

Dear reader,

Rural areas have some specific characteristics that can be considered very challenging when it comes to mobility. Examples of these characteristics include long distances between the various amenities such as schools, hospitals, or public administration, sparsely populated areas with low public transport demand, high car dependency due to long distances between settlements etc.

Such characteristics are difficult to tackle in terms of meeting the prerequisites set by the European Union in relation to efficient, cost-effective and environmentally friendly transport and mobility.

Mobility Management is needed to counteract the negative effects of transport



Source: RURBANCE final booklet

Currently more than half of the population worldwide lives in cities. However, this means that there is still **about half of the population worldwide living in rural areas, and** in some regions this is the majority of the population. Urban-rural links are increasingly growing and include the mobility of people, goods and services as well as waste. Despite the relevance of this linkage, **rural connectivity is an ongoing challenge around the world**. Since most economic and social opportunities are located in urban areas or towns, rural communities can be quite disconnected from infrastructure and transport options – thus lacking access to the opportunities that urban areas offer.

The **OECD Regional Outlook 2016** examines the growing productivity gap across regions within countries, and the implications of these trends for the well-being of people living in different places. In this sense, both rural and urban areas deserve clean, affordable, accessible and safe mobility, because mobility is an important factor for **social, environment and economic development** of each area.

Mobility Management is a powerful instrument that can help to overcome the negative impacts of car-oriented transport and spatial planning, also in rural areas. However, most of the examples of Mobility Management measures are in the urban context. These are dedicated to the traffic problems caused by a lack of space and high density of interactions. In rural areas mobility-related problems are different. They are mainly caused by the specific characteristics of these areas:

- The population density is low.
- The public transport service is often unattractive because of low frequency services.
- On average, the availability of private cars is higher than in the cities.
- The rural areas are heavily affected by the demographic change.

Because of these external conditions, it is not possible to implement all existing Mobility Management measures in rural areas without adaptations. Nevertheless, Mobility Management is not a fixed structure, but it can be adapted to the individual conditions of different regions.



Photo credit: [Urban Globe](#) / Shutterstock

For a balanced development of the relations between rural and urban areas

In recent years quite a few European **projects and other initiatives dealt with Mobility Management for rural areas: for example the projects SmartMove and Flipper** offered exchange of knowledge and best practices, the project **Poly-SUMP** developed methodological frameworks for the deployment of sustainable mobility plans in peri-urban and rural areas), and the projects **RURBANCE** and **RUMOBIL** investigated the establishment



Source: RURBANCE final booklet

of transnational cooperation between public authorities and other relevant entities from the private and public sector .

By pursuing the objective of economic, social and territorial cohesion, these projects can contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the [Europe 2020 strategy](#).

Austria's klimaaktiv mobil programme promotes a green mobility transition and provides attractive offers to support CO₂-reducing mobility projects



Klimaaktiv mobil is embedded in the klimaaktiv initiative of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism. Klimaaktiv mobil motivates and supports private and public organisations and entities to develop and implement measures to reduce CO₂ emissions from related transport activities. Klimaaktiv mobil sets a strong focus especially on rural regions and the linkage of urban and rural areas. Among the target groups of klimaaktiv are companies and public services, cities, municipalities and regions, leisure and tourism operators, construction companies and real estate developers, as well as schools and youth groups.

Investment incentives for e-mobility, cycling and mobility management and the eco-driving initiative are important contributions to the Austrian Climate Act, the Energy Efficiency Act and, above all, the new 2030 climate and energy strategy and the long-term future options for 2050. Klimaaktiv mobil builds on [partnerships](#) and is designed as **national framework to move the relevant players in transport towards climate friendly mobility** in order to reduce CO₂-emissions, to promote renewable energy and stimulate the economy and green jobs in urban as well as in rural areas.

Rural mobility planning in France

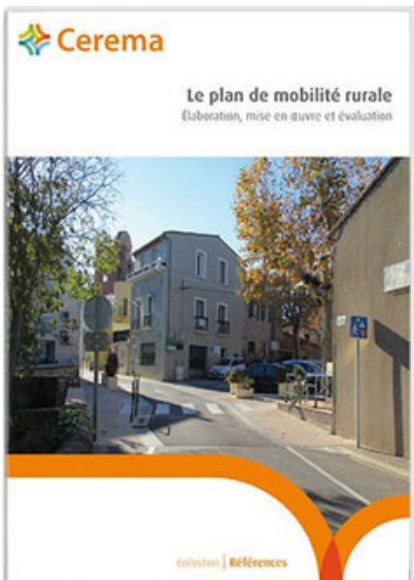


Photo: Cerema, le plan de mobilité rurale

In France, a specific **travel plan for rural areas**, the rural mobility plan, has been created by law in 2015. In integrating transport policies, this rural mobility plan aims to offer rural areas a comprehensive approach to Mobility Management. By seeking to balance and reconcile the different means of transport, it **helps to provide a better living environment** and thereby makes rural areas more attractive places to live in.

A specific [guidance document](#) (in French) has been developed by Cerema. This guidance support public and private local stakeholders in areas with a low level of urbanisation in creating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating rural mobility plans. It draws on remarkable local experiments, some of which have been in operation for several years.

From needs to implementation of a set of integrated mobility solutions in low density areas: the case of the Natural Regional Park of Grand Causses

From 2014 to 2016, Cerema worked with the Natural Regional Park of Grand Causses on a project called **TEAMM** (in French) aiming to **implement innovative mobility solutions in rural areas**. In cooperation with local stakeholders, three steps have been completed:



Photo: Natural Regional Park of Grand Causses

1. Identification of citizens' mobility needs (e.g. daily commuters travel mainly between the two major cities in the region).
2. Matching of citizens' mobility needs and mobility services.
3. Involving local stakeholders while doing workshops aiming to develop mobility solutions in partnership.

Thanks to political and technical support, local stakeholders identified integrated mobility solutions such as coordination of rural buses, multimodal transport hubs and shared mobility services. While implementing these mobility solutions, the Natural Regional Park took forward the integrated approach by planning a sustainable development Coherent Territorial Planning Scheme project.

ILSE, the flexible on-demand bus service



Photo: Landkreisverwaltung Vorpommern-Greifswald

The German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure initiated the demonstration project “**Long-term protection of services of public interest and mobility in rural areas**” (original project title in German: Modellvorhaben Langfristige Sicherung von Versorgung und Mobilität in ländlichen Räumen). This innovative approach helps rural areas that are particularly affected by demographic change, to develop concepts to protect services of public interest, local supply and mobility in the future. Mobility management is a central feature.

Some regions in Germany are already implementing concrete projects according to their mobility concepts. For example, a new bus-on-demand called “**ILSE**” (in German) is funded in the regional municipality of Vorpommern-Greifswald. A particularly interesting feature of that project is that planning and scheduling individual trips is **managed through the region's integrated coordination centre**, which is also responsible for coordinating emergency vehicles and fire trucks. A software calculates the ideal route for the individual trips and checks, whether several trips can be combined into one trip. Booking of the on-demand bus service “ILSE” can be done via telephone or online.

Promoting rural public transport use through active mobility consultancy



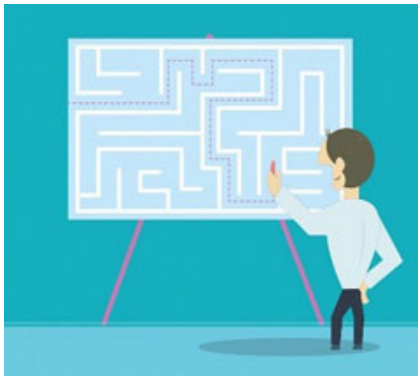
Photo: studio 43 - Nektarios Basdekis

Usually, public transport rail and bus services are not commercially viable in areas with a low population density, where households and businesses are relatively far apart. As a result, there is a reliance on public subsidies. However, as public authority budgets have come under increasing pressure in recent years, it has become more and more difficult to sustain existing services.

Therefore, in order to overcome the problems outlined above and to help breathe new life into rural transport networks, public authorities across Europe have been developing new forms of public transport services and complementary “soft” measures, like the **SmartMove** approach. The SmartMove project focused on **overcoming subjective barriers** to public transport use and **highlighting the clear health, safety and climate-related benefits of sustainable transport modes** such as walking and cycling. The SmartMove method, which involves engaging people in face-to-face dialogue and providing tailored advice and information, was tested in **eight rural and peri-urban regions** across Europe.

Conclusion

Why are Mobility Management measures important in the rural area, too? The answer is:



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Mobility Management is not only focusing on the reduction of car traffic and congestion. Mobility Management measures provide a variety of benefits also – or even especially – to rural areas. In general, the importance of social and economic benefits for the society and the individuals, which are brought about by Mobility Management measures, is higher in rural areas. In urban areas, environmental and health benefits resulting from the implementation of Mobility Management measures have a higher importance. **The reduction of the climate impact of transport is equally important in cities and in rural areas.**

Upcoming events in March and April 2018

- **CIVITAS FLOW and CIVITAS TRACE Final Conference**
13–14 March 2018 | Brussels, Belgium
<http://h2020-flow.eu> and <http://h2020-trace.eu>
- **CIVITAS PROSPERITY: National SUMP Training events**
20–23 March 2018 | Rovinj, Croatia
09–12 April 2018 | Katowice, Poland
23–27 April 2018 | Brasov, Romania
<http://sump-network.eu/learning-activities>
- **Transport Research Arena 2018**
16–19 April 2018 | Vienna, Austria
<https://www.traconference.eu>
- **CIVITAS Urban Freight Conference**
23–24 April 2018 | Brussels, Belgium
<http://civitas.eu>
- **ELIPTIC Final Conference**
26–27 April 2018 | Bremen, Germany
<http://www.elliptic-project.eu>

For more events, please visit the [EPOMM calendar](#).



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