

## FRANCE

# Socially inclusive futures

### Location

Villeroque-Termenès

### Programming period

2014 – 2020

### Priority

P6 - Social inclusion & local  
development

### Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 46 355  
EAFRD 29 667  
National/Regional  
Occitania Region 4 040  
Department of Aude 2 525  
Private/own funds 10 123

### Project duration

2018 – 2021

### Project promoter

Rural town of Villeroque-  
Termenès

### Contact

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### Website

[www.autopartage.villeroque.fr/](http://www.autopartage.villeroque.fr/)

This project solved problems of mobility and access to public services in an isolated territory by providing a non-polluting vehicle at an affordable cost, while encouraging carpooling and strengthening social ties.

## Summary

This project is an innovative solution that helped improve public, social and solidarity services. It provides a cost-efficient and green alternative transport solution to personal cars. The whole village and the local authority joined in developing the project and creating real added value.



## Results

Villagers can use non-polluting transport for trips of up to 80 km, including access to supermarkets, do it yourself (DIY) stores, specialised care and hospitals for tests as well as to visit family and friends. Carpooling and strengthened social ties are encouraged, including with tourists. Municipal services also use the vehicle. This has saved on the purchase of new cars.

This project also contributes to ecological transition objectives in saving resources and this cleaner form of transport as it is aligned with the European Green Deal.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- The local authority took up a citizens' initiative on carpooling to provide access to services for less mobile villagers, showing the benefits of openness and cooperation between the parties.
- A broad group made up of stakeholders cooperated to produce various options that were accepted by users and the local authority. This includes payments that have supported local employment.
- Support from the RDP made the project economically viable.
- The project is an innovative solution that has won awards and already been replicated in another region in France.

### Context

Villerouge-Termenès is a small village with 140 inhabitants, located in the centre of the Corbières massif. The area has a low population density and no major public services such as medical centres, or large shops. The closest bakery is 10 kilometres away. A significant part of the population had difficulties in getting around, especially the elderly and young people with modest financial resources. Those people felt isolated and needed solutions to increase their mobility. Moreover, a group of local residents were interested in renewing their second family vehicle and wanted to purchase a common ownership electric car. The village also had an electrical charging point, but it was far from being fully used. Given all this, the municipality decided to purchase an electric car that would be available to all for sharing.

### Objectives

The objectives of this project were to address access to vital public services, social isolation of some of the population, and to reduce the purchase of new vehicles in an ecologically sound way.

The municipality planned use of the electric vehicle for five half-days per week, and 20 000 km per year.

### Activities

Several steps preceded the implementation of the project:

In 2017, the village inaugurated an electric charging station on the square located next to the castle on which is a car park for tourist reception. Solar panels from this square are mostly used for charging electric cars with two stations owned by the Syaden, a local energy union which has been a partner in this project. This charging point can welcome two cars simultaneously.

After the mayor spoke to the families interested in investing in a new common car, the needs of the population were evaluated by the Municipality in detail (e.g., the type of vehicle needed, electric or not, needs of other categories of the population, research of relevant partners). Given the geographical remoteness of small food shops and supermarkets and the coexistence of a young population with modest income and an ageing population with driving difficulties, the Municipality decided to launch on a citizens' initiative to buy an electric vehicle for its inhabitants.

In 2017, because the investment and costs of this project were too high for the Municipality's budget, they

searched for financial support. The support needed would cover the investment of the car, and 3 years of operating costs.

Also, in 2017, the municipal council invited about 15 representatives of the village, local stakeholders to gather twice in the year to define in concertation the best modalities of use and sharing. The meetings of this extra-municipal council allowed to propose different options of use for the car, depending whether the user is from Villerouge-Termenès, or not, considering price options, period of reservation, etc. This group of stakeholders also worked on solutions to improve carpooling and their proposals were accepted by the municipal council.

When these modalities were defined, the municipality has entrusted the management of the reservations and payment procedures to an internet platform named 'Clem'.

Finally, the electric car became available for rent for the first time during the summer of 2018.



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### Main results

In quantitative terms, the objectives of this initiative are already met. Today, the car is booked 10 half-days per week and travelling up to 30 000km a year, with half the inhabitants benefitting from the service.

This project helped local employment. One employee is in charge of car cleaning and so far, has been paid for 360 working hours.

This project also has an impact on energy. The vehicle is parked under a photovoltaic shade, which produces 3 to 4 full charges per day. Pooling this electric vehicle and high use compensates for the ecological impact of the battery.

There has been a discussion with the [Agence de la Transition Climatique \(ADEME\)](#) about a quantitative and qualitative study of the project over 2 years, to draw an initial assessment of this pilot operation and to verify its sustainability.

This project won the Innovation and Experimentation in Rural Areas prize from Leader France and appeared in the Access'R European project catalogue.

In addition to its social aspect, this project also contributes to ecological transition objectives. For instance, it is aligned with the European Green Deal, such as rolling out cleaner, cheaper and healthier forms of private and public transport.

### Key lessons

The commune saw a citizens' initiative to buy an electric vehicle for carpooling as a way to provide additional mobility and access to services for villagers who had restricted mobility.

The initiative was jointly developed with local inhabitants, which was key to the success of this well-scaled project.

Village representatives searched for financial support because the costs of this project were too high for the commune and citizens alone. EAFRD supported 63% of

the investment in the car and 3 years of operating costs with local and regional government funding covering another 15%. The remaining costs were funded by the village.

The success of involving users and the commune in the extra-municipal group can be seen in the agreed options for car sharing and payments for cleaning the car.

A network of rural accommodation as well as local services and craftsmen is included in suggested itineraries on the vehicle's GPS and is also available on connected equipment such as smartphones. This emphasises the advantages of local partnership.

A similar initiative in Ploec-L'Hermitage, a small town in the Region of Brittany in France, has three electric cars for sharing and the mayor came to visit Villerouge-Termènes in 2019.

*'The interest of the approach, I think, is that it did not start from above, but that it came from a demand that was forged in the territory',* from the former mayor of Villerouge-Termènes, who developed this project.

*'Such a vehicle is a solution to travel expenses that everyone finds difficult to fund. And we managed to cancel the purchase of vehicles in the village, so it makes more ecological sense',* a villager.

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### Additional sources of information

[www.gal-estaudois.fr/projets-soutenus/fa1-villerouge/](http://www.gal-estaudois.fr/projets-soutenus/fa1-villerouge/)

<https://accessr.eu/en/projets/shared-vehicle-in-villerouge-termenes/>

<https://villerouge.fr/>

Funded by the



\*This project has been categorised under 'Socially inclusive futures' by the nominating National Rural Network