**INTERREG Alpine Space Project**

**"Sustainable Mobility Behaviours in the Alpine Region – SaMBA"**

# RECOMMENDATIONS
# for implementing harmonized
# Behaviour change policies

October 2021

**Short Description**

This document describes a set of recommendations for use by alpine space public authorities in their mobility and behaviour change policies.

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## Introduction

In every country of the Alpine Space, due to economic, environmental and social issues, public authorities aim to reduce the prevalence of cars (especially occupied by only one person) and split the modal share between more virtuous means of transport.

A lot is and has been done for the past years and decades, to reduce car prevalence and dependence, but in almost every place, with mixed results. Pulling triggers like constraints and limitations against cars, and incentives towards new mobility options, it has been a constant debauchery of means to operate a real, broad and sustainable modal shift within population. Despite all this, people, especially in cities, continue to suffer from noise, pollution and congestion.

The Interreg project SaMBA (Sustainable Mobility Behaviour in Alpine space) conducted from April 2018 to October 2021 had for goal to study behaviour change in mobility, especially based on rewards and pricing. By means of pilot cases and others experiments, some rewards and financial incentives have been tested in order to check their ability to trigger behaviour change in mobility.

All the elements collected from national and international workshops, experiments, encounters, meetings with experts, were used as a basis for the following set of recommendations:

## Behaviour change in mobility

Changing your daily mobility is a big leap for almost everyone. The change has to be consciously chosen, and never forced or constrained if you want to make it sustainable.

For that reason, the mobility alternative needs to provide to the user enough benefits, that can be diverse, and anyway, at a higher level than disadvantages. And in doing so, make users choose this option for a better mobility.

### The behaviour changes stages

Although the following model has been set up in the 80's, it is still very accurate, and describes the process people mostly go through on the way to change, going from a mindset of "not even thinking of changing their habits" to "being convinced and use some alternatives". This process is usually long and requests personal or public actions to proceed through all the stages.
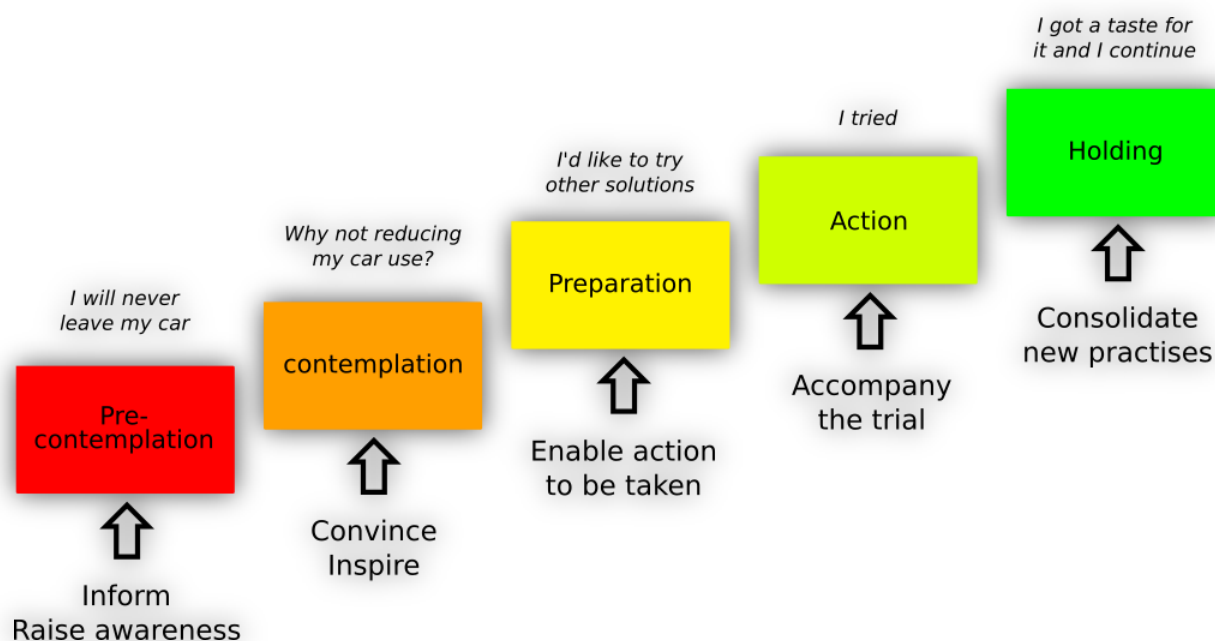
*Transtheoretical model*
*JO Prochaska – CC Di Clemente (1982)*

For each step, some actions can be taken to make people switch to the next one, and this includes different actions like informing, accompanying, convincing.

However, we have recently noticed some waves of change due to other causes without passing through this long-term process. Some events, like the Covid-19 pandemic, can also lead people to suddenly find other mobility solutions because they feel unsafe or scared. Technological improvement has also a role to play when it comes to provide new mobility objects (electric and micro mobility). Social tendencies carried amongst others by social media, can also have a high power of change.

All these elements add new inputs in the behaviour change process that could explain some sudden changes. However, public authorities don't have any control over these waves. They can only stay attentive in order to be reactive when it comes, providing accompaniment with last minute rules, temporary infrastructures, targeted communication.

## Considering user targets stage in mobility projects

Although it has been proven in the past decade that personal accompaniment is the most effective way to get people to change, this method remains very expensive, and probably out of reach for most public authorities. This factual situation shouldn't prevent the policy makers to focus on behaviour change stages. Without targeting everybody individually, it might be possible, in the light of specific surveys, public meetings and social studies, to determine the most common mindset/stage the targeted commuters are situated in, and work mostly on the triggers corresponding to that level.

There are different actions and motivations in each stage of behaviour change. That's why it's important to consider the position people are in the behaviour change process, and to understand why they act like they do, in order to start building policies that could be adapted to the situation, and eventually could be relevant and efficient.

All public authorities, for their mobility policies, should hire the services of sociologists and psychologists: they can provide a deep expertise and deal with a relevant adaptation of actions according to the first results.

Cooperation with local universities is also highly recommended: researchers, students, laboratories usually have a great interest in these topics and can support public authorities with experiments, studies and users accompaniment.

## About rewards and pricing…

Since the center goal of the SaMBA project is a focus on the reward and pricing domain, it's the way pilot cases and workshops have been driven. With the sound question in background: is it possible to trigger a **broad and sustainable** modal shift amongst our alpine territories, playing with rewards and pricing?

## Financial rewards are not magical

Public authorities have mostly considered these past years that rewarding policies would necessarily make people change their behaviour: If we pay people for riding their bikes or carpooling, they will do it! But the reality is slightly different.

The rewards, especially when high, could work well for at least making people try something new. However, it will probably never affect some segments of the population:

- People who fit heavily in the first stage of the behaviour change chart, and there are a lot of them. Their sturdy habits and their ignorance about alternatives are strong enough to not allow rewards affect their mobility choice.

- People living in some places where the mobility alternatives are not accessible or easy-to-use enough.

Also, financial rewards cannot be the main part of a mobility policy. It has to be an additional feature of a mobility ecosystem that provides other incentives, and includes necessarily:

- Well developed, accurate and attractive mobility means. Without being highly relevant, the alternative options will never reach an acceptable modal share.

- Large campaigns of communication in a constant flow: in the process of behaviour change: one of the first steps is "knowing about the alternative" as well as its advantages. For that reason, and because people tend to forget what they are not really interested in, the alternative means of transports have to be constantly displayed, explained, accompanied.

- Restriction policies, like make life harder for cars in urban centers, limiting speed in some areas and streets, limiting the width of streets or road to make more room for cyclists or pedestrians on sidewalks.

Financial rewards are not magical, but they have a role to play, especially if they are relevantly implemented:

- They might give a nudge or help some people to take the leap to a more virtuous mobility

- They can be used for experimentations, in order to test different behaviours, and in a very tight and adjustable experimental frame.

- They could also be used for a special mobility event, creating a one-time interest amongst people, and allowing them to try. Associated with some gamification, it can be a relevant trigger.

## The windfall effect of financial rewards

As seen previously, financial rewards can easily give some good results in an experimental frame. But an experimentation process is supposed to end, and is especially expected to end with good outputs. That's why experiments and pilot cases about modal shift are usually composed with experimental features that do not completely match the reality: chosen targeted users, only one transport mode addressed, high rewards, etc.

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First of all, it's very important to calibrate relevantly the rewarding level and to make sure that it is easily adjustable:

- Too low, it will not create the nudge effect, and will not affect a large number of users.

- Too high, this might catch a wide range of users, but mostly people interested in the reward, not in changing their behaviour. The higher the rewards are, the stronger the windfall effect may be.

Sure, high rewards are going to make people change. But… it might be only for the duration of the project. You can strongly expect that most people will go back to their old habits as soon the rewarding system ends.

Nevertheless; the expected goal is sustainability in people's behaviour change. It is not only to make people change their mobility, it's also to confirm them in their new mobility habits, in the long term. And probably, later; for them to do without rewards when their new behaviour is totally accepted and part of their daily habits.

Then, could a solution be to maintain the reward system at a high level, make the rewards "sustainable"?

Anyway, there are some other options to provide rewards in a longer term…

## Rely on a market network of merchants and private companies

Usually, public transport systems are largely funded by public money. The level of public funding usually goes from 50 to 90% of the real cost of transport, in order for everybody to be able to afford the ticket price. Moreover, in some cities the public transport system is at no cost left for passengers. This is already a heavy weight for public finances. But what about other means of transport? Should they be funded or rewarded the same way?

The cost for proposing rewards can be extremely high. For example, if you keep lifting up the level of rewards, you will probably convince everybody to bike to work or share their car. And this is the impediment that public authorities face in their policy implementations. But who can keep spending more and more money in rewards, and more globally in mobility policies?

Public authorities might not be able to pay rewards indefinitely. That is why relying on a network of local merchants seems to be an option to alleviate public expenses, and make them rely on private companies:

- Merchants: They advertise for their business and get new customers
- Private companies: They can take in charge mobility expenses through their own mobility plan.

The benefits of relying on private stakeholders and funds:

- Public expenditures are alleviated…
- Resources are potentially unlimited, as long as economy goes…
- Rewards can be as various as what the shops can provide.

## The power of non-financial rewards

The "experience" rewards are often ignored or little considered when implementing some mobility policies. These rewards can take the form of a gain in different domains as:

- Security
- Time
- Comfort
- Health/shape
- Stress reduction

These rewards can be really powerful for fostering mobility change, even before applying any financial rewards policy. However, for each of them, it might particularly difficult to estimate their real power, and especially the impact they have on the mobility choice made by the users. We all know that comfort and security can be perceived very differently according to the concerned people.

That is why a global improvement on mobility alternatives is a way to help modal shift.

Another interesting trigger that tends to be more and more powerful is the **motivation.**

A good alternative, in addition to providing advantages, needs to be stylish, attractive and trendy to reach its goal. It needs to make people proud and look cool, when using this means of transport.

All these experience rewards and triggers might not be directly linked to the cost of transport, but can in a roundabout way cover for the costs.

# Optimizing mobility policies through Alpine Space

A reward policy is probably a tool to use amongst others, a trigger to pull when the need for a nudge seems necessary. But it can't improve mobility policies by itself.

## Enhancing mobility alternatives first

Improving a global mobility system is the required basis for a consistent modal shift.

Even with appealing rewards, a sustainable behaviour change will not occur without relevant and attractive alternatives. That is why it is absolutely necessary to make sure beforehand that the targeted modal shift goes towards some attractive alternatives.

It can look easy to say, but walking, biking, carpooling or using public transports doesn't provide the same amount of interest to everyone and in every place. It's always important to take in consideration that some mobility alternatives are easier to use than others. And therefore, the less acceptable they are the smaller part of the modal share we should expect them to represent. All alternatives will always have pros and cons. But making sure that none of them present dissuasive or redhibitory features is a good start in making them become a real option.

**Good alternatives in a relevant mobility system are mostly the first goal to reach before any other policy.**

## Finding the perfect modal split?

The biggest issue for mobility policies makers is and has always been to find the right balance between the different mobility means. And as a matter of fact, it's counter-productive to pitting mobility options against each other.

A good modal split can vary a lot according to the location, the actual alternatives and of course, the previous state of the area. In the Alpine space, there is a wide range of location types, going from deep rural with no other option than individual car, to city centers with a concentration of all the side effects of unbridled mobility. And of course, the sought modal split won't be the same whether it's located in places where the car is daily necessary or where there's an abundance of mobility options. That's why it's important to work precisely on each territory assets before looking for people to change their mobility behaviour.

There's no really perfect modal split: a good situation is reached when most people consider their commuting journey safe, short enough and not too expensive, when everybody has a mobility solution, when there's no longer traffic jams, and when the air quality is sustainably good or acceptable.

This modal shift still remains the (almost) unreachable and distant goal for public authorities in the alpine space. But working on some targeted place, reaching a real, durable measurable mobility change might take its part in accessing this goal!

## Rely on the Alpine space network.

One of the many outputs of the SaMBA project was to set up a wide list of public stakeholders throughout Alpine space. Considering that areas in the Alpine range are likely to be more or less similar, this list is supposed to help all other public authorities willing to deal with their mobility issues, to get in contact with other policies makers and find support, advice and examples of good practice.

The network of stakeholders gathered by the different partners will be available on the SaMBA website.

## Take advantage of the SaMBA tools

During the project, some tools have been developed, mostly for helping public authorities throughout alpine space in their mobility projects:

- **The Mobility Behaviour Change (MBC) platform**
  This platform aims to support public authorities and mobility policies makers with operational tools which are at free disposal on the platform and which serve to monitor mobility habits, launch challenges to collect ideas and solutions from the community that are useful for solving specific local mobility problems, co-create the measures and chose the most appropriate measure to be adopted also preliminary assessing its main impacts. => https://www.mobilitybehaviorchange.eu/

a. **The SaMBA Tool for finding policies and estimating impacts in terms of mobility behaviour change**
   It provides a preliminary form supposed to be filled with the characteristics of your mobility project. According to some of the given elements, the tool gives you good advice for your specific case and relate straight to some good examples that have been gathered along the SaMBA project.