Ride and Buy App

ACT4DYS

Background

The Ride & Buy App was launched in Hannut - a small Belgian town of approximately 17,500 inhabitants - to encourage active "slow mobility" (particularly cycling and walking) while supporting the local economy. The concept originated in early 2020 after a group of high-school students, inspired by climate activism, proposed a city initiative to both reduce CO_2 emissions and strengthen the local economy.

The municipality secured funding from the Walloon Digital Agency and worked with a private digital agency to co-develop the app with students, city officials, and local retailers.

Officially launched in September 2021, the platform integrates route guidance (highlighting safe cycling routes), real-time CO_2 savings tracking, and a rewards mechanism that translates kilometres cycled or walked into vouchers usable in the city centre shops.

To support uptake, complementary measures were introduced: a network of safe cycling paths linking outlying villages (17 km total), weekly "school cycling buses" where parents and students ride together, test periods of up to two months for electric bikes, and a €150 subsidy for purchasing an e-bike.

Key Activities

- Launch of the Ride & Buy App through participatory co-design with youth, city authorities and local retailers.
- A two-month electric-bike testing scheme for residents, coupled with a €150 purchase subsidy.
- Weekly cycling school buses, from spring and autumn, to promote safe cycling to school.
- Users of the app earn €0.10 per km as vouchers redeemable in local, participating shops.

Impact

- Construction of 70 km of safe cycling infrastructure linking surrounding villages with the city centre.
- Reduction of 15,000 CO_2 kg.
- Roughly 800 vouchers were awarded to riders and paid to local, participating shops.
- Up to 70 students go to school by bike weekly, from spring to autumn.
- Some 670 users have cycled over 112,000 km.

Challenges & Solutions

Agile project management styles used to develop the app, may not be consistent with public procurement or other funding mechanisms.

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Tips for Similar Projects

- Support youth-led initiatives to foster innovative and effective projects.
- Ensure training for local agents and adequate resources for human resources.
- Consider app format and availability across various digital tools and services.

Resources

- **Ride and Buy: Development of an App (article)**

- **Launch of the Ride-Buy App (article)**

- **Interreg Europe - Good Practice (video & article)**

- **Urbact - Good Practice (article)**

Identified Limitations/Weaknesses

Disability is not readily accounted for in the project; replications should include access to adapted bikes, accounting for other modes of accessible mobility and ensure app accessibility.
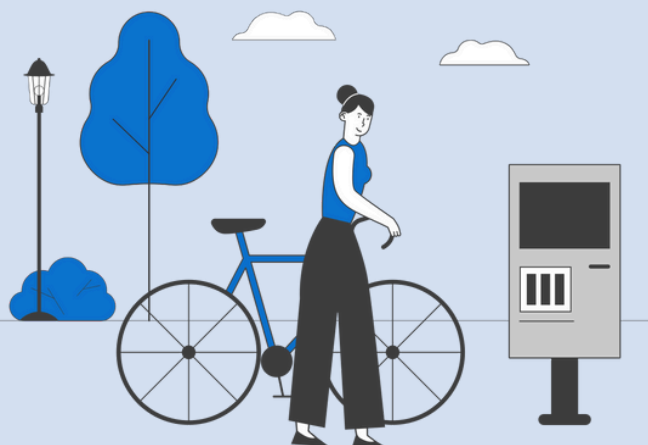
Video

- Watch this **video** about the Ride and Buy App!

Video Description

Promotional video in French, describing the Ride and Buy initiative.

Partners

CARDET

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Proportional Message

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