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**World Health Organization
Regional Office for Europe**

Sustainable tourism mobility: Inspiration for the countries of the pan-European Region

Submitted by the Leaders of the Partnership on Sustainable Tourism Mobility

Summary

At the Fifth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment (Vienna (online), 17–18 May 2021), member States decided to establish "THE PEP Partnership on Sustainable Tourism Mobility, with a view to sharing good practices and developing respective guidelines and tools.[a]
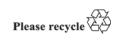
The Partnership reported to the twenty-first session of the Steering Committee of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) (Geneva, 23–25 October 2023) that it expected to complete a document promoting sustainable mobility in tourism by April or May 2024.[b]

The Bureau of THE PEP Steering Committee, at its forty-second meeting (Oslo, 4–5 July 2024), decided to present the document for adoption at the twenty-second session of the Steering Committee. The present document was submitted to the secretariat by the Partnership, after comments from the Bureau. This document will be accompanied by a set of case studies when published.

The Steering Committee is invited to adopt the document.

[a] ECE/AC.21/2021/2/Add.1−EUCHP2018924/4.3.2/Add.1, Vienna Declaration, para. 25 (c).

[b] ECE/AC.21/SC/2023/2−EUCHP2219536/1.1/2, para. 40.

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I. Introduction and international context

1.   Tourism and tourism-related travel is an important economic activity and an industry that secures jobs and contributes to regional development (e.g., infrastructure) and livelihoods. At the same time, tourism faces challenges in terms of the environment and society. Tourism-related transport causes greenhouse gas emissions and, in some cases, mass tourism affects local civil society negatively.[1] With heightened awareness of sustainability and of the inherent need for mobility and accessibility, the environmental impact of tourism travel has gained prominence. Balancing the demand for seamless travel experiences with the urgent need to reduce ecological footprints is critical. This document is designed to address challenges in tourism mobility, specifically focusing on the mobility patterns of tourists.[2]

2.   The document aims to provide practical insights and recommendations for fostering sustainable mobility behaviour in response to contemporary challenges. Unlike existing manuals or toolboxes, this document targets responsible national authorities from the tourism and transport sectors. Developed collaboratively by members of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) Partnership on Sustainable Tourism Mobility,[3] it brings together the experiences of national stakeholders. This collaborative effort emerged from a decision made at the Fifth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health, and Environment (Vienna (online), 17–18 May 2021), where the establishment of THE PEP Partnership on Sustainable Tourism Mobility was endorsed.[4] Coordinated by the Austrian Federal Ministries of Transport, Innovation and Technology and of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism, the document represents a collective commitment to advance sustainable tourism mobility at both the national and international levels.

3.   The urgency surrounding the need to address climate change is evident in international agreements such as the Paris Agreement, the new Inland Transport Committee Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport and, for its member States, the European Union commitment to climate neutrality by 2050.[5] Despite existing policies, the transport sector remains a significant greenhouse gas emitter, projecting only, for example, a 22 per cent reduction in emissions by 2050 for the European Union, falling short of the 90 per cent target of the European Union European Green Deal.[6] Sustainable tourism mobility can therefore contribute to reaching the global sustainability goals also referred to in the recent report of the Tourism Panel on Climate Change.[7] The European Union Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy envisions an environment-friendly, climate-resilient, multimodal mobility system by 2030, emphasizing carbon neutrality and increased high-speed rail traffic. The European Union European Tourism Agenda 2030 urges its member States to contribute to decarbonizing mobility, promoting sustainable transport, and enhancing multimodal travel.

4.   Diverging from existing manuals and toolboxes that often focus on destination-specific perspectives and stakeholders, this document uniquely concentrates on the wider

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[1] Tourism Panel on Climate Change (2023), Stocktake Report (n.p., 2023), available at tpcc.info/stocktake-report/.

[2] In the present document, mobility behaviour for tourism purposes is referred to as tourism mobility. Further transport activities generated by the tourism sector, such as the transport of goods or labour force, are not considered in this document.

[3] Austria – Lead Partner, representatives of Azerbaijan, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

[4] United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (2023), "Partnership on Sustainable Tourism Mobility (previously, TRANSDANUBE Partnership)", available at www.unece.org/thepep/tourism; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2022), Vienna Declaration (ECE/AC.21/2021/2/Add.1−EUCHP2018924/4.3.2/Add.1) .

[5] European Commission, "European Climate Law", available at https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-climate-law_en.

[6] European Environment Agency (EEA), *Decarbonizing Road Transport: The Role of Vehicles, Fuels and Transport Demand*, EEA Report No. 2/2022 (Copenhagen, 2022).

[7] Tourism Panel on Climate Change, Stocktake Report (n.p., 2023).

national level. It addresses crucial queries regarding how national level entities can incorporate the promotion of sustainable tourism mobility into their strategies and policies and support tourism destinations to advance.

5. The present document is tailored to assist national authorities to:

(a) Understand the fields of action with regard to climate-friendly and sustainable tourism mobility;

(b) Deepen understanding of how to address challenges within the transport and tourism sectors and learn how other countries address those challenges;

(c) Facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences and gain inspiration from good practices in other countries;

(d) Generate innovative ideas to overcome existing or emerging challenges;

(e) Engage in collaborative initiatives, rallying for action on the international, pan-European, European Union and bilateral levels.

II. Overarching actions

6. During the discussions with the members of the Partnership and supported by a wider stakeholder consultation process, seven specific fields of action were identified (see para. 10). At the same time, sustainable tourism mobility requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond measures in these fields. This chapter outlines two overarching actions designed to provide a solid foundation for national efforts in fostering sustainable tourism mobility.

A. Action 0.1: Foster institutional capacity and cooperation

7. This action recognizes the complexity of both the tourism and transport sectors, emphasizing the need for strengthened skills, resources and structures within national authorities. The action addresses challenges in building networks and fostering collaboration among stakeholders at different levels, such as the lack of knowledge and exchange of good practices. In their leadership role, national authorities face the need for a new agenda for sustainable travel practices and for progressive guidelines to be set for the promotion of said agenda. Overall, the action seeks to overcome fragmented efforts and a lack of coordination in promoting sustainable mobility. It is recommended to:

(a) Establish and support collaborative exchange forums to unite transport and tourism sector experts, create horizontal collaboration networks and promote stakeholder cooperation in the pursuit of sustainable tourism mobility practices among:

(i) Destination management organizations;[8]

(ii) Local communities;

(iii) Tourism businesses;

(iv) Transportation service providers;

(v) Experts in sustainable mobility and tourism;

(vi) Governmental bodies dealing with transport and tourism mobility;

(vii) Civil society;

(b) Actively participate in shaping the collaborative platforms where stakeholders share knowledge and work collectively toward common goals.

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[8] Destination management organizations (or destination marketing organizations) are organizations promoting a location as an attractive travel destination. Examples of destination management organizations include tourist boards, tourism authorities or "convention and visitors bureaux".

B. **Action 0.2: Integrate sustainable tourism mobility into national strategies**

8.   The challenges addressed by this action include the lack of consideration for tourists in mobility and transport strategies and insufficient attention being paid to sustainable mobility in tourism strategies. This action offers a solution by taking a proactive role in developing the needed comprehensive strategies that prioritize and integrate the unique mobility needs of tourists. It is recommended to:

(a)   Incorporate sustainable tourism mobility into broader national development strategies, encompassing environmental, economic and social considerations;

(b)   Examine existing policies, identify areas for improvement, and craft inclusive, forward-thinking frameworks that holistically address tourism mobility needs;

(c)   Ensure that national strategies align with global sustainability goals outlined in agreements such as the Paris Agreement, the ECE Inland Transport Committee Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport and the European Union European Green Deal.

III. Fields of action

9.   During the discussions with the members of the Partnership and supported by a wider stakeholder consultation process, the following fields of action were identified:

(a)   Understanding mobility requirements of different tourist groups (Field of Action 1);

(b)   Mobility management at destinations (Field of Action 2);

(c)   Long-distance travel options (Field of Action 3);

(d)   Flexible transport systems (Field of Action 4);

(e)   Cycling and walking as part of the tourism experience (Field of Action 5);

(f)   Multimodal travel information (systems) – requirements of tourists (Field of Action 6);

(g)   Integration of sustainable mobility services into tourism packages, marketing and communication (Field of Action 7).

10.   The fields of actions offer possible solutions to promote sustainable mobility in tourism and are based on case studies identified by the Partnership. These examples should support countries to take appropriate measures, find partners and build alliances, or be inspired by case studies.

11.   For the implementation of any action, cooperation between stakeholders from different sectors and levels is crucial. In the planning and the implementation phases, responsible stakeholders need to consider the benefits and possible challenges for tourists and local inhabitants alike.

IV. Field of Action 1: Understanding mobility requirements of different tourist groups

12.   Leveraging data on different tourist groups and their mobility needs is of paramount importance for national authorities aiming to spearhead sustainable travel initiatives. Informed by comprehensive research, understanding the distinct preferences and behaviours of various demographics becomes essential. This data- and research-driven approach empowers authorities to tailor strategies and policies in tourism mobility, ensuring that they align with specific needs, thereby enhancing convenience and overall satisfaction for diverse tourist groups. Examples are tourists' preferences regarding travel style, destinations and accommodation, price sensitivity, comfort and reliability standards, ticket flexibility and

language type. Authorities can use insights into these preferences to develop aligning initiatives. By prioritizing evidence-based decision-making, national authorities can support stakeholders at the destination level to enhance and render more effective tourism mobility-related services.

A. Action 1.1: Facilitate and finance research

13. This action recognizes the need for research initiatives that consider evolving trends in mobility and tourism. It addresses the challenge of tailoring mobility solutions to the specific needs and unique characteristics of various tourist groups. The objective is to optimize the use of sustainable means of transport, offer solutions through targeted investments, and focus on personalized mobility services for different segments of tourists. It is recommended to:

(a) Establish financial support for research activities on the requirements and needs of different tourist groups and trends of future tourism mobility;

(b) Encourage the transport and tourism sectors (e.g., transport service provider, mobility service provider, tourism association) to engage in research activities, and work together to build on existing transport research to include the tourism mobility perspective;

(c) Contribute to and be involved in relevant studies, projects and networks (e.g., THE PEP) in international frameworks by providing expertise and sharing best practices;

(d) Support regular exchange (e.g., through working groups, workshops, online seminars) among the national and international actors responsible for tourism/mobility/climate, in order to exchange verified data, analyses and trend forecasts.

B. Action 1.2: Establish a significant database

14. This action addresses the challenge of limited mobility data for tourism, given that mobility data predominantly focus on everyday travel. The action emphasizes the need to: enhance understanding of tourism mobility; and collect and combine data specifically related to tourist preferences and behaviours during travel. The aim here is to provide a more comprehensive and accurate picture of mobility patterns in the tourism sector. It is recommended to:

(a) Initiate regular tourist surveys on tourism mobility to get a better idea of tourists' mobility behaviour;

(b) Regularly collect detailed data on tourism mobility;[9]

(c) Set up a user-friendly, participatory data platform for sustainable tourism mobility and update it regularly.

C. Action 1.3: Stimulate projects to better meet the needs of specific tourist groups

15. This action offers solutions for the inclusion management of tourist groups, such as elderly persons, who may be not sufficiently considered due to mainstream demand. It addresses the need to empower businesses and local authorities to lead projects tailored to the specific needs of diverse tourist groups, aiming to foster sustainable mobility behaviour and ensure inclusivity in tourism strategies. It is recommended to:

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[9] Information collected could include use of means of transport for arrival or departure and during the stay.

(a)   Focus attention on the specific mobility needs of different tourist groups and ensure physical and digital accessibility;[10]

(b)   Develop support schemes (e.g., for local projects that address specific tourist groups to foster their sustainable mobility);

(c)   Initiate projects that support sustainable travel for specific target groups (e.g., by collaborating with transport or tour operators);

(d)   Encourage exchange between sectors (e.g., tourism, transport, culture, sports and other major events) and levels (national, regional and local) on sustainable mobility in different areas (including in remote areas).

V.   Field of Action 2: Mobility management at destinations

16.   Successful mobility management at destinations necessitates an integrated approach encompassing planning, implementation, financial support and capacity-building. These actions involve various measures, including information activities, promotion, organization and coordination efforts, education and training initiatives, as well as integrational and supportive measures. To enhance sustainable tourism mobility at destinations, it is essential to broaden the scope of first- and last-mile solutions, incorporating modes such as cycling, walking, shuttles, flexible transport services and sharing options for cars and bicycles. The enhancement of multimodal services through funding and awareness-raising campaigns contributes to mobility management by increasing the range and flexibility of transport systems and fosters integrated planning, infrastructure development and policy frameworks for seamless accommodation of diverse modes of transport.

A.   Action 2.1: Support destinations in planning and implementation

17.   This action addresses the challenge of implementing integrated strategies for sustainable transport at destinations. It recommends the adoption of sustainable regional tourism mobility plans, similar to those in the Alpine and Danube regions.[11] Such plans prioritize collaboration, stakeholder engagement and comprehensive analysis to implement sustainable mobility policies, adapting the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan methodology for effective integration across local, regional and national stakeholders. It is recommended to:

(a)   Create national legislation endorsing sustainable tourism mobility planning, for instance, with tax incentives for sustainable modes, regulations on emissions standards, mandating to promote and improve public transportation;

(b)   Ensure cooperation at the national level between the transport and tourism sectors when preparing guidance for sustainable mobility planning at tourist destinations. Examples of outcomes could be national strategies and guidelines for sustainable mobility management at the destination, including its planning, implementation and promotion;

(c)   Facilitate analysis of touristic transport challenges and opportunities at destinations;

(d)   Support regional and local stakeholders by offering such guidelines on, for example, how to:

(i)   Develop a sustainable regional tourism mobility plan (e.g., a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan including tourism mobility at the regional or local level);

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[10] For instance, the European Telecommunications Standards Institute, the European Committee for Standardization and the European Electrotechnical Committee for Standardization (2018), Accessibility requirements for information and communication technologies products and services EN 301 549, Harmonized European Standard, V2.1.2.

[11] Alpine Pearls, Brandnamic GmbH (2024), Alpine Pearls – a car-free holiday in the Alps, available at www.alpine-pearls.com/en; and (2024), Danube.Pearls, available at www.danube-pearls.eu/en/. Note: Mention of any firm, product, service or licensed process does not imply endorsement or criticism by the United Nations.

(ii) Create functional mobility plans, including tourism mobility for large generators of traffic;

(iii) Plan and provide walking- and cycling-friendly infrastructure;

(iv) Implement flexible transport services, for instance, on-demand mobility solutions, first- and last-mile offers;

(v) Establish integral tourism packages that offer accommodation, regional and local transport in one package;

(vi) Implement effective parking management.

B. Action 2.2: Establish financial support schemes

18. This action addresses the challenge of the lack of funding mechanisms and fiscal incentives to promote sustainable travel at tourist destinations. The approach comprises improving conditions for car-free travellers, encouraging a modal shift towards sustainable mobility and the need for effective collaboration between national, regional and local levels when allocating public funds and implementing sustainable travel measures. It is recommended to:

(a) Where funds are available, establish financial support schemes such as grants and co-financing mechanisms to incentivize the implementation of mobility management measures at destinations;

(b) Diversify funding channels by exploring diverse options, including national calls for tender, public contracts, grants and funding, including from the European Union for some countries;

(c) Encourage collaborative funding initiatives by fostering collaboration among the national, regional and local levels, promoting efficient allocation of public funds for sustainable mobility initiatives and enhancing the effectiveness of sustainable tourism mobility plans;

(d) Ensure long-term financing to increase planning security for stakeholders.

C. Action 2.3: Initiate and facilitate capacity-building

19. This action addresses the need to promote sustainable mobility plans and effective management in tourism destinations in order to optimize infrastructure. This also requires developing skills at the regional and local levels. Capacity-building measures are essential, and national authorities play a crucial role in initiating and facilitating these efforts by raising awareness, prioritizing education, and establishing networks. The action emphasizes the need for balanced tourism flows, optimized visitor management and improved well-being of local residents, as well as advocating for the redistribution of visitors across different times and areas to alleviate peak-season pressures and minimize environmental impact. Anticipating challenges, such as tourism peaks and overtourism, is integral to overall awareness-raising efforts. It is recommended to:

(a) Engage in awareness-raising activities, training courses, education and promotion targeted at local and national stakeholders (e.g., advertising campaigns to enhance awareness and understanding, or mobility trainers for destination and hotel staff);

(b) Implement and support training schemes or programmes for sustainable tourism mobility management, including the certification of mobility coordinators and related initiatives;

(c) Tailor educational activities to suit diverse target groups within the tourism industry;

(d) Support the establishment of regional mobility centres that aim to:

(i) Enhance coordination of sustainable mobility initiatives at the regional level;

(ii)   Offer personalized travel assistance, including trip advice and ticketing;

(iii)   Provide destination maps for convenient sustainable transport access.

VI.   Field of Action 3: Long-distance travel options

20.   According to the European Union Sustainable Mobility Strategy,[12] concerted efforts are required from national and international authorities to effectively address the challenge of sustainable travel, avoiding flying and reducing reliance on private cars. The key lies in establishing environmentally conscious, cost-effective and reliable long-distance travel options connecting home locations to tourism destinations. This necessitates international cooperation for land-bound, high-capacity, high-speed and night train solutions. National authorities, playing a central role in financing infrastructure and the organization and funding of public service obligation passenger services, must go beyond regulatory aspects to actively shape the establishment of better long-distance, cross-border services, and must uphold rigorous quality standards. The commitment of authorities to sustainable long-distance transport, competitive with air travel, is crucial for a greener future for tourism mobility.[13]

A.   Action 3.1: Ensure the provision of adequate infrastructure and use existing infrastructure more efficiently

21.   This action offers solutions to challenges related to the urgent shift from private car- and aviation-based tourism to sustainable long-distance public transport. It specifically focuses on the financial and technical considerations required for establishing resilient and well-developed rail infrastructure. The challenges addressed include the need for additional and upgraded rail infrastructure and the efficient utilization of existing infrastructure, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach for a successful transformation. It is recommended to:

(a)   Develop national long-term infrastructure planning considering the interests and needs of all tourist groups, including the necessary financing instruments needed to ensure adequate infrastructure in the long-term;

(b)   Participate in international collaboration initiatives aimed at the harmonization and standardization of railway infrastructure internationally on, for example, track gauge, tunnel sizes, platform elevation at stations, electric traction types and command and control systems;

(c)   Prioritize and improve the quality and reliability of railway services most relevant to tourism, for instance, night trains;

(d)   Increase capacity and usability of main public transport hubs considering the requirements of different tourist groups, including by providing multilingual services and information.[14]

B.   Action 3.2: Ensure the provision of public transport vehicles reflecting tourists' needs

22.   The challenge addressed by this action lies in harmonizing quality standards for sustainable long-distance travel at the vehicle level of both trains and buses, aiming to make it a convenient and attractive choice for a wider audience and taking into account the requirements of different tourist groups (see Field of Action 1). This action focuses on the

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[12] European Commission (2021), Mobility Strategy, available at transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/mobility-strategy_en.

[13] Zlotán Pafféri and Bulcsú Remenyik, Railways and sustainable tourism (Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies, 2023), available at www.cer.be/images/MAVEssay_Rail__Sustainable_Tourism.pdf.

[14] Noting the work that is being undertaken by the Inland Transport Committee on the improvement of information in railway stations and hubs.

need to improve the overall standard and desirability of sustainable travel, particularly in the context of public transport options for tourism mobility. It is recommended to:

(a)   Determine quality standards regarding the comfort of vehicles (rolling stock and buses) to be integrated in tenders. Give special attention to tourists' needs, for example, luggage transport (especially when bulky), seating comfort, catering, bicycle carriage (see also Field of Action 4) and family friendliness;

(b)   Raise awareness of the need for high-capacity rolling stock (e.g., double-decker or double traction) in order to increase the quality and reliability of services for all user groups;

(c)   Facilitate closer alignment between the development of rolling stock procurement strategies and infrastructure development strategies to make sure that rolling stock meets infrastructure needs and vice versa, in order to ensure that adequate quantities of quality rolling stock are available whenever and wherever needed.

C.   Action 3.3: Expand the offer of sustainable transport services reflecting tourists' needs

23.   This action addresses the optimization of long-distance travel by focusing on tourists' needs, ensuring convenient itineraries, minimizing transfers, and adapting service frequency and departure times. The action also emphasizes the need for collaboration with tour operators and destinations to improve overall appeal and efficiency, considering regulatory aspects and enhancing the quality of bus services and terminals. It is recommended to:

(a)   Foster tourist-friendly route planning with fewer transfers (challenging with bigger luggage) and longer connections (e.g., night trains);

(b)   Support collaboration with railway companies from neighbouring countries for planning tourist-friendly, cross-border routes;

(c)   Engage with tour operators and tourism destinations to adapt the frequency of services and departure times to meet tourists' requirements and to offer seasonal connections meeting tourists' needs;

(d)   Promote service-related job profiles in the railway industry and provide training for existing staff to better meet tourism requirements;

(e)   Improve long-distance bus services, their regulatory status, service scope and capacity, and service quality and reliability. This recommendation places particular emphasis on the design of the bus terminal itself.

D.   Action 3.4: Enable attractive pricing and ticketing

24.   This action addresses the commercial aspects of long-distance public transport, aiming to enhance the competitiveness of sustainable modes. Specifically, the focus is on ensuring comparable pricing and affordability of sustainable services, aligning with the goal of making eco-friendly options more attractive and accessible to the public. It is recommended to:

(a)   Facilitate tourist-friendly ticketing (e.g., season tickets, cross-border bookings and whole-network-included tickets);

(b)   Collaborate to develop an attractive international fare system ensuring alignment with ongoing initiatives in the European Union and encompassing all travel modes, including aviation;

(c)   Facilitate long-term individual travel planning by rail, by, for example, arranging the publication of timetables (in paper and digital form), with advanced reservation options and flexible ticketing;

(d)   Work towards regional and international information, booking and ticketing, including by lobbying for an international fare system;

(e)   Promote advertising at tourist destinations, and local businesses, and associations in the source markets (i.e., from where tourists travel) to raise awareness, encouraging tourists to opt for active and public modes of transportation when making their travel decisions;

(f)   Promote the view that sustainable tourism travel is part of the touristic experience ("The journey is part of the holiday");

(g)   Encourage the establishment of national tourism agencies in source markets to facilitate accessible and non-profit sustainable long-distance travel guidance for the public.

E.   Action 3.5: Provide regulatory framework

25.   This action aims to ensure that regulatory and legislative frameworks for sustainable long-distance travel are harmonized with policies at the international and pan-European levels and with sustainable tourism mobility management.[15] Complementing travel demand management at tourist destinations (see Field of Action 2), this action proposes measures at a larger scale. It is recommended to:

(a)   Be involved in co-creation and implementation of regulations, such as the European Union Rail Passengers' Rights Regulation[16] (and related regulations) or common rules for the operation of air services, in order to establish a comprehensive regulatory framework for sustainable long-distance travel;

(b)   Initiate and conduct awareness-raising campaigns to inform and educate stakeholders about the benefits and options of sustainable long-distance travel within the pan-European region;

(c)   Require the inclusion of environmental impact information on long-distance travel options;

(d)   Advocate for greening the taxation system for long-distance travel at the international level (e.g., aviation fuel taxation).

VII.   Field of Action 4: Flexible transport systems

26.   The attraction of secluded destinations, promising tranquillity and closeness to nature, is gaining in popularity. However, these locations often present logistical challenges due to their distance from major transportation hubs. The interaction between high-capacity, long-distance transport, such as trains, and the need for bespoke solutions in reaching remote destinations highlights a crucial aspect of sustainable tourism mobility. Ensuring a smooth transition from long-distance connections to local (semi-)public transport is vital for promoting ecologically responsible tourism. Regional and local solutions for the "last mile", where travellers complete their journey, are important. Orchestrated by regional and local stakeholders, these solutions require substantial support from national authorities, beyond regulatory frameworks and financial instruments. In this context, the backing of national authorities becomes crucial for defining quality and data standards for information services. The integration of on-demand services, flexible transport systems (e.g., dial-a-bus systems, shuttle services, shared mobility solutions) into travel information systems is of the utmost importance (see Field of Action 6).[17]

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[15] Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology of Austria, *Austria's 2030 Mobility Master Plan: The New Climate Action Framework for the Transport Sector: Sustainable – Resilient – Digital* (Vienna, 2021).

[16] See https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021R0782.

[17] Many of the following recommendations regarding a flexible transport system stem from the European Union-Interreg project "The Last Mile". Interreg Europe (2023), Last Mile, available at projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/lastmile/.

A. Action 4.1: Provide a comprehensive strategic and regulatory framework

27. This action addresses challenges in implementing flexible transport systems, including the need for clear definitions aligned at the international level, taking into account the complexity of flexible transport systems as reflected in national regulations. It seeks regulatory support for flexible transport system initiatives and aims to foster an accepted view of flexible transport systems as innovative collective transport solutions. It is recommended to:

(a)   Support flexible transport systems through legislation by preparing unambiguous definitions of the systems and provisions in national laws to include flexible transport systems in public transport systems;

(b)   Develop specific national recommendations regarding flexible transport systems in public transport in the context of applicable laws;

(c)   Support the integration of flexible transport systems into transport and sustainable mobility strategic documents and guidelines[18] (and link them to funding programmes (see Action 4.3: Establish a viable economic framework);

(d)   Call on regional and international institutions to directly address flexible transport systems as possible solutions in certain circumstances in strategic documents, and to define flexible transport systems as one of the new forms of collective transport.

B. Action 4.2: Provide a robust institutional framework

28. Key challenges associated with the establishment of a robust institutional framework for flexible transport systems include: the absence of clear operational standards; a lack of collaboration across different sectors; a need for effective public-private partnerships; and coordinated integration of flexible transport systems into the national public transport system. It is recommended to:

(a)   Initiate intersectoral collaboration (transport, tourism and environment experts at the local, regional and national levels) to effectively manage and organize flexible transport systems. For instance, by establishing formats for exchange of information and good practices within and between regions;

(b)   Implement legal provisions fostering public-private partnerships to facilitate seamless collaboration between regional and local authorities and private stakeholders;

(c)   Advocate for coordination of all transportation modes (both flexible transport systems and conventional public transport systems), promoting an integrated approach to mobility solutions;

(d)   Strengthen the institutional framework at the regional or national level with a broader vision of integrated public transport planning, including standards for technology, operations and data quality.

C. Action 4.3: Establish a viable economic framework

29. Financial sustainability of flexible transport systems is made difficult by the need to efficiently address mobility needs in rural areas and regions with seasonal traffic variations. Therefore, the accessibility of tourist destinations, especially in rural areas, by (semi-)public modes demands funding instruments that facilitate its operation. National authorities play a crucial role in aligning strategic financial planning with the regional challenges posed by tourism mobility needs. It is recommended to:

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[18] For instance, the European Union Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, Sustainable Urban/Regional Mobility Plans, National Sustainable Mobility Strategies.

(a)   Integrate flexible transport systems into national transport financial plans in order to secure initial funding to support the implementation and operation of such systems;

(b)   Facilitate collaborative funding conditions by fostering cooperation between national and regional funding instruments for the midterm and long-term, ensuring financially sustainable operation of flexible transport systems;

(c)   Establish support programmes prioritizing comprehensive financial assistance for flexible transport systems in sparsely populated areas, distributed settlements and regions with high seasonal traffic, ensuring sustained viability.

D.   Action 4.4: Set awareness-raising activities

30.   This action targets the challenge of limited awareness and information about flexible mobility systems among local inhabitants, tourists and stakeholders. Therefore, the action addresses the need for effective communication of the benefits of flexible transport systems to promote them strategically and overcome initial resistance among stakeholders and in mobility practices. It is recommended to:

(a)   Promote flexible transport systems through awareness-raising and reducing barriers between local inhabitants, tourists and relevant stakeholders from municipalities, as well as the transport and tourism sectors;

(b)   Design and launch strategic campaigns creating targeted promotion initiatives that emphasize the benefits of flexible transport systems in rural touristic areas and other tourism destinations;

(c)   Integrate flexible transport systems into event themes and actively contribute to events, aligning narratives closely with the system to enhance awareness and acceptance;

(d)   Encourage stakeholder collaboration fostering partnerships between national authorities, municipalities and businesses to jointly implement and raise awareness of flexible transport systems for impactful acceptance.

VIII.   Field of Action 5: Cycling and walking as part of the tourism experience

31.   Encouraging active transport modes is essential for national authorities seeking to enhance sustainability in mobility. This is valid for both walking and cycling as forms of everyday mobility but also for hiking and cycling tourism as sustainable modes of tourism mobility. These activities offer a profound connection with landscapes, urban scenery and cultural heritage, promoting a sensitive and immersive experience. More than half of people who get on their bicycles for several days while on holiday also use them more in everyday life afterwards.[19] Additionally, cycling tourism has been shown to boost local economies, with cyclists spending more and their expenditures staying within local communities. The European Cyclists' Federation estimates a substantial economic value of €44 billion from the 2.3 billion cycling trips made annually, linking to the versatility[20] of cycling and walking, suitable for year-round exploration. This provides an alternative form of tourism, particularly beneficial to regions with traditionally seasonal tourism. The Pan-European Master Plan for Cycling Promotion[21] dedicates a whole chapter of recommendations to promoting cycling tourism.

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[19]   Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrrad-Club e.V. (ADFC), "ADFC-Radreiseanalyse 2022", available at www.adfc.de/artikel/adfc-radreiseanalyse-2022, 16 March 2022 (German only).

[20]   European Cyclists' Federation, "The benefits of cycling: Unlocking their potential for Europe" (n.p., 2018).

[21]   Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology of Austria, *Pan-European Master Plan for Cycling Promotion: 5th High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment*, *May 2021* (Vienna, 2021). Available at unece.org/info/publications/pub/376488.

A. Action 5.1: Strengthen walking and cycling infrastructure for tourism mobility

32.   This action emphasizes the crucial role of national authorities in coordinating with regional and local administrations in order to establish comprehensive and high-quality active mobility infrastructure. It recognizes the need for collaboration at various administrative levels, involving different sectors and departments, and stresses the importance of connecting with pan-European networks to enhance the planning process and to promote sustainable tourism experiences. It is recommended to:

(a)   Strengthen collaboration among national bodies involved in active mobility and tourism;

(b)   Collaborate with national, regional and local governments, along with the tourism sector, to build networks, design common strategies, and share data on cyclists and walkers;

(c)   Create attractive, safe and comfortable routes, and provide services such as food, accommodation, bicycle rentals and repair shops;

(d)   Guarantee accessibility of attractions via walking and cycling (attractive intradestination mobility);

(e)   Plan and coordinate infrastructure development and management, the establishment and maintenance of local, regional, national and European networks;

(f)   Standardize cycling and walking infrastructure; adopt and implement national guidelines for the signs and signals on the networks, along with international conventions and standards.

B. Action 5.2: Multimodality – link active mobility and public transport

33.   This action provides solutions for the accessibility of walking and cycling routes, emphasizing integration into public transport networks. It focuses on promoting bicycle-friendly features in public transportation services, coordinating with public transport for round trips, and emphasizing the importance of nationwide bicycle rental schemes and accessible bicycle parking facilities to enhance sustainable tourism mobility. It is recommended to:

(a)   Promote intermodal connectivity by enhancing bicycle carriage capacities on trains, buses and boats, by standardizing vehicle designs and through attractive ticketing and online booking services;

(b)   Promote bicycle parking at stations, connecting stations with cycling and walking networks and infrastructure;

(c)   Support bicycle rental services by establishing and governing such services, with a specific emphasis on facilitating one-way rentals across regions, supporting first-/last-mile bicycle sharing, and endorsing public nationwide bicycle rental schemes;

(d)   Support structured planning, provide quality standards, together with financial support schemes to facilitate bicycle parking and rentals at train stations.

C. Action 5.3: Data - Monitor and analyse active tourism developments

34.   This action addresses challenges related to the lack of informed planning and goal alignment by advocating for a data-driven approach. It underscores the importance of a data-driven approach, advocating for the collection and utilization of information on cyclist and walker flows, preferences and habits to enhance the understanding and strategic promotion of these specific tourism activities. It is recommended to:

(a) Collect and analyse data on the number, length and use of routes, and the perceived quality of the infrastructure and services offered, along with tourist habits and preferences;

(b) Define and analyse various indicators that provide information for the development of active mobility strategies as part of the tourism experience;

(c) Communicate and publish data and results of the analysis.

D. Action 5.4: Strengthen governance and organization of active mobility

35. This action addresses the challenge of fostering a cooperative framework by emphasizing the role of national authorities in coordinating and enhancing collaboration across public administrations with private actors, including tourism enterprises, and with environmental agencies, regional developers, health institutions and citizens to promote strategies for active mobility among diverse stakeholders. The active involvement of the private sector is needed for its financial strength and innovative capacities to advance common goals, facilitating exchange among decision-makers, enhancing efficiency, capitalizing on synergies, and preventing duplication of efforts. It is recommended to:

(a) Coordinate different levels of public administration in the exercise of their unique competences with a cross-sectoral approach (in a hierarchical manner where necessary), while also harnessing synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts;

(b) Facilitate the exchange of knowledge between public and private stakeholders for efficient decision-making;

(c) Leverage active involvement of private stakeholders to attract investment and innovation to the sector.

IX. Field of Action 6: Multimodal travel information (systems) – requirements of tourists

36. Multimodal transport systems allow for the use of various modes of transportation on the basis of their suitability for different purposes and trip characteristics. Therefore, they provide travellers with diverse options and reduce reliance on private motorized modes. However, the increasing range of choices also brings complexity, requiring collaboration among multiple transport providers operating under different systems, mechanisms and regulatory frameworks to deliver appealing solutions for travellers. The European Union, for example, has addressed this challenge through regulations mandating member States to establish national access points, requiring transport operators to adopt specific data standards and ensuring the provision of routing information, forming a crucial foundation for transport providers or intermediaries to provide travellers with necessary information[22] for navigating multimodal transport systems.

A. Action 6.1: Provide convenient and accessible information on multi- and intermodal travel

37. Tourists, who are often unfamiliar with their travel destinations and transport options, often lack access to real-time and reliable information for their journeys.[23] Promoting the exchange of data between different transport providers within a multimodal chain helps to bring the travel information to travellers in a bundled form. If the data are available in

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[22] European Parliament (2017), Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/1926 of 31 May 2017 supplementing Directive 2010/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to the provision of EU-wide multimodal travel information services, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 272 (2017), pp. 1–13.

[23] For example, costs and booking procedures, travel time, necessary travel documents, validity of ticket on multimodal trip, need for reservation, luggage and bicycle transport, barrier-free access, walkways, transfer times between modes, services at the station, travel disruption and alternatives.

sufficient quality, the information provided will also be more reliable. This reduces uncertainty among tourists about travelling by public or collective transport. It is recommended to:

(a) Define quality standards and requirements for real-time information and make available data (e.g., time of arrival or departure, train or bus connections, delays, cancellations and alternative travel solutions);

(b) Support pilot actions, initiatives and cooperation for enhanced multimodal travel options between transport and mobility service providers (e.g., financial incentives and awards for sustainable tourism mobility solutions) and tourism providers;

(c) Encourage transport and mobility service providers to cooperate and share relevant data to improve the availability and reliability of travel information (e.g., for national transport options and international destinations) throughout multimodal transport chains.

B. Action 6.2: Facilitate data connectivity

38. Mobility data of different mobility service providers are, in many cases, not connected due to the high number and heterogeneity of actors, their different data standards and the difference in the data available. In such cases, existing transport offers might not be easily visible and accessible for travellers because providers can only display their own offers on their platforms. Due to the greater heterogeneity of players in a multimodal system, this challenge becomes even more significant. Tourists are often less aware of the different options and possibilities to navigate in a multimodal transport system and therefore depend more on providers to offer them the best solutions for their travel needs. It is recommended to:

(a) Establish internationally accepted and harmonized standards for data connectivity considering data-ownership and data security;

(b) Define data requirements and a high-quality data standard (e.g., specific data sets and data formats) on both the national and international levels for reliable and accurate multimodal and intermodal transport information;

(c) Provide effective governance structures and supportive schemes (e.g., financial support);

(d) Promote discrimination-free access to data to enhance connectivity in multimodal transport.

C. Action 6.3: Integrate multimodal and intermodal travel options in journey planners

39. Currently, the journey planners of transport providers often only include the modes they operate, posing a challenge for comprehensive multimodal travel options, both nationally and internationally. With the growing complexity of various transport modes and tourism services, such as bicycle rentals, taxis/shuttles, luggage storage and varying opening hours of services, effective integration lacks real-time data connectivity and information on deviations. It is recommended to:

(a) Establish a robust foundation to foster seamless data connection and sharing (e.g., white-label information platform);

(b) Encourage transport and mobility service providers at all levels to cooperate nationally, connect their data and offer sustainable multimodal transport services;

(c) Ensure the provision of real-time data, information on disruptions, deviations and routing and geodata to facilitate journey planning by investing in advanced technological systems, implementing comprehensive data-sharing and protocols, and fostering collaboration with relevant stakeholders to establish a robust and interconnected information ecosystem;

(d)   Support journey-planning solutions, ticketing, booking, clearing and travel information through open Application Programming Interfaces accommodating diverse touristic offers to improve efficiency and accessibility.

X.   Field of Action 7: Integration of sustainable mobility services into tourism packages, marketing and communication

40.   National authorities and tourism organizations can contribute to promotion of sustainable tourism mobility within packaged offerings. They can establish certification schemes to recognize operators incorporating eco-friendly travel services. Additionally, authorities can lead awareness-raising campaigns to highlight the environmental benefits of sustainable transportation, encouraging its use. Training programmes ensure that service providers are well-informed about sustainable travel options. Collaboration with stakeholders, international advocacy and strategic marketing further contribute to fostering a more sustainable tourism industry.

A.   Action 7.1: Integrate sustainable mobility into certification and labelling schemes for tourism

41.   This action addresses the complexities of certifying sustainable tourism packages, which encompass various services such as travel modes, accommodation, leisure programmes and meals. The diverse nature of these services makes the certification process intricate, requiring active involvement from national or regional governments to evaluate and promote certification schemes, ensuring their credibility and effectiveness. It is recommended to:

(a)   Utilize and promote existing certification schemes (e.g., green accommodation, ecolabels), while developing new standards for certifying sustainable tourism packages;

(b)   Provide digital tools for tour operators to calculate and compare emissions of carbon dioxide across various tourism packages and travel modes;

(c)   Encourage the development of international and national certification methodologies to benchmark, compare and rank travel offers based on sustainability, considering tourist perspectives;

(d)   Encourage funding institutions to offer benefits for sustainable or green-certified tourism services in funding applications and grant schemes, ensuring financial incentives for certified operators.

B.   Action 7.2: Promote sustainable mobility in national tourism communication and promotion campaigns

42.   This action addresses the need for sustainable tourism mobility advocacy. National or regional tourism agencies and destination management organizations should strive to integrate sustainability, including mobility, into promotion campaigns to actively promote and emphasize climate action, aiming to make visitors more aware of their carbon footprint during holidays. Thus, they would contribute to addressing climate change within the tourism sector. It is recommended to:

(a)   Integrate sustainable mobility into both domestic and international campaigns to promote tourism;

(b)   Promote sustainable travel packages in communication and promotion campaigns by Governments, State agencies, national tourism organizations, destination management organizations and State-owned transport companies;

(c)   Implement marketing strategies favouring sustainable modes while alerting against unsustainable ones;

(d)   Include a comparison of the carbon footprints of various transport modes in communications.

C. Action 7.3: Spread information and support training

43.   This action addresses the need for sufficient information and awareness among tourism sector businesses regarding sustainable mobility services. It is recommended to:

(a)   Showcase good examples, case studies and practices to make tourism stakeholders aware of products and packages for sustainable mobility in tourism;

(b)   Support tour operators in developing new products and offers for sustainable mobility;

(c)   Provide training opportunities for tourism stakeholders and tour operators interested in adopting sustainable mobility practices. Provide support to get certificates and labels, organizing workshops, webinars, information days and study trips, and creating toolkits and guidance materials;

(d)   Encourage and reward environmentally friendly practices through progressive taxation measures incentivizing sustainable mobility offers.

Annex

Glossary

1.   "Flexible transport systems" (or flexible transport services) here means innovative, on-demand transport solutions, for example, for the last mile in a touristic region (e.g., dial-a-ride or call-a-bus systems, shuttle services and shared mobility solutions). Such systems usually complement mass transport and do not operate with fixed routes, stops and timetables. Hence, they are adequate in meeting the mobility needs of users in low-demand areas and during low-demand periods (e.g., weekends, holidays).

2.   "Hiking" (as opposed to walking) involves more challenging and nature-focused experiences over longer distances and varying terrain.

3.   "Mobility" refers to individuals' needs and desires to move from one place to another and the patterns and choices they make in their movements, encompassing transportation modes, frequency and distance of travel, etc.

4.   "Mobility management"[24] is a concept to promote sustainable transport and manage the demand for car use by changing travellers' attitudes and behaviour. At the core of mobility management are "soft" measures such as information and communication, organizing services and coordinating activities of different partners. Soft measures most often enhance the effectiveness of "hard" measures within urban transport (e.g., new tram lines, new roads and new bicycle lanes). Mobility management measures (in comparison to hard measures) do not necessarily require large financial investments and may have a high benefit-cost ratio.

5.   A "Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan" is a strategic plan designed to satisfy the mobility needs of people and businesses in cities and their surrounding areas for a better quality of life. It builds on existing planning practices and takes due consideration of integration, participation and evaluation principles.[25]

6.   "Transport" as an economic sector involves moving people and goods between locations using different modes such as road, rail, air and sea.

7.   "Transportation" is the provision and availability of infrastructure and services related to moving people (and goods).

8.   "Tourism" is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon that entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called "visitors" (they may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure.[26]

9.   "Tourism mobility" in this document focuses specifically on the mobility behaviour of tourists and visitors. Transport activities generated by the tourism sector, such as the transport of goods or labour force, are not considered in this document.

10.   "Walking" (as opposed to hiking) tends to be more casual and suitable for shorter, everyday distances in urban or village settings.

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[24]   European Platform on Mobility Management, Mobility Management (2024), available at epomm.eu/about/mobility-management.

[25]   European Commission, Mobility and Transport, "Sustainable urban mobility" (2024), available at transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/urban-transport/sustainable-urban-mobility_en?prefLang=de.

[26]   United Nations World Tourism Organization, "Glossary of tourism terms" (2024), available at www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms.