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DREAM_PACE

D3.2.3 Final Action plans and take up

East Tyrol

Final Version

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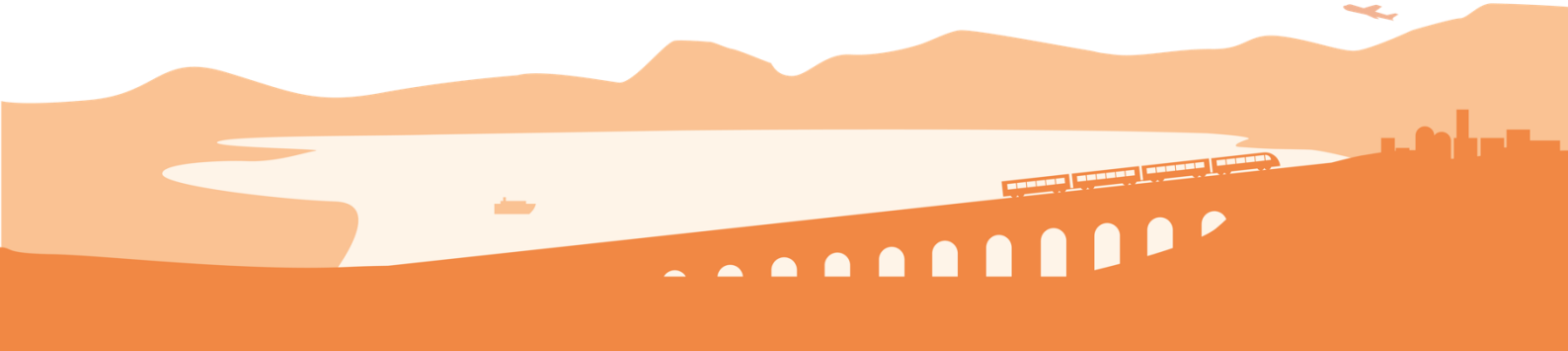

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1. Executive summary

This document is the final Action plan for the DREAM_PACE pilot region of East Tyrol and is part of deliverable D3.2.3.

The draft Action Plan (D.3.2.1) built on the analysis and diagnosis of governance and planning (Activity 1.1) and of operational trends and approaches to DRT (Activity 2.1) and on the DRT strategy elaborated in D3.1.2 and for which the consultation process is being completed. Updating the draft Action plan presented in D3.2.1, this deliverable defines the final Action plan delivered at local /regional level, integrating final strategy and solutions. It includes the documentation on the adoption and description of the approval process by decision makers.

This document is organized as follows.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the pilot region, outlining the purpose and scope of the Action plan.

Chapter 3 outlines the strategic background and the scenarios developed in the pilot area.

Chapter 4 describes the development of the Action plan, highlighting the needs and priorities identified, the challenges addressed, and the stakeholder involvement process. It also outlines the pilot actions and its components, specifies the measures that are consequently implemented in order to achieve the objectives of the Action plan.

Chapter 5 provides information on the monitoring and evaluation process for the Action plan, including the expected results of implementation and the estimated relevant impacts.

Chapter 6 serves as the concluding chapter, outlining how the Action plan will be officially approved or taken up, summarizing the overall approach, and presenting the next steps.

Chapter 7 provides a comprehensive list of references, offering background information and sources supporting the document. Finally, the Annex presents some pictures describing the current PT situation in East Tyrol.

2. Introduction

East Tyrol is located in the southern part of Austria, directly south from the main alpine ridge. With an area of 2.020 km^2 and 48.841 inhabitants, the region is very sparsely populated (24 inhabitants/km^2). Due to its large share of natural space and its scenic beauty, East Tyrol attracts lots of tourists both in summer and in winter with about 2.1 million overnight stays per year. The landscape is characterized by mountains and valleys, subsequently the settlement area is only 9% of the region's total area.

Settlements consist, on the one hand, of Lienz, the capital city of East Tyrol, and, on the other hand, of 32 communities which, in most cases, have a core settlement area but also a lot of remotely placed farms and houses which are hard to access since most of them are placed further up the mountain.

These characteristics account for the fact that most people choose the car over public transport for daily and occasional mobility. Particularly in Lienz, in combination with the through traffic and tourist traffic, this leads to a large number of vehicles on the road with all its negative effects, like air and noise pollution, loss of space, risks of accidents, etc. To reduce these social costs, and in favour of vulnerable groups like older people, children and people with special needs, this action plan points out the potential for improvement and several objectives of improving accessibility and useability of public transport in the region of East Tyrol. Finally, by the following actions, the public mobility offer in the region should be improved and help increase the quality of life of the residents.

Public transport in East Tyrol is organized by Verkehrsverbund Tirol (VVT), the county's collective traffic planning authority. Currently, public transport in Osttirol is operated by Postbus, an operator who is active all over Austria. At the End of 2025 a new tender for PT in East Tyrol started and is still running at this point in time (February 2026) and will be operative in the second half of 2027.

There is one rail line crossing the region via two valleys and trains are passing on an hourly basis in each direction. Additionally, there are 18 bus lines, two night bus lines and two Dial-a-Bus lines in the Puster valley and the Defereggen valley, the two operating DRT-Systems in East Tyrol. When PT is mentioned in this document, it also includes these two DRTs. In the figure below, these lines are indicated in the form of a network plan.

Figure 1. Transport network map in Osttirol *(© Verkehrsverbund Tirol GmbH 2020)*

3. Strategic background and scenarios developed in the area

In East Tyrol, DRT services are only available in two regions: Puster Valley and Defereggen Valley, operating as dial-a-taxi services from 5 am to 7 pm, 7 days a week. These services work on a reservation basis, requiring bookings at least 60 minutes in advance. In addition, various mobile apps cater to different mobility services in the region, leading to fragmentation of the digital usability.

Several living lab meetings were held in the framework of the DREAM_PACE Project (11 and 14 December 2023, 22 February 2024, 17 June 2024, 6 May 2025 and 25 June 2025), to develop scenarios for optimizing existing DRT services in East Tyrol and integrating them into a unified mobility app for the region.

Complementary to this, 9 of the 33 municipalities provide a so called "Gemeindemobil"[1], a very simple kind of DRT, where the municipality provides an electric car and about 20-30 voluntary drivers per community operate the service from Monday to Friday between 8 am and 12 am and between 1 pm and 6 pm. People can call and order the car for a drive inside the area of the municipality. One-way costs between 1 € and 2 €. According to the mayors, this system works very well for them, it is very cost effective and a good addition to the public transport (PT) offers. Restrictions are that it can only be used by local residents (not tourists) and that it can only offer the service inside the borders of the municipality, in some exceptional cases also into the neighboring municipality (e.g. to go to a doctor if one is not available within the municipality)

During the living lab meetings in the DREAM_PACE project, stakeholders, including representatives from local authorities, transportation authorities, and technology providers, discussed strategies to improve DRT services in East Tyrol and streamline mobility solutions.

The following topics were addressed:

- **Optimization of existing DRT Services**: Participants discussed strategies to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the current Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) services in the region. This included evaluating route configurations, adjusting schedules, and improving service coverage to better meet the mobility needs of residents and visitors.
- **Availability of Public Transport (PT):** Discussions concentrated on the lack of public transport options available in the region after 7 pm. Participants explored potential solutions to extend the operating hours of public transportation services, ensuring accessibility for commuters and enhancing mobility during evening hours by extending the lines to later times and better fit bus lines to the schedules of the trains.
- **Unified app for all Mobility Services**: Discussion revolved around the development of a unified mobile application that integrates various mobility services available in the region. Participants highlighted the importance of consolidating information on DRT, public transport, ride-sharing, and other transportation options into a single platform to ease access and enhance user experience.

The main challenge in the DREAM_PACE project in East Tyrol was optimizing the existing Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) services. Additionally, the project aimed to extend DRT coverage to more parts of the region, addressing the current limited availability of public transport options. Moreover, ensuring the availability of public transport after 7 pm posed a significant challenge in East Tyrol. Furthermore, the existence of different apps for various mobility services complicated accessibility and user experience. To tackle these challenges, the vision was to have a unified mobility app that integrates all mobility service options in East Tyrol.

[1] Communities with „Gemeindemobil": Assling, Hopfgarten i.D., Kals a.G., Matrei i.O., Nußdorf-Debant, Prägraten a.G., St. Jakob i.D., St. Veit i.D., Virgen.

Two crucial areas were also highlighted for improving mobility in the region. Firstly, it emphasized the need to address the limited accessibility of public transport, especially for those living outside main routes. Figure 1 shows the intersection of quality of PT-service coverage (red/green/grey area with red having the highest service quality) and permanent settlement areas (blue squares). This helps to illustrate the lack of PT coverage in certain areas. This Analysis was done for all 33 municipalities in Osttirol for both workdays and holidays.

Participants of the Living Labs also addressed the **scarcity of local taxis**. However, proposed solutions like tailored taxi services and expanding DRT could be promising ways to enhance accessibility. Secondly, the fragmentation of mobility services caused by multiple apps was discussed, making it challenging for users to find efficient transportation options. The proposal for a unified app encompassing all mobility services could significantly streamline mobility solutions and provide users with better recommendations.

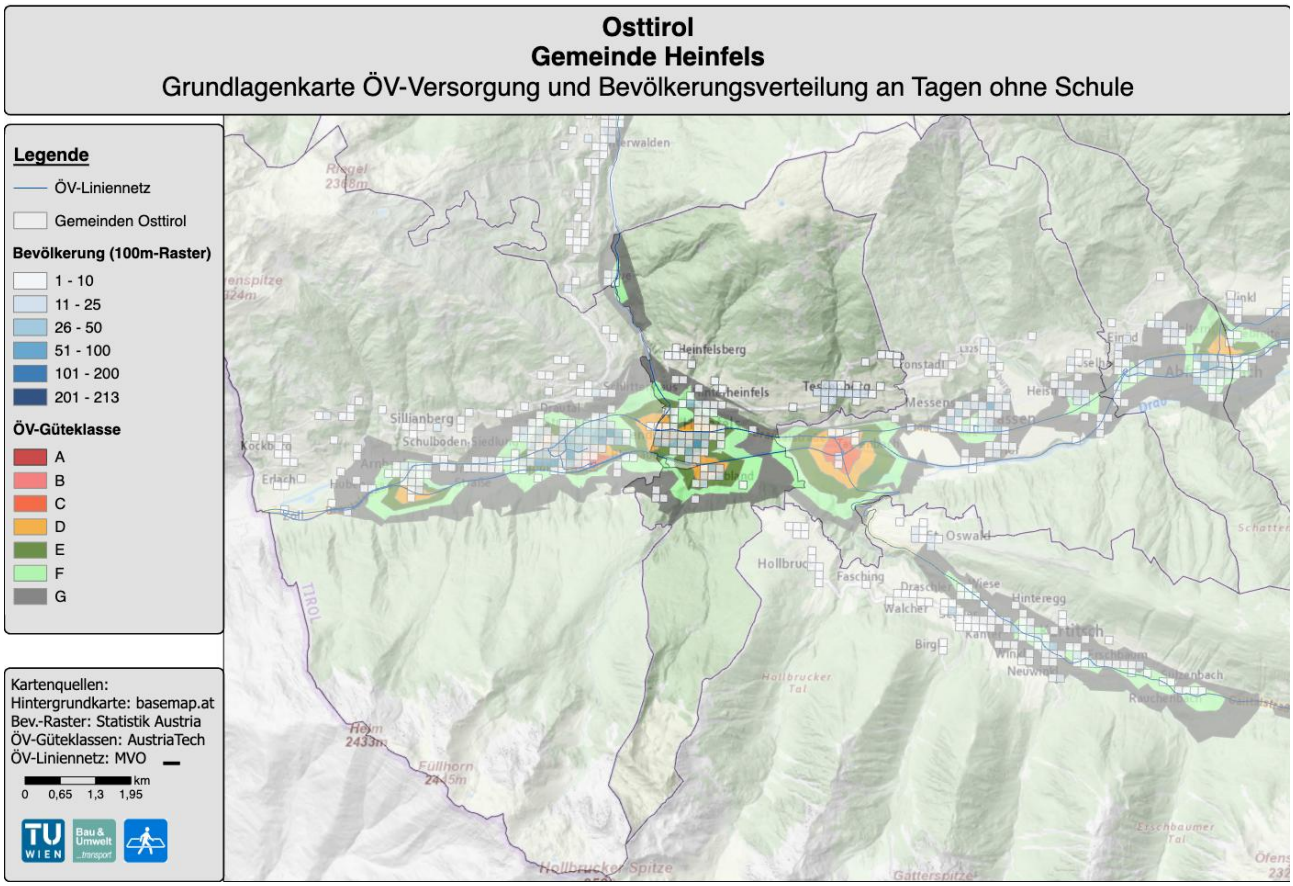


Figure 2. PT offer and settlement, example Heinfels (Tessenberg)

To build on these discussions, it was essential to conduct feasibility studies to assess the practicality and effectiveness of proposed solutions like extended offers in the evenings and a better tuning between train and bus lines. Engaging with stakeholders, including transportation authorities and technology firms, was crucial in collaborating on solution development and implementation. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms had to be established to track implementation progress and make necessary adjustments based on feedback and evolving mobility trends. These follow-up actions aimed to enhance accessibility and streamline mobility services, improving the overall mobility experience in the region.

4. Development of the Action plan

4.1. Activities developed on the territory and objective of the plan

Development of a Blueprint for Sustainable Mobility in East Tyrol: Closing Gaps with Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) Services.

In response to increasing mobility demands and the need for more efficient public transport (PT) solutions, RMO developed a comprehensive mobility blueprint for East Tyrol. This initiative was undertaken in collaboration with an external expert team and involved a detailed assessment of the region's existing transport infrastructure. The primary objective was to identify service gaps in the current PT system and explore how Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) solutions could complement and enhance mobility offerings.

To ensure a data-driven and community-oriented approach, RMO conducted a multi-phase analysis that integrated both qualitative stakeholder insights and quantitative technical assessments. By engaging with all relevant stakeholders, including municipalities, transport authorities, and local residents, RMO aimed to develop a robust and actionable strategy that could serve as a foundation for implementing efficient, cost-effective, and user-friendly transport solutions in the region.

Methodology and Approach.

The project was structured into three key phases, each contributing to a deeper understanding of the region's mobility needs and potential improvements:

1. **Community Engagement & Stakeholder Consultations.**

   To capture the diverse mobility needs across East Tyrol's 33 municipalities, RMO conducted individual interviews with representatives from each community. These discussions focused on:

   - Current public transport availability and its alignment with local needs.
   - Key mobility challenges, including accessibility gaps, service frequency issues, and insufficient connections to major transport hubs.
   - Local expectations and priorities, helping us to understand what solutions are most desirable and feasible.

   In addition, RMO engaged with:

   - Local businesses and institutions to assess transport needs for commuters and employees.
   - Tourism operators to evaluate seasonal demand fluctuations and potential synergies with public transport.
   - Residents and mobility user groups to gather first-hand experiences and identify pain points.

2. **Technical & Data-Driven Mobility Assessment.**

   Alongside qualitative insights, RMO conducted a technical analysis to map existing transport infrastructure and assess potential for optimization. This included:

   - Population distribution and settlement structures to identify underserved areas.
   - Analysis of existing public transport routes, stops, and service frequencies, highlighting inefficiencies or gaps.
   - Traffic flow and private car usage data, including traffic counts, to estimate potential modal shifts from private vehicles to public transport.

- Geospatial analysis to pinpoint areas where new or improved PT services, such as DRT, could be most impactful.

By integrating mobility patterns with demographic and spatial data, RMO generated detailed community-specific transport profiles, outlining:

- Current mobility patterns and key weaknesses in PT services.
- Potential user groups who could transition from private car use to PT.
- Strategic recommendations for improving accessibility and sustainability.

3. **Regional Mobility Strategy & Stakeholder Collaboration**

The insights gained from community consultations and technical analysis were consolidated into a comprehensive regional mobility profile. These findings were presented in a large intermediate workshop, bringing together:

- Representatives from all 33 communities.
- Local and regional transport authorities (VVT, municipal governments).
- Mobility experts and urban planners.
- Business and tourism stakeholders.

This workshop served as a platform for discussion, enabling municipalities to align their mobility goals, explore collaborative solutions, and identify synergies in service integration. The aim was to develop a coordinated public transport concept that is financially viable, operationally efficient, and adaptable to future mobility needs.

The results of this process directly fed into 2025 public transport program revision, ensuring that the blueprint contributes to a more sustainable and user-centred mobility system in East Tyrol.

Challenges & Financial Considerations.

One of the main challenges in expanding public transport services is financial feasibility. Many municipalities, along with the regional Public Transport Authority (VVT), remain hesitant to commit additional funding beyond the baseline PT services.

Key financial challenges include:

- Rising costs of PT services: The re-tendered PT programme costs 20% more than the existing one, leaving little room for additional expenditures.
- High costs of DRT solutions under the VVT framework: Implementing a Dial-a-Bus (DRT service) through the VVT program requires € 250.000 per vehicle, making it an impractical solution for many municipalities.

Given these financial constraints, alternative solutions were considered:

- Community-based e-car sharing programs with voluntary drivers, which provide a low-cost, flexible mobility option while fostering community engagement.
- Optimizing existing PT routes and schedules to reduce inefficiencies and improve coverage without significant additional investment.
- Exploring funding opportunities and partnerships, including potential EU grants or regional mobility subsidies, to support innovative transport models.

Despite these constraints, the timing was optimal to influence the new PT tender for East Tyrol. Through this project, RMO aimed to provide VVT and local authorities with comprehensive data and insights that

support the design of a more adaptive and inclusive transport system, maximizing the opportunities available within the restructured PT framework.

Conclusion & Expected Impact.

The Blueprint for Sustainable Mobility in East Tyrol is an ambitious, yet necessary initiative aimed at modernizing the region's transport infrastructure while addressing the challenges of cost, accessibility, and environmental sustainability. By leveraging stakeholder collaboration, technical analysis, and innovative DRT models, RMO aimed to:

- Bridge the gaps in existing PT services by introducing targeted DRT solutions.
- Reduce dependency on private cars and promote more sustainable mobility habits.
- Ensure cost-effective and community-driven solutions, making public transport a viable option for a larger population.
- Maximize synergies between different municipalities, creating a more integrated regional transport system.

By aligning with the 2025 public transport program revision, this blueprint had the potential to significantly enhance mobility in East Tyrol, offering more efficient, flexible, and sustainable transport solutions for both residents and visitors.

The main objective of the Action plan and the listed measures is to improve the public transport offer for the residents but also the tourists by optimizing the coordination between lines, extending the offer during specific daytimes and filling gaps in the existing PT plan by DRT-offers.

During the elaboration of the mobility blueprint of East Tyrol, RMO identified points in the region, which would be most suitable for a future implementation of DRT-Systems, where it would be interesting to adapt general PT offer, design new routes for PT or where capacities must be increased. In the blueprint, there are recommendations to adapt the offer of these points which is an objective for the following time after the project lifetime.

By doing so, the accessibility and useability of PT can be enhanced and therefore the base for heavier use of PT is made. Finally, this can improve quality of life and enhance decarbonization in East Tyrol.

4.2. East Tyrol Action plan measures

4.2.1. Measure 1: Establish DRT offers for several municipalities with potential need/demand

Several settlements in East Tyrol, like for example Tessenberg[2], part of the municipality of Heinfels in the Puster valley, which is a settlement with about 200 inhabitants, were not connected to any public transport service or bus line. Tessenberg is located at an elevated position above the valley and is about 3 km away from the next bus stop. This makes it almost impossible for some groups of people who don't have a car to do their daily routines, parents must bring their kids to school and older people are either dependent on their families or have to own a car.

Since there is a road coming from two sides into the settlement, it was possible to connect the two neighbouring communities via this route and try to offer a DRT-system like a dial-a-bus or a community e-car service. For that, first the municipality must commit to implementing an offer. Then, it could be

[2] Other Settlements without functional Connection to PT: Stronach, Hollbruck, St. Oswald, Wacht, Alkus, Gwabl, Oberleibnig, Bichl, Zedlach, Proßegg, Gruben, Berg, Hintenburg

determined, what kind of offer RMO wanted to implement also depending on the financial power of the municipality and in dialogue with the inhabitants what the DRT-System should look like (operating times, size of vehicle, legal requirements, financing, volunteers etc.).

Main facts:

- **Timing for implementation**: 6 months pilot, specific timing can vary, depending on what is already available in the municipality.
- **Institution(s)/ department(s) responsible for implementation:** Municipalities, RMO, DRT-operator or VVT or Taxi company, ÖPNV Verband Osttirol.
- **Stakeholders involved and responsibilities:**
    - Municipalities: implementation;
    - RMO: coordination;
    - ÖPNV Verband Osttirol: collecting interests/needs from all communities;
    - Taxi Companies: potential operators but they might also be against a DRT-Systems, as it could substitute their services.;
    - General Public.
- **Risk and/ or vulnerability tackled:** potential low acceptance by general public – early involvement in process.
- **Estimated deployment cost(s)**: ~€250.000 / vehicle /year.
- **Financing plan and sources**: 50% - 75% funded by federal PTA VVT, rest own financing by municipalities.
- **Dependencies (if any) on other proposed measures**: -
- **Will measures continue after the project**: it will be implemented after the project end.

4.2.2. Measure 2: Improve coordination between trains and bus lines in Lienz

During the interviews with the municipalities, it was often mentioned, that specific bus lines starting from Lienz train station do not well coordination with the incoming trains, with buses leaving just before trains arrive. This is due to the large number of pupils using these busses who are an important group of users rather than the small number of tourists who complain about missing a bus and having to wait an hour for the next bus.

This problem was addressed in the new tender for PT and if it results it is not totally solved by a better coordination between bus and train, DRT Systems with a specific target group could be a solution.

Main facts:

- **Timing for implementation**: 2nd half of 2027, open end.
- **Institution(s)/ department(s) responsible for implementation:** Municipalities, RMO, ÖPNV Verband Osttirol, VVT.
- **Stakeholders involved and responsibilities:** Communities are responsible for implementation, since earlier plans on a regional basis were put to rest due to lack of feasibility. Thereby, useful solutions at this time, could only take place in a small scale, organized by the municipalities in form of the before mentioned community-based DRT-Services (“Gemeindemobile”), RMO responsible for coordination, general public.

- **Risk and / or vulnerability tackled**: enhanced connection between bus and train, better useability of train for residents and tourists.
- **Estimated deployment costs:** cost was low, only adaption to the bus lines necessary.
- **Dependencies on other proposed measures**: when adapting bus lines always check with other municipalities to identify dependencies and conflicts of timetables.
- **Will this measure continue after the project?** If pilot is successful, and adaption sustainably effective: yes.

4.2.3. Measure 3: Optimize bus lines in the region and react to input from municipalities

By directly interviewing municipalities on their expectations and objectives for public transport, RMO identified existing gaps in the PT offer in East Tyrol. RMO used this information to provide input to the tender of the new PT program, which included the two existing DRT-Systems in Puster Valley and Defereggen Valley. These was also be optimized by implementing virtual stops or extend their operating hours for example. Previously, these DRTs had a classic timetable and route with fixed stops but only operated with a prior call for ordering them. By operating this way, they were not very flexible and were only suitable to complement the classis bus line operating in parallel.

Main facts:

- **Timing for implementation**:2nd half of 2027, open end.
- **Institution(s)/ department(s) responsible for implementation:** municipalities, RMO, local PT Authority (ÖPNV Verband Osttirol), VVT.
- **Stakeholders involved and responsibilities**: VVT: implementation, RMO: coordination, general public, municipalities as principals.
- **Risk and / or vulnerability tackled**: optimized bus timetable, better useability of local PT for residents and tourists.
- **Estimated deployment costs:** adaption of timetable of bus lines necessary.
- **Financing plan and sources:** General PT-tender is underway and will be operative in 2027.
- **Dependencies on other proposed measures:** adapted bus lines always have to be check with other municipalities and dependencies of bus timetable in relation to the general timetables.
- **Will this measure continue after the project?** If pilot is successful, and adaption sustainably effective, yes.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

The following results were expected from the implementation: better connection to existing PT system, lower dependence of residents on cars, greater resilience to weather issues, smaller CO_2 footprint of the region in general and positive effects on tourist mobility.

Risks associated with planning and implementation were: financing of VVT- DRT, finding an operator, adaption of bus line 941 or 942 (Dölsach) may not be feasible or possible, VVT may not be willing to cooperate.

The following KPIs should be defined for monitoring and evaluation:

- Dialogue with municipalities – number of events/meetings, stakeholders involved.
- Dialogue with residents – number of events/meetings, stakeholders involved.
- Number of people transported.
- Km driven by DRTs.
- Number of trips made.
- Pooling factor.
- Number of km per car: based on survey.

6. Conclusions and next steps

East Tyrol is a sparsely populated Alpine region in southern Austria, covering 2.020 km² with around 49.000 inhabitants spread across Lienz and 33 rural municipalities. Its mountainous terrain and dispersed settlement patterns make private car use the dominant mode of transport, contributing to congestion, pollution, and accessibility challenges — particularly for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, and people with mobility impairments.

This Action Plan, developed under the Interreg CE DREAM_PACE project, sets out a strategic framework for improving public transport (PT) accessibility in East Tyrol through targeted enhancements to Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) and conventional bus services. Building on a series of stakeholder living lab workshops conducted between 2023 and 2025, the plan identifies three core measures: (1) expanding DRT coverage to additional municipalities currently underserved by fixed bus lines; (2) improving timetable coordination between bus and rail services at Lienz train station; and (3) optimising existing bus routes in response to direct input from all 33 municipalities.

The plan is underpinned by a comprehensive mobility blueprint methodology combining community interviews, geospatial analysis, and traffic data to identify service gaps and prioritise interventions. A key challenge is financial feasibility, given that the rolling re-tendering of PT services is projected to increase costs by 20%, limiting scope for new expenditure.

The Action plan was given to VVT and it was considered by them when setting up the new PT-programme. The new PT-programme is tendered from the end of 2025, it will be contracted in August 2026 and implemented by the end of 2027. Furthermore, the Action plan was approved by the ÖPNV community association and also included for further planning and implementations since it provides a holistic picture of the mobility situation in East Tyrol.

Additionally, a Letter of interest for the further collaboration and cooperation on the objectives of the DREAM_PACE project was signed by Associated Partner “Amt der Tiroler Landesregierung, Abteilung Mobilitätsplanung”, securing the consolidation of the outputs and future development of DRT in the region.[3]

Although RMO could not bring an actual pilot to practice, the blueprint of the region, which was developed during the project, is a detailed plan to achieve the right mix of traditional PT and DRT Systems in the region of East Tyrol. Furthermore, the initiative of bringing it into the new setup of the PT program was the best possible time and will help to endure that the provided inputs will be put into practice very soon.

The contribution of DREAM_PACE also helped to get relevant data up to date, so RMO doesn’t have to rely on old characteristics of the region. Also results from predecessor projects like “Last mile” or a regional study of the factory traffic will be used to cover these types of transport.

Next steps will be detailed dialogues with the partnering municipalities, where RMO identified potential changes of PT-lines and useful DRT potential and collect these inputs to integrate them into the new tender for PT in East Tyrol. With the same objective, RMO organized a big workshop with all stakeholders to discuss the changes and adaptations and finalized its input to the tender during the last living lab on 25 June 2025.

Subsequently, RMO will continue to concentrate on the digitalization (unified app for intermodal transport and PT offer) and accompany this with the simplification of access and use of the PT offers and also intermodality in East Tyrol.

[3] The signed Letters of Interest from the stakeholders Tyrol’s federal mobility department, PTA VVT and ÖPNV / PT municipalities association are attached to D3.2.3 in the Annex 7.

7. References

1) DREAM_PACE Application Form, Version 2.0. 2023.
2) DREAM_PACE D1.1.1 “Report on governance and planning for public transport, mobility innovations and DRT in CE Regions”. 2023.
3) DREAM_PACE D1.1.2 “State of the art report on governance structures and planning processes for DRT in the pilot areas”. 2024.
4) DREAM_PACE D1.1.3 “Development scenarios for DRT innovative governance and planning approaches”. 2024.
5) DREAM_PACE D1.2.2 “Living labs meetings documentation on the co-design process for governance / planning in pilot areas. 2025.
6) DREAM_PACE D1.2.4 “Co-designed solutions blueprint of coordinated DRT implemented /tested through pilot activities”. 2025.
7) DREAM_PACE D1.2.1 “Living labs preparation: stakeholder mapping, raising awareness and local engagement”.2023.
8) DREAM_PACE D2.1.1 “Analysis report on DRT digital and operational innovations in CE Regions and engaged areas”. 2023.
9) DREAM_PACE D2.1.2 “State of the art report on digital and operational approaches for DRT in the pilot areas”. 2024.
10) DREAM_PACE D2.1.3 “Development scenarios for DRT innovative digital and operational approaches”. 2024.
11) DREAM_PACE D2.2.1 “Living labs preparation: stakeholder mapping, raising awareness and local engagement”. 2023.DREAM_PACE D2.2.2 “Living labs meetings documentation on the co-design process for governance /planning in pilot areas. 2025.
12) DREAM_PACE D2.2.3 “Co-designed solution blueprint improving existing DRT, implemented /tested in pilot activities”. 2026.
13) D3.1.3 “Topic guide DRT 3.0 in Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs)”. 2026.
14) DREAM_PACE D3.2.2 “Report on strategy-setting workshops for action plans' implementation”. 2026.

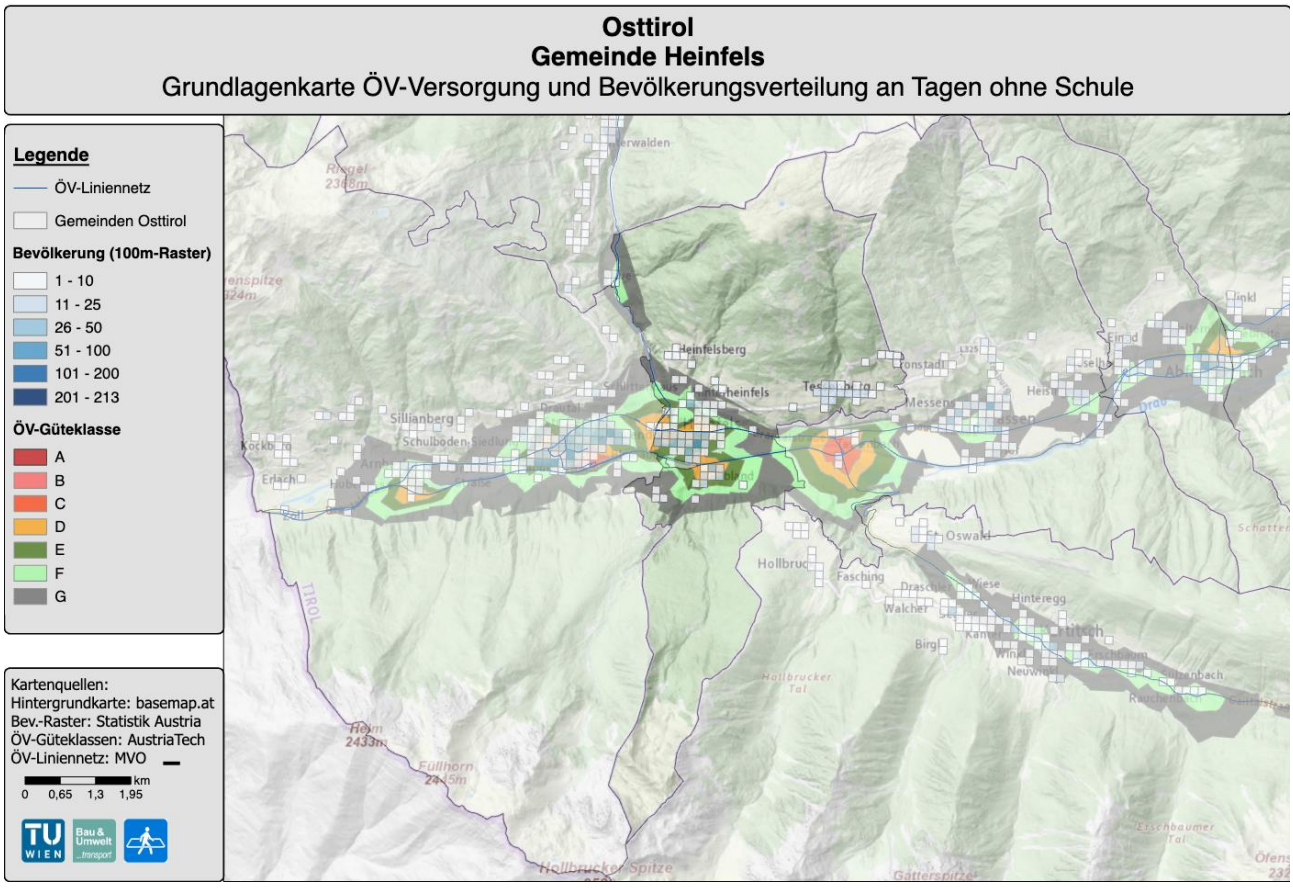
8. Annex - Pictures from PT offer in Osttirol

Skibus St. Jakob in Defereggen.

PT on its limit during rush hour.

Bus in reserve, must be available at all times, cannot be used to balance demand.

Checking the PT and DRT-Routes in live action.



Example of mapping of PT offer and Settlement/Inhabitants, done for all 33 municipalities in Osttirol.