CIVITAS Thematic Leadership Programme

City of Genoa and the flexible “on demand” transport systems: an innovative way of moving
Flexible transport systems

Editorial by Alexio Picco*

When we have to choose the mode of transport for any kind of trip, we generally have few alternatives: either relatively low cost with rigid timetables and routes (traditional local public transport) or high cost, high quality and high comfort alternatives (taxi and private car). Essentially there is no service between the two. This is one of the main restrictions of the current local mobility system. Although we are not in a free market, it is possible that a regulated local mobility market could support and favour the birth and development of a flexible transport system.

This could offer a level of quality and price between the traditional local public transport and the taxi which would be competitive for a broad range of mobility demands. It is therefore possible to design a local mobility scheme, not only suitable for a polycentric city like Genoa, but also exportable to many other contexts, to combine the traditional strong points of local public transport (fixed timetable and routes) together with “on demand” services, such as:

- Bus/minibus “on demand” services, implemented in the local public transport network with similar fares to other public transport services (therefore generally subsidised). Particularly suitable where there is a limited mobility demand and a significant “network effect”.

- Collective “door to door” taxi services, with much lower fares than the traditional taxi, possibly with a fixed fare, known in advance by the user. The mobility demand generated by the reduced fares should make the system economically sustainable: this is suitable for fast and medium-length trips (between districts).

- Minibus fast services at fixed fare with seat booking, economically sustainable and useful to rapidly connect distant city areas, without providing a “door to door” service.

- Specific services fixed for particular transport needs or specific targets: people with reduced mobility, house-work trips, transport services for large mobility attractors such as hospitals, commercial centres, etc., whose economic sustainability can be achieved through the stakeholders’ involvement.

- Car and bike sharing and car pooling services.

Obviously, the appropriate mix of the above mentioned systems should be re-assessed from time to time; but the different systems have a common structure which foresees:

- Design, development and management centre for services which has a similar technological and organizational model.

- Booking and trip management call centres.

- Several transport operators.

This is the overall context how Genoa has developed the Agency for flexible services.

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The Thematic Leadership within CIVITAS Initiative

Thematic leadership is a program that aims to extend the horizontal exchange between the CIVITAS cities beyond the project borders. The program involves CIVITAS II cities or a group of CIVITAS II cities (joint leadership) who exercise a leading role or possess a special experience in one of the thematic fields of CIVITAS. They will be called thematic leaders. The thematic leader is a forerunner of a certain theme, who organizes technical workshops, acts as a contact point, is responsible for knowledge sharing and for producing printed information.

This brochure is a product of the thematic leadership for “flexible on demand transport systems” led by the City of Genoa. It is the first city within CIVITAS that carries out such a program and therefore provides a valuable example for other cities who intend to become thematic leaders.

Thematic leader cities (up to seven) will be supported by CIVITAS-GUARD. The support includes production of the information material (folder or brochure) or support for printing and translation costs. The information generated in the thematic leadership will be disseminated via the CIVITAS website. A dedicated section on the website provides contact details of all the thematic leaders. The website will also offer a registration tool for potential technical workshops. Furthermore, a program for expert visits will be established with the support of CIVITAS–GUARD.

The program is designed for technicians from CIVITAS Forum cities and potential follower cities, who will benefit from the existing experience of the thematic leaders. Genoa, Odense, La Rochelle, Preston and Ploiești have already announced their strong interest to become thematic leaders for a certain topic. Currently, there are four additional suggestions for thematic leaderships:

- Urban bicycle traffic (Odense: Troels Andersen).
- Goods distribution schemes (La Rochelle: Dominique Breuil).
- Public transport prioritization & traffic control (Preston: Richard Clarke).
- Real time information & vehicle location (Ploiești: Radu Popescu).

If you are thinking about becoming a thematic leader please contact: Karl Reiter (CIVITAS-GUARD): reiter@fgm-amor.at
The context: Flexible “on demand” services between private car/taxi and traditional local public transport

Flexible Transport Services (FTS): current practices in Europe

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<th>(Emerging) national framework for FTS</th>
<th>FTS for general public use</th>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Finland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Many FTS schemes, but no national framework</td>
<td>Belgium, France, Germany, Italy</td>
<td>France, Netherlands, Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some individual FTS schemes</td>
<td>Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, UK</td>
<td>Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little or no FTS</td>
<td>Austria, Hungary, Greece, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain</td>
<td>Austria, Hungary, Greece, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain</td>
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Source: CONNECT (Coordination of Concepts for New Collective Transport) Project
Agency for flexible services: an integrated way to approach demand responsive services

- The Agency is a unique coordination centre able to design, develop and manage integrated flexible services and systems, using several different transport operators.
- The Agency is part of AMI, a company fully owned by the Municipality of Genoa, established in 2004 in order to develop strategic innovative sectors of urban mobility such as flexible services and information mobility services.
- The Agency is able to provide “turn-key services”.
- Feasibility, design, planning, implementation, management, maintenance, dispatch centre for all flexible services and relative technology and systems.

Agency for flexible services in Genoa: current services

- Agency, staffed by 5 people for the design, implementation and management phase plus 4 persons in the dispatch centre.
- Development and management of the 3 existing Public Transport on demand buses (Drinbus)
  - dispatch centre and transport operations is provided by AMT (Genoa PT operator).
- Design, development, management and dispatch centre for the Genoa Disabled services
  - transport operations is provided by 3 social cooperatives and Radiotaxi.

- Collective taxi design and system development (DRINTAXI)
  - dispatch centre and transport operations is provided by Genoa taxi drivers association.
- Car sharing development and management is provided by a specific company partially owned by AMI (Genova Car Sharing).
- Design, development and dispatch centre for new flexible services in Liguria Region
  - new on demand services for the main hospital of the town of Savona, new mobility management flexible services for the IKEA employees, other flexible services in the Region.
- Design of car pooling services for large events in the city of Genoa, for citizens and for mobility management specific services.
- Take up of the flexible PT system and service in the city of Krakow.
- Participation in several EU and national projects in order to support the start up of various different services.
Genoa case study: Drin Bus

Objectives

- To develop new additional Public Transport (PT) customer oriented services in low demand areas.
- To substitute traditional fixed PT routes with flexible “on demand” services with the same operating costs.

Main features

It is a “many to many” service, with trips and timetables fully flexible within fixed stop points in the defined areas during the operating hours.

How to use Drin Bus in Genoa? It’s very easy!

- Choose your origin and destination bus stops
- Choose your departure and arrival time
- Book your journey calling for free at the number 800 085302

The service is available from Monday to Saturday, from 6.00 am to 8.00 p.m. The booking can be made 30’ before departure, however users “on the road” without previous booking will also be accepted, in accordance with the scheduled service.

Development

- The first two services were launched in 2002 as additional PT services and their areas of operation have been enlarged several times.
- The third service was launched in 2004 as a substitution of two fixed traditional PT routes.
- During CIVITAS Caravel Project (2005-2009), the service will be upgraded and a new software release and new booking functionalities such as an interactive voice recognition system.

Achieved results

Actually 2857 users are registered for the service. The number of passengers has yearly increased by 8% in the area of Pegli, 5% in Quinto and 13% in Bolzaneto, where the Drin Bus has replaced the traditional fixed routes. In this latter area the environmental costs/benefits analysis has shown a saving of 34,500 EUR each year, due to the decreased environmental pollution combined with the modal shift obtained.

Success stories and barriers

Drin Bus demonstrates that a service between traditional fixed bus routes and totally flexible taxi service is ideal to serve low-demand urban areas characterized by accessibility problems. The main success is the reaction of the citizens who appreciate the better quality of this service. Drin Bus has reduced the use of the private car as well as providing an irreplaceable public transport service for some social classes (students, housewives, workers, elderly persons, etc.). Even when compared to traditional low demand fixed routes, the principal barrier to the introduction of the system were higher initial operating costs. It is remarkable that using demand services as a substitution for traditional fixed routes, the same operating costs will be accompanied with an increased number of passengers/revenues.
The customers’ point of view

As an important part of the service assessment, the Drin Bus service has been evaluated through a customer satisfaction survey during 2005. The following show the main results in terms of perception of the quality of the service and of the modal shifts.

Users’ main characteristics

The majority of the Drin Bus users are women (71%) aged from 25 to 60 years old (62%). The users are mainly employees (29%), housewives (22%) or retired people who go to the railway station or to the centre area served by the Drin Bus. The service is also used by students (15%) twice a day.

Users’ perception of the service

The 91% of the Drin Bus users are satisfied with the service and consider it better than the previous traditional bus lines (see chart below).

The weak points of the Drin Bus service have been, for the 78% of the users, the difficulty of reaching the call centre and only for the 6% of the users the lack of punctuality. (see chart below).

Negative factors of Drin Bus service

The strong points of the service are mainly the personalization of the journey (28%), the comfort and security provided by the modern vehicles with air-conditioning (21%) and the direct link with the centre of the area (21%) (see chart below).

Satisfaction Index of Drin Bus service users

Before the introduction of the Drin Bus service, 40% of the people used the traditional bus lines serving the area everyday; 21% at least 6 times per week, while another 21% never used these bus routes.

After the introduction of the Drin Bus service, 65% of people used the service everyday, 20% of the people used the service more than 6 times for week and 15% of people used it less than 6 times for week.

Usage of car before and after Drin Bus service introduction

With the introduction of the Drin Bus service, the percentage of people using the car everyday has decreased from 13% to 9%, the number of people using it at least 6 times per week has decreased from 23% to 3%, of those using it less than 6 times per week has risen from 17% to 28%, while the number of people who never use the car has increased by 13% (see chart below).
The citizens’ point of view

The citizens perceive such flexible transport system as an extension of the public transport in city zones which are not yet served. Thanks to “on demand” service it is also possible to satisfy the mobility demand of weak social groups (as women, elderly people and so on) and improve the accessibility of points of attraction.

The flexible service is well appreciated by users because of the high level of personalisation (in fact, you may chose the time of departure and arrival). In addition, the service is used by frequent travellers, thus reducing the private car usage and emissions of pollutants. It is therefore possible to conclude that, for the citizens, the “on demand” flexible transport service delivers a high cost/benefits ratio.

Lessons learned and advice for implementation

Feasibility and Planning

Most of the time the flexible services are not included in the general framework of the collective passengers transport services; it has to be understood how to structure them accordingly to the laws and the regulations applied in the different contexts. It’s very difficult to rely on the traditional market studies due to the fact that is very hard to have real feedback from the users before they have tested the system. From the very beginning a clear “contract” between the different actors has to be agreed - who is paying the service, who is planning and controlling it, who is managing the dispatch centre and who is operating it.

Implementation

Technology has to be used in the best way; as an example, it is not advisable to use fixed on-road installation for the trip booking procedure, but, if possible to rely on the high number of mobile phones already available, in addition to the fixed telephone boxes. Web or automatic telephone reservation may help but the relevant part of the service will be booked by phone calls in the traditional way.

Operation phase

A good communication structure between the different elements of the service (dispatch centres, vehicles and depots) is very important from the management point of view.

Communication and marketing

Because of the very innovative character of such type of services, it is crucial to insist on a single brand image that should be used on every component of the service itself: vehicles, stops, web site, tickets, leaflets, brochures and so on.

It’s important to plan a substantial budget for communication and marketing in order to achieve the potential target. A free test of the service would definitively demonstrate its benefits most effectively.
Genoa case study: Drin Taxi

Objectives

- The develop a collective flexible taxi service with reduced fares.
- To contribute to modal shift from private cars to a flexible taxi service.
- To improve the users’ degree of satisfaction with urban mobility services.

Main features

- A unique taxi fleet coordinated by a call and dispatch centre able to create collective journeys according to the users’ request.
- The real time optimisation of the users requests and allocation of the collective journey to the most suitable taxi.
- The use of a technology derived from the demand responsive bus service.
- From the users point of view, Drin Taxi will allow relevant discount in comparison with the normal taxi fares, on the basis of shared travel and small deviations of route.

Development

The service will be launched in 2007, during the CIVITAS Caravel Project.

Expected results

The Drin Taxi will create a new market with new potential revenues for taxi drivers and a new collective transport service for citizens.

Genoa case study: transport system for disabled people

Objectives

The aim is to integrate different stand alone disabled services in one unique coordinated on demand service.

Main features

The situation before the development of the flexible service was characterised by a non-integrated use of resources (several different operators), a low level of journey optimization (without the use of specific DRT software). The new organizational model includes:

- The Municipality of Genoa who finances this social service, manages the travel authorizations and decides about the overall development of the service.
- The Agency for flexible services who delivers the day by day service planning, manages the users’ requests throughout its call and dispatch centre and controls the development of the service. All these tasks can be realized thanks to the use of a specific flexible service’s software.
- Several Transport Operators that manage drivers and cars for the day to day development of different services (school, work and rehabilitation services).

Development

The call centre was opened in November 2005; the different services and operators will be integrated in a single coordination centre on an incremental basis, initiated in 2005 with the introduction of the first two services.

Expected results

The reorganization of the services for disabled people will increase their effectiveness and efficiency, facilitating the growth of the number of users at the same cost level and the use of a real-time booking system.

Success factors are the use of the flexible service’s technology to organize the services and the new organizational model (Municipality of Genoa that authorizes the travel, the Agency for flexible services that plans and controls the service, coordinating different specialized operators).

Potential barriers are the high number of users’ differentiated needs that increases the level of complexity.
Genoa case study: the car sharing service

Objectives

To offer a new, useful and innovative individual transport service in order to reduce the use of private car.

Main features

In Italy, after some pilot trials and a brief running-in period, Car Sharing is now a tested reality, fully operational in 6 cities (Venice, Bologna, Turin, Rimini, Genoa and Modena, 5 of them within the National Circuit ICS - Iniziativa Car Sharing) and expanding all over the country. The ICS network has a total of 3,487 users with 146 vehicles available and 83 reserved parking places. The subscriptions are increasing with an average monthly rate of 135, while the runs made each month are between 1,300 and 1,400 for a total of around 60,000 kilometres.

Genova Car Sharing, founded in 2003 as a partnership between AMI and Automotive, launched the Car sharing service in July 2004, is supported by the Municipality of Genoa and forms part of the ICS network. Genova car sharing service offers citizens:

★ Individual use of car without fixed costs (initial capital, insurance, taxes, maintenance).
★ Cars’ availability without connected problems (even without paying for fuel).
★ Freedom of movement and parking (you can use bus lanes, circulate in traffic limited areas and park in all the parking places for free).
★ Possibility to choose specific vehicle for specific use.

Development

Car Sharing will also be soon active in Parma, Florence and Palermo. In the Province of Milan, in Rome, Brescia and Reggio Emilia the system is in its planning stage. The service started in Genoa with a fleet of 15 cars and 15 parking places spread all over the city centre: currently, the number of available parking places is 32, but, by the end of CIVITAS Caravel Project (February 2009), 50 parking spaces will be created, following an operative plan. Today the fleet is composed of 57 vehicles, but it is planned that he number of cars will be about 120 by the end of the Project.

Achieved results

In June 2006 Genova Car Sharing has reached 1,024 users.

Genoa flexible transports services further developments

New on demand services for a commercial area

In order to increase the accessibility of a post industrial area with a high number of commercial and small industrial enterprises, not properly served by the traditional Public Transport services, the project aims to develop a flexible “on demand” service. The service is made possible by the cooperation of the city mobility manager together with the mobility managers of the companies located in the area, coordinated by IKEA. The service will be initially designed for the employees working within the area and will be co-funded by CIVITAS Caravel (design), the Italian Environment Ministry and companies co-funding (operation). The Agency for flexible services is responsible for designing the service and for supporting its implementation by providing it with a dispatch centre. The transport operator will be selected on a "private tender" base. The service should start in 2007.

New on demand service for the main hospital of the town of Savona

In order to achieve improved accessibility to the new hospital, located in a hilly area of the city, a new interurban service connecting the eastern and western coasts to the hospital in the town of Savona (40 kilometres from Genoa) is being implemented. The service is supported by the local PT company and by the hospital’s management. The users will pay the usual PT fare. The Agency for flexible services now supports the implementation of the scheme and in the near future will provide the dispatch centre. The operation will start at the end of 2006.

Car pooling service

New car pooling services are in the design phase: a first service, linked to the most important trade fair events of Genoa, the World Boat Exhibition, will be launched in October 2006. The Agency for flexible services provides support in designing other services for the citizens and for the companies, which are in their planning stage.
The Scope of DRT in Europe: current practices and emerging trends

Flexible Transports cover a wide domain, including:

★ **Demand Responsive Transport** (DRT) for the general public, as implemented in a wide range of European settings, currently on a small scale.

★ **Dedicated services** for particular categories of users, including people with reduced mobility.

★ **“Route taxi”** services as implemented in Russia, other CIS countries, China, etc., which are part of the formal transport supply but currently without ITS.

★ Paratransit as **collectors** of many individual operators (as many as 500 vehicles on a single corridor) as implemented in Brazil and South Africa, again without ITS.

Within Europe, we currently find the following type of services:

★ General use services in medium-sized towns, with extensions to neighbouring villages and rural areas.

★ Services in towns adjacent to cities which provide local and feeder services to trunk haul services to the cities.

★ Complementary services e.g. replacing fixed routes on evenings or on week-ends.

★ Extensive flexible service networks in rural areas, replacing previously low-frequency conventional services.

★ Services in low-density rural areas.

★ Dedicated or special services, restricted to certain users.

★ Niche urban markets.

The scale and range of services are increasing and they have the potential to play a more significant role in the transport offer.

Source: Connect Project

The image below shows how a Flexible Agency can co-ordinate users groups and associations’ needs and transport operators vehicles providers in order to put into practice, through a DRT planning and real time data exchange, a flexible transport service.
Other cities good practice

A Swiss flexible solution

PubliCar is a fully flexible demand-responsive door to door minibus service in Switzerland, which can be booked via call centres. The service started in 1995 as a pilot project and ten years later approx. 20,000 to 30,000 users per year are served by the service in each of the 32 operational areas where the service is now delivered (see image below).

PubliCar service was developed by the public transport operator PostAuto and aims especially at low density areas. The scheme is seen as complementary or as an alternative to traditional public transport. It does not only offer a flexible public transport for low density areas, but also for small towns or during times of weak demand, for example night services.

PubliCar provides in many cases connections to the main public transport network. Call-a-bus services in Switzerland are treated like traditional public transport and therefore have to be financed with public funds. Users pay an extra of 4 SFr (approx. 2.53 EUR) when using the service. The operation of PubliCar is usually not more expensive than fixed bus lines, in many cases even slightly cheaper. The cost effectiveness could be improved by 5% where PubliCar replaced conventional services. Currently the cost recovery rate is at approximately 25%.

The main users of PubliCar are female (75%) and between 26 and 62 years old. 98% of the customers declare themselves satisfied or very satisfied with the service. The main target areas of the service are rural regions, that cannot efficiently be served by traditional public transport. The main purposes of the use are leisure activities (38%), commuting (27%), visits to doctors and hospitals (16%) and shopping (13%). Stakeholders in the implementation and operation of the services are the operator PostAuto, as well as the government at federal and cantonal level, as funding source.

The key to success: an easy to use service

Users call a free number to order the services at the PubliCar call centre, which bundles demand where possible. The drivers of the minibuses are informed via GSM/SMS about the trips requested. Depending on the situation and complexity of the specific PubliCar service (e.g. area and users, number of vehicles in an area), different disposition systems are in use. In the simplest case, the driver decides how to arrange a tour. In other cases the optimal route is calculated with special software in the call centre.

PubliCar is seen as one of the elements to optimize the whole public transport system. In many cases the flexible scheme provides a basic service which covers larger areas. During peak hours this service is reinforced by traditional bus lines.

PubliCar developed a franchising system that makes it possible to assign the service to regional or local private transport companies or private vehicle owners.

Future developments

As the high satisfaction of the users and the positive assessment of the PubliCar scheme by the operator shows, the service is well established in Switzerland. It has been continuously expanded and optimized, taking into consideration specific regional requirements.

For further information: www.publicar.ch

Source: NICHE Project, state of the art report
What Genoa visitors can expect

If a visitor comes to Genoa, he may enjoy “on site” visits of the flexible transport services, such as:

- Drinbus dispatch centre technologies.
- Drinbus services (real booking and real on board visit during the regular services).
- Drinbus vehicles and on board technologies.
- Disabled dispatch centre technologies.
- Drintaxi dispatch centre and technologies.
- Car sharing service.
- Specific presentations of the different existing services and focus on the new services.

Moreover it will be possible to arrange on site visits and presentations to other innovative transport systems and services in Genoa (access control and pricing schemes, goods distribution schemes, modelling systems and mobility plans, security monitoring centre, info mobility services, mobility forum).

Furthermore, the Genoa visitor can also discover Genoa, the city of Christopher Columbus, who inspired the name of the CIVITAS Caravel Project with his famous ships.

“A regal city, leant on an alpine hill, proud for men and for walls, whose simply appearance makes it Lady of the Sea”: with these words he poet Francesco Petrarca described Genoa, born on the sea, strong republic and proud of its glorious past, today city of art, fascinating keeper of innumerable treasures to be discovered.

The typical fishing harbour of Camogli in the Levante Riviera
### CIVITAS I and II cities implementing flexible transport systems and services

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<th>Measure</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>Taxi sharing</td>
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<td>Bristol</td>
<td>Dial-a-ride service expansion and development of clean vehicles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genoa</td>
<td>Agency for flexible transport services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Krakow</td>
<td>Demand responsive transport services</td>
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<td>La Rochelle</td>
<td>Night public transport services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>Linking individual passenger transport information with healthcare appointments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Odense</td>
<td>Integration and quality improvements of sustainable modes</td>
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<td>Ploiesti</td>
<td>Improved infrastructure for collective transport</td>
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<td>Potenza</td>
<td>Demand responsive transport system</td>
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<td>Toulouse</td>
<td>Improving quality and structure of PT services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toulouse</td>
<td>Integration of the demand responsive transport as a complementary service to PT</td>
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All measures are available at the CIVITAS website: [www.civitas-initiative.eu](http://www.civitas-initiative.eu)
Innovative measures of 36 demonstration cities

Get depth knowledge at www.civitas-initiative.eu

The CIVITAS-website is based on a CIVITAS dissemination database that contains different sections. This website gives you information about CIVITAS-related news and events, the CIVITAS projects and the CIVITAS cities. All contact details of people working within CIVITAS are stored in the “people database”. Moreover, you get in depth knowledge about the innovative measures of the 36 demonstration cities.

Eight categories of measures have been identified as the basic building blocks of an integrated strategy. Each CIVITAS city chooses an appropriate set of measures from those building blocks and combines them in order to form integrated solutions for clean urban transport in cities. In addition, the city puts in place the appropriate planning framework, ensures political involvement and support, and establishes the necessary partnerships to ensure delivery of the plans. More than 300 measures can be found by searching the website in the relevant CIVITAS city, via keyword or in the assigned “Dissemination Measure Fact Sheet”.

Dissemination Measures Fact Sheets

The “Dissemination Measure Fact Sheets” are the core product for the CIVITAS dissemination activities. In order to achieve knowledge transfer between experts, each measure will be described on one single page and consists of a heading, picture, picture text, measure objective, measure results, measure implementation, expected results and related measures. Additionally each Dissemination Measure Fact Sheet includes contact details (e-mail address) of the measure leader so a direct contact with this person can be established immediately.
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