

PRESS RELEASE

RATP Dev publishes international study on optimising the performance of automated metros, the new standard for urban mobility worldwide

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RATP Dev today publishes its study, “Unlocking the Full Potential of Automated Metros – Perspectives from Global Stakeholders”. This unprecedented analysis provides an overview of the sector and identifies seven key lessons for harnessing the full potential of this mode of transport, which has become essential in addressing the challenges of mobility, capacity, and the environmental transition in major metropolitan areas.

With nearly 30 lines totalling around 600 km – either in operation or under development – including more than 300 km of fully automated lines, and carrying 3 million passengers every day, RATP Group is a world leader in automated metros. Lines 1, 4, and 14 in the Île-de-France region, operated on behalf of Île-de-France Mobilités, are flagship examples of this expertise.

In a rapidly expanding market, the Group is involved in several major international projects, including four key lines expected to be operational by 2035 in Paris, Sydney, Singapore, and Melbourne. This momentum is also reflected in the Group’s active participation in several strategic tenders, notably in Copenhagen and Dublin, confirming the growing role of automated metros as a standard for high-capacity urban transport. Building on its experience and expertise, RATP Dev ultimately aims for urban rail activities to account for 50% of its revenue.



Hiba Farès, Chairwoman of the RATP Dev Executive Board:

“Automated metros are now a mature technology, widely deployed around the world, that is profoundly transforming how cities develop and how people travel. But why do some automated metros deliver sustained performance over time ... while others do not? With this study, we answer that question by showing that much of their potential has yet to be unlocked. Achieving this requires projects to be approached from an integrated perspective right from the design phase, with a focus on operational performance, quality of service, and safety.”

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Based on around 30 interviews conducted with key stakeholders across the sector – transport authorities, manufacturers, operators, and international experts – as well as members of RATP Group’s Automated Metro Club, the study provides a shared perspective on the ecosystem. Despite the diversity of stakeholders involved, it highlights a strong consensus on the challenges and the drivers of performance. This alignment is particularly evident in key areas such as integrating operational considerations from the design phase onwards, the quality of project governance, and taking the human factor into account.

A rapidly expanding global standard

After over 40 years of development and operation, these systems have demonstrated their ability on a large scale to combine high performance, increased reliability, and energy efficiency. Automated metros are now establishing themselves as a standard for high-capacity urban transport. Fully automated networks (GoA4) currently account for more than 2,300 kilometres of lines in operation worldwide, a figure that is expected to double by 2030.

Against a backdrop of rapid urbanisation, increasingly congested existing infrastructure and the climate emergency, automated metros provide a strategic response: they can accommodate growing demand while supporting decarbonisation policies and the modal shift towards public transport.

Proven operational performance

The study highlights immediate operational benefits. Automation can deliver energy savings of up to 15–20%, while significantly increasing line capacity and improving service regularity. It can also significantly reduce headways – a decisive advantage in accommodating passenger flows on the busiest lines. These benefits are complemented by unprecedented operational flexibility, with services that can be adjusted in real time to match demand – a key advantage during peak periods or major events.

A major driver of urban transformation

Beyond their technical performance, automated metros are becoming powerful tools for urban transformation. They reduce congestion, improve air quality and enhance the attractiveness of local areas, while structuring urban development around public transport. Automated metros therefore go far beyond their original transport function to become key infrastructure at the heart of the economic, social and environmental development of major metropolitan areas.

The conditions for unlocking their full potential

While the technology has reached maturity, the study emphasises that the real challenge now lies in fully harnessing the potential of these systems. It identifies seven key success factors:

- Integrated governance involving public and private stakeholders;
- Involving the operator from the design phase onwards;
- A people-centred transformation, combined with effective management of technical complexity;
- Anticipating obsolescence and designing systems that can evolve over time;
- Harnessing data, AI and innovation to enhance performance;
- A stronger focus on the passenger experience;
- Integrating automated metros into urban strategies.

Read the full study on ratpdev.com