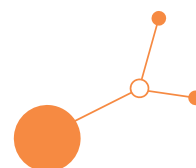


DREAM_PACE

Governance scheme and CV of a mobility coordinator



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1. Executive summary

The East Tyrol pilot project highlighted the importance of involving a broad range of stakeholders. Public Transport Authorities (PTAs), municipalities, digital service providers, tourism associations, chambers of labour and economy, large employers, and the general public each contribute specific competences. Their interaction is shaped by both formal mechanisms (planning responsibilities, contracting, financing) and informal mechanisms (living labs, bilateral discussions, participatory workshops). Together, these channels ensure that local knowledge informs planning, while regional authorities maintain strategic oversight.

However, the pilot also revealed gaps in coordination. While many stakeholders have their own mobility strategies, actions are often fragmented and not sufficiently aligned at the regional level. To address this, the concept of a regional mobility coordinator was introduced. Positioned as the junction point of the governance model, the coordinator ensures continuity, avoids duplication, and maintains mobility as a priority on the regional agenda.

The mobility coordinator's responsibilities are wide-ranging: from strategic alignment and stakeholder management to data analysis, communication with citizens, and innovation in service delivery. Daily tasks include coordinating transport services, monitoring performance, engaging with municipalities and operators, managing financial processes, and promoting new initiatives. This dedicated role is essential to transforming mobility from a fragmented field into an integrated system that supports sustainability, accessibility, and regional development.

Several institutional options exist for hosting such a role, including regional development agencies, municipal consortia, local government associations, regional transport authorities, or dedicated offices. Each comes with advantages and limitations, but all underline the need for a clear mandate, adequate resources, and strong legitimacy.

The experience of East Tyrol offers lessons beyond its borders. By combining formal governance structures with participatory approaches and anchoring coordination in a dedicated role, rural regions across Europe can move toward inclusive, efficient, and sustainable mobility systems that reflect local realities while connecting to wider regional and national frameworks.



2. Governance scheme

The governance of public transport and, in particular, demand responsive transport (DRT) in rural and low-demand regions is rather complex. Unlike urban environments, where passenger volumes are high and services can be standardised, rural areas face challenges arising from dispersed settlements, low population density, and seasonal fluctuations in demand. In these contexts, mobility governance must bring together a wide range of actors with different competences, responsibilities, and interests. This requires cooperative structures, transparent decision-making, and a continuous balancing of priorities. Effective governance therefore does not emerge automatically; it must be designed and actively maintained.

The case of East Tyrol illustrates these dynamics. Multiple stakeholders - ranging from transport authorities and municipalities to service providers and social partners - had to be involved in order to design solutions that are both efficient and socially inclusive. While this chapter builds on the East Tyrol pilot, its reflections and conclusions are transferable to other rural regions facing similar challenges.

A rural transport system rests on the cooperation of diverse stakeholders. Each actor contributes specific competences and perspectives, which together shape the planning, operation, and evaluation of mobility services. Table 2 provides an overview of the main stakeholder groups as identified in the pilot region of East Tyrol. The table summarises their roles and involvement in the governance structure. While the exact composition may differ in other regions, the general categories of actors and their respective functions remain comparable.

The governance model in practice demonstrates how standardized systems can be adapted to regional needs. For example, municipal initiatives such as 'Gemeindemobile' complement PTA services by offering locally financed transport solutions with volunteer drivers. Seasonal services, such as ski shuttles or hiking buses, illustrate the flexibility required in regions with strong tourism demand. In each case, coordination by the mobility coordinator and communication between PTA, operators, and municipalities were crucial to avoid duplication and inefficiencies.

Type of stakeholder	Name and brief description	Competences, role and contribution to the pilot	Involvement
PTA	ÖPNV Verband Osttirol, PTA representing public interests	Can influence PT providers like VVT or ÖBB and their offers.	Involved permanently, attended living labs, cooperated in procurement for external expertise and permanent bilateral contact
Local Authorities	33 Municipalities of East Tyrol	Collect and Provide information from public.	Involved permanently, attended living labs, bilateral discussions and they are updated constantly on progress
Digital Service Provider	ÖBB 360° Wegfinder App	Brings together route planning, booking and payment of different services to one app, could make useability easier for residents and also tourists.	Involved when needed, giving expertise bilaterally on demand.
Regional Authority	TVB Osttirol	Representing interests of tourists, accommodation providers, bring information of	Involved permanently, attended living labs, bilateral discussions and also using synergies to



Type of stakeholder	Name and brief description	Competences, role and contribution to the pilot	Involvement
		hotspots for activities and during tourists' season.	develop tourism mobility not related to DREAM_PACE Project
General Public	Residents of East Tyrol and Tourists	Interests represented by Municipalities and TVB. Most important target group, also provider of information.	Involved indirectly through Municipalities and TVB.
Regional Authority	Land Tirol	Also funds the project; high interest for successful outcomes and high potential influence.	Involved partially, network meetings with other mobility managers out of Tyrol, supporting role when needed.
Regional Authority	Chamber of Labour	Represents interests of workers; potential users of new PT-Services.	Involved, participated in living labs and gets informed of progress
Regional Authority	Chamber of Economy	Represents interests of organisations and economic growth.	Involved, participated in living labs and gets informed of progress
Other (enterprises)	Liebherr, Loacker, Hella, IDM	Biggest companies in the region, could support the use of new offers, promote it to their workers, funding/sponsoring,	Involved, participated in living labs, building synergies with previous projects
PTA/PTO	VVT and ÖBB. They coordinate and operate PT in Tyrol Region	High power and influence on all PT and DRT offer, since they operate most of the services.	Involved permanently, important decision maker since co-tendering the new PT-programme together with ÖPNV-Verband. Attended living labs, permanent contact and bilateral discussions

Table 1: List of regional stakeholders

The interaction of stakeholders is shaped by both formal and informal mechanisms. Formal structures include the planning and financing responsibilities of the Public Transport Authority (PTA) and the service delivery role of operators. Informal mechanisms arise through workshops, bilateral consultations, and living labs, where local knowledge and user feedback are integrated into planning. Cooperation is not without challenges: stakeholders differ in priorities, levels of engagement, and capacities. For municipalities, mobility is only one among many tasks, while for schools or tourism providers, it is relevant only at specific times of the year. This makes transparent communication and clear coordination structures essential.

Most Stakeholders in regions like East Tyrol do have some kind of mobility management inside their organization or follow some kind of a mobility strategy given out by federal states or other institutions. Experience from the DREAM_PACE and previous projects shows, that even though this is the case, coordination of actions and initiatives does not or only to a limited extend happen inside the region.

This is where the role of the region's mobility coordinator comes into play. His responsibilities, competencies and daily tasks will be described in the following chapter.



3. Mobility Coordinator

At the centre of the governance system stands the **mobility coordinator**. This role should be introduced in order to overcome fragmentation and ensure continuity across diverse actors. Since most stakeholders treat mobility as one issue among many, the coordinator dedicates full attention to it. Positioned between PTAs, municipalities, operators, and users, the coordinator functions as the linchpin of the governance model.

The competencies and responsibilities of the mobility coordinator are broad and include:

- Strategic coordination: aligning DRT and conventional public transport initiatives with regional priorities.
- Stakeholder management: acting as a neutral mediator, ensuring voices from municipalities, operators, and users are heard.
- Monitoring and evaluation: tracking service quality, usage levels, and accessibility, and using this information to refine services.
- Innovation: fostering new mobility solutions such as shared rides or micro-mobility and embedding them into the wider system.
- Communication and awareness-raising: informing residents about mobility options, supporting digital literacy, and ensuring accessibility for vulnerable groups.
- Financial and procurement support: assisting in co-financing arrangements and ensuring efficient resource use.

In this way, the mobility coordinator acts not merely as an administrator but as a catalyst for change. The position ensures that mobility remains on the regional agenda, bridges institutional divides, and provides a continuous feedback loop between users and providers.

Figure 5 shows a simplified Governance scheme for rural regions with a regional mobility coordinator in place who acts as a junction point between PTAs, PTOs, municipalities and other stakeholders.

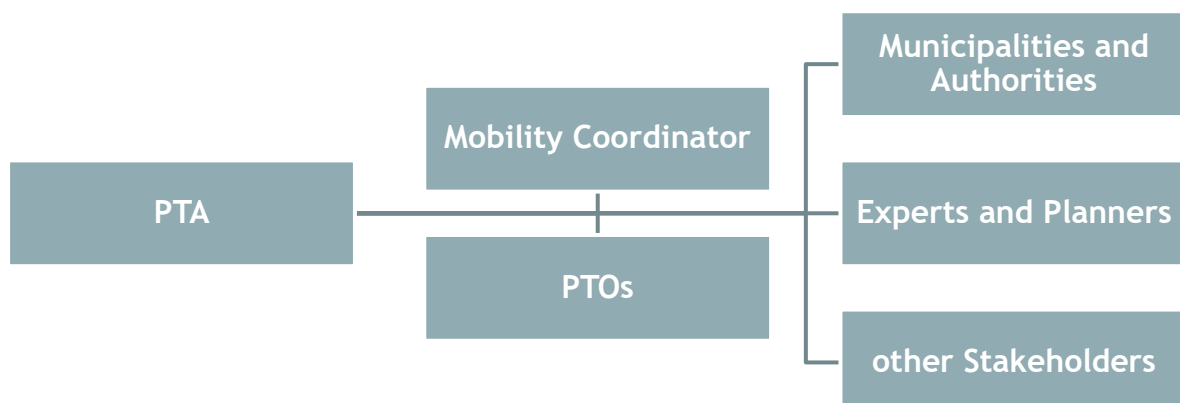


Figure 1: Simplified governance scheme

Governance in rural mobility is necessarily multi-layered, participatory, and adaptive. The experience from East Tyrol illustrates that while institutional structures provide the framework, it is the mobility coordinator who ensures functionality and coherence. By generalizing these lessons, other regions can design governance systems that are both efficient and responsive, combining local knowledge with regional authority in order to create inclusive and sustainable mobility offers.



3.1. Candidates and Profile

The role of the coordinator could be taken from members of several institutions who dedicate some of their actions to the mobility needs in the region. An important characteristic of the coordinator must therefore be the knowledge of the region and its needs and objectives regarding mobility and sustainability.

Depending on the specific characteristics and also the size of the region, several players come into play when thinking of who could take the coordination. Below, some possible institutions are listed with the note they might not be present in some regions.

Regional development agencies

These are often well placed to act as mobility coordinators, as they already manage a broad portfolio of regional development tasks, including infrastructure, economic promotion, and sustainability. Their advantage lies in their capacity to link mobility with other regional priorities. However, they may lack specialized expertise in transport planning and may need to build up specific competencies.

Consortia or associations of municipalities

When several municipalities join forces, they can establish a consortium to jointly manage mobility coordination. This structure benefits from direct democratic legitimacy and proximity to citizens' needs. At the same time, decision-making may become slow or fragmented if local priorities diverge, and resources for staffing and expertise are not always guaranteed.

Local government associations (LGAs)

LGAs bring together municipalities in a structured form and can pool resources to represent local interests at a higher level. They have experience in inter-municipal cooperation, which is valuable in rural and mountainous contexts where no single municipality can solve mobility issues alone. Their weakness is often limited operational capacity, as many LGAs act more as lobbying and coordination platforms than as service providers.

Dedicated mobility offices at local or regional level

A specialized office focusing only on mobility can ensure professionalism, continuity, and accountability in coordinating different services. It can also act as a clear contact point for citizens and operators. The main challenge is the financial sustainability of such an office in sparsely populated areas, where the demand might not justify a full-scale administrative body unless linked to wider regional functions.

Regional transport authorities

These bodies usually have established competence in public transport planning and contracting. They can bring professional expertise, access to funding, and long-term strategic planning. However, regional transport authorities are sometimes too large and centralized, risking a lack of sensitivity to the specific challenges of small, peripheral communities.



Cross-border cooperation bodies (e.g., in Interreg areas)

- In mountainous regions that straddle borders, cross-border bodies can be key players in mobility coordination. They can integrate services across national boundaries, reducing fragmentation and ensuring connectivity. The complexity of legal frameworks, funding rules, and different national regulations, however, often slows down implementation.

Public-private partnerships with transport operators

Engaging operators directly in coordination through partnerships can ensure practical solutions and strong service delivery. Such partnerships can also mobilize private investment. Yet, they may prioritize profitability over accessibility, which could conflict with the social equity goals of rural mobility.

Universities or research institutions with mobility expertise

Academic institutions can act as neutral, knowledge-based coordinators, bringing in innovation, pilot projects, and evaluation methods. They are particularly valuable for experimental or EU-funded projects. Their limitation is that universities typically do not have the mandate or the long-term operational responsibility to manage mobility services sustainably. This kind of expert often could also act as external experts who support certain projects.

Non-profit organizations with experience in rural or community mobility

Civil society organizations can be highly effective in addressing the “last mile” and in mobilizing volunteers for community-based mobility solutions, such as ridesharing or on-demand shuttles. Their flexibility and citizen trust are strong assets. On the other hand, they often lack the stable funding and administrative capacity needed to run large-scale or long-term mobility systems.

3.2. Responsibilities

A sustainable mobility in rural regions consists of several actions, initiatives and new offers like a strong backbone of classic PT, DRT-Systems, ride- and asset sharing, municipal mobility offers and digital and informational management only to mention a few. To integrate these into a functioning whole system, coordination between them and driving change management are the key responsibilities of a mobility coordinator.

Other **management-responsibilities** describing the position of the mobility coordinator could be:

- Acts as a “moderator” between stakeholders and decision makers
- Local person with a good network and well-known to support local stakeholders in reaching their objectives
- Drive change in existing topics as factory traffic and tourism mobility
- Junction point to PTAs and PTOs
- Combine financial resources and limit parallel projects, increase efficiency
- Collecting Data and Facts to support decision makers in discussions
- Develop concepts and plans together with stakeholders



But in return, the mobility coordinator should be able to count on support and cooperation from all **stakeholders**, like:

- Organise questionnaires and surveys
- Media releases
- Sharing contacts
- Collect and organize fundings
- Sharing relevant data and findings

Expected **outputs** from the position could be:

- Driving change towards sustainable mobility solutions
- Organizing pilots
- Collect information
- Acting as a contact person to relevant questions and issues
- Bringing up relevant issues inside the region and bring up potential points of action
- Building a “mobility network” inside the region which brings together all relevant stakeholder and institutions and represents a platform for discussions on relevant topics

Fields of action where a mobility coordinator is acting could be:

- Mobility Management
- Active mobility
- Public transport
- Multi-modal transport
- Traffic security
- Information and communication
- Cooperation and network

The above listed responsibilities show that there is a wide spectrum of tasks to be covered in order to coordinate the mobility development in rural regions.



3.3. Daily Tasks

From the above-described profile and responsibilities, the regional mobility coordinator will derive multiple daily tasks. With a thematic categorization, these daily tasks could include the following topics.

Stakeholder communication and networking

Regular contact with municipalities, transport operators, digital service providers, and regional/national authorities would certainly be the main objective and should be included in an ordinary daily schedule of the coordinator. Therefore, also organizing and attending meetings to align interests and collect feedback from local communities is part of the daily tasks depending on the individual project status.

Data management and analysis

In Cooperation with the specific stakeholders and experts, collecting and evaluating usage data (ticketing, app-based reservations, passenger counts) is among the tasks of the coordinator. Subsequently, identifying demand patterns to adapt services to seasonal fluctuations (e.g., tourism peaks or school transport) also comes into play and finally preparing reports for funding bodies and decision-makers based on these data analyses.

Communication with citizens

Acting as a first point of contact for inquiries and complaints about mobility services besides the municipalities themselves could be a daily task after having integrated and communicated the position well enough, speaking this will only be possible after some time operating in the position.

Also, providing information through digital platforms or local information points and promoting new services, pilot projects, and awareness campaigns to increase acceptance and usage in the general public.

Financial and administrative tasks

Depending on his involvement in special projects, managing budgets, subsidies, and reimbursement schemes with municipalities or regional authorities could be among his schedules, also including coordinating procurement processes for vehicles, digital tools, or external expertise.

Strategic development and innovation

Thinking of Innovation and bringing pilot into practise, Co-Designing and testing new mobility solutions like DRTs and ensuring integration of mobility with broader regional development goals (tourism, accessibility, etc.) and other actions will also include the mobility coordinator.

Partnership building and cross-sector cooperation

Finally, engaging with schools, employers, social services, and tourism actors to tailor mobility services and developing joint initiatives with cross-border partners if the region lies at ay border to foster cross-regional and international cooperation and cohesion.



4. Conclusion

The governance of public transport and demand responsive transport (DRT) in rural and mountainous regions such as East Tyrol demonstrates both the challenges and opportunities of designing mobility systems for low-demand areas. Unlike urban contexts, where standardized approaches are feasible, rural mobility requires tailored solutions built on cooperation, flexibility, and ongoing dialogue among diverse actors. The East Tyrol case shows that no single stakeholder alone can manage these complexities; instead, it is the interplay of municipalities, transport authorities, operators, enterprises, social partners, and the general public that creates a functional system. Formal mechanisms, such as planning and contracting by PTAs and operators, provide a backbone of stability, while informal mechanisms—living labs, bilateral consultations, and participatory workshops—ensure that local knowledge and user needs inform the design of services.

At the centre of this governance structure stands the mobility coordinator. This position embodies the recognition that fragmented responsibilities and competing priorities require a dedicated role to bridge institutional divides. The mobility coordinator not only ensures continuity but also acts as a driver of innovation, data-based decision-making, and citizen engagement. Through daily tasks such as monitoring usage data, facilitating stakeholder communication, and coordinating pilot projects, the coordinator provides the glue that holds the governance system together. Importantly, the role also anchors mobility firmly within broader regional development strategies, linking transport to goals such as economic vitality, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and tourism development.

The lessons from East Tyrol are transferable to many rural European regions. Governance models must be designed to adapt to seasonal variations, demographic challenges, and geographic constraints. A strong backbone of conventional public transport, complemented by demand-responsive services, municipal initiatives, and digital tools, offers a viable path forward. However, efficiency and inclusiveness can only be achieved when supported by transparent decision-making, shared financial responsibility, and a willingness among stakeholders to collaborate.

There are several institutions and bodies, that could take this role in a region with regard on which are even existent in the questioned region. As the mobility system itself, this role must be custom-tailored for a certain region and therefore also grow into the above-mentioned responsibilities and tasks for which this solution component gives a rough guidance.