

D6.3b The future of the LTPN in Kos

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ABSTRACT

STARTER (IEE) aims to promote energy efficient and sustainable mobility policies and practices in five pilot sites across Europe. The main goal is to achieve a 10% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions amongst specific target groups in the pilot sites by the end of the project (2014).

In Kos a local travel plan network (LTPN) has been set-up. The main stakeholders in tourism and transport have identified together soft mobility measures relevant for the local situation and possible to be implemented within the lifetime of the STARTER project.

Through the implementation of these measures, STARTER will show that Kos has more to offer: more travel options, more freedom, more fun and a healthier environment. Hereby creating a win-win situation for residents, the touristic sector and tourists

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

D6.3 THE FUTURE OF THE LTPN IN KOS	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STARTER PROJECT	5
1.2 SCOPE OF THE REPORT	6
1.3 STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT	6
2. OVERVIEW OF RESULTS AND EXPERIENCES DERIVED FROM IMPLEMENTATION ...	7
2.1 THE INITIAL PROBLEMS	7
2.2 THE PLANNED MEASURES	8
2.3 BARRIERS DURING IMPLEMENTATION	10
2.4 RESULTS OF THE MEASURES	11
3. POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LTPN.....	12
3.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE NETWORK.....	12
3.2 ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL FUTURE MEMBERS OF THE LTPN	12
3.3 DEVELOPMENT PLANS OF THE NEXT 3 YEARS	13
3.4 FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF THE LTPN	13
4. ACTION PLAN BEYOND STARTER	14

Executive summary

Αυτό το παραδοτέο περιλαμβάνει πληροφορίες και κατευθύνσεις σχετικά με τη συνέχιση του Τοπικού Συνεργατικού Δικτύου (ΤΣΔ) που δημιουργήθηκε στην Κω στα πλαίσια του ευρωπαϊκού έργου STARTER. Στόχος του είναι να διαμορφώσει ένα πλαίσιο αναφοράς σχετικά με τη περαιτέρω λειτουργία του Δικτύου και τη μελλοντική διεύρυνσή του.

Αρχικά γίνεται μια σύντομη εισαγωγή στο έργο STARTER, τους στόχους του και τα κύρια αναμενόμενα αποτελέσματά του. Επίσης, παρατίθενται ο σκοπός και η δομή του παραδοτέου.

Στη συνέχεια γίνεται μια σύνοψη των δραστηριοτήτων υλοποίησης των μέτρων που υλοποιήθηκαν στην Κω: PORTAL, πινακίδες ενημέρωσης και αναθεώρηση επιλεγμένων δρομολογίων δημοτικής συγκοινωνίας. Παρέχονται τα βασικά προβλήματα που οδήγησαν στην δημιουργία του ΤΣΔ και στην επιλογή και υλοποίηση των τριών μέτρων, τα προβλήματα που παρουσιάστηκαν κατά τη διάρκεια της υλοποίησης των μέτρων και το πώς αντιμετωπίστηκαν, καθώς και τα κύρια αποτελέσματα από την αξιολόγηση των μέτρων. Επίσης γίνεται μια περιγραφή των προκαταρκτικών μέτρων που θα υλοποιηθούν στο μέλλον.

Το επόμενο κεφάλαιο επικεντρώνεται στο ΤΣΔ. Παρουσιάζονται οι στόχοι του, τα υφιστάμενα μέλη και προτάσεις για μελλοντικά μέλη, οι προοπτικές μελλοντικής εξέλιξής του και στοιχεία που σχετίζονται με τρόπους χρηματοδότησης του Δικτύου και την οικονομική του βιωσιμότητα.

Τέλος, το τελευταίο κεφάλαιο περιλαμβάνει ένα προκαταρκτικό σχέδιο ανάπτυξης του ΤΣΔ και υλοποίησης των μελλοντικών μέτρων.

1. Introduction

1.1 Short description of the STARTER Project

There are a vast number of touristic regions in Europe, all of them attracting many tourists from Europe and around the world. These regions include islands and seaside resorts visited during the summer, mountainous regions, lakes and lakesides, historical and religious sites as destinations of cultural or religious visits, and many others. Despite the different characteristics of these places and the different type of tourists that they attract, they all share a common feature, which is the fact that the touristic activity is, to a higher or lower degree, concentrated during a specific season.

The seasonality of tourism demand leads to a rising demand for transport and mobility services during the high season, which has a large effect on the traffic situation in the specific touristic regions. Besides a peak in transport peak during peak seasons, touristic sites are also facing a significant growth of mobility demand while local alternatives for the private car tend to be very limited and there is often a lack of effective information towards tourist for getting around with sustainable travel modes.

Side effects of this include high energy use (mainly fossil fuels), traffic noise and air pollution leading to negative health and environmental effects, increased risk of traffic accidents, low quality of transportation services and damage to the transport infrastructure.

Based on the above, it is clear that there is a great need to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of local transport systems in order to cope with the growing problems and most importantly to put emphasis on the use of alternative sustainable transport modes and/or mobility measures. On the other hand, sustainable transport is also a market opportunity for the touristic sector, since consumers are becoming more and more conscious of the need for sustainability. The problem however is that 'greening' seasonal traffic is not simply the task of the authorities: the main players of the transport sector, the environmental organisations and the economic/touristic sector should join forces with local/regional authorities to ensure sustainable seasonal traffic.

For this reason STARTER (*Sustainable Transport for Areas with Tourism through Energy Reduction*) aims to promote energy efficient and sustainable mobility policies and practices across the EU through the cooperation of all local interested parties.

The main outcome of the project will be the implementation of Local Travel Plan Networks (LTPNs)¹ and innovative mobility measures in 5 regions suffering from a steep seasonality of transport demand, which will contribute to achieve a less energy consuming transport system and less car-dependant 'lifestyles'. Increased awareness of LTPNs and sustainable mobility policies by policy shapers, makers and implementers is a key result of the project.

¹ A Local Travel Plan Network (LTPN) is: "A group, or network, of organisations that have come together to share resources and ideas for developing and implementing a travel plan in their local area." Where a travel plan is: "A package of measures tailored to the needs of individual organisations and aimed at promoting greener, cleaner travel choices and reducing reliance on the car."

1.2 Scope of the report

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the main goals of the STARTER project are to create and sustain a Local Travel Plan Network in each one of the five pilot sites, as well as to identify and implement soft mobility measures aiming to shift residents and tourists towards more environmental friendly and energy efficient modes of transport. Moreover, the specific goal of the project is to achieve a 10% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions in the five touristic areas participating in the project.

In order to develop the Local Travel Plans, a user need analysis has been performed based on standard data collection questionnaires with qualitative/quantitative data concerning mobility and information related to tourists (including user needs, expectations, and current behaviour) and other potential stakeholders in each pilot site. Additional data has been gathered from questionnaires distributed to tourist, residents, tourist employees, local authorities and potential LTPN stakeholders for the zero-state analysis as part of the evaluation methodology (WP5).

It has to be mentioned that this deliverable is mainly written for (and by) members of the local network and therefore all kind of background information (site description, geographical-, economic- and political context etc.) is not included in this document. Detailed information about the network can be found in D4.2 – Final Implementation Report (available on the project website: www.starter-project.eu)

The demonstrators all like to see that their network continues beyond the scope of STARTER. This task therefore includes the revision of the Local Travel Plans developed at the beginning of the project (WP3), with special focus on:

- measures to be taken beyond the scope of the project,
- policy plans to be adapted, and
- plans for financial viability of the LTPN.

1.3 Structure of this report

This deliverable first starts with a short overview of the results and experiences gained during the STARTER project. Chapter three details the future beyond STARTER: objectives, network members, development plans and final issues. The deliverable ends with an action plan for the coming years.

2. OVERVIEW OF RESULTS AND EXPERIENCES DERIVED FROM IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 The initial problems

The touristic season in Kos starts early in April and ends in October. However the peak period of demand is the months July and August. In this period the number of arrivals is extremely high. Although the variation of the foreign visitors' arrivals is more rational along the season, the Greek tourists are traditionally allocated in these two months and especially in August.

Therefore, the main mobility problems are basically concentrated in July and August. These problems refer to:

1. Parking, since the existing legal parking places are not enough to satisfy the high use of private vehicles and rentals cars.
2. Traffic congestion in the city centre and the key poles of attraction.
3. Environmental pollution and noise in the city centre. Although in the islands the environmental pollution cannot be severe, specific areas where the major traffic is concentrated suffer from the environmental problems.

Apart from the traffic problems caused during the summer due to the high number of tourists, it should be noted that the local residents also add up to the severe traffic congestion as they use very frequently their private cars.

Given the above-mentioned problems, the Municipality of Kos and other interested stakeholders have identified several priorities in terms of mobility management. The most important of these priorities of the local authorities is to further expand the cycling network both inside the city centre and between the city centre and some major resorts and well known touristic places around the centre. Moreover, other additional forms of mobility based on this network may be developed, such as the implementation of a bike sharing system, which is currently under discussion.

Another priority of the local authorities is the upgrading of the public transport. The Municipality has discussed several choices for the improvement of the public transport system along the island. Some of them are the restructuration of the entire public transport routes, lines and bus stops, the integration of all public transport means under the umbrella of a central mass transit authority, the investment in new buses, and the creation on a portal for providing real time information to passengers about expected times of bus arrival at stops, deviations from schedules etc. All these choices require funding and the Municipality examines several funding opportunities taking also into account its priorities.

With the above main priorities, the transport system in the island will be reformed and mobility conditions substantially improved. Some additional actions could include the development of an ITS application through which the visitors and locals can facilitate their mobility in the whole island, as well as the implementation of a controlled parking system in the centre of the city in order to discourage the extensive and illegal parking in the main roads.

From the above it can be easily concluded that a Local Travel Plan Network provides major assistance to the local stakeholders, as they would be involved in a fruitful discussion during which all the existing ideas, goals and already taken steps will be gathered in one single Local Travel Plan, facilitating this way the decision making process and the formulation of a list of short, medium and long term actions.

2.2 The planned measures

The LTPN members in Kos developed an extensive list of measures in order to facilitate the mobility of both tourists and residents. The three measures implemented in the context of STARTER were included in this list, which has a clear orientation towards energy efficient and environmentally friendly transportation. The measures included in the list have been classified according to the mode of transport, and they have been prioritized according to the urgent needs that must be met.

The list includes both hard and soft measures, while the most urgent and important ones are presented below along with their expected impacts:

1. Expansion of the existing bicycling network along with the improvement of its signage

Kos has an extensive cycling network covering basically the centre of the city. It is within the priorities of the Municipality of Kos the expansion of this network to such a direction so as to cover parts of the rural road network, as well as towards large hotels and resorts located outside of the city centre.

Moreover, the expansion could be done in such a way in order to cover and/or unify archaeological sites and other points of interest into integrated cycling paths. The development of this measure will have as a result the creation of large area through which tourists and local residents will be in the position to travel without using any other mode than the bicycle. Therefore, it is expected that the measure will discourage the use of private cars, which is one of the main problems that the city centre of Kos currently faces.

Although the current existing cycling network is quite extensive and well appreciated by the visitors, its signage requires several improvements in specific points of the network. Several black spots have been identified by the various authorities and organizations (municipality, port authority, municipal police), as well as the users of the cycling network. These spots need to be registered and prioritized through onsite diagnostic checks. Then, the technical department of the municipality will study them more carefully and the appropriate improvements will be made.

2. Expansion of the pedestrian zones in the city centre

As an added value to the wide cycling network, the present one is connected to several pedestrian zones that exist in the island of Kos, especially in the city centre where many of the commercial stores are located. The combination of these zones with the cycling network covers a wide area, within which tourists and residents can move without using motorized transport of any kind.

The expansion of the pedestrian zones will allow tourists to avoid using cars in a wider area, while it will also benefit the local market, as the commercial centre will be easily accessible. Moreover, the expansion of the zones should be realized in such a way so as to include archaeological sites and other attractions, in order to create integrated paths that can be run through only on foot and by bicycle.

The most important element of the study for the expansion of the pedestrian zones will be the identification of the most suitable areas for this expansion to take place, along with the necessary transportation study for the shift of motorized vehicles to other arteries. Other issues that will be examined are the formulation of an indicative feasibility study, the identification of the necessary stakeholders, the identification of potential sources for funding, as well as the necessary dissemination actions.

3. Implementation of a controlled parking system in the centre of the city

One of the major problems that the island faces regards the lack of available parking places, as some tourists and many residents chose to visit the centre of the city using either their private car or a rented one. To solve this problem, one solution examined by the Municipality is the implementation of a controlled parking system in the centre of the city. The system may be implemented in the greater area of the city centre and include three types of parking places (zones): parking places for residents, visitors and mixed.

The goal of such a system would be to discourage long-term parking, to ensure the availability of parking places for residents, as well as to create short-term available parking places for visitors in areas where a high rate of rotation is necessary. The connection of this system with some kind of payment is not necessary, as it can be implemented with simple time limit enforcement.

4. Unification of the three public transportation operators in Kos

Currently three are the main public transportation operators in Kos: Interurban transport operator, municipal public transport operator and the union of taxi drivers. A challenging measure could be to unify these three operators under the umbrella of a central mass transit authority. This authority could have the sole responsibility to provide public transport services to visitors, residents and workers.

In order to do so, a study could be conducted in order to investigate the conditions for this integration, the reformation of the entire public transport network (schedules, lines and bus stops), legislative barriers that could emerge, organizational elements and funding opportunities. It has to be mentioned at this point that the Municipality has done some preparatory work in cooperation with the Hellenic Institute of Transport, which needs to be further expanded and finalized.

5. Organization of promotion actions

The Municipality of Kos has recognized that apart from the implementation of the above and potentially other measures, promotion and dissemination actions should be carried out in order to inform tourists and residents about the various implemented measures and the benefits from their use. These actions will include awareness campaigns, promotion material, press releases in local magazines and newspapers, broadcasting in the municipal media (TV channel and radio), articles in websites etc.

The main responsible body for these promotion and dissemination actions will be the Municipality of Kos, however, the members of the LTPN established in STARTER will have an important and active role to play. The latter could perform wide promotion actions in order to reach out and attract as many tourists and residents as possible. For example, the promotion material about the implemented measures could be distributed in hotels and major concentration areas of tourists and residents.

2.3 Barriers during implementation

In general terms, implementation of the STARTER measures in Kos was rather smooth and straightforward. No major barriers, obstacles or problems can be reported that made the implementation difficult and delayed the delivery of the measures. This was the result of the prompt and good design of the measures, and the close monitoring of the implementation by the Municipality. However, three difficulties are worth to be mentioned:

The change in the type of measures: In January 2014, the Municipality planned to develop two measures: a) the expansion of the cycling network and the improvement of its signage in certain points (black spots) and b) the organization of an awareness campaign for the promotion of the implemented measures. In the project meeting that was held in April 2014, the measures were changed in order to be more soft-oriented. So the two measures were changed to a) the information signs (maps) and b) the rescheduled public transport timetables of two lines. This posed a small delay in the planning activities of the Municipality, but it did not affect the progress of the implementation task.

Another difficulty was the change in the Municipal Authority. The elections period (May 2014) made an additional obstacle in the implementation of the measures, which however it did not affect the progress of the implementation task either.

Especially for the PORTAL, there was a 2-month delay in the development of the mobile version of the PORTAL for iOS and Windows Mobile users.

Concerning the drivers that guided the implementation of the three measures, the following can be stated per measure:

PORTAL:

1. The absence of an official website for Kos. This was the main driver for the implementation of the portal. Until recently there were various sites that offered touristic information about Kos. In many cases, this information is unreliable, inaccurate and mainly incomplete. Now with the launch of the official online portal for Kos, developed by its municipal authority, the tourists (and also residents) can enjoy comprehensive and recently updated information about all activities offered by the island.
2. The need for electronic advertising of many local businesses
3. The need for more detailed and comprehensive information for Kos
4. The need for value added services for the tourists
5. The need for a unique electronic place that will concentrate POIs, PT routes, bicycle lanes, facilities and services

Information signs:

1. The need to guide tourists and facilitate their visit to outstanding POI inside and close to the city centre
 2. The need to direct new arrivals (those that arrive by ships) on how to find their destination
-

Rescheduled public transport timetables:

1. The need to increase the frequency of the two bus lines that service some big hotels due to the increased traffic between these hotels, the nearby beaches and the city centre

2.4 Results of the measures

Within the STARTER project, the Municipality of Kos implemented on-line information tools (PORTAL), promotional measures for sustainable mobility (on-street information signs) and promotional measures for public transport (new timetables for PT).

The tourists in Kos present a satisfying preference in sustainable transport modes (walking, PT and bicycle), but car still holds a significant percentage of use. Given that for the majority of car users combine their trips with car with other modes of transport, therefore not appearing to be committed to their cars, the challenge for the Municipality is to minimize the car trips by offering door-to-door sustainable transport solutions of high quality.

The evaluation of the implemented measures in Kos reveals promising impacts in terms of modal shift towards bicycle and public transport. It appears that even soft improvements in the public transport (increase of frequency and extension of the operating hours) can bring significant benefits even within a short time of application. On the other hand, information measures (on-line Portal and on-street information signs) do have a positive impact in sustainable travel behaviour, but need more time to mature.

The operation of the Portal the last year mostly caused a modal shift towards bicycle and walking and to a smaller degree towards public transport. This is the reason why the energy savings and CO2 emissions reduction (2,7%) do not appear so significant in relation to what would have been expected by the 14% of modal shift. This is something to be considered by the Municipality: improvement of the PT information within the Portal might be the issue, but an overall improvement of the PT quality (even in the basis of soft improvements in the timetables) might really make the difference.

On the other hand, the on-street information signs almost exclusively caused a modal shift towards walking and PT. Making the information on bicycle rentals more visible is also a point to be considered for further improvements of the measure.

In regards to the LTPN's establishment and operation in Kos, the results from the STARTER evaluation are quite promising. The LTPN membership was doubled within the STARTER lifetime (from 7 members in 2012 to 14 members in 2014), despite the fact that the local stakeholders were not always so easy to reach. Personal commitment was required and several bilateral meetings took place in order to keep the LTPN members updated on the STARTER activities. The LTPN concept was a new concept and much effort was required to convince the stakeholders about the benefits expected from it.

The LTPN members were very active in identifying the local mobility problems and possible solutions to them, but they were kept rather sceptic when it came to the contribution of the LTPN to the local tourist-transport cooperation. Conflict of interest is an issue and - especially during a period of economic crisis – stakeholders/owners of businesses have a tendency to be suspicious when their involvement is required.

Continuity of the LTPN is within the political willingness of the new Municipal Authority as well (a change of the Authority occurred in summer 2014), but the Municipality also recognises that the most important issue related to this continuity is funding.

3. POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LTPN

3.1 Objectives of the network

The major objectives of the LTPN established in Kos are:

1. To bring together local stakeholders from all the sectors in order to discuss and find solutions for the existing mobility problems.
2. To set up a complete and comprehensive local travel plan with clear orientation towards energy efficient and environmentally friendly transportation.
3. To strengthen the cooperation among the various local stakeholders for the facilitation of the transportation in the island.

All the above objectives have been met in the framework of STARTER. The challenge from now on is to continue and further expand the network.

3.2 Actual and potential future members of the LTPN

The current membership of the LTPN in Kos per type of organization is shown in the following table.

Table 1: LTPN membership in Kos

	Type of organization	
1.	Municipality of Kos	1
2.	Public Transport Provider	2
3.	Hotel Associations	2
4.	Associations of touristic businesses	1
5.	Owners of touristic businesses	2
6.	Tourists operators	2
7.	Associations of tourist operators	1
8.	Association of taxi drivers	1
9.	Association of bike friends	1
10.	Policy Authority	1
	Total	14

The Municipality of Kos is the leader of the network. In addition to the above members, the following ones will be approached to become members:

- Port authority
- Airport authority
- Municipalities from nearby islands
- National Tourism Organization

3.3 Development plans of the next 3 years

The development plans for the next three years include:

1. To keep the network alive.
2. To enrich the network with more including more representatives from selected stakeholders (e.g. travel agencies).
3. To cooperate with authorities and stakeholders from other areas in order to exchange knowledge and experiences, as well as to promote the idea of LTPNs to other areas.
4. To establish PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships) with some of the local stakeholders in order to facilitate the financing of the measures implementation.
5. To search for additional funding from other sources (e.g. national programmes).

3.4 Financial viability of the LTPN

The type of LTPN established in Kos is an Area Travel Plan Network. So the LTPN does not require specific financing. The only expenses encountered are the ones required for the organization of the meetings, which are covered by the Municipality of Kos. As such, no specific financial plan is necessary.

The financing of the measures is the sole responsibility of the Municipality. The Municipality will also find the necessary funding sources. For the time being the following sources have been identified:

1. Municipal funds
 2. Funding through other EU Projects
 3. Sponsoring schemes with the private sector
 4. Financing by selected members of the LTPN with regard to the measures dealing with promotion activities
-

4. ACTION PLAN BEYOND STARTER

The mobility measures planned to be implemented in the future are described in section 2.2. The cost for the implementation of these measures is very difficult to be estimated, since it depends on the scale of development (e.g. length of the cycling network) and the available funding, while for most of them a feasibility study is required that will include financial aspects, such the cost/benefit ratio, investment and rate of return. On the other hand, the source of funding is safe to be presented.

Therefore, the following table includes the source of funding for the above measures and an indication of the time horizon for their implementation.

Table 2: Source of funding and time horizon for the measures to be implemented in Kos

Measure	Source of funding	Time horizon
Expansion of the existing bicycling network along with the improvement of its signage	5. National Strategic Reference Framework 6. Funding through other EU Projects 7. Municipal funds	1 - 5 years
Expansion of the pedestrian zones in the city centre	8. National Strategic Reference Framework 9. Funding through other EU Projects 10. Municipal funds	1 - 5 years
Implementation of a controlled parking system in the centre of the city	11. Municipal funds 12. Concession to a private company that will operate the measure and derive income from its operation (fee)	1 - 2 years
Unification of the three public transportation operators in Kos	13. Municipal funds 14. Funding through other EU Projects 15. Sponsoring schemes with the private sector	1 - 2 years
Organization of promotion actions	16. Municipal funds 17. Financing by selected members of the LTPN	1 - 5 years