



CONNECT2CE - “IMPROVING RAIL CONNECTIONS AND SMART MOBILITY IN CENTRAL EUROPE”

FINAL PUBLICATION





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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, most of Central Europe's inhabitants live in urban areas, whereas the population in rural, cross-border and peripheral areas is steadily decreasing. Lack of efficient public transport connections in these areas is one of the causes of this depopulation. CONNECT2CE - Improved rail connections and smart mobility in Central Europe, is a project supported by the Interreg Central Europe programme and funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The motto of the Interreg Central Europe programme is "Taking cooperation forward" and the programme is focusing on regional development in innovation, carbon dioxide reduction, protecting natural and cultural resources as well as transport and mobility.

CONNECT2CE belongs to the latter category - Transport and mobility. The project aims at tackling the weak accessibility of regional, peripheral and cross-border areas of Central Europe by promoting new public transport services to link these areas to the urban areas where the main transport networks and hubs are located.

CONNECT2CE has done so by elaborating harmonised and coordinated strategies and tools which are mainstreamed and implemented at regional and cross-border levels through pilot actions in three areas all connected and intertwined with each other and all being essential elements that contribute to enhancing public transport services of peripheral/cross-border regions:

1. **CONNECTIVITY** - partners have set standards in terms of frequency, quality and costs for public road and rail transport services connecting these areas. Also, the harmonization of multi-modal timetables and cross border rail services has been implemented.
2. **INTEGRATED TICKETING** - partners implemented integrated tickets that include integrated fares across public transport operators and one ticket for all means of transportation.
3. **ICT TOOLS** - partners have designed web portals and mobile applications to make public transport more attractive and more easily accessible. The tools are multi-lingual.

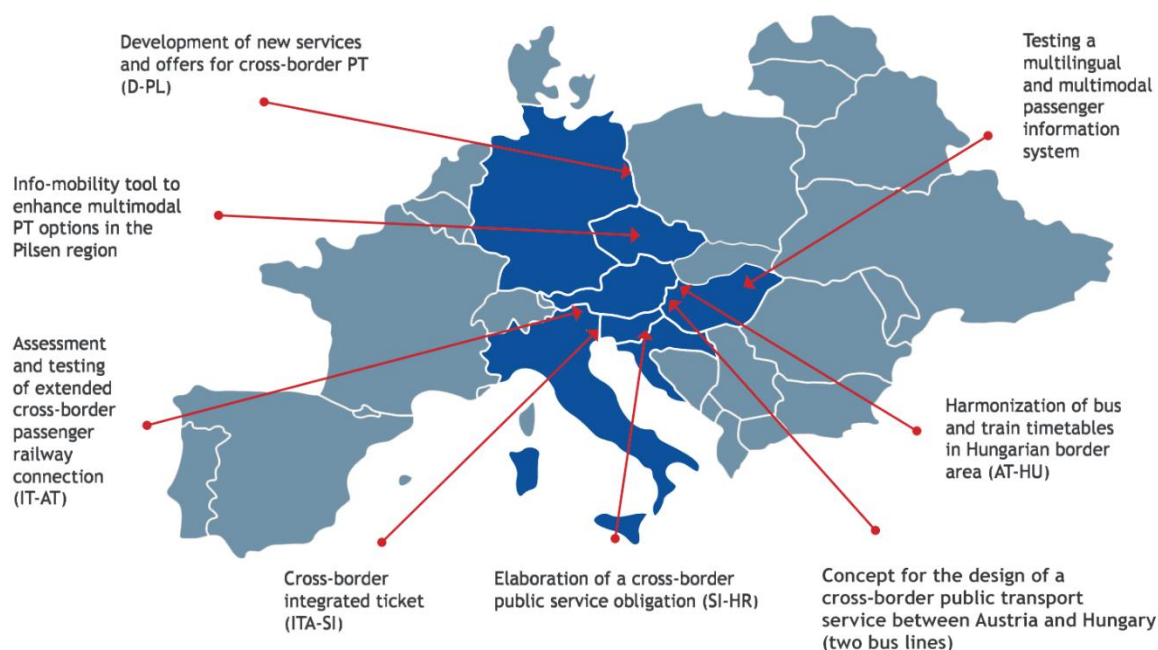
Thirteen Project Partners across eight countries have applied this approach throughout the project by actively participating in all activities applying the elaborated transnational strategies and action plans at the regional and cross-border level, combining transport and territorial development. CONNECT2CE lasted for three years, from 1st June 2017 to 31st May 2020 and managed a total budget of €2.7 million, €2.2 million of which accounts for ERDF funding.





PILOT ACTIONS

During the CONNECT2CE project implementation, 8 pilot actions were carried out all across Central Europe. Through the pilot actions, coordinated strategies and tools were mainstreamed and implemented at the regional and cross-border level. The map displays the name and location of each pilot action.





Pilot action 1 - Assessment and testing of the extended cross-border passenger railway connection

Udine Cividale Railways Company Ltd. tested the transnational tool for improvement of regional/cross-border railway and public transport connections through the experimental extension of the cross-border passenger train service from Villach, Austria to Trieste, Italy. The main goal of the pilot action was to test the extension of the cross-border passenger service of MICOTRA train Villach-Udine-Trieste. Within this pilot, partners performed two main activities:

- 1) Rail service testing implementation
- 2) Monitoring and assessing the usage of the service as well as eventual operational issues.

The pilot action was presented to the public on 14th June 2018 at the premises of the Central European Initiative in Trieste. The extension of the existing Udine-Villach service was active on Saturdays, Sundays and on Italian and Austrian public holidays with two trains per day in each direction. The overall cross-border connection service was jointly managed by Udine Cividale Railways Company on the Italian side and Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) on the Austrian side. The trains used during the pilot action had two passenger carriages and one carriage for storing more than 100 bicycles.



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Validi fino al 8 dicembre 2018

ARRIVO		PARTENZA		ARRIVO		PARTENZA		ARRIVO		PARTENZA	
1816		1818		1815		1821		1823		1823	
VALIDO DAL 20/06/2018 SABATO, DOMENICA E FESTIVI											
TRIESTE CENTRALE	-	05.45	-	-	15.50	-	-	-	-	-	-
MONFALCONE	06.11	06.12	16.16	16.17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TRIESTE AIRPORT	06.17	06.18	16.23	16.24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CERVIGNANO AQUILEA-GRADO	06.25	06.26	16.31	16.32	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PALMANOVA	06.45	06.50	16.52	16.53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UDINE	07.12	-	17.18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GENERALERO ANNUALE											
UDINE	-	07.14	-	17.22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GENOVA DEL FRIULI	07.31	07.32	17.40	17.41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
VENEZIE	07.38	07.39	17.47	17.48	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GARNA	07.44	07.45	17.53	17.54	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PONTERBA	07.58	07.59	18.07	18.08	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USOZZA VAL BRUNA	08.10	08.11	18.19	18.20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TARVISIO B.V.	08.21	08.27	18.30	18.40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ARNOLDSTEIN	08.35	08.36	18.48	18.49	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FURNITZ	08.42	08.43	18.55	18.56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
VILLACH WARMBAD	08.47	08.47	19.00	19.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
VILLACH WESTFB	08.50	08.51	19.03	19.04	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
VILLACH HBF	08.54	-	19.07	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
VALIDO DAL 19/07/2018 SABATO, DOMENICA E FESTIVI											
VILLACH HBF	-	09.45	09.48	09.49	09.48	09.49	09.48	09.49	19.32	19.33	19.29
VILLACH WESTFB	-	09.52	09.52	09.52	09.52	09.52	09.52	09.52	19.36	19.36	19.36
VILLACH WARMBAD	-	09.56	09.57	09.56	09.57	09.56	09.57	09.56	19.41	19.41	19.41
FURNITZ	-	10.02	10.02	10.02	10.04	10.02	10.04	10.02	19.47	19.48	19.48
ARNOLDSTEIN	-	10.02	10.04	10.02	10.04	10.02	10.04	10.02	19.47	19.48	19.48
TARVISIO B.V.	-	10.12	11.02	10.12	11.02	10.12	11.02	10.12	19.57	20.05	19.57
USOZZA VAL BRUNA	-	11.09	11.10	11.09	11.10	11.09	11.10	11.09	20.13	20.14	20.13
PONTERBA	-	11.21	11.22	11.21	11.22	11.21	11.22	11.21	20.25	20.26	20.25
GARNA	-	11.36	11.37	11.36	11.37	11.36	11.37	11.36	20.41	20.42	20.41
VENEZIE	-	11.42	11.43	11.42	11.03	11.42	11.03	11.42	20.46	20.47	20.46
GENOVA DEL FRIULI	-	11.49	11.50	11.49	11.10	11.49	11.10	11.49	20.52	20.53	20.52
UDINE	-	12.10	-	11.30	-	11.30	-	11.30	-	21.13	-
VALIDO DAL 20/06/2018 SABATO, DOMENICA E FESTIVI											
UDINE	-	12.14	-	-	11.34	-	-	-	-	21.17	-
PALMANOVA	-	12.38	12.39	11.58	11.59	11.58	11.59	11.58	21.41	21.42	21.41
CERVIGNANO AQUILEA-GRADO	-	12.55	12.56	12.16	12.17	12.16	12.17	12.16	21.57	21.58	21.57
TRIESTE AIRPORT	-	13.02	13.03	12.23	12.24	12.23	12.24	12.23	22.04	22.05	22.04
MONFALCONE	-	13.10	13.11	12.29	12.30	12.29	12.30	12.29	22.09	22.10	22.09
TRIESTE CENTRALE	-	13.34	-	12.59	-	12.59	-	12.59	-	22.39	-





The first activity consisted in testing the extended MICOTRA service during weekends and bank holidays over one year period, from June 2018 to June 2019. It implied the provision of daily service as planned, which meant: ensuring the presence and readiness of the full crew staff as well as the full operability of the rolling stock.

The second activity, encompassed monitoring and assessing the service use as well as its functioning and related costs. The collected information and lessons learned backed up the decision to keep the service operational beyond the testing phase co-funded by the CONNECT2CE project.

The results of the first Pilot Action consist in the practical demonstration of the feasibility of the extended MICOTRA service up to Trieste during the agreed one-year testing period. For an overall number of 117 working days 468 rail services were carried out. Based on successful outcomes, which includes the interest raised among users and stakeholders, the decision to keep the service operational beyond the one-year testing period was confirmed. In general, the achieved result, apart from further improving an existing cross-border service between Italy and Austria provides also a tangible example of enhanced transnational connectivity.

Among the main findings, several elements required for activating this specific railway service have been acknowledged. Furthermore, the pilot demonstrated the impact of specific issues due to the peculiar features of the tested service. To counterbalance the costs associated to a complex set up, particular attention was paid to offering a service which is likely to attract users. To this purpose, the service targeted the tourists, in particular, focusing on sustainable and cyclo-tourism, which provided relevant opportunities for synergistic approaches. It is important to note that cycle tourists used MICOTRA services in one direction only or for a part of the trip while travelling along a cycle path to do a trip in the opposite direction.





Pilot action 2 - Elaboration of a cross-border Public Service Obligation between Slovenia and Croatia

Croatian Railways - Passenger Transport Ltd. (HŽPP) and Slovenian railways - Passenger transport Ltd. (SŽPT) tested the transnational tool for the improvement of regional/cross-border railway and public transport connections through the design of a feasibility study which contains recommendations on how to improve the railway service between the two countries. The study mentioned covered three themes: the analysis of rail supply between Slovenia and



Croatia, the requirements assessment for the Public Service Obligation (PSO) and the development of a financial model. Public Service Obligation generally means an obligation imposed on an organization, in this case, on HŽPP and SŽPT, by a legislation or by a contract, to offer a service of general interest within the European Union territories. By investigating the criteria needed to enhance the service between the two countries, both railway operators could benefit from recommendations' endorsement. However, the creation and implementation of a cross-border Public Service Obligation contract does represent a relevant barrier.

In order to create successful cooperation between partners in the project, the responsible partners identified several objectives. These objectives include:

- 1) Framework analysis, together with train operation/railway management and legal framework;
- 2) Economic framework, which includes revenue and cost structure and cost coverage;
- 3) Public Service Obligation parameters and requirements, including the necessary tools and information, related payments and revenues allocation, cost recovery structure of cross-border services, the financial model for drawing a Public Service Obligation contract and the checking of existing national Public Service Obligation contracts;
- 4) potential measures to improve the cross-border services, containing service structure and volume; marketing measures; and additional measures.





This pilot action expects passenger train services between Ljubljana and Zagreb to be coordinated and managed with new proposed measures retrieved by external experts. Currently, the cross-border rail passenger transport between Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Zagreb (Croatia) covers five train lines per day, including regional trains, long-distance trains, and night trains. Since the cross-border services are part of the national Public Service Contract, the requirements and instruments regarding reporting and monitoring are already agreed upon by the Croatian authority and HŽ Passenger Transport.

A focus for this project is the development of marketing measures to increase the cross-border rail transport demand. As a result of the project task, the consultant provided a financial model introducing additional marketing measures, including all necessary annexes, a report with all findings and conclusions of the analyses, as well as the documentation on calculation and databases. The final version of the feasibility study has been agreed upon between the selected expert and the client.

The Feasibility study was performed in two phases:

Phase 1: collecting and managing data, drafting the first version of the financial model.

Phase 2: final report about the successfully completed document - financial model focusing on marketing measures for service promotion.

The final version of the study has been presented to the Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure (MSTI), and consultants have been asked to evaluate the proposed measures to improve cross-border services with limited financial investments. The management boards of HŽPT and MSTI have therefore proposed the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding by the Croatian and Slovenian partners.

As a follow up, HŽ Passenger Transport and Slovenian Railways signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the improvement of international train services between Croatia and Slovenia within the CONNECT2CE project on 12th February 2020 in Zagreb. Through this document, both parties committed to undertake activities to ensure better travel quality and provide sustainable international services. The main activities consist in improving train services between Zagreb and Ljubljana to better connect the two neighbouring countries.





Pilot action 3 - Harmonisation of bus and train timetables in the Hungarian border area

KTI Institute for Transport Sciences Non Profit Ltd. tested the transnational tool for improvement of regional/cross-border railway and public transport connections by harmonising timetables along Szombathely-Kőszeg and Szombathely-Szentgotthárd with possible extension to Austria and Slovenia.



The general infrastructure development plan for Austria includes traffic capacity enhancement around Sopron and Vienna. This impacts the services to and from Budapest and by a wider impact the entire cross-border region at the Austrian-Hungarian border. Connecting cross-border regions is one of the European Union's most important aspirations. While cross-border road, rail and water infrastructures have been agreed in a "traditional" set of bilateral agreements, the same cannot be said of public transport links. Typically, there is a supply-driven regional international passenger service, where on one side of the border a larger settlement with cross-border suburban journeys is noted.

In the current pilot action, the connections at Körmend and Szombathely intermodal stations run smoothly as regards the connecting bus and rail services. Similarly occurs for the best practice observed at Lutherstadt-Wittenberg station in Brandenburg province near Berlin, Germany. The small-scale and efficient intermodal hubs for connecting services are vital for establishing an attractive public transport offer in the peripheral rural border areas.





A multi-perspective technical study has been delivered and can be used by the respective authorities to harmonise timetables of regional buses and trains with special attention paid to the planned new cross-border bus services.

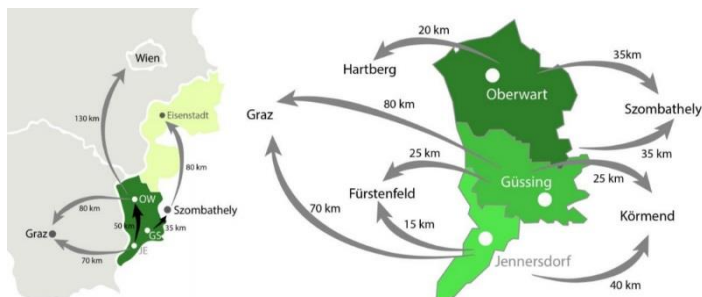
The main findings related to the implementation of the present pilot action include the legal and operational conditions which differ from country to country. Moreover, the analysis included service timetables, frequencies, tariff systems, all of which make the implementation of new services rather challenging as the connections are to be developed on the existing service network. The timetable harmonisation showed that there is a vast and robust public transport network in Hungary with interconnections to other TEN-T corridors in the region, thus a major modification at Körmend or Szombathely was not possible.





Pilot action 4 - Concept for the design of a cross-border public transport service between Austria and Hungary (two bus lines)

Regional Management Burgenland Ltd. tested the transnational tool for improvement of regional/cross-border railway and public transport connections through two cross-border bus lines for a further development of public transport in the functionally intertwined Burgenland - West Hungarian region.



Burgenland, together with Vienna, Bratislava, western Hungary and Styria, builds up the South East Transport Axis (SETA) corridor. The corridor runs from north to south through the region and represents the backbone of the public transport. As part of the Pilot Action No.4, two new bus lines are being developed to strengthen the South East Transport Axis (SETA) corridor. This development is embedded in the strategic overall development concept for the further development of public transport in the Burgenland-West-Hungary region. The new bus lines will connect the city of Graz with the South East Transport Axis (SETA) corridor (Körmend and Szombathely) via the local centres of southern Burgenland (Oberwart and Güssing). The following connections are planned:

- 1) Graz - Oberwart - Szombathely
- 2) Graz - Fürstenfeld - Güssing - Körmend

After clarification of the legal framework, a status analysis of existing traffic and commuter flows within the project area was carried out. Based on this, requirements for a suitable bus connection, including a potential estimate of the short, medium, and long-term number of expected passengers was defined. The passenger potential analysis is based on empirical values of an existing bus line from southern Burgenland to Vienna (line G1), among other things. Subsequently, a feasibility study was conducted on a comparable system between the districts of Oberwart, Güssing and Jennersdorf, as well as the adjacent Hungarian region and Graz. Finally, an operational and finance concept was developed in close coordination with the relevant regional and sectoral stakeholders and is ready for implementation.





The main results of the pilot action are the following:

- 1) Determination of the status quo
- 2) Comparative analysis G1
- 3) Requirements profile to an attractive bus offer
- 4) Determination of passenger potentials
- 5) Legal framework
- 6) Organization and financing
- 7) Completion and final report

The determination of the status quo consists in the determination of commuter flows directed to Graz, the analysis of the existing transport offer, and the estimation of the modal split.

The comparative analysis G1 showcases the positive experiences drawn for the planning of a bus service to Graz, as well as a list of factors necessary for the success of the pilot action.

The requirements profile to an attractive bus offer and the determination of passenger potentials focus on the commuter flows and short-term passenger potential along the Szombathely - Oberwart - Hartberg - Graz axis, commuter flows and short-term passenger potential along the Körmend - Güssing - Fürstenfeld - Graz and Jennersdorf - Graz axes, and identification of long-term passenger potential (Horizon 2030).

The pilot action was developed in close coordination with the relevant regional and sectoral stakeholders. The main goal of the pilot action was to develop a feasibility study for the introduction of two new cross-border bus services between Austria and Hungary. The result is a ready-to-run operating and financing concept.



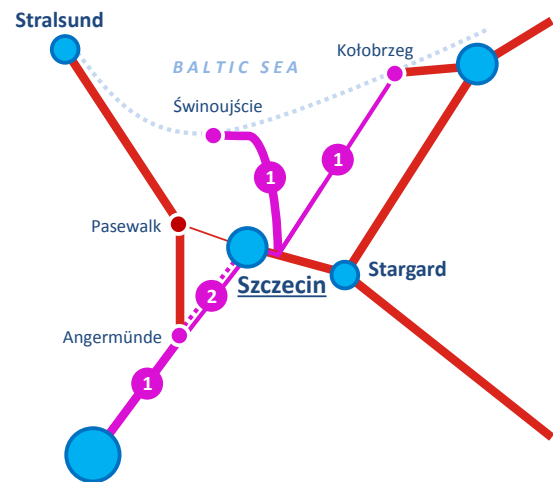


Pilot action 5 - Development of new services and offers for cross-border public transport

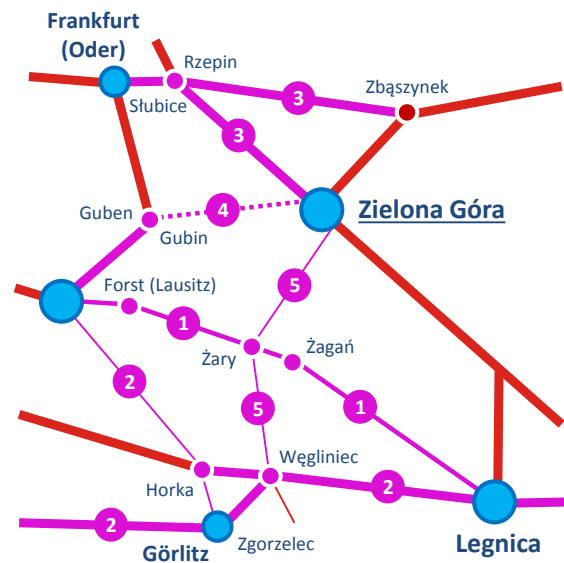
The Public transport authority Berlin-Brandenburg tested the transnational tool for improvement of regional/cross-border railway and public transport connections by assessing improved cross-border services between Berlin-Brandenburg and Poland and the design of tailored public transport offers.

The implemented activities during the pilot action were:

- 1) Preparation of the market study for modern railcars with innovative engines, preparation of the extension stage for intensification of exchange with railcar producers and pre-feasibility check of implementation;
- 2) Exchange with the Western Pomeranian Voivodeship and the Przewozy Regionalne (Polregio) railway company to introduce attractive ticket offers between Berlin and the Baltic Sea, extending the integrated ticket for cross border travels between Berlin and Szczecin to Kołobrzeg and Świnoujście;
- 3) Investigation of the feasibility of the extension of the planned Szczecin Metropolitan Railway to Brandenburg.



Berlin <-> Baltic Sea



Cottbus <-> Zielona Góra <-> Żary <-> Żagań





After an initial phase of market research, the design of the extension stage of the market study for modern railcars with innovative engines aimed at the establishment of a development dialogue with interested railcar producers to support the development of vehicles with innovative propulsion systems. A feasibility check for the possible operation of vehicles with innovative propulsion systems between Germany and Poland was prepared.

During pilot implementation, the Western Pomeranian Voivodeship intensified works aimed at the preparation of the necessary infrastructure for the Szczecin Metropolitan Railway, which will be introduced during the upcoming funding period 2021-2027. After electrification of the railway line between Angermünde and Szczecin Gumieńce until 2026 it will be possible to extend the network of the Szczecin Metropolitan Railway to Berlin-Brandenburg. However, joint concepts for cross-border offers are needed.

The study on the possible deployment of innovative and environmentally friendly vehicle propulsion technologies (e.g. hybrid engines, hydrogen fuel cells) for cross-border railcars (market study for modern railcars with innovative engines), the proposal of the Przewozy Regionalne (Polregio) railway company for attractive ticket offers between Berlin and the Baltic Sea and initial options for the integration of the railway line Angermünde - Szczecin into the Szczecin Metropolitan Railway are the key results provided through the implementation of this pilot action.

The offers' development in regional transport is the main finding of the pilot action, and it is determined by decisions taken on long-term planning horizons. Decisions during these procedures are taken by national and regional authorities, which are responding to the needs of passengers. Due to this situation, the improvement of offers in cross-border railway transport faces many challenges - decisions taken by national and regional authorities need to be harmonised, taking into account the needs of passengers travelling across borders. Additionally, many interoperability issues have to be taken into account, which requires additional investments in infrastructure, rolling stock and qualified staff.





Pilot action 6 - Cross-border integrated ticket Italy-Slovenia

The Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat and Slovenian railways-Passenger transport, Ltd. together with the bus operator Trieste Trasporti (Associated Partner) tested the transnational tool for the implementation of multimodal integrated tariff and ticketing schemes by elaborating a multimodal cross-border integrated ticket between train (Slovenia) and bus (Italy) in Trieste. This pilot action included six main activities:



- 1) Finalisation of the new web portal/app;
- 2) Definition of harmonised timetables between different transport modes;
- 3) Finalization and signature of the cross-border agreement between the operators, Trieste Trasporti and Slovenian Railways;
- 4) Approval and adoption of the “tariff resolution” by the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia;
- 5) Full operability of the new joint cross-border service (fare integration, emission of e-tickets);
- 6) Receiving of provisional statistics about the Pilot Action 6 by the Slovenian Railways and their associated partner (e.g. no. of travellers, most frequent stops, etc.) regarding the first period (March-May 19)

On April 18th, 2019, the integrated ticket Trieste-Ljubljana was presented to the public at the headquarters of the Central European Initiative Executive Secretariat in Trieste. The dissemination event was followed by a round table on the theme "Results and challenges of promoting public transport in a cross-border dimension".





On 9th December 2019, Trieste Trasporti and Slovenian Railways signed the amendment of the agreement for the extension of the cross-border integrated public transport service (bus/train) between Trieste and Ljubljana. By supporting opportunities for improving the public transport connections on both local and cross-border level, public transport operators of Italy and Slovenia, as well as with the regional authority of the Friuli Venezia Giulia facilitated successful institutional dialogue during the process of the extension of this cross-border service.

The process that led to the preparation and implementation of this pilot action was long and accounted for several activities. It included a thorough analysis during which several lacks and problems were identified, missing links solved and renovation works (road access to Villa Opicina station) performed. After several meetings and proficient discussions, operational, technical and financial aspects were commonly agreed to deploy the pilot action as best as possible, such as the tariff fare and the allocation of revenues across the border, ticket sales, the harmonisation of



The Villa Opicina rail station after the renovation works (missing link bus/train solved)

timetables, etc. Both the results and the process represent a very useful lesson that can be transferred to other cross border areas and to stakeholders located in Central Europe, not falling within the scope and geographical areas involved in this project.

The importance of the pilot action is not only relevant at the local level but, in terms of problems solved, steps made and knowledge gained, partners have experienced and developed a roadmap to implement cross border public transport integration. Considering this, the experience gained within the pilot action could be disseminated and transferred to other cross border areas, improving and having a wider impact.

CONNECT2CE ticket can be purchased online to travel from Ljubljana to Villa Opicina by train and then continue the trip to Trieste city centre by bus, using Trieste Trasporti bus services.





Pilot action 7 - Info-mobility tool to enhance multimodal public transport options in the Pilsen region

Regional Authority of the Pilsen Region tested the transnational tool for the implementation of info-mobility systems through a web portal for the reservation of bikes/stands at the stations of Nepomuk and Žihle in connection to trains to Pilsen.

The main goal of the pilot action was to introduce an info-mobility tool to inform customers about available fares and prices in the peripheral area of the Czech region of Pilsen. This tool is sided by the extension of the regional integrated public transport system to its bordering and remote areas (e.g. Klatovy and Domažlice).

This pilot action implemented 5 activities, which are:

- 1) Procurement of the info-mobility system supplier
- 2) The start of cooperation with the selected supplier
- 3) Preparation of the system together with the selected supplier and with POVED (Pilsen Public Transport Operator)
- 4) Preparing and printing of the Pilot Action leaflet
- 5) The development of the English language versing and system debugging





Pilot action 8 - Testing a multi-lingual and multimodal passenger information system

Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurt Railway Corp. tested the transnational tool for the implementation of info mobility systems through a multi-lingual and multimodal passenger information system dedicated to cross-border connections. The developments at Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurt Railway Corp's IT department, have provided devices to display the departure and arrival times of trains and buses in several languages on passenger information monitors acquired and installed at Kőszeg station during the pilot action.



During the pilot action the contact centre has been procured, which allows the following:

- 1) maximizing the availability of customer service capabilities within existing human resources capacity;
- 2) improving and developing customer relationships;
- 3) expanding channels and opportunities for passenger searches, managing requests in a unified system;
- 4) image enhancement, improvement of the company's public image.

The acquisition of the contact centre was completed after the second successful tender procedure. After fine-tuning, adding the necessary additions and training of the operators, it was possible to install the system.

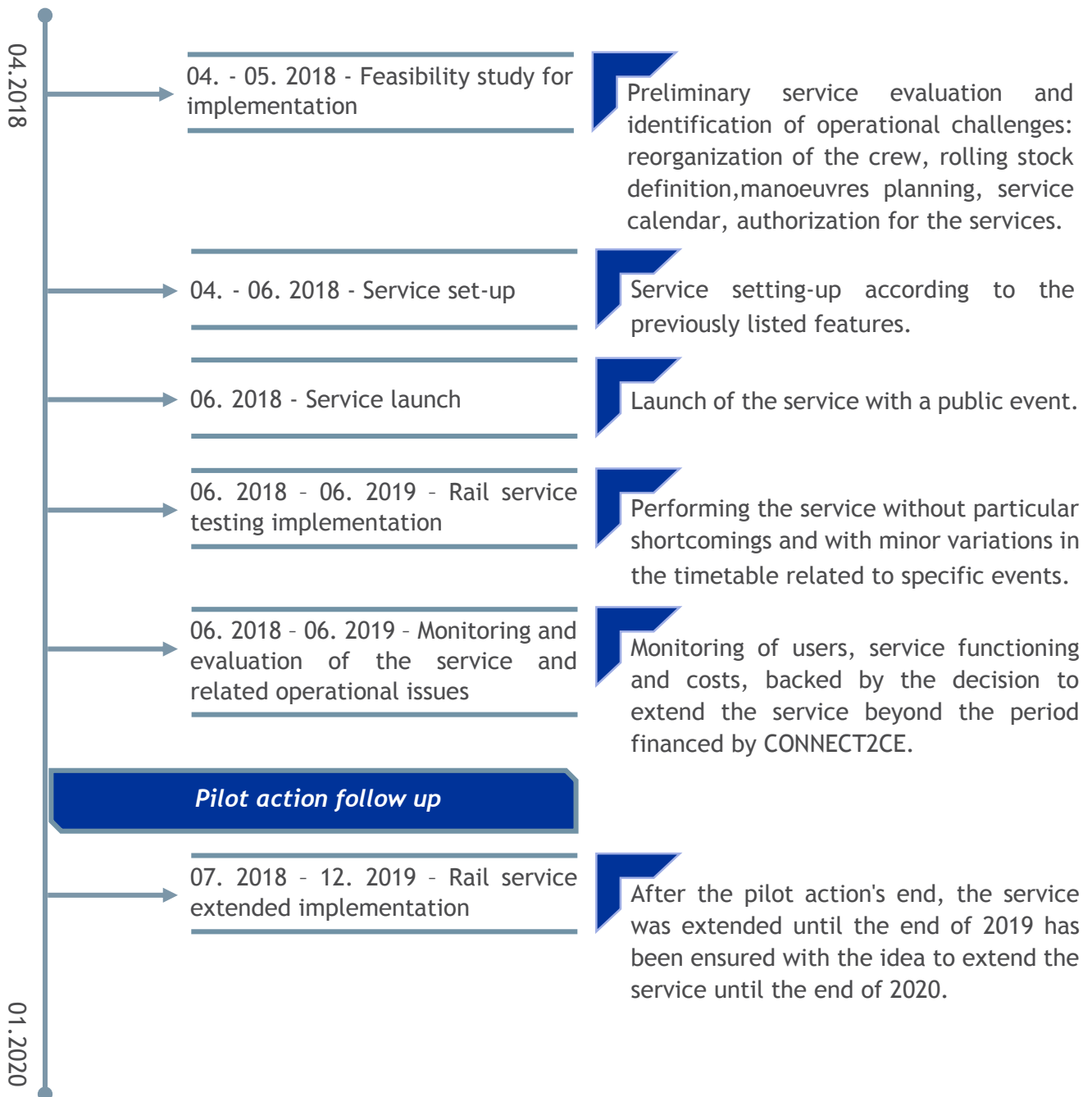
The Kőszeg station has been equipped with 2 intermodal 3-language passenger information monitors. These monitors display bus and train schedules. As the Kőszeg station is becoming an intermodal junction, the buses will be able to stop at one end of the passenger platform, and the trains on the other, thus enabling direct transfers.





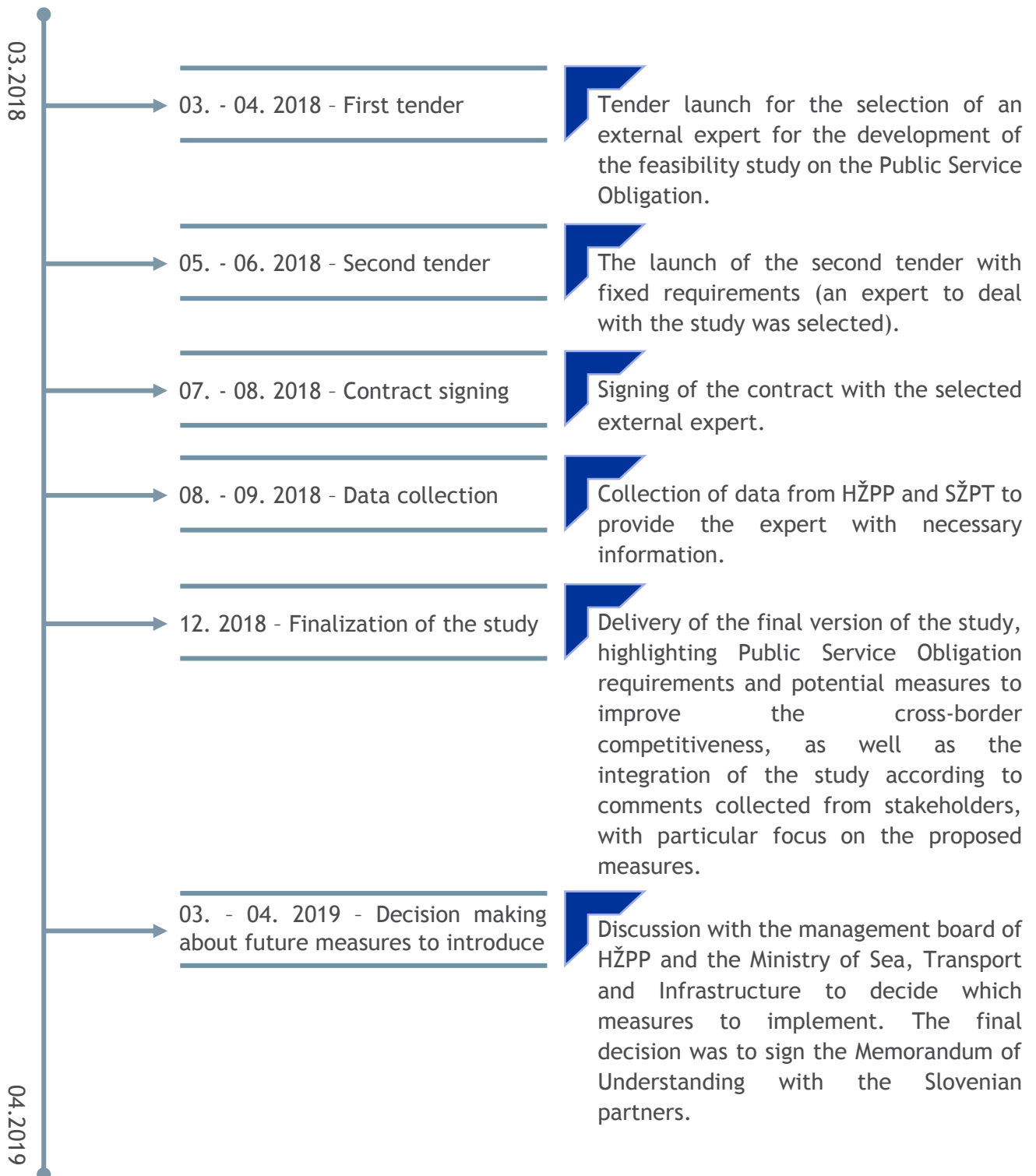
TIMELINES OF THE PILOT ACTIONS

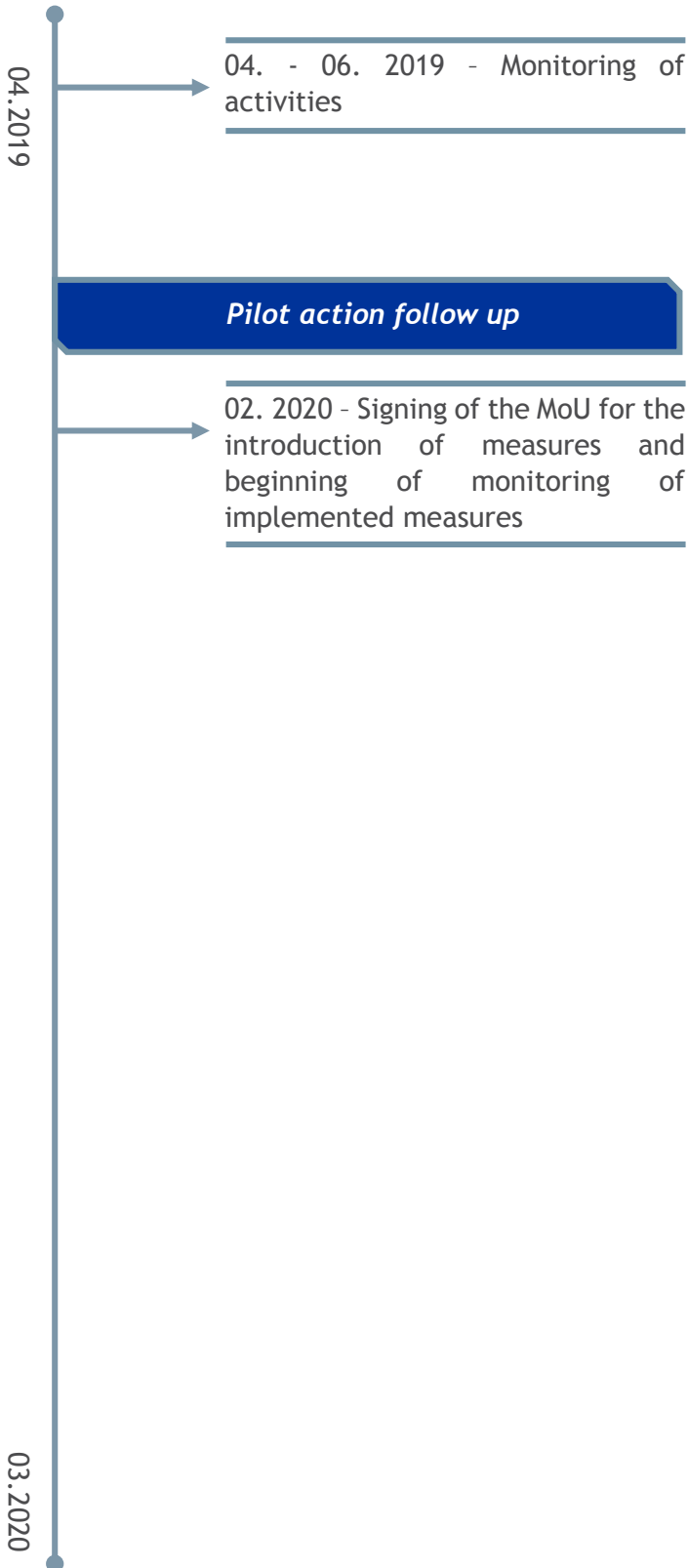
Timeline of Pilot Action 1:





Timeline of Pilot Action 2:





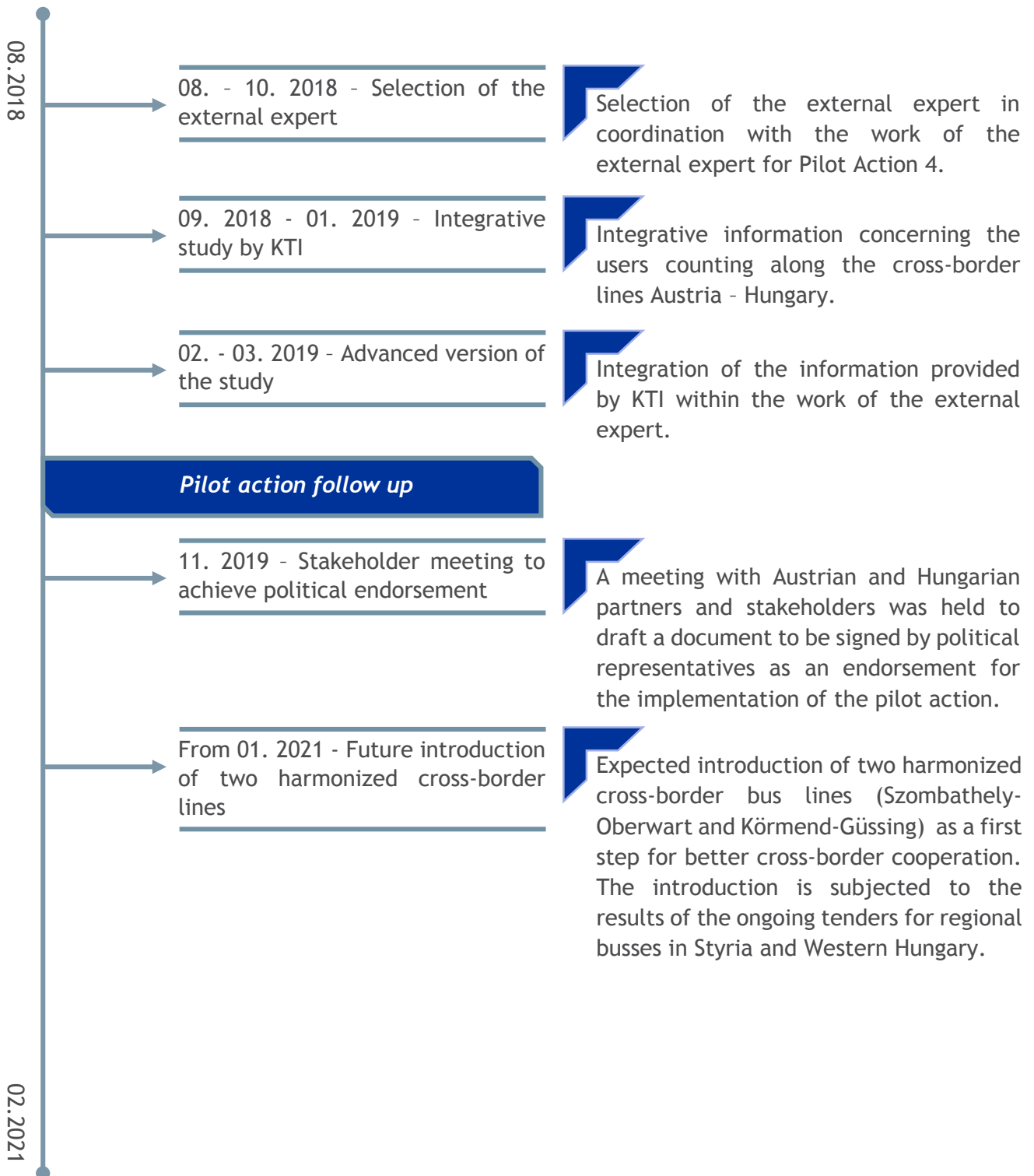
Evaluation of possible future effects related to the introduction of selected measures and the discussion on the future needs to monitor the satisfaction of users for implemented measures.

The Memorandum of Understanding on the improvement of international train services between Croatia and Slovenia was signed in February 2020. After the signature, the expected analysis of the users' satisfaction for the implemented measures begun.



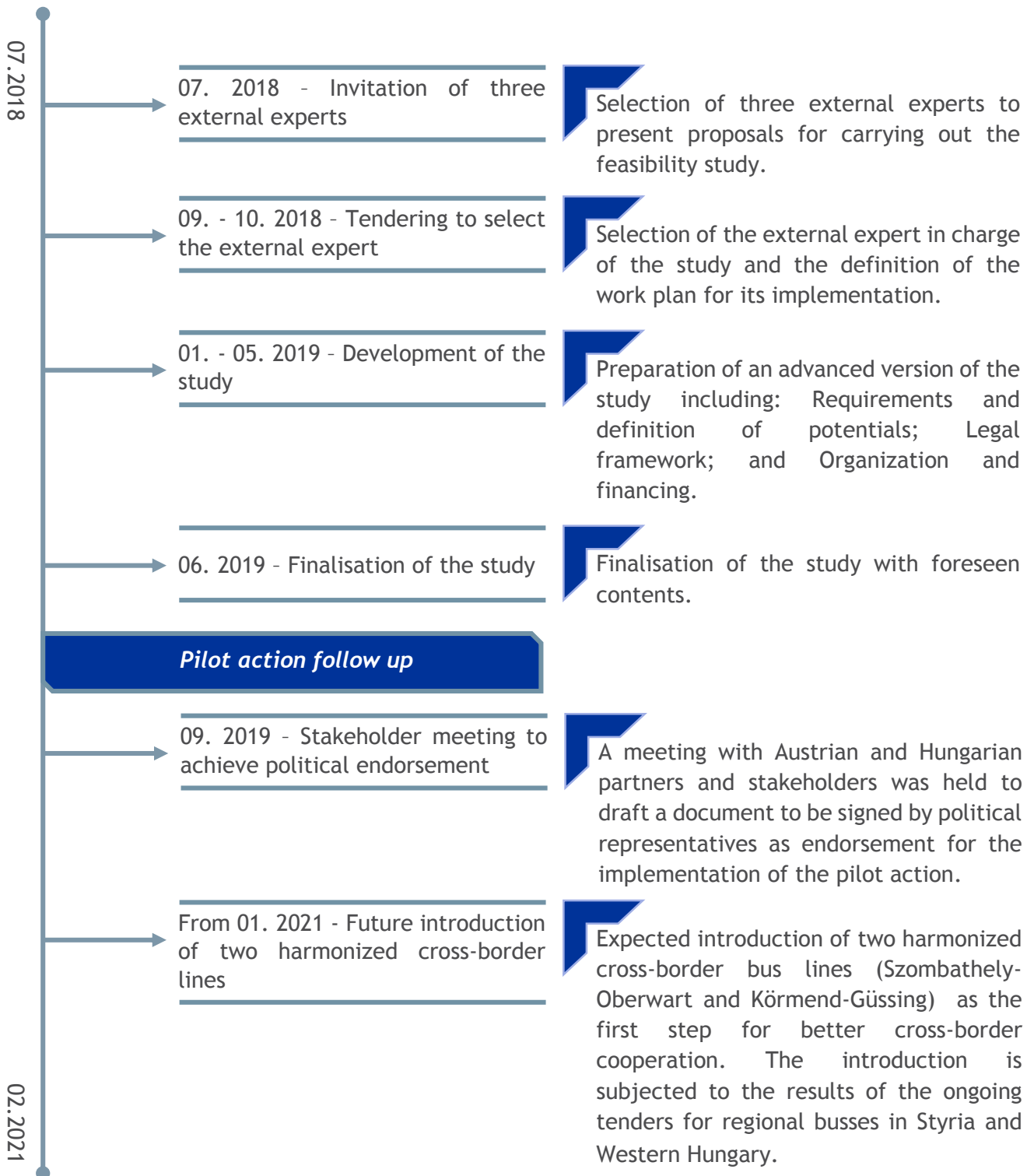


Timeline of Pilot Action 3:



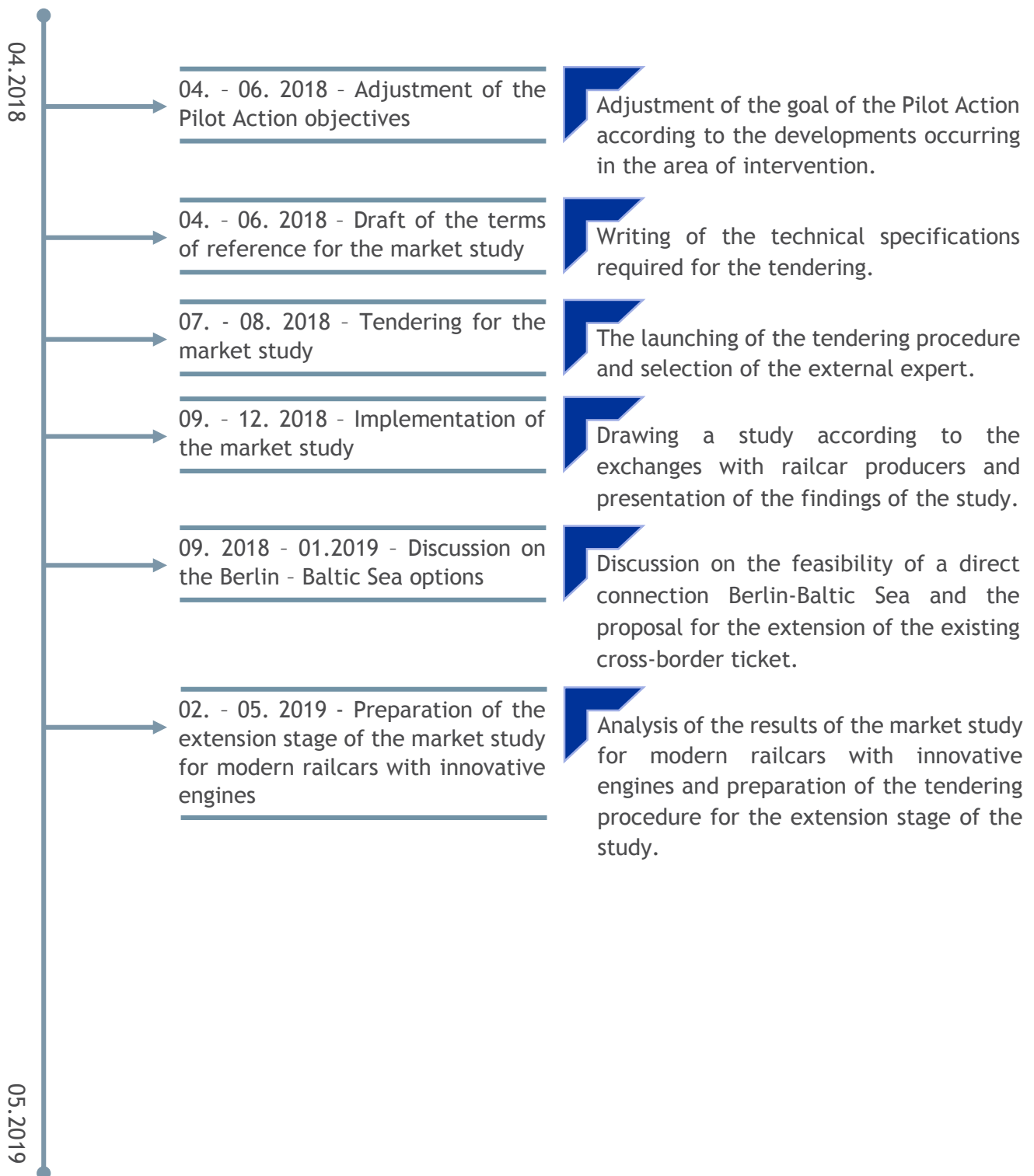


Timeline of Pilot Action 4:





Timeline of Pilot Action 5:





02.2019

02. - 05. 2019 - Elaboration of a proposal for attractive ticket offers between Berlin and the Baltic Sea

Elaboration of a proposal by the Polish regional railway company to introduce attractive tickets between Berlin and the Baltic Sea: extension of the current integrated ticket Berlin-Szczecin to Kołobrzeg and Świnoujście.

05. - 06. 2019 - Preparation of the requirements for a study on the cross-border extension of the Szczecin Metropolitan Railway to Brandenburg

Preparation of the tendering procedure for a study investigating the feasibility of the extension of the planned Szczecin Metropolitan Railway to Brandenburg.

Pilot action follow up

Until 02.2020 - Implementation of the extension stage of the market study for modern railcars with innovative engines

Launch of the tendering procedure, selection of the expert and development of the study. The aim is to understand which other cross-border contexts may be suitable for these railcars.

Until 09. 2019 - Attempt to achieve an agreement upon attractive ticket offers between Berlin and the Baltic Sea

Attempt to achieve an agreement to introduce attractive tickets between Berlin and the Baltic Sea: through the extension of the current integrated ticket Berlin-Szczecin to Kołobrzeg and Świnoujście.

Until 03. 2020 - Implementation of the study investigating the feasibility of the extension of the Szczecin Metropolitan Railway to Brandenburg

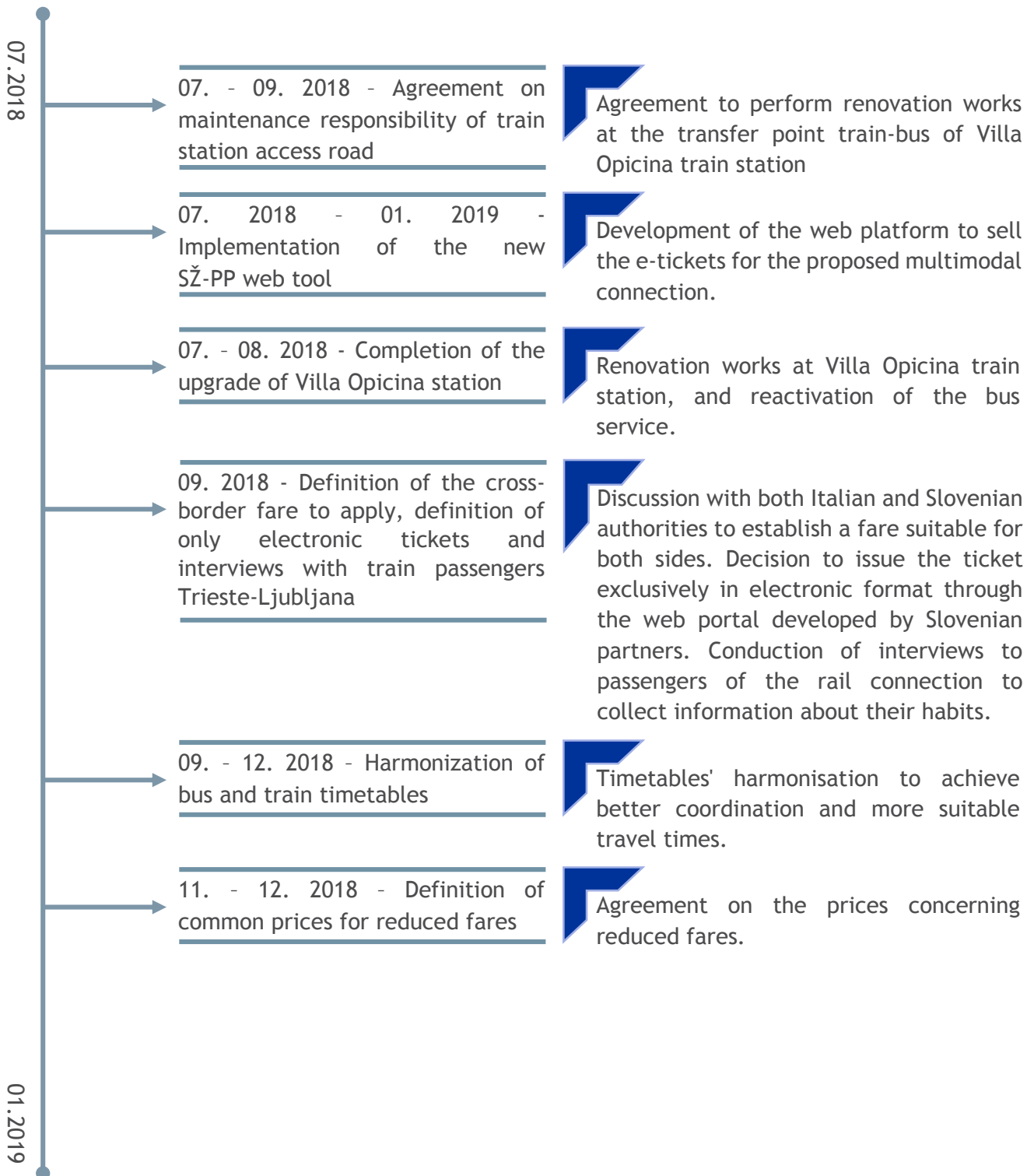
Launch of the tendering procedure, selection of the expert and development of the study. The aim is to examine how German destinations in Brandenburg may become part of this Polish network to be established by the year 2025/26.

04.2020





Timeline of Pilot Action 6:





02.2019

02. 2019 - Entry into the force of the agreement AP14-PP10, approval and adoption of the tariff resolution, a minor revision of the timetables and a minor revision of the web purchasing platform.

Entry into force of the agreement between the Slovenian and Italian side. Approval and adoption of the tariff resolution by the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region. A minor revision of the rail and bus timetables before the official launch of the ticket was performed to guarantee optimal multimodality, and a minor revision of the web portal was performed to ensure the consistency of the contents in all three languages.

03. - 06. 2019 - Testing of the integrated cross-border ticket

Beginning of the implementation of the testing period for the integrated cross-border ticket Ljubljana - Trieste.

06. 2019 - Assessment of service through statistics about the usage of the service in Italy and Slovenia

Launch of the tendering procedure, selection of the winner and development of the required study. The aim is to understand which other cross-border contexts may be suitable for these railcars.

Pilot action follow up

06. 2019 - 04. 2020 - Testing of the integrated cross-border ticket

The testing period for the integrated ticket active from 1st March 2019 and envisioned to last until 31st December 2019, has been prolonged until 30th April 2020.

06. - 08. 2019 - Assessment of service through statistics about the usage of the service in Italy and Slovenia

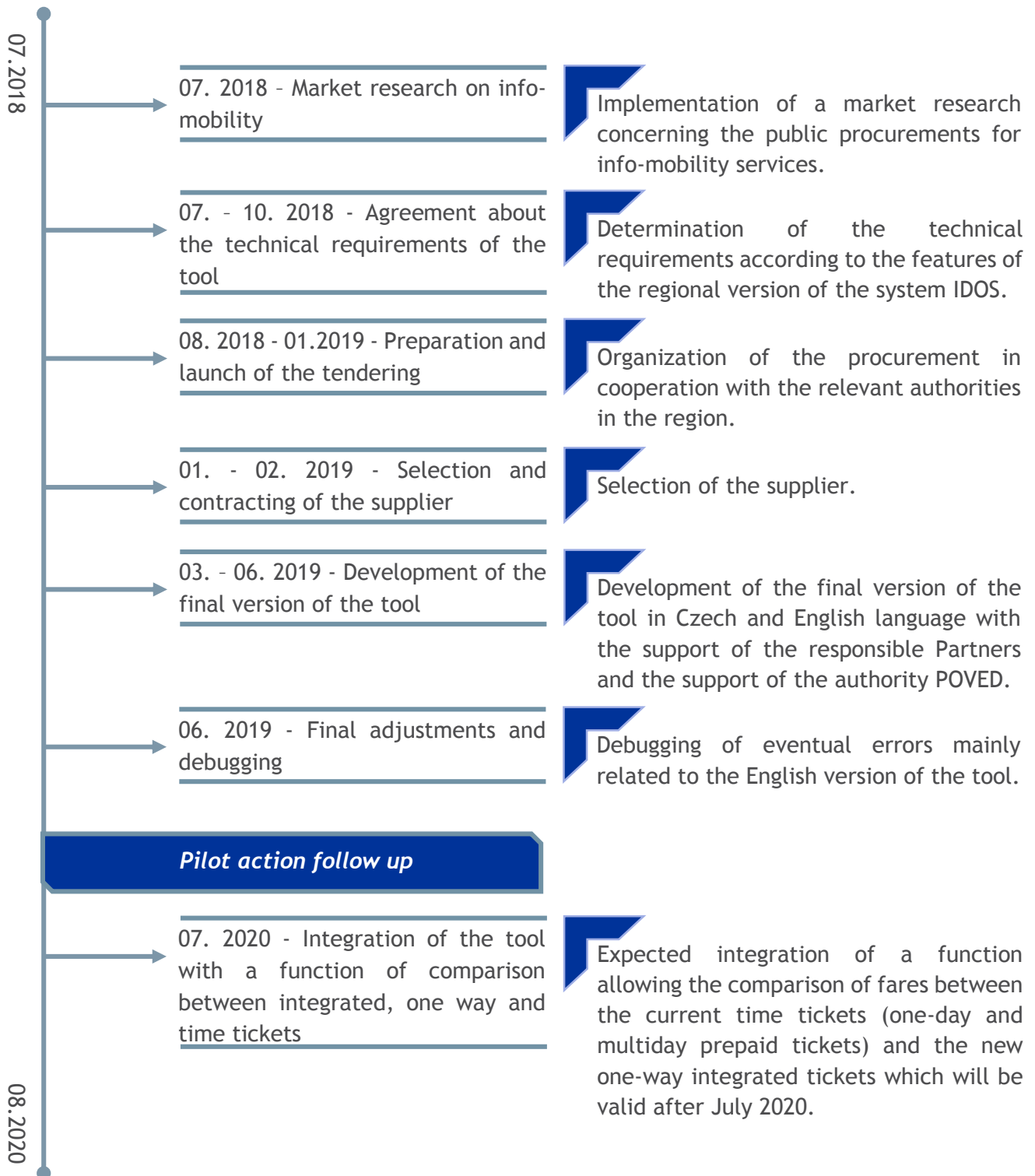
Regular collection of statistics about the use of the new service by users in both Italy and Slovenia.

09.2019



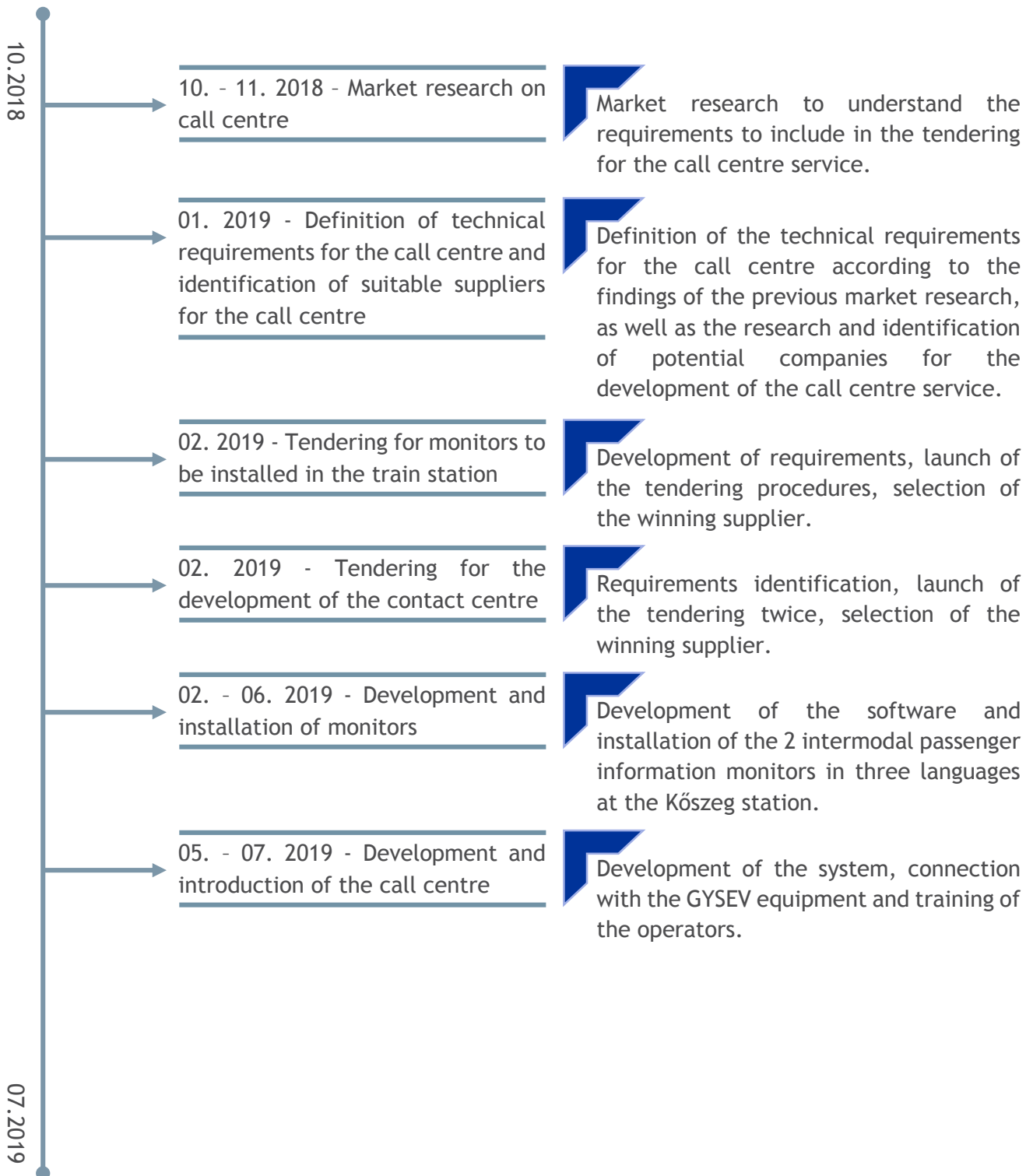


Timeline of Pilot Action 7:





Timeline of Pilot Action 8:





10.2018

05. - 06. 2019 - on-board systems upgrade with multilingual information

Upgrade of the on-board information systems with information provided both in Hungarian and German.

Pilot action follow up

Since 06. 2019 - The two monitors at the multimodal platform in the Kőszeg station are working

The test run of the monitors is complete. The monitors are operating.

11. 2019 - The contact centre became operational

The test run of the contact centre is complete and has been in continuous operation.

11. 2019 - Stakeholder meeting to achieve political endorsement

A meeting with Austrian and Hungarian partners and stakeholders was held to draft a document to be signed by political representatives as an endorsement for the implementation of the pilot action.

From 2021 - Transfer of one of the two installed monitors at the multimodal platform under construction in Kőszeg station

Transfer of one of the two monitors at the new platform which will smoothly link rail and bus services arriving and departing from the station of Kőszeg.

12.2021





PROJECT RESULTS

CONNECT2CE partners have been working hard over the last three years to reach the foreseen objectives. Thanks to their efforts and to the cooperation established with associated partners and stakeholders, several important results were achieved. All of these results were oriented towards the main project goal: solving the weak accessibility of regional, peripheral and cross-border areas of Central Europe to/from the main regional/national/EU transport networks and hubs and improving public transport services in those areas.

Transnational tools and training for improving peripheral and cross-border mobility in Central Europe

Transnational tools are one of the first project results, created to improve peripheral and cross-border passenger transport in Central Europe. These tools can be defined as 3 transnational governance decision support tools jointly developed at the transnational level with methods and concepts in the following fields:

- a) designing Public Service Obligations/Public Service Contracts/harmonising multimodal timetables/implementing regional/cross-border rail services;
- b) developing regional/cross-border multimodal integrated tariff schemes and tickets;
- c) applying Information and communications technology to info mobility systems.

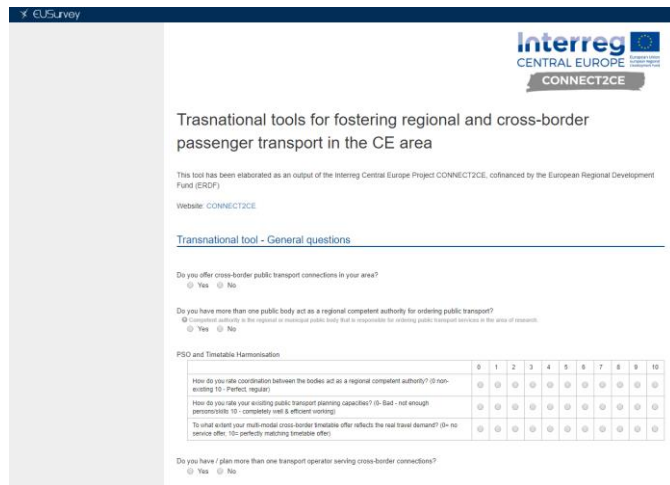
As understood from the previous transnational studies, CONNECT2CE's project partners belong to a rather heterogeneous group of regions from many different geographical, social-economic and sectoral areas. Thus, to elaborate equally usable decision support for any interested partner and virtually any interested professional from the area, special attention has been paid when designing the logical frameworks for enhancing the different thematic fields mentioned above.





Efficient management of public transport requires careful consideration of different possible options to choose from. Harmonising all of the aspects can be a very challenging task for related authorities, who are usually overloaded with other tasks and daily operational problems. Therefore, the transnational tool starts with a common set of general questions to properly identify the most problematic theme for the user and

therefore addressing the following in-depth analysis in one or more thematic questionnaires. Thus, in a web-based user-friendly platform, addressing various aspects and situations in the transport areas, each user should find the potential solution (based on best practices) on how to set-up, run and efficiently operate an attractive and competitive cross-border public transport system.



The Transnational tools were tested in pilot actions and served as a basis for the Transnational toolboxes and territorial strategies which were developed within the CONNECT2CE project. The Transnational tools contribute to the number of tools and services developed and implemented for the improvement of regional passenger transport contributing to the CONNECT2CE goals.

The Training for enhancing public planning capacities of peripheral and cross-border mobility in EU was organized in Brussels, Belgium. It covered a transnational training for mobility planners and operators through lectures and interactive sessions held by external experts and supported by representatives of the EU institutions (European Parliament and European Commission) focusing on the following 3 topics:

- a) Public Service Obligations/Public Service Contracts/timetable harmonisation/implementing regional/cross-border rail services;
- b) regional/cross-border multimodal integrated tariff schemes and tickets;
- c) applying Information communications technology to info mobility.

The training event was building a capacity for the implementation of the pilot actions. This output contributes to increasing the amount of training implemented on the improvement of regional passenger transport.





The results of the training have and will be used by local public authorities; regional public authorities; national public authorities; infrastructure and (public) service providers; higher education and research institutions; and International organisation, European Economic Interest Grouping under national law.

Target groups and stakeholders involvement, under the guidance of the KTI Institute for Transport Sciences Non-profit Limited Company led to the involvement of selected target groups and stakeholders in the Training for enhancing public planning capacities of peripheral and cross-border mobility in EU.

Each project partner held meetings with associated partners, target groups and stakeholders within their territory to collect their contribution in identifying the shortcomings in regional/cross-border public transport, with particular reference to the accessibility of peripheral/cross-border areas to the main regional/national/EU networks and hubs. The results of these meetings will have a long-lasting effect on project partners, associated partners and stakeholders well beyond the project's duration, as they will be included in their public transport planning procedures. These results have also served as a basis for the elaboration of the toolboxes and territorial strategies which were developed in the latter part of the project. Transnational tools have been transferred at the local and transnational level during local seminars organised by each project partner inviting the respective associated partners and stakeholders; transnational targeted events organised by Regional Management Burgenland, Public transport authority Berlin-Brandenburg and Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat.

8 Pilot actions implemented in Central Europe

Eight pilot actions enhancing peripheral and cross-border passenger transport accessibility were implemented all across Central Europe. The pilot actions were based on territorial needs assessments and have tested the transnational tools on three main topics:

- 1) connectivity (Public Service Obligation/harmonization of timetables/public transport cross-border passenger services);
- 2) multimodal integrated ticketing;
- 3) application of Information communications technology to info mobility.





The achievements recorded in each pilot actions served to feed toolboxes and territorial strategies. Additionally the pilot actions results have and will be used by local, regional, and national public authorities; infrastructure and (public) service providers; international organisations, European Economic Interest Group under national law; and the general public.

As part of the pilot actions, ad hoc meetings were organised by project partners with the involvement of the associated partners, target group and stakeholders. These meetings were held within their territories to have their contribution to the development and implementation of the pilot action. Besides, associated partners, target groups and stakeholders have contributed to the final evaluation of the pilot actions. The latter have been transferred to the relevant target audiences at two levels:

- 1) Targeted events (institutional and operational stakeholders) - all pilot actions via:
 - a) local seminars held by each project partner;
 - b) Transnational targeted events held by Regional Management Burgenland Ltd., Public transport authority Berlin-Brandenburg and Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat
- 2) local dissemination events to inform the general public about the start or activation of new products or services.

Transnational toolboxes

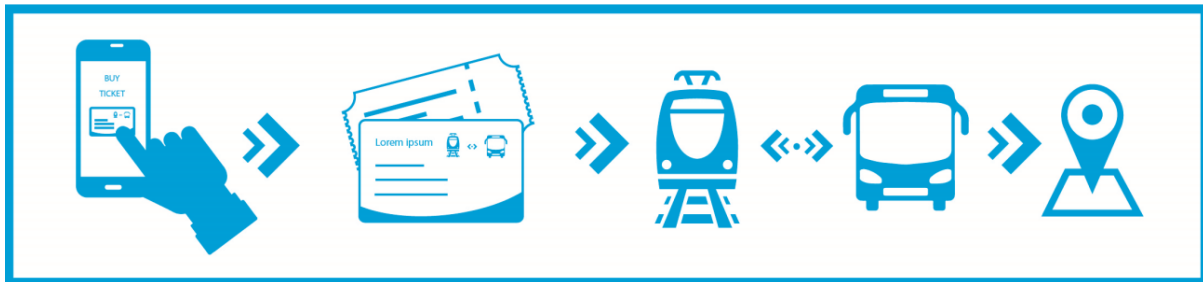
Transnational toolboxes for enhancing peripheral and cross-border public transport accessibility in Central Europe have been elaborated based on the previous project results, stakeholders consultation and lessons learned during the pilot actions. Three transnational toolboxes have been developed in total, and they elaborate the following:

- 1) Public Service Obligations/Public Service Contracts/timetable harmonisation/regional and cross-border public transport services;
- 2) Multimodal integrated tariff and ticketing systems;
- 3) Application of Information and communications technology to info mobility systems.



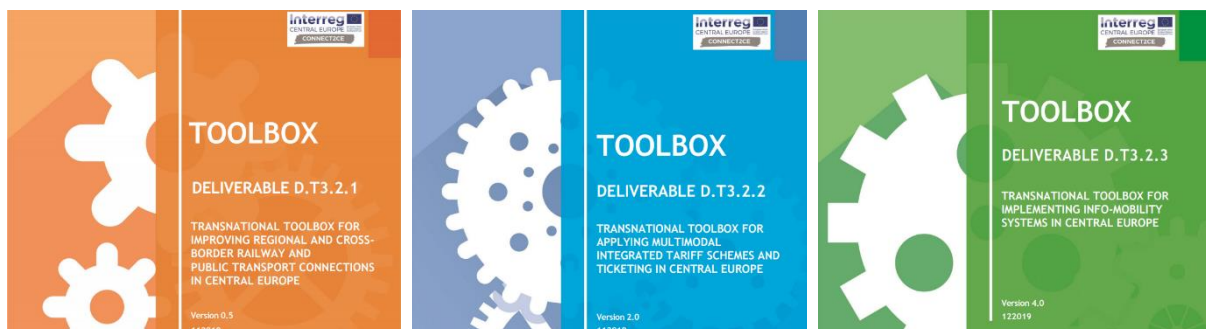


CONNECT2CE project analysed the current Central Europe's peripheral and cross-border accessibility to regional, national and European networks and hubs to provide tools and toolboxes to help decision-makers in choosing the measures and preparing specific projects for a gradual improvement of the situation. The role of decision-makers can be taken by any entity, authorised for improvement of cross-border public transport, i.e. public authority, transport agency or transport operator.



Three different Toolboxes have therefore been implemented, to cover three main topics addressed by CONNECT2CE:

1. Transnational toolbox for improving regional and cross-border railway and public transport connections;
2. Transnational toolbox for applying multimodal tariff schemes and ticketing in Central Europe;
3. Transnational toolbox for implementing info-mobility systems in Central Europe



Transnational toolboxes aim at facilitating the improvement of peripheral and cross-border accessibility in Central Europe to regional, national and European networks and hubs.

The objective of the transnational toolboxes is to provide practical guidance for public authorities and passenger transport operators for the implementation of measures and projects to improve public transport in the peripheral and cross-border areas.





The toolboxes give the user guidelines on the implementation of the improvement of a transport system or service in cross-border public transport - how to prepare an efficient project implementation plan. The toolbox guidelines are divided into implementation steps with a short description of the purpose and the information on the providers and the involved actors, required sources, implementation time, hints for implementation and the outputs and results achieved by implementation of a particular step.

Territorial strategies

Territorial strategies enhancing peripheral and cross-border public transport accessibility in Central Europe have translated the results of the pilot actions and the transnational toolboxes into one territorial strategy following the consultation of local associated partners, stakeholders and target groups, setting clear objectives and deadlines for the application of the project's results at regional and national level. This output contributed to a number of strategies and action plans developed and/or implemented for the improvement of regional passenger transport.



The main results have and will be used by local, regional and national public authorities; infrastructure and (public) service providers; higher education and research; and international organisations, European Economic Interest Group under national law. Ad hoc meetings with associated partners, target groups and stakeholders allowed their direct involvement in the development of territorial strategies for the improvement of peripheral and cross-border accessibility in Central Europe. To ensure the results achieved are further implemented in other realities, the strategy has been transferred to relevant target audiences at two levels:

- 1) local seminars organised by each project partner to the respective associated partners and stakeholders (municipal, regional, national governments, public transport operators not included in the partnership);
- 2) transnational targeted events organised by the Regional Management Burgenland, Public transport authority Berlin-Brandenburg & by the Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat.





RESULTS CAPITALISATION

With the ending of the CONNECT2CE project in May 2020, the logical question that pops up is - What is next?

CONNECT2CE, as the name states, aided in creating better connections for regional, peripheral and cross-border areas. The cooperation between different players at these levels started or improved during the project and will continue even after CONNECT2CE has finished. Two great examples of such cooperation are the examples of cooperation between Trieste Trasporti and Slovenian Railways, and the cooperation between Croatian Railways and Slovenian Railways.

At the end of 2019, Trieste Trasporti and Slovenian Railways have signed the amendment of the agreement for the extension of the cross-border integrated public transport service between Trieste and Ljubljana, which prolongs the service until 30th April 2020.

In February 2020, Slovenian Railways Passenger Transport and Croatian Railways Passenger Transport have signed the Memorandum of Understanding which confirms the cooperation between the two countries and their dedication towards facilitating better quality travel and providing sustainable international services.

After the finished construction of The Kőszeg station, the equipped intermodal multi-lingual passenger information monitors will display bus and train schedules. The operation of these monitors makes it possible to display the departure and arrival times of trains and buses in several languages on the passenger information monitors acquired and installed at Kőszeg station during pilot action 8. The monitors will remain operational after the end of CONNECT2CE.

As part of Pilot Action No.4, two new bus routes between Austria and Hungary have been developed to strengthen the South East Transport Axis (SETA) corridor. These public transport routes will also remain operational after CONNECT2CE has finished.





The MICOTRA experimental extension of the cross-border passenger train service from Villach, Austria to Trieste, Italy implemented during pilot action 1 ran for one year during the testing period and was successful enough to extend that service beyond the 1-year testing period, and beyond the duration of the project.

Harmonising timetables along Szombathely-Koszeg and Szombathely-Szentgotthard with the possibility of service extension to Austria and Slovenia has helped in improving the long-term public transport connections at the Hungarian border area. During the pilot action, a multi-perspective technical study has been developed and can be used by the respective authorities even after the project's end in order to harmonise timetables of regional buses and trains with special attention paid to the planned cross-border bus services.

Przewozy Regionalne (Polregio) railway company and regional partners from Berlin, Brandenburg and Western Pomeranian Voivodeship are highly interested in the introduction of attractive ticket offers between Berlin and the Baltic Sea, extending the integrated ticket for cross-border travels between Berlin and Szczecin to Kołobrzeg and Świnoujście. The preparation of the necessary infrastructure for the Szczecin Metropolitan Railway, which shall be introduced during the upcoming funding period 2021-2027 was done under the pilot action 5..Indeed it delivered a Study on the possible deployment of innovative and environmentally friendly vehicle propulsion technologies for cross-border railcars and the Proposal of the Przewozy Regionalne railway company for attractive ticket offers between Berlin and the Baltic Sea. Both of these are crucial documents that help in improving connections between Germany and Poland in the present as well as the future.



CONCLUSION

In order to tackle weak accessibility of regional, peripheral and cross-border areas of Central Europe to and from the main regional, national and EU transport networks and hubs, the CONNECT2CE elaborated harmonised and coordinated strategies and tools to be mainstreamed and implemented at regional and cross border level. In particular, these strategies and tools have been applied to pilot actions performed in three areas, which are all connected and intertwined with each other. Those areas are Connectivity; Integrated ticketing and tariff schemes; Implementation of the most efficient and innovative Information communications technology tools on info-mobility. All three contributed to the enhancement of public transport services of peripheral and cross-border regions.

Connect2CE's partnership produced 7 main project results, all of which were accomplished through a successful cross-border and transnational cooperation, and those are the following:

- 1) Transnational tools for improving peripheral and cross-border passenger transport in Central Europe
- 2) Training for enhancing public planning capacities of peripheral and cross-border mobility in Central Europe
- 3) 8 pilot actions implemented all across Central Europe to enhance the peripheral and cross-border passenger transport
- 4) Transnational toolboxes enhancing peripheral and cross-border public transport accessibility in Central Europe
- 5) Territorial strategies enhancing peripheral and cross-border public transport accessibility in Central Europe
- 6) Carriage renting for the extension of the MICOTRA train to Trieste
- 7) Multi-lingual and multimodal passenger information system in the cross-border area Hungary-Austria.

Through the pilot actions, coordinated strategies and tools were mainstreamed and implemented at the regional and cross-border level. The results of these actions help the policymakers improve the public transport system planning capacities, which, in the end, benefits the public transport users, especially those living and working in low-density and sparsely populated peripheral areas.

Lead Partner
Central European Initiative Executive Secretariat
Mr. Paolo Dileno, Project manager

For additional information visit:
www.interreg-central.eu/connect2ce





ANNEX - PROJECT PARTNERS

Connect2CE's partnership consists of 13 project partners and 12 associated partners. The lead partner is the Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat (CEI).

Lead partner - Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat

Established 30 years ago, the Central European Initiative is an intergovernmental regional forum, the oldest and largest regional organization, committed to supporting European integration of non-EU countries through cooperation between and among its Member States and with the European Union, other interested public institutions or private and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as international and regional organisations.



In order to offer a solid contribution to European integration the Central European combines multilateral diplomacy and project management, both as donor and recipient, and brings together 17 Member States from Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe and serves as an institutional platform for political, economic, scientific, academic and cultural cooperation between those countries. According to its Plan of Action 2018-2020, its member countries gave mandate to the CEI - Executive secretariat to participate in activities in the field of Connectivity: contributing to the rehabilitation and development of transport infrastructures and services as a catalyst of international trade, investments and economic development. Additionally, the CEI-ES will continue focusing to the extension of the TEN-T Network to the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership Countries, TEN-T guidelines, Motorways of the Sea Policy, green transport corridors and intermodal terminals policy as well as improvement of coordination in the development of cross border transport connections in the CEI region. The Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat has over 15 years' experience in EU co-financed projects in terms of both participation and management.





Since 2004, the Secretariat participated in 37 EU projects, acting as Lead Partner in 8 of them, namely:

SEETAC (South-East Europe Programme);

ACROSSEE (South-East Europe Programme);

ADRIA A (Cross-Border Cooperation programme Italy-Slovenia 2007-2013);

CERES (Seventh Framework Programme);

Improving Cooperation in South-East Europe by Actions for Strengthening the Regional Cooperation Council (IPA Regional Programme);

COME-IN! (Central Europe 2014-2020);

NAMIRG (DG ECHO 2017-2019).

Currently, the CEI-ES is involved in 16 EU co-funded projects, acting as LP in 5 of them:

CONNECT2CE (Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE), AD RIPASS (Interreg Adrion Programme), CELEBIO (H2020), PRE-RIGHTS (DG JUSTICE) and FORTIS (Interreg CBC Italy - Slovenia 2014-2020).

The CEI's experience encompasses both European Territorial Cooperation and sectorial programmes directly managed by the European Commission. Moreover, the CEI also acts as a donor and has twenty years' experience in the management of its own funds and programmes, i.e. the CEI Know-how Exchange programmes, CEI Technical Cooperation supported by the CEI Fund at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the CEI Cooperation Fund. In the context of CONNECT2CE, CEI acts as Lead Partner, responsible for overall coordination, day-to-day project management, as well as financial and risk management. Finally, the CEI-ES was in charge of the pilot action no. 6, namely the development of a cross border integrated ticket Italy-Slovenia, provided in cooperation of Trieste Trasporti.





Project partners

CONNECT2CE's 13 project partners consist of already mentioned Lead Partner - Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat, as well as the following:

European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen (EURAC);
Udine Cividale Railways Company Ltd. (FUC);
Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurt Railway Corp (GYSEV);
HŽ Passenger Transport Ltd. (HŽPT);
KTI Institute for Transport Sciences Non Profit Ltd. (KTI);
Institute of Traffic and Transport Ljubljana L.L.C. (PIL);
Regional Authority of the Pilsen Region (PK);
Regional Management Burgenland Ltd. (RMB);
Slovenian railways - Passenger transport Ltd (SŽ-PP);
Sistemi Territoriali Ltd.(ST);
Intermodal Transport Cluster (KIP);
Public transport authority Berlin-Brandenburg (VBB)

This segment will go over the basic information about each project partner, as well as their competences and role in the project.

European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen is an advanced research centre, with its Headquarters located in Bolzano and offices in Vienna and Brussels. European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen is organized in 11 Institutes that cover integrative topics, from governmental trends to studies on renewable energies, sustainable development and protection of natural resources. Its activities include (inter)national research, training and cooperation with public and private clients. Within the European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen, the Institute for Regional Development and Location Management was involved in CONNECT2CE. It focuses on the promotion of sustainable development practices in the residential, business and recreational spaces of peripheral areas, analysing local conditions to measure the spatial and socio-economic impact of human activities.

eurac
research





European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen covers managerial; scientific; and dissemination activities. Their experience in regional and cross-border passenger transport, deriving from the participation and management of previous EU projects grants an ideal background for this task. European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen is also the privileged contact with the Mobility Agency of Bolzano, associated partner involved in stakeholder/targeted events and the uptake of project results. European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen was responsible for the Italian data collection. The main tasks are to provide data and best practices about South Tyrol and Italian regions and to contribute to the analysis and evaluation of selected measures in the field of transnational and peripheral rail transport and integrated fares. European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen was also responsible for the writing of specific technical documents. Their quality is granted by internal publication rules that follow a rigorous peer-review process. European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen grants a diffusion of project results to stakeholders at local and transnational levels. European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen cooperates with relevant international bodies, such as the Alpine and the Carpathian Conventions. European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen is a member of several associations on regional development (UNESCO Dolomites Foundation, Alpine Network, European Regional Science Association, etc.). The relationship with the Italian Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea grant a privileged connection with the national political level. European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen has not performed any economic activity within CONNECT2CE.

Udine - Cividale line opened in 1886, and it is still in service, run since January 2005 by **Societa Ferrovie Udine Cividale s.r.l.**, and 100% owned by Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Administration. Udine Cividale Railways Company, with its passenger service on its company railway line, has an important role by connecting the urban and suburban areas with Udine, transporting around 450.000 passengers per year.



Udine Cividale Railways Company was involved in all activities of CONNECT2CE, particularly in the enhancement of public transport planning capacities for better regional and cross-border passenger transport in Central Europe, as well as providing a strategic framework for improving regional and cross-border passenger transport in Central Europe.





Udine Cividale Railways Company has actively participated in all activities since regional and cross-border passenger services are at the heart of its mission. Moreover, Udine Cividale Railways Company has implemented the experimental extension of the MICOTRA train to Trieste, with two trains per day in each direction for one year on Saturdays and Sundays, which is the main benefit for Udine Cividale Railways Company from participating in the project. Udine Cividale Railways Company has organized a local dissemination event for its pilot action and has engaged the Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Administration - its associated partner - in all the project's activities, both the technical and communication activities. Udine Cividale Railways Company has performed economic activity, consisting of the sale of tickets for the extension of the MICOTRA train to Trieste.

Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurt Railway Corp is a passenger railway operator in the Western-Transdanubia region and Burgenland, based in Sopron, Hungary. The company is a joint enterprise of the states of Hungary and Austria. The mission of the company is to better connect the peripheral and cross-border areas.

Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurt Railway Corp has been involved in all parts of the CONNECT2CE project and has contributed by mapping the public transport connections and their

current status along the tri-state-border of Austria-Hungary-Slovenia to improve the transport of the peripheral areas near the tri-state border. Moreover, Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurt Railway Corp has also mapped the public transport connections and their current status in and around Kőszeg functioning as a central transport node along the state-border of Austria-Hungary to improve the transport of the peripheral areas near the state-border. Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurt Railway Corp has implemented one pilot action, foreseeing a multimodal and multi-lingual passenger information system to the cross-border railway line with Austria. The main benefit for Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurt Railway Corp from participating in the project is to improve the rail passenger service connections to and from the peripheral areas to its main railway line, as well as to streamline cross-border connections with Austria and possibly to Slovenia. Local dissemination events followed all implemented pilot actions. No economic activity has been performed by Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurt Railway Corp.

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HŽ Passenger Transport Ltd. is currently the only authorised passenger railway operator in Croatia. It is 100% owned by the state and it provides public passenger transport services in both urban and rural

areas, connecting them by commuter trains, short-range trains, long-distance domestic and transnational trains. The Company has around 1900 employees and is financed partly by the state and partly from tickets. HŽ Passenger Transport is responsible for pilot implementation in Croatia as well as for providing the partnership with relevant data for joint activities. Benefits for HŽ Passenger Transport consist of providing better service to users, attracting people to greener transport modes, benefits from better connections of peripheral areas to the main nodes and best practices. HŽ Passenger Transport also expects to benefit long-term, by capitalizing on the Public Service Obligation strategy, since one of its main goals is to have long-term Public Service Contract(s) with the responsible authority(es) for the sustainable planning and business operation. From the policy point of view, HŽ Passenger Transport expects to benefit by helping to set feasible strategy and tools and test it through pilot implementation. HŽ Passenger Transport has not performed any economic activity as part of this project.



The **KTI Institute for Transport Sciences Non-profit Limited Company** is a priority public benefit company. The state-owned KTI is one of the research bases of the Hungarian Ministry for Innovation and Technology. KTI's mission is to create a continuously developing, safe and competitive transport environment in the interest of

maintaining a well-resourced environment, taking into consideration the aspect of sustainability and compliance with EU directives for transport policy, comprising freight and passenger transport, KTI contributed to the project with its technical and scientific expertise. In particular, KTI led the elaboration of transnational tools for improved connectivity, integrated ticketing and info mobility/e-ticketing. Additionally, KTI implemented the harmonisation of bus and train timetables in the Hungarian border area - in close cooperation with Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurt Railway Corp and Regional Management Burgenland. KTI has involved its associated partner - Ministry for Innovation and Technology of Hungary - in all its activities within the project. KTI has not performed any economic activity within the project.





Institute of Traffic and Transport Ljubljana L.L.C. is a research organisation founded by Slovenian Railways with over 50 years of tradition in research and development projects in all transport modes in Slovenia and EU. With different activities in railways development, the Institute of Traffic and Transport Ljubljana became a full member of the International Railway Research Board at the International union of Railways and a member of Slovenian Chamber of Engineers registered at Slovenian Research Agency. For the implementation of activities within CONNECT2CE, the Institute of Traffic and Transport Ljubljana has competences on management, consulting and technical assistance on the national and international level. The main activity of PIL is focused on the strategic framework for improving regional and cross-border passenger transport in Central Europe and the elaboration of tools and toolboxes sourcing from the expertise developed in the institute. The Institute of Traffic and Transport Ljubljana has coordinated activities to prepare transnational toolboxes and transnational strategies for improvement of regional/cross-border railway and public transport connections, improvements on multimodal integrated ticketing, tariff systems and infomobility systems. Moreover, the Institute of Traffic and Transport Ljubljana actively participated in preparing of transnational tools, feasibility studies and pilot actions for improvement of public transport services. The main benefit for the Institute of Traffic and Transport Ljubljana within CONNECT2CE is additional capacity building in the field of integrated passenger transport. Institute of Traffic and Transport Ljubljana has also involved the Ministry of Infrastructure of the Republic of Slovenia as their associated partner.



Pilsen Region is one of fourteen regional administrative units in the Czech Republic. The regions are independent local governments. As the supreme regional transportation authority, it cooperates closely with national authorities and has direct influence onto public authorities, national decision-makers and politicians. It is the best organization to adopt the project's result in practice and introduce the issue of better public transport accessibility in peripheral areas to relevant stakeholders.





With its knowledge, it has contributed to studies of the transport situation in the Pilsen Region, specification of weakness and searching for innovative solutions while applying information technology. Pilsen Region has implemented a pilot action to improve the connection of regional peripheral areas with Pilsen City. Pilsen region has not performed economic activity within the project.

Regional Management Burgenland Ltd. is a province-owned service agency of project management experts who are conversant with EU regional cooperation programmes, procedures and management conditions. Regional Management Burgenland is the coordination and information centre for interregional programmes in Burgenland and is a member of the



Europe Direct Network of the EU. Within CONNECT2CE, Regional Management Burgenland has focused on the definition of the legal framework to enable cross-border micro public transport services in the pilot region Kőzög/Oberpullendorf. A cross-border Public Service Obligation has been designed to gain specific knowledge and the adequate legal framework to allow innovative public transport solutions to serve the populations on the two sides of the border, as to better connect them to the main regional and national transport networks and hubs. Moreover, Regional Management Burgenland has held high-level dialogue-oriented targeted events with the responsible institutions and operators located on the South East Transport Axis (SETA) corridor and as to involve them in the projects “Advisory Board” to further develop transnational passenger connectivity in Burgenland and Central Europe. Regional Management Burgenland has not performed any economic activity within the project.

Slovenian railways - Passenger transport, Ltd. is the only authorised rail passenger transport operator in



Slovenia. The company is fully owned by the Slovenian State. Within this project, Slovenian railways - Passenger transport is a leading partner of the national consortium. More specifically, Slovenian railways - Passenger transport focuses on connecting all nodes of the Slovenian railway network, with particular reference to peripheral areas, aiming to enhance the link to the main nodes of the Slovenian network, and also on improving cross-border connections.





The main benefit for the company is to provide better service to public transport users, connecting with other operators, especially those in peripheral areas, promote eco-friendly transport and use information from best practice.

Slovenian railways - Passenger transport also provided information about Public Service Obligation for national and cross-border railway service in Slovenia and cooperated in the preparation of transnational Public Service Contract Croatia-Slovenia and harmonization of timetables for peripheral areas. Slovenian railways conducted two pilot actions and has not performed any economic activity within the project.

Sistemi Territoriali Ltd. is an in-house body of the Veneto Region in charge of the management of



regional transport infrastructures. Its institutional role envisages the involvement and the awareness raising of relevant key actors like Ports and stakeholders for the implementation and sustainability of the activities. Sistemi Territoriali has significant experience in managing national and international projects, with a focus on transport and logistics field. Within CONNECT2CE Sistemi Territoriali studied how to improve its railway services through the analysis of quality service and of potential improvements such as increasing number of trains and harmonizing the timetables with the cadenced path system already in use on the main network which resulted in the better connection of the regional peripheral areas to the main node of the railway network. Sistemi Territoriali has not implemented pilot actions within the project but has benefited from the ones developed by other project partners. Sistemi Territoriali has contributed to the elaboration of the transnational strategies.

Intermodal Transport Cluster is a public non-profit association established on the initiative of the Croatian Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Transport and Infrastructure with a vast experience in EU and



**Klaster
intermodalnog
prijevoza**

national project management as a project leader, partner and work package leader. Intermodal Transport Cluster's role in the project is the leader of communications. Through this project, the organisation has strengthened its research and dissemination capabilities by gaining new experiences during the project. It also gained access to new innovative sustainable transport solution and innovative practices for boosting public transport in smaller and cross border European regions.





In addition to those benefits, the Intermodal Transport Cluster also strengthened its international networking by meeting new stakeholders from the sector of sustainable and innovative transport. No economic activities have been carried out in the project.

Public transport authority Berlin-Brandenburg covers the German Federal States of Berlin and Brandenburg. Public transport authority Berlin-Brandenburg's tasks are the coordination and planning of the public transport service within the region, to offer an integrated customer information service, coordination and further development of the integrated fare system, the sales concept and the revenue sharing as well as tendering, contracting and controlling service contracts with rail operators. Within the project, Public transport authority Berlin-Brandenburg implemented a pilot action aimed at leveraging the potentials of cross-border railway transport through new and tailored offers. The pilot action has addressed cross-border railway transport (in particular Berlin-Szczecin and Cottbus-Zielona Góra/Żary-Żagań) between Germany and Poland. All activities have been performed in close cooperation with the partners of the "Transport Round Table" of the Oder-Partnership, to whom project's results have been transferred through transnational targeted events. Public transport authority Berlin-Brandenburg has provided its knowledge and experiences to the partnership, with particular focus on multimodal integrated tariffs and ticketing, contracting of transport services, info mobility and e-ticketing systems. The main benefit for Public transport authority Berlin-Brandenburg from participating in the project is gaining knowledge on target groups and the demand for offers in cross-border railway transport and experience in overcoming technical barriers. Public transport authority Berlin-Brandenburg has not performed any economic activity within the project or as a result of it.



DISCOVER MORE

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