

## Introduction

Every year, around **20,000 people die** on EU roads and at least **100,000 more are severely injured**. [1] [2]

Many road safety experts believe that a **cultural change is needed**, among road users and those responsible for shaping the traffic system through their roles in organisations.

The TRUST project is tackling this challenge and grounds its work on six building blocks

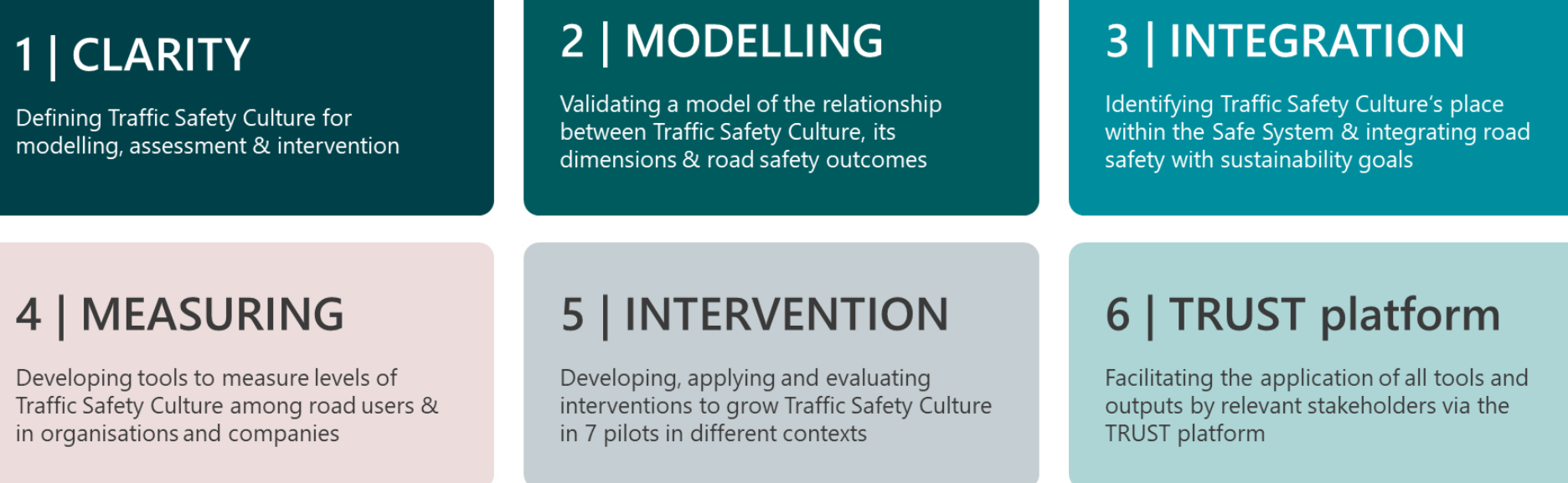


Figure 1 | TRUST Building blocks for cultural change in road safety

## What is 'Traffic Safety Culture'?

Traffic Safety Culture (TSC) can be defined as (two examples):

- 'a social climate in which traffic safety is highly valued and rigorously pursued' [3]
- 'the shared belief system of a group of people, which influences road user behaviours and stakeholder actions that impact traffic safety' [4].

TSC has mainly been used as a boundary concept, which researchers tended to use based on their background or for a specific purpose.

TRUST conducted an extensive literature review and found:

**25 definitions** of either 'traffic safety culture' or 'road safety culture' were extracted from scientific publications. A total of **13 sub-dimensions** is contained in the 25 definitions.

Only very few authors suggest models on how different dimensions (1) are defined, (2) relate to each other and (3) relate to road safety outcomes.[5] Furthermore, the extent to which proposed definitions were empirically put to test and by what methods also varies considerably [6] [7] [8].

**If the concept is to be applied to bring about real change, the terminology must be precise, otherwise it remains hollow.**

## 'Traffic Safety Culture' | TRUST definition

The TRUST project is developing a conceptual and operational definition of TSC that is scientifically grounded and that can be used as a basis for developing models as well as measurement and assessment tools. The TSC definition comes about through examination of related fields (culture, organisational culture, and safety culture) and by drawing insights from other transport modes (aviation, rail, maritime) as well as safety-critical fields (nuclear industry, public health).

The **TRUST definition of Traffic Safety Culture** is well-grounded in literature and agreed upon by a group of leading experts and practitioners, which collaborated in a Delphi study and a consensus workshop.

The Delphi surveys were conducted separately for experts with backgrounds in organisational safety (culture) and traffic safety culture, presenting them with elements of previously proposed definitions. Both surveys resulted in a high degree of agreement regarding the importance of the following dimensions:

Traffic Safety Culture as a group's shared

- Values
- Beliefs
- Norms
- Attitudes
- Patterns of behaviour

## How does TSC contribute to road safety outcomes?

The second stage of the TRUST project will be to **determine the link between TSC and road safety outcomes**.

Research already exists to link national culture to collision rates, but the specific **impact of TSC components at the community and organisational levels** is less well understood.

The TRUST project will also consider TSC's place within the Safe System Approach, particularly with a view to seeing whether a strong TSC can facilitate the adoption of the Safe System.

## Developing a conceptual model for TSC

The TRUST project will develop a **comprehensive scientific model for TSC** as well as **TSC assessment tools**.

TRUST will introduce a **new TSC index**, considering the TSC of road users but also policy integration and other indicators of a functioning Safe System for the national and sub-national level.

The **TSC model** will depict TSC and its elements at different levels (national/regional/local and organisational). Relationships between key elements will be explored. The following elements will be included:

- safety policies and leadership,
- societal indicators (e.g., level of corruption),
- organisational safety culture,
- behaviours of road users,
- crash involvement and risks.

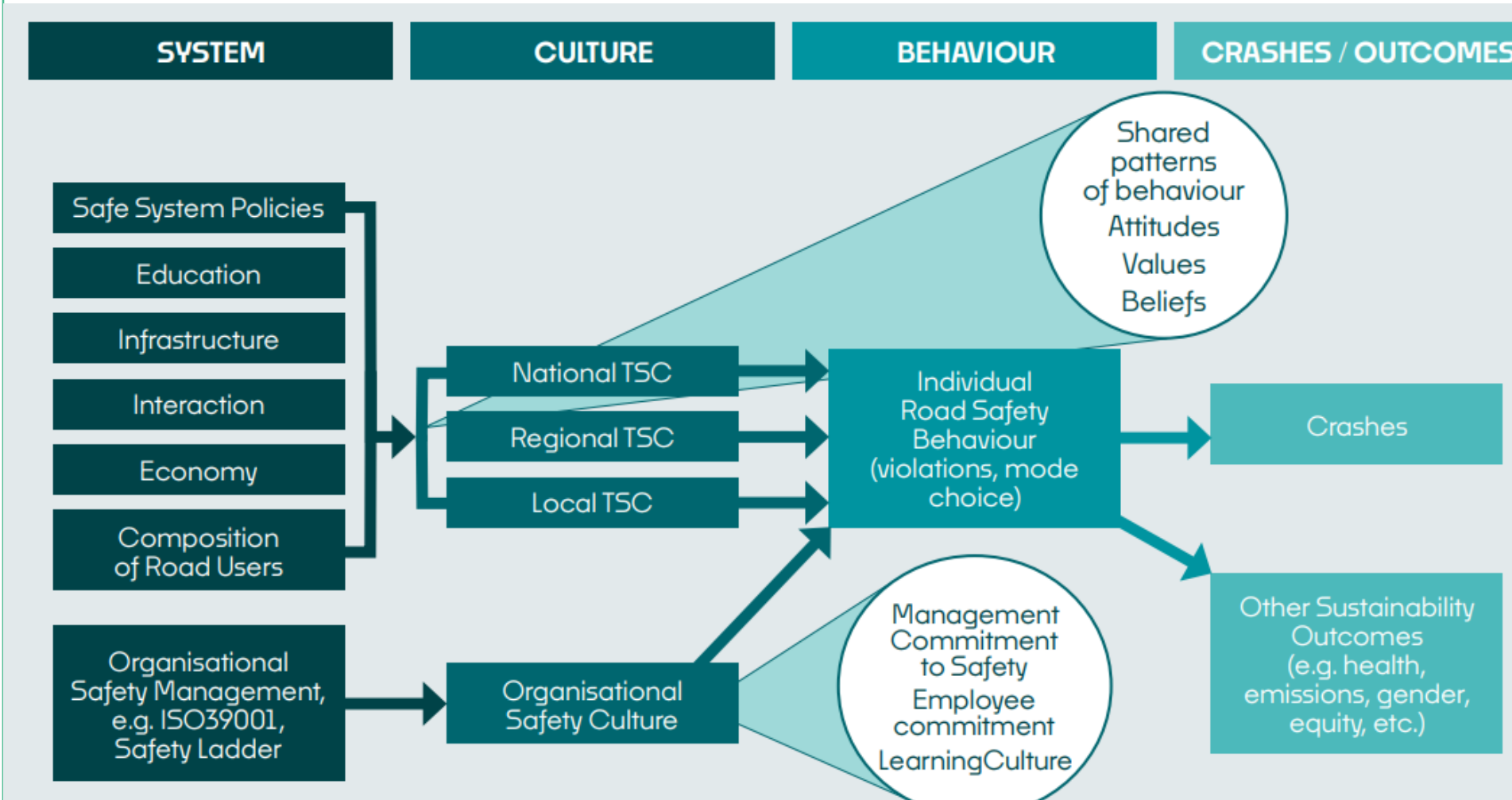


Figure 2 | Preliminary TRUST Model of TSC

**TSC assessment tools – traditional and innovative AI-based tools**  
TSC assessment tools will be developed in the TRUST project for use both at the community and organisational level

- traditional survey-based tools
- innovative tools based on LLM for organisations

## Implementation and testing | 7 pilots

TRUST will identify cultural intervention mechanisms for various community and organisational settings.

**7 pilots**, organized with authorities, companies, driving schools, secondary schools and other partners in **12 European countries**, serve as test environments for the applicability and effectiveness of the TSC assessment tools and interventions in the following contexts:

- Local authorities & cities | Pilot 1
- Drivers at work | Pilot 2
- Hot food delivery | Pilot 3
- Tourism sector | Pilot 4
- Driving school students | Pilot 5
- Secondary school students | Pilot 6
- Road safety professionals | Pilot 7

	Car	Truck, bus	PTW	Bicycle	Walking	New mobility	VRU (age)	Speed	Distraction	Fatigue	DUI	Courtesy on the road	Sustainability	Protective equipment
Local authorities & cities														
Drivers at work														
Hot food delivery														
Tourism														
Driving schools														
Secondary schools														
Road safety professionals														

Figure 3 | Overview of the 7 Pilots covering a wider range of road user groups, stakeholders and road safety hot topics. \*DUI: Driving Under the Influence. VRU: Vulnerable Road Users

## The TRUST Platform

The TRUST platform website will be a repository for all the knowledge generated within the TRUST project and as a tool providing guidance to authorities, companies and decision-makers at all levels.

It will provide **low-threshold access to validated (self-) assessment tools for benchmarking, guidance** for applying appropriate intervention strategies, as well as a **European TSC index** for national and subnational levels.



## Looking ahead

The TRUST project's results will be:

- A conceptual and operational **definition** of TSC
- A **model** on the impact of TSC on road safety performance
- An understanding of how TSC can contribute to **sustainability**.
- A **TSC Framework** including models, assessment tools and intervention methods for measuring and improving TSC.
- Evaluated **pilot interventions** to improve TSC in different contexts.
- A range of **resources**, including:
  1. an adapted version of the Norwegian Traffic Safe Municipality scheme (P1)
  2. online tools for organisations to self-assess their level of TSC maturity (P2)
  3. a traffic safety culture training and micro-intervention package for the hot food delivery sector (P3)
  4. a practical guide on safe mobility for tourism professionals, with focus on young drivers and Vulnerable Road Users (P4)
  5. validated teaching and learning materials for driving schools for at least five countries (P5)
  6. a webinar for designing evidence-based teaching resources on road safety and mobility education (P6)
  7. a modular set of webinars for road safety professionals on TSC and integrating road safety with sustainability. (P7)
- **Policy recommendations** to European, national and regional policy-makers for improving TSC.
- **Comprehensive guidance documents** for organisations and communities showing how to tailor and evaluate TSC interventions
- **A European TSC index** for national and subnational level.
- The **TRUST platform** with a wealth of information on TSC, validated TSC tools and benchmarking.

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## TRUST partners



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