



## Optimising Bike Sharing in European Cities

June 2011 – Final Conference Newsletter

### **Bike Sharing Schemes and the OBIS Project - Background Information**

In 2001, only a few Bike Sharing Schemes were running in Europe, by 2011 about 400 schemes were in existence in the OBIS countries alone. The main trigger was the launch of two big schemes: Bicing in Barcelona 2007 and Vélib' in Paris in 2007. In the UK, London's Barclays Cycle Hire (aka "Boris Bikes") was launched in July 2010 and since then, media coverage of the scheme has greatly raised public awareness of the public bike sharing concept in the UK and beyond.

The OBIS project began in 2008 and is due to finish in August 2011. The OBIS consortium has carried out the broadest analysis of Public Bike Sharing Schemes so far. 51 schemes in 48 cities located in 10 European countries were included in the qualitative and quantitative analysis.

OBIS is funded by the Intelligent Energy - Europe programme, the EU's tool for funding action to move us towards a more energy intelligent Europe. The 16 OBIS partners include not for profit, public sector, academic, transport, commercial and membership organisations from nine countries – Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK. The OBIS project partners have compiled a handbook which aims to be a helpful guide for those considering setting up a public bike sharing scheme in their town or city.

### **Bike Sharing Schemes and Policy – What does the OBIS Handbook recommend?**

The research carried out during the OBIS project led to some key recommendations all of which are explained in the handbook. Briefly, bike sharing schemes need national support and to be included in national transport strategies. Setting up ways of funding schemes is also crucial. At a municipal level, context and purpose are key – factors such as: whether the city or town has a cycling culture or not, climate, topography, layout, distances, public transport arrangements and so on vary greatly and need to be taken into account. Why are you doing the scheme? What problems will it address? Who will use it? When, where, why, how and how often? Likewise, involving a wide range of stakeholders is very important along with setting up a public bike sharing task force to make sure you can draw on relevant expertise. Analyzing requirements by carrying out a professional feasibility study is essential to enable appropriate decisions about the type of scheme which will best suit your town or city. OBIS discovered that small pilot schemes with a low density of stations tend to fail. However, if a pilot scheme is set up carefully with a dedicated test group, it can be helpful in testing both the technology and viability of the scheme. Bike sharing is not for every town or city and you need to be honest about the costs and the benefits. In the worst case, it could be better to spend the money on other cycling measures. However, experience shows that most systems have the potential to work properly provided they are carefully planned.



*The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the authors. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Union. Neither the EACI nor the European Commission are responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.*

## OBIS final conference

Around 90 participants from all over Europe attended the OBIS project final conference in Prague on 21 June 2011 at the Czech Ministry of Transport (Ministerstvo Dopravy). Delegates heard all about the OBIS project and the successes and learning points relevant to public bike sharing which have emerged during the three years of the project. These ranged from practicalities such as the difficulties encountered by redistribution trucks in narrow streets to the importance of getting high level political support for a bike sharing scheme. The main output of the project, the Bike Sharing Handbook, was presented and discussed during the conference and participants were informed of the comprehensive results and recommendations from three years of research.



Photo: Jitka Vrtalová; NaKole.cz

Alix Stredwick from Transport Initiatives, London commented:

*"The OBIS conference really helped me appreciate how extensive public bike sharing schemes are and how much they have evolved. I'm more excited now about future developments such as integrating them with other public transport and offering electric bikes and cargo bikes as well as regular bikes. It is very positive for bikes to be seen as a genuine form of public transport."*

The conference presentations are available for downloading. The handbook is now available to download:

<http://www.obisproject.com/palio/html.wmedia? Instance=obis& Connector=data& ID=779& CheckSum=1882085425>



*The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the authors. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Union. Neither the EACI nor the European Commission are responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.*

The handbook will be available to download in other languages as well as the printed versions at the end of August 2011.

## Bike Sharing Schemes – Worldwide

The OBIS project has focused on European bike sharing schemes, however, the OBIS partners are aware of bike sharing schemes starting in many other places outside Europe. The bike sharing blogspot is an excellent source of information about bike sharing worldwide:

<http://bike-sharing.blogspot.com/> .

Schemes are in place in cities and towns as diverse as Mexico City and Buenos Aires in Latin America, Tel Aviv in Israel, Washington DC and Miami in the USA, Doha in Qatar; Melbourne in Australia and Dublin in Ireland and Bangkok in Thailand. The world's largest bike sharing scheme with 50,000 bikes is currently in Hangzhou, China. They aim to have 175,000 bikes by 2020 and you can find out more about it via the following link:

<http://www.streetfilms.org/the-biggest-baddest-bike-share-in-the-world-hangzhou-china/> .



Barclays Cycle Hire Bikes (Photo: Tim Birkholz)

## Bike Sharing Schemes – The Future?

The future for bike sharing schemes looks bright – worldwide take up means that public bike sharing has taken on a life of its own. Interest is growing all the time and likely to increase as more towns and cities realise that bike sharing can be a very useful part of their public transport offer. It is also a helpful tool for getting people back onto bikes and reducing the amount of short car trips. Schemes have evolved from 1st to 2nd to 3rd generation and are now moving into the 4th generation with integration with other public transport systems and the use of smart cards which can be used for buses, trams, trains, metro and car clubs. As time goes on, we may see electric bikes and cargo bikes on offer as well everyday bikes. This would give greater flexibility and, particularly in the case of electric bikes, possibly tempt a different type of user onto bikes. Technology is developing very rapidly and more and more people have smart phones enabling easier use of and access to the bikes.



Vélo Bleu Nice (App by: Intellicore)



*The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the authors. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Union. Neither the EACI nor the European Commission are responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.*

## **OBIS Prize Draw - Deadline - 31 July 2011**

Three great prize packs for cyclists and wanna-be or gonna-be cyclists!!! Each pack includes:

- ABUS cycle helmet sponsored by DB Rent
- Set of cycle cleaning brushes, Knog lights and The Cyclist's Companion book sponsored by CTC
- USB Stick sponsored by Altran
- Bicing bag sponsored by Barcelona Municipality

Additionally the winners will get a printed copy of the OBIS handbook in the language of his/her choice.

To enter the prize draw:

- Put "OBIS Prize Draw" in the subject line of an e-mail.
- In your e-mail, answer this question:  
*"How many bike sharing schemes were analyzed within the OBIS bike sharing project?"*

Please include your complete postal address and your choice of language for the handbook. Deadline for entries is **31<sup>st</sup> July 2011**. Send your e-mail to Janett Büttner ( [buettner@choice.de](mailto:buettner@choice.de) )

The prize draw will take place on 1 August after which the three lucky winners will be notified and receive their prizes. Please note – only one entry per person.



*The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the authors. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Union. Neither the EACI nor the European Commission are responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.*