



ACCESS

Achieving Circularity in Cities through
Environmental Sustainability of Sports

USE OF LOCAL CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF BYCICLE-FRIENDLY FACILITIES

Let's take the
scenic route



This practice aims at reducing the environmental impacts linked to the mobility of supporters, staff, and athletes to reach sporting venues by providing greener alternatives to conventional transport modes.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

The sport industry is increasingly attentive to the impact of mobility on the overall environmental footprint of sporting events; therefore, managers of sport venues and event organisers are increasingly promoting active ("soft") mobility as part of their matchday transportation strategy. The external areas of sport facilities are increasingly equipped with bicycle lanes and sometimes electric bicycle systems to promote soft mobility of fans, staff, athletes, and volunteers.

The Ghelamco Arena in Belgium (20,000 capacity) is one of the pioneers of this practice. The football club KAA Gent has developed a major mobility programme for supporters. As part of their project, called "Cycling Buffalo's", which started in 2013, the following actions were implemented: 2838 permanent cycle locking stalls and 600 mobile stalls were installed; car parking facilities near to stadium are no longer provided; separate routes for walkers and bikers within vicinity of the stadium were created; measures were implemented to prevent cars using cycling routes for illegal parking; various communication channels were used to raise awareness on alternative transport options to the stadium.

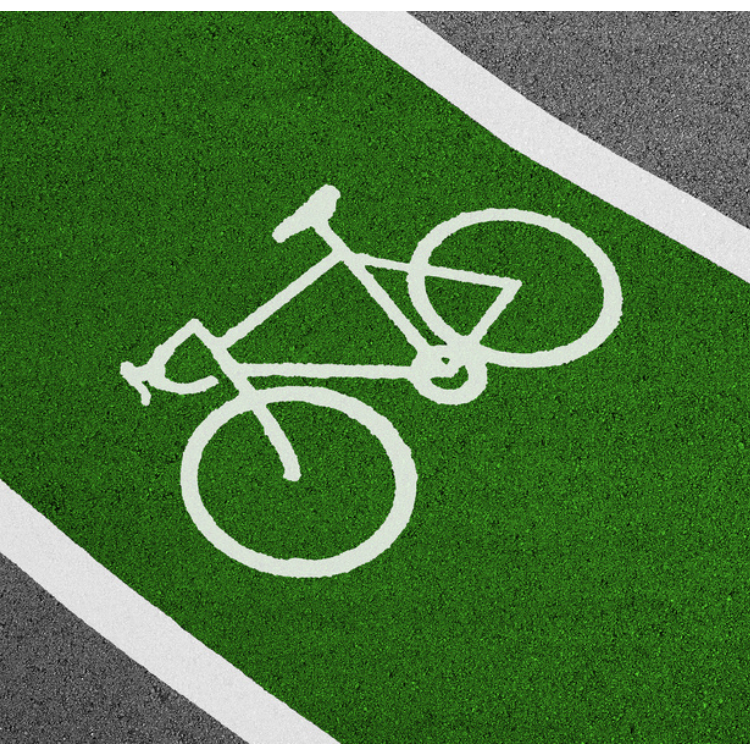
CHALLENGE

Transport is a vital sector, but our current mobility system is not sustainable. Transport connects people, cultures, cities, countries, and continents, and it is one of the main pillars of modern societies and economies. Transport networks also ensure access to public services, such as education, health, sports, thus contributing to a better quality of life.

However, the transport sector also causes substantial negative impacts on the environment and human health, as it is responsible for about a quarter of the EU's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and causes air pollution, noise pollution and habitat fragmentation.

Urban planning is key to reduce the environmental footprint of sporting events linked to mobility: in this context, the sustainable urban development of cities should not only foresee the promotion of public transportation, but it should also reinforce or implement cycling infrastructures and facilitate access to the events through "soft" mobility (i.e. the transport of people or goods through non-motorized means, based around human physical activity). Moreover, the creation of bicycle lanes and possibly also electric bicycle systems available to citizens should also be coupled with adequate parking infrastructures near the major sporting venues.

This would result in a win-win-win solution for the city (by increasing its liveability), the sport systems (by reducing the environmental footprint of sporting events), and the community in general (by promoting healthier lifestyles).



RESULTS

Promoting active (“soft”) mobility to sports stadia (i.e. travelling from one place to another by physically active means) provides a combination of health, environmental and logistical benefits to sports stadia and stadium users, whilst also helping to support environmental sustainability by preventing GHG emissions.

In the example of the Ghelamco Arena presented above, the practice resulted in an average of 2000 KAA Gent supporters using bicycles each match over the course of the season, with an average of +15% of KAA Gent supporters coming to the Arena by bicycle and resulting in an almost congestion-free football stadium.

As already mentioned, this practice provides win-win-win results for the city (by increasing its liveability), the sport systems (by reducing the environmental footprint of sporting events), and the community in general (by promoting healthier lifestyles).

LESSONS LEARNT

The example mentioned above shows how this practice is more effective when coupled with a sustained communication campaign aimed at informing supporters on travel options and routes and at raising awareness on the environmental and health benefits of soft transport.

In addition, two aspects are also important for the success of this practice: monitoring (e.g. to prevent cars from using cycling routes for illegal parking in the proximity of sporting venues) and safety (development of safety measures around the stadium to protect cyclists; installation of cameras to prevent theft).

REPLICABILITY POTENTIAL

The replicability potential of this practice depends on the motivation and financial resources of the owners of the sport venue and of the local authorities and infrastructure departments. The replicability is also higher when the sporting venue is under construction instead of already existent, as soft mobility infrastructures can be included from the very beginning of the planning and designing process.

Substantial financial resources may be needed to create cycle lines that connect the city centre to the sport venue, while more limited resources are needed to install bicycling infrastructures around the stadium such as bike racks. However, as already mentioned, the mere installation of cycle racks is not enough if it is not coupled with investments in communication campaigns aimed at promoting active mobility and in the development of measures aimed at ensuring the safety of cyclists.





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This factsheet is a part of a larger collection of good practices available on the project's website

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The **ACCESS project** is one of the latest European projects which explores and challenges environmental sustainability and environmental management in sports. Co-funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme, ACCESS is looking at narrowing the gaps between the current environmental performances of sport organisations, their strategies, and practices on one side and strategies and targets of their respective cities or regions with the overall objective – making these sport organisations a reference point for sustainability in sports in their countries and turning them into replicators of solutions for achieving it.



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