



**e-smartec**  
Interreg Europe

# Action Plan

Region of Central Macedonia

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## General information

project

**e-smartec - enhanced sustainable mobility with marketing techniques (PGI06099)**

partner organisation(s) concerned

**Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (RDF CM) on behalf of the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM)**

**Centre for Research and Technology Hellas/ Hellenic Institute of Transport (HIT)**

country

**Greece**

NUTS2 region

**Central Macedonia**

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The Action Plan aims to impact

- ✓ **Investment for Growth and Jobs programme**
- European Territorial Cooperation programme**
- Other regional development policy instrument**

Name of the policy instrument(s) addressed

**Regional Operational Programme (ROP) of the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM) 2014-2020, Greece**

## 1. Introduction

Many European urban areas face a series of environmental challenges linked to mobility – congestion linked to air pollution. Based on the experience, sustainable urban mobility planning cannot be achieved without the commitment of key stakeholders and travellers. Users' engagement in mobility planning is often a big challenge for authorities since it requires deep knowledge of marketing and sociological aspects.

E-smartec aims at reinforcing existing policies and programmes by enhancing each step of mobility planning with the deployment of targeted marketing techniques for linking bottom-up and top-down decision making. The overall goal is to develop Action Plans that provide tailored guidelines on citizens' and stakeholders engagement marketing techniques. Eventually e-smartec is expected to contribute to the urban dimension of regional and local mobility policy-making by enhancing sustainable measures acceptance level, thus contributing to the implementation of the EU goal on the transition to a low carbon economy.

The 6 e-smartec 'test-bed' areas of the Action Plans include: Bratislava Self Governing Region (represented by University of Zilina), Region of Central Macedonia (represented by Regional Development Fund of the Region of Central Macedonia on behalf of the Region of Central Macedonia), Lazio Region (represented by Rome Mobility Agency), North Limburg (represented by Municipality of Venlo) , West Midlands (represented by Coventry University Enterprises Ltd) and State of Hessen (represented by Hessen Trade & Invest GmbH/ Centre of Competence for Sustainable Urban Mobility). With the lead partner CERTH (Centre for Research and Technology Hellas), the communication leader POLIS (Promotion of Operational Links with Integrated Services) and the technical support partner LCU (Link Campus University), the e-smartec consortium brings together 9 partner from 7 countries, engaged to further enhance the inclusiveness of sustainable mobility planning and the awareness of sustainable mobility interventions.

Funded under the Interreg Europe Programme and the thematic area of Low Carbon Economy, the e-smartec project initiated at the beginning of August 2019 and unfolds into two phases of a total duration of three years: phase 1 (two and a half years duration), where an exchange of experience process takes place, resulting in the regional Action Plans formulation and phase 2 (one year duration), where the Action Plans are implemented.

## 2. Background

The Region of Central Macedonia (RCM) is one of the thirteen administrative regions of Greece. It is the largest and second most populous one after the Region of Attica. RCM has a total area of 18.811 square kilometers and consists of seven Regional Units: Chalkidiki, Imathia, Kilkis, Pella, Pieria, Serres and Thessaloniki, which are further divided into 38 municipalities. Its population reaches approximately the 1,9 million inhabitants, according to provisional results of Census 2011, covering 17,1% of the total Greek population.

RCM borders in north with two Balkan countries, Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia. It constitutes an important transportation node (electricity, natural gas) in Greek and Balkan

level. The Region is linked with neighboring countries by motorway (PATHE, Egnatia), railway, "Makedonia" airport and the port of Thessaloniki. As regards urban mobility, the trips in the Metropolitan area of Thessaloniki are mainly based on private vehicles: 44% private cars, 27% public transport, 11% pedestrians, 4% taxis, 11% motorcycles and 3% bicycle. In addition, around 1.6 million trips take place in the Metropolitan area of Thessaloniki on a daily basis.

The vision of the RIS3 strategy of RCM is to become an Innovation Hub for the wider region of South East Europe by 2025 by maintaining and strengthening its significant Human Capital with competent qualifications in research and technological development, enhancing the cooperation of the field of knowledge with Entrepreneurship and the development of an innovative environment with the aim of overcoming the crisis and creating new job positions, on the basis of innovation, competitiveness and extroversion. The RIS3 of RCM focuses on priority sectors that are Champion sectors and Horizontal Support Sectors. The following are identified as relevant to the e-smartec project framework:

- Horizontal Support Sectors
  - Transport and Supply Chain Technologies

*Policy Basis: Recognized goal for RCM to promote smart, sustainable, intermodal transport.*

The technologies concern the various types of transport (road, rail, air and maritime transport) but also issues such as fuel and energy efficiency, urban mobility, supply chain and smart transport systems.

In the framework of the e-smartec project, several meetings, and training workshops with interactive exercises and activities, were carried out with our stakeholders to engage them in participatory planning and awareness raising on sustainable mobility. The stakeholders transferred their experiences and their needs for support during the various stages of their SUMP cycles, as well as in promoting the adoption of alternative forms of transportation on the students' routes to/and from school.

The results of the cooperation with our stakeholders contributed to the finalization of the Action Plan and specifically the formulation of Action 1 as a result of working together with the Municipalities in the Region and Action 2 with the added collaboration with the school community.

The overall efforts was taken into account to improve the planning and implementation of SUMPs in the Municipalities of the Region and the utilization of sustainable mobility infrastructure funded by the ROP.

### 3. Policy Context

The Operational Programme (OP) of RCM was approved on 18/12/2014 by the European Commission and revised on 9/1/2020. It is the main programme and financial instrument for the support of the development policy in the Region in the programming period 2014-2020.

It includes total resources of 1,009 million euros in terms of public expenditure and aims to address the needs and problems as well as to utilize the possibilities and advantages of the Region for its emergence as a dynamic competitive pole of international scope. It is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF).

The development vision of the RCM for the new programming period 2014-2020 is the following: "The emergence of Central Macedonia as a dynamic development pole of international scope with a distinct identity, competitive and innovative productive base, quality environment, strong social and spatial cohesion." According to the development needs of the region, but also based on the above national planning (NSRF 2014-2020, National Reform Program), Central Macedonia selects Thematic Objectives 1 to 10, each of which corresponds to a Priority Axis (PA).

Thematic Objective 1. Research, Technological Development and Innovation

Thematic Objective 2. Information and Communication Technologies

Thematic Objective 3. Entrepreneurship

Thematic Objective 4. Economy of Low Pollutants

Thematic Objective 5. Prevention & Management of Risks from natural disasters

Thematic Objective 6. Environmental Protection

Thematic Objective 7. Transport

Thematic Objective 8. Employment

Thematic Objective 9. Social Integration & Fight against Poverty

Thematic Objective 10. Education

With the utilization of TO 1, 2 and 3, the economic development of RCM is sought, through the strengthening of Research, Technological Development and Innovation, ICT and the support of SMEs. The investment priorities and actions of TO 4, 5 and 6 will contribute to the protection and upgrading of the environment, as well as to a more efficient use of resources. TO 7 is selected for the completion and improvement of TEN-T and secondary road connections with TEN-T, while TO 8, 9 and 10 will be used to strengthen social cohesion and improve infrastructure and structures, health, education and welfare.

Through the Action Plan, RCM aims to organize and support Objectives 4 and 6. Specifically for the Thematic Objective (TO) 4 "Energy rearrangement for a low-emission economy" OP

CM sets as one of the priorities the promotion of integrated interventions for urban mobility with the ultimate goal of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but also other pollutants such as PM<sub>10</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub>, in the metropolitan area of Thessaloniki and other medium-sized urban centers. The desired result can be achieved through the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans which will include the promotion of public transport means of anti-pollution technology and / or fixed track, by making greater use of modern ICT in urban transport, as well as the promotion of sustainable urban transport, with an emphasis on smart and alternative transport. Special mention is made of the development of environmentally friendly means of transport in the Urban Complex of Thessaloniki by creating bike lanes, special routes and sidewalks. The relevant Investment Priority adopted by the OP RCM is 4e "Promoting low carbon strategies for all types of areas, especially for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and adaptation measures related to reducing the adverse effects", which specializes in OP 4e1 "Promotion of Sustainable Urban Mobility in the Region of Central Macedonia".

The objectives of the OP RCM regarding the Investment Priority 4e1 are the following:

- Reducing urban pollution (air, noise) in large cities
- Improving the urban mobility system through the strengthening of the use of soft public transportation means and through new urban soft transport infrastructure
- The reduction of travel time and costs with positive effects on the production and income of the citizens.
- The upgrade of the quality of the urban environment, the health and the quality of life of the inhabitants.
- Improving the aesthetic image of cities.

In relation to the Thematic Objective (TO) 6 "Environmental protection and efficient use of resources", in the OP RCM among the priorities related to the e-smartec project are the protection and restoration of the urban environment & the air in large urban centers and the completion of spatial & urban planning, while promoting the spatial planning of its coastal area. The relevant investment priority adopted by the OP RCM is the 6e "Action for the improvement of the urban environment, the regeneration of cities, the revitalization and disinfection of degraded environmental areas (including the areas to be rebuilt), the reduction of air pollution and the promotion of measures for the reduction of noise ", which specializes in IP 6e1 "Regeneration and revitalization of degraded urban areas and improvement of the urban environment".

The objectives of the OP RCM regarding the I.P. 6e1 are the following:

- The reduction of air pollution and noise in urban centers
- Upgrading of urban infrastructure and urban furniture - protection and expansion of public free spaces
- The economic revitalization of urban areas and the increase of employment
- Improving the quality of life in urban and suburban environments
- The urban reconstruction of the city
- The rehabilitation of contaminated areas and the utilization of abandoned buildings

- Improving the attractiveness and competitiveness of the city

As the e-smartec project is implemented between two programming periods (2014-2020 and 2021-2027), an effort is made to influence actions already included in the ROP CM 2014 - 2020, but also to influence the design of the new ROP CM 2021-2027.

The new programming period concerns the new Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 announced by the European Commission on 02/05/2018. Respectively, the proposals for the Cohesion Policy and the Regulations of the Funds of the new Programming Period 2021-2027 were announced on 29/5/2018.

At the country level, the planning for the period 2021-2027 has as a starting point the issuance of the 1st Circular by the Ministry of Development on 6/6/2019. The 1st Circular presents the new framework for the planning of the Operational Programs of the new NSRF, while at the same time it is the starting point for the consultation with the competent bodies, social and economic partners for the formulation of strategy proposals and priorities, which will feed the national objectives.

In relation to the current programming period, the 11 TO of the programming period 2014 - 2020 are concentrated in 5 Policy Objectives, which maintain the same spirit in the programming period 2021 - 2027, aiming at Europe 2030.

#### 1. Smarter Europe

- through innovation, digitization, economic transformation and support for small and medium-sized enterprises.

#### 2. Greener, carbon-free, Europe

- implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in energy transition, renewable energy and the fight against climate change.

#### 3. A more connected Europe

- with strategic transport and digital networks.

#### 4. A more social Europe

- which will implement the European pillar of social rights and support quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare.

#### 5. Europe closer to citizens

- supporting local development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU.



### 3.1 Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans - SUMP

The Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) were introduced in Greece in 2016, through the Green Fund, and specifically through the funding included in the funding program "OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL BALANCE ACTIONS 2016" in Priority Axis 4: "Sustainable Urban Mobility".

Law 4784 on Sustainable Urban Mobility - Micro-mobility that determines their content and elaboration process was passed in 2021. SUMPs are characterized and differentiated from conventional traffic studies, due to the combination of traffic and urban planning and the special emphasis on participatory design.

The Region of Central Macedonia, benefiting from its participation in European programs (Interreg Europe, etc.) and the valuable collaborations it has achieved and maintains with research bodies and actors, implemented the SUMP Competence Center. A website, which is an open space for information and support of the Municipalities of the Region of Central Macedonia for the optimal implementation, monitoring and updating of their Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans.

The stimulus for the creation of this site was the cooperation of RCM with HIT/CERTH in the Interreg Europe project REFORM which aims to strengthen the role of the Regions in the implementation process of SUMPs. The aim of the Competence Center is for the proposed projects of the local SUMPs to be in line with the strategic planning and the recognized priorities and objectives of RCM, to act as a complement and to be the basis of the Metropolitan or Regional transportation planning.

The Green Fund finances 162 Municipalities of the country for the elaboration of a SUMP. At the local level, until October 2021, the data from the 38 Municipalities of the Region show the following:



It is noted that there hasn't been made any provision for SUMPs of enlarged urban areas such as e.g. neighboring cities, metropolitan areas, etc.

In addition, the Region of Central Macedonia, with the support of the Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia, organized with great success during the first phase of the e-smartec project, a student contest on the sustainable transportation of students to and from school.

The purpose of the contest was to raise awareness of children about moving to and from school on foot, cycling or skating and the adoption of the principles of sustainable urban mobility, as well as the activation of the school community in participatory processes. Students of Primary Schools and High Schools of the Region of Central Macedonia



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participated in the contest. Simultaneously with the student contest, parents and carers had the opportunity to complete a questionnaire about their travels, providing useful information that can be used for the SUMP of their areas.

This action focuses on the most important message: the promotion of green and environmentally friendly transportation so that the plan for a better future for our cities and for a cleaner environment becomes a reality. An equally important message is the participation of the younger generations as they are given the opportunity to envision and claim for a more sustainable future.

## 4. Details of the actions envisaged

### 4.1 ACTION 1: Strengthening of SUMPs in RCM

#### RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT

The website of the SUMP Competence Center (SUMP-CC) of RCM is an open space for information and technical support for the Municipalities of the Region of Central Macedonia for the optimal implementation, monitoring and updating of their Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans. The aim of the Center is the proposed projects of the local SUMP to be in line with the strategic planning and the recognized priorities and objectives of RCM, to comply with the European and national standards and directions, to act complementarily and to form the basis of the Metropolitan or Regional Transportation Planning. At the same time, by collecting comments and questions via e-mail, SUMP-CC tries to respond to the problems faced by the Municipalities of RCM at each stage of implementation of SUMP.

RCM and local stakeholders drew inspiration from the e-smartec project, opening dialogue on how innovative marketing tools can enhance the promotion of active mobility and raise awareness among stakeholders and citizens on issues related to sustainable mobility.

Specifically, the online meeting on: "Participatory processes and synergies for the development of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans", was attended by 21 participants including executives and representatives of Municipalities, as well as e-smartec experts on sustainable mobility and participatory planning. During the meeting, the problems faced by the Municipalities in the utilization and integration of participatory processes during the preparation of SUMP, have been recorded. In the dialogue that followed, the participants stressed the importance of the SUMP Competence Center of the Region, which can function as a living laboratory for problem solving, information and exchange of experiences.

During the second stakeholders meeting of the e-smartec project, executives and representatives of Municipalities of RCM participated in the consultation of the e-smartec Action Plan, with the objective to contribute to the shaping of the actions of the e-smartec Action Plan of RCM giving feedback to the project partners. The contribution of the participants was valuable, as they transferred their experiences and their needs for support, during the various stages of their SUMP cycles. All information collected, was taken into account during the finalization of the two actions of the e-smartec Action Plan.

In addition, the good practices of Hessen Trade & Invest GmbH / Center of Competition for Sustainable Urban Mobility (HTAI / CC-SUM)

(Germany) and the University of Žilina (Slovakia) inspired the formation of the first action:

#### **Active Mobility Check for Municipalities in Hessen (Germany)**

The Active Mobility Check (AMC) is a marketing tool to promote a better environment for active mobility in municipalities. It combines different marketing techniques for awareness raising among stakeholders and creating a culture of walking and cycling in an urban community with an efficient, short and participatory planning process. All stages of the AMC are targeted towards a strong public perception.

Aim of this practice is to strengthen active mobility culture and planning on all municipal levels and to provide the opportunity for political authorities to present outputs specifically in a media attentive way.

The practice is publicly driven by the organisation AGNH, a partnership to promote active mobility in Hessen. The partnership is carried by the Hessian Ministry of Economics, Energy, Transport and Housing based on the Integrated Climate Protection Plan Hessen 2025 and the Hessen Mobility Strategy 2035.

Members are stakeholders in active mobility such as municipalities, universities and transport authorities and other associations and organizations.

The Active Mobility Check tool has a universal layout and can thus be generally transferred to and applied in any other (European) municipality.

Prerequisites for the adoption/implementation of the GP:

- translation of handbook and standard instruments to local language,
- adaption of tender documents to local (national) requirements, and
- check of documents for including/adapting to specific local/national requirements and conditions.

Mayors are key to success: incorporation of check-up process as well as defined measures into funding schemes.

#### **Active Mobility Marketing Toolbox Hessen (Germany)**

The Active Mobility Marketing Toolbox is a toolbox that enables local authorities to promote active mobility, using standardized material to

raise awareness and promote active mobility, achieving greater publicity combined with low cost and effort.

The aim of this practice is to give local authorities and politicians the opportunity to discuss active mobility issues in public without having to use their own, usually scarce resources.

The practice is publicly driven by the organization AGNH, a partnership to promote active mobility in Hessen. The partnership is carried by the Hessian Ministry of Economics, Energy, Transport and Housing. Members are stakeholders in active mobility such as municipalities, universities, transportation authorities and other associations and organizations.

The possibility of using the toolbox in another context and drawing further learning effects from it is estimated as high, since the dialogue with the citizens can always be different.

The prerequisite for implementation is that there is the political will to support the project and that there is a central contact point, which takes care of the provision of the material.

Heart piece of the practice is the provided material. Even though, the practice is seen as transferable to other regions, for a successful adoption local specification must be elaborated. The whole practice must be centrally organized.

### **Transdanube Pearls: Network for sustainable mobility (Slovakia)**

The practice concerns the creation of a network, involving actors along the Danube, committed to the promotion of sustainable mobility in tourism. The practice included the creation of a team of experts, who identified the potential members of the network and analysed the current situation of sustainable mobility along the Danube. The practice deployed engagement techniques (network seminars, assemblies, etc.) in order to bring the potential network members together and engage them to eventually participate. Members were awarded the title “Danube Pearls” and sustainable mobility solutions were offered for the tourists to travel between the “Pearls”.

The aim of this practice is to promote sustainable mobility options against the predominance of car used by tourists and support cooperation between stakeholders, thus increasing the visibility of sustainable mobility services.

The mobility experts personally took the bike road between the Pearls and defined the problematic sections. Thus, concrete steps were taken

like putting a bike carrier on a bus in the most dangerous sections. The updated app focusing on the bike road has been installed more than ten thousand times on android devices and has an above three-star rating. The practice represents a significant learning potential for both other regions and other projects in the same region.

Taking into account the above, the first action is related to the integration of the know-how in SUMP-CC concerning the use of innovative marketing tools in:

- i. raising public awareness of the principles of sustainable mobility and,
- ii. creating the appropriate conditions for the co-planning and co-monitoring of sustainable mobility packages.

#### NATURE OF THE ACTION

The action will strengthen the SUMP in the Region through the utilization of the existing structure of the SUMP-CC of RCM with the transfer of know-how from the e-smartec project. More specifically, this action proposes:

- 1.1 the provision of practical advice on how to map groups of organizations and citizens in order to meet the participatory requirements of a SUMP and their connection with good practices from the Municipalities of RCM,
- 1.2 the creation of a roadmap regarding the use of appropriate marketing techniques in all Phases of Development of a SUMP and their connection with good practices from the e-smartec project,
- 1.3 the creation of a toolbox, which, in addition to good practices, will include practical material (eg templates of invitations and schedules of meetings/consultations with institutions and citizens) for selected (critical) phases of involvement of institutions and citizens during of the SUMP cycle. Particular emphasis will be placed on good practices for the promotion of sustainable school mobility, which is also linked to the proposed Action 2 of this Action Plan.
- 1.4 targeted meetings with Municipalities that implement sustainable mobility projects (projects included in the ROP CM 2014-2020), to support Municipalities in the dissemination of these projects and their wider acceptance, while seeking to raise public awareness of sustainable urban mobility. Indicatively, the projects "Bioclimatic Upgrade and Sustainable mobility of the road network PE 14-15 (Kifissia – Votsi) Kalamaria", "Environmental redesign of Eptapyrgiou Street and side streets" of the Municipal Unit of Sykies, and "Environmental upgrade of E. Trapezountos Street to a green axis of promenade & interconnection of points of interest" of the Municipality

of Pavlos Melas, budget around € 10,000,000 in Investment Priority 6e of ROP CM 2014-2020.

The ultimate goal of the action is to assist the Municipalities in the planning and implementation of actions aimed at public support of:

- measures proposed by the SUMP,
- wider interventions currently being implemented in relation to sustainable urban mobility, and
- promotion of a culture of cooperation and open dialogue between the actors of society with characteristics such as participation and synergy.

RCM has already developed capabilities for the coordination and development of participatory processes through the experience of the SUMP-CC.

**STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED**

Stakeholders in the implementation of the Action are part of the Local Stakeholder Group. In the context of the meetings of the stakeholders and the utilization of the experience from corresponding good practices that emerged in the interregional meetings of the project, the initial roles of each stakeholder in the implementation are distributed according to the table below.

Stakeholders	Role
<b>Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (RDF CM) on behalf of the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM)</b>	Body that implements the action. Given the role of the Region as a body of policy planning and implementation, it undertakes the coordination of the action. RDF CM supports RCM in the implementation of the action.
<b>HIT (CERTH)</b>	Scientific and technical manager of SUMP-CC. Scientific support in the writing of the guide with the marketing techniques and the toolbox. Support in communication with Municipalities for the promotion of integrated projects with the use of marketing techniques.

<b>Municipalities</b>	Beneficiaries (directly). Participation in the action, and selection and application of appropriate marketing techniques on a case-by-case basis.
<b>Stakeholders and citizens involved</b>	Beneficiaries (indirectly). Various bodies and citizens are involved in consultation actions. Also, in fact, the citizens are the final recipients of the action.

**TIMEFRAME** This action will be implemented during the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the e-smartec project, from February 2022 to January 2023.

**COSTS** The strengthening of SUMP-CC will not require financial resources as it will operate from the Services of RCM with the support of HIT / CERTH. Any costs that will arise will be covered by own resources.

**FUNDING SOURCES** No additional funding is required as SUMP-CC operates from the Services of RCM with the support of HIT / CERTH.

**MONITORING MEASURES** The period of monitoring of the Action Plan of the e-smartec project for RCM is from 01/02/2022 - 31/01/2023. During the monitoring period, the implementation of the actions and the achievement of the objectives are expected to be evaluated every six months. At the same time, the achievement of the objectives will be recorded in the reports to the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg Europe Program.

In the e-smartec project, the number of SUMP-CCs that are improved by participatory processes and advanced marketing techniques has been set as a self-evaluation index, with a target price of 10 SUMP-CCs.

Index	Delivery date	Type	Action/ Subaction	Source	Goal
Delivery of the map groups of organizations and citizens in order to meet the participatory requirements	June 2022	Outcome	1.1	CC-SUMP	1 map
Interactive roadmap regarding the use of	November 2022	Outcome	1.2	CC-SUMP	1 roadmap



appropriate marketing techniques in SUMPs					
Number of additional good practices or video tutorials	October 2022	Outcome	1.3	CC-SUMP	10 good practices
At least two meetings with executives of Municipalities of the Region for providing advice on currently ROP funded projects	December 2022	Outcome	1.4	Meeting agendas	2 meetings
Number of SUMPs improved by participatory processes and advanced marketing techniques	January 2023	Impact	Action 1	CC-SUMP (survey)	10 SUMPS
Number of new registered forum members (Municipal executives)	January 2023	Outcome	Action 1	CC-SUMP	10 members

## 4.2 ACTION 2: Raising awareness of sustainable school transportation and activating participatory planning

### RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT

This action was gradually formed during the implementation of the e-smartec project in the Region of Central Macedonia with the active participation of local stakeholders and the exchange of useful information between the various categories of stakeholders.

In the frame of the questionnaire survey addressed to parents and carers with children in the classes of the Kindergarten, Primary, and High School of the Region of Central Macedonia (September – December, 2020), the main factors of choosing transportation mean are distance from school and combination with other mobility needs (e.g. successive transfer of a child to school and then travel of the parent to the workplace). The research showed that 52% of commuters travel on foot while 39% by car. In contrast, bicycle is chosen by only 3% for school transportations. Regarding marketing and awareness-raising techniques, such as PEDIBUS, Walking School Bus, to increase the rate of soft means transportation, and the planning of soft infrastructure, such as school bike lanes, the intention to participate is around 70%. In addition, from the parallel action of the student photography (High school students) and painting (primary school students) contest with the main theme of how students perceive sustainable school mobility, it

became clear that children understand quite well the concept of sustainability thus making the transition to active mobility an easier, at first, process.

In the first workshop of the local stakeholders, which was attended by principals and teachers of Primary Schools and High Schools of the RCM, representatives of the parents and carers groups of these schools, as well as experts in sustainable mobility and participatory design of e-smartec and PE4T projects, emerged the willingness of target groups for an active contribution to promoting the adoption of soft forms of mobility. The need to raise awareness of the reasons for the shift to sustainable school mobility was highlighted, but also the need to develop a framework and appropriate participatory planning that involves all stakeholders in the process of implementing interventions and measures supporting alternative modes of transport to and from school. Many teachers stressed out the need of guidance by competent institutions, with the input of experts, so that they focus each time on the specific challenges / problems each school faces. At the same time, the institutional actors emphasized the importance of the active participation of all for the successful implementation and sustainability of relevant actions. Parents showed interest in further information and mobilization through parent associations to identify opportunities, plan actions and promote the culture of environmentally friendly school mobility.

The second stakeholders meeting of the e-smartec project took place with the participation of executives and representatives of Municipalities of RCM, and e-smartec experts for the consultation of the e-smartec Action Plan of RCM. The contribution of the participants was valuable, giving insights on how RCM can communicate the second action of AP to the Municipalities. The participants expressed their desire to continue their cooperation and communication, for the needs of promoting sustainable urban mobility in the Municipalities of the Region and during the next phase of the e-smartec project, where the actions of the Action Plan will be implemented.

For the above actions but also for the Action Plan, the Region of Central Macedonia and local stakeholders drew inspiration from the e-smartec project to transfer good practices related to school mobility. More specifically, the good practices that were chosen gave the impetus for the organization of activities in order to encourage students to move to / from school safely and sustainably through specific routes (good practice: PEDIBUS), for actions to allocate part of the public space to the citizens so that the benefits of pedestrian zones (good practice: VIA LIBERA) and public awareness actions, such as the introduction of a

competition on sustainable mobility (good practice: Cargobike Trendsportal) are taken into account.

**PEDIBUS: get together to school safely and sustainably – Italy**

The PEDIBUS initiative supports primary schools managers to encourage pupils and families to walk to school safely in organised groups following fixed routes.

The main purpose of the project is to foster the relationship between parents in order to stimulate a mutual support, in accompanying the children to school as a group. This promotes socialization among children, produces physical well-being and facilitates parents in organizing the accompaniment of children to and from school.

The initiative is Public driven, it arises from an idea launched by the City Mobility Agency and spread with the word of mouth communication to encourage a bottom-up organisation between parents, school, local groups, shopkeepers etc. Also, the usage of social media is a driver to support the aggregation and the trust.

To date, the network of school mobility managers reaches 36,000 students and about 4.000 units of teaching and administrative staff. There are 8 Comprehensive Institutes that have started PEDIBUS projects.

Children, the main target of the initiative, are motivated to walk, they interact with each other, learn from each other (repeat their lessons when they go to school), learn the rules of the road, gain confidence, are active and feel responsible.

**VIA LIBERA: Ιταλία car-free streets – Italy**

Via libera is an initiative supported by the city to incentivize a new approach to car-free mobility. Once a month, on Sundays, 15 km of streets around the city centre are banned to cars and citizens can freely take advantage of this opportunity (walking, cycling, neighbourhood parties, events, etc.).

The initial goal is to verify the impact of transitory and definitive pedestrianizations, already being studied by the PUMS (SUMP) within the different city boroughs.

The initiative is Public driven, promoted by the mayor and coordinated by the City Mobility Councilor. In addition, it is supported and implemented with the Rome Mobility Agency, ATAC (PTO), the Local Police, and the City Departments for: Mobility, Environment, Culture, Sports, Trade, Tourism, and School. The associations are also

involved, such as the City Forum on road safety. Also the private sector has been addressed, involving shopkeepers, restaurants, gyms, libraries, museums along the route.

A strong organization must be in place for ensuring the success of the practice. Many stakeholders have to be coordinated and motivated. The support of social associations (vulnerable users, cycling, disabled etc.) helps foster the take up and continuation of the initiative.

### **Cargobike Trendsportal – Competition – Netherlands**

The practice refers to a competition conducted as part of the policy making process of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) in the municipality of Venlo. The Municipality purchased an electric cargo bike and, after moving around to the city to create awareness on mobility topics, the bike has been awarded to citizens through a photo/idea sharing contest.

Objective of the practice is to draw attention and create citizens' involvement in mobility planning

Thanks to this promotion, at least 400 people have provided input for the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan of the municipality. This proved to be a very effective way to engage citizens to the co-planning process of the SUMP.

The practice can be easily adopted by other regions/ cities, as it generates great results in citizens' engagement with a small investment.

For the successful adoption of the practice it is recommended to have:

- an attractive incentive,
- many moments and events to make physical contact,
- time to have the conversation,
- keep up the social media,
- follow up from first contact moment.

### **Cycle Training in Schools (Bike ability) – United Kingdom**

Bikeability is a cycling training programme for young people, families and communities provided in many primary schools by an education organisation.

Bikeability is much more than a cycling training program providing long-term benefits. It supports culture, environment, and health by giving students practical skills and knowledge on how to cycle safely.

Education concerns all types of cycling. These courses are available

throughout the year in most communities in England. Children and adults can be educated either individually or as a group.

This action takes place through a charity that aims to upgrade training in the use of bicycles. Most of the funding for the programme concerns State aid.

More than 3 million children have completed the Bikeability training program. The government has pledged £13m to continue the project aimed at promoting active movement. An independent survey in 2016 on the impact of this project showed that Bikeability helped children cycle more often and safer. Increasing the frequency of bike-to-school travel will reduce traffic congestion outside schools, which will also improve air quality.

As this programme is in place in all parts of the UK, it has been shown that it can be transferred to any area if there is support from government and cycling organisations and there are appropriate trainers to help implement it.

#### **City Cycling (STADTRADELN) – Germany**

CITY CYCLING offers Municipalities tried and tested measures that actively support sustainable mobility through marketing/public relations activities.

This campaign contributes to the protection of the climate and is an example for the promotion of cycling in the Municipalities. As decision-makers for the creation of bicycle infrastructure, local politicians must first experience for themselves what it means to travel by bike in their Municipality and thus help to implement measures that will enhance the experience of cycling.

The CITY CYCLING campaign is designed as a competition to promote cycling. Members of local councils are invited to form groups with citizens and compete. Ideally, members of local authorities should act as group leaders by setting a positive example and urging residents to cycle more. Thus, during 21 consecutive days, as many bike journeys as possible must be made either for business or private purposes. School classes, clubs, organizations, companies, and individual residents are also invited to form corresponding groups. Over the three-week period, cyclists record the kilometres travelled in their online calendar, a database linked to the web to record the kilometres travelled.

The implementation of the practice does not require financial resources other than the cost of participation. Significant human resources are also not required as the coordinator of the programme is sufficient.

In 2019, 1127 Municipalities participated in the programme and more than 400,000 cyclists and 7,000 local officials from different levels of administration were registered. 77,800,000 kilometres by bike were travelled and more than 11,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> did not end up in the atmosphere.

The campaign in order to have the desired results and to have a duration in time must be placed under the auspices of the Municipality.

This practice can easily be implemented in any region. In addition, using the CITY CYCLING-App, moderators receive an anonymous profile about each user's travel habits and can use this information to design their infrastructure.

### NATURE OF THE ACTION

The action aims to activate participatory processes and to introduce actions to raise awareness of the school community for the choice of soft means of transportation to and from school. The objective of the action is to increase the percentage of parents and students who choose sustainable modes of transportation for their travels to / from school, and their active participation in actions and consultations for sustainable mobility. Awareness-raising actions are expected to be introduced on an annual basis, possibly during European Sustainable Mobility Week.

As the Municipalities are responsible for the implementation of urban interventions and the development of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP), RCM through the RDF CM aims to support the Municipalities for the development of SUMPs, with emphasis on issues of safe and sustainable transport of students to and from school.

Utilizing the experience and results of the e-smartec project, RCM with the support of RDF CM, in good cooperation with the Municipalities, will organize the action for coordination and implementation of participatory procedures and activities related to the promotion of a sustainable way of the transportation of students from and to school.

RCM will inform the Municipalities as well as the involved bodies, about the modern marketing trends related to sustainable mobility, and will transfer the know-how developed within the e-smartec project, to encourage students to sustainable school transportation. RCM will

implement an action to raise awareness of students for safe and sustainable transportation to and from school.

The following activities are required for the implementation of the action:

- 2.1 Call of interested Municipalities and stakeholders for the implementation of actions and measures that promote the adoption of sustainable ways of transportation to and from school.
- 2.2 Implementation of an awareness raising action of students, for safe and sustainable mobility (open public event), with the possibility of collecting relevant data.
- 2.3 Evaluation and feedback.

The multiple benefits of this action are the following:

- utilization and transfer of the know-how developed in the context of e-smartec project and its application in the local community
- raising the awareness of local communities for the adoption of more sustainable modes of transportation to and from school
- Ability to inform citizens about their active participation in issues of sustainable mobility (e.g. information on the implementation of the SUMP of their area).

#### STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

In the context of the stakeholder meetings and utilizing the experience from corresponding good practices that emerged in the interregional meetings of the project, the initial roles of each stakeholder in the implementation are distributed according to the table below.

Stakeholders	Role
<b>Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (RDF CM) on behalf of the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM)</b>	A body that implements the action of raising awareness of sustainable school transportation and activating participatory planning. RDF CM supports RCM in the implementation of the action.
<b>HIT (CERTH)</b>	Scientific support in the selection and shaping of tools that will be used in the implementation of the action.

<b>RCM Municipalities and stakeholders</b>	Expansion of the cooperation with the Municipalities of RCM and the involved bodies (e.g. OASTH (Organisation of Urban Transportation of Thessaloniki), OSETH (Transport Authority of Thessaloniki S.A.), Hellenic Police) for the activity of raising awareness for sustainable school transportation and activating participatory planning.
<b>Educational community</b>	Participation in informing students. Encourage students to participate in the action.
<b>Parents and carers of students, students</b>	Direct beneficiaries of the action - Participants in the activities of the action.

**TIMEFRAME** This action will be implemented during the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the e-smartec project, from February 2022 to January 2023.

**COSTS** This action will be implemented with own funds of the Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia and is estimated to cost approximately 20,000 - 30,000 € per year.

**FUNDING SOURCES** RDF CM, supporting RCM, will undertake the financing of the action.

**MONITORING MEASURES**

The period of monitoring the Action Plan of the e-smartec project for RCM is from 01/02/2022 - 31/01/2023. During the monitoring period, the implementation of the actions and the achievement of the objectives are expected to be evaluated every six months. At the same time, the achievement of the objectives will be recorded in the reports to the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg Europe Program.

In the e-smartec project, the number of SUMP that are improved by participatory processes and advanced marketing techniques has been set as a self-evaluation index, with a target price of 10 SUMP.

Index	Delivery date	Type	Sub action	Source	Goal
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Meeting with executives of interested Municipalities and stakeholders	July 2022	Outcome	2.1	Participants list	Participants from at least 8 different Municipalities
Implementation of the action	November 2022	Outcome	2.2	Press release	1 event per year
Number of carers and guardians - students who participated in the event	November 2022	Outcome	2.2	Press release	50 participants

Endorsement

<b>DATE:</b>	28- 01 - 2022
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	Apostolos Tzitzikostas
<b>FUNCTION:</b>	President of the Board of Directors, Governor of the Region of Central Macedonia
<b>ORGANISATION:</b>	Regional Development Fund of central Macedonia on behalf of the Region of Central Macedonia
<b>STAMP OF THE ORGANISATION:</b>	

<b>DATE:</b>	28 - 01 - 2022
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	Evangelos Bekiaris
<b>FUNCTION:</b>	Director of the Hellenic Institute of Transport (HIT)
<b>ORGANISATION:</b>	Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH)/ Hellenic Institute of Transport (HIT)
<b>STAMP OF THE ORGANISATION:</b>	

## Partners



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

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