

Title

Easy Bike – a bike sharing scheme

Short description

EasyBike is a bicycle sharing system. It was first implemented by the Greek company BrainBox in 2008. The aim of the practice was to promote sustainable mobility in cities, because the bicycle sharing system had not yet been well developed in Greece. This practice included the installation of bike stations in select parts of cities and the provision of bicycles. Citizens can use these bikes by paying a relatively small fee depending on the time they use the bike (the first 30mins are free of charge and the cost rises by 0.50 Euros for every thirty minutes afterwards, up to a maximum of 3 hours of use in a single session). There are suggested cycling routes on maps next to the bike stations, which incorporate sightseeing features and most convenient and safest roads to travel. The main goals of this practice are to promote more sustainable methods of active travel in cities, increase the physical activity and fitness levels of the local population and improve the microclimate of the urban environment by reducing car use and, by extension, the emission of pollutants.

Topic

Moving – Active mobility

Characteristics (type, level)

Neighborhood, Local/Regional Intervention

Country/Countries of implementation

Greece

Aims and Objectives

The goal of this project is to promote bicycle sharing. Bike sharing is the act of providing bicycles in areas of select cities in Greece which can be used, for a small fee, by the general population. Citizens can choose to use the bicycle over other means of transportation for their daily commute, short travels, shopping or sightseeing. By allowing more people to travel by bicycle, their health and fitness levels will improve, and there will be fewer cars on the streets as well as lower GHG emissions.

Target Group

The project offers a daily urban transportation service by bicycle, available to all adult citizens, residents and visitors of the city, frequent and occasional users who are capable of riding a bicycle.

Status

Ongoing

Start and Completion dates

2012 – today

Lifestyle and Behavior Change

This project encourages citizens to engage with active traveling. By providing shared bicycle stands in strategic areas, where pedestrian traffic is high, citizens have a readily accessible option of alternative transport.

Effects on:

Health and Wellbeing	Citizens who engage with the cycling project can enjoy the benefits of increased levels of physical activity and fitness levels.
Vulnerable populations	In many of the participating cities, the municipality, as part of their social solidarity activities, often covers the fee of service for citizens who cannot afford it. Vulnerable populations can choose to use the shared bike systems as an alternative means of transport to cars, since it is a far cheaper and less polluting way of travel. If the number of motorized vehicles goes down through the shared bike system, the population can experience better urban environment quality (noise levels, stress, and pollution).
Environment	A reduction of the number of short trips in urban settings via car has positive effects on the environment. Lower greenhouse gas and pollutant emissions, as well as energy savings from the reduced need for liquid fuel, promote environmental quality.

Initiated and/or implemented by

This practice was initiated by BrainBox, a private company in Greece that specialises in information technologies. The company implemented the EasyBike Sharing System, which has been expanding throughout the years. The project was initially developed to help promote sustainable mobility in Greece via cycling.

Stakeholders and sectors involved

The project is being implemented with the collaboration of various local stakeholders, namely local authorities/government of the municipalities where the bike sharing system has been put in effect. Overall, EasyBike is available in 13 cities of Greece and 1 in Cyprus, with more cities joining in the near future. Some stakeholder examples are seen below:

Technopolis City of Athens, Industrial Gas Museum of Athens, Municipalities of the City of Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras, Ioannina, Komotini, Kavala, Nafpaktos, Rethymno.

Other stakeholders include companies such as the National Bank of Greece, the Hellenic Telecommunications Organization (OTE) and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) who have sponsored the program.

Financial support

Funding for the project was provided by various sources, most often from the municipalities' budget, followed by the Green Fund (from the Ministry of Environment and Energy), grants and sponsorships from private companies (e.g. SNF) and, in some cases, EU funding through the MED Programme – European Territorial Cooperation 2007-2013.

Evidence-base

The project's website reports that using bicycles, for the daily urban transport needs, can help promote the physical activity and fitness levels of citizens, as well as improve their wellbeing by reducing the number of cars in the streets (through the subsequent reduction of polluting emissions). The website also includes statistical data on CO2 emissions and number of oil barrels that have been conserved by using the bike sharing system over the years.

Main activities

The main activity of this project was the creation of bike stations in various cities, where people can rent a bike for a few hours by paying a small fee. Suggested cycling routes are also available at the stations, so users can follow certain paths around the cities, if they so wish.

Evaluation

There have been surveys conducted in some of the cities who participate in the project in order to evaluate how the practice progresses over time, examine and address any technical issues that arise and assess its effectiveness. However, there hasn't yet been a big-scale compilation of all the findings from all the participating cities in Greece.

Main results

The main results of the Easy Bike system are collected through information which is directly received from the ICT component of the bikes:

Number of bicycles: 1.506
Registered bike users: 14.012
Hours travelled: 96.794
Kilometers travelled: 1.560
Tons of CO2 conserved: 248.183
Oil barrels conserved: 577.170

Key success factors and barriers

The main success factor of the practice has been the positive embrace that the practice received in the various participating municipalities and the rapidly rising interest to be implemented in more cities.

The main barrier identified has been the funding of the practice, particularly the initial purchasing of the bikes. Although many municipalities were willing to adopt the practice, they often were unable to provide the necessary funds. This was exacerbated by the ongoing economic recession which caused officials to prioritize the funding of welfare and solidarity initiatives, instead of active mobility programs.

INHERIT Perspective

Easy Bike has been included within INHERIT because it promotes engagement of the population with more active forms of travel. By using the bike sharing system, citizens are able to ride bicycles for their daily trips which is more sustainable and environmentally friendly than using their own cars. As more people use bicycles for transport, the microclimate of the cities is protected, due to the lower emission of pollutants and the wellbeing of the population also improves due to the increased levels of physical activity.

More information

[Easy Bike website](#)

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