

TEMPLATE

Output factsheet: Pilot actions

Version 1

Project index number and acronym	CE886 - CONNECT2CE
Lead partner	Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat
Output number and title	O.T2.1 - Pilot actions enhancing peripheral and cross-border passenger transport accessibility in CE <i>(D.T2.2.7 - Pilot action no. 5 - Development of new services and offers for cross-border PT (D-PL))</i>
Responsible partner (PP name and number)	PP13 - VBB
Project website	https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/CONNECT2CE.html
Delivery date	14 February 2020

Summary description of the pilot action explaining its experimental nature and demonstration character

The pilot action has focused on selected relations between Germany and Poland, which are marked by Polish commuters working in Germany and Germans spending leisure time in Poland. Considering these phenomena, the pilot action has focused at improving cross-border rail services in two selected areas: between Berlin and the Western Pomeranian Voivodship with destinations located at the Polish part of the Baltic Sea, and the railway line Cottbus <-> Żary <-> Żagań <-> Legnica <-> Wrocław.

Already before the implementation period, partners and involved stakeholders cooperated within the German-Polish cross-border governance structure of the “Transport Round Table” of the Oder Partnership. This informal body monitors the development of the conditions for cross-border railway transport between Germany and Poland, exchanging views on potential developments and facilitating improvements through continuous exchange of information. During the first implementation period of the pilot action, the scope of the pilot action has been specified to meet current challenges and needs in the area of intervention. The Baltic Sea area in the Western Pomeranian Voivodship has been chosen to investigate the possibilities for better tourist services to connect Berlin with the seaside in Poland; the Cottbus-Legnica area has been selected to implement a market study for the introduction of railcars with innovative propulsion systems.

During the second implementation period, the market study was elaborated in close exchange with railcar producers to discuss technologies currently available and progress expected in upcoming years. The study investigated several technical options: hydrogen, diesel-electric, and battery-electric. Based on feedbacks received within the “Transport Round Table” of the Oder Partnership, the diesel-electric option was identified as

suitable short-term option, taking into account the characteristics of cross-border railway lines between Germany and Poland. For the Baltic Sea connection, the potential for introduction of direct connections has been discussed. However, due to several reasons, in short-term perspective the most feasible solution would be the amendment and extension of the existing cross-border ticket Berlin-Szczecin to other relevant destinations in Western Pomerania.

In the final implementation period, the discussion on integrated tickets Berlin-Baltic Sea was still ongoing. Due to promising feedback of the Polish regional railway operator Polregio, attempts to introduce such tickets will be renewed in future. At the same time, based on intensified talks and discussions with the Western Pomeranian Voidvodship, VBB launched an additional activity: the investigation of the potential integration of the Angermünde railway node into the planned Szczecin Metropolitan Railway, in order to increase the cross-border accessibility between Germany and Poland. In this respect, a feasibility analysis will feed into the preparation of the territorial strategy for the improvement of the regional and cross-border accessibility in Berlin-Brandenburg (WPT3). In parallel to this activity, also an extension stage of the market study on innovative propulsion system is being realised, to better understand possible options for application of new technologies in regional railway transport between Germany and Poland.

NUTS region(s) concerned by the pilot action (relevant NUTS level)

DE3 Berlin
DE4 Brandenburg
PL42 Zachodniopomorskie
PL43 Lubuskie

Expected impact and benefits of the pilot action for the concerned territory and target groups

The investigation of possibilities for better tourist services to connect Berlin with the seaside in Poland lead to the development of a concept for integrated tickets Berlin-Baltic Sea, providing the chance for substantial increase of competitiveness and comfort of cross-border railway transport, with particular focus on tourists. The expected impact and benefits will be modal shift towards railway transport and increase of market potential for tourism services along the seaside in Poland due to better access to the Berlin market.

The market study for the introduction of railcars with innovative propulsion systems lead to better understanding of framework conditions for the application of new technologies in regional railway transport between Germany and Poland. Mixed results, since moderate innovations (diesel-electric options) turn out to be most suitable in short-term perspective, and substantial innovations are not feasible yet (in case of battery-electric options due to technical shortcomings, in case of hydrogen options due to lack of necessary infrastructure).

Sustainability of the pilot action results and transferability to other territories and stakeholders

The sustainability of pilot action results will be achieved through continued cooperation within the “Transport Round Table” of the Oder Partnership and documentation of findings e.g. in the minutes of the meetings. It is expected that follow-up activities will be prepared by German and Polish partners through renewed attempts to introduce integrated tickets Berlin-Baltic Sea (market potential and demand of passengers will grow, and economic pressure to attract tourists to the seaside in Poland will increase) and ongoing discussion on structural change in former coal regions in Germany. The development and deployment of innovative propulsion systems in transport is an important part of the discussion, and German passenger rail authorities urgently seek for alternative solutions to diesel engines.

The transferability to other territories and stakeholders will be facilitated through transnational tools elaborated within the CONNECT2CE project, documenting experiences and findings of all pilot actions and providing recommendations for the improvement of cross-border governance of railway transport in Central Europe.

Lessons learned from the implementation of the pilot action and added value of transnational cooperation

Regarding the investigation of possibilities for better tourist services to connect Berlin with the seaside in Poland, the most important lesson learned is the need to replace outdated international agreements on cross-border tariffs (which were introduced in completely different times) by modern regulations, facilitating the introduction of cross-border services in public transport on local and regional level. This would remove a very important border obstacle, limiting further integration of cross-border regions.

Regarding the introduction of railcars with innovative propulsion systems, the most important lesson learned is the need to develop more flexible and resilient concepts for propulsion systems of railcars. Electric interfaces within railcars enable to application of different propulsion concepts, allowing e.g. for the deployment of diesel engines throughout the first decade of operation of a railcar, and replacing the diesel unit by a battery unit once battery technology will be more advanced than today. However, it is not clear if such concepts have a chance of realisation.

The added value of transnational cooperation has been the exchange of experiences within the partnership, allowing for the reflection of local and regional achievements against the transnational background. Additionally, the organisational framework of the project facilitated the exchange between German and Polish partners due to clear schedules, and at the same time highly valuable flexibility regarding the adaptation of aims and objectives to territorial needs.

References to relevant deliverables and web-links If applicable, pictures or images to be provided as annex