

Project „El Expreso Panamericano“



Ideas, Motivation

- To complement the offer for the international tourism with an extraordinary option, unique in Latin America
- To emphasize the role that railways played in the history and the development of the countries crossed and prove the advantages of this mode of transportation as far as comfort and safety are concerned
- Respectful attitude against the environment, the cultures and social structures of the countries visited
- To create employment in the operating firm of the “Expreso Panamericano” itself and, on top of it, to conserve and create jobs in the firms of the contractors for additional services

Itinerary of the « Expreso Panamericano »

Campo Grande (Federal State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil) – Corumbá – Puerto Suárez (Bolivia) – Santa Cruz de la Sierra – Yacuiba – Pocitos (Argentina) – Perico – Gral. Güemes – Salta – Socompa – Antofagasta (Chile) – Abaroa (Bolivia) – Río Mulatos – Potosí – Sucre - Viacha/El Alto (La Paz) – Charaña – Arica (Chile) and back.

The itinerary characterizes itself for using exclusively a continuous network of **metric gauge**.

The total travel distance is about **4900 Km (3050 Miles)**

Travel concept

The passengers contemplate the natural beauty of the regions comfortably from their seat in the train and spend the nights in hotels along the itinerary. There, they also have dinner. During the day, meals are provided on board of the train. By means of excursions to important or scenic places, the passengers get to know the nature, the culture of the local people and the historical monuments. Just to name a few of them: Pantanal, Chiquitanía, Puna of Northeastern Argentina, Pacific Ocean, San Pedro de Atacama, Salar de Uyuni, Potosí, Sucre, Lago Titicaca, Tiahuanaco.

In the station “El Condor” of the line Río Mulatos – Potosí the **highest point in the world reached by railways** will be crossed on 4787 metres (14’800 ft.) above sea level!

The total duration of the trip will be **21 days**, from which some 13 are spent with train travelling and the remaining ones are used for excursion or rest.

Rolling stock

In 1967 and 1978, ENFE (Empresa Nacional de los Ferrocarriles del Estado) of Bolivia acquired a total of 14 railbuses from the german builder Ferrostaal. They consist of 2 units, one with the motor and one trailer. This picture shows one of the units in its original state:



The railbuses proved to be very robust and covered passenger services on both bolivian networks. Its reduced weight (18,5 metric tons) allows their circulation on modest infrastructures; they are able to run on almost all the lines with higher speeds than trains pulled by a locomotive and with less wear of the tracks. During a couple of years, they ran on the international service between La Paz and Arica over the Ferrocarril Arica a La Paz (FCALP), which counts with some accentuated grades. For various reasons, those railbuses have the technical admission on all the lines considered within this project.

Today 13 of the vehicles still exist; they are in custody of the two concessionaires of the bolivian railway networks. FCOSA operates two services of "Cama/Semicama", one between Santa Cruz de la Sierra and Quijarro (3 times per week) and one from Santa Cruz to Yacuiba (2 times per week). On the lines of FCA, at present no railbus is active. The weekly train Oruro – Cochabamba had to be cancelled early in 2004 shortly after its inauguration due to flooding and, therefore, destruction of the track. It can be concluded that most of the railbuses are idle.

The project plans the rental (and, at a future stage and if this option is available, the purchase) of a railbus and the execution of the necessary reparation/adaptation at the expense of the firm to be created.

The enterprise

The operating company of the « Expreso Panamericano » will be created in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, based on bolivian laws.

Implementation of the new offer

Under the auspices of AIFFLA (Asociación Internacional para el Fomento de los Ferrocarriles Latinoamericanos/Friends of Latin American Railways), a study trip will be organised in the year 2007. This trip will serve to spread the notice about the creation of this new offer to the tourism market and the media inclined to tourism. At the same occasion, the first travellers from Europe, Latin America, North America and other parts of the world will have the chance to enjoy this special itinerary and the sights along this route.

Impact on the labour market

Employments created within the company:

On board of the “Expreso Panamericano”

1 Conductor
1 Train Guard*)
1 Cook
1 Assistant**)

*) Also acts as tour guide to give information about the country, the people, the culture and the economy along the route.

**) Assists the cook and the train guard in their functions; is in charge of the cleaning of the railbus

Furthermore, there will be employees on request to replace the above named in occasions such as vacations, sickness, accidents or to help in case of heavy demand.

Administration

1 Manager
1 Secretary

In the firms of the contractors (incoming tour operators, hotels, restaurants, groceries etc.), more jobs are conserved or even new ones created. However, this can not yet be quantified.

Impact on the environment

The “Expreso Panamericano” uses existing infrastructures, so the tracks of the railway are in place since a long time; they are mostly in at least acceptable state. Just the excursions and the transfers to and from the hotels will be by road transport, in fact, only short distances.

The railbus is a vehicle whose consumption of fuel is very low. Measures will be considered (filters) in order to reduce to the minimum the expulsion of exhausting gases.

During the process of professional training of the staff emphasis will be put on ecological themes.

It is estimated, therefore, that the impact on the environment is absolutely minimal.

Relation with other projects

Through various media, information was broadcasted regarding the creation of a bi-oceanic corridor by rail. The idea is to improve the capacity of the railway networks of Brazil, Bolivia and Argentina in order to facilitate the transport of agricultural products and other freight.

The main promoters of this project are the government of Bolivia, the governor of the federal state of Mato Grosso do Sul in Brazil and the governors of the provinces in north-eastern Argentina. In declarations to the press, those officials emphasized the importance of such a corridor for agriculture and industry but also stressed that tourism is a part of this endeavour.

The project described on this pages coincides perfectly with those plans.

The reactivation of the Potosí – Sucre line in the Bolivian Andes makes it possible to reach the constitutional capital with the “Expreso Panamericano”.

Institutional support

The project "El Expreso Panamericano" is supported by the travel agencies "Comet Reisen AG" of Zurich, Switzerland (expert and pioneer in trips to Latin America) and "INTI Tours e.K." of Deggingen, Germany as well as by the association AIFFLA (Asociación Internacional para el Fomento de los Ferrocarriles Latinoamericanos/Friends of Latin American Railways). AIFFLA promotes predominantly the passenger trains in Latin America by undertaking consulting activities and broadcasting information about various aspects of the railways on that continent. The association integrates, among other interested people, professionals in the field of railways who let AIFFLA benefit of their knowledge.

Steps towards the realization of the project

- Creation of a business plan

- Contract for custody or rental of the railbus
- Renovation and adaptation of the vehicle
- Agreement with the concessionaires about the use of the tracks
- Renovate the technical admission of the vehicle for the lines used
- Determine the service points en route (fuel, lubrication, small repairs)
- Maintenance agreement with a workshop (FCOSA)
- Agreements with the various customs/border authorities regarding the quick execution of the procedures when crossing the borders
- Insurance for the transport of passengers/liability

- Contracts with hotels and restaurants where the "Expreso" makes stops
- Contracts with local incoming travel agents

- Hire the staff for the positions named
- Professional training of the staff
- Homologation by the concessionaires for the operational functions performed on their railway network

- Creation of an Internet site
- Elaboration of publicity material (leaflets, documentations) and promotional items
- Publicity campaign in the principal markets (in Latin America: Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile; North America; Europe: Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Great Britain; Asia: Japan, Corea, China; Australia). The campaign will address the travel agents at tourism trade fairs and the public also at tourism trade fairs and through the media

Execution of the project

It is planned to introduce the "Expreso Panamericano" in the year of 2007. By this, it is possible to resolve all the detail questions which arise from the steps above named. The goal is to establish a solid and permanent offer.

Zurich, 07.5.2004