WP Upscaling – Activity 6: Best practices

Upscaling actions in Leuven

Hilke.evenepoel@leuven.be

ShareDiMobiHub

Introduction

Leuven was one of the partner cities in the ShareDiMobiHub consortium. Leuven focused on two pilot projects and the further upscaling of hubs and shared mobility services. This report forms part of the upscaling work package.

Leuven has drawn up an [action plan](#) with the aim of upscaling and further integrating shared mobility services with public transport, as well as digitising them. The expected results of this action plan are an increase in the supply and use of shared cars and bicycles. This report briefly explains the results achieved within the scope of the project, together with the efforts made.

Furthermore, Leuven's best practices are listed within the most important project domains:

- Cooperation with shared mobility providers

- Integration with public transport

- Communication and nudging

- Digital integration - integration with MaaS

- Stakeholder management with regard to upscaling mobility hubs

- Maintenance of the hubs

Overview: baseline, targets and final results (July 2025) – limited to commercial providers

	#	Desciption of the indicator	Expected annual growth	Expected growth-effect	Baseline 31/12/2022	Target	Intermediate results 31/12/2023	Intermediate results 31/12/2024	End results 31/07/2025	Effect achieved when reporting based on most up-to-date data
Supply	1	number of active Hoppin hubs	10%	28%	41	52	41	41	41	0%
	2	number of shared cars	20%	55%	157	243	182	192	194	24%
	3	number of hubs with shared car	10%	28%	54	69	65	76	73	35%
	4	number of shared bikes	25%	69%	186	314	256	293	255	37%
	5	number of hubs with shared bikes	30%	83%	30	55	51	59	12	-60%
Use	6	number of active shared car users (with address in Leuven)	15%	41%	4.471	6.315	5.188	5.879	Only 1x/year update	31%
	7	number of shared bike users (not necessarily inhabitants of Leuven)	10%	28%	7.336	9.353	7.840	9.760	*7000*	-5%
	8	number of trips with shared bike (yearly)	20%	55%	36915	57.218	47.486	54.724	*47181*	28%
	9	average number of trips/day/shared bike	10%	28%	0,50	0,64	0,54	0,58	*0,51*	1%

Estimations based on data till 31/07/2025

1. More supply

Action 1.1: Deployment of more hubs - results

- **N° of hubs for shared cars: 73 → 35% increase compared to baseline**
  - It is proceeding smoothly, even more smoothly than anticipated, to expand the number of shared car hubs.
  - A new commercial provider of EVs has been launched in Leuven since the beginning of 2024: BattMobility, Unfortunately, 1.5 years after launch, the fleet is still limited (4 cars) .
  - The main provider, Cambio, grew significantly in 2023, including in terms of the number of hubs in Leuven. From 2024 onwards, growth has been rather stagnant. Some hubs were even temporarily deactivated.

- **N° of hubs for shared bikes: 12 → 60% decrease compared to baseline**
  - The expansion with shared bikes has gone well in 2024. Since May 2024, there is now also a supply of shared bikes at the Wijgmaal train station; now all train stations of Leuven have a shared bike offer, with financial support from the City of Leuven.
  - In addition, since September 2024, 6 new hubs have been launched with shared e-bikes.
  - At the end of December 2024, we received terrible news of Cargoroo's bankruptcy. Specifically, this means a huge decline in the supply of bikes. Each of these 50 shared cargo bikes had an individual stand - so in 2025 we will continue with 50 fewer shared bike hubs. The plan is to launch another cargo bike-sharing system in spring 2026.

- **N° of Hoppin hubs: 41 → no changes compared to baseline**
  - Leuven was a pioneer in Flanders to roll out the Flemish branding Hoppin for mobility hubs. Thus, since 2021 we have a basic network of some 41 Hoppin hubs. For the expansion of Hoppin hubs, we are stricter: at least 2 mobility services must be available and well used. Based on the evaluation at the end of 2024, new Hoppin hubs would be planned in 2025. Due to the sudden disappearance of shared cargo bikes, it seems that installing more Hoppin hubs in the short term is not opportune.

Action 1.2: Expansion of number of shared CARS - results

Facts

- N° of shared cars: 197 → 24% increase compared to baseline (< expected)
  - +16% in 2023
  - +5% in 2024
  - +1% in 2025

- All round-trip providers

- Short pilot with free-floating cars provider (09-12/2023) but stopped in Leuven because of too weak business case

- 1 new provider since beginning of 2024,i.e. Batt Mobility, however launching "slowly"

Efforts of Leuven

- Regular consultation with commercial providers in relation to expansion plans (usually on an annual basis)

- Contract awarded to Cambio to provide 4 shared cars in the outskirts of Leuven, with a cashback system* (2022-2023)
  - success formula
  - 4 + 2 cars (continue without subsidy since 2024)

- Awarded contract to Cambio to make 2 electric shared cars (1 passenger car and 1 van) available to a combined group of City of Leuven employees (service trips) and citizens, with a cashback system (2022-2024)
  - very few service trips during exclusive time slots → evolution to system without exclusive time slots → good to make services realize that "own car" is not so necessary, that using a shared car can deliver the demand for transport.
  - e-van is less well used by neighborhood residents.

* The higher the usage of the shared car, the more the city will be reimbursed by the provider in the annual settlement.

Action 1.2: Expansion of number of shared BIKES - results

Facts

- N° of shared bikes: 255 → 37% increase compared to baseline (< expected)
  - +38% in 2023
  - +14% in 2024
  - -13% in 2025
- Expansion of cargo bikes since 03/2023: from 30 to 50, but a decline to 0 cargo bikes at the end of December 2024
- All B2O providers
- Gradual expansion of shared bikes in train station-surroundings
- Start with 15 e-bikes in 12/2023, expansion of fleet in 09/2024 (56 e-bikes) and 06/2025 (76 e-bikes)

Efforts of Leuven

- **Shared cargo bikes:** Concession granted to Cargoroo to provide at least 50 bikes for a minimum of 5 years (01/2023-12/2027). Leuven makes a financial intervention in the form of an income guarantee during years 1 to 3 for the 30 bicycles located at the mobility hubs. Cargoroo's bankruptcy caused an abrupt decrease of 50 shared cargo bikes in 12/2024.

- **Shared bikes in train station surroundings:** Cooperation agreement with Blue Mobility (till 12/2025), with financial intervention by Leuven in the form of an income guarantee. Supplemented by a third payer arrangement on behalf of the city, namely a contribution of €1 per trip at the current fare of €3.5.

- **Shared e-bikes:** Cooperation agreement with Blue Mobility (till 12/2025) with a financial intervention of Leuven per bike/month in the form of an income guarantee, with a cash-back system. The more the bikes are used, the less the intervention of the city.

→ Regular consultation with bike provider(s) regarding expansions (# and locations)

2. More use

Usage data

Facts

- # active shared car users = *5.879*
  → 31% increase compared to baseline
  (< expected)

- # shared bike users = *7.000*
  → 5% decrease compared to baseline

- # trips with shared bike (yearly) = *47.181*
  → 28% increase compared to baseline
  (< expected)

- Average # of trips/day/shared bike = *0,51*
  →1% increase compared to baseline
  (< expected)

Efforts of Leuven (see [report WP2 A7](#))

- Action 2.1: Continued attention for communication actions in regular city channels (see ppt WP2 A7)

- Action 2.2: Development of additional communication actions

- Action 2.3: Nudging actions for disadvantaged groups

3. Best practices

Cooperation with shared mobility providers

- **Partnership:**
  Aim for a partnership with the SMPs with a focus on mutual trust and transparency.

- **Financial robustness:**
  Be sure to assess the financial robustness of the SMPs when awarding a public contract; request the necessary documents that substantiate this financial robustness in the specifications.

- **Financial support:**
  Discuss openly the financial feasibility of providing the requested services and work out a financing schedule in the interests of the local government and the provider.

- **Regular consultation:**
  Regular one-on-one consultations between the provider and local government, involving office and field staff, are conducive to cooperation, with sufficient awareness of the day-to-day reality. In addition to consultation, facts and data are highly desirable for monitoring and adjusting policy lines. To this end, the provider offers a user-friendly channel where the local government can consult the data, e.g. a dashboard.

- **Exchange:** Occasionally bring together the various SMPs that are active within your local government so that they can hear from each other what is going well and what is not.

- **Clarity about SLA:**
  As a local government, make it very clear what service level is expected in terms of quality, pricing, service provision, communication and marketing, circularity, cooperation with the social economy, data exchange, etc.

- **Clear ambitions regarding growth:**
  It is important for local governments to make their ambitions clear; what annual growth is being targeted? Based on input from the local government, providers, and citizens, expansion plans should preferably be drawn up annually. Certain parameters such as occupancy rate, number of users, parking pressure, etc., in addition to data on population density, economic activities, etc., can certainly help in making good choices.

Integration with public transport

- Formulate your objectives for each target group and prioritize them
  - To generate a modal shift among Leuven residents, it is best to focus on proximity, i.e., work on an area-wide network of shared cargo bikes and cars for shopping, visits, etc., because these trips are still often made by (second) car (preferably organized at a mobility hub or Hoppin hub).
  - To achieve a modal shift among visitors/commuters, work on smoother multimodal routes based on network logic, preferably with public transport as the main means of transport and (electric) shared bikes for the first/last mile.
    - Provide shared bikes at all major public transport stops; e-bikes are an added value in order to increase the range in terms of distance and hills.
    - Gradually expand the network of hubs, both at smaller public transport stops and at major destinations. Make it possible to pick up and drop off shared bikes there.
    - Work towards a smooth transition; that is why further integration in terms of route planning, ticketing, infrastructure, etc. is so crucial.
    - Also organize a range of shared bikes for car users at peripheral parking lots so that they at least no longer drive into the city.
    - Consider other transport options or services that would make using public transport to get to the city more appealing, such as buggies, rollators, lockers for storing groceries, …
    - Look beyond your own local government and aim for a regional approach. Strive for a high-quality range of integrated mobility services that are easily accessible.
    - → Prioritise reserved parking spaces for shared vehicles.
    - → Give preference to B2O for shared cargo bikes and cars and B2M for shared bikes.

Communication and nudging

- **Goals**
  Consider the specific effects you want to achieve through your communication.

- **Communication channels**
  Find out exactly what is possible and permitted by policymakers and the communications department. What restrictions apply to potential online and offline channels?

- **Tendering**
  Should you outsource? Weigh up the pros and cons before deciding whether to outsource a campaign assignment.

- **Monitoring**
  Consider whether you want to measure the results of your communication activities and then allocate sufficient time and resources.

- **Framing**
  Above all, ensure that the reader immediately sees 'what's in it for me'; go beyond mobility to include health, freedom and fun.

- **Language use**
  Keep it very simple and check with a test panel that the intended message is getting across. In a tender, the contract may be awarded to a Dutch provider, meaning that the 'copy' may not meet expectations.

- **Innovation**
  Strike a good balance between originality and existing guidelines for corporate identity, clarity of message, etc.

- **Repetition**
  Repeat the message over time and space — behavioural change takes years. Hold people's attention in city-wide channels but also integrate as much as possible into 'target group-oriented' communication, preferably at turning points in people's lives (e.g. moving house, looking for a job, retiring, ...).

- **Social media**
  Explore further what works well on social media (influencers, etc.) and draw up a plan with the relevant colleagues.

- **Partnerships**
  Seek partnerships with other governments, civil society organizations, providers, etc. to conduct joint communication/campaigns.
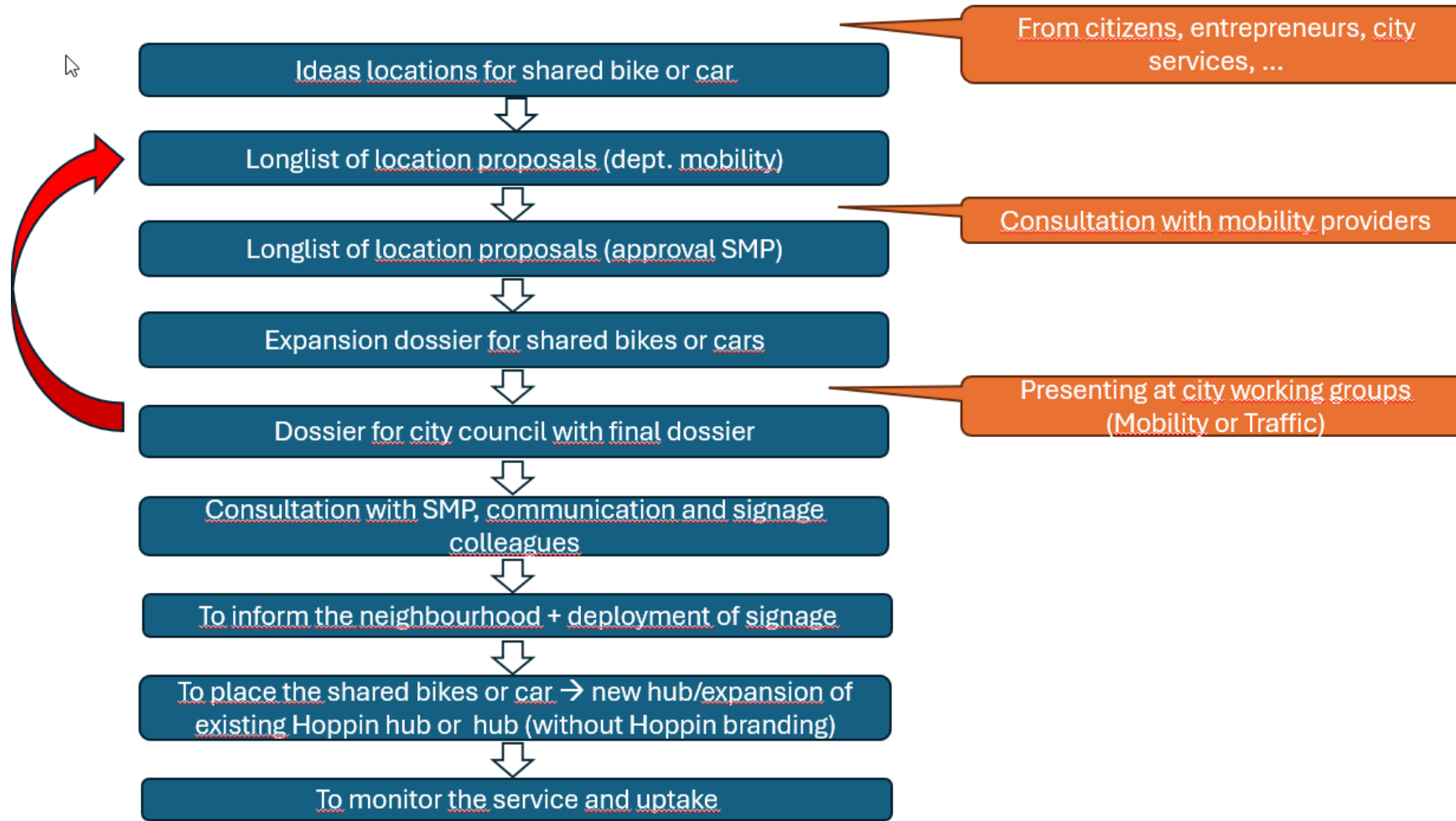
- ## Feasibility and added value
  A MaaS app for Leuven would not have any direct added value due to the limited size of the city and the limited mobility options. At the Flemish level, however, it could work, especially since De Lijn (the Flemish bus company) and NMBS (the Belgian railway company) are available everywhere. There are also only a limited number of SMPs. Flanders' attempt to offer an app within the "Hoppin" accessibility brand has failed. In the Flemish context, nothing else is planned until 2030.

- ## Ease of use
  - **Combined mobility can become more attractive if all digital actions involved in making the journey, from planning to payment, are integrated → public transport and parking providers integrate first and last miles mobility services into their app, gradually moving to a higher level.**
  - **Navigation apps such as Google Maps should integrate first and last miles mobility solutions as far as possible.**
  - **Some existing MaaS apps in Belgium (B2C: KBC Mobile, Floya, Umob and B2B: Olympus Mobility, Skipr, ...) should continue their efforts to expand services and improve user-friendliness, while reducing additional costs.**

Stakeholder management with regard to upscaling mobility hubs

Ideas locations for shared bike or car

⬇

Longlist of location proposals (dept. mobility)

⬇

Longlist of location proposals (approval SMP)

⬇

Expansion dossier for shared bikes or cars

⬇

Dossier for city council with final dossier

⬇

Consultation with SMP, communication and signage colleagues

⬇

To inform the neighbourhood + deployment of signage

⬇

To place the shared bikes or car → new hub/expansion of existing Hoppin hub or hub (without Hoppin branding)

⬇

To monitor the service and uptake

From citizens, entrepreneurs, city services, ...

Consultation with mobility providers

Presenting at city working groups (Mobility or Traffic)

- The project leader for 'shared mobility and hubs' coordinated the successive steps in this process, with support from expert project staff.

- After being placed on the agenda, coordination was mainly discussed by email or via existing platforms.

- Once upscaling becomes more significant in the public domain (i.e. larger hubs offering different services), we will collaborate with our public works research department from the design stage onwards. Regarding the design of our future Hoppin hubs, we are considering developing a Hubs 2.0 framework that takes into account the Flemish Hoppin design guide.

Maintenance of the hubs
Please note that the following tips only take into account the elements of the hub related to shared mobility

- The hubs consist of fixed elements, such as pillars, bicycle racks and traffic signs, as well as additional signage to improve visibility, and mobile elements, such as shared bicycles and cars.

- Maintenance of these elements should be clustered optimally for efficiency; maintenance of fixed elements and bicycles can certainly be bundled together.

- If you wish to outsource, give preference to a local company, ideally a social enterprise.

- Advocate for a sustainable and socially responsible approach, considering factors such as cleaning products, transport logistics for maintenance and battery swap, and fair working conditions.

- Clearly define what maintenance involves to avoid misunderstandings.
  - Does updating information on the pillar (both analogue and digital) also fall under maintenance?
  - When is the maintenance party responsible for repairing damage and when are they not?
  - What is the frequency of proactive and reactive maintenance?
  - Where is there overlap with the tasks of the cleaning or signage city service?

- Due to the dynamic nature of the offering (e.g. locations changing, work on public domain and an unstable offering by the provider), keeping the information on a physical medium at the Hoppin hub up to date is very challenging → consider focusing primarily on visibility and wayfinding and less on information, which changes so quickly.

- Work on streamlining the process from reporting damage to completing repairs.

Thank you