

Pilot Actions Evaluation Report
Municipality of Maribor
Implementation of measures at the main bus station in
Maribor

**Innovative transportation services for blind and partially sighted passengers in Danube
region**
DANOVA

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INTRODUCTION

People with visual impairments may feel disabled if they do not have adequate access to supports and services and face barriers such as discrimination or inaccessible buildings or transportation. It has been estimated that 96% of the transport system in the EU is still not fully accessible to blind and partially sighted people (European Blind Union) and that accessibility is extremely low in many countries in the Danube Region. Furthermore, significant differences in the level of accessibility between countries and also between cities/regions within a country have been identified. As a result, over 30 million blind and partially sighted people cannot travel independently.

For blind and partially sighted passengers, the lack of accessibility features such as tactile surface indicators (TWSI), tactile orientation maps, large print and Braille signage, audio signage, screen reader friendly websites and applications makes it extremely difficult and, in some cases, impossible to use conventional transportation systems (airplanes, buses, trains, public transportation). In these cases, they rely on the assistance of a sighted person (their personal assistant, member of a staff or a random passer-by), which ensures their ability to travel, but still imposes some limitations compared to the travel experiences of sighted people.

The DANOVA project aims to improve the accessibility of airports, seaports, train stations and bus terminals for blind and partially sighted people by developing a range of new services and skills to enable full access to all transport information, facilities, and services. Within DANOVA project several steps were undertaken in order to improve accessibility:

- International investigation and collection of best practices

- Local assessment of infrastructure accessibility and web page accessibility for each transportation partner within DANOVA project. Assessment was performed according to prescribed Assessment methodology which was produced by University of Maribor in co-operation with technical partners. Croatian Blind Union (CBU) and Austrian Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted (BSVO),

- International Call for ideas in which total of 22 ideas for improvement of accessibility of infrastructure for blind and partly sighted people have been submitted. Three best ideas were selected and chosen by the Call for ideas Jury,

- Implementation of pilot actions,

- Training programme for employees of infrastructure providers and stakeholders

According to the Local assessment done by each transportation partner, implementation measures or fields of intervention for pilot actions were identified and prioritised in three categories: high, medium, low.

The first step of WP T3 was achieved – Action Plans of sites where the testing will be implemented were prepared by each Pilot Partner. The international investigation and its summary in the Capitalization Strategy (WPT1), Local assessment report (WP T1) as well as and inputs collected during the development of the concept of a totally accessible facility (WPT2) were used in the Pilot Plans.

Core phase of the WP T3 is the testing phase, where the Action Plan is put into practice, PPs perform testing & consecutive feedback. Implementation aims to show the feasibility, effectiveness & replicability of solutions, operative procedures, technological innovations. PPs already identified several fields of intervention; new topics could be added on the basis of results obtained from investigations and development of a totally accessible transport facility.

Deliverable D.T3.2.1 is the Appraisal Report on testing.

The testing pilot action is completed by an evaluation report to give feedback on action's performance and to show how the blind and partially-sighted passengers benefited from these initiatives. The evaluation report is crucial for the analysis of transferability and adaptability of the solutions. This document contains a Pilot action process evaluation(P1) and a Pilot action evaluation grid (P2). One report is to be done per each testing site.

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1. PROCESS EVALUATION

This chapter provides the evaluation of the pilot action planning and implementation process. Costs, problems and barriers encountered during the project life, and successes achieved with the pilot action in Municipality of Maribor at the main bus station.

1.1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PILOT ACTION SITE

Location

Maribor is the second largest city in the Republic of Slovenia and the capital of the Podravje region. Maribor has app. 110.000 inhabitants and spreads across 147.5 km². Furthermore, the city is university, economic, financial, administrative, cultural, educational, trade and tourist centre of the north-east Slovenia. Maribor lies in the heart of Europe at the crossroads of the X. and V. trans-European transport corridor, which connects Madrid with Kiev and Berlin with Istanbul.

Main bus station in Maribor is located in walking distance to city centre and adjacent to main railway station in Maribor.

Maribor main bus station infrastructure

The bus station is located near the city centre and very close to the railway station. The building of the main bus Station Maribor was opened in 1989. The station offers city, inter-city and international bus transport services. It has 25 Indoor (roof protected platforms) and 16 outdoor platforms. There are also three power charging stations for electric vehicles exclusively provided for Avant2Go car sharing service. It has two main entrances and three side entrances.

The bus station does not have its own parking facilities, but there is a car park nearby (operated by municipal company Marprom – same public company operating the Main bus station). In addition to the ticket and information office, there are many small shops, cafes and food bars located in the station.

Maribor main bus station has around 83.306 passengers per year.

Accessibility for blind and partly sighted

The current infrastructure and equipment at the main bus station has partially adequate infrastructure and equipment for the accessibility of blind and partially sighted. Within the passenger's terminal and bus platforms, there are TWSIs, but are not correctly built-in and not connected with the rest of the bus station premises. TWSIs outdoors for approach and departure from the location are missing. There are also acoustic signals for traffic lights missing and also the contrast stripes on the main entrance stairs. Currently, blind and partially sighted passengers cannot access the location and buy tickets or visit the sanitaria without support or assistance. There is also a need for directional signs in large print braille and relief, also appropriate signalization for the evacuation plan should be implemented, as well as visual and appropriate signalization. There is no large freestanding indoor bus timetable display which could be very helpful to the blind or partially sighted passengers.

Therefore, within DANOVA some project measures for improvement have been identified and some of them were already implemented within DANOVA project and some of them will be implemented

in future phases of main bus station investment or maintenance plans. Details about measures and recommendation from assessment performed is described in *Local assessment report of main bus station*.

1.2 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TAKEN

Assessment of main bus station Maribor infrastructure accessibility to blind and partly sighted passengers has been performed in June 2021 according to prescribed methodology. Recommendations and measures for improvement are prioritised in three main categories, high, medium and low priority. Within DANOVA the assessment is organized within modules making assessment process as well as outcomes easier to understand. There are two distinct parts of the assessment – the off-site and on-site assessment. The former is composed of eight modules related to access to information and rules of conduct, while the latter deals with built environment and is composed of eleven modules. Assessment process was divided in three main steps:

- a) Review of national environment (regulations),
- b) Off site assessment which included eight modules: review of existing site accessibility policies, disability training programme, customer service standards and pre-post travel access to information,
- c) On site assessment which includes eleven modules: approach and departure to and from the site, entrance to the site, inside circulation, security screening and custom, sanitary facilities, waiting areas, departure and arrival pints, evacuation routes and exit from the site.

Each of these modules is built using DANOVA building blocks: parking (car, taxi), public transport, wayfinding (signage and displays), horizontal and vertical circulation, counters, machines, sanitary facilities and evacuation routes.

Accessibility of each area has been assessed in scale from 1 (Hazardous, inaccessible, and unsatisfactory) to 5 (Accepted as a Best Practice). According to performed assessment, improvement areas and type of interventions were identified which were divided in three categories: High, Medium and Low priority type of interventions.

There were total of 16 High, 24 medium and 36 Low priority type of interventions identified for main bus station in Maribor (and two bus stops) out of which Municipality of Maribor has already implemented 10 of them. All interventions were implemented at the main bus station in Maribor.

Priority of intervention	Total recommendations	Implemented within DANOVA
High	16	5
Medium	24	2
Low	36	3

Table 1. Comparison of number of recommendations implemented according to priority of intervention

1.2.1. Type and reason for pilot action intervention

According to the assessment performed, Municipality of Maribor has identified following pilot action interventions to be implemented within DANOVA project:

Acoustic signals for traffic lights - The traffic light on the south and southwest crossroads has no acoustic signal and the acoustic signal on the north crossroads is not audible enough (highest priority, measure 2)

Contrasting strip – main entrance stairs - add colour contrasting strips at the edge of each step (highest priority, measure 3)

Evacuation plan and appropriate signalization - a floorplan with important information on exits, platform, information and sanitary facilities be placed on several clearly visible places (highest priority, part of measure 7)

Large freestanding indoor bus timetable display - installation of large, freestanding display for timetables (highest priority, measure 9)

Improved illumination at main entrances - improved illumination at north main entrance (highest priority, part of measure 11)

Handrails maintenance at north main entrance - fixing the handrails (medium priority, measure 1)

Bus lines and timetables on East and on West platforms - enlarging the size of letters for bus timetables (medium priority, part of measures 15 and 16)

Disability awareness training of staff members - disability awareness training for all staff, including management carried out (low priority, measure 15)

Information on the building in suitable formats - bus station map added to the website (low priority, part of measure 19)

Web site compliance with W3C levels A/AA or AAA – improvement of the web site content (timetables in readable PDF format making it possible to read with reading apps) (low priority, part of measure 18)

Interventions to be implemented within pilot action were chosen according to their priority (high and medium), according to estimated budget of Maribor partners within project DANOVA and according to prioritization of measures done by Marprom management. In process of determining which interventions are most critical for Marprom to implement, representatives of blind and partially sighted (cooperation with The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students and Intermunicipal Society of the Blind and Visually Impaired Maribor) were consulted as well as interested stakeholders.

1.2.2 Implementation process

Within DANOVA project the Department of traffic and utility of Municipality of Maribor was actively involved from the start of the project. They managed to implement 3 measures within the existing municipal budget (1. adding the contrasting strips at the main north entrance stairs, 2. fixing the handrail at the main north entrance and 3. implementing the acoustic signals on all traffic lights

surrounding the bus station). Other measures were co-financed from DANOVA project, one part from the budget of Municipality of Maribor and one part from the budget of University of Maribor.

These interventions were divided in the three separate public procurement processes as follows:

Public procurement name	Public procurement estimated amount	Start date of procurement	Date of contract	Date of service performed / equipment installed
<u>External expertise</u> adjustment of the content to be shown on the displays – making of new graphic interface to display the information	3.800	August 2022	September 2022	November 2022
<u>External expertise</u> design of map of Maribor main bus station and purchase of A3 frames for timetables	6.000	September 2022	September 2022	October 2022
<u>Equipment</u> Installation of two large freestanding indoor bus timetable displays in the waiting area on the main bus station	32.000	July 2022	January 2022	October 2022
TOTAL	43.000 EUR			

Table 2. Pilot action procurement and implementation timeline

Largest public procurement and more complex one for implementation was “Installation of two large freestanding indoor bus timetable displays in the waiting area on the main bus station”. Preparation of technical documentation for that public procurement was very lengthy and difficult process. Installation of equipment was finalized in October 2022 and assessment of current situation and improvements in accessibility of infrastructure at the main bus station in Maribor for blind and partly sighted passengers has been performed in November 2022 by representatives of blind and partially sighted (cooperation with The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students and Intermunicipal Society of the Blind and Visually Impaired Maribor).

1.2.3. State before and after the implementation

Evaluation of pilot action intervention has showed significant improvement in accessibility of Maribor main bus station infrastructure as follows:

5 out of 16 high priority measures were implemented,

2 out of 24 medium priority measures were implemented,

3 out of 36 low priority measures were implemented.

Most significant measure implemented relates to installation of two large freestanding indoor bus timetable displays in the waiting area on the main bus station.

Implementation of other measures of pilot action in Maribor also largely improved accessibility for blind and partly sighted passengers on main bus station in Maribor (simple map of the bus station, printing and set-up of larger bus time tables at the main bus station, set up of the Contrasting warning signs on the stairs at the entrance, fixing the handrail at the entrance, improving the lighting at the entrance, improvement of acoustic signals for traffic lights on the crossroads around the main bus station).

According to finalised works and equipment installed following quantities were implemented:

Type of equipment	Prior to implementation (piece)	After the implementation (piece)
Freestanding indoor bus timetable displays	0	2
Map of Maribor main bus station	0	1
Timetables in larger format (in A3 frames) at the main bus station	0	25
Acoustic signals for traffic lights	2	5
Graphic interface for transmitting the information for blind and visually impaired	0	1
Contrasting strip – main entrance stairs	0	1

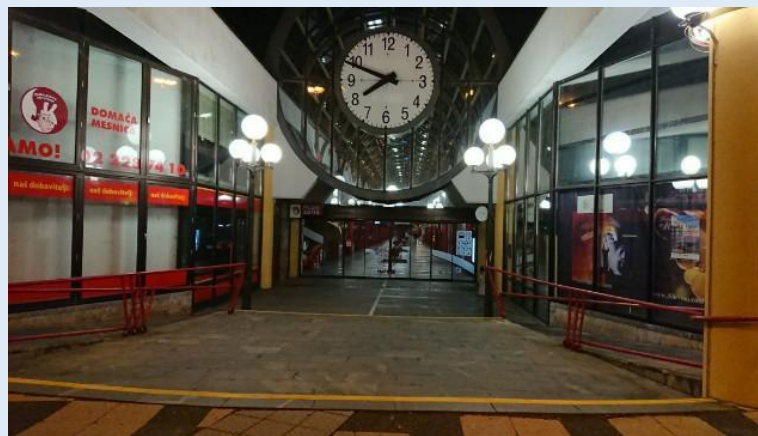
Table 3. Pilot action improvements

Please see photos after the implementation per areas.





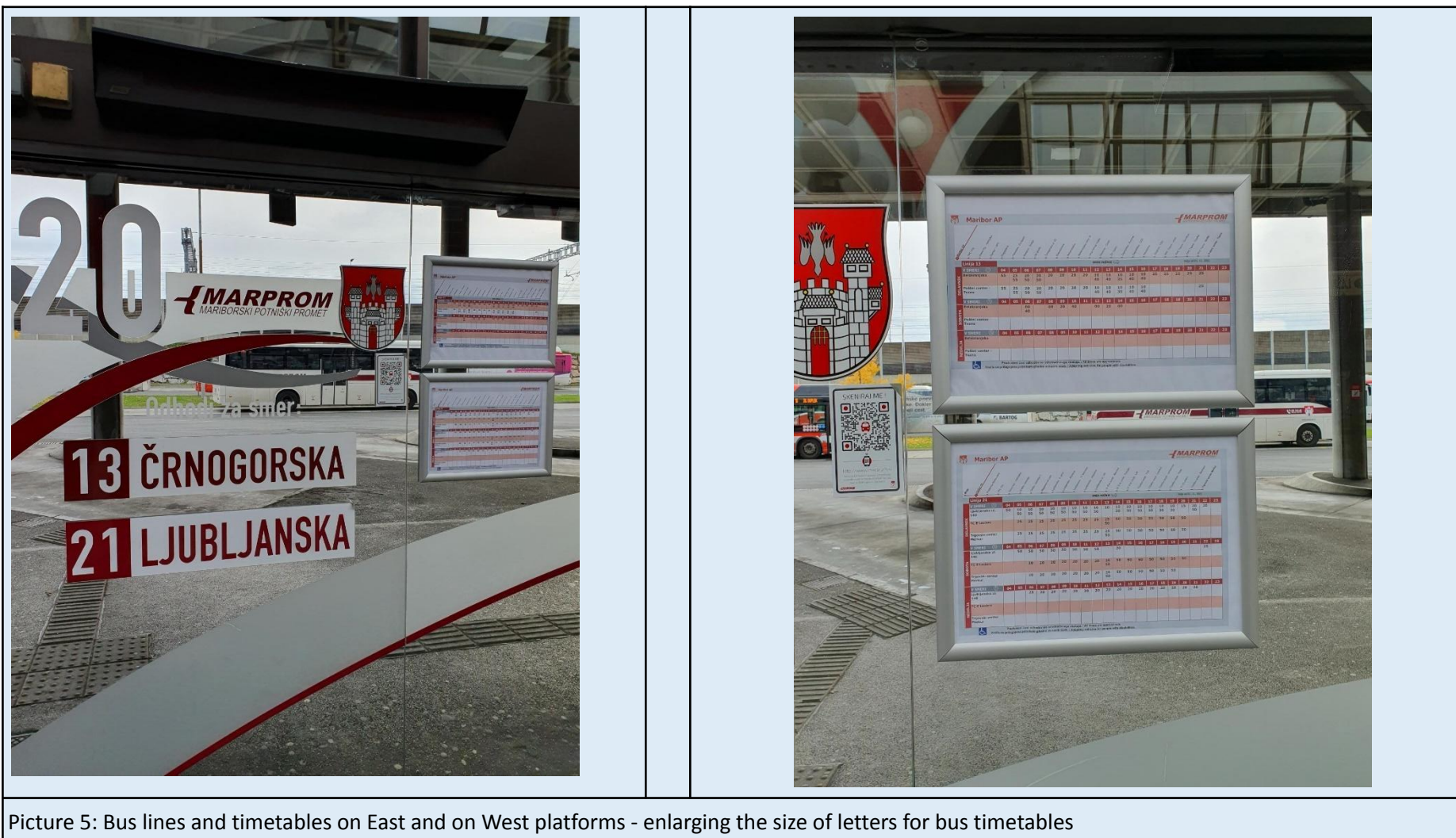
Picture 2: Contrasting strip – main entrance stairs



Picture 3: Handrails maintenance at north main entrance and Improved illumination at main entrances



Picture 4: A floorplan with important information on exits, platform, information and sanitary facilities placed in main station and on the web site



Picture 5: Bus lines and timetables on East and on West platforms - enlarging the size of letters for bus timetables



Picture 6: Two large freestanding indoor bus timetable display

1.3 COSTS

Pilot action costs reported in D.T.3.3.1. amounted to 30.400 EUR, please see attached table:

Category of funding	Expenditure Amount (EUR)
External expertise Adjustment of the content to be shown on the displays – new graphic interface to display the information adapted to blind and visually impaired passengers	3.660
External expertise Design of map of Maribor main bus station and purchase of A3 frames for timetables	4.410
Equipment Installation of two large freestanding indoor bus timetable displays in the waiting area on the main bus station	25.990
TOTAL	34.060 EUR

Table 4: Pilot action actual costs

The total costs encountered during the pilot life cycle are equal to 34.060 EUR, which is above originally budgeted amount for implementation of pilot action of 28.675 EUR. Difference occurred due to the fact that during estimation of initial budget MOM had no previous knowledge of measures to be undertaken in order to improve accessibility for blind and partly sighted and had planned some different measures to be adopted, which were not possible to realize in the project time frame and project budget. Also, difference is a result of public procurement process.

The funding sources are:

ERDF contribution 85% - 28.951 EUR

MOM contribution 15% (of 30.400 EUR) - 4.560 EUR

UM contribution 15% (of 3.660 EUR) - 549 EUR

Such costs are in line with the costs foreseen in the AF.

1.4 PROBLEMS FACED

During the implementation of pilot action Municipality of Maribor (MOM) has faced several problems and challenges:

Definition of technical description of pilot action in public procurement process. MOM had no adequate knowledge to determine all necessary technical requirements for large freestanding indoor bus timetable display. Therefore, we needed a lot of time to study all technical specifications and discuss it with IT experts from bus operator to procure displays.

There was delay in public procurement procedure and consequently delay in installation of equipment. Due to the very lengthy and difficult process of technical specification preparations for free standing displays, the public procurement started later than planned. Since we wanted to order a display which would be also suitable for people in wheelchairs, the delivery time for such a custom-made product was much longer (not in DANOVA time frame). In order to shorten the delivery time we found an option to order “standard” product (two 55” monitors with touch screen option). We were able to discuss this option with representatives of blind and visually impaired and with the transport operator (manager of main bus station in Maribor who will also manage and maintain the monitors) who supported this solution. Displays were installed in the first half of October 2022.

Consultations and communication with local public transport operator Marprom and municipal department for utility and traffic. During the pilot preparation and implementation representatives of MOM (Service for development projects and investments – project office) had numerous meetings and consultations with representatives of local public transport operator Marprom. The challenge in communication process was to get to know the organisation structure of the operator and communicate different details connected to the pilot implementation to different departments and people. During the preparations of the specifications of the displays, installation and function of displays, different departments were involved: IT department of MARPROM, external company of Marprom who manages and operates the bus data which were planned to be displayed on free standing displays, company’s management, technical operators who will take care of display maintenance after the project end. Project office representatives of MOM also had several meetings with MOM’s department for utility and traffic. The topic of the meetings was to identify different possibilities of financing the measures proposed in Local Assessment Report. The facility of main bus station in Maribor is namely divided between different managers/operators – one being MOM taking care of public space and another one MARPROM, taking care of business part of the bus station. There were a lot of discussion if some measures could be financed from municipal budget. According to the findings MOM could finance from other financial sources (set up of the Contrasting warning signs on the stairs at the entrance, fixing the handrail at the entrance, improving the lighting at the entrance, improvement of acoustic signals for traffic lights on the crossroads around the main bus station).

Improvement of data shown on displays. During the pilot implementation, the operator identified quite some possibilities to improve the data shown on displays in the future. Some improvement of data is connected to the typographical corrections which could be done by the operator, some is connected to the corrections of data in database of the ministry.

1.5 GOOD POINTS / SUCCESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Implementation of all measures of pilot action in Maribor (set up of large freestanding bus displays, simplified map of the bus station, printing and set-up of larger bus time tables at the main bus station, set up of the contrasting warning strips on the stairs at the entrance, fixing the handrail at the entrance, improving the lighting at the entrance, improvement of acoustic signals for traffic lights on the crossroads around the main bus station) has largely improved accessibility for blind and partly sighted passengers on main bus station in Maribor.

In combination with training of Marprom's (local bus operator) employees, this has significantly risen level of service that municipality and Marprom provide to blind and partly sighted passengers and is considered to be major starting point in implementation of other measures identified within DANOVA project.

In preparation and implementation phase participation of different stakeholders was very important. The cooperation with representatives of blind and visually impaired had the biggest importance. Through the cooperation process we started close cooperation with people of The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students, Intermunicipal Society of the Blind and Visually Impaired Maribor and Council for disabled people at MOM. As a result of good cooperation besides completed DANOVA pilot actions we can also mention the application for Access City Award 2023 and cooperation in the process of preparation of Action plan to improve equal opportunities for people with disabilities in Maribor for period 2022-2027.

Furthermore, in discussion with representatives of blind and partly sighted, web page was identified as the crucial point of pre-travel information and its accessibility was considered of most importance for blind and partly sighted passengers. Therefore, Marprom as a local bus operator improved some information published on the web site and will continue to improve its connect in order to be more user friendly for all passengers.

1.6. TRANSFERABILITY POTENTIAL AND ADAPTABILITY

During stakeholders' meetings and Transnational working Group meetings it was concluded that pilot action implemented in main bus station in Maribor can be used as a good practice for other bus stations in the region as well as for other applicable infrastructure access points. Representatives of other public passenger transport providers (*Avtobusni promet Murska Sobota d.d.*, *Ljubljanski potniški promet d.o.o.*, *Slovenske železnice-potniški promet d.o.o.*) have all expressed interests in sharing DANOVA project results and pilot action results.

Experience of the Municipality of Maribor (MOM) and other DANOVA partners can be used in similar or other environments, following crucial points are to be considered in implementation of such practices according to MOM experience:

Performing assessment of the current status of accessibility for blind and partly sighted.

Prioritization of interventions to be implemented.

Involving the expert to prepare technical specification for equipment (in our case free standing display),

Take into consideration also the expected costs and timeline for preparation of data connected to the implementation of IT equipment (f.ex. free standing display).

Problems occurred during the installation and after the installation.

Benefits for blind and partly sighted passengers after the pilot action implementation.

1.7 OVERALL CONCLUSION ON THE EVALUATION OF THE PILOT ACTION PROCESS

MOM pilot action has made MOM infrastructure at the main bus station in Maribor more accessible to blind and partly sighted passengers. Prior to pilot action intervention, travel information about departure of busses were shown on displays at the main station but the displays were placed too high (above the eye level), so reading the information from close distance was impossible. The information shown was also not in appropriate format (size, fonts and colours).

After the pilot action implementation there are two large free-standing displays installed at the main bus station with the information in format (size, fonts and colours) specifically adopted to partially sighted passengers. Additionally, also larger printed formats of bus timetables were placed on the platforms of the local city busses. Before timetables were printed in A4 format, now there are in A3 format. On the web page timetables shown in PDF format were transferred to readable PDF format so blind and partially sighted passengers are able to read them with reading apps.

Additionally, a simplified map of the main bus station was prepared which enables the passengers easy orientation at the station. Maps are placed at the entrances of the bus station, in the station itself and on the web site of the Maribor local bus operator. This enables the users also to download the map and enlarge it if needed.

The accessibility of the main bus station was also improved with contrasting warning strips on the stairs at the entrance, fixed handrail at the entrance stairs, improving the lighting at the entrance, improvement of acoustic signals for traffic lights on the crossroads around the main bus station.

Expected impact of Maribor pilot action and DANOVA project can be summarised as follows:

Project and Policy instrument	Goal	Impact	Indicator
Danova – Danube Transnational Programme	Increase competences for business and social innovation - Developing innovative social services able to	DANUBE region and other interested parties	Transnational concept for accessibility for blind and partly sighted that is to be developed based on Capitalisation

	better meet social needs and to provide services in general interest		strategy, collection of best practices, call for ideas' selection and stakeholder engagement
	Improvement in accessibility for blind and partly sighted passengers of public transport in Maribor	All users of Maribor main bus station	<p>3 crossing improved with installation of additional and improvement of existent Acoustic signals for traffic lights</p> <p>2 monitors installed</p> <p>Improved access at the entrance on north (set up of the contrasting warning signs on the stairs, fixing the handrail, improved lighting)</p> <p>Map of bus station</p> <p>Timetables printed in larger format</p>

			Timetables on website transformed to readable PDF
	Improvement in level of service to blind and partly sighted passengers	Public transport company Marprom employees and blind and partly sighted passengers	29 employees of Marprom attended training session

Table 5. expected impact of MOM pilot action and DANOVA project

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NOTE:

FILL IN ONLY THE TABLES THAT WERE INCLUDED IN THE PILOT ACTION AND DELETE THE REST!

1. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

1.1. National regulations

Did the pilot action include any improvements on this matter?	NO	/		
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2. OFF-SITE ASSESSMENT

2.1. Site policies, service standards and awareness training

Disability awareness training			Evaluation	Comments
Did the pilot action include any improvements on this matter?	NO	/	N/A	The pilot actions did not envisage the training, but the training for both managerial and operational staff was implemented through the project.

2.2. Pre- and post-travel access to information

Website		Evaluation	Comments
Did the pilot action include any improvements on this matter?	YES – bus station map added to the website and improvement of the web site content (timetables in readable PDF format making it possible to read with reading apps for the blind passengers)	N/A	
Does the pilot site have its own website (stand-alone website)?	NO		
Is website of the audited site compliant with W3C levels A/AA or AAA? (for stand-alone websites expert assessment is mandatory, for webpages within corporate websites, online tools can be used https://www.experte.com/accessibility to check accessibility of main webpage)	NO – We ran the accessibility check with expert and Wave accessibility checkers and gave the summary of the check to Marprom and it is attached to this report. The website does not have an accessibility statement.	3	<input type="checkbox"/> Compliance checked by the expert (if YES, tick the box, leave empty if checked with online tool)
Does the website provide information on the building (including accessible paths and facilities, etc.) in suitable format (text)?	YES - floor plan of the main bus station added to the website with clearly marked important locations and services.	3	

3. ON-SITE ASSESSMENT

For each of the modules below, insert (copy/paste) appropriate building block assessment tables. Choose from all that apply, each building block can be used as many times as needed. If specific module is not present at audited site (e.g. Security screening and customs is only present at locations like airports and ports), delete the module.

If the pilot action does not include any improvements on this module, please delete it.

3.1. Approach and departure to and from the site

PATHS, CORRIDORS		Assessment	Comments
Did the pilot action include any improvements on this matter?	YES	4	3 crossings improved with installation of additional acoustic signal, on two crossing improvement of existent Acoustic signals for traffic lights
Is the path equipped with acoustic guidance?	YES	4	The traffic light on the south and west crossroads had no acoustic signal and the acoustic signal on the north crossroads was not audible enough. During the pilot 3 crossings were improved with installation of additional acoustic signal, on two crossings improvement of existing acoustic signals for traffic lights (improvement of length and volume of the signal)

3.2. Entrance to and exit from the site

STAIRS		Assessment	Comments
Did the pilot action include any improvements on this matter?	YES	4	Improved access at the entrance on north (set up of the contrasting warning signs on the stairs, fixing the handrail, improved lighting)
Is there a new visual contrast (e.g. colour	YES	5	main entrance stairs - colour contrasting strips added at the edge of each step

contrasting strip) at the edge of the steps?			
Is there adequate illumination on the stairs with no glare?	YES	3	the lighting at the entrance was improved
Do the stairs have handrails on both sides that are continuous on the landing?	YES	4	the handrail at the main north entrance was fixed

3.3. Inside circulation, waiting areas

DISPLAYS		Assessment	Comments
Did the pilot action include any improvements on this matter?	YES	5	Installation of two large freestanding indoor bus timetable displays in the waiting area on the main bus station
Is information on displays easily understandable (designed to be simple and easy to interpret, the message is unambiguous)	YES	5	
Are new displays readable and legible for partially sighted people?	YES	5	the information is in proper size, fonts and colours, contrast
Are new displays well illuminated with no glare?	YES	5	Monitors are with no glare
Is there sufficient visual guidance (signage, visibility of display etc.) available to detect new display easily?	YES	3	Monitors are shown on the bus station map (at the bus station and on the web-site)
Is it possible to get very close to the new display to read the information?	YES	5	Monitors are standing in the hallway of the station which is also a waiting area and it is possible to get very close to read the information. Monitors are with touch screen and they also enable the user to move the shown content to the eye-level so it is also easier to read the content shown for the

			visually impaired or elderly passengers.
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3.4. Evacuation routes

EVACUATION ROUTE		Assessment	Comments
Did the pilot action include any improvements on this matter?	YES	3	<p>During the assessment it was proposed that a floorplan with important information on exits, platform, information and sanitary facilities is placed on several clearly visible places.</p> <p>A simplified map of the main bus station was prepared which enables the passengers to orient more easily at the station. Maps are placed at the entrances of the bus station, in the station itself and on the web site of the Maribor local bus operator. This enables the users also to download the map and enlarge it if needed.</p>






3.5. Arrival and departure points

SIGNS		Assessment	Comments
Did the pilot action include any improvements on this matter?	YES	4	Larger printed formats of bus timetables were placed on the platforms of the local city buses
Are new visual signs readable and legible for people with visual impairments?	Yes	4	<p>During the assessment it was proposed that the bus timetables for city buses would be printed in a large print.</p> <p>During the pilot larger printed formats of bus timetables were placed on the platforms of the local city buses. Before there were timetables printed in A4 format, now there are in A3 format. Also on the web page, timetables shown in PDF format were transferred to readable PDF format so blind</p>

			and partially sighted passengers are able to read them with the help of reading apps.
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4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 1. Hazardous, inaccessible, and unsatisfactory**
If the evaluated element is dangerous and poses a hazard to blind and/or partially sighted persons, and, if the rated element is inaccessible, and if it is rated unsatisfactory by blind and/or partially sighted persons, the element receives the lowest rank (1). Note that all three conditions must be met in order to assign the lowest rank 1.
- 2. Inaccessible and unsatisfactory**
If the rated element is inaccessible and assessed as unsatisfactory by blind and/or partially sighted persons, but does not pose a hazard to passengers with visual impairments, the element is rated with rank 2.
- 3. Unsatisfactory but acceptable**
The element is rated unsatisfactory by blind and/or partially sighted persons, but does not pose a hazard to passengers with visual impairments nor is the element inaccessible. The element is evaluated with rank 3.
- 4. Accessible and acceptable**
The element is rated as acceptable and accessible to blind and partially sighted persons; the element is rated with rank 4.
- 5. Accepted as a Best Practice**
The element is rated as acceptable and accessible to blind and partially sighted persons and shows an exemplary way of implementing standards. It is very important that the expert or representative of the visually impaired rate the element as exemplary. It is very important that the element works for the intended user(s) - if the solution is very innovative but does not work for visually impaired people (e.g. due to its complexity), it cannot be given the highest rank. The solution is something that works and can/should be transferred and implemented elsewhere; the element is evaluated with rank 5.

Evaluation rank	Evaluation Criteria	Symbol	Priority for intervention
1	Hazardous, Inaccessible and Unsatisfactory		Highest
2	Inaccessible and Unsatisfactory		High
3	Unsatisfactory but acceptable		Moderate
4	Accessible and Acceptable		Low
5	Accepted as a Best Practice		None

5. IMPROVEMENT AFTER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PILOT ACTION.

Please, based on the evaluation grid, describe

- Whether the problems you tackled with the Pilot Actions are dealt with?

The problems detected by the accessibility assessment and which are part of the pilot action were solved in such a way as to improve accessibility for blind and partially sighted people. Namely, the problems detected by the accessibility assessment were defined according to priorities, which greatly contributed to a better quality and more objective assessment in the selection of actions.

By implementing 5/15 defined top priorities, 2/24 defined medium priorities and 3/36 low priorities the accessibility for easier and equal use of the main bus station for blind and partially sighted people has been improved.

In accordance with the provided funds and project time frame it was possible to implement several of interventions by the end of DANOVA project. The assessment offered a very detailed overview for the preparation of action plan to ensure the independence, equality and inclusion of blind and partially sighted people to the greatest possible extent. This will be, hopefully, realized in the following years.

The assortment of proposed interventions was broad and very diverse. One reason is the specifics connected to the transport facility (bus station) and another one the very detailed audit done in Maribor.

- What is the accessibility improvement (one evaluation rank higher equals 20% improvement)?

The assessment of accessibility improvement, although it is very difficult and demanding, given the guidelines for individual approach to each individual in need, is generally estimated at 60%.

- How that corresponded to the Pilot action plan – was it fulfilled as planned?

We believe that the goals have been achieved because the implemented actions have made MOM's infrastructure at the main bus station in Maribor more accessible to blind and partly sighted passengers. In combination with training of Marprom's (local bus operator) employees, this has significantly risen the level of service that municipality and Marprom provide to blind and partly sighted passengers and is considered to be major starting point in implementation of further measures identified within DANOVA project.

We believe that certain measures could already be implemented in the near future since they do not require big financial efforts. All of DANOVA actions are also part of Municipal Action plan to improve the equal opportunities for people with disabilities in Maribor for period 2022-2027.

- What were the reasons behind the success / unsatisfactory result?

We believe that the reasons for the success were very high engagement and determination to implement the planned pilot actions, which included a series of joint meetings, consultations and additional informing.

In the process of determining which interventions are most critical for bus station operator Marprom to implement, representatives of blind and partially sighted (cooperation with The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students and Intermunicipal Society of the Blind and Visually Impaired Maribor) cooperated constantly, through the whole process.

- What are the lessons learned?

One of the most important lessons we have learned is that the process of improving conditions for a particular group requires their direct engagement in the form of consultation and getting to know and understand their needs and characteristics. Another important lesson is the proper prioritisation when it comes to ensuring accessibility and personal mobility for blind people, as well as the need to sensitise both management and operational staff of the transport facility. The latter also refers to the importance of training in proper approach to and communication with visually impaired people, which the transport operator intends to include in its future measures.

Representatives of DANOVA project also made many useful contacts during the project implementation and got to know the organizational structure of Marprom the local bus operator company which manages the bus station. This will make future pilot actions easier to implement or at least to contact the competent persons when setting up the new pilots.

- Would you consider this Pilot action can be replicated in a similar transport node – yes/no, why?

Yes, we believe that this pilot action can be replicated in a similar transportation facility. But following is to be considered in implementation: performing assessment of the current status of accessibility for blind and partly sighted; prioritization of interventions; Involving the expert to prepare technical specification for equipment, benefits for blind and partly sighted passengers after the pilot action implementation.

- What will you advise the management of other transport nodes which are going to implement similar Pilot action?

It is recommended that organisations representing blind and partially sighted persons, experts in the relevant fields and end users be involved in the process, as this will enable the transport facility to ensure that its actions meet the needs of the target users as well as legal requirements and standards. In this way, the facility has the opportunity to implement best practises and avoid being burdened with additional costs for further adaptations.