Unlocking multimodal business travel: Striving for efficient booking of combined trips

GBTA welcomes the EU's work on Multimodal Digital Mobility Services

The demand for combining different transport options within one ticket and including greener transportation options, and seamlessness – both in the booking process and in the trip itself – is of utmost importance for business travelers. The technology to compare rail with flights or airport-to-city train with taxi fares or to combine multiple modes of transport in one trip is emerging but is hindered by lack of access to data and the lack of opportunity for intermediaries to sell multimodal transportation tickets.

The Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) and their GBTA Europe members welcome the European Commission's initiative on Multimodal Digital Mobility Services (MDMS), which aims to reduce the fragmentation of digital mobility services in the EU, improve data sharing and facilitate the transition to sustainable transport options, as well as the combination of various transport modes, for example air and rail.

GBTA believes that MDMS will set the stage for greener and more seamless travel, leveraging the European railway infrastructure and benefits of multi-modal travel. With corporate travel managers eager to reduce the environmental footprint of their travel programmes, the availability and comparability of data across modes of transport, especially when combining air and rail, will be key to success.

Resolving data sharing challenges to support a seamless and greener travel experience

GBTA agrees with the European Commission on the challenges identified to unlock multimodal travel across Europe, particularly:

a. The lack of clear conditions for combining and reselling mobility products, as well as for journey continuation;
b. The lack of consistent, reliable information on the emissions and calculation standards associated with individual and combined modes of transport.

GBTA believes that the MDMS initiative will set the stage for greater harmonization across the EU and support a seamless travel experience for business travelers across borders.

To ensure this legislation is future proof, GBTA believes the following objectives/key considerations should be considered:

01	02	03
Ensure open access to real-time travel data by MDMS platforms	Provide GHG emissions data for combined trips	Guarantee high level of flexibility and passenger rights

1. Ensure open access to transport data by MDMS platforms

The MDMS initiative has the potential to engage a wide range of transport providers wishing to participate in multimodal platforms based on transparent ranking criteria, ensuring fair competition and market access for the various mobility players.

To realise this potential, GBTA believes that it is essential for the European Commission to create the conditions for transparency and fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory access by MDMS to real-time data and travel information from transport operators.

It is crucial that all transport providers, regardless of their focus on serving different types of customers, are treated equally in terms of providing non-discriminatory access to real-time data and travel information to MDMS platforms on fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory (FRAND) terms. This data will have to be made available to intermediaries on FRAND terms to help business travelers make sustainable choices and compare and switch between travel modes. To fully achieve its ambitious objectives, the MDMS Regulation must cover all relevant players of all modes, meaning those with a certain degree of market power. In our view this specifically includes obligations for large airline groups, rail operators and municipal & long distance public transport operators.

Regulation is necessary to address the current market failure of large transport operators withholding data and travel information from MDMS platforms and reserving such data exclusively to their direct distribution channels. Without non-discriminatory access to data (schedules, fares, …) on various transport modes, MDMS platforms will not be able to offer multimodal tickets and business travelers will not have visibility of more sustainable transport options.

2. Provide GHG emissions data on MDMS platforms

Business travelers are looking to switch to greener modes of transport. However, the lack of emissions data is a major barrier to climate action: a [study] by GBTA shows that two-thirds (63%) of business travel professionals claim the lack of transparent sustainability data is the main barrier to climate action.

The MDMS initiative offers the opportunity to help travelers select greener modes of transport by displaying the climate impact associated with a trip at the point of sale.

To this end, GBTA calls on the European Commission to include a provision on the disclosure of GHG information on MDMS platforms, based on a harmonised measurement framework to allow comparability.

Such harmonised framework is currently being developed by the European Commission and GBTA has been supportive of this effort (view GBTA position on CountEmissionsEU [here]). GBTA calls on the European Commission to align CountEmissionsEU with the upcoming MDMS

initiative so that a common methodology for transport-related emissions can be used for the information displayed on MDMS platforms.

3. Guarantee passenger services and high level of flexibility in the terms and conditions

Business travelers rely on digital technologies to make bookings and plan their travel in order to increase efficiency and convenience. GBTA sees the multimodal digital mobility services as an opportunity to create a "**one-stop shop" for business travelers where they can find all relevant information about their travel in one place**. This includes data on price, emissions, real-time data in case of disruption, and passenger rights.

Providing clear guidance on rights in the event of a cancellation or delay is crucial for ensuring the safety and confidence of travelers. In that vein, GBTA calls on the EU Commission to include provisions for the inclusion of detailed information on travelers' rights in multimodal digital platforms, so that business travelers can make informed decisions when planning their trips. This would include information on alternative routes and any relevant details in the event of a disruption during the journey.

By providing a one-stop shop for all travel information, **GBTA believes that business travel will be made more seamless and that travelers will be empowered to make more informed and environmentally conscious decisions when planning their trips.**