OUTPUT FACT SHEET

Pilot actions (including investment, if applicable)

Project index number and acronym	CE1410 REIF
Output number and title	O.T2.1 - Pilot actions
Investment number and title (if applicable)	n/a
Responsible partner (PP name and number)	LP – Thuringian Ministry for Infrastructure and Agriculture
Project website	interreg-central.eu/reif
Delivery date	31-05-2021

Summary description of the pilot action (including investment, if applicable) explaining its experimental nature, demonstration character and transnational added value
The pilot action aimed at assessing the feasibility and necessary steps of an enhancement of the regional rail freight network through the revitalization of disused rail tracks. The Thuringian pilot action "Development of a roadmap for revitalisation of disused routes for rail freight traffic using the example of the "Ohratalbahn" between Gotha and Graefenroda" is therefore addressed to the challenge of reactivating closed branch lines for freight transport. The rail transport plays an important role for the protection of the climate and environment, as it generally has lower specific energy consumption, space requirements and emissions than the motorized freight transport. The development of the railway infrastructure in Thuringia nearly stagnated in the last 30 years. Since 1994 even 41 lines have been closed with an overall length of 467 kilometers. Also the modal share for freight transport in Thuringia stagnated in the last years or even decreased to the disadvantage of rail. The „State development program Thuringia 2025" demands the sustainable development of transport infrastructures and the shifting of traffic to environmentally friendly modes of transport.

In order to achieve the goals of regional development in Thuringia and of the “REIF” project, with the roadmap Thuringian partners have developed a tool that can pave the way for the reopening of disused railway lines for freight traffic.

The general roadmap was developed on a real closed branch line in Thuringia, the “Ohratalbahn”, and its application was demonstrated in an exemplary manner. The core of the developed roadmap is a 3-phase model. It shows how a route reactivation can be built up in 3 phases, which gradually increase in terms of operational quality and the costs incurred. This has the advantage that the stakeholders involved are not overwhelmed by costs and are fully involved in the development of the overall process.

The results were made available to the transnational partners in the "REIF" project and have been discussed. This is an important prerequisite for deployment in other European regions, which is basically possible.

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

(Nuts 2) DEG0, Thuringia, Sub-region (NUTS 3): DEG0C, Gotha & DEGOF, Ilmkreis

The development of the pilot action mainly has an effect on the counties which are traversed by the line. As the developed road map can be used for other railway lines it also has an effect for whole Thuringia.

The county of Gotha has an area of 936 km^2 with 134.500 inhabitants and is located in western Central Thuringia. In the north and east it borders on the foothills of the Thuringian Basin. The terrain profile varies from around 200 meters above sea level. NN located lowlands in the northern part of the district to the over 900 meters high peaks of the Thuringian Forest in the south.

The Ilm County with an area of 805 km^2 and a population of 105.600 is crossed by the Ohratalbahn only in the western part. It is mentioned here because passenger traffic as well as goods traffic plays an important role in reactivation and the route could serve as an alternative to the car for many commuters.

The Ohratalbahn has been chosen as the pilot line to develop a roadmap approach for the reactivation of disused lines. Results can subsequently be used and adapted by all disused branch lines in Thuringia.

Investment costs (EUR), if applicable

n/a

Expected impact and benefits of the pilot action for the concerned territory and target groups and leverage of additional funds (if applicable)

The aim of this pilot action "Development of a roadmap for revitalisation of disused routes for rail freight traffic using the example of the "Ohratalbahn" between Gotha and Graefenroda" is a guideline that can be used for projects to revitalise closed regional railway lines for rail freight transport. This roadmap was developed and tested using the example of the "Ohratalbahn".
The pilot action responds to three of the previously identified challenges:

- Missing loading terminals
- Rail freight transport is cheaper on routes with passenger transport
- Missing connections in the route network.

The municipalities, industries and population located in the "region will benefit in the first line.
In the second line all closed branch lines in Thuringia will benefit and thus the rail freight transport as a whole.
This roadmap can serve as the basis for studies as prerequisites for investments in the revitalization of disused routes. This is already the case for the "Ohratalbahn".

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

The roadmap developed as the output of the pilot action can also be used for investigations into reactivating further closed railway lines in practically all countries. In Thuringia there is already a specific interest in using the roadmap to close the gap in the "Werra Railway" in the "Wartburgkreis" region. Several more routes are discussed and selected for investigation concerning their reactivation potential.
In order to ensure future use, the roadmap was handed over to the responsible department for traffic in the Thuringian Ministry of Infrastructure.
It was also presented to relevant planners and decision-makers in Thuringia in a regional capacity building workshop and to municipalities and counties which have set up a so called "Round Table Ohratalbahn".
In the REIF project, the roadmap is distributed to all project partners and passed on to the program level for further use.

This roadmap supports administrations in the formulation of tenders for studies and provides the drafters of the studies with a framework for action. The 3-step concept shows how freight traffic on disused railway lines can be re-established with an efficient use of resources.

If applicable, contribution to/ compliance with:

- relevant regulatory requirements
- sustainable development – environmental effects. In case of risk of negative effects, mitigation measures introduced
- horizontal principles such as equal opportunities and non-descrimination

All measures proposed in the roadmap are based on the regulations and laws of rail transport in Germany.
The roadmap provides assistance and instructions for reactivating disused railway lines for freight traffic. In itself, this is a process of sustainability, because existing but no longer used infrastructure is made usable again. The effort required for this varies from case to case, depending on the condition and the status of the existing infrastructure. In any case, it is much lower than planning and implementing a completely new line.
Our pilot action has positive effects on the environment because it helps to transfer freight traffic from road to environmentally friendly rail. The impact on the environment from additional freight trains is many times lesser than the burden caused by the hundreds of truck trips saved.
It also contributes to the better accessibility of rural areas and increases the economic development potential there.

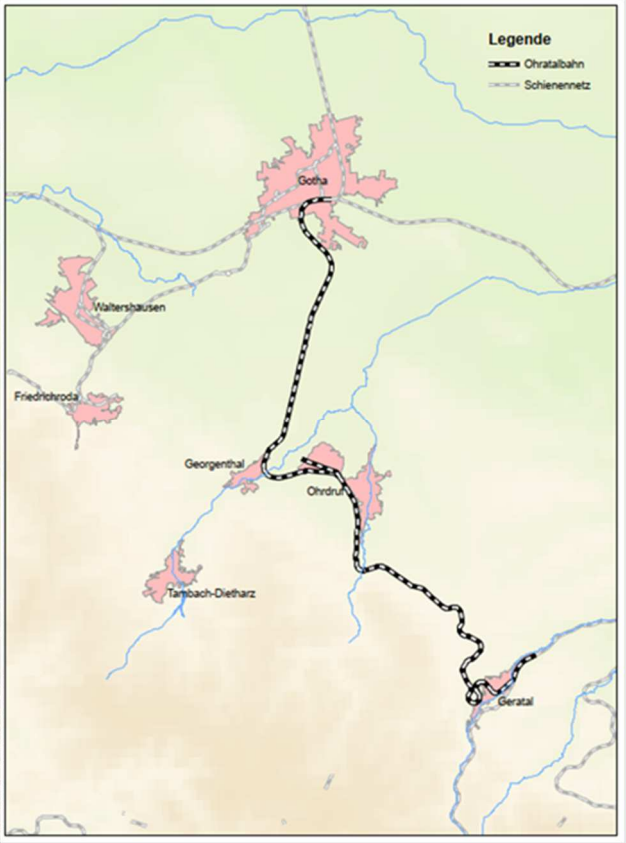
References to relevant deliverables (e.g. pilot action report, studies), investment factsheet and web-links
If applicable, additional documentation, pictures or images to be provided as annex

The output is based on the following deliverables:

- D.T2.2.2 Pilot activity concept and launch report
- D.T2.2.4 Establishment of Market player working group
- D.T2.2.7 Pilot evaluation report
  Download link: https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/REIF/Pilot-action--4---Thuringia---Road-map-for-the-revitalizatio.zip

A video summarizing the pilot action outcomes is also available on the REIF website.

Ohratalbahn near Georgenthal in 2020



Ohratalbahn connecting Gotha and Graefenroda

In the context of a feasibility study, a concept of measures and for implementation was drawn up for the reactivation of freight traffic on a selected route, including a cost estimation.
The roadmap developed using the “Ohratalbahn” as an example is intended to provide a base for action. On this basis the feasibility of revitalizing disused railway lines for freight traffic can be checked and created in a practical manner.
The examined route is a branch line with a length of 36 km in the northern foothills of the Thuringian Forest between the connection points to two main railway lines in Gotha and Graefenroda. There had been no trains running on the Emleben – Graefenroda section since 2014.

The key aspects of the roadmap for the revitalization of railway lines for freight traffic can be summarized as follows:

Classification of the route to be considered	•Location and connection to the national rail network •Function regarding development in the region (settlement areas and business locations)
Situation of the infrastructure	•Is the route still dedicated to railway operations? •Who is responsible for the infrastructure? •What is the condition of the railwail line infrastructure? •What measures are required for restarting?
Expected demand of transportation	•Is there a corresponding volume of goods traffic in the catchment area (including road freight transport)? •Is there an immediate need for transport? Is it possible to identify a development in freight transport by rail?
Operating concept for the route	•Is only freight traffic planned or is a mixed operation with passenger traffic to be expected? •Which operational requirements result from this? • Which infrastructural measures (track, safety technology etc.) are required accordingly?
Reactivation effort	•Determining the required investment, if necessary, also for a step-by-step restart of the route. •Assessing the operating expenses. •Can an economical operation be represented?
Organization, financing	•Who is the operator of the route (infrastructure and / or operation) in future? •How can investment and operating expenses be financed? •Are there funding opportunities for reactivating and expanding the infrastructure available?

QR-Code with link to pilot action video