OUTPUT FACTSHEET: PILOT ACTIONS

**Project index number and acronym**
CE55 RUMOBIL

**Lead partner**
Ministry for Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt

**Output number and title**

**Responsible partner (PP name and number)**

**Project website**
http://interreg-central.eu/rumobil

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**Summary description of the pilot action explaining its experimental nature and demonstration character**

Whereas Saxony-Anhalt provides a good main transport network (rail service and interregional bus services), a number of rural/peripheral areas are not adequately connected to the main transport network. Most parts of these regions suffer from an ongoing population decline and dynamic aging as well as services of public interest retreat from these areas. This, however, brings enormous challenges for the provision of public services, such as public transport (PT). One the one hand, population decrease and limited funds to finance PT result in reduced PT offers.

The MLV together with its in-house transport agency NASA introduced a new bus service, which has been operated according to the demand of residents. A “Citizen Bus”, in German “Bürgerbus” operated by local communities and voluntary drivers represents a highly innovative and cost-effective approach for connecting rural/ peripheral areas. The approach is being tested in two municipalities (Möser and Osterburg) with the buses running between remote villages and bigger towns/ secondary or tertiary transport hubs. The service is Osterburg started in February 2018, while the service in Osterburg started three months later. While there have been similar approaches in the past, the Citizen Buses were the only of their kind in Saxony-Anhalt at the time.

The experimental nature of the pilot action shows mainly in the different organisational and planning approach. Unlike traditional PT services, Citizen Buses depend on the commitment of the voluntary drivers. While it helps to lower the costs for personnel and therefore the costs of the service itself, it also is a risk factor when it comes to maintaining a sustainable service. The pilot demonstrates what needs to be taken into consideration to provide a reliable service and how such services can help to sustain local mobility in the specific areas.
NUTS region(s) concerned by the pilot action (relevant NUTS level)

In Saxony-Anhalt, two regions are concerned by the pilot action. Osterburg, located in the district of Stendal (NUTS 3), has 10,076 inhabitants (31.12.2015) and covers an area of 230 km². Osterburg as the main city having around 5,000 inhabitants is surrounded by 29 smaller settlements. Möser, the second pilot candidate, is located in the district Jerichower Land (NUTS 3), 20 km from Saxony-Anhalt’s capital Magdeburg. Möser has 8,137 inhabitants and covers an area of 80 km². The municipality Möser consists of six settlements, the biggest settlement is Möser with around 2,700 inhabitants.

Expected impact and benefits of the pilot action for the concerned territory and target groups

Citizen Buses are an instrument to improve the local mobility in regions, where traditional PT services don’t satisfy the needs of the potential passengers. The pilot action was mainly targeted at the elderly and other people with reduced mobility, as they have special needs to be satisfied for them to use PT services.

One of the benefits of the pilot action was the densification of the bus stop network, which helped to reduce the average walking distance and thus making it more accessible to the aforementioned target groups. The reconstruction of the vehicles in compliance with the Passenger Transportation Act (German: Personenbeförderungsgesetz – PBefG) also helped to make the buses more accessible.

Another benefit was the fine development of the settlements surrounding Osterburg and Möser. Along with the denser bus stop network, the quality of PT services could be improved with the introduction of additional lines operating in the respective regions. While the number of passengers still show room for improvement, Citizen Buses were never meant to be a mode of mass transport and therefore the number of total passengers cannot be compared to those of regular train or bus services.

Sustainability of the pilot action results and transferability to other territories and stakeholders
When new mobility services are introduced, experience shows that they need some time to actually establish themselves and to be accepted by local people. Since the pilot actions in the RUMOBIL project did not have sufficient time to be further developed, the state of Saxony-Anhalt is going to financially support the two Citizen Bus projects for two more years until the end of 2020 (covering costs for leasing, insurance and vehicle tax).

During this period, the two projects will be further tested and developed in order to increase demand and gain more knowledge for future projects of other municipalities. How much of the gained knowledge can be transferred depends on the circumstances of the other territories respectively municipalities. However, it can be a first indicator of what has to be taken into consideration when starting such PT services.

With the latest revision of the Public Transport Plan of Saxony-Anhalt Citizen Buses a framework to develop PT in rural areas has been worked out. This includes Citizen Buses along other mobility services. Furthermore, Saxony-Anhalt is planning a funding programme to financially support more Citizen Bus projects.

Lessons learned from the implementation of the pilot action and added value of transnational cooperation

During the implementation of the pilot action, it became apparent that the actual challenge was not so much traffic planning as the organisational and coordination effort. Before launching Citizen Bus services, the stakeholders affected by the pilot and their interests have to be taken into account. These include, among others, the public authorities as well as the local transport and taxi companies.

At the same time, the legal requirements regarding passenger transport licence, accessibility, etc. must be followed. In this regard the added value of the transnational cooperation only helped to a limited extend, as the legal frameworks of each country can differ vastly. Instead, transnational cooperation helped with the exchange of experience and thus it contributed to find suitable approaches and solutions to tackle the problems.

References to relevant deliverables and web-links
If applicable, pictures or images to be provided as annex

A more detailed overview of the results can be found in deliverables D.T2.2.3 (Final Report) and D.T2.6.2 (Quantitative Evaluation).