

## **DIGITAINABILITY: SUSTAINABLE SMART CITIES 2022**

### **PROJECT: *A Strategic Framework for Rural Mobility in Bavaria***

#### **BRIEF INTRO**

Ensuring accessible and reliable sustainable mobility options is not only core to addressing the climate crisis and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but also reduces disparities between urban and rural quality of life and gender inequality in the field of mobility. However, facilitating a sustainable mobility transition is a challenge that cannot be solved with a one-size-fits all approach. Rather, contextually appropriate and flexible policy responses are required in order to employ effective solutions that directly address the needs of individuals and communities. In the rural context this question becomes more complicated, as low population density means that typical transportation responses employed in urban areas are often not practical in rural communities.

Recognizing the multi-faceted nature of this challenge, our group set to work researching and compiling examples of policies and programmes for rural mobility from around the world to understand how these could be employed in Bavaria to ensure all individuals have access to clean, reliable and affordable mobility options.

#### **THE CHALLENGE**

Design strategies, concepts or specific business ideas for digitalized mobility approaches which are ecologically and socially sustainable and ensure a high degree of social participation for many people. The desired outcome is that people are empowered to live a sustainable and mobile life in the Bavarian countryside, and decision-makers have toolkits at their hands to provide meaningful policies for this.

Challenge Giver: Stiftung Mercator

#### **YOUR IDEA**

In order to facilitate a sustainable mobility transition in Bavaria, we developed a strategic framework to be applied until 2030, that aims to support the development of liveable and sustainable rural communities, where all residents have access to clean, affordable, and reliable mobility options. This framework provides tangible and practical tools for policymakers, yet is flexible enough to be applied in a way that is contextually relevant to each community. The framework is comprised of three pillars which, when combined in an operational environment, we are confident could facilitate a mobility transition that is both efficient and inclusive for communities across Bavaria. The three pillars are as follows:

- Leverage and enhance existing networks;
- Introduce new mobility options; and,
- Invest in rural communities.

## KEY LEARNINGS

- There is no one single mobility programme that can serve all needs of all individuals. Policy responses must be flexible and contextually relevant in order to meet the needs of each community and be successful.
- Mobility touches all elements of our lives and society. Ensuring clean and accessible rural mobility options means that individuals can live fulfilled and empowered lives within their home communities, with access to social activities, religious and civic institutions, and have their needs met.
- Research on rural and practical programmes for rural mobility is lacking. This is an area with high potential for growth.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

We look forward to sharing this policy framework with Mercator Stiftung and hope it can inform their policy recommendations moving forward. We recognize this is a high-level analysis designed for top-level policy makers in Bavaria, but are confident the lessons and recommendations we have included are broadly applicable to those working to facilitate the mobility transition.

## FURTHER READING

[Gloucestershire Council Launches Rural Minibus Pilot](#)

[Prince Edward Island is Getting Rural Transit Right](#)

[Innovations for Rural Mobility - International Transport Forum](#)

[Smart Villages and Rural Mobility - European Network for Rural Development](#)

[Improving Rural Mobility: Options for Developing Motorized and Nonmotorized Transport in Rural Areas - World Bank](#)

[KombiBus: Delivering passengers, freight and post in rural Germany - MAMBA](#)

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