolling stock maintenance depot. In Europe the term service facility is used, while we use depot in the UK.
SJ	State owned Railway Undertaking in Sweden, operates both commercial services and PSCs under contract
Skånetrafiken	Swedish PTA for the Skåne region
Snälltåget	Open Access Railway Undertaking in Sweden. Part of Transdev Group

87

SNCF Group	French state-owned railway. It is structured into different businesses, each operates independently of each other.
SNCF Gare et Connexions	Business responsible for managing all railway stations in France
SNCF Réseau	The Infrastructure Manager in France
SNCF Voyageurs	French Railway Undertaking. Operates both commercial long-distance services, and PSO services under PSC contracts
Svensk Kollektivtrafik	Association of Swedish PTAs
Trafikverket	Swedish Transport Administration. Infrastructure Manager for Sweden. Also procuring authority for night trains in Sweden
Transdev	Railway Undertaking. Operator of PSO contracts in France, Sweden and Germany
Transitio	Swedish rolling stock owner which owns and manages the rolling stock used in PSCs. Owned by the Swedish PTAs
Transport Styrelsen	Swedish Transport Authority – Safety Regulator
Trenord	Railway Undertaking. Operator of Italian PSO contract, owned jointly by Trenitalia and regional municipal operator FNM
Trenitalia	Italian Railway Undertaking. Operates both commercial long-distance services, and PSO services under PSC contracts. Part of FS Group
Verkehrsverbünde	German local transport associations
VR Sverige	Railway Undertaking. Operator of PSO contracts in Sweden. Part of VR Group (Finland state-owned operator)
VRR (Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Ruhr)	German PTA covering part of regional state of North Rhine-Westphalia
Vy Tåg	Railway Undertaking. Operator of PSO contracts in Sweden. Part of Vy Group (Norway state-owned operator)



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