Challenges, opportunities and solutions to improve mobility in rural areas: The SMARTA Project

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www.ruralsharedmobility.eu
The context

A **quarter** of Europe’s population lives in rural areas, that is about **150 million people**

Naturally diffuse, much higher **need** for **mobility** than in urban areas

Public transport weak, high **dependency** on private **car**

**The issues**

- **Mobility**
  - How to live a daily life without a car

- **Traffic generated in rural areas**

- **Environment**
The SMARTA Project
www.ruralsharedmobility.eu

Enhance current policies and practices on mobility in rural areas, leading to sustainable mobility

Shared mobility ↔ Public Transport

SMARTA smart rural transport areas

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Sponsored by European Parliament
Funded through EU Transport Ministry - DG MOVE

The SMARTA Consortium

UNIABDN VECTOS TML MEMEX EIP
Project activities

Research

“Insight Papers” & Good Practices

Demonstration

“Pilot sites”

Policy recommendations for rural mobility for improving the accessibility in rural areas

Engagement

Stakeholders’ engagement

Practitioners and operators

Regional and local authorities

European Parliament

European Commission
Rural shared mobility landscape

**Asset sharing**

Allows the traveller to utilise/pick-up a specific means of transport (bike, car, e-scooter, etc.) without any property issue; users must be registered.

The ‘shared mobility services’ include both the **mobility services** themselves and the **supporting services** including traveler information, reservation, payment and operation management.

**Flexible Transport Services**

Include a range of services that act as an additional layer between conventional (fixed route and schedule based) transport and personal transport (car or taxi).

**Ride sharing**

Allows aggregation of the mobility demand for sharing a ride in the same vehicle (e.g. carpooling); and/or to use the same service (e.g. taxi) together with other persons.
In all, 14 rural shared mobility sites, 13 countries

5 SMARTA Pilot sites
- Ring a Link, Kilkenny, Ireland
- School bus and ITS, Toscana Sud, Italy
- RezoPouce, Herault, France
- Bürgerbus Oberes Glantaal, Germany
- Bürgerbus Dreisam-Stromer, Germany

4 SMARTA2 Pilot sites
- East Tyrol, Austria
- Municipality of Trikala, Greece
- Municipality of Águeda, Portugal
- Brasov Metropolitan Area, Romania

5 in-depth Good Practices
- Vallirana, Spain
- Groningen-Drenthe, NL
- Vejle, Denmark
- Vidzeme, Latvia
- Bielsko-Biala, Poland

14 Different mobility practices

- Kilkenny, IE
- Herault, FR
- Águeda, PT
- Vallirana, ES
- Toscana Sud, IT
- Vejle, DK
- Vidzeme, LV
- Dreisam Stromer, DE
- East Tyrol, AT
- Brasov, RO
- Trikala, GR
- Bielsko-Biala, PL
Research activities

“Insight Papers”
Analysis of the challenges of mobility in rural areas and the framework in each of the 28 EU countries (including selected EEA states, North America and Australia)

“Good Practices”
Comprehensive overview of Good Practices in rural shared mobility from around Europe and beyond
Insight Papers: Key findings about Frameworks for rural mobility

There is near-total absence of specific national policy for mobility in rural areas.

There are different Authority levels acting in rural mobility.

There are few obligations at national level to provide rural mobility services or its funding.

The organisational arrangements for rural shared mobility are weak.

Frameworks are not conducive to developing rural shared mobility.

Note: Some Regions and Local Authorities make policy and programs even if national level does not.
Task 1: Good Practices

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)

- Ring a Link, Kilkenny, IE [DRT1]
- Shotl Platform, ES [DRT4]
- Prontobus, Modena Province, IT [DRT2]
- The Village Bus in Kolsliere, SE [DRT5]
- DRT in the region of Middle Tejo, PT [DRT3]
- RegioTaxi, NL [DRT6]
- Suffolk Links DRT, UK [DRT9]

Hybrid cases (HYB)

- ArrivaClick On-Demand PT Service, UK [HYB1]
- Badenoch&Strathspey Community Transport Company, UK [HYB2]
- Texelhopper, NL [HYB3]
- Go-Mobil, AU [HYB4]

Rail and Bus) Public Transport Network (PT)

- SmartMove project in Langadas, GR [PT1]
- Krakow Metropolitan Transport, PL [PT2]
- Smart Move in Alba Iulia, RO [PT3]
- Muldental in Fahrtn, DE [PT4]
- DRT in rural areas of Castilla y Leon, ES [DRT11]

Shared Mobility (SM)

- SUMA, Elba, IT [SM1]
- SOPOTNIK, SI [SM2]
- Alpine Bus – Bus service in tourist area, CH [SM3]
- Talybont Energy, UK [SM4]
- Rezo Pouce, FR [SM5]
- EcoVolis community bike-sharing, Albania [SM6]
- Northern Commute, Limerick, IE [SM6]
- Autonomous shuttle in Bad Birnbach, DE [SM8]
- Bürgerbuses, Baden-Württemberg, DE [SM9]
- Flexi Tec, BE [SM10]
Scope of the SMARTA Evaluation Framework

Research questions:
What are the solutions to cope with rural mobility challenges?
What would be the impacts of implementing such solutions?
What can policymakers, institutions and system managers do to improve rural mobility?

What are factual (pos or neg) results? (WHAT? - IMPACTS)
What are reasons behind these results? (WHY? REASONS)
Can pilot be replicated? (TRANSFERABLE? - CONDITIONS)

Mobility & accessibility indicators (layer 2)
Enabling factors (layer 1)
Implementation process (layer 3)
Feasibility (layer 4)

Evaluation framework
Task 3: Engagement and Networking

Building the SMARTA network is a fundamental step for ensuring the validation of the SMARTA activities, for achieving widespread uptake of the SMARTA findings and for raising awareness about the rural mobility issues.

SMARTA Network

1) Is consulted for validating the results of the project (e.g. analysis of the frameworks for each of the EU-28)

2) Is involved in the discussions related to the smart solutions for improving the accessibility of rural areas, through Pilot experiences, Good practice cases, etc.

3) Is involved in the open discussion for the development of new policies for rural shared mobility

First SMARTA Workshop, January 2019

SMARTA final Conference scheduled for 10-11th December 2020

POLIS 2020 Conference | 2nd December 2020
What is the Problem in Rural Mobility in Europe?

Lack of Policy and Responsibilities

- There is no policy for rural mobility at European level, nor any obligation for Member States to have such a policy.
- Not a single European Member State has a target-bound policy for rural mobility, with assigned responsibilities and sufficient committed budget to deliver it.
- It is left to regions and local areas to provide such services as they see fit, if they choose to, or do what they can with the limited resources allocated.

Limited Supply of Services

- Rural areas in Europe have limited public transport, many have none.
- Low frequency, timed for commuting. Unsuitable for many purposes.
- Lack of structured integration of scheduled public transport and local mobility services.
- Few opportunities for people from urban areas to visit rural amenities without their car.

Limited Mobility for People without cars

- Very high dependency on cars. Without a car, depend on lifts, taxi (high cost) or don’t travel.
- Limited accessibility to bus services, if they exist (distance, surface, lighting, …).
- Low level of service makes connections difficult, may not have suitable return trip.
- Children usually have good access to/from school, but otherwise depend on parents for lift-giving - less independence, heavy burden.

Leads to

Which results in
But why should Europe Act on Rural Mobility?

‘Mobility’ is a basic freedom.
- It is the possibility to access work, education, services, society and everything else that is part of a person’s life.
- It is a vital enabler of any community, especially of rural communities, where many essential things are located some distance away.
- Providing sustainable forms of mobility make an important contribution to mitigate climate change.

Why should EU act on something that seems to be a local issue?

Rural mobility issues are widespread across all European Countries

People
Rural communities
Businesses and activities

Centralisation, reduced local services, jobs, shops and activities
Reduced financial support to rural mobility
Socio-demographic issues – young and old stay, the middle leaves

Need to travel further, for most purposes
Car is often the only option, as alternatives are not available
Many cannot use cars, due to age, infirmity, affordability

Difficult to live a daily life without a car
Increased rural traffic, converging on urban areas
Energy Consumption and Emissions

137 million people impact on whether an EU policy succeeds or not.

27% Population living in rural areas
24% Share of EU’s rural population at risk of poverty or social exclusion

Legacy of disinvestment and lack of investment in rural broadband, social infrastructure, jobs

2017
What to do?

A new vision is required for mobility in Europe’s rural areas.

Existing and emerging mobility deficits in rural areas must be addressed

**Rural territories require policy frameworks that improve mobility in EU regions**

There is a need for action at the European policy-making level to develop a common European framework that encompasses a shared future vision for rural mobility and at the same time takes into account the emphasis on the specificities of rural areas and their populations.

Rural shared mobility solutions require minimal infrastructure and can be deployed rapidly.
SMARTA FINAL CONFERENCE
10-11.12.2020

Developing Smart Rural Transport Areas
Thank you!

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RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON
THE SMARTA WEBSITE

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