



ACTION PLAN

for the Podlaskie Voivodship

within the scope of development of

cycling transport



**BIAŁOSTOCKI
OBSZAR
FUNKCJONALNY**

The EU CYCLE project is implemented through the INTERREG Europe Programme,
funded by the European Regional Development Fund, co-financed by the European Union.

Part I – General information

Project: EU CYCLE, Cycling for growth and quality of life in European regions

Acronym: EU CYCLE

Index number: PGI05942

Partner organisation concerned: Association of Białystok Functional Area

Country: Poland

NUTS2 Region: Podlaskie Voivodship

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ABSTRACT

Summary of the objectives of Action Plan.

The Action Plan for the Podlaskie Voivodship concerning the development of cycling transport, prepared within the framework of the project "EU CYCLE, Cycling for development and quality of life in European regions", identifies activities, which through their implementation in the 2nd phase of the project (period of 1 year) will contribute to the reduction of low emissions through decarbonisation of transport in the podlaskie voivodship, by switching from individual motorised transport to cycling as a low-emission and sustainable means of transport in urban areas, for commuting to work in towns and cities and for a new, sustainable car-free tourism.

Part II - The political context

The Action Plan aims to influence: Another regional development policy instrument.

Name of the policy instrument concerned: Development Strategy of the Białystok Functional Area until 2030.

1. Information about the document.

This document is the Action Plan prepared within the framework of the project "EU CYCLE, Cycling for Development and Quality of Life in European Regions" carried out by the Association of Białystok Functional Area. The author of the Action Plan is the *Rowerowy Białystok Association*, whose task was, among others, to synthesise the experience gathered during the international cooperation with the project partners from Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Hungary and Italy and the stakeholders. Conclusions drawn on the basis of that co-operation constitute the basis for the Action Plan, thanks to which it will be possible to make full and effective use of available funds to ensure high quality cycling projects.

The aim of the Action Plan is to identify effective measures responding to the needs of the region and necessary to improve the policy instrument - Strategy of Development of the Białystok Functional Area till the year 2030, aiming at comprehensive development of cycling in the podlaskie voivodship and increasing its accessibility and promotion. This document will be used to implement targeted, coherent actions of various stakeholders, in particular the members of the Association of the Białystok Functional Area.

Within the EU CYCLE project, the main activities in the Podlaskie Voivodeship are focused on the Białystok Functional Area (BOF). It consists of: the capital of Podlaskie Voivodeship - the city of Białystok and 9

communes of Białystok Powiat, including urban-rural communes: Choroszcz, Czarna Białostocka, Łapy, Supraśl, Wasilków, Zabłudów and rural communes: Dobrzyniewo Duże, Juchnowiec Kościelny and Turość Kościelna.

The measures proposed in this Plan can be implemented in all local government units of the Podlaskie Voivodship, but are mainly addressed to the municipalities - members of the BOF as a representative and pilot group for the region. This results from the fact, that they have the densest network of infrastructure (270 km of cycling routes, including 160 in Białystok), implement the largest number of cycling investments in the region, as well as the leading role of the capital city - Białystok - in the issues covered by the Plan. The actions carried out so far in the BOF area are an excellent example of how other communes in the Podlaskie Voivodeship can start changing their approach to low-emission transport and development of a cycling infrastructure network in their area.

In its original version, the Action Plan was based on actions intended to influence the change of the policy instrument - European Funds for Podlaskie Voivodeship 2021-2027 (Regional Operational Plan for Podlaskie Voivodeship 2021-2027 - ROP). Unfortunately, 4 actions proposed in the prepared document were not approved for implementation at the level of the Marshal's Office. Therefore, the document was amended in order to adjust the activities to the new policy instrument, i.e. the Development Strategy of Białystok Functional Area until 2030, which will have a direct impact on the implementation of the ROP in Podlaskie Voivodeship. The new instrument will be directly responsible for, among others, implementation of Integrated Territorial Investments in the Białystok Functional Area in the 2021-2027 perspective.

2. Information about the EU CYCLE project.

The project "EU CYCLE, Cycling for development and quality of life in European regions" is co-financed by the European Union, from the European Regional Development Fund and the Interreg Europe Programme 2014-2020. The partners in it are: Hungary (West Pannon - project leader), Belgium (ECF - European Cyclists' Federation - substantive partner), Italy (Region of Apulia), Germany (Euregio Rhine-Waal) and Poland (Białystok Functional Area Association).

The project aims at developing proposals to amend selected regional strategic documents in each partner country in a way that would contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the low-carbon economy. The project partners aim to achieve a common goal of reducing low emissions by popularising bicycle transport.

The document which is the subject of analysis on the Polish side is the **Strategy of Development of Białystok Functional Area until 2030**.

The involvement of five international partners in the EU CYCLE project allows to learn about solutions in other European Union countries, as well as to analyse the possibility of transferring the good practices from those countries to the Podlaskie Voivodeship. The partners decided to share their experience in order to increase the possibilities to fully and effectively use the available funds to ensure high quality cycling projects.

Hence, within the framework of the project a number of meetings with foreign partners took place in order to exchange experiences and to gather best practices. This document summarises the lessons learned from these activities. Due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, the meetings were held remotely, which unfortunately made it impossible to carry out the tasks in the original form of foreign study tours. In the course of the EU CYCLE project, the following documents were also produced to support the participants in terms of content:

- Territorial Analysis of Cycling Transport in Podlaskie Voivodeship, including the BOF Communes, prepared Integrated Cycling Planning Guide.
- Prepared by the technical partner of the project - the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) from Belgium:
 - Handbook - How to get European funds for cycling investment. Guide for Poland on the programming process for the European Regional Development Fund for the period 2021-2027,
 - Handbook for planning a regional cycling network,
 - Integrated Cycling Planning Guide.

The second phase of the EU CYCLE project, lasting from 1st August 2022 until 31st July 2023 will be the phase of implementation of the Action Plan, its monitoring, supervision and evaluation of its results.

3. Conditioning

Actions identified in this Plan are a response to current mobility trends. A survey of the Polish Bicycle Association of July 2020 shows, that one in five Poles rides a bike more than before, 41% choose this vehicle over other means of transport and 18% consider the purchase of a bike in the nearest future. The bicycle is also gaining in popularity due to the growing environmental and climate awareness over the years - as a low-emission means of transport that is good for both humans and the planet.

This trend was further strengthened by the pandemic, when it became an attractive alternative to individual and public transport - affected by sanitary restrictions and perceived as risky. In many cities of the European Union (e.g. in France), temporary and ad hoc bicycle lanes in the form of pop-up bike lanes were created for

the time of the pandemic. When restrictions were relaxed, many of these remained. It is becoming clear to an increasing number of policy makers and citizens that cycling is pandemic-proof, flexible, safe, zero-emission and cheap. This view can also be found in the diagnoses of EU policy documents. These - and many other factors - will increase the importance of cycling and consequently the interest of self-governments to invest in cycling transport, infrastructure and tourism. Also in the Białystok Functional Area.

Analiza terytorialna transportu rowerowego w regionie wykonana w ramach projektu EU CYCLE wykazała jednak szereg słabych stron, takich jak: uboga infrastruktura rowerowa (drogi dla rowerów, miejsca obsługi) oraz turystyczna (miejsca noclegowe, wypożyczalnie rowerów), znikome inwestycje w infrastrukturę Park&Ride oraz brak regionalnej polityki rozwoju ruchu rowerowego i standardów technicznych i wykonawczych infrastruktury.

During the previous programming period for EU funds, investments in individual motorised transport, public transport and the infrastructure dedicated to them were the most important. Motorways, dual carriageways, bypasses and car parks were built. Cycling infrastructure was created only as an addition to these investments. Their aim was not to develop cycling, but motorised transport. Hence, taking into account the completely different - low emission and ecological - challenges and priorities of the forthcoming perspective, it will be necessary to face the outdated procedures, habits and competence gaps in local self-governments in the field of cycling transport.

In the Regional Operational Programme of the Podlaskie Voivodeship for 2014-2020, investments in cycling infrastructure were part of sub-activity 5.4.1 "Low-carbon strategies excluding BOF". Under priority axis V 'Low-carbon economy', an amount of PLN 35,321,320.00 was spent on infrastructure for clean urban transport and its promotion (including equipment and rolling stock), while only PLN 62,920.00 was spent on bicycle and pedestrian paths. This illustrates the scale of the disproportion in the treatment of both means of transport - cycling and public transport. There are also good practices in this area, such as the "Partnership project: Development of low-emission public transport and cycling in the BOF", implemented under sub-measure 5.4.2 "Low emission strategies of the BOF". The total value of this project amounted to 159 335 612.90 PLN, of which 48 839 961.64 PLN was spent on bicycle investments.

In order to benefit from the funds available in the financial perspective 2021-2027, projects must fit in with the objectives and priorities of the European Union. In accordance with the idea of the Partnership Agreement, public transport should be developed along with infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians. Objective 2 of the cohesion policy - a more environmentally friendly, low-emission Europe - will not be achieved if the funds allocated for its implementation are used by local authorities to finance bus lanes,

electric buses and charging stations only. The experience of the previous financial perspective suggests that there is such a risk. This Plan is aimed at proposing measures aimed at better acquisition and spending of funds on the basis of the Development Strategy of the Białystok Functional Area till the year 2030 and other available funds, such as e.g. Operational Programme of Eastern Poland or funds from the Regional Operational Programme, on investments dedicated specifically to the development of cycling transport.

Part III – Details of actions envisaged

Action 1

Title of the action: Adoption of implementation standards for bicycle infrastructure for road managers in the BFA

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8
Y1			X					
Y2			X					
Y3			X					
Y4			X					
Y5			X					
Y6			X					

X1 - Plans, sustainable mobility plans, spatial plans to support cycling.

X2 - Infrastructure: dedicated cycling infrastructure implemented, integration of cycling with ongoing transport infrastructure projects.

X3 - Organisational measures: provision of human resources and other organisational measures to coordinate the development of the cycle.

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

X5 - Communication: awareness raising / education. *Bike to Work* campaigns, awareness raising and cycling skills training.

X6 - Monitoring: support monitoring of cycling traffic, modal split (via surveys, counters).

X7 - Enabling regulatory framework: any legal or regulatory changes that have improved cycling conditions.

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

Y1 – Regional cycling

Y2 – Cycling tourism.

Y3 – Urban cycling

Y4 - Intermodality

Y5 - Urban-rural connections.

Y6 - Territorial cooperation in cycling.

1. Purpose of the action

The measure is aimed at creation of a document containing technical standards for planning, designing and implementation of cycling infrastructure to ensure consistency, directness, safety, comfort and attractiveness of investments in this area. It will have a positive impact on the way the policy instrument - Strategy of Development of the Białystok's Functional Area till the year 2030 - is managed, as investments in cycling infrastructure arising on its basis will be implemented in a technically and operationally uniform way.

2. Relevance to the project

This action was inspired by the good practice presented during the international learning process, by the Hungarian partner - West Pannon Regional and Economic Development Public Nonprofit Ltd, within the workshop "EU CYCLE Project Workshop - Innovative tools in the calls for proposals in TSDOP". It took place on 30 June 2020 and during the workshop the partner presented the mandatory requirements accompanying the call for proposals for projects from operational programmes. These included the requirement for investments to comply with the "National Cycling Design Guidelines" (technical), as well as annexes: templates of mandatory documents: Cycling Network Plan, Urban Cycling Network Design Methodology, Model Road Safety Audit, Cycling Road Design Guidelines and Good and Bad Practices. Including the proposed investments into a uniform planning and technical framework will guarantee their consistency, quality, and the expended operational programme funds - expediency and effectiveness.

3. Nature of the action

The proposed measure includes the adoption by the general meeting of the members of the BOF Association of technical standards of development of cycling infrastructure in the communes of the Białystok Metropolitan Area. It will allow to translate the good practices of countries with the highest cycling participation and safety levels into Polish reality. The quality of infrastructure is of great importance for cyclists, but it also influences the whole transport system of the local self-government unit. Good cycling

conditions are able to encourage many car users to switch to bikes, thanks to which there are less traffic jams, pollution, noise and accidents.

This measure will influence the policy instrument - Strategy of Development of Białystok's Functional Area until 2030. As a result of adopting standards, the infrastructure created on the basis of the Strategy will meet certain requirements - uniform for all communes of the functional area. The strategic document states that it is necessary to develop the network of bicycle paths in order to create coherent intercommunal connections. Thanks to the standards, people responsible for shaping the cycling policy will be able to more boldly reach for funds for new infrastructure and spend them better. The standards will introduce a certain, minimum quality level in designing and implementing projects aimed at the development of cycling in the BOF. It will also allow to improve the level of knowledge and competences of local authorities and road managers, who will know and from now on will apply the best solutions concerning the design of cycling infrastructure. All these actions are coherent with the simultaneously created Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan for the Białystok Metropolitan Area till the year 2035.

- The emerging infrastructure should be shaped according to the world's best standard - the Dutch methodology of the so-called five requirements of the C.R.O.W. standardization organization:**consistency** - 100% of sources and destinations should be accessible by bike;
- **directness** – trasy powinny być wyznaczone możliwie bez objazdów i z minimalnym współczynnikiem wydłużenia;
- **safety** - cycling infrastructure should avoid collision points with pedestrians and other vehicles and ensure good visibility, separation or combination of cycling and motorised traffic depending on speed and volume of traffic;
- **convenience** - cycling infrastructure should not cause energy losses, force to stop, and limit gradients, difference of levels and kerbs;
- **attractiveness** - the cycling route should meet the needs of users, ensure social safety and be compatible with its surroundings. It should be well connected with the functions of the city and run in the vicinity of greenery.

Thanks to unified technical and construction standards the cycling infrastructure in the region will be built uniformly and according to the above mentioned criteria. Thanks to that it will serve cyclists better, and the self-governments will spend the operational funds in a more targeted and effective way.

4. Stakeholders involved

The EU CYCLE project is implemented through the INTERREG Europe Programme, funded by the European Regional Development Fund, co-financed by the European Union.

communes of Białystok Functional Area - responsible for the development of transport policy, including cycling policy, within their area.

inhabitants of BOF communes - users of bicycles and cycling infrastructure.

non-governmental organisations - entities having activity for the benefit of low emission economy, development of cycling transport, cycling tourism and cycling sports in their statutory objectives.

5. Time frames

Implementation of the measure will last until July 2023.

6. Costs

Costs will be determined through a public procurement procedure.

7. Sources of funding

BFA Association budget will be the source of financing for the measure.

External sources of funding will also be sought

8. Risk assessment

Costs resulting from procurement procedures may exceed the budget allocated for the measure. 9.

9. Monitoring

Monitoring will be carried out by the Association of Białystok Functional Area.

OTHER:

We approve the content of this action plan and commit to its implementation.

Date: 08.07.2022.

Name of organisation: Association of Białystok Functional Area

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