

FINLAND

Innovation & cooperation

Location
Oulu

Programming period
2014 – 2020

Priority
P1 – Knowledge transfer & Innovation

Measure
M01 - Knowledge transfer & information actions

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 214 008
EAFRD 89 883
National/Regional 124 125

Project duration
2018 – 2021

Project promoter
University of Vaasa

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<https://projectsites.vtt.fi/sites/maasdigiboks>

Mobilising rural awareness in Finland about sustainable transport opportunities

Summary

Transport in Finland is changing radically. There is an increasing demand for sustainability, economic effectiveness, and digitalisation alongside some significant changes in transport legislation. In this context, knowledge transfer is an essential part of developing more efficient and environmentally friendly private and public transport systems for rural areas.



The project was implemented by a university and a research centre. They collected, processed, and disseminated information about changes in the transport and mobility sectors that affect rural areas. Project activities included the production and dissemination of monthly newsletters, articles, and blogs, as well as the hosting of webinars and the presentation of the project at related events and on social media.

Results

The final assessment conducted by the project's Steering Group concluded that the project succeeded in representing a complex topic via a variety of media and formats. It managed to set out guidance that was relevant and accessible to diverse stakeholders.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Rural actors need information about proposed changes to understand the likely future of transport and mobility in rural areas.
- ❑ Administrations that deal with transport planning in rural areas need access to basic information about trends in demographics, employment, and rural services.
- ❑ Facilities and infrastructure planning should always happen in consultation with transport services operators.

Context

By 2030, the Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communication aims to have halved the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that are caused by traffic. The Ministry forecasts that by 2030 in Finland there will be 700 000 electric or hybrid cars, compared to 60 000 electric and hybrid cars today. These cars are currently far more common in urban areas, even though they are well suited to rural areas and long-distance driving. In contrast, farms, SMEs, and inhabitants in rural areas are heavily dependent on the use of private cars and fossil fuels.

In order to build understanding about the necessary shift towards more efficient and environmentally friendly private and public transport in rural areas, broad discussion and dissemination about the latest changes in the field, would be crucial.

Objectives

'MaasDigiboksi' is a national knowledge transfer project which aims to equip rural actors to adapt to technology and policy change in the rural transport services sector.

Activities

The University of Vaasa implemented this nationwide knowledge transfer on rural transport in cooperation with VTT Technical Research Centre Ltd. The project collected, processed, and disseminated information regarding changes in the transport and mobility sector that affect rural areas. It also illustrated how digitalisation and changes in legislation can enable a more flexible organisation of transport and mobility services.

Main results

- Production and dissemination of 31 monthly e-newsletters dealing with transport-related news from a rural point of view.
- Publishing 21 case studies to clarify transportation related terminology and to showcase good practices (mainly concerning ongoing rural transport development projects).
- Creation of nine blog posts and 14 magazine articles targeting rural transport stakeholders including SMEs.

- Hosting six webinars on diverse topics such as the digitalisation of transport, transport procurement, and the project itself. Each webinar was attended by 30 to 60 participants.
- Production of nine videos (mostly footage from the webinars) that are hosted on YouTube, and which had been viewed around 400-500 times by the end of the project.
- Project representatives attended 43 events related to rurality and/or transport (five were research seminars) and were invited to publicly present the project 52 times.
- The project gathered 264 followers on Twitter including villages, municipalities, ministries, and companies. 43 members joined its Facebook group.
- A final assessment conducted by the project's Steering Group concluded that the project succeeded in representing a complex topic via a variety of media and formats. It set out guidance that was relevant and accessible to diverse stakeholders.
- According to its results indicators, the project exceeded its objectives with the sheer diversity and quantity of dissemination material produced and shared.

Key lessons

- When planning for facilities and infrastructure in rural areas (e.g. schools, health care, sports clubs) it is important to consult with transport services operators to ensure that the proposed facilities will be easily accessible by foot, bike, public transport, or carpooling.
- Rural actors need information about proposed changes to understand the likely future of transport and mobility in rural areas.
- Administrations that deal with transport planning in rural areas need access to information about trends in demographics, employment, and rural services. This information helps decision makers to accurately plan for future transportation in a way that benefits the communities they seek to serve.

Additional sources of information

Twitter: @MaasDigiboksi