

## Title

REKOLA - bike-sharing scheme

## Short description

REKOLA is a bike-sharing scheme that was started in Prague in 2013, and has now expanded operations to 6 Czech cities. Unlike most other bike-sharing schemes, REKOLA does not use fixed bike racks to park their bikes. Instead, they allow their easily identifiable, refurbished pink-coloured bikes to be haphazardly locked to public infrastructure (railings, street lamps etc.) by combination locks. The numeric combination for bike unlocking could be obtained from REKOLA website or using a dedicated app (Android app has now >10 000 downloads and is used for unlocking by about 50% of all users) or via text. Starting from March 2017 all the refurbished bikes in Prague and Brno were replaced by new ones (550 in total in the two cities). Some bikes (all in Prague and Brno) are equipped with GPS. Bikes can be returned almost anywhere in designated zone in respective city by locking them up securely to public infrastructure, subject to some limitations and extra fees for doing so.

## Topic

Moving – Active mobility

## Characteristics (type, level)

Neighbourhood and local/regional product

## Country/Countries of implementation

Czech Republic (*but similar initiatives also in place elsewhere*)

## Aims and Objectives

The aim of this bike-sharing scheme is to provide comfortable, joyful and sustainable urban transport mode as an alternative for short journeys in time and length.

## Target Group

City residents as well as visitors/tourists.

## Status

Ongoing

## Start and Completion dates

2013 – today

## Lifestyle and Behavior Change

A bike-sharing scheme provides a highly accessible active mode of transport. As such it stimulates a change from passive transport mode to active one for those who don't have a bike (or don't want to use it for commuting). It can be used occasionally (single use payment) or long-term as a monthly or annual (= 8 month) membership.

## Effects on:

<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	As an active mode of transport biking is promotes healthier lifestyle. Regular biking has been associated with decreased morbidity and (premature) mortality risk.
<b>Vulnerable populations</b>	Effect on vulnerable populations is probably limited, but may increase availability of bikes for low-income groups. The subscription (CZK 1200 for 8 months) is relatively modest, and as such it is the cheapest transport option available aside from walking (annual public transport pass costs CZK 3650).
<b>Environment</b>	Bike-sharing may substitute motorized-journey and consequently lead to reduction in emissions of CO <sub>2</sub> and harmful pollutants from motorized transport. Bikes and dedicated infrastructure occupy less space so reduction in congestion and less demand for traffic infrastructure compared to car-based transport can be expected.

### Initiated and/or implemented by

Vitek Jezek (Rekola founder) with a group of friends initiated a volunteer-based bike-sharing in Prague, partly in response to lack of commitment from Prague City Council who had been promising municipality-operated bike-sharing scheme for around 10 years.

### Stakeholders and sectors involved

- Rekola bike-sharing started as DIY project in 2013 with refurbished bikes and supported by volunteers, gradually transforming into a business startup;
- city authorities and city district councils – in general the attitude toward bike-sharing is more cheerful in cities with well-developed cycling infrastructure, while in Prague for example it is somewhat cumbersome;
- business angel – in late 2016, Rekola attracted a business angel investment for improvement and expansion of fleet and service

### Financial support

Rekola started as volunteer-based project funded from subscriptions and donations, but in late 2016 a substantial capital boost (around €2-4 million) from a venture fund (business angel) for improvement of services was announced.

### Evidence-base

Not available.

## Main activities

Bike-sharing scheme in Prague and 5 other Czech cities.

## Evaluation

Quantitative analysis of own data on bike usage (from apps and bike-fitted GPS), biking paths preferences and major bottlenecks. Anonymized data on bike usage (including trip length, trip routing, lending duration, bike return hotspots etc.) are provided to city planners in Prague and Brno.

## Main results

In 2016, the scheme recorded about 100 000 rides by its users (roughly 4x increase from previous year). Each bike is on average rented 3 times a day (4 times a day in Prague). On average, every bike added to the bike-sharing scheme in Prague attracts 14 new users to join the scheme. The relative success of the scheme suggests that bike-sharing is feasible also in cities with limited cycling infrastructure and hilly terrain.

## Key success factors and barriers

The key success factors were the enthusiasm of REKOLA founders and early adoption of modern technologies (mobile web and app for bike unlocking and returning). In the beginning the founders thought that two key barriers would be lack of cycling paths and citizens habit of using car or public transport. With growing number of bikes, municipal authorities in Brno and Prague are pondering on restricting places where bikes can be left.

## INHERIT Perspective

This initiative has been chosen for inclusion because it has a win-win potential. It improves health through increased physical activity of bike-sharing users, who will not otherwise be able to bike, and by replacing motor-based journeys for bike rides, reduction in emissions, congestions and noise benefits to the local environment. It makes possible a change to the environmental STATE and at the same time it has a clear influence on EXPOSURE through promoting active mobility and consequently aiming to change BEHAVIOUR.

## More information

- website: <https://www.rekola.cz/>
- FB: <https://www.facebook.com/RekolaCZ>
- Google app: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=cz.rekola.app>
- iOS app: <https://itunes.apple.com/cz/app/rekola/id888759232>

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