18th International NECTAR Conference
Munich, Germany, 13 - 15 July 2026

Call for papers for the thematic session of Cluster 2: Policy and Environment

Transport and Health Integration in a Sustainable Future

The thematic session of Cluster 2 (Policy and Environment) at the 2026 NECTAR conference is focused on cross-sectoral integration of the transport and health sectors, within the context of the transition towards sustainable transport. We are interested in research on cross-sectoral integration in both directions: integration of health in mobility planning and integration of mobility in health planning.

Health in mobility planning

Transport can influence health negatively (e.g., road traffic injuries, air and noise pollution) and positively (e.g., active mobility, access to healthcare, and public and green space for various users). The links between transport and health and wider co-benefits are recognised to some extent in transport policy, but in most cases, mobility is only considered as a driver for health improvement through the promotion of cycling and walking. Historically, greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures have not systemically considered physical and mental health impacts, or inequalities in their distribution. This is problematic, as accelerated transport decarbonisation is needed to achieve low-carbon and zero-carbon transport goals in the next decades. To develop a low-carbon and more inclusive transport system, many governments nowadays seek to implement 'Shift' measures (e.g., switching to walking, cycling and public transport), 'Improve' measures (e.g., introduction of electric vehicles), and to a lesser degree, to 'Avoid' measures (reducing to reduce total travel or trip lengths through proximity-based planning substituting physical travel to digital communication). The potential health benefits of 'Shift' measures, including promotion of walking and cycling, such as increased physical activity and cleaner air, are well documented, but the health impacts of 'Avoid' and 'Improve' strategies are less well understood. For example, increased particulate emissions from tyres and brakes from increased weight and acceleration/deceleration of electric cars potentially lead to more severe respiratory disease and a greater likelihood and more severe consequences of collisions with vulnerable road users.

Mobility in health planning

The health sector is an important mobility-generating sector, with patients, visitors and healthcare staff travelling to and from healthcare facilities and patient homes. Reducing the demand for healthcare travel is typically seen to be outside the control of the transport sector and is also not generally taken into account in healthcare business strategies and investment decisions. The potential to Avoid, Shift, and Improve healthcare-related mobility is not well understood. At the same time, there are opportunities to better integrate mobility in health planning, making mobility more

sustainable, and potentially reducing healthcare costs and improving the quality of healthcare provision. Moreover, with an ageing population and increasing health costs, societies face an uncertain health access frontier. Increasing the uptake of digital healthcare is often seen as an important strategy to increase healthcare access and reduce growing healthcare costs. In the healthcare sector, the COVID pandemic was a catalyst to develop and implement several e-health solutions, such as online meetings with doctors and telemonitoring of patients, reducing the need to travel. Also, a more local healthcare delivery can reduce trip distances, e.g., delivering healthcare more locally using neighbourhood health hubs. There are, however, many barriers related to the complex and fragmented organisation of the healthcare sector, and the needs and capabilities of patients and healthcare professionals. There is a need to develop inter- and transdisciplinary collaborations and explore adaptive strategies integrating mobility in healthcare processes and business cases.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- barriers, incentives and accelerants to improve the integration of health in mobility planning and mobility in health planning
- health impacts of transportation on vulnerable groups, including children and older adults
- health impacts of transport policies, including accessible public spaces, active mobility infrastructure, educational and outreach strategies for behavior change
- health impacts of low-carbon transport measures, including mental health, for different population groups, and health impacts of climate adaptation strategies
- the role of technology (e.g., mobile apps) in promoting healthy mobility choices
- mobility and accessibility impacts of digital healthcare and neighbourhood hubs
- new solutions towards maximising health co-benefits and reducing health inequalities associated with low-carbon transport interventions
- empirical case studies, theoretical contributions on cross-sector collaborations between the transport and health sectors
- wider implications for public health of vehicle electrification and autonomous cars

Deadline for abstract submission

The deadline for abstract submission is January 31, 2026. Abstracts (max. 500 words) should be submitted electronically, using the form available on the conference website and following the instructions found there: https://nectar26.eu/

A copy of the abstract should also be sent to Karst Geurs (k.t.geurs@utwente.nl) and Maria Attard (maria.attard@um.edu.mt).

Criteria for acceptance

Criteria for acceptance are scope, scientific quality, NECTAR membership, and the possibility of fitting the presentation in a coherent conference session. The number of participants in this thematic session will be limited to 8.

Venue

NECTAR 2026 will be hosted by the Accessibility Planning Research Group at Chair of Urban Structures and Transport Planning, Technical University of Munich (TUM), at the Technical University of Munich, in collaboration with the NECTAR Board and its thematic clusters.

Participation and NECTAR membership

All practical details will be communicated through the conference website. In order to participate in the conference, a consecutive and current two-year NECTAR membership is necessary (2024-2026).

Non-members can find details of how to join the association on the “Membership” page of NECTAR’s website: www.nectar-eu.eu/membership

Important dates
Abstract submission: January 31, 2026
Notification of acceptance: April 1, 2026
Confirmation of attendance: April 30, 2026

We look forward to seeing you in Munich!

Karst Geurs, NECTAR vice-chair, University of Twente, the Netherlands
Sander Lenferink, Radboud University, the Netherlands
Peter Jones, University College London, United Kingdom
Maria Attard, NECTAR chair, Cluster 2 co-chair, University of Malta, Malta
Deb Neiemier, Cluster 2 co-chair, University of Maryland, United States
Wafa Elias, Cluster 2 co-chair, SCE- Shamoon College of Engineering, Israel
Edoardo Marcucci, Cluster 2 co-chair, University Roma Tre, Italy