

## UK Hub

# Working with mobility providers to achieve gender and diversity smart mobility solutions

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## Transdisciplinary work collaborations are desirable but challenging

For successful gender and diversity sensitive mobility planning, it is important to work not only in an interdisciplinary but transdisciplinary manner. This means that diverse actors not only from different disciplines but also from different scientific and societal institutions who normally do not work together are mutually concerned about gender and diversity approaches in sustainable mobility planning (e.g. Lang et al., 2012; Ahlstrom et al., 2020). However, working in a connected way can prove challenging, given the broad spectrum of disciplines and institutions in the field, such as planners, policymakers and academics, all trying to address gender and diversity for sustainable urban mobility from differing perspectives.

To counteract this, the work of the UK Hub focuses on strengthening and modifying approaches e.g., the collection and evaluation of mobility data to ensure gender and diversity as an integral part in our future mobility.

\* 'Guidelines – Developing and implementing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan'  
<https://www.eltis.org/mobility-plans/sump-guidelines>

## Key Messages

### State of Play

To understand the level of awareness among mobility providers about gender and diversity issues and how this factors into their services.

### Output

This brief provides guidelines for policy makers and transport providers and recommends that gender and diversity is an active part in transport planning through the following objectives

1. to gain an **all-encompassing view** into the needs and requirements of diverse stakeholders
2. that **mobility services** should be inclusive for all users
3. to plan future mobility services by ensuring a transdisciplinary working approach that understands **gender- and diversity as an integral part** of our future mobility planning.
4. to **recommend that mobility surveys and data** in terms of their findings, potentials and gaps are assessed with regards to gender and diversity.
5. to recommend the collection of **data on gender and diversity** using the collection of gender and diversity disaggregated data..

## AUDIENCE

This policy brief informs all stakeholders in the field of public transport by suggesting a new transdisciplinary approach to work which puts gender and diversity at the center of our future sustainable urban mobility planning (SUMP\*), and by providing an organizational framework and best practices to ensure mutual economic and social benefit.

## Transdisciplinary work is needed to address gender and diversity issues in smart mobility



Transport planners and operators are constantly seeking novel solutions to support citizens to navigate journeys in a sustainable, inclusive and affordable way. The Covid 19 pandemic has impacted travel for work and leisure with citizens trying to avoid crowded public transport modes and seeking more personal options such as demand responsive buses, e-Bikes or e-Scooters. This has enabled smaller operators to bid for mobility services in an already tight market. Such operators may already operate in the global arena but be unaware of specific knowledge of gender and diversity issues on a local level. It is this specific issue the UK hub sought to address.

Using co-creation methods and sharing knowledge can support smaller operators to ensure that any solutions offered are as inclusive as possible, thus maximising acceptance and ensuring value for money and sustainability.

## Approach and Results

For transdisciplinary work collaborations that put gender and diversity at the heart of their philosophy in the context of mobility planning, the UK Hub pursued the following research approach.

**A focus on two main elements:**

- 1 RESEARCH APPROACH:** Design of an organisational framework through co-creation workshops with the mobility provider Zeelo to allow understanding of **the state of play** for SME mobility providers currently operating in the UK. This will support future sustainable mobility planning for the provider (and therefore planners) and allow the development of innovative solutions thus reaching sustainability goals by building on knowledge exchange and mutual trust between different stakeholders.
- 2 RESEARCH APPROACH:** Design of a tool-kit to collect and evaluate mobility data regarding gender and diversity in order to identify gaps and opportunities. We put this into practise in cooperation with representatives of the transport provider, Zeelo. We determined which existing mobility data Zeelo had used or not so far, whether and how additional assessments are designed and carried out, and for what purpose.

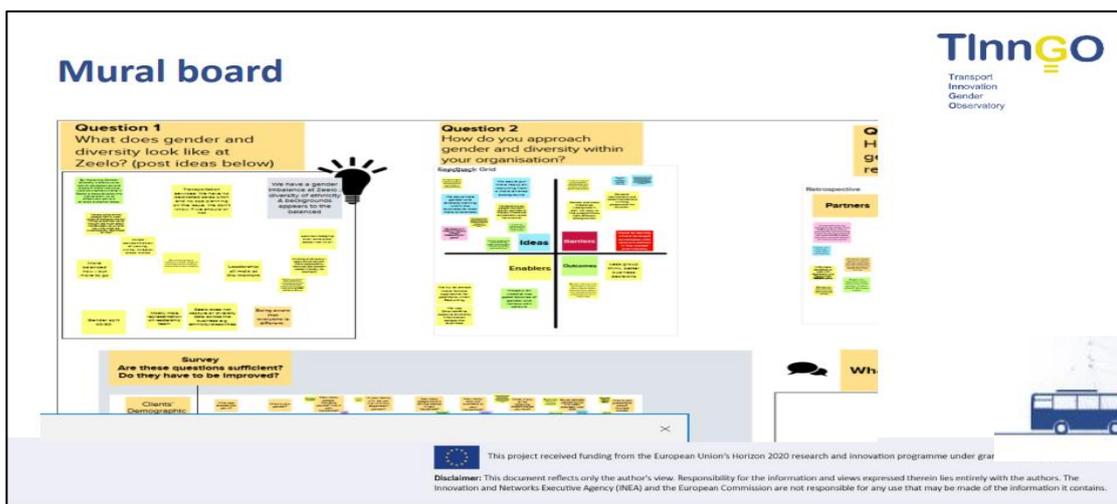


Figure. Example of one co-creation workshop with Zeelo using Mural and Zoom

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### 1 Transport operators know their market but are they missing out?

1. The development of a toolkit for co-creation workshops can support planners to establish that new mobility providers are aware of **localised transport issues**
2. Co-creation workshops can provide a **learning environment** for operators, planners and researchers to share knowledge and explore local issues/legislation requirements.
3. Using such workshops new mobility providers can **maximise their acceptance** and thus sustainability of their operation
4. Successful workshops rely on an **openness for collaboration and co-creation**
5. Desirable incentives for collaborating should be highlighted to operators and planners, as all parties will have different objectives.
6. A further important factor is the flow of information, which needs to be organised and distributed effectively, and on time. Thus, **adequate coordination of different actors, tasks, roles and responsibilities** involved is required for successful collaboration.
7. Outputs from the workshop lead to the subsequent development of a **toolkit** for mobility providers to improve their data collection. This will enable them to understand their ridership and highlight gaps and opportunities
8. Validation of the **data collection toolkit** has been initiated by the operator, Zeelo, further support will be offered by the UK hub to analyse the data and refine the toolkit.

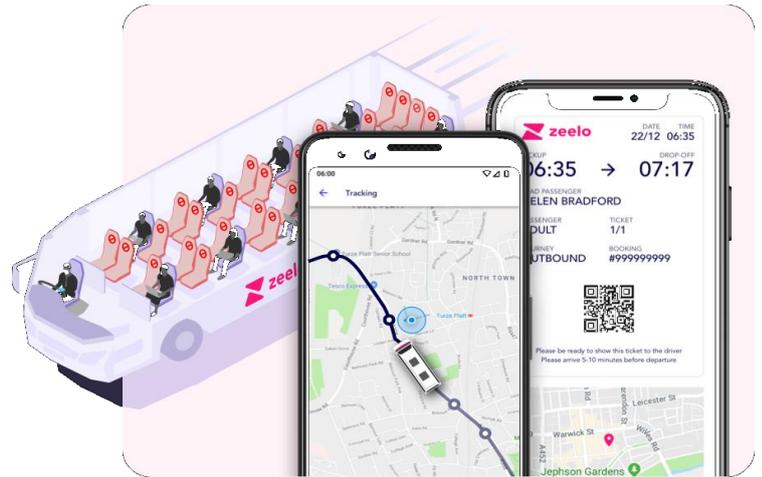


Figure. Zeelo's app for on-demand bus service

### 2 Collaboration Methodology

Our goal was to develop a methodology that explored SME transport providers' knowledge of gender and diversity issues in the local context and ways in which this knowledge could be improved through co-creation. This has enabled us to develop a toolkit for operators to collect data and improve services to a variety of different groups such as women, children and disabled people.

The methodology is based on four steps to realise success;

1. Informal meetings between transport operators, planners and policy makers in order to **set the framework** (e.g. number of meetings; ethical agreement).
2. A **workshop**, designed to explore knowledge of gender and diversity and support the transport provider in **designing more gender and diversity attractive, effective, sustainable and inclusive services**. During the workshop (in our case this was facilitated online using Zoom and Mural) a survey was co-created that the transport provider can use to identify the needs of women, children and disabled people from their clients (businesses, schools transport operators and riders). Identifying needs will improve the quality of services and ensure an inclusive approach.
3. A **follow up meeting** to evaluate the results of the workshop, allow for reflection and develop proposals for the survey toolkit from all involved in the collaboration.
4. **Validation** of the survey within the transport provider's organisation.
5. **Final development** of the survey toolkit that could be applied for other providers.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The aim of the research was to explore SME mobility providers' understanding of gender and diversity issues in the local (UK) context through a process of co-creation with policy makers, providers and planners in the field. This will not only enable mobility providers to have a richer picture of user needs but should increase acceptance and therefore sustainability of their schemes. This co-creation will also support planners and policy makers to develop mobility solutions that provide affordable, attractive, sustainable, effective and inclusive options for citizens.

- The UK hub recommends that UK local authorities and policy makers question potential providers about gender and diversity as a prerequisite of any bids for contracts.
- We recommend this methodology based on the best practice example we developed with Zeelo to support new mobility providers in understanding local context and regulations and to ensure new schemes offer an affordable, attractive, effective inclusive and sustainable service.

### THE UK Hub developed:

A framework to organize co-creation with transport planners, policy makers and SME transport operators which aims to improve their understanding of gender and diversity issues in the local context. We did this by;

1. Holding co-creation workshops with transport operators and policy makers
2. Generating outputs from the workshop, in this case a survey for the operator, which could lead to greater acceptance of new mobility solutions such as demand responsive buses, e-scooters and e-bikes.

Such co-creation exercises build trust between operators and policy makers with greater understanding of what is required from all parties. They have potential to outline the impact for all partners of such transdisciplinary collaborations such as increased revenue for operators (through maximising ridership) and ensuring the support of policy makers.



*“This methodology helped us a lot to move on with issues on gender and diversity and to offer a more attractive and inclusive service!”*



#### References

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