



EU CYCLE

Action Plan of the Euregio Rhine-Waal



1. General Information

Project	<i>EU CYCLE</i>
Partner Organisation	<i>Euregio Rhine-Waal</i>
Country	<i>Germany</i>
NUTS2 region	<i>Düsseldorf</i>
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2. Policy Context

- The Action Plan aims to impact:
- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
 - European Territorial Cooperation programme
 - Other regional development policy instrument

Policy instrument addressed:

a) *Interreg VA Germany-Netherlands (Interreg DE-NL): **Priority Axis 2 “Sociocultural and territorial cohesion of the programme area”***

Since 1991 the Dutch-German border region benefits from the European Union’s structural funds within the framework of the INTERREG A Germany-Netherlands programme. This policy instrument aims to promote innovation and development in the region (*innovation*) and to deconstruct the barrier effect of the border (*cohesion*). Within the last 28 years since the programme’s introduction, a great number of cross-border projects and other initiatives have been funded and implemented within the programme area reaching from the coast of the North Sea to the Lower Rhine area, around 460 km along the Dutch-German border. The total budget of the programme for the years 2014-2020 has amounted to ca. 440 million, out of which 222 million Euro have been provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The EU CYCLE project is implemented in the frame of the INTERREG Europe Program, funded by the European Regional Development Fund, co-financed by the European Union.

In order to better cater to the programme's objectives, two main priority axes have been established for the INTERREG VA Germany-Netherlands programme 2014-2020 which in turn comprise several key sectors crucial for the border region.¹

The priority axis with the strongest relevance for the EU Cycle project is priority axis 2 "Sociocultural and territorial cohesion of the programme area".

Priority Axis 2 "Sociocultural and territorial cohesion of the programme area"

Strengthening the social-cultural and territorial cohesion in line with the EU2020-priority of inclusive growth forms priority axis 2 of the programme. Projects carried out under priority axis 2 contribute to decreasing the barrier effect caused by the border in the programme area and intensify cross-border interactions between citizens and institutions. Projects may contribute to these aims both in the psychological sense (for example by means of education and culture) and by involving citizens and institutions in specific cooperative activities (for example joint mobility projects). The overall goal of the cross-border projects is to:

- Have a positive impact on the attitudes towards the neighbouring country;
- Intensify cross-border relationships;
- Present the border as an opportunity rather than a barrier to the inhabitants of the programme area;
- Make the border more permeable.

Priority 2 projects can roughly be divided into the following thematic fields:

- Employment, education, culture
- Nature, landscape, and the environment
- Structure and demography
- Network-building at local and regional Level

Lowering the barrier effect caused by the border should be central for each project.

b) INTERREG VI A Germany-Netherlands 2021-2027

Currently, the policy instrument is in a phase of transition. The programme period of the INTERREG V A Germany-Netherlands programme that was determined for 2014 - 2020 has come to an end. All

¹ The third priority is allotted to the technical assistance to the project, such as managing authority, certifying authority, first level control, etc.

budget has been allocated to projects. By 31 December 2022, all projects that received funding under the INTERREG V programme will have been finalized. Since there is no budget for new projects available under the INTERREG VA policy instrument, no policy changes can be expected. Therefore, the policy instrument that was initially brought into the project is no longer suitable for policy change. The policy instrument for the following programme period 2021 – 2027, the INTERREG VI A Germany-Netherlands programme, has been under preparation concretely for the last year. After its final approval by the European Commission in early 2022, the new policy instrument is officially launched by the end of April 2022. The first projects under this policy instrument will prospectively be approved and funded by end 2022.

For the policy instrument INTERREG VI A Germany-Netherlands 2021-2027 the following thematic priorities have been selected:

- Priority 1: A more innovative programme area.
- Priority 2: A greener programme area.
- Priority 3: Working together on a connected border area.
- Priority 4: A Europe closer to its citizens in the border area.

Within these priorities, specific objectives and lines of action have been further defined in order to cater concretely the needs of the region. The specific objectives of the INTERREG VI A Germany-Netherlands programme have been defined as follows:

Priority 1: A more innovative programme area.

- Specific objective: Development and extension of research and innovation capacities and the introduction of advanced technologies.
- Specific objective: Increasing the sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and creating jobs in SMEs, including through productive investments.

Priority 2: A greener programme area.

- Specific objective: Promote climate change adaptation, disaster prevention and resilience using ecosystem-based approaches.
- Specific objective: Promoting the transition to a resource-efficient circular economy.

Priority 3: Working together on a connected border area.

- Specific objective: Improving the effectiveness and inclusive nature of labor markets and access to quality jobs by developing social infrastructure and promoting the social economy.
- Specific objective: Improving equal access to inclusive and high-quality education, training, and lifelong learning services by developing accessible infrastructure, including the promotion of the resilience of long-distance and online learning.
- Specific objective: Ensuring equal access to health care and promote the resilience of health care systems, including primary care, and promotion of the transition from institutional care to care in the family and local community.

Priority 4: A Europe closer to its citizens in the border area.

- Specific objective: Improving the efficiency of public administration bodies by promoting cooperation in the fields of law and administration as well as cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, especially with the aim of removing legal and other obstacles in border regions.
- Specific objective: Building mutual trust, especially by promoting cooperation between citizens.

With regards to more innovative cycling projects, there are specifically good opportunities under priority 2. More concretely, priority 2 aims to contribute to a “greener, **low-carbon transition** to a CO₂-neutral economy and a resilient Europe through promoting clean energy and a fair energy transition, green and blue investments, the circular economy, climate protection and adaptation to climate change, risk prevention and risk management and sustainable urban mobility.”

Additionally, important initiatives in the field of cycling can be funded by the so-called People-to-People projects. These projects are funded with a grant up to 25,000 euros. Each People-to-People project must contribute to reducing the barrier effect of the border for citizens and entities in the fields of employment, education, culture; Nature, landscape and environment; Structure and demography; or Network development at local and regional level. The application procedure for these project is relatively low-threshold and unbureaucratic. All kinds of cycling initiatives can fit very well in the rationale of people-to-people projects; the People-to-People project therefore offer a great opportunity as a funding source for some of the actions presented in this action plan.

With new budget available for projects in 2022, the Euregio Rhine-Waal will cater to its envisaged policy instrument improvement by promoting new projects that will improve sustainable mobility and cycling tourism in the cross-border region of the Rhein-Waal area. As one of the policy responsible programme partners host of the Joint Secretariat and the programme management of the INTERREG A Germany-Netherlands programme, the Euregio Rhine-Waal can play a key role in promoting the creation and implementation of relevant cycling projects which can be implemented and funded under the respective policy instrument. Moreover, the dissemination of good practices that build the basis for the envisaged actions in this action plan will foster innovative new projects by making regional actors and stakeholders aware of the additional possibilities of development in the area of cycling. The actions will provide useful advice concerning the realisation of innovative cycling-related projects.

Details of the actions envisaged

ACTION 1: Incentivised cycling scheme “Track it!”								
	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	
Y1					x	x		
Y2								
Y3					x	x		
Y4								
Y5								
Y6								

X1 - Plans, sustainable mobility plans, spatial plans supporting cycling
 X2 - Infrastructure: realized dedicated cycling infrastructure, integration of cycling into implemented transport infrastructure projects
 X3 - Organisational measures: Provision of human-resources and other organisational measures to coordinate cycle development;
 X4 - Products and services: Public bike services schemes, cycling friendly tourism service or cycling friendly workplaces
 X5 - Communication: awareness raising/education. Bike to work campaigns, awareness raising and cycling proficiency training
 X6 - Monitoring: support monitoring cycling, modal split (via surveys, counters);

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X7 - Enabling regulatory framework: any legal or regulatory change which improved the conditions for cycling

X8 - Funding: Level of sustained public and private funding for cycling development in the region

Y1 – Regional cycling

Y 2 - Cycling tourism

Y3 – Urban cycling

Y4 – Intermodality

Y5 – Urban-rural connections

Y6 – Territorial cooperation in cycling

1. Objective of the action

On the one hand around one-fifth of climate-damaging carbon dioxide emissions in Germany are caused by transport (Federal Environment Agency 2016). Around 7.5 million tons of CO₂ could be avoided in Germany alone if around 30% of short journeys of up to six kilometres in inner cities were made by bicycle instead of by car. On the other hand, 80% of households in Germany own a bicycle, yet the share of all trips biked in Germany averages only 10% (Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, 2014).

According to the Fahrrad-Monitor Deutschland 2015 (Bicycle Monitor Germany 2015), around 82% of Germans between the ages of 14 and 69 believe that decision-makers at the municipal level should pay more attention to the issue of promoting cycling.

In order for municipalities to better promote cycling mobility, especially in inner cities, innovative initiatives are needed that are able to directly reach the citizens of the municipalities and present incentives for the increased use of bikes on a daily basis. Incentivised, competitive initiatives that are linked to a digital app that support the monitoring and evaluation of these initiative present a suitable solution. The suggested action “Track it!” focuses on exactly this approach and combines an incentive for biking more with benefits for the participants, the municipality and local businesses.

2. Relevance to the project

Throughout the interregional learning process, the good practice “Pin bike” was presented by the region of Puglia. It is a system that successfully allows a municipality, schools, or private organisations to provide economic incentives to people for the use of their bikes. To achieve this it links the cycled kilometres tracked by an app including an anti-fraud patent hardware tracking system to rewards that can be spent locally. The initiative was designed as a dynamic reward system that values cycling and promotes sustainable mobility solutions for citizens. The municipality can customize its initiatives with double or triple points, according to certain periods of the year or on certain days or times, or even

according to users' age. The rewards for the cycled kilometres are given out in form of vouchers of local shops, cafes, theaters, etc. and can be spent exclusively on commercial activities in the city.

3. Nature of the action

An incentivised, competitive cycling initiative called "STADTRADELN" is already implemented in some municipalities in Germany, among others twenty municipalities within the Euregio Rhine-Waal. The initiative was introduced by the Klima-Bündnis e.V. nation-wide but it is up to the municipality to implement the initiatives locally. It takes place once a year for a period of three weeks. The "STADTRADELN" tracking is done via an app, citizens can register with a team or individually. Prizes for the cycled kilometres are given out only on a national level, not municipality-based and the prizes are bike specific goods, such as cycling bags, or other cycling accessories.

The envisaged action "Track it!" intends to further build on the existing "STADTRADELN" initiative inspired by the example of "Pin bike" and introduce a bike tracking and reward system more systematically. While "STADTRADELN" is an initiative that runs only once a year for a limited period of three weeks, this action will establish a permanent incentivised scheme to promote the use of cycling for commuters on a daily basis and throughout the whole year.

The action "Track it!" requires a four step approach – the first step of the process has already been implemented to make sure the action can be completed within phase 2.. Moreover, the steps two and three can be implemented at the same time, to be more time efficient:

Firstly, a needs analysis has been completed and framework conditions for the action were drawn up. In this first step an exchange with the municipality of Moers about the action has already taken place and the municipality expressed great interest in supporting the idea and in being a role model for it in the region. Furthermore, there has been an exchange with the 100.000+ network as a representative organisation for 8 cities in the Euregio Rhine-Waal. The stakeholders from the network have assured support in bringing the idea to the municipalities in the network and in connecting the concerning stakeholders, after the action has been implemented successfully in the city of Moers as a pilot.

The municipality of Moers is very well suited as a pilot municipality, since it is already experienced with the implementation of the "STADTRADELN" initiative and is furthermore a very active municipality when it comes to supporting biking in the city. The experience gained in the "STADTRADELN" initiative have now been combined with the insights gained from the exchange of experience of the good practice "Pin bike" and it can already be proceeded to step two of the action..

As a second step, an app will be put in place that can track the use of the bikes while complying with all necessary GDPR rules and including an anti-fraud system. Again, the apps used in the framework of the “STADTRADELN” initiative and the “Pin bike” project will serve as an example. It is also a potential option that an existing app could be further developed and (re)used for the “Track it” action. The other option is that the app will be newly developed. The INTERREG VI A Germany-Netherlands programme will serve as a funding instrument for this step. (see 6. for more details)

Third, local shops have to be approached in order to negotiate possible incentives that can be linked to “Track it!” in the form of vouchers. It will be highlighted that giving out vouchers for the exclusive use on commercial activities in the cities will ultimately also benefit the local shops, cafes, etc.

As a fourth step, a comprehensive communication campaign has to be set up in order to broadly promote the initiative and highlights its benefits for the citizens. The campaign can make use of local communication channels (such as local newspapers, posters throughout the city and in the shops, etc.) and digital channels (such as social media and local websites).

4. Stakeholders involved

Municipalities: Municipalities in the regions implement the action. As a pilot, the action is implemented in the municipality of Moers which has already been involved throughout the development of this action. The municipality of Moers is very much interested in the idea and is willing to function as role model,. The 100.000+ network serves as a cross-border organisation to share the action initially implemented in Moers with 7 other cities in Germany and the Netherlands.

Local shops, cafes, theaters, etc.: These stakeholders within the municipalities are included in the process of providing incentives for the bikers.

Region of Puglia: The region of Puglia is included in the process especially at the beginning as a mentor to consult during the planning and implementation of the action.

5. Timeframe

The short-time planning foresees to initiate the implementation of the action within the second phase of the EU Cycle project, starting from August 2022. Since the first step of the action has already been completed, there is already a solid basis for the continuation of the implementation. When it comes to long-term planning, the goal is to establish a sustainable incentivised scheme for the long-term use that significantly helps to promote cycling on a local level over the coming years. The new funding period of the INTERREG programme Germany-Netherlands has started in mid-April 2022, including

the so-called People-to-People projects, which include a funding of maximum of 50.000 EUR and are significantly less bureaucratic. There are no calls which means that project applications can be handed in at any time. This will significantly speed up the implementation process of this action. People-to-People have a simplified approval process, meaning that process can be approved basically within a few weeks. Moreover, the new programme guarantees that also applications for bigger projects are decided upon within the short timeframe of 18 weeks in its programme regulations. Taking into account that this action has already been initiated, that project applications are not dependent on available project calls and can be submitted on a continuous basis, and that the policy instrument guarantees an 18 week approval framework for projects in their programme regulations, the available timeframe of phase 2 of the EU Cycle project will be sufficient for the implementation of this action. Concretely, the following schedule is foreseen: Presenting the project idea to relevant municipalities in September 2022. The project application, including partners from both sides of the borders that can deliver a pilot app development, will be handed in in November 2022. Due to the simplified approval procedure for projects up to 50.000 EUR, the project approval is expected for beginning of December 2022. Starting from the moment of approval, the first few months will be coined by the app development and preparations in the municipalities; a pilot of the action Track it system is envisaged to start in May 2023. This leaves sufficient time to complete this pilot project within phase 2 of the EU Cycle project.

6. Costs and Funding source

It is difficult to estimate the real costs at this point. However, the following sources of main costs have to be considered:

- Costs for the development of an app
- Costs for a comprehensive communication campaign
- Additionally, staff costs for the implementation and long-term management of the initiative have to be considered.

This action is funded within the framework of the INTERREG VI A programme Germany-Netherlands. The project consortium will make use of the expertise across the border for the development of the app. One municipality (the municipality of Moers) will function as a role-model and this model will then be rolled-out to other municipalities on both sides of the border.

7. Risk assessment

The risks in the abovementioned action mainly lies in the use of the app. In order for the action to be successful, citizens have to actually make use of the initiative and be willing to engage with the

scheme and the app. Therefore, a comprehensive communication campaign, highlighting the concrete benefits for the citizens and promoting the local rewards will be crucial for the success of the action. Also it is important to be aware of and align the app with the GDPR rules and communicate the concerning aspects transparently to the users.

8. Monitoring

In order to ensure successful monitoring, the implementation process will be divided in smaller phases (see 3. Nature of the action) that each have their own deadline.

In the second step, the development of the app, procurement deadlines have to be set, as well as deadlines for the party that provides the service of generating the app in close cooperation with the municipalities have to be agreed upon with the municipalities.

Since the action is funded by the Interreg programme, it will furthermore need to provide regular documentation of the progress in implementing the project.

ACTION 2: Elaborating a set of criteria for funding for a cross-border bike sharing system

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	
Y1								
Y2							x	
Y3							x	
Y4								
Y5								
Y6								

X1 - Plans, sustainable mobility plans, spatial plans supporting cycling

X2 - Infrastructure: realized dedicated cycling infrastructure, integration of cycling into implemented transport infrastructure projects

X3 - Organisational measures: Provision of human-resources and other organisational measures to coordinate cycle development;

X4 - Products and services: Public bike services schemes, cycling friendly tourism service or cycling friendly workplaces

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X6 - Monitoring: support monitoring cycling, modal split (via surveys, counters);

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1. Objective of the action

The objective of this action is to develop a set of criteria as mandatory requirements for projects developing a cross-border bike rental system to be funded under the policy instrument Interreg VI A Germany-Netherlands. Currently, a well-established and very frequently used bike sharing portal (NiederrheinRad) is in place in the German regions bordering the Netherlands. Anyone interested can borrow bikes at one station and return them at any of the other 32 stations. More than 500 bicycles are currently available at the different stations which are mainly hotels and tourist information centres. The main target groups are tourists. This system will be extended to the Dutch side of the border, increasing the availability of this compatible bike rental scheme to both sides of the borders. This will make cycling tourism in the region more attractive. In order to ensure the high-quality development of projects that contribute to this, the criteria for funding projects under the Interreg VI A Germany-Netherlands policy instrument will be reshaped. In doing so, a set of mandatory criteria will be elaborated that are mandatory for funding projects in the aforementioned field

2. Relevance to the project

Throughout the interregional learning process, the good practice “Innovaive tools in the calls for proposals for sustainable transport development” by the project’s lead partner. This good practice presents a wholistic approach for calls for proposals for sustainable mobility projects, including among others Methodology background document, a handbook on cycling-inclusive planning/promotion as well as a link to a book of standards. For the action envisaged, this approach of developing a

handbook and book of standards with criteria for funding projects on cross-border bike rental systems will ensure the smooth implementation and high-quality of these initiatives.

The set of technical criteria for the rental system to be funded will be based on the lessons learned within the good practice “BIKER” from PP4 BFA.

3. Nature of the action

In this action the project partner together with regional stakeholders will elaborate a set of criteria for the funding of bike sharing systems to be funded under the policy instrument. This set of criteria will present a wholistic approach and tackle a number of different elements. These elements will build on good practices of EU CYCLE and include templates for preparing project plans, outline of the methodology background document, the handbook on cycling-inclusive planning/promotion and references to the Euregional mobility plan that provides an overview over the region’s mobility in general. Key technical criteria will be also added in order to guide the project development process. This set of criteria will be added to the official programme documents and communicated through the normal information channels used by programme authorities in a transparent way. Specifically, the regional programme management of the policy instrument Interreg VI A Germany-Netherlands, which supports and accompanies projects during the application phase and monitors the implementation and progress of the projects, will be using this set of criteria for projects referring to cross-border bike rental schemes to be funded under the policy instrument. In this way, the policy instrument will be improved with regards to the quality of cycling projects that are funded under the policy instrument.

4. Stakeholders involved

Municipalities: Municipalities in the regions will be affected by the projects directly. Therefore, they will be involved closely in stating their needs and providing input for the development of a set of criteria for funding for cross-border bike rental schemes to be funded under the policy instrument.

Regional Programme Management: The regional programme management of the policy instrument is responsible for accompanying and support potential projects partners in the application process. They also monitor the implementation and progress of projects carried out under the policy instrument. They are therefore crucial for applying a set of criteria for projects to be funded under the policy instrument.

5. Timeframe

This action will be implemented within the second phase of the EU Cycle projects. Therefore, the action will be completed between August 2022 and end of July 2023. In doing so, the first few months will be coined by consultations with stakeholders and collecting further relevant information for the development of the set of criteria. The second half of the second phase will be used to generate

documents to be added to the programme manual and to be used by the programme management when support project proposals.

6. Costs and Funding source

Costs for this action will be limited to staff costs provided by the partner organisation, as well as potential meeting costs with stakeholders.

7. Risk assessment

The risk of the abovementioned action remains rather limited. Since the action is not depending much on external factors, the project partner organisation, as one of the policy responsible organisations and host of the regional programme management of the policy instrument, will develop this set of criteria in consultation with stakeholders and will generate supporting documents to be used for projects funded under the policy instrument.

8. Monitoring

As laid out in the timeframe, monitoring will take place in two steps:

During step one, the first few months of the project's phase 2, the set of criteria will be elaborated in close consultations with stakeholders and by consulting available documents and information. Step two will be the development and generation of a document with the elaborated set of criteria to be used for project application in the field of cross-border bike rental schemes.

Monitoring will be done by the project partner who is also responsible for the action itself as well as one of the policy responsible organisations.