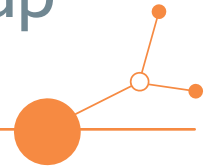
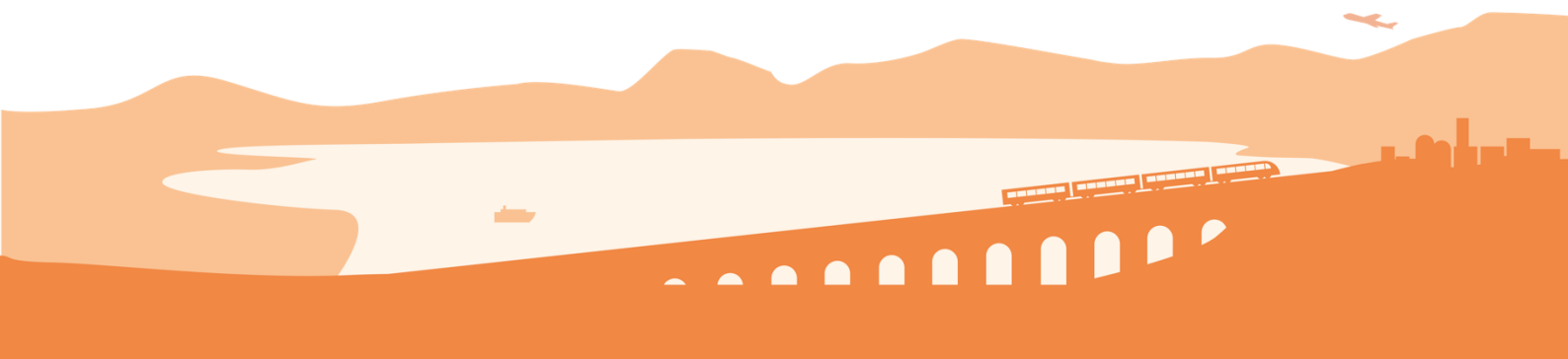


## D3.2.3 Final Action plans and take up Stuttgart (Baden-Württemberg)



Final Version  
02 2026





## Authors of the document

Partner No.	Acronym	Name	Action	Version
2	Redmint	Gabriele Grea Anja Seyfert	Template	1
8	ATE	Florian Kressler	Template	1.1
11	nexus	Martin Schlecht Wiebke Blum Ayla Tiefenbach Paul Schlichting	Input from Baden-Württemberg pilot 1.2 for draft Action plan	1.2
8	ATE	Florian Kressler	Draft comments to the draft Action plan	1.3
4	Mobilissimus	Nikolett Csörgő Rita Petrovác	Draft revision 1 of draft Action plan	1.5
11	nexus	Martin Schlecht Wiebke Blum Ayla Tiefenbach Paul Schlichting	Feedback to the revision 1 and final version	Proposed final
8	ATE	Florian Kressler	Edited approved version of the draft Action plan for official release	Final
11	nexus	Martin Schlecht Wiebke Blum Ayla Tiefenbach Paul Schlichting	Update for the final Action plan	1
2	Redmint	Gabriele Grea Anja Seyfert	Consolidation of the contribution	2
1	SRM	Chiara Lepori Dario Marchini	Edited approved version for inclusion in D3.2.3 as Annex	Final



## Contents

1. Executive summary .....	3
2. Introduction .....	4
3. Strategic background and scenarios developed in the area .....	6
4. Development of the Action plan .....	7
4.1. Activities developed on the territory and objective of the plan.....	7
4.2. Stuttgart region Action plan measures.....	7
4.2.1. Measure 1: Improve booking system .....	7
4.2.2. Measure 2: Involving local stakeholders as multipliers for marketing .....	8
4.2.3. Measure 3: Marketing - develop a marketing and branding strategy .....	9
4.2.4. Measure 4: Financing programme .....	9
4.2.5. Measure 5: Strengthening the interregional network .....	10
4.2.6. Measure 6: Defining common KPIs for comparative analysis .....	12
5. Monitoring and evaluation .....	13
6. Conclusion and next steps .....	14
7. References.....	15



## 1. Executive summary

This document is the final Action plan for the DREAM\_PACE pilot region of the Stuttgart region 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.



## 2. Introduction

Baden-Württemberg, located in Southwest Germany, is the country's third most populous federal state, with approximately 11.28 million inhabitants as of 31 December 2022 (Federal State of Baden-Württemberg). Since its foundation in 1952, the state's population has grown by over four million people, representing an increase of 64%.



Figure 1. The Region of Baden-Württemberg in South-West Germany  
(source: Land Baden-Württemberg, 2023)

Economically, Baden-Württemberg is one of Germany's most prosperous regions. In 2023, the state's nominal gross domestic product (GDP) amounted to 615 billion euros, equating to approximately 54,339 euros per capita. This places its per capita economic output 27% above the European Union average (Baden-Württemberg Statistics Portal). A distinctive feature of the region is its high density of 'hidden champions' – medium-sized companies that are global leaders in niche markets. These businesses significantly contribute to the state's economic stability and innovative strength.

### Public Transport and DRT Governance

Since its establishment in 1996, NVBW has served as the central service company of the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Transport, responsible for the planning and coordination of local rail passenger transport (SPNV) in the state. As a wholly state-owned company, NVBW advises and supports the ministry on regional rail transport matters. One of its key tasks is organizing Europe-wide tenders for regional rail transport services. NVBW collaborates with infrastructure operators, districts, municipalities, and regional associations to ensure an efficient and customer-oriented public transport system.

Under the bwegt mobility brand, NVBW promotes modern and sustainable local transport in Baden-Württemberg, in partnership with transport associations. As the primary superregional partner, NVBW played a crucial role in the pilot project, which was implemented in Calw, a small city in the Northern Black Forest region, in collaboration with local authorities and DRT providers.



### Testing region: Calw

The district of Calw has a population of approximately 158.000 people (as of 2019) and covers an area of 797 km<sup>2</sup>. It consists of numerous small, remote valleys and villages, making public transport accessibility a key challenge. Additionally, Southern Germany's long-standing automotive industry presence has resulted in private combustion vehicles remaining the dominant mode of transport. As of 2023, there were 123.000 registered vehicles in the district (112.000 cars and 9.000 motorbikes) for approximately 69.800 households, with a rising trend in ownership.

Despite these mobility patterns, efforts have been made to expand public transport in recent years. Among these initiatives is 'Rufbus Calw', an on-demand bus service coordinated and financed by the municipality through the transport company Verkehrsgesellschaft Calw (VGC). The Rufbus operates on regular bus routes but can be ordered via phone call, providing additional flexibility to public transport users.

While many municipalities in Baden-Württemberg face similar mobility challenges as Calw, it is important to note that DRT governance and implementation in the state function under highly federalized principles. This results in significant regional differences in how DRT is planned, funded, and integrated into local transport networks.

Baden-Württemberg is characterized by dynamic population growth, strong economic performance, and a focus on innovation-driven SMEs. Its mobility structure integrates both traditional and sustainable transport solutions, though private vehicle use remains prevalent in rural regions. The governance and financing of DRT services in Calw reflect the complex decision-making structures within the federal transport system, which must be considered when evaluating insights gained from the pilot project.

### Purpose of the Action plan

By combining user insights with interregional collaboration, this Action plan lays the foundation for more efficient and accessible DRT services in Baden-Württemberg.

This Action plan outlines the planned and future measures aimed at improving Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) services in Baden-Württemberg. The plan builds on insights from pilot activities conducted in Calw, where tests and research were carried out to assess DRT service provision and identify key characteristics. The proposed actions focus on the governance and planning of a coordinated DRT network to enhance accessibility in peripheral and rural regions.

DRT services in Baden-Württemberg are highly diverse and heavily reliant on regional public funding. The Nahverkehrsgesellschaft Baden-Württemberg mbH (NVBW), public transport company of Baden-Württemberg) plays a central role as the main funding provider. Given that DRT services in Calw operate within a federal system of decision-making and financing, the implementation of most proposed measures requires an interregional approach rather than being limited to the pilot region alone. Strengthening collaboration across different regions is therefore essential to ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of DRT services.

The Action plan serves as a strategic guide for implementing the pilot components related to the governance and planning of a coordinated Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) network, with the goal of enhancing accessibility in peripheral and rural regions.

In this specific use case, the Action plan aims to:

- Assess passenger experiences with the existing on-demand services to identify areas for improvement and optimize service delivery;
- Strengthen the network of stakeholders in the transport sector by exploring collaborative solutions to address shared challenges and improve overall DRT governance.



### 3. Strategic background and scenarios developed in the area

#### Identifying challenges and user needs

During the living labs with the stakeholders in Calw and NVBW, the persona method was used to better understand the challenges people face when using the current Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) system. Stakeholders from municipalities and transport operators discussed the needs of different passenger groups and explored ways to make DRT services easier to access and use.

#### Future Scenarios for DRT Development

Based on these discussions, plans were developed to improve the booking system and the way routes are planned for DRT services in Baden-Württemberg.

The booking system should be managed by a regional operator, making it easier to handle reservations in a coordinated way. People should be able to book a ride by phone, website, or mobile app. The existing app should be improved so that it is easy to use and well-known, ideally linking with popular navigation apps like Google Maps, the NVBW App, or the DB App. Over time, the app is expected to become the preferred booking method instead of phone calls. It should also offer real-time updates on waiting times and routes, be available 24/7 for both advance and last-minute bookings, and allow users to cancel trips directly through the app to avoid unnecessary journeys.

The way DRT routes are planned should also become more flexible. Instead of following fixed routes, the system should adjust to passenger requests in real time, picking them up from their requested location or a nearby stop. This approach would be especially helpful for older people, passengers with limited mobility, women traveling at night, and children or young people who need a safe and reliable transport option.

One key finding from the living labs was that making these improvements possible will require close cooperation between many different groups, including municipalities, transport providers, and planners. Working together will be essential to ensure that these changes fit well within the existing DRT system and improve services for all users.



Figure 2. The NVBW-App logo  
(source: Google Play store, 2025)



## 4. Development of the Action plan

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

Pilot activities with NVBW were carried out in Calw, approximately 40 kilometers west of Stuttgart. The pilot focused on the existing dial-a-bus service ("Rufbus") and contributes to Pilot Action 1.2, which aims to enhance the governance and planning of a coordinated DRT network to improve accessibility in peripheral and rural regions.

Through stakeholder engagement and citizen surveys, the project examined the functions, benefits, and challenges of the DRT service in Calw. The goal was to establish an evaluation format for understanding passenger needs and to bring stakeholders together to improve the existing service.

To address the identified challenges and explore potential improvements, several actions are being undertaken:

- **Supermarket Survey:** A survey conducted outside a major supermarket gathers insights into why non-users do not use the DRT service. Key issues identified include a limited bus network and a lack of awareness about the existing service, highlighting the need for improved marketing;
- **Onboard Interviews:** Short interviews conducted with passengers during DRT rides capture user experiences, including both benefits and areas for improvement. While many users appreciate the service, areas for enhancement include increasing service frequency, improving punctuality and reliability, and addressing concerns from both drivers and passengers;
- **Service Needs:** Existing users primarily rely on DRT for daily commuting, often as a substitute for regular public transport. As a result, flexibility is a greater concern for non-users than for current passengers. Needs such as extended service hours beyond regular public transport operation and effective communication with drivers are generally well met;
- **Stakeholder Workshop:** A workshop with local transport authorities and DRT operators aims to strengthen collaboration and reinforce the shared objective of providing an efficient and well-functioning DRT system.

By implementing these actions, the project seeks to develop a more user-centred and effective DRT service tailored to the needs of both users and non-users in the region.

### 4.2. Stuttgart region Action plan measures

#### 4.2.1. Measure 1: Improve booking system

Currently, there is no common booking system in the region of Baden-Württemberg. To improve the booking system for Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT), the bwrider platform, developed by Südwestdeutsche Landesverkehrs-GmbH (SWEG, Southwest German Transport Authority), is set to become the standard system across Baden-Württemberg. The goal is to create a consistent and user-friendly booking experience that makes it easier for people to access DRT services, no matter where they are.

By introducing bwrider as the main booking platform, the system will improve compatibility between different transport providers, make operations more efficient, and simplify access for passengers. The platform aims to provide three key functions:

1. Searching for available rides;
2. Selecting the most suitable option;



### 3. Booking the ride.

However, technical challenges remain, particularly in integrating the systems of different providers. At the same time, using a single platform helps avoid inefficiencies, such as municipalities developing their own booking systems at a high cost. Ongoing technical improvements and collaboration with local DRT projects will ensure that bwrider meets the needs of different regions while aligning with the broader public transport network.

#### **Main Facts:**

The NVBW and SWEG are responsible for developing and implementing the bwrider platform as a unified booking system across Baden-Württemberg. Local transport providers play a key role in integrating the system into their services and adapting it to their branding.

By standardizing the booking process, this measure aims to lower barriers for users, making DRT more accessible and easier to use. While the deployment costs are not yet defined, the project will be publicly funded by NVBW.

Designed for long-term impact, the measure will continue beyond the initial project phase, ensuring ongoing improvements in DRT accessibility and integration.

#### **Status of implementation:**

The bwrider App is installed as a regional service to order DRT. It is integrated in the county's mobility application "bwegt". Before, the DRT could only be booked via phone call one day in advance. Now it is possible, to book any DRT in the county of Baden-Wuerttemberg via App one hour in advance.

### 4.2.2. Measure 2: Involving local stakeholders as multipliers for marketing

Various local stakeholders are involved in the regional funding scheme, receiving financial support to test different Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) models based on local mobility needs. These pilot projects explore different approaches to optimize DRT services, but challenges remain.

One major issue is the comparatively high self-financing portion, which makes it difficult for municipalities to secure the necessary funding. As a result, services often struggle with financial sustainability and efficiency. Additionally, funding beyond the regional elections is uncertain, creating instability for DRT operations. Since these services rely on temporary funding and are not adequately integrated into municipal budgets, they often disappear once funding ends.

Municipalities face a delicate balancing act: they must ensure adequate DRT service provision without undermining their existing public transport systems. The lack of long-term financial security makes it difficult to plan and sustain these services effectively. To address these challenges, more efficient funding structures and long-term integration into municipal budgets are essential.

#### **Main Facts:**

- NVBW is conducting accompanying research (Begleitforschung) until 2028 to analyse and, if possible, harmonize the activities, best practices, and challenges across different regions;
- Key challenge: High self-financing costs and lack of long-term funding security;
- Funding concerns: Many DRT services are temporary and risk being discontinued once funding expires.

#### **Status of implementation:**



Local stakeholders are currently not directly addressed as multipliers for DRT services. It is believed that the target groups, who could make use of the DRT, know about the service and spread the word by word-of-mouth recommendation.

#### 4.2.3. Measure 3: Marketing - develop a marketing and branding strategy

A unified marketing strategy is being developed to improve transparency, visibility, and communication for Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) in Baden-Württemberg. A key component of this strategy is the publication and establishment of the "bwshuttle" brand, which will be integrated into bwegt, the region's existing mobility brand that already unifies public transport services.

Designed specifically for DRT projects, the strategy ensures consistent messaging and effective user engagement. To support local implementation, a marketing toolbox will be provided, offering customizable materials and guidelines tailored to the diverse needs of different DRT initiatives.

Additionally, plans are in place to expand the variety of available vehicles based on regional needs, including trains, cars, buses, and shuttles. While all DRT providers in Baden-Württemberg will have access to the joint marketing materials, their use will remain optional.

##### Main Facts:

- The marketing strategy development began in 2025;
- NVBW is responsible for its development, while local DRT providers and operators will handle execution;
- The strategy aims to increase the visibility of DRT services and establish a recognizable brand to help users easily identify and access mobility options;
- The initiative is publicly funded by NVBW, though the exact deployment costs are yet to be determined;
- The measure is designed for long-term impact, continuing beyond the initial project to support the ongoing promotion and integration of DRT services;
- The joint marketing toolbox will be available in Q2 of 2025.

##### Status of implementation:

For now, there are no further ambitions to develop a unified branding and marketing strategy. For one reason, because other actions are considered more important. For another reason, that a higher demand for DRT could currently not be covered for financial and organisational reasons.

#### 4.2.4. Measure 4: Financing programme

The "Förderprogramm ODV" is established in accordance with §15 ÖPNV-G, the local public transport law, to support the development and expansion of Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) services in Baden-Württemberg. A key aspect of this initiative is the integration of a surcharge-based DRT model into the existing financing framework under §15 ÖPNV-G, planned for the third quarter of 2025. This will allow participating providers to apply fare-based surcharges for DRT services, which could potentially be incorporated into the public transport funding model, increasing revenue for operators.



Figure 3. bw branded DRT service  
(source NVBW, 2024)



Currently, 16 projects are being implemented across 15 municipalities, ensuring financial support for local DRT solutions. With a total budget of 20 million euros, the programme aims to enhance accessibility and efficiency, strengthen the role of DRT within the public transport system, and improve its financial sustainability.

#### Main Facts:

- **Implementation Timeline:** The programme started in 2025.
- **Responsible Entities:** NVBW oversees the programme, while regional municipalities and DRT providers will manage local implementation.
- **Funding & Budget:** the initiative is publicly funded, with a budget of 20 million euros, ensuring stable financial support for continuous DRT operations.
- **Long-Term Outlook:** the funding is secured for the current legislative period, but financial support beyond 2027 is not yet guaranteed.
- **Strategic Goal:** the programme is designed to integrate DRT more effectively into the public transport system, reinforcing its role as a flexible and accessible mobility solution.



Figure 4. bwshuttle branding logo (source: NVBW, 2024)

#### Status of implementation:

Currently, 16 projects are being implemented across 15 municipalities, ensuring financial support for local DRT solutions. With a total budget of 20 million euros, the programme aims to enhance accessibility and efficiency, strengthen the role of DRT within the public transport system, and improve its financial sustainability<sup>1</sup>.

### 4.2.5. Measure 5: Strengthening the interregional network

A key finding from the pilot governance workshop, which brought together stakeholders from multiple bordering regions in Baden-Württemberg, was that interregional exchange significantly benefits DRT governance. It fosters mutual learning, strengthens collaboration, and helps identify shared challenges and solutions. Given the highly federalized and diverse mobility governance structures in Baden-Württemberg, interregional cooperation is particularly valuable. Therefore, fostering stronger interregional networks must be a key priority.

To facilitate this, the interregional network "Zukunftsnetzwerk ÖPNV", established by NVBW, will serve as a platform for continuous exchange and collaboration among stakeholders in the public transport sector. Through regular networking events and information exchanges, the network aims to:

- Promote dialogue between municipalities, transport authorities, service providers, and researchers.
- Share best practices and facilitate knowledge transfer on key topics such as DRT digitalization and sustainable mobility.
- Support coordinated development of public transport in Baden-Württemberg and beyond.

Additionally, the network will organize workshops, expert discussions, and working groups to deepen cooperation and develop actionable strategies for improving interregional mobility.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.zukunftsnetzwerk-oepnv.de/foerdermittel/foerdermittel-des-landes/foerderprogramm-on-demand-verkehre>

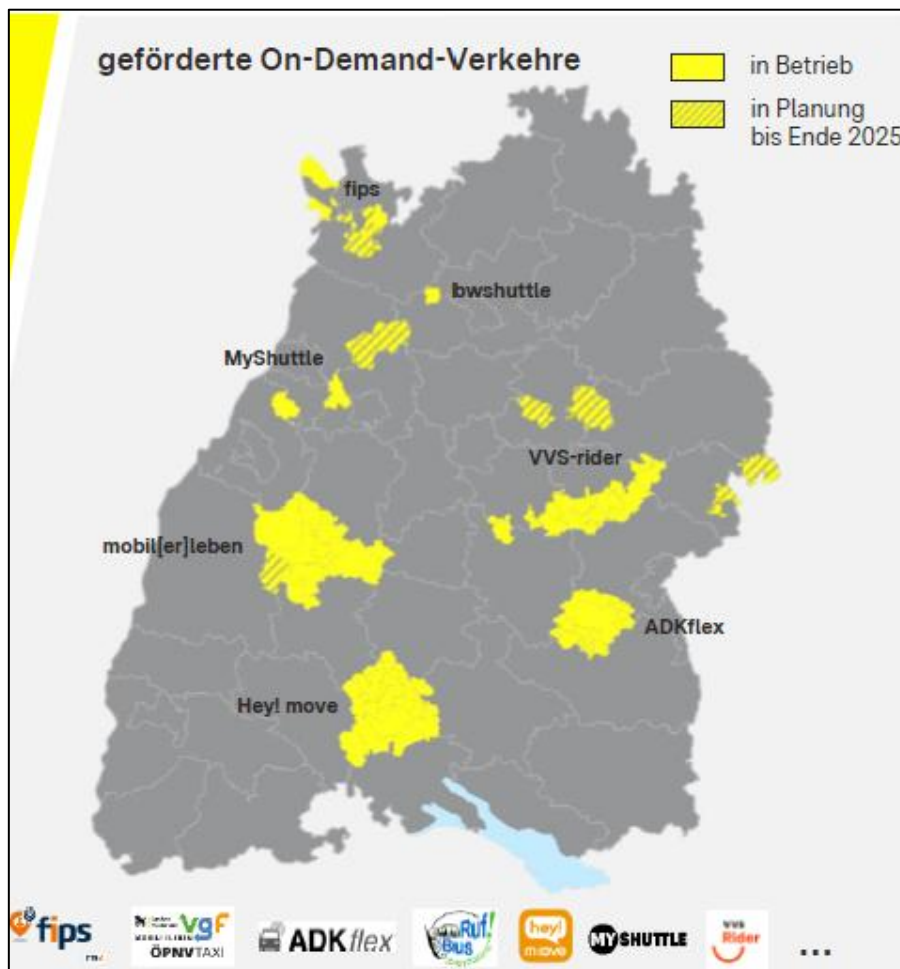


Figure 5. Currently funded DRT initiatives in the region of Baden-Württemberg (source: NVBW, 2025)

#### Main Facts:

- Start Date: the initiative started in 2025.
- Leadership: NVBW leads the implementation, with active participation from local DRT providers, operators, and municipalities.
- Goals: strengthen collaboration, improve DRT services, and address common challenges through regular exchanges.
- Impact: stakeholders develop shared solutions and best practices, enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of DRT across the region.
- Funding & Continuity: while deployment costs and financing sources are not totally determined, the initiative is designed for long-term cooperation and continuous improvement beyond the initial project phase.

#### Status of implementation:

The network for public transport providers “Zukunftsnetzwerk ÖPNV” (Zukunftsnetzwerk ÖPNV » Nahverkehrsgesellschaft Baden-Württemberg mbH) has been established and comes together in regular meetings. This strengthens the network in the region and uses local stakeholders to multiply ideas that are generated on regional level.



#### 4.2.6. Measure 6: Defining common KPIs for comparative analysis

Currently, Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) services in Baden-Württemberg vary significantly across different categories, including service provision, marketing, operational setup, and booking systems. This high degree of individuality makes it difficult to systematically compare services and evaluate their performance in a meaningful way. Establishing a standardized framework for analysis is essential to improve transparency and enable data-driven decision-making.

##### **Main Facts:**

A key objective of this initiative is to define common Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to allow for consistent and comparative analysis of DRT services.

These standardized KPIs will help create a uniform evaluation framework, making it possible to assess performance, identify best practices, and optimize services across different regions.

Establishing common DRT standards will ensure comparable data, providing valuable insights for future service improvements and policy decisions.

##### **Status of implementation:**

To identify KPIs and demands an ongoing evaluation of regional DRT service is carried out on regional level by the NVBW. A first evaluation was finished in 2024; it is planned to continue the study until 2028<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.zukunftsnetzwerk-oepnv.de/verkehrsangebote/on-demand-verkehr/begleitforschung-zu-on-demand-verkehren-in-bw>



## 5. Monitoring and evaluation

The outlined actions are closely monitored by NVBW and its respective partners to ensure effective implementation and continuous improvement. A key component of this process is the Begleitforschung, which systematically assesses the impact of the measures, identify best practices, and provide data-driven recommendations for further development.

Building on the strong collaboration and exchange established in the project, Nexus maintains regular contact with NVBW through ongoing evaluation meetings. These exchanges will involve the local partner municipality of Calw, ensuring that insights from the pilot study are integrated into existing DRT plans and governance structures.

A particular focus is put on evaluating the benefits of interregional exchange. The findings are used to encourage stakeholder engagement, strengthen collaborative networks, and highlight the advantages of knowledge-sharing for improving DRT services. By fostering a data-driven approach, the monitoring and evaluation efforts support the long-term sustainability and efficiency of DRT in Baden-Württemberg.



## 6. Conclusion and next steps

The measures outlined in this Action plan continue to aim at strengthening interregional cooperation in organizing and synchronizing on Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) services in Baden-Württemberg. They contribute to improving accessibility and aligning services more closely with user needs, while simultaneously ensuring adaptation to the federal administrative structure. This coordination is a key prerequisite for effective management and planning, particularly in peripheral and rural regions.

The results achieved so far have been discussed extensively in the context of ongoing exchanges with Project Partners. Given current budget constraints in the Calw district, the focus is currently on maintaining existing services rather than expanding them. At the same time, the NVBW's long-term, accompanying research at the state level, continues to provide important insights into the performance and potential of on-demand transport. Standardized key performance indicators and updated surveys strengthen the basis for evidence-based further development.

Continuous interregional exchange remains crucial for the successful implementation of the proposed measures. Ensuring the continuation of this collaborative approach represents a critical next step.



## 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. DREAM\_PACE D3.1.3 “Topic guide DRT 3.0 in Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP)”. 2026.
- 7) DREAM\_PACE D3.2.2 “Report on strategy-setting workshops for action plans' implementation”. 2026.