

## Title

**The SWITCH Project –replacing short car journeys with active travel**

## Short description

The SWITCH project aimed to promote engagement with active travel methods for the population and the subsequent reduction of car travel. Active modes, like walking and cycling are the basis of healthy, environmentally friendly multimodal travel behaviour with synergies to public transport. The project uses personalised travel planning approaches to encourage people to switch car trips to active modes. The innovation comes from a) the combination of tried and tested personalised travel planning approaches, b) their application to target groups in life changing moments on a large scale, c) the application of ICT solutions like Smartphone applications and d) the use of public health arguments to motivate behavioural change. It allows for the creation and implementation of local campaigns to raise awareness for the benefits of active travel, as well as providing actual incentives and personalised travel plans for the population in order to engage more with walking and cycling.

## Topic

Moving – Active Mobility

## Characteristics (type, level)

Local/Regional – Intervention

## Country/Countries of implementation

Austria (Vienna), Poland (Gdansk), Belgium (Antwerp), UK (Hounslow), Spain (Donostia / San Sebastián)

## Aims and Objectives

The SWITCH project wants to allow the population to ‘SWITCH’, from using their personal cars, to walking and cycling for their transportation needs in urban settings. ‘SWITCHing’ short car trips for more active modes contributes to energy savings and emissions reductions, as well as promoting the wellbeing of the population.

## Target Group

The primary target group of the SWITCH project is urban transport planners, health experts and local authorities who wish to promote a ‘switch’ from car-based to active modes of travel. Local stakeholders, citizens, advocacy groups and organizations also benefit from the project.

## Status

Completed

## Start and Completion dates

The project was initiated on 01/06/2014 and was completed on 31/05/2016

## Lifestyle and Behavior Change

Through the use of Personalized Travel Planning, ICT Applications, raising awareness of consequences from car dependent lifestyle, motivation and incentives/rewards for changing

travel habits, citizens were encouraged to engage with more active forms of travel and reduce the use of their cars, especially in cases of short urban travels.

### Effects on:

<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	The SWITCH project can directly influence people's health. Citizens who engage with more physical activity (by increasing their number of days with more than 30mins of P.A.), can achieve greater fitness levels, which can have very positive impacts on their overall health.
<b>Vulnerable populations</b>	Information is not available
<b>Environment</b>	The local urban environment can also benefit from people 'switching' their travel methods in a direct way. The reduction in the number of, often unnecessary, car trips leads to reduced levels of CO2 and other pollutant emissions. As fewer cars travel on the road, more energy can be saved through the reduced need for gas.

### Initiated and/or implemented by

The SWITCH project was initiated by a consortium of five European cities and supported by eight experts in alternative travel, health or economical aspects of mobility. The reasons that led to the development and implementation of the project were the reduction of car use and pollutant emissions in urban settings, and the promotion of active forms of travel for the population.

### Stakeholders and sectors involved

- **Vienna:** The Mobility Agency for the City of Vienna
- **Donostia / San Sebastian:** The Municipal Census Department, the Culture Diversity Department, health delegation of the Basque Government, vice chancellor of Gipuzkoa's campus
- **Gdansk:** The Mayor of Gdansk and the Vice-mayor of Gdansk both promoted the SWITCH campaign

- **Hounslow:** The Hounslow team worked closely with all local schools and brought together colleagues in public health, education and transport from within the local authority

### Financial support

SWITCH was an EU funded project, and Local Partners of cities covered some of the expenses as well, when necessary.

### Evidence-base

The project was based on scientific facts by the WHO and the EU Commission about the health effects and consequences of low physical activity levels, high CO2 emissions and environmental degradation of using motorized vehicles. According to a survey conducted in 2013 in the 28 Member State of the EU, 44% of Europeans did not meet the 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week recommended by the WHO. Moreover, one in eight European citizens (13%) reported not walking for ten minutes at a time on any day during the previous week. This lack of physical activity can cause major health problems for individuals and great economic costs for society as a whole.

### Main activities

The project piloted 5 Campaigns in the 5 mentioned cities to promote the program. The campaigns included the production and distribution of informational material in the form of brochures, educational seminars, talks in schools, engagement with businesses to provide material incentives (pedometers, cycling helmets and lights etc.), and the use of ICT services such as phone apps promoting the program.

### Evaluation

In order to assess the success of a personalised travel planning campaign, an evaluation process was carried out via the use of short and long-term surveys. People were asked about their current travel behaviours and physical activity levels before receiving information. This data was compared with information surveyed some months after the campaign.

The follow-up evaluation surveys collected data on people's levels of engagement with active forms of travel after receiving information and personalized travel plans. Reports were also compiled on distance traveled on foot or by cycling. Calculations were also conducted by the project team on how many car kilometers, GHG-emissions and primary energy consumption were saved by these fewer car trips.

### Main results

The summary of results from all 5 piloted cities showed very promising findings for the success of the program:

- Total number of car trips saved for all the cities: 668 trips
- Total number of GHG-emissions saved: 25796 kg
- Total number of primary energy consumption saved: 2318 liters
- Increase in number of days with more than 30 minutes of physical activity over all cities: 2682 days

### Key success factors and barriers

Success factors: All of the five participating cities have been developing an environmentally friendly culture over the years, through changes in policies and improvements in alternative transport infrastructure. The majority of the population was already aware about the positive effects to be gained from switching to more active forms of travel and this helped

with their engagement levels. The local authorities were also very welcoming and supporting of the project and played a major role in its promotion and implementation.

Barriers: More exposure of the campaigns through the Media was necessary to increase engagement was reported by some of the participating cities. Face-to-Face recruitment provided more participants than cities where telephone recruitment was conducted; however, it was a more costly and time consuming process. The financial aspect was also a barrier. Depending on the nature of the designed campaign, the produced material, incentives and ICT applications raised the project's costs.

### INHERIT Perspective

The SWITCH project is included within INHERIT as it has proven to be a very effective initiative which promotes "switching" to more active and sustainable ways of transportation. The piloted interventions in the 5 cities provided very positive results from their citizens' engagement with alternative modes of transport, which led to fewer car trips and reduced pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions. Promoting similar initiatives in other cities can have a major cumulative effect for the promotion of more sustainable transportation modes, and effectively protect the environment and people's wellbeing and health.

### More information

[The SWITCH website](#)

[SWITCH Project Final Report](#)

[The SWITCH Campaign Guide and Toolbox](#)

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