MARA

Mobility and Accessibility
in Rural Areas

Guidance for stakeholder involvement and public participation – MARA Interreg Project Report

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Content

1. Forewords

Stakeholder involvement is the first prerequisite for public authorities to plan and implement a demand-driven and efficient transport system. This document aids partner regions to identify and implement appropriate participatory tools to involve the main stakeholders (residents, tourists, transport actors) in planning mobility solutions and for selecting best practices and integrating these in regional stakeholder involvement. However, the report does not try to cover all aspects and things that need to be taken into account when preparing stakeholder engagement. Instead, it gives some ideas why involvement is important. If you want more detailed technical support for your stakeholder involvement strategy there are practical guidelines available in internet that can be downloaded freely. We have listed some at the end of this report.

The target audience of the report is the regional public authorities responsible for mobility planning in the pilot areas. Following the description and outputs of MARA application the report will be produced as a result of GoA 2.1, collating participative tools and methods for stakeholder involvement from all partner regions, evaluating them, and listing good identified practices which could be transferred to other regions. We will thank Age Poom, University of Tartu, for valuable comments for the first draft of the report. The content of the report is based on a literature review, the webropol survey distributed among MARA partners, experiences of participation in two areas and knowledge exchange among MARA partners in the interactive workshop organized in Hajnowka, Poland, in September 2019. We hope you find this report useful.

Helsinki 1.12.2019

On behalf of writing team,

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2. Why stakeholder involvement is needed?

Transportation systems are complex social and technical systems (Cascetta et al. 2015). Some plans can be very local (e.g. improving quality of local bus station) concerning limited amount of stakeholders, while transportation planning can cover wider regions and concerns of several cities (public transportation) or even countries (Rail Baltic). As transportation plans and projects are often dynamic, affecting multiple stakeholders and situated in complex institutional setting, some authors consider that they belong to a wider class of problems known as "wicked problems" in the literature of social sciences (Cascetta et al. 2015). Therefore, stakeholder engagement is urgent for planning socially acceptable transportation systems, avoiding resistances towards plans and mitigating risks that may others occur during implementation phase. Stakeholder Engagement (SE) or Public Engagement (PE) can be understood as a process of involving stakeholder concerns, needs and values in the transport decision-making process (Kelly et al. 2004, Cascetta et al. 2015).

Sustainable energy or transportation systems are typically considered as part of technology-oriented "smart" solutions, where architects, engineers and other professionals develop innovative technological solutions giving hardly room for citizen engagement. However, technological-deterministic point of view in developing sustainable solutions is shifting from the first generation "smart" projects slowly towards a more citizen-centric approach, focusing on smart citizens rather than smart infrastructure as the high-tech solution to sustainability challenges. The role of public engagement and stakeholder involvement in smart projects has gained lately much attention in Europe. Top-down planning traditions are facing new ideologies of self-governance and civic society, where empowered citizens take decisions in their own hands and actively develop their neighborhoods to become more attractive and inclusive (e.g. Buijs et al. 2016). However, transportation planning still relies heavily on top-down approaches, being "engineering task" and having less regulation for engaging people or adopting user-centric approach. User-centric point of view includes increased attention for user innovation, co-creation and collaboration with a wide variety of stakeholders (Pogačar and Žižek 2016). This all often leads to more acceptable transportation plans and realization.

When speaking about *Public* Engagement we refer to citizens whose role is not specified in the planning. *Stakeholders*, on the contrary, can be considered as individuals or institutional, professional, economic or other entities that have an interest in the case/project, may be (in)directly affected by the project or can have an effect on the project. Cascetta et al. (2015) define transport stakeholders as "people and organizations who hold a stake in a particular issue, even though they have no formal role in the decision-making process". The potential stakeholders can be identified by asking:

Who is most likely interested in the project or the actions planned?
Who are the potential beneficiaries?
Who is or might be adversely affected by the project?
Who are the supporters, sponsors or funding agencies, and who are the opponents?
Who might have an effect on the project (planning and/or implementation)?

Vast amount of research papers has been published on public participation or stakeholder engagement as a part of planning transportation systems. Scientific studies have been extremely common especially in the United States, where the federal, state and local laws have demanded citizen involvement in transportation planning and project since 1950's and many laws have been strengthened over time (McAndrews and Marcus 2015). Public participation guidelines listed at the end of this report have identified several reasons why stakeholder involvement is crucial for successful transportation planning. These reasons call for a need to apply a proper methodological approach in stakeholder

engagement. This involves full coverage of stakeholders groups, selection of relevant and targeted engagement methods and tools according to stakeholder group, and applying the tools inclusively for collecting input from and developing and adjusting solutions together with stakeholders.

Some of the main reasons why stakeholders engagement is needed are the following:

To obtain high-quality information about mobility behaviors, understand true mobility patterns and travel chains, and estimate mobility needs of residents and tourists.

To understand heterogeneous preferences, underlying values and norms of the user groups of transport systems.

To identify salient socio-cultural factors influencing mobility patterns. For example, the multidimensional nature of accessibility where individuals' travel behavior and perceived accessibility also play an important role (Laatikainen et al. 2017).

To increase public awareness of transport challenges and planning.

To increase acceptance and decrease resistance. People's behavior towards a plan can change if they feel being involved in the decision-making process, since participation changes their perception about problems and potential solutions (Gatta et al. 2018).

To increase the chance of creating transportation investment (public infrastructure and services, shared mobility services) that fully suits the needs of different user groups.

3. What kind of engagement is enough?

Even relatively routine transportation projects can be complex and contentious and would benefit from participation methods that are more engaging than information shared in a report, newsletter, or informational meeting (McAndrews and Marcus 2015). On the contrary, in certain circumstances engagement can fail and there are potential risks where costly and time-consuming public participation end-up in ineffective planning process and worse decision-making than compared to traditional, top-down decision-making (Irvin and Stansbury 2004). Researchers have identified several aspects that can go wrong (Irvin and Stansburry 2004, McAndrews and Marcus 2015, Hou 2011, Camay et al. 2013):

→ Stakeholder involvement does not succeed in creating dialogue among and with participants.

Engagement may create dissent and conflict among or within communities instead of shared understanding and agreements.

Participation does not effectively reach disenfranchised or disabled groups.

Participation is dominated by a few strong participants, because stakeholder groups have different resources and competences to be equally involved in the planning process.

Decisions are not truly open to the influence of lay public.

Failed participation processes may increase costs to municipalities, states, and developers.

The participation with particular goals is dated in the wrong stage of the process.

Selected participation tools and proposed timeframe are not applicable to relevant stakeholder groups and for reaching defined goals of stakeholder involvement.

The professional terms and too big amount of information make the contents difficult to be understood by the participants.

Identifying potential pitfalls in advance and developing a comprehensive strategy for stakeholder involvement taking contextual factors (e.g. elite and powerful group can dominate the participatory process), budget and time limitations into account, may help to avoid disadvantages or control some of these specific deficiencies mentioned. Choosing *feasible*[1] tools is an important part of your strategy development. There might be a need to define differences between individual (e.g. electronic surveys) and community based (e.g. focus group meetings) participation methods. The participation techniques commonly used in land-use and transportation planning are mainly individual-oriented tools giving less weight to collective participation (McAndrews and Marcus 2015). Another urgent question to be raised "Are there any vulnerable groups involved"? Stakeholder involvement need to be equitable, the interests and values of socially excluded groups need to be considered and presented (McAndrews and Marcus 2015). The responsibility to involve affected parties in decision-making is in the hands of public authorities.

The development of stakeholder involvement strategy can be divided into two major operational phases: *inclusion* and *closure*. Inclusion means that the organizing team needs to decide **whom to involve** and what topics to include. First, it needs a **rationale to select those who are invited** to become stakeholder of the participation process and those who are left out. In addition, choose the topics that need engagement of stakeholders. You may want to exclude some issues[2] not relevant to be time- and budget wise. *Closure* includes the selection of tools of **how these stakeholders are going** to be involved and engaged. Different participation tools may be used and selecting the most effective set of tools for engagement is crucial to the success of the whole process (Cascetta et al. 2016). It should be also remembered that stakeholder engagement is more than just communication. It can ensure that knowledge, interests, and values as well as world-views from stakeholders are systematically collected and transported to the decision makers (del Río et al. 2019).

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1   See more about feasibility in the page 12.

2   These can be technical details of the plan. Be careful when excluding topics. If possible you could ask second opinion from other team or organization about topics for stakeholder involvement.

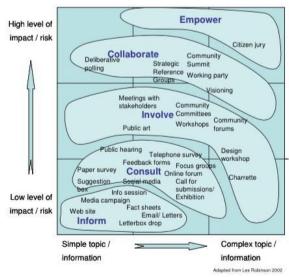## 4. How to choose tools for stakeholder involvement correctly?

In transportation planning, different participation tools can be used depending on complexity, longevity of the topic and who are the key stakeholders that are necessary to involve in the planning process. The methods and tools can be typified based on Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation introduced in the **TABLE 1** and illustrated in the **FIGURE 1**. Despite this approach has been criticized among researchers it provides a good starting point to start build the *inclusion* and *closure* of your stakeholder involvement strategy.

TABLE 1. Type of tools and short definition based on Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation.

TYPE	DEFINITIONS
Inform	One-directional communication, e.g. press releases, social media campaigns, visualizations about ongoing plans or development processes, informing stakeholders to get engaged.
Consult	Two-directional, *one-time* hearing during the process, e.g. internet- or telephone-based surveys, interviews or public hearings. Usually includes feedback to stakeholders or public report how opinions have been taken into consideration in the plan/project.
Involve	To work directly with the stakeholders *throughout* the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered, e.g. workshops, brainstorming, role plays, community committees.
Collaborate	To partner with the stakeholder in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solutions, e.g. strategic groups.
Empower	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public, e.g. citizens juries.

FIGURE 1. Illustration on different participation tools and their level of engagement. Source of the photo: https://medium.com/@RedheadSteph/re-imagining-the-iap2-spectrum-9d24afdc1b2e
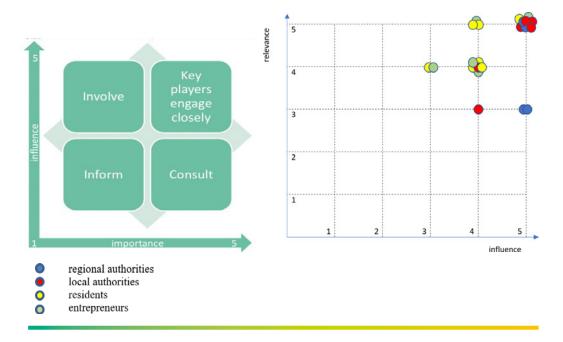
Excerpt taken from Warringah Council "Community Engagment Matrix" 2011.

The diagram below demonstrates graphically where different methods and tools may sit on the spectrum taking into account the level of impact/risk and the complexity of the topic or issue.

When considering most suitable participation methods, not only the characteristics of a plan, but also the characteristics of the stakeholders matter. When you think about your stakeholders, it is common that some of them are more powerful to resist or protest against the plan/project than others. You need to understand how **stakeholders affect** decision-making or project. What is the anticipated level of conflict, concern controversy, or opportunity on this or related issues? Be especially aware of those you are not involving and whether ignoring their participation could cause potential risk/ harm to the project? Remember that despite a specific stakeholder may have a low level of influence on the project, the project can still have a strong impact on this stakeholder. Therefore, you need to estimate the relevance of the project for the identified stakeholder.

To determine the appropriate tools for stakeholder involvement, it is important to estimate the degree with which a stakeholder considers the issue/plan significant. The stakeholder will become involved according to its perception of the seriousness of the issue. To estimate the level of relevance of the plan for a stakeholder, you may ask questions like: How much does the stakeholder care about this case/issue? How significant are the potential positive outcomes and adverse effects of the case/plan on the stakeholder? You may score the stakeholder's potential influence on the issue and how relevant the plan/ topic is for them from 1 = very low up to 5 = very high and place them into the stakeholder engagement matrix presented in the **FIGURE 2** (see more Innovation for Social Change 2014). People are more prone to participate if they feel that their wellbeing is going to be affected.

FIGURE 2. Two-dimensional matrix for stakeholder power relations (left-hand). Results of stakeholder mapping in the MARA case area in Hajnowka, Poland (right-hand) (Glińska et al. 2019).

4.1. How to estimate feasibility of chosen methods and tools

In reality, the participation can be planned by using the protocol "mapping and identifying stakeholders" demonstrated in MARA workshop in Hajnowka autumn 2019. The protocol guides to identify stakeholders, choose most suitable participation tools and evaluate their feasibility together with other experts. The results are directly usable in creating stakeholder involvement strategy (See **ANNEX 1**: Guidance_Stakeholder_engagement_SYKE).

Feasibility, on the first hand, refers to implementation of the tool: economic (budget, costs, working hours), social (labor's skills and experiences in stakeholder involvement) and technical (e.g. licenses, technical capacity) capability and capital of organization

team to implement chosen engagement method and tool. You may consider how time-consuming or expensive the participation method is to implement: does it need extra labor hours, special expertise or private consultation services? Are there (expensive) licenses or techniques to assess the method? On the second hand, feasibility can be estimated from stakeholder perspective. Some methods or tools chosen may be feasible to implement, but do not attract stakeholders to take part. Is tool used technically too complicated or method assessed time-consuming not inviting stakeholders to engage? Sometimes information about the plan is described using difficult technical terms, making interpretation of the plan difficult for stakeholders[3].

In the MARA project, feasibility of different tools were estimated as a part of regional stakeholder involvement strategies. The tools chosen for each region were evaluated by partners by using common criteria for feasibility: organizational skills to conduct and attractiveness for stakeholders. However, partners felt that estimating the feasibility of engagement tools was a challenging task. Therefore support from other partners and through Peer Group meeting organized during the MARA project can help identifying appropriate and feasible tools for different regions. Shared experiences and reflections with other partners will help us understand potential pitfalls of selected tools and improve their implementation in different regions and cases.

4.2. Examples of methods and tools for engagement

There are many different tools developed to engage different stakeholders or general public. They can be either used on their own, or usually used as a set of tools for engaging different stakeholders. Selecting the most appropriate technique(s) of engagement is crucial to the success of the whole process (Cascetta and Pagliara 2012). There are many different tools that can be used to engage people in the process as illustrated in the FIG. 1. There is not one "correct" tool for every situation and using more than one technique increases the likelihood of gaining a more representative response. The tools that have been choses should be based on *inclusion*, *closure* and *feasibility* as discussed above. We introduce few potential tools and remind the reader that the list below is not exhaustive, but we give some examples of different participation tools and stakeholder involvement approaches based on their level of engagement (TABLE 1, FIG. 1).

INFORMING AND CONSULTATION

Informing is prerequisite for stakeholder involvement. There are several ways to inform about the plan. It is important to carefully plan how key stakeholders are informed, and how the planning goals or options are presented. Also, you need to consider if there is a need to inform general public or other stakeholders, who will not be actively engaged during the planning process. Sometimes there is great need for developing scenarios or models that predicts e.g. changes in travel time, frequency or reliability in services that would have significant impact on travel behavior (Cascetta and Pagliara 2012). It is crucial to provide context-specific information so that it matches the local concerns, circumstances and mentalities of the people at each location.

→   **Project portals** with comprehensive set of information, surveys and data, and social media sites such as blogs for quick or intermediate updates and polls are becoming a normal practice of larger infrastructure projects.

→   **Digital tools** (e-tools) for enabling information sharing, communication and education of decision-makers, experts, general public or other stakeholders taking part in the planning process (Pogačar and Žižek 2016). Nowadays there are many

3   More about the role of information in the next chapter

different mobile phone applications and internet-based e-tools developed to engage, participate and share information. Information collection can happen by using Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) approach (Pánek and Benediktsson 2017), or by using Public Participation GIS (PPGIS) also called "place-based e-tools" where volunteered participants collect or share place-based information, opinions or other issues (Møller et al. 2018). Some cities or organization have developed their own e-tools for public participation, for example, in the city of Helsinki, authorities use an internet-based e-tool "Tell it on map" (*Kerro kartalla*).

INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION

Involvement and collaboration requires deeper and normally longer engagement from both sides, i.e. public authority or institution who runs the project and stakeholder groups that involved in the planning phase. In many cases, the same stakeholder involvement method can cover different levels of engagement. Methods such as MDCA (see p. 15) are especially used in complex and long-lasting planning processes. Another aspect that has recently raised in public engagement is "empathy hearing". Empathy refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and respond to the feelings of another, offering a way to improve communication and interactions between stakeholders and authorities responsible for engagement (Edlins and Dolamore 2018).

→   **Multi Decision Criteria Analysis (MDCA)** is a method that allows choosing among different alternative plans by also taking into account the preferences of different stakeholders. Usually MDCA methods are used when engaging professionals or focus groups. Stakeholder groups can contribute in the prioritization of assessment criteria, ideally in rather early phases of the plan/ project. There are several MDCA techniques developed that can support public sector in decision-making (Dodgson et al. 2009). One of the most common techniques used in transportation planning is the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) (Saaty 1995).

→   **Learning Labs** (permanent or time-limited) can be established to build constructive and continuous dialogue between city authorities, researchers, innovators and societal interest groups and possibly otherwise interested or relevant stakeholders. Learning Labs help innovators to identify important societal values, and involve external stakeholders in their innovation process, in order to come to a co-creation process in which the identified viewpoints of the actors can be translated into practical design requirements.

→   **Collective public participation** is a method where citizens participate to the planning process as a group instead of representing only themselves. It requires networking with each other and forming a coalition to develop a shared response for the participation. Participation is enhanced by their group preparation: studying the plans and maps, collecting data, investigating precedents and case studies, creating mutual support for a common position, and practicing what to say at a public hearing (developing project messaging). The "Hackathon" is an example of short-term (1–3 days) collective participation where people usually work as a team. People work intensively together to solve some particular real life problems (challenges), in a friendly and fairly competition (Urban Inno Interreg 2017).

→   **Spatial multi criteria assessment tools** such as Zonation (Moilanen et al. 2014) that aid locational decision making from the perspective of land use decisions (e.g. reserving land for new infrastructure projects and there are alternatives to consider) require input from experts or stakeholders. As all MDCA methods, also Zonation is quite technical and has a slightly different focus – conservation purposes. However, combining this kind of methods with other participation tools can enhance mutual understanding about land use decision and how prioritize decisions.

→   **"Monitorial citizens"** may be involved and defined who monitor, evaluate and suggest solutions to the plan throughout the preparatory phase without having formal power in decision-making (Bartoletti and Faccioli 2016).

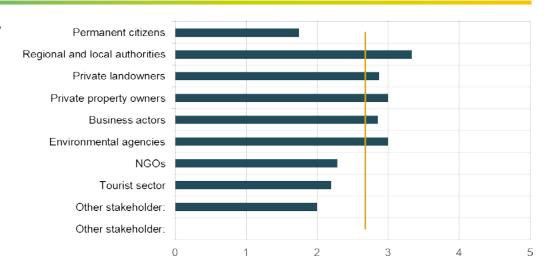# 5. Experiences of participation tools among MARA partners

In this chapter, we present results based from internal survey and partner workshop held in Hajnowka, Poland, in September 2019. We will introduce two activities that were made by BUT and SYKE in their regions. The first example shows how local stakeholders were engaged in the early phase of the stakeholder involvement strategy in Hajnowka, Poland, followed by the example of PPGIS survey conducted in the Kymenlaakso region, Finland.

We conducted a webropol survey for all MARA partners concerning the public participation, experiences on tools for stakeholder involvement during the summer 2019. We asked what kinds of tools have been used in different regions to engage different stakeholders and what is required by the legislation. Participation tools were classified into five levels based on how deeply the stakeholder has been part of the process and decision-making (see **TABLE 1**). The levels are based on Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969).

Totally nine MARA partners took part in the survey: Estonia (University of Tartu), Finland (Finnish Environment Institute), Germany (Ministry of Energy), Latvia (Vidzeme Planning Region), Lithuania (Vilnius Gediminas Technical University), Norway (Setesdal Region), Poland (Bialystok University of Technology), Sweden (Trafikverket) and Russia (Tourist Info Center Karelia). Each partner has their own case focusing on either shared mobility services (e-bikes, shared cars), improvements of public transportation or integrating transport modes. We asked respondents who should be engaged in transportation planning at the regional scale and on what planning-level according the law. They picked up stakeholders in the list and chose the level of involvement. They could also add stakeholders not in the list.

FIGURE 3. Stakeholders' involvement level in regional scale transportation planning in nine countries according their legislation. Values are average scores among respondents (N = 9).

5 = Empower,
4 = Collaboration,
3 = Involvement,
2 = Consultation,
1 = Informing.

Regional and local authorities were considered most important stakeholders in terms of level of participation, while involvement of local residents was lowest. Next we asked respondents to pick up those participation tools for different stakeholder groups that had been used in mobility or transportation planning processes in their region. Information campaigns and public meetings were most commonly mentioned participation tools among all stakeholders. Field trips or site visits were less often used method in MARA case regions and there were no experiences on advisory boards (Empowered, making decision together) **(FIG. 4)**.

FIGURE 4. Most commonly used participation tools among different stakeholders in the MARA case regions. Columns are sums of all respondents (N = 9). Potential maximum value is 81 (9 stakeholder groups in nine regions).

During the MARA project meeting in Hajnowka, SYKE organized a workshop about stakeholder involvement for partners. The most important aim of the workshop in Hajnowka was to support partners to identify their stakeholders and select the most suitable tools for a stakeholder involvement in their case region. Before the group work, SYKE presented results of innovative tools identified by MARA partners in the survey. These potential new tools to use in regional stakeholder strategies were discussed.

Many partners considered that site visits could be a good way to get feedback from the plan and discuss about potential solutions with key stakeholders. Visits should be organized only for selected key stakeholders or focus groups to have enough time for discussions and knowledge exchange. External experts can guide the visit and give a better understanding about the plan. Partners also saw that organizing a visit to other region with key stakeholders to share positive and negative experiences on new mobility services or transportation solutions.

5.1. Developing stakeholder involvement strategy in Hajnowka region, Poland

In order to prepare the practical part of the Strategy, the team conducted qualitative surveys in a form of engaging two focus groups comprised of representatives of various stakeholder groups in Hajnówka County. The surveys took place between 21st October and 4th November 2019.

The first focus group was composed of 13 persons, including: six representatives of the County Office in Hajnówka (incl. the Staroste and the Head of the Transport Department), six representatives of municipal governments (Hajnówka Town Hall, Hajnówka Municipal Office, Białowieża Municipal Office, Dubicze Cerkiewne Municipal Office, Kleszczele Town Hall, Narewka Municipal Office) and the Director of County Road Management in Hajnówka.

The second meeting was attended by 15 persons, including: five representatives of the County Office in Hajnówka, a representative of the Municipal Utilities Company in Hajnówka (in charge of renting buses and organizing bus transport for inhabitants), representatives of the Agritourist Association Puszcza Białowieska, the Association of Borysówka Village Sympathizers, the Civic Centre for Culture, Sport and Leisure in Kleszczele, a regional transport company Przewozy Regionalne Sp. z o.o. in Białystok.

Group discussions incorporated an element of workshops, where the participants were requested to complete forms, allowing for:

1) identifying key groups of stakeholders potentially interested in implementing the results of the MARA project in Hajnówka County;

2) determining the influence and relevance of a given group of stakeholders on the possibility to implement the results of the MARA project in Hajnówka County;

3) indicating the level of engagement of stakeholder groups potentially interested in implementing the results of the MARA project in Hajnówka County;

4) determining methods of engaging specific groups of stakeholders interested in implementing the results of the project, as well as determining feasibility methods and a level of attractiveness of a given method with regard to a given group of stakeholders.

5.2. Use of public participatory GIS tool to engage non-residential visitors in Kymenlaakso region, Finland

During the summer of 2019, SYKE produced and conducted a participatory survey of summer visitors and holidaymakers in the Kymenlaakso region. One aim of the survey was to get practical hints and guidelines to MARA partners for using public participatory GIS in their case studies, if found applicable. The survey was carried out by using commercial Maptionnaire: Internet based Public Participation GIS tool, which allowed locating the answers on the map. The survey could be answered either by computer, tablet or smart phone. The survey was open from the beginning of July to the middle of August.

The purpose of the survey was to identify the modes of transportation and demands of public transport among summer visitors (like vacationers, cottage owners & hotel guests). The survey included multiple choice, statement and mapping questions. The survey was designed in cooperation with the City of Kouvola and Kymenlaakso County authorities. Prior to the survey, the size of the target group was surveyed (e.g. number of leisure houses and hotel nights in 2017), the area was delimited and background information relevant to the survey was sought (e.g. current public transport, changes in public transport during 2000–2019).

The survey length was kept tight so that it did not take more than 10 minutes to complete the survey. As the survey was conducted during the holiday period, it is expected that the respondents' enthusiasm for responding to the questionnaire is lower than at other seasons. In order to complete all answers, the length of the query and its readability are of great importance. In particular, the older population will often leave their response if they find it too difficult (Rzeszewski and Kotu 2019). It is a good idea to design the look and headline of the survey so that it does not attract a specific set of respondents, for example, if the title of the survey is "How to improve public transport in the area".

The biggest challenge with Internet-based surveys is to get the target audience excited about the survey and make it attractive. The number of respondents may be small and therefore resources should be devoted to marketing and disseminating the survey. Visibility can be increased e.g. with street campaigns as part of another audience event, advertising via social media and local newspapers. It has been studied that reward significantly increases response activity (Shapira et al. 2001). Local private businesses donated awards for the survey. The awards included two €50 gift cards to grocery stores and 10 gift cards to regional service stores. We advertised the survey through social media (Twitter, Facebook), local newsletters, webpages (SYKE, City of Kouvola), street campaigns and by distributing 3000 cards around the region (e.g. cafes, libraries, museums, restaurants and in local events).

Totally 381 persons took part in the survey. It is a good response for this kind of survey in Kymenlaakso. The highest response rate was in the first week. In this case, the average number of responses was several dozens per day. 65% of the respondents were women, 33% men and the rest did not want to tell their gender. Most of the respondents were 25–74 years old. The largest age group was 45–54 years (20% of the respondents).

53% of the respondents were employed or self-employed. Another large category was retired people, with 25% of the respondents.
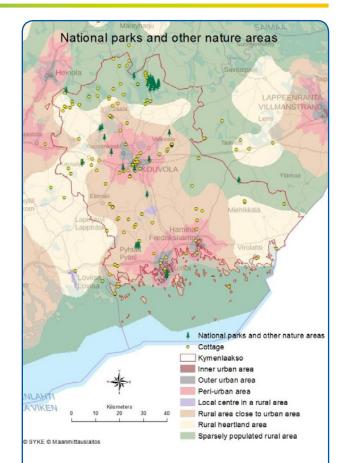
The survey asked the reason for this visit to the Kymenlaakso area. By far, the most votes were received from relatives/friends (24%) and the summer cottage (23%), which contributes to the success of the survey targeting. The frequency of visits was also mapped. The majority (29%) of the respondents said they rarely visit the area (1–2 times a year or less).

Own car seems to be by far the most popular mode of transport among the respondents, which in itself is not surprising in such remote rural areas where the coverage of public transport may not be sufficient to meet one's own mobility needs. However, there was also some support for arriving by train (17%) and bus (12%). Also, public or private transport services in Kymenlaakso do not appear to be very active among respondents. We asked if visitors used regional or local public transportation or services. Trains, local buses and taxi services and local buses have been used to some extent, while rental car services and city bikes have been almost unused by respondents. The development of public transport services in the Kymenlaakso area was clearly felt to be necessary and important. Only 5% of the respondents felt that development was not at all important or not very important. The survey also surveyed respondents' views on possible new modes of transport services that could be developed in the area. The most interesting new modes were ridesharing, electric cars to be borrowed and a "call a bus" services, defined as follows: *New mode of transport service that combines the features of a taxi and a bus. The charterer defines the pick-up location and destination, and the trip is linked to other rides in the same direction.*

The aim of survey also was to map the mobility behavior of summer visitors in the Kymenlaakso region and the destinations they visited regularly or infrequently and what kind of mode of transportation they used to these destinations. The survey contained contains several items to locate regarding a person's basic needs or recreation (e.g. shopping, visits to cultural and natural sites). For the purposes of analysis, we asked respondents to locate their leisure house or site they currently stayed at. Below there are two examples of mapping exercise. Results can be used to analyze the average distances summer visitors have travelled in the region and if these destinations could be reached by public transportation (need for improving services).

FIGURE 5. Example: Location of national parks and other nature areas respondents mentioned to visit and locations of cottages. Basemap colour theme represent the spatial structure of the Kymenlaakso region. It divides the area into seven different types according to their degree of urbanity or rurality.

6. Guidelines and templates for stakeholder engagement

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8. Supplementary material

Guidelines for Evalution of Stakeholder Involvement

by Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)

The guideline is giving a short description about interactive workshop in Hajnowka organized by SYKE. This activity is linked to the WP2 and GoA2.1 aiming to identify appropriate participatory tools to involve the main stakeholders (residents, tourists, transport actors) in your case study region. This evaluation work will support in progressing the **stakeholder involvement strategy**.

The document will guide you through 5 steps towards inclusive and feasible stakeholder involvement. Evaluation progress is divided into five steps: (1) Identify key stakeholders, (2) estimate the power of stakeholder, (3) define the level of participation, (4) select participation tools, (5) evaluate the tool(s). Next we explain each steps in detailed. Before you continue with the document we want highlight two important things:

We hope that every participant will personally take part of this evaluation task, despite there will be several persons from the same institute.

We hope that you are well prepared for the interactive workshop and prefill first three steps before the partner meeting. Fill you answer to separate table (Stakeholder mapping) attached with the email.

1.   Identify three key stakeholders

Stakeholder can be considered as individuals, organisations and or other entities that have an interest in the case/ project, may be affected by the project or can have an effect on the project. Identify potential stakeholders by asking: Who are the potential beneficiaries? Who might be adversely affected? Who are the supporters and who are the opponents? Who is most likely interested in the project or the actions planned? Who is affected by the project? Who has an effect on the project?

2.   Estimate the power of a stakeholder

After you have identified 1-3 potential stakeholders for your case you need to decide how these participants are going to be involved and engaged. Estimating the power (influence and relevance) of the stakeholders help you to select suitable participation methods.

2.1.　STAKEHOLDER'S INFLUENCE TO THE CASE/ ISSUE

When you think about your stakeholders, it is common that some of them are more powerful to resist or protest against the plan/ project than others. You need to think what is the potential for stakeholder impact on the potential decision or project? What is the anticipated level of conflict, concern controversy, or opportunity on this or related issues? Be especially aware of those you are not involving and whether ignoring their participation could cause potential risk/ harm to the project? Remember that despite a stakeholder may have a low level of influence, case/ project can have a strong impact on a specific stakeholder and therefore you need to estimate the relevance of the project for the identified stakeholders (Step 2.2).

SCORES FOR INFLUENCE	LEVEL OF INFLUENCE	DEFINITIONS
1	Low	The stakeholder has minor if any influence to the case/plan
2	Rather low	The stakeholder has some influence to the case/plan
3	Medium	The stakeholder has influence to the case/plan
4	High	The stakeholder has clear influence to the case/plan
5	Very high	The stakeholder has significant influence to the case/plan

2.2.　IMPORTANCE FOR A STAKEHOLDER

To determine the appropriate tools for stakeholder involvement, it is important to estimate the degree to which a stakeholder considers the issue/plan significant. The stakeholder will become involved according to its perception of the seriousness of the issue. To estimate the level of interest or concern of the stakeholder regarding a case, you may ask questions like: How much does the stakeholder care about this case/issue? How significant are the potential impacts of the case/plan on the stakeholder?

SCORES FOR INFLUENCE	LEVEL OF INFLUENCE	DEFINITIONS
1	Low	The stakeholder has minor if any interest towards the case/ The case have minor or no impact to the stakeholder
2	Rather low	The stakeholder has some interest towards the case/ The case have some impact to the stakeholder
3	Medium	The stakeholder is interested in the case/ The case have impact to the stakeholder
4	High	The stakeholder is clearly interested in the case/ The case have clear impact to the stakeholder
5	Very high	The stakeholder is strongly interested in the case/ The case have significant impact to the stakeholder

3.   Define the level of participation

The level of participation is linked with increased stakeholder impact on to the plan/decision. The level of participation can vary despite the stakeholder has a strong power (high scores in influence/importance) depending on the type of stakeholder (regional authority, local resident, environmental agency). Define the level of engagement for each stakeholder you have already given score for power.

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION	TYPE	DEFINITIONS
A	Inform	One-directional communication e.g. social media campaigns about ongoing plans or development processes and inform stakeholder to engage.
B	Consult	Two-directional, one-time hearing during the process e.g. internet- or telephone-based surveys. Usually include feedback to stakeholders how their opinions have influenced the plan/ project.
C	Involve	To work directly with the stakeholder throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered e.g. workshops, community committees.
D	Collaborate	To partner with the stakeholder in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solutions e.g. strategic groups
E	Empower	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public e.g. citizens juries.

Following two steps we will make together as a group exercise in Hajnowka!

4.   Select most suitable tool(s)

Based on stakeholder mapping and evaluation work done in the steps 2 and 3, partners will select most suitable participation tool(s) which shall be applied in their cases or be used to improve their existing participation tools. SYKE will present results of best practices for stakeholder involvement based on webropol survey during the interactive workshop. After the presentation groups will help each other to select most suitable tools.

5.   Evaluation of tools

The tools chosen for each case will be evaluated together with other partners using common criteria of evaluation: technical feasibility and attractiveness for stakeholders. You may consider how time-consuming or expensive the participation method is to implement: does it need extra labor hours, special expertise or private services? Are there (expensive) licenses or techniques to assess the method? Some tools may be feasible, but do they attract stakeholders to take part? Shared experiences and reflections with other partners will help us understand potential pitfalls of selected tools and improve their implementation in different regions and cases.

Stakeholder Involvement Strategy in Hajnowka County

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Białystok, November 2019

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Introduction

This document entitled "Stakeholder involvement strategy" constitutes one of the planned results of the project "Mobility and Accessibility in Rural Areas" (MARA). Its main objective is to indicate goals and means of engaging key groups of stakeholders in planning and implementing measures connected with improving mobility among the inhabitants and tourists within the area of Hajnówka County, situated in Podlaskie Voivodship, north-east Poland.

The document was developed by a team of four authors representing the Faculty of Engineering Management at Bialystok University of Technology, one of the partners to the MARA project. The authors were selected in a manner ensuring proper representation of various disciplines of science, including public management, tourism management, public sector economy, transport and logistics. Moreover, the team was appointed on the basis of a principle that the engaged persons have a rich practical experience in drawing up strategic plans and expert opinions for local government units as well as other public organizations, also in participation with local stakeholders.

The development of the Strategy was preceded by a detailed analysis of source literature, both of foreign and Polish origin. The synthesis of conclusions following literature review is presented in the first part of the document.

In order to prepare the practical part of the Strategy, the team conducted qualitative surveys in a form of engaging two focus groups comprised of representatives of various stakeholder groups in Hajnówka County. The surveys took place between 21st October and 4th November 2019.

The first focus group was composed of 13 persons, including: six representatives of the County Office in Hajnówka (incl. the Staroste and the Head of the Transport Department), six representatives of municipal governments (Hajnówka Town Hall, Hajnówka Municipal Office, Białowieża Municipal Office, Dubicze Cerkiewne Municipal Office, Kleszczele Town Hall, Narewka Municipal Office) and the Director of County Road Management in Hajnówka.

The second meeting was attended by 15 persons, including: five representatives of the County Office in Hajnówka, a representative of the Municipal Utilities Company in Hajnówka (in charge of renting buses and organizing bus transport for inhabitants), representatives of the Agritourist Association Puszcza Białowieska, the Association of Borysówka Village Sympathizers, the Civic Centre for Culture, Sport and Leisure in Kleszczele, a regional transport company Przewozy Regionalne Sp. z o.o. in Białystok.

Group discussions incorporated an element of workshops, where the participants were requested to complete forms (annexes no. 1, 2, 3), allowing for:

→ identifying key groups of stakeholders potentially interested in implementing the results of the MARA project in Hajnówka County;

→ determining the influence and relevance of a given group of stakeholders on the possibility to implement the results of the MARA project in Hajnówka County;

→ indicating the level of engagement of stakeholder groups potentially interested in implementing the results of the MARA project in Hajnówka County;

→ determining methods of engaging specific groups of stakeholders interested in implementing the results of the project, as well as determining feasibility methods and a level of attractiveness of a given method with regard to a given group of stakeholders.

The conclusions of group discussions were recorded in specific parts of the Strategy. Moreover, the document includes: a timetable for involvement, a budget and responsible persons as well as principles on monitoring and reporting records included in the document.

1. Summary of literature review

Social participation in Polish literature is a new issue and the notion of "public participation" occurs relatively rarely. The concept actually used is "civic participation" (Piasecki, 2009) or "social participation" (Wygnański, Długosz 2005). British literature frequently uses additional notions with regard to participation, such as "civic", "social", "public", "individual", "communal" (Brodie et al. 2009).

Local government units require all the greater engagement of the local society in decision making (Ilczuk, Glińska, 2018). This results from the decentralization of the democratic system as well as the need for modern and effective strategic management that should be understandable and executable in the spirit of fairness and equal opportunities for all social groups. An important aspect is as well providing for the interests of various social groups, which stimulates their cooperation (participation principle) and striving for satisfying the needs of a local society (social attitude principle) (Markowski, Marszał 2005, p. 13). A significant impact on the development of social participation at a local level was brought by a change in the style of growth management in accordance with the model of public governance. Modern literature considers participation (apart from transparency, rule of law, responsibility, effectiveness, efficiency) as one of fundamental governance principles ("Koncepcje Good Governance…", 2008, p. 38).

The organization International Association for Public Participation defines five levels of social engagement (Kazimierczak 2011, p. 89): 1. Informing - or, providing citizens with knowledge, information on a specific problem and suggestions for their solving (e.g. ensuring access to public information, dissemination on the notice board or in the Public Information Bulletin), 2. Consulting - or, organizing the process of two-way communication along the channels authorities-citizen, citizen-authorities, as well as readiness for applying specific solutions, considering remarks raised, 3. Inclusion – accounting for remarks, opinions, solutions or their elements in created, implemented or monitored public policies, 4. Cooperation - or, partnership, engagement of social, economic partners or citizens at each stage of the decision-making process, 5. Empowerment - or, providing citizens with the power of final decision making. Social participation should be one of constant elements of management in a local government.

In the last decade e-democracy has been ascribed with significant meaning since it exerts impact on stimulating citizens' activity. Electronic democracy is "an aptitude of new information technologies for strengthening the level and quality of civic participation in governance" (Sakowicz, 2008, p. 311). The Internet is perceived as expanding the public sphere. Its use brings the possibility to conduct consultations, public debates, discussion panels, poll surveys or create initiatives on a great scale. In practice, it is mainly used for communication, it can strengthen social engagement, particularly the young generation, it is as well an effective channel for expressing opinions and interests (Piasecki 2008, p. 257).

The analysis of the **Polish source literature** on social participation (articles in scientific periodicals, monographs and guidance books – 50 items) proves that:

→ The most popular form of participation in Poland is social consultation that constitutes a statutory requirement for consulting important drafts of local laws. Consultations are aimed at acquiring opinions of inhabitants but is should be noted that they are not treated by the authorities as binding. Ultimately, this type of participation is of perfunctory character and becomes a one-way information transfer by local authorities. The advocates of the citizen engagement strategy call for creating real participation (based on information flow and simple forms of co-deciding by citizens) as well as aiming at ideal participation (balancing relations between public authorities and citizens) (Kalisiak-Mędelska 2015, pp. 155–161).

→ **In Poland there grows interest of local stakeholders in co-participating in making important decisions for local development** (e.g. as a result of growth in social

awareness, growing social expectations and readiness for cooperation and increasing co-responsibility for decisions made together with local authorities). **The level of engagement of specific social groups in the participation process is different, mostly it is dominated by the participation of local inhabitants and entrepreneurs. However, local authorities use in practice quite a narrow range of participation tools**, e.g. public meetings, public hearing (official debates), social consultations. Other participation tools used in practice are: opinion making in writing, using representation groups, e-consultations (using the Internet and electronic mail), focus groups, questionnaire surveys, citizens' panels (with a group representing a given local community), open days, street shows, presentations (Szaja, 2015, p. 292).

→ **In Poland there exists the need to raise the level of engaging local stakeholders in the execution of public undertakings with the use of a wider range of social participation tools.** Citizens and social organizations that represent them should be provided with a greater possibility to negotiate and co-decide in decision making (e.g. by means of committees and advisory boards, joint teams appointed by local governments for developing and executing municipal strategies or programs, task-force groups, citizen juries, public voting (Wójcicki, 2013). On-line tools (engagement in the Internet) should as well be used to a greater extent in order to engage stakeholders.

Basic forms and tools of social participation include (Schimanek, 2015, pp. 17–22, Szaja, 2015, pp. 292–294):

1)   Exchanging information, knowledge and experiences:

→   Information and knowledge are communicated in a one-way manner by public institutions to the citizens: information disseminated through websites, leaflets, brochures for inhabitants, reports, reports on activity, results of analyses, diagnoses or evaluations, information sent via email or texted, letters to citizens, guidance books, information in local media, consultancy;

→   One-way information communicated by citizens to public institutions: complaints, motions, information in the media;

→   Mutual information sharing between participants of the participation process: information meetings for citizens, councilors'/ village heads'/ mayors' consultation hours, seminars, conferences, training for inhabitants, joint work teams, Internet chats, social media portals.

2)   Consultations (they are most frequently conducted in a form of direct meetings, public discussions, workshops or public opinion hearing)

Other forms: possibility to lodge complaints and motions by inhabitants, consultation books placed in offices, opinion polls among inhabitants (e.g. with the use of surveys or questionnaires), remarks to drafts of programs, strategies;

Institutionalized forms of consultations: participation of inhabitants in the work of municipal councils or committees, standing consultation teams, councils. Inhabitants' opinions can be gathered with the use of: written information submitted in e.g. boxes in municipal offices or sent by mail, new technologies, e.g. via electronic mail, mobile phones, Internet surveys completed directly on the office's website.

3)   Participation in decision making:

suggesting by citizens of new solutions or implementing amendments to the drafts of strategic documents; e.g. in a **form of a legislative initiative of inhabitants by means of petitions, civic foresight** (forecasting the future by means of meetings, workshops or joint work teams or councils, **delegating decision making towards**

citizens or their organizations, e.g. by means of proposing and selecting public tasks for execution by means of **community-led budgets** (all the more frequently used in recent years).

4)   **Participation in the execution of public measures:**

communicating public tasks through commissioning them to non-governmental organizations and other entities that execute public benefit activities (open call for proposals or non-competitive procedure), subsidizing task execution (e.g. within municipal budget fund), financial and material support towards tasks executed by inhabitants, providing loans, warranties, investment grants towards tasks executed by non-governmental organizations, partnership projects, sub-tasks for non-governmental organizations, including non-formal groups, e.g. neighborhood groups, in the execution of specific tasks.

5)   **Participation in controlling the execution of public measures:**

Monitoring and evaluating the execution of public tasks, e.g. expressing opinions by inhabitants, appointing monitoring or steering committees within the executed programs or strategies

6)   **Complex solutions** (involving all or almost all stages of developing and exercising decisions as well as various forms and mechanisms of participation): standing consultation-advisory bodies, e.g. public benefit councils, local partnerships, local action groups.

Summary from foreign source literature review:

Some conclusions:

→   important: identification and involvement of all stakeholder groups that are necessary for proper research;
→   involvement of specific stakeholders at specific levels is needed and compositional dynamics (of stakeholder groups levels), rather than striving for equal stakeholder participation;
→   virtual applications can make public participation more accessible and improve reliability of its results.

Identification of tools and methods of stakeholders:

→   constructive dialogue' between innovators and societal interest groups and possibly otherwise interested or relevant stakeholders (aims to help innovators to identify important societal values, and involve external stakeholders in their innovation process, in order to come to a co-creation process in which the identified viewpoints of the actors can be translated into practical design requirements);
→   workshops;
→   explorative field visit;
→   participatory scenario-building approach;
→   combining qualitative and quantitative methods;
→   refining the scenarios and assessing impacts using SWOT analysis;
→   surveys contained questions about the stakeholder's roles, responsibilities:
→   participatory observation;
→   semi-structured key informant interviews, written interviews, reflection workshops;
→   online survey;
→   virtual reality models;

→   consultations;
→   interviews used to scenario building and evaluation;
→   questionnaire;
→   focus group discussions.

2. Description of the case

The Polish MARA case concerns identifying the needs and problems with regard to mobility within the area of Hajnówka County.

Hajnówka County is located within administrative borders of Podlaskie Voivodship (in its south-east part), which is located in north-east Poland. The eastern border of Poland is also the borderline between Hajnówka County and Belarus. The county is comprised of nine municipalities. These are: Hajnówka urban municipality, Kleszczele urban-rural municipality and seven rural municipalities: Białowieża, Czeremcha, Czyże, Dubicze Cerkiewne, Hajnówka, Narew, Narewka. The county covers the total area of 1,624 km2 and its population is approximately 44 thousand inhabitants. It is surrounded by Białystok County from the north, Bielsk Podlaski County from the west and Siemiatycze County from the south.

Within the borders of Hajnówka County there exists one of the most precious natural landmarks in the world – Białowieża Primeval Forest, entered on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The area of Białowieża Primeval Forest, despite immense attractiveness of its tourist values, is provided with poor transport access for tourists.

The execution of the MARA project in Hajnówka County shall allow for achieving the following goals:

→   Identifying real needs of inhabitants and tourists in terms of transport services in the region of Białowieża Primeval Forest (e.g. within the type of preferred means of transport to travel around the region, assessment of the level of satisfaction with the local transportation system, required changes within improving the functioning of transport in the region, including innovative mobile solutions) – in the course of execution;
→   Identifying and evaluating major problems connected with mobility and transport access in Hajnówka County (?) - completed;
→   Identifying goals, methods and tools applied in engaging the main stakeholder groups (public entities, transportation companies, inhabitants and tourists) in solving problems mobility issues (in the process of planning and implementation), evaluating the existing tools and participation methods as well as indicating manners of improving the tools of engaging stakeholders in the process of planning solutions in the scope of mobility;
→   Engaging various groups of stakeholders in planning mobility solutions in the region of Białowieża Primeval Forest, which shall allow public authorities to improve planning and implementing an efficient transportation system;
→   Adopting regional spatial plans based on the results of the project (accounting for measures towards improved solutions in the scope of mobility).

Ultimately, the project shall contribute to improving accessibility and mobility of inhabitants and tourists within the area of Białowieża Primeval Forest. The project is conducted in partnership with the County Office in Hajnówka, an entity responsible for transport services in the county (performing public tasks of supra-municipal nature within mass transport and public roads).

The project implementation was initiated in January 2019 and shall be concluded in June 2021.

The starting point in the execution of the MARA project in Hajnówka County was identifying major issues concerning mobility and transport availability in the area of Białowieża Primeval Forest[1]. These are mainly:

→   poor quality of road infrastructure;
→   poor offer of the public road transport (insufficient network of bus connections, including vans, large disproportions within the frequency of buses at specific routes, insufficient number of direct connections);
→   insufficiently developed offer of connections between neighboring counties;
→   poor connection with other regions of Poland by means of mass transport (lack of developed offer of direct long-distance connections, which makes it difficult to plan leisure time and discourages tourists from visiting this region);
→   marginal role of the rail transport (low density of railways and poor offer of passenger connections);
→   lack or insufficient integration of transport systems (connections between trains and buses in Białystok and Hajnówka), which leads to a prolonged waiting time for transfers;
→   unsatisfactory system of publishing timetables by road carriers on websites (chaos in publishing timetables, lack of Internet service with such a local range that ensures uniform publication of collective timetables of all carriers, outdated or incomplete data), which significantly hinders travel planning for tourists;
→   poor accessibility of Hajnówka County in terms of individual motorization (low motorization rate, low expenditures on road maintenance, long distance from a network of express ways and motorways);
→   insufficient development of bicycle infrastructure (poor number of marked bike routes, parking shelters, self-service bicycle mending stations, lack of self-service bike rentals, including electric bikes).

The execution of the MARA project, by means of engaging various stakeholder groups in the process of planning solutions in the scope of mobility (e.g. territorial local governments, transport providers, inhabitants), led to the evaluation of the relevance of these issues on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 – problem of little relevance, 5 – very relevant problem). This evaluation was conducted at two focus meetings on the 21st October and 4th November 2019, where respondents completed a total of 23 evaluation questionnaires (table 1 presents the results of this evaluation).

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[1]   The basis for identifying problems was an expert opinion performed on the request of the County Office: *Analiza dostępności komunikacyjnej regionu Puszczy Białowieskiej. [The analysis of transport availability in the area of Białowieża Primeval Forest]*, Zespół Doradców Gospodarczych TOR, Ekoton, Warszawa–Białystok–Hajnówka 2014.

TABLE 1. Evaluation of the issues concerning mobility and transport availability in Hajnówka County

PROBLEM	ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5 (1 – NOT IMPORTANT, 5 – VERY IMPORTANT)					AVERAGE
	1	2	3	4	5	
poor quality of road infrastructure	-		6	7	10	4,17
poor offer of the public road transport (insufficient network of bus connections, including vans, large disproportions within the frequency of buses at specific routes, insufficient number of direct connections)	1	1	6	7	8	3,87
insufficiently developed offer of connections between neighboring counties	1	1	4	11	6	3,87
poor connection with other regions of Poland by means of mass transport (lack of developed offer of direct long-distance connections, which makes it difficult to plan leisure time and discourages tourists from visiting this region)	-	2	3	8	10	4,13
marginal role of the rail transport (low density of railways and poor offer of passenger connections	-	1	4	12	6	4,0
lack or insufficient integration of transport systems (connections between trains and buses in Białystok and Hajnówka), which leads to a prolonged waiting time for transfers	1	2	8	7	6	3,78
unsatisfactory system of publishing timetables by road carriers on websites (chaos in publishing timetables, lack of Internet service with such a local range that ensures uniform publication of collective timetables of all carriers, outdated or incomplete data), which significantly hinders travel planning for tourists	3	5	7	4	4	3,04
poor accessibility of Hajnówka County in terms of individual motorization (low motorization rate, low expenditures on road maintenance, long distance from a network of express ways and motorways);	-	-	10	6	8	4,09
insufficient development of bicycle infrastructure (poor number of marked bike routes, parking shelters, self-service bicycle mending stations, lack of self-service bike rentals, including electric bikes).	1	4	5	8	5	3,52

The most significant problems that received the highest rating (above 4) were considered: poor quality of road infrastructure (4.17), poor connection of Hajnówka County with other regions of Poland by means of mass transport and low accessibility of Hajnówka County in terms of individual motorization (4.09).

Other issues connected with mobility and transport availability in Hajnówka County identified by stakeholders were:

→ very poor financial means allocated by local governments towards the organization of the public transport;

→ very poor external subsidizing towards the development of road infrastructure (discarding the "poverty" criterion in the region), lack of access to external funds at a level of minimum 95%;

→   lack of modern applications allowing for offering transport services and their
    browsing;
→   lack of a transfer node (station);
→   lack of electric car charging stations.

3. Purpose of stakeholder involvement

Stakeholders should be understood as interest groups, i.e. individuals, groups of people, institutions, community, group or organization having an interest in the results of the project (having positive or negative influence of the project) and/or that may affect the implementation of the project (positively or negatively). Considering the MARA project, its stakeholders should be understood quite broadly. Stakeholders, relevant from the point of view of the project are: residents, tourists, carriers, transport companies, tourist offices, local authorities, regional authorities, local entrepreneurs, media, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and entities operating city bike systems.

Solutions engaging stakeholders allow for increasing their involvement in the implementation of the project. The use of such an instrument leads to an increase in the effectiveness of undertaken measures. Partners involved in the implementation of projects are more convinced of their validity and significance. The involvement of residents and tourists, as later users of given objects, devices or networks, in the decision-making process increases the chance of creating an investment more fully suitable to their needs. To understand true mobility patterns in the region and estimate mobility needs, the information about mobility behaviors of residents and tourists are needed. In addition, other population- and services-based data is needed for analysis.

A necessary condition is strong conviction the local community of the need for a new investment. In addition, data on tourists mobile needs can be obtained by including in the process tourist offices and non-governmental organizations involved in tourism development. In the process of mobile needs identification carriers, transport companies operating in the region could be crucial because entities have reliable data regarding residents and tourist mobile patterns in the region. Non-governmental organizations also include other social, civic and voluntary organizations that may be interested in the project. The so-called third sector organizations should be an important partner. These are the organizations that know best the specificity of the problems they deal with. Consulting these environments can be extremely valuable.

The implementation of tasks that shall enable meeting the needs of the local community may mean the need to convince decision-making bodies, especially if the involvement of public funds is needed. For this purpose it is necessary to convince to the idea both local and regional authorities. Regional authorities are needed due to, sometimes, a limited ability of local authorities to make decisions and finance investments. The participation of local authorities as well as regional authorities seems crucial in understanding policy-makers and sharing information to the public.

The execution of tasks which shall allow for satisfying the needs of local communities may involve the necessity to engage private means. This can be achieved by means of shifting a part of measures towards private entities. This does not have to mean full cost and responsibility reallocation for performing tasks towards the private sector, but merely cooperation between the authorities and private entities in a contractually designated scope. This measure necessitates the engagement of entities potentially interested in the investment, e.g. local entrepreneurs and entities operating city bike systems. Moreover, the involvement of private entities may affect advancing the execution of the investment and, consequently, lead to lower costs of its execution.

In order to disseminate the project, in particular its positive results, measures may involve the participation of local media, which can be very helpful.

4. Key stakeholders identification

The identification of stakeholder groups relevant to the project was one of the goals of the focus group interview. Respondents indicated the following groups of stakeholders:

→   residents; mainly: owners of guesthouses, agritourist facilities interested in tourism development, the elderly as a group using the public transport more frequently than the private one as well as active seniors participating in classes at the University of the Third Age, commuters to schools and work;

→   tourists;

→   local authorities and regional authorities, in particular road administrators;

→   local entrepreneurs especially enterprises providing transport services, tourist offices and hotels and food services;

→   non-governmental organizations (NGO) especially ecologists, transport and tourist societies, agritourist societies, organizations promoting an active, sporty lifestyle; ecologists supporting ecological means of transport;

→   operators of city bike systems; where – according to the respondents – it may occur that it shall be easier to engage local entrepreneurs rather than external entities (operators of city bike systems);

→   the media;

→   the Ministry of National Defense and the Polish Border Guard as financing entities.

The next stage focused on identifying key stakeholders. Key stakeholders can significantly affect the project or are very important for its success. Without their continuous participation, the project could not be implemented. The focus group interview led to the identification of key stakeholders. Study participants were divided into groups (3 groups for every two panels). Six groups selected key stakeholders, assessed the impact of stakeholders on the project (on a scale from 1 to 5) and assessed the importance of the project for stakeholders (on a scale from 1 to 5) (table 1- table 6). The gathered results (from all groups) are presented in table 2.

TABLE 2. Groups of key stakeholders identified in the course of the focus group study

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	NUMBER OF INDICA-TIONS BY RESPON-DENTS	SCORE FOR INFLUENCE (MODAL)	SCORE FOR INFLUENCE (AVERAGE)	SCORE FOR RELEVANCE (MODAL)	SCORE FOR RELEVANCE (AVERAGE)
Local authorities	4	5	4,0	5	4,43
Regional authorities	6	5	5,0	3 and 5	4,0
Inhabitants	8	5	4,7	4	4,5
Local entrepreneurs	6	4	4,2	4	4,2

Source: own study

The key stakeholder groups are the following:

1.   Regional authorities and local authorities.
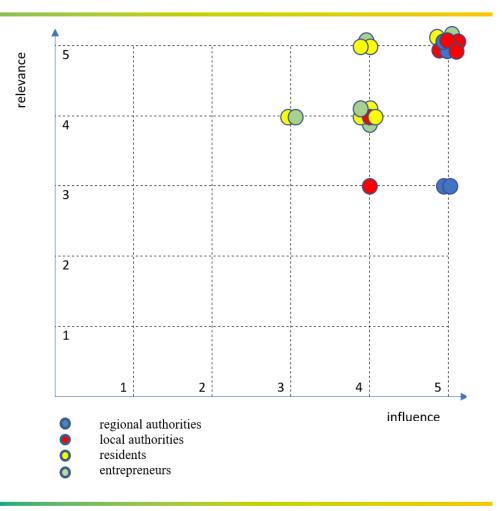2.   Inhabitants.
3.   Local entrepreneurs.

Local authorities were indicated as a group that has the greatest impact on the project and a stakeholder interested in the project to a large degree. Local authorities include municipalities represented by the legislative body – the Municipal Council and the executive body – Voyts and Mayors, as well as counties represented by the legislative body – the County Council and the executive body – the County management with the Staroste. This is a key group for project execution. It was indicated as the one to co-exist with the regional authorities group. Regional authorities comprise a group that has the greatest (on a five-point scale) impact on the project, but simultaneously evaluated as a group that may be interested in the project in a large extent (evaluated as 5 by 3 groups of FGI participants) or to a medium degree (evaluated as 3 by 3 groups of FGI participants). Regional authorities were indicated as an entity required in matters engaging public funds due to a limited possibility of decision making and investment financing by local authorities. Regional authorities are deemed the Marshall's Office and the Voivodship Office.

Another indicated group is composed of inhabitants. Their impact is evaluated very high. High values were as well ascribed to the interest of the stakeholder in the project / the impact of the project on the stakeholder.

The last identified key group for project execution includes local entrepreneurs. Both the impact of local entrepreneurs on the project as well as the impact of the project on this group received high values.

All the evaluations gathered in the course of workshops are presented in **FIGURE 1**.

FIGURE 1 Evaluation of the significance and the impact of key stakeholder groups on the project

It can be observed that key stakeholders were evaluated very high as stakeholders having high or significant influence on the project and stakeholders strongly interested in the project or significantly affected by the project.

5. Key stakeholders' involvement

In the course of workshops the following key stakeholder groups were determined with a view to engaging in the process of project planning and implementation:

1) local government authorities,
2) regional government authorities,
3) inhabitants,
4) local entrepreneurs representing tourist industry,
5) transport companies, carriers.

The levels for engagement of stakeholders in the case of Hajnówka County shall be: informing (one-way communication), consultation (two-way one-off), involvement (two way-continuous); collaboration (discussion and making decisions together) and empowerment (execution of specific tasks).

Local (Hajnówka County as well as local government units comprising Hajnówka County) and regional authorities (Regional Council of Podlaskie Voivodship) are the most important group of stakeholders (partners) in the process of project planning and execution. The levels of engagement of these two groups entail: involvement, collaboration and empowerment.

The major methods of engaging these groups of stakeholders shall be: meetings with inhabitants, face-to-face meetings, study visits and workshops. All of these methods are very attractive for these stakeholders.

Inhabitants are another key group that shall engage in project execution. The levels of involving inhabitants shall be: informing, consultation, involvement and collaboration. This sort of engagement shall be achieved by means of such methods as: meetings with the authorities, surveys – direct and online, requests to councilors / office. These methods are characterized by a high and a very high level of attractiveness from the perspective of this group of stakeholders.

The next group of stakeholders that shall be involved comprises local tourist entrepreneurs. The levels of engagement of this group shall entail involvement and collaboration. The main methods of engaging entrepreneurs shall involve: individual interviews, participatory observation, meetings with the authorities and online surveys.

The last group of stakeholders shall be transport companies (carriers). The levels of engagement of this group shall entail involvement and collaboration. The major methods of engaging entrepreneurs shall involve: online surveys, face-to-face meetings and group interviews.

TABLE 3. Levels and methods of participation of key stakeholders

NAME OF STAKEHOLDER	DESCRIBE SHORTLY IN YOUR OWN WORDS THE STAKEHOLDER	GIVE A SCORE FOR IN-FLUENCE (1–5)	GIVE A SCORE FOR REL-EVANCE (1–5)	CHOOSE THE LEVEL OF PAR-TICIPATION (A–E)	IDENTIFY PARTICI-PATION TOOL(S)	FEASIBILITY OF PARTICIPATION TOOL(S)	ATTRAC-TIVENESS FOR STAKE-HOLDER
Local authorities	local government authorities (Hajnowka County and communities from Hajnowka County)	5	5	C, D, E	meetings with inhabitants, face-to-face meetings workshops	village council meeting	5 5 5
Regional authorities	Podlaskie Marshall Office Voivodeship Office	5	5	C, D, E	exploratory field visits, study visits face-to-face meetings	invitation of councilor, direct meeting	5 5
Inhabitants	The ones using bikes	3	4	B, C	meetings with the authorities, surveys, requests to councilors / office	joint local cultural events closed meetings	5 5 5
	Pupils Parents The ones who are working Seniors	5	4	A, C, D A, C, D	direct surveys, face-to-face meetings	local events village council meeting in rural club rooms	4 4
	Students	5	5	A, C, D	online survey	by the way, informal groups, social media	4
Local entrepreneurs	agritourism, hotels (tourist service)	4	4	D	Individual interviews, participatory	business records	5 5 5
	tourism industry	5	5	C, D	observation, meetings with the authorities online surveys		5
Transport enterprises	passenger services carriers transport entrepreneurs	5 4	4 4	C C, D	online surveys face-to-face meetings	closed meetings appointment	3 5
	carriers	4	3	C, D	group interviews	joint cultural events	4

6. Timetable for involvement

TABLE 4. Timetable for engagement of stakeholders

CASE	STAKE-HOLDERS	AIM OF INVOLVEMENT	SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES								
			I–II/19	III/19	IV/19	I/20	II/20	III/20	IV/20	I/21	II/21
Hajnówka County	Local and regional authorities	→ share information and data → collaborate within case study activities → empowerment of mobility actions	Informing about the project	Four meetings with authorities	Two FGIs with workshops	Two meetings with authorities			Meeting with authorities		
	Residents	→ inform and consult main results → involve in project implementation		Participating in the quantitative research (diagnostic survey)	Two FGIs with workshops; participating in the quantitative research (diagnostic survey)		Information about the quantitative research results			Collabora-tion with residents in terms of project im-plementation	Publication of the research report online
	Local entrepreneurs	→ inform and consult main results → involve and collaborate in project implementation			Two FGIs with workshops						

7. Information about engagement activities

1. The County Office in Hajnówka as a local authority is a partner of the MARA project. It shall take part in project design, involving other stakeholders and informing about the activities. It shall share information and data (GIS, survey) on mobility needs and patterns in that area.
2. Bialystok University of Technology – partner of the MARA project, shall support the County Office in Hajnówka in terms of conducting stakeholders meetings both with residents and entrepreneurs.

8. Budget and responsible persons

The budget for implementing different measures listed above should be included in the strategy, presenting details of the costs of staffing and materials. The roles and responsibilities of all persons involved in the public participation process – including a team of practitioners, the developer, local government departments and cross-boundary partners – should be also identified.

The project provides a number of activities related to the implementation of the strategy of stakeholder involvement – **TABLE 5**.

TABLE 5. Budget for the implementation of stakeholder involvement strategy

WORK PACKAGE	ACTIVITY	COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTNER
4.2	Meeting with residents No. 1	1,600 €	County Office in Hajnówka
	Meeting with residents No. 2	1,600 €	County Office in Hajnówka
	Meeting with residents No. 3	1,600 €	County Office in Hajnówka
	Meeting with a transport company No. 1	1,600 €	County Office in Hajnówka
	Meeting with a transport company No. 2	1,600 €	County Office in Hajnówka
4.3	Adaptation of a regional spatial plan based on project results	8,000 €	County Office in Hajnówka
Σ		16,000 €	

The first set of measures relates to Work Package 4.2. These activities include five meetings with residents and transport companies aimed at involving stakeholders in terms of the implementation of mobility solutions. The cost of these activities is 8,000 €.

The second set of measures is connected with Work Package 4.3 in the area of adaptation of regional spatial plan based on the project's results. They cover setting up the website informing about project's results and the organization of two meeting to adapt the project's results. The cost of that set of activities is 8,000 €.

The partner responsible for the implementation of these two sets of activities is the County Office in Hajnówka.

9. Monitoring and reporting

The Strategy shall be reviewed and monitored on a half-year basis through:

→   the Monitoring Group of the County Office in Hajnówka,
→   the Senior Management of County Office in Hajnówka.

The members of the Monitoring Group shall be appointed among the employees of the County Office in Hajnówka who are involved in the MARA project. The representatives of Bialystok University of Technology shall be also engaged in the Monitoring Group.

A full detailed final evaluation shall be carried out in the autumn 2021. The evaluation shall focus on the effectiveness of the Strategy as a whole and shall make references to future requirements. The Monitoring Group of the County Office in Hajnówka shall assist with the review.

Progress shall be disseminated in annual stakeholder involvement reports available on the website of the County Office in Hajnówka.

The main checkpoints of the monitoring process:

→   Have all "implementation" tasks been completed?
→   Are there any open issues?
→   How will these issues be resolved?

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