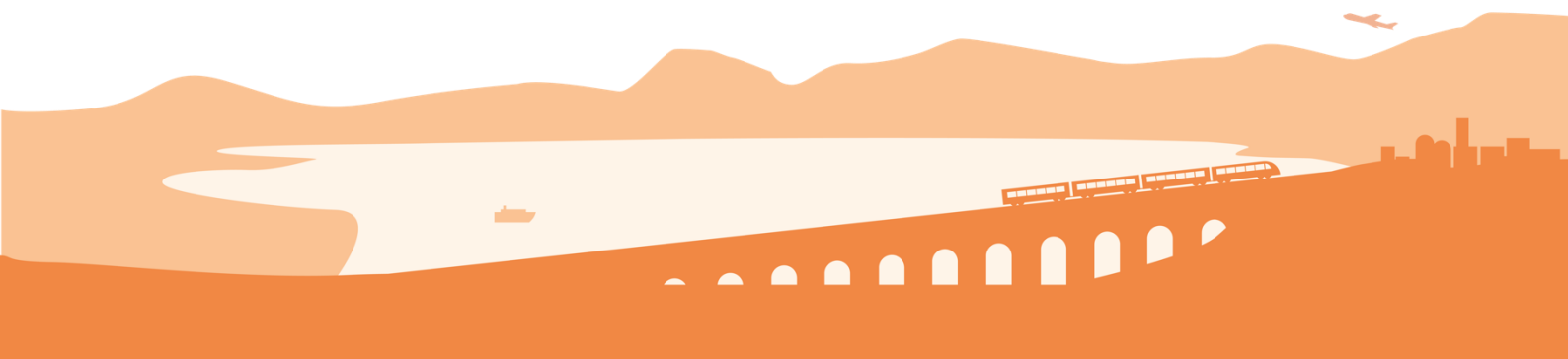


D3.3.1 Report on set up and development of community and measures to animate the debate on DRT trends



Final version
08 2024





Authors and log change of the document

Partner No.	Partner Acronym	Name of the author	Action	Version
2	Redmint	Gabriele Grea Anja Seyfert	1st version of the document	1
1	SRM	Chiara Lepori Dario Marchini	Review of the document	2
10	TUB	Massimo Moraglio	Review of the document	3
2	Redmint	Gabriele Grea Anja Seyfert	Final version	Proposed final
1	SRM	Chiara Lepori Dario Marchini	Edited approved version for official release	Final

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1. Executive summary

The territory of central Europe is characterised by uneven transport connections and mobility opportunities, across and within regions, between urbanized contexts and rural and peripheral areas.

The project's common challenge is to improve accessibility and connectivity in CE peripheral and rural areas through better integration of public transport networks with Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services, building on joint development and implementation of governance, planning, digital and operational innovations.

DREAM_PACE aims at **developing innovative Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) concepts for peripheral and rural areas**, complementing regional mobility networks to improve connectivity, sustainability, inclusiveness.

The project will **improve DRT planning and delivery capacities of public authorities and operators**.

A new generation of DRT services will become functional and integral part of regional mobility networks, enhancing accessibility for citizens, territorial cohesion and social inclusion.

In order to do this, the contribution of technology and service providers is fundamental in order to implement DRT concepts able to exploit the benefits of the most recent technological and operational innovations delivering services responding to the needs of citizens and communities.

This report provides an overview on the process of creation of a community composed by relevant stakeholders active in the field of DRT technology and business innovations at EU and global level, which is expected to support project activities with expertise and insights on innovation trends and successful cases.

Secondly, the report highlights the main instruments designed in order to engage the Technology and Business Community members in a fruitful debate, and exposes the first results of the interactions between the Community and the project progress. Annex I provides the list of the Members of the Tech&Biz Community, including the participating Associated and Project partners representatives (updated on August 31st, 2024). Annex II presents a draft plan of Community events until the end of the project (updated on August 31st, 2024).



2. Why a Technology and Business community on DRT

The interest in Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) in recent years is closely linked to the technological and digital evolution of the platforms that today allow more efficient travel planning, an improvement in sharing information with users (in real time) and greater route flexibility.

One of the reasons for this is linked to the potential of replacing traditional services with this new method, particularly in rural and low-demand areas. Conceptually, call services are distinguished between those that offer "door-to-door" relationships and those that are offered between predefined points, exclusively in the presence of demand. In this way, the on-call service adapts to user needs: routes, active stops and timetables are designed on the basis of passenger requests.

DRT services can satisfy different mobility needs, focusing on areas with varying mobility needs, or on off-peak time slots, or on specific demand categories (e.g. disabled, elderly, students, tourists). The services can also be combined with conventional methods, improving their capillarity and sustainability.

Looking at the competitive environment of digital platforms enabling new flexible mobility services, examples of DRT solutions developed from 2012 onwards include among others ViaVan (today Via), Kutsuplus, Bridj, Chariot, Padam, UberPool, Lyft Lines and Shuttle. The services offered are developed in the market space between public transport and taxi/TNC services, with very different business models and service characteristics. The set-up activities of the DREAM_PACE Community focused in particular on the engagement of those platforms offering support to local authorities and communities and public transport operators for the development of flexible services across the existing networks.

According to the DREAM_PACE approach - also thanks to the digitalization process - a new generation of DRT services will become functional and integral part of regional mobility networks, enhancing accessibility for citizens, territorial cohesion and social inclusion. Integration is the key to the DREAM_PACE innovative approach: as DRT services are mostly developed as stand-alone solutions to specific needs, the potential of scalable strategies and solutions is widely underestimated.

DREAM_PACE Activity 3.3 "Fostering collaboration among actors, creating a DRT tech and business community" aims at ensuring relevance and consistency of the project development towards territorial needs, innovation trends, sustainability and inclusiveness principles, through a Quadruple Helix approach¹ engaging partners and stakeholders.

¹ The Quadruple Helix is an innovation and collaboration model that describes the interaction between public sector, citizens/end-users, academia and industry.



3. Setting up the Community

The DREAM_PACE Technology and Business Community (also called Tech&Biz Community) is an open community, with the participation of important actors of the DRT digital ecosystem (some of them already engaged as Associated Partners during the genesis of the project).

The role of the Community in the project is to foster the debate on DRT governance, planning, digitalization and operational trends, facilitating the exchange of visions and practices, enabled by the creation of social media groups (e.g. LinkedIn) and dedicated workshops and contents.

The setting up of the Community can be summarised through the following points:

1. A first screening of the digital mobility ecosystem was carried out in 2022, when the project was ideated, in order to identify the main actors active on the EU and CE market as well as the main trends and challenges for flexible mobility;
2. Relevant stakeholders were mapped, and contacted by partners, in order to become associated with the project and contribute to the definition of the key challenges;
3. At the project start (March 2023) the first group of Community members was informed about the project planned activities, and engaged in the discussion via bilateral contacts, email and social media;
4. In September 2023, the kick off workshop of the Tech&Biz Community took place online, presenting in detail the project and its goals and activities, in order to gather the interest of the participants both at general and at pilot area level. The workshop also served as a starting point for planning Community events (workshops, seminars, online discussions) and fostering interactions with project partners and collaborations.

3.1. Main tools planned to animate the community

The Community will be animated mainly through the following tools/approaches:

- A. **Online workshops:** 6 workshops are being organised in order to discuss the progress of project activities, main challenges and opportunities of collaboration, as well as to engage the Community members in pilot activities as well as in the consultation process for the DREAM_PACE strategy;
- B. **Thematic groups:** through social media (i.e. the LinkedIn DREAM_PACE page) thematic threads will be developed on relevant topics for the implementation of project activities, in order to foster a constant and on-the-spot debate ensuring the alignment between partners' actions and main trends, good practices and planning, operational and technological developments at international level;
- C. **Bilateral meetings/calls for interest at local level:** partners will be able to activate the community on specific needs, in order to identify the most suitable support for the implementation and testing of innovative solutions. This approach will ensure fair access to opportunities within the Community;
- D. **Physical meetings and events:** a set of physical events (national and international) with the presence of DREAM_PACE partners and presentation of project progresses and outcomes will be advertised across the Community, and members of the Community will be invited to participate. Moreover, in the final phase of the project, the community members, and particularly the Associated Partners, will be invited to physical events (e.g. the final conference).

As already mentioned, the Community is open: new partners are welcome to participate in the debate. The engagement will be proposed at different levels, in order to maximise the potential of collaboration on strategic as well as operation challenges at pilot sites.



4. The Tech&Biz workshops, first results

Two Technology and Business Community workshops have been held in the first half of the project, respectively on September 18th, 2023 and on June 27th, 2024.

4.1. 1st workshop, focus on the presentation of the project approach and activities (September 18th, 2023)

The primary scope of the workshop was to present to the Associated Partners - which are members of the Technology and Business Community - the structure of the project and the activities planned, with a special focus on our six pilot areas. Moreover, main ideas for the engagement of the Community in project activities have been discussed. A total of 22 participants joined the workshop, equally distributed between project partners and members of the Community.

The main objectives, challenges and activities that will be rolled out in the next two and a half years were introduced and illustrated through the following slides:

Our common objective

DREAM_PACE aims at developing innovative Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) concepts for peripheral and rural areas, complementing regional mobility networks to improve connectivity, sustainability, inclusiveness.

The project will improve DRT planning and delivery capacities of public authorities and operators.

A new generation of DRT services will become functional and integral part of regional mobility networks, enhancing accessibility for citizens, territorial cohesion and social inclusion.

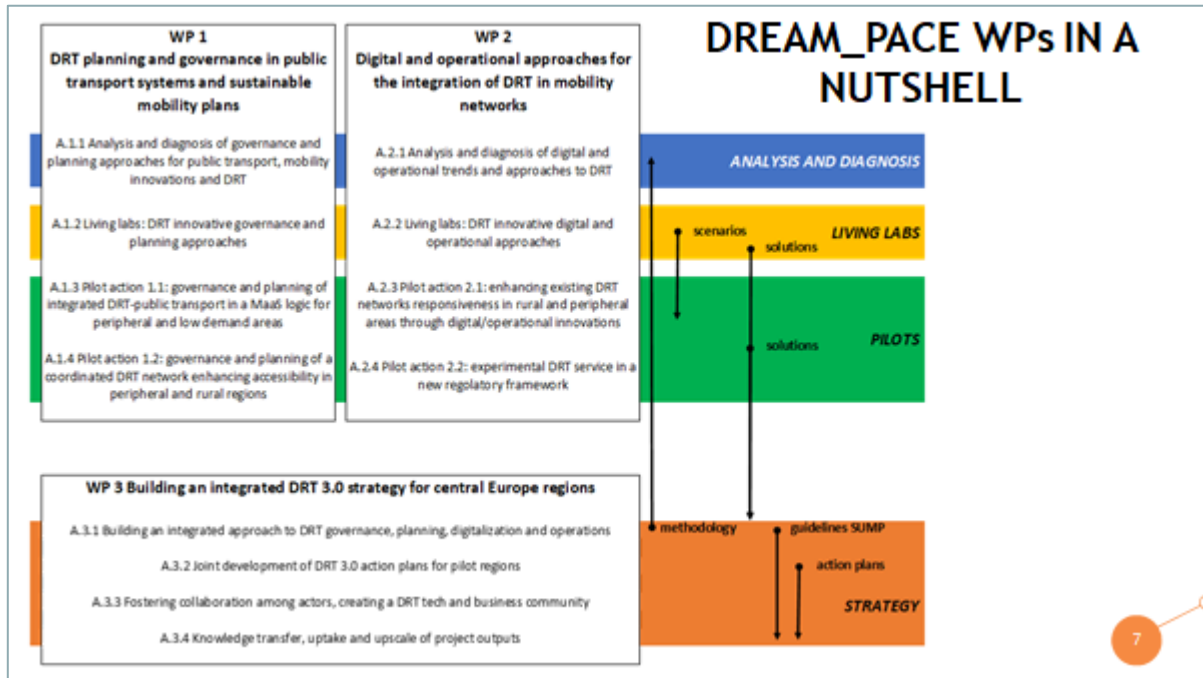
Our challenge(s)

Improve accessibility and connectivity in peripheral and rural areas through a better integration of public transport networks with flexible services, delivering:

- better connections to the main transport corridors and nodes, focussing on public transport
- enhanced mobility options in rural and peripheral areas to foster territorial cohesion and social inclusion

Our approach

- a) **Participation and collaborative approach:** engagement of citizens, service providers, public authorities and other stakeholders in planning, co-designing, set up and development
- b) **Cross fertilisation and transnational debate:** definition of discussion groups at transnational level, developing common strategies, solutions and practices
- c) **Actions for sustainability:** targeted actions for take up and upscaling, involving partners and stakeholders contributing to the development of sustainable mobility policies



SOLUTIONS AND PILOTS WP1/1

Governance and planning of integrated DRT-public transport in a MaaS logic for peripheral and low demand areas

- Strategic planning approach (tested within SUMP and Master Plans processes)
- Recommendations on data governance and integration, tariff and funding
- Business planning tool for flexible management of DRT-PT (tested on running services)
- DRT dedicated tendering procedure (demonstrated on field)

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SOLUTIONS AND PILOTS WP1/2

Governance and planning of a coordinated DRT network enhancing accessibility in peripheral and rural regions

- Governance scheme for the coordination of DRT, and set up of coordinator (demonstrated on field)
- Strategic planning approach to DRT (strategic guidance for DRT coordination)
- Business model for crowdsourcing (tested by engaging potential participants)

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SOLUTIONS AND PILOTS WP2/1

Enhancing existing DRT networks through digital/operational innovations

- Tools for digitalization of existing services
- Digital integration between DRT and PT
- Operational hybrid DRT models enhancing flexibility (based on hotspots, integration of different services)
- New approaches to inclusiveness (including no or simplified booking through interactive screens)

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SOLUTIONS AND PILOTS WP2/2

Experimental DRT service in a new regulatory framework

- Partner SDC, applying the newly developed tendering procedure, will implement and test the first-of-a-kind DRT experimental service in Croatia, building on the recently issued regulatory framework at national level

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STRATEGY WP3

Topic guide DRT 3.0 in Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP)

The "Topic guide DRT 3.0 in Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP)" (D.3.1.3), builds on the outcomes of WP1 and WP2 activities. It will **provide guidance for planning and delivering innovative, integrated and inclusive DRT services in peripheral and rural areas**. The strategy will be developed through

- a) continuous feedbacks with other project activities,
- b) active dialogue with stakeholders (including the members of the open tech and business community), and
- c) the EU consultation process

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The following questions were shared with the audience:

- a) **Our topics: are you experiencing similar challenges, how and where?**
- b) **Suggestions on how to make the debate effective?**
- c) **Where would you like to contribute (strategies, solutions and pilots)?**

The questions stimulated a free discussion where the following main points emerged:

- **Focusing on territories** will be engaging: it will allow to provide tangible contributions to the debate, and to help the co-design of innovative solutions process;
It is important that the **challenges are clearly defined and communicated, that stakeholders converge on common objectives** and shared vision when discussing DRT projects. Expectations are sometimes very divergent, so it is essential to clarify the final target for everyone;
- It would be helpful to have a session where common technical definitions are shared (**thematic deliverables on governance and planning and digitalization and operations will be shared**: this could be a possible basis for a common understanding);
- Starting from the abovementioned common framework, a **collection of experiences** will help the project partners to design concrete actions (this could be a **call for inputs to the community**);
- Another opportunity of collaboration will be the definition of **common criteria and methods to rate DRT efficiency and effectiveness** (concerning financial, environmental and user aspects);
- A **LinkedIn group with discussion threads and webinars/workshops** seems to be the more effective combination for fruitful collaboration;
- Contributions from the Community will be organised through a list of **sub-topics** (aligned with the structure of the project).



4.2. 2nd workshop, focus on progress at pilot area level (June 27th, 2024)

During the second workshop, the discussion focused on the pilot areas, and on the main challenges that partners are tackling at local level in order to achieve the expected objectives.

Community members actively contributed highlighting the most relevant aspects connected to the implementation of pilot actions, and suggesting possible approaches. Per each pilot, a summary of relevant elements emerged is provided in the following.

Bologna Metropolitan Area (IT) - “Connecting people: enhancing DRT role towards MaaS“

The previous SMACKER Project (Interreg Central Europe 2014-2020) allowed to test DRT services in a territory part of the metropolitan area, showing good results in terms of transported passengers and customer satisfaction.

The Bologna pilot aims at:

- Defining how DRT can be integrated in the public transport offer since the planning phase (Planning) and how this can also be included in the next public procurement tender documents (Governance);
- Defining how DRT can be included into a MaaS system developed and implemented in the Metropolitan City of Bologna (Governance).

Highlighted discussion elements:

- The main challenges remain the provision of resources to activate the services and preparation for the integration of DRT in the future MaaS;
- A second aspect is how to define “weak demand” areas to be integrated in the network through DRT services.

Main outcomes of discussion:

- ✓ Data standards must be discussed, aligned and then specified in service contracts;
- ✓ Data collection parameters must be accurately identified according to the characteristics of the territory, and the socio-economic role of public transport networks in the area;
- ✓ Impact of flexibilization can be on the services, but not on the contract while it is valid; therefore, new contracts must be accurately prepared, elements of flexibility should be considered.

Budapest (HU) - “DRT enhancing the quality of PT services“

The pilot activities focus on less populated areas where environmentally friendly and inclusive services will be developed, starting from the current experience of 11 existing DRT lines with predefined stops and times and fixed routes.

The Budapest pilot aims at:

- Improving the existing DRT system
 - Increasing the degree of flexibility by innovative, IT supported solutions;
 - Developing the existing DRT system in a more “demand-responsive” way based on passenger needs (e.g. replacing the existing fixed route model);
- Monitoring the efficiency of the new system that will be put in place;
- Investigating possible extensions of DRT system in Budapest (e.g. new housing areas and their connections with railway stations).



Highlighted discussion elements:

- The proposed service is innovative for the existing landscape, as it is completely flexible and applies to a new development area;
- Automation could be considered in the future.

Main outcomes of discussion:

- ✓ Potential good practice from Germany: Pionierprojekt KIRA startet mit autonomen Fahrzeugen für den ÖPNV - Nahverkehrs-praxis (nahverkehrspraxis.de)
<https://www.nahverkehrspraxis.de/pionierprojekt-kira-startet-mit-autonomen-fahrzeugen-fuer-den-oepnv/>;
- ✓ Feasibility of autonomous services must be verified for different user groups, studies are needed on stakeholders and environment to understand what can be successful.

Oltrepò Pavese - Stradella (IT) - “Improving the existing DRT service in low demand areas”

DRT in the pilot area has been active for 4 years, in particular as off-peak solution and summer service, serving 30 municipalities with 250 stops.

Main challenges are:

- Enhance digitalisation and improve its acceptance (40 % of people don't use digital booking);
- Better connect DRT and other services.

Autoguidovie is working on:

- New tools for integration (book complete trips DRT and traditional services in the same app, align bus and rail timetables, test special devices to allow booking without smartphones at stops);
- Planning and governance (developing a new planning tool for DRT, developing an innovative set of criteria to assess the potential and monitor the impact of planned solutions).

Highlighted discussion elements:

- Concerning governance and planning, a first batch of elements in order to redefine the planning approach to DRT have been shared with local authorities;
- Specific target groups will be addressed with different tools (e.g., app, totems in hot spots for elderly people);
- Operationally, is there any example for the “hotspot” approach (few fixed stops, others on demand)?
- How to improve communication, as stakeholders identified it as key success factor?

Main outcomes of discussion:

- ✓ Synergy with other pilot areas (Calw in the Stuttgart Region) to better understand the methodology to reach users and non-users;
- ✓ Providing gadgets with information (like bags) proved more effective than social media or other channels;
- ✓ Gradual transition from fixed to DRT service: for example, bus signage could indicate “this service will change, please download the app”;
- ✓ Expanding progressively from fixed line to DRT leads to better acceptance.



East Tyrol (AT) - “DREAM_PACE as reason to establish an integrated comprehension of intermodal mobility in rural areas“

East Tyrol is a mountain area characterised by a rural structure and very low density.

The main planned activities will allow to:

- Establish a regional mobility network involving all relevant actors and operators to work on the coordination, development, integration and digitalization of DRT systems and all other mobility systems (FTS, PT, Micro PT, etc.);
- Guarantee access to sustainable and financial affordable mobility services in the future and connect them to the main corridors;
- Integrate different services into a single platform to enable to multi-modal trip planning with different modes of transport.

Highlighted discussion elements:

- Difficulties to improve user experience with the digitalisation of services;
- Is there a “must-have” for users in order to enhance attractiveness?

Main outcomes of discussion:

- ✓ User-feedback need to be collected to better understand the problems;
- ✓ From the digital platform side, possible feedback is generally limited; operators have to take care of user-feedback;
- ✓ Direct feedback can be gathered for every trip (app-based) and through frequent surveys;
- ✓ Workshops can be organised with users and operators, based on collected data (hackathons etc.);
- ✓ Testing a chatbot, as in the US, could enhance interactions and could be considered for the EU.

Split-Dalmatia County (HR)

In Croatia, DRT-services have been recently included in the regulatory framework.

SDC is the largest County in Croatia, and it aims to integrate DRT into the existing network, creating cost-effective and efficient connections especially in rural areas.

The activities will focus on:

- Developing a specific governance framework for planning and integrating DRT in the existing network, enhancing its quality and attractiveness;
- Tendering and testing a DRT service integrating platform and operator, as joint offering for at least one year;
- Assessing the results and aligning DRT with other services, scaling up the concept in other areas and in other regions in Croatia.

Highlighted discussion elements:

- This is a newly developed service and the first DRT in Croatia;
- Big time window, flexibility depending on times;
- Combination with commuters: mass transportation in peak hour with fixed service, off peak hours for tourism and other uses as flexible service;
- Collaboration between bus service operators and DRT-platform providers;
- How to deal with no-shows?



Main outcomes of discussion (challenges in/for building a new service from scratch):

- Necessary steps: analysis of user groups and needs, analysis of existing services / attraction poles in the area (hospitals, schools etc.); analysis of frame conditions. Also, it is necessary to have reliable data and understand the conditions to do simulations;
- A new service typically receives a positive response, especially when no prior service exists. The starting point is a feasibility study, followed by thorough simulation; afterward, testing and gathering real data on travel behaviour is essential to make any necessary adjustments. This approach may be riskier and more expensive but has better results;
- Adding service progressively rather than launching on a large scale and then scaling back; be careful with spending money, as investing too much immediately without results may lead to failure;
- Operational models and variants can be tested;
- Sometimes people reserve many trips since they don't know when to leave; a general rule may be to apply a block after 3 no-shows, lasting 2 to 3 days or up to a week.

Stuttgart Region (DE)

With many years of experience with DRT services, the Stuttgart Region faces challenges related to the social acceptance of the service and its ability to replace car use.

Within the project:

- Benchmark analyses among different experiences are performed, in order to identify factors of success;
- Focus group discussions with non-users are conducted to find out barriers;
- A citizen council on DRT is established.

Highlighted discussion elements:

- From a governance perspective, the pilot focuses on how to plan for services at local level;
- The “a-persona” method is considered as an effective approach to analyse users;
- How to size correctly the planning of new DRT services?

Main outcomes of discussion:

- ✓ Looking at the coordination of services, the service in Ile de France can be a good practice: 10 transport operators in the same platform under the same public authority;
- ✓ A single platform for the user: e.g. school services, hospital services etc. all in one platform;
- ✓ Smaller zones work better than bigger ones, especially with low number of vehicles;
- ✓ Reduce the target groups can help the focus, e.g. only elderly and pupils / students;
- ✓ Door-to-door service for elderly users and stop-to-stop for others will be considered as a possible option.



5. Conclusions

The first two workshops strengthened the relationship between experts and practitioners from the community, and provided valuable insights on the operational and technological options that can enhance the quality and viability of DRT services in the pilot areas and beyond. The discussion within the Community provided several feedbacks on planning as well as on relevant communication aspects, which should be considered for developing actions at local level.

Four more online workshops will be organised in order to accompany the project activities in the crucial implementation phase.

As explained above, based on the results of the first two workshops and the internal discussions among partners, it was decided to establish a set of thematic groups, that will be activated on the social media (LinkedIn) and will enable the discussions. They will focus on the ongoing developments and the main challenges faced in the six pilot areas interested by the project.

Moreover, the members of the Tech&Biz Community are expected to play a central role in the consultation process around the DREAM_PACE Strategy (ref. D3.1.2), starting in RP4. For this reason, the members will be directly addressed and involved in project-related events at both national and international level, with the objective of gathering their contributions and commitment to the Strategy.



6. References

- 1) DREAM_PACE D1.1.1 “Report on governance and planning for public transport, mobility innovations and DRT in CE Regions”. 2023.
- 2) DREAM_PACE D1.1.2 “State of the art report on governance structures and planning processes for DRT in the pilot areas”. 2024.
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- 4) DREAM_PACE D1.2.1 “Living labs preparation: stakeholder mapping, raising awareness and local engagement”.2023.
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- 6) DREAM_PACE D2.1.2 “State of the art report on digital and operational approaches for DRT in the pilot areas”. 2024.
- 7) DREAM_PACE D2.1.3 “Development scenarios for DRT innovative digital and operational approaches”. 2024.
- 8) DREAM_PACE D2.2.1 “Living labs preparation: stakeholder mapping, raising awareness and local engagement”. 2023.
- 9) DREAM_PACE D3.1.1 “Methodological background for the design of DRT integrated solutions”. 2023.
- 10) DREAM_PACE D3.1.2 “DRT strategy draft and setup of the consultation process”. 2024.
- 11) SHAREPLACE, Interreg Central Europe [<https://programme2014-20.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/SHAREPLACE.html>]
- 12) SMACKER, Interreg Central Europe [<https://programme2014-20.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/SMACKER.html>]



Annex I - Members of the Tech&Biz Community, Associated and Project partners (update 31/08/2024)

Organisation	Name of participant	Status
Metropolitan City of Bologna	Mauro Borioni	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
NVBW	Martin Schiefelbusch	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Padam	Ricardo Alcala Farrugia	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Ioki	Ginevra Mutti	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Ioki	Franco Rosso	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Ioki	Giorgia Santoro	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Cityway	Werner Kutil	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Cityway	Olivier Joyeux	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Nemi	Martí Jofre	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Nemi	Giacomo Bonardi	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Nemi	Jordi Carbonell	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Via	Antoine de Bausset	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Via	Maria Fasulo	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Shotl	Albert Tresserras	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Shotl	Thomas Valentini	Associated partner & Tech&Biz
Andyamo	Marco Pettito	Tech&Biz
Stuttgart region / Calw	Magdalena Kreinberger	Tech&Biz
GO-Mobility	Daniele Mancuso	Tech&Biz
Spare	Adam Sandstrom	Tech&Biz
Spare	Camila Gonzales Arango	Tech&Biz
Spare	Jerome Mayaud	Tech&Biz
SRM	Chiara Lepori	Lead partner
SRM	Marco Amadori	Lead partner
SRM	Giuseppe Liguori	Lead partner
SRM	Dario Marchini	Lead partner
Redmint	Gabriele Grea	Project partner
Redmint	Anja Seyfert	Project partner
AG	Monica Marconi	Project partner
BKK	Viktoria Hideg	Project partner
BKK	Tamás Halmos	Project partner
Dyvolve	Saša Bart	Project partner
ATE	Florian Kressler	Project partner



Organisation	Name of participant	Status
RMO	Mayur Gowda	Project partner
nexus	Martin Schlecht	Project partner
nexus	Paul Schlichting	Project partner
SDC	Martin Bućan	Project partner
TUB	Massimo Moraglio	Project partner



Annex II - Draft plan of Community events (updated August 31st, 2024)

Date/Period	Description	Type
September 18th, 2023	Kick off Meeting, focus on the presentation of the project approach and activities	Workshop (I), online
June 27th, 2024	Presentation of the LL activities and co-design process at pilot area level	Workshop (II), online
December 2024 - February 2025	Launch of online discussion groups, with Tech&Biz community members, on pilot testing activities plans	LinkedIn platform, open discussion
February 2025	Workshop on national events involving Community members (DE and IT), introducing the strategy consultation process	Workshop (III), online
June 2025	Update on pilot testing activities	Workshop (IV), online
October 2025	Update on the strategy consultation process	Workshop (V), online
November 2025	DREAM_PACE Final conference, Community members invited	Final conference, live
January 2026	Workshop on solutions uptake and upscale beyond the project timeframe and borders	Workshop (VI), online