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Public Transport in Île-de-France

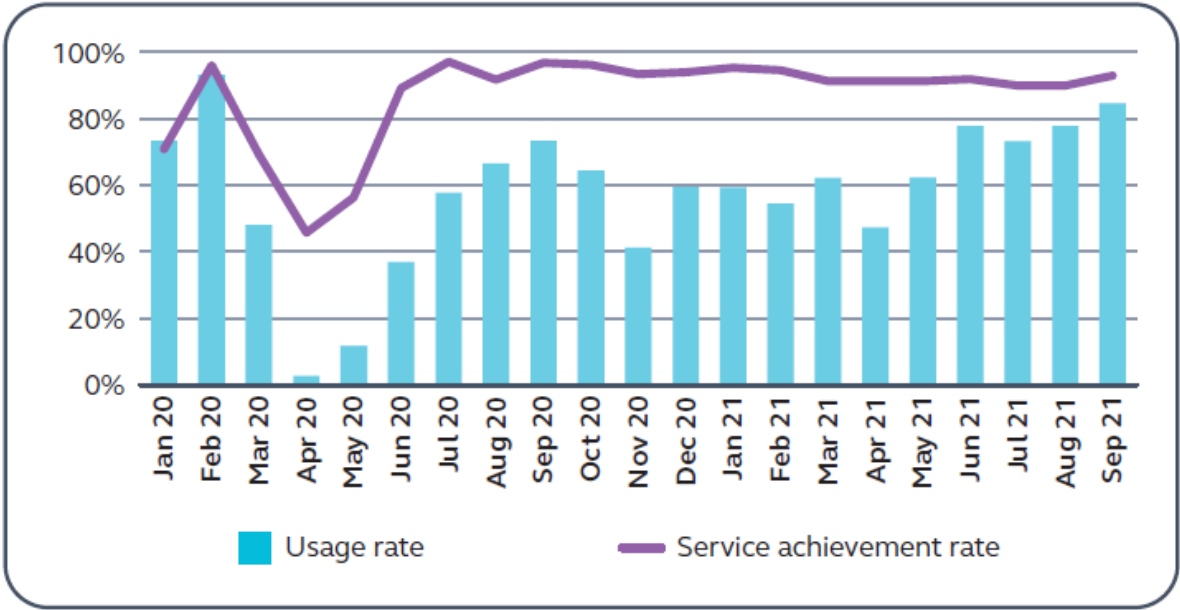
Executive summary

2022 Annual Public Report

The Court of Accounts and CRC Île-de-France have investigated the conditions in which the public authorities and public transport operators were able to maintain operational management during the pandemic, analysed its financial impact in 2020 and 2021, and assessed its consequences in both the medium and long term on the evolution of the public transport system in Île-de-France.

Brutally reduced operations that have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels

Comparative evolution of services and usage



Source: Court of Accounts, in accordance with IDFM data

Despite the drastic drop in usage, which has still not returned to pre-pandemic levels, the State, IDFM and the operators (RATP, SNCF and Optile bus line operators) have chosen to maintain a service level greater than observed demand in order to allow frontline staff and key workers to travel and to guarantee social distancing among passengers.

Maintenance – essential to providing a service – has been reoriented to concentrate on routine and preventive operations. Network extension and modernisation works have been more greatly affected, with cascading delays of around six months. These will be all the more difficult to catch up on as the sites are complex, interdependent and located in urban environments.

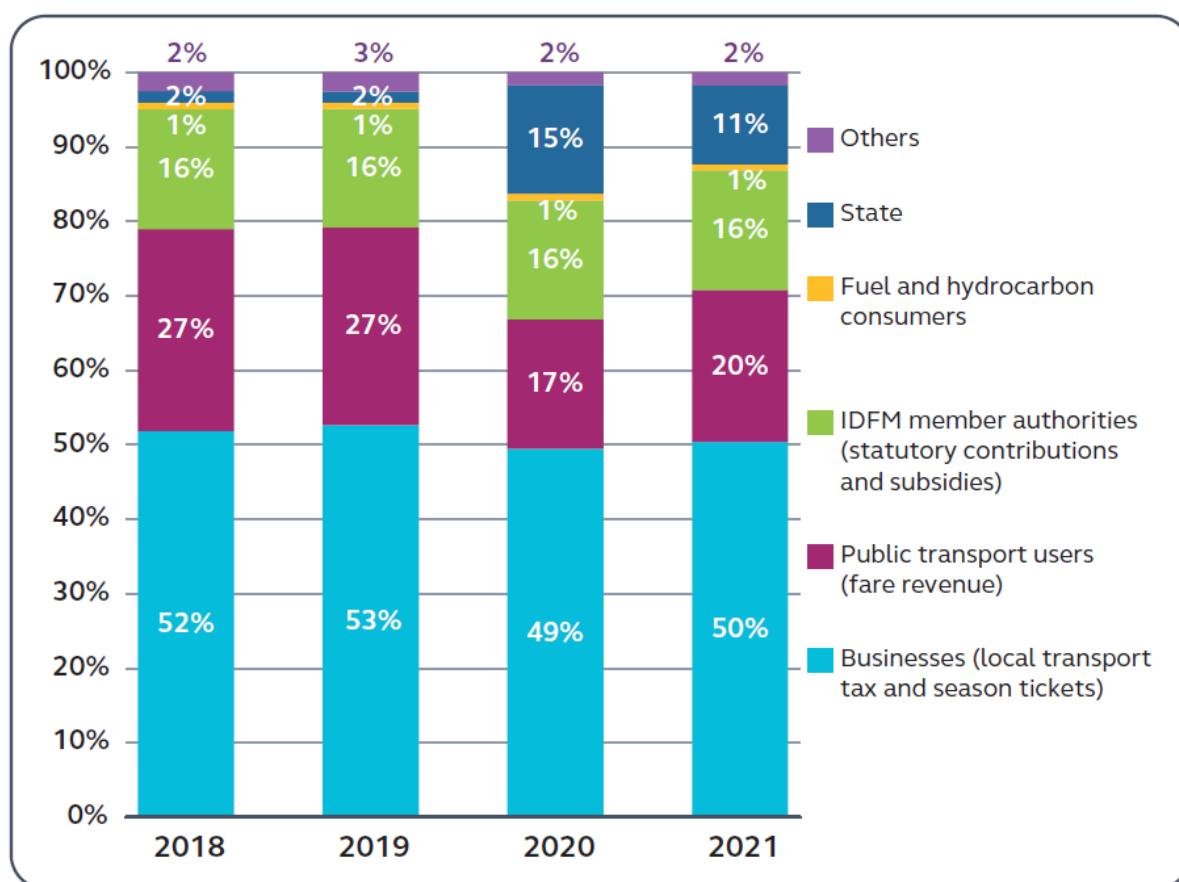
Management during the pandemic was satisfactory overall. IDFM and the operators have endeavoured to put in place appropriate health measures to reassure users. Staff – who have been well supported – showed their dedication, particularly during the most acute phases of the pandemic.

Heavy operating losses, covered by the State, and a stable rate of investment

In 2020, overall revenue losses compared with 2019 reached €1.42 billion, including €1.29 billion in fare revenue losses. These should amount to approximately €1 billion in 2021.

Following difficult negotiations, marked by IDFM's decision to suspend payment of its contributions to SNCF and RATP in July 2020, then again in September 2021, the majority of these losses have been covered by the State. The latter intervened as the guarantor-of-last-resort of a system whose management is nevertheless decentralised and the operational financing of which is supposedly based on Île-de-France's resources alone.

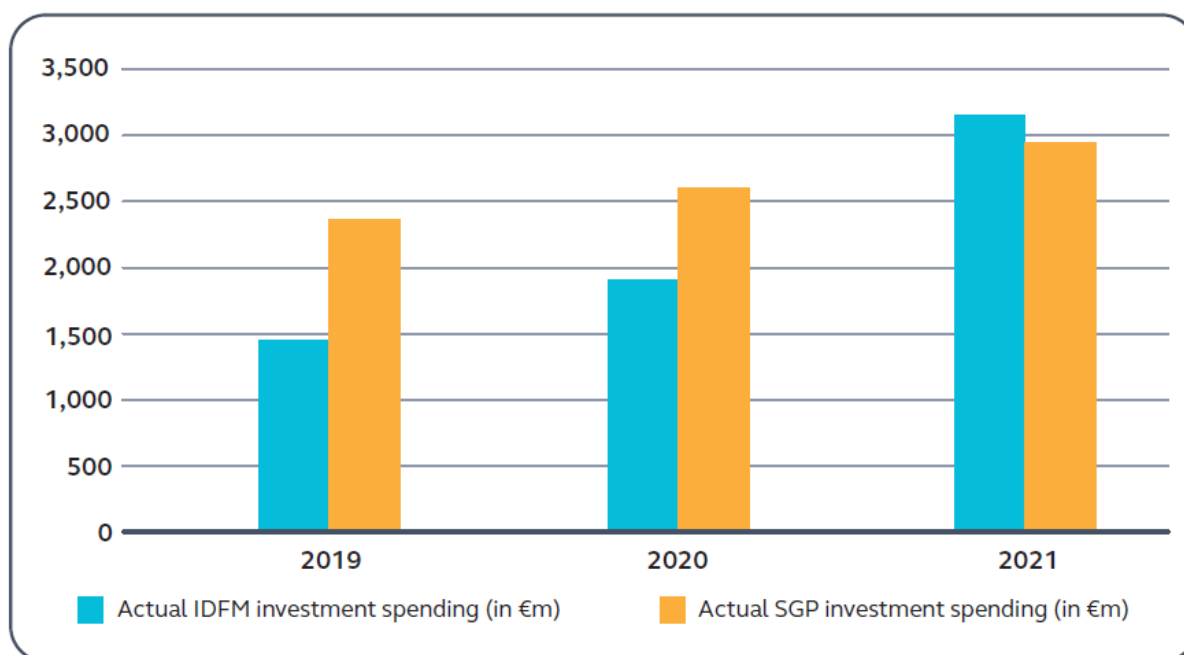
Evolution of the relative weighting of IDFM financiers for its operating income



Source: Court of Accounts, in accordance with IDFM data

Despite these financial difficulties, investments by IDFM and SGP have increased. At the same time, their debts have also increased, reaching €7.62 billion and €24.5 billion respectively by the end of 2021.

Evolution of investment spending by SGP and IDFM



Source: Court of Accounts, in accordance with IDFM and SGP data

The need to consolidate regional public transport funding in Île-de-France

Despite the beneficial effects of the increase in supply and population growth, the boom in remote working and persistent sluggishness of tourism are most likely to keep usage rates below 2019 levels until at least 2023-2024. The pandemic could therefore result in delayed growth in demand for public transport by five or six years, which would significantly aggravate the funding challenges the Île-de-France public transport system was already experiencing before the pandemic.

The sustainability of Île-de-France's public transport economic model depends, in particular, on IDFM's ability to maintain its debt reduction ratio over the next fifteen years. However, projections show that this ratio will be exceeded in 2026. Steps must therefore be taken, in terms of spending and revenue, to restore the system's financial balance.

Planned investments are largely intangible, including those related to the future automatic metro lines of the Grand Paris Express. Fine adjustments to service levels and attempts to improve operator productivity are essential, but will no longer generate significant savings. Yet smoothing out investments planned by IDFM over the 2026-2030 period (€10 billion, including €8.5 billion for renewing or modernising rolling stock), is feasible.

It is therefore necessary to take action on revenue in order to help restore the sustainability of the model. Substantial existing and future extensions to the network and corresponding improvements in the quality of service justify an increase in fares and an increase, where otherwise necessary, in the contributions of IDFM member authorities.

Restoring the Île-de-France public transport system's funding balance also requires new measures. Amplifying those aimed at encouraging travel by public transport and discouraging private car use could both help increase passenger numbers. IDFM could also benefit from new resources from securing part of the land value brought about by the densification of the network and from the contributions of Île-de-France road users in funding public transport in the region.