



Demand-Responsive  
Transport to ensure  
accessibility, availability  
and reliability of rural  
public transport

## PILOT DESCRIPTION

**Region Värmland  
(Sweden)**

**12/12/2019**  
(Interreg Baltic Sea Region)



The aim of Region Värmland's (Sweden) demand-responsive transport (DRT) pilot is to investigate **how seamless travel offers could be designed to encourage vulnerable traveller groups to use less cost-intensive Special Transport Services (STS).**

In Sweden, STS is provided to individuals that have been approved of having a non-temporary disability and have mobility issues when travelling alone or on public transport. At the same time, Sweden also offers patients transport schemes where transport to and from the health care treatment is subsidized for all residents. This patient transport scheme can also be utilised by STS approved travellers. Today, all patient transport options can be booked only by phone. An operator receives the specifics of when and where the passenger needs to travel and makes a seat reservation on the agreed journey. Sometimes specially equipped vehicles are needed and sometimes the passengers use regular public transport. Therefore, some of the journeys are demand-responsive in their nature while others make use of conventional public transport.

Within the patient transport scheme, it is also possible in some instances to be reimbursed for travelling with a private car. Many patients opt for this. Possible reasons for it might be that:

- they do not know of the patient travel scheme
- they do not want to call and book the service, perhaps because it imposes on their integrity
- they perceive public transport as an unreliable mode of travelling

This leads to many unnecessary vehicle kilometres in private cars or single passenger vehicles which generate a lot of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and costs for society.

**In this pilot, Region Värmland aims to develop its patient travels with regular public transport further by introducing digital bookings and a new price structure for those using this new digital service.** Routines for how these passengers identify themselves will get an overhaul with the aim of protecting the passengers' integrity. It should not be possible to tell that this specific passenger is traveling with a patient ticket. A monitoring system of all bookings is already in place and the digital bookings will be integrated in a way as to ensure that Region Värmland is still able to follow the passenger as they move from point A to B. The idea is that these changes will incentivise and promote the use of regular public transport for patient travels instead of cost-intensive special transport services.

**The service would be cutting costs by reducing the administration and number of man hours needed to plan specific demand-responsive routes.** It will also incentivise travellers with a new digital booking service and give a monetary incentive to use digital bookings as this will be premiered with reduced pricing.

**Overall, the pilot aims to investigate whether the availability of digital bookings in combination with new pricing strategy and better integrity is attractive enough to vulnerable groups such that they will switch means of travel to regular public transport.** Thus, the hopes are that technology and pricing strategy could be the tools needed for changing travel behaviour and to reduce unnecessary vehicle kilometres and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.