

DELIVERABLE D.T2.2.3 - PILOT FINAL REPORT

Report summarising implementation of pilot in Saxony-Anhalt region

Version 1
October 2018

Introduction

Each piloting partner has been documenting activities done during the pilot implementation. The final report is summarising the steps undertaken to establish new services, show the difficulties encountered and solutions found. Report is describing the period March 2018 – August 2018. In addition report documents the final results of pilot project.

FINAL REPORT

Period March 2018 – June 2018

General data	
Project partner	Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt (Lead Partner)
Pilot name	Introducing a new bus service to connect peripheral towns
Pilot location	Möser, Osterburg
Person(s) responsible for pilot implementation	Sophie Golinski Anna Meyer
Pilot starting date	19.02.2018 (Osterburg), 03.05.2018 (Möser)
Pilot ending date (if applicable)	
Author of the interim report	Alexander Nitschke Malek Bensch

Reported period

Steps undertaken in period March 2018 – October 2018

After an extensive planning and preparation phase, the first citizen bus was introduced in February of this year. After the handover of the citizen bus in Osterburg on 08.02.2018 the operational phase started shortly afterwards, on 19.02.2018.

Kick-off event in Möser

The second citizen bus in Saxony-Anhalt was handed over on 27.04.2018 as part of a kick-off event. Thomas Webel, Minister for Regional Development and Transport, handed over the citizen bus and the certificates of appointment for the voluntary drivers. In addition to the minister, the project team consisting of MLV and NASA GmbH, local and regional politicians, the voluntary drivers and representatives of the press were also present. In addition, the public was invited to attend the event. At the same time, the event was used to inform citizens about the new service and to offer them the opportunity to test it themselves. As a result of the event, articles as well as regional radio and TV reports about the start of the new citizen bus in Möser were published/released.

The actual start of operations took place a week later, on 03.05.2018. Even after the start of the citizen bus in Möser, new voluntary drivers joined in. In May, potential drivers had their checkups and received their passenger transport license after completing the tests.

Publicity Campaign

The aim of the publicity campaign is to increase awareness of the buses in Osterburg and Möser. Brochures were produced in advance for both municipalities to inform about the new services, their routes, tariffs and the contact information. There were also promotional gifts such as fabric bags, notepads and ballpoint pens, which were distributed by the local authorities to interested parties. Due to the high demand, another 1,000 copies of the brochures were printed for the municipality of Möser in June 2018.

The publicity campaign also included a short animated video explaining the citizen buses in Osterburg and Möser, showing their advantages and promoting the approach to other communities. The video is based on the design elements of the other advertising measures (colour, recurring elements, etc.) in order to create brand recognition.

Difficulties encountered and solutions found in reporting period

The difficulties after the start of the citizen buses were mostly of technical nature. In June, a failure occurred in the electronic sliding door on the bus in Osterburg. This failure showed in the door not closing properly. However, the problem could be solved within a few days, so that the operation was only marginally affected. For two days, on which the bus was supposed to run, an equivalent replacement bus was being used. This way any cancellations of trips could be avoided. In Möser, on the other hand, a problem arose in June with the tablet, which is being used for ticket sales and the transmission of operating data to the backend system. Since several stops in Möser are served by several different routes a day, the system was no longer able to interpret the data correctly and transmit it to the background system due to an internal error. After a notice from the administration in Möser, the problem could finally be solved on the software side through the service provider METOP.

Final results

Resource requirements (planned versus actual)

Various costs are associated with the the implementation of the two citizen bus projects in Saxony-Anhalt. The implementation period took time from December 2017 to May 2018. Planned and real cost of the different relevant budget sections are approx.:

Total stuff costs:

planned: 57.250,- €

real: 43.000,- €

Equipment:

Planned: 18.000,- €

Real: 11.843,- €

Infrastructure:

Planned: 20.000,-€

Real: 8.158,- €

Since NASA as well as MLV have one person each working on the RUMOBIL project, the total amount of working time during the implementation period can be considered as approx. 720 hours per person. While there are a total of 14 drivers in Möser respectively 13 in Osterburg, there are no personnel costs associated, as they work on a voluntary basis and receive no remuneration. The working hours vary from driver to driver as they do different routes. According to the timetable of the respective citizen buses, the following time expenditure results for the drivers:

Osterburg: 17 hours per week

Möser: 19 hours per week

Interfaces and dependencies with other groups – stakeholders

On 30 November 2016, a workshop at the Ministry of Regional Development and Transport informed relevant stakeholders in Saxony-Anhalt on the RUMOBIL project, pilot activities for Saxony-Anhalt, and existing, successful “Citizen Bus” projects from neighbouring Federal States. The event was attended by around 60 stakeholders representing different fields of interest, such as transport agencies, local and regional administrations, NGOs. Besides providing all necessary information, the participants were invited to discuss on possible locations for pilots, already existing initiatives, and possible challenges involved.

Since May 2017, the municipalities of Möser and Osterburg have been intensively working on the establishment of a “Citizen Bus” in their territories. For this, all relevant stakeholders have been involved in the planning process, including local and regional authorities, regional public transport companies, taxi drivers. In several meetings, the stakeholders identified gaps in the public transport network, designed routes and timetables, and recruited first voluntary bus drivers.

Furthermore, the project was promoted in local newspapers and first local information events took place. Important steps are further specified in the following sections on organization and resources:

In the period March to August 2018 there were no particular collaborations or interactions with other stakeholders, but occasional discussions between the municipalities, the voluntary drivers and the local associations and clubs (e.g. senior citizens' association) as well as other interested citizens.

In the future, several events will also take place, in which the RUMOBIL project will be presented to other interest groups and experiences will be exchanged.

Risks and risk mitigation

Even in the planning phase of the project, discussions were held with municipalities that had successfully implemented a citizen bus themselves. One of the main findings was that all citizen buses have one risk in common: Ensuring the operation of the bus with voluntary drivers.

Citizen buses are characterised by the fact that they do without professional drivers and instead rely on volunteer drivers. Generally, these drivers have only a limited time budget, which makes special care necessary in resource and personnel planning. Another problem is, that citizen buses are more vulnerable to cancellations due to their voluntary nature. Temporary absences of drivers can result from illness or private obligations, while permanent absences can result from resuming gainful employment or a lack of motivation.

A sufficient number of replacement drivers is needed to counter this problem. In Möser and Osterburg, an active publicity campaign (flyers, notices, meetings) was carried out in advance to acquire more volunteer drivers than were actually necessary for operation. This also means that the drivers have longer breaks between their journeys due to more flexible planning.

In both municipalities, the constant acquisition of new drivers and ongoing planning of deployment have successfully ensured the operation with no personnel-related cancellation of journeys.

Achievement of pilot project objectives

The main objective of the project was to strengthen local public transport in rural areas and thus contribute to ensuring people's mobility. The individual objectives were as follows:

Fine development in the community

One of the most important goals was the fine development of the communities through the use of citizen buses. Although both Möser and Osterburg have scheduled bus services, not all parts of the towns benefited equally due to the small number of access points (bus stops). The establishment and operation of new bus stops has shortened the walking distance and thus created a more attractive service. This particularly affected the districts of Lostau, Schermen and Hohenwarthe in the municipality of Möser.

Intermodality

Another goal was to improve the connection to the regional rail network. Thus, both citizen buses serve the respective railway station of each municipality. The timetable takes the arrival and departure of the railway lines in Möser (RB 40) and Osterburg (S 1) into account, so they are better connection. In Möser in particular benefited from the new service, as there was no interchange node between bus and train before the introduction of the citizen bus.

Lessons learnt and recommendations.

Within the context of the project, many new insights were gained regarding the introduction and implementation of citizen bus systems. While some of the findings were surprising, there were also some that were already known in advance (see "Risks and risk migration").

In the course of the project it became apparent that the planning phase is an important factor for the success of a project. This was evident in both municipalities. There were surveys among the population as to whether they would use a citizen bus if it served their area or not. Although there was approval of the project in many places, this only showed to a limited extent in the demand after the introduction of the citizen bus. Especially in Körbelitz (municipality of Möser) and Flessau (municipality of Osterburg) demand was extremely low. In contrast, demand was relatively high in Hohenwarthe and Schermen/Pietzpuhl (municipality of Möser) and Gladigau and Königsmark (municipality of Osterburg). It is therefore advisable not to let planning take place solely on the basis of surveys, but also to take actual demand data into account.

Even if there is often a desire to connect all parts of the town and its surrounding areas, it may not always make sense to do so. This showed in the Körbelitz district, for example. Although this district belongs administratively to the municipality of Möser, structurally there are strong relationships with the neighboring municipality of Gerwisch, which is why the trip relations are also more oriented towards Gerwisch. It is therefore advisable only to connect parts of towns, where a corresponding demand can be expected. Another advantage of this approach is, that fewer routes reduce the complexity of the timetable, which makes it easier for citizens to understand and in the end PT more attractive.

Another finding was the relatively low demand for connections to local rail passenger transport in Osterburg. Despite connections between bus and train, these are hardly accepted by the users. This is probably due to the already existing connections by the conventional scheduled traffic. It would also be conceivable that the citizen bus would primarily be used for inner-city routes and that other means of transport would be used for outbound routes. It is therefore advisable, as already described above, to focus more strongly on demand data, where these are available.

On the other hand, the acceptance of the service, which allows to "rent" the citizen bus outside of the regular schedule, is positive. In the municipality of Osterburg, this is actively used by local clubs in order to transport their members to events, etc. This leads to the conclusion that more flexible solutions, which are oriented towards the needs of the people, are quite popular. As far as this is known from the outset, new usage potentials can arise from this.

Conclusion

In general, it can be said that the RUMOBIL project has led to a significant improvement in the services - especially with regard to the fine development and local mobility. Above all, those parts

of the towns that were previously only insufficiently connected to the town centre benefited the most from the introduction of citizen buses.

At the same time, however, it is apparent that improvements in supply are not automatically linked to high demand. It is therefore necessary to continue developing the project in the future. Optimisation potential exists with regard to the timetable and operation. A simple and understandable timetable would make it possible to operate both citizen buses even more efficiently and successfully.

Nevertheless, the project did not just help to improve the quality of service in the respective municipalities; it also raised awareness for public transport in general. Furthermore both towns benefited from a stronger social cohesion as the drivers usually were well known in their communities.

Photos



Fig. 1 – Introduction event in Möser

RUMOBIL



Fig. 2 – modification of car for PT use



Fig. 3 – Introduction event in Osterburg



Fig. 4 – Citizen meeting in Osterburg



Fig. 5 – Stakeholder workshop