

PRESS RELEASE

ROAD TESTED METHOD BRINGS RIDERS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT



[Cologne, Germany - 22 June, 2016] The results are in: Two and a half years after the EU-funded SmartMove project began, results show that individual marketing is a reliable way to boost public transport ridership for rural communities on tight budgets.

Running parallel “[active mobility consultancy](#)” (AMC) campaigns in eight distinct regions throughout

Europe, the project managed to increase public transport patronage in every case through education and consultancy tailored to individual households. Each campaign saw 6.7 to 25 percent of participants increasing their public transport usage, with the average increase being 17 percent.

These results were unveiled at [SmartMove’s final conference](#) June 22 in Cologne, where partners from all eight regions presented their work and achievements.

SmartMove implemented the campaigns during spring and summer of 2015, targeting rural regions where the car is king and public transport struggles to compete. Public authorities typically lack resources to invest in new vehicles and personnel, so SmartMove offered a solution that’s inexpensive and seeks to squeeze the most out of existing services.

The SmartMove method engages households in face-to-face dialogue that gives tailored advice and information to help people make more use of public transport in their daily travel. In test regions, the dialogues were supported by several active measures, including bus trainings, pedelec try outs and citizen audits. The project highlighted feeder systems – including on-demand shuttles and bike and walking routes – that help people bridge the “last mile” between their homes and the nearest transit stops.

From follow-up interviews of households who took part in the campaigns, it’s evident that people appreciated the consultancies and got value from them. In nearly every trial site, 80 to 90 percent of participants reported learning something new about the local public transport system by taking part. Typically, in addition to participants who had already changed their travel habits, a quarter to half of respondents said they felt more motivated to use public transport in the future.

The increases in public transport use have improved the environment. In every region, survey data was used to calculate a number of avoided car trips per week, and with average trip distances factored in, an estimate of avoided CO₂ emissions could be calculated. The savings per region amounted to 20 and 100 tonnes of avoided annual CO₂ emissions.

The SmartMove methodology proved a persuasive tool in getting people to change their mobility habits – even in rural regions where public transport service is infrequent and perhaps less competitive with cars when compared to urban contexts. The trick, however, is to get people to participate in the first place.

In most regions, local implementing partners reached or exceeded the project target of engaging 500 local households. Two regions struggled to reach that threshold, including two regions in Germany where national laws restrict house-to-house solicitation and campaigners had a lack of data on household mailing addresses.

Elsewhere, however, the targeted number of people was reached and the results impressive. One lesson was that the more personalized the outreach, the quicker the recruitment. Email was more effective than snail mail, and phone solicitation was better than either of these. Best of all was face-to-face recruitment by on-the-ground canvassers.

Once participants were engaged, good results were practically guaranteed. Active mobility consultancy proved to be an excellent tool for squeezing more utility out of existing public transport services without increases in operational costs or expensive investments in infrastructure.

If you are interested in more details of the method, please visit our online learning tool [here](#).

For more information on this release or the SmartMove project, please see: <http://www.smartmove-project.eu>

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or contact national project representatives at: <http://www.smartmove-project.eu/about/partners.html>