PROJECT

VELO.INFO

VELO.INFO: the European Network for Cycling Expertise

Funding: European (5th RTD Framework Programme)

Duration: Sep 2002 - Apr 2004

Status: Complete with results

Background & policy context:

Within Europe, among countries and cities large differences occur in the ability to implement cycling policy. Velo.Info makes the expertise available to professionals all over Europe and it offers far more specific and detailed information on cycling than current expertise centres on traffic and transport. Velo.Info offers urban planners and transportation professionals an information and expertise instrument that stimulates and supports the implementation of cycling policy in cities. Velo.Info will be the professional's tool to exchange information and expertise. Velo.Info contributes to the EU policy on clean urban transport which aims to increase the urban transport system's sustainability and efficiency through radical integrated strategies for clean urban transport (i.e. cycling as a mode of urban transportation). Velo.Info supports the implementation of cycling policy, thus also supports EU policies on air quality and noise quality. (96/62/EC, COM/97/500).

Objectives:

The high-level objective of Velo.Info is to enable local authorities and experts in attaining sustainable urban planning by establishing a WWW-based expertise centre on bicycle planning policies and bicycle use, of which the usefulness and continuity is ensured.

The usefulness and continuity of the expertise centre is ensured by (i) involving users and suppliers of cycling policy knowledge in the development of the system and (ii) making use of use of state-of-the-art technology for data storage, information disclosure and internet communication. Specific attention is given to creating a critical mass of content on bicycle policy information and use. The partners develop a sustainable business model to create a system that will continue to function after the project lifetime. The continuity of VeloInfo is guaranteed, by the combined force of industry, cities, expert institutes and cyclist organisations.

Methodology:

The **www.Velo.Info website** contains knowledge, expertise and planning tools for urban cycling policies and operates in five European languages English, French, German, Spanish and Dutch. The core of the website is a searchable database containing 3781 items on cycling planning, including 681 documents in full for which we have received the permission of copyright owners to publish on the internet. The database is searchable using the Collexis search engine. All topics that are of potential relevance to cycle policy or master planning are covered within the database.

Users of the website are encouraged to contribute information to the site which will be added to the database. Within this framework it is anticipated that the amount and quality of data available via Velo.Info will continue to grow. A series of twelve briefings have been developed that act as 'points of entry' by describing the relevance of cycling to other policy areas. Each of these briefings acts as an introductory guide to the subject and also can be utilized as a pre-defined search within the Velo.Info database in order to find relevant documents to the topics. Each of the briefings is fully referenced. This allows the user to follow a flow of information from an introduction to an overview to more detailed treatment of each topic.

The Velo.Info site includes a **Cycling Master Planning Framework** tool, designed to assist cities in determining their current level of performance in Cycling Master Planning; the relationship between their performance and that of other cities; and to identify the topics on which performance improvement is needed. A benchmarking database of more detailed activity is included within the site to allow cities to contribute information and access details of other cities' activity. The database consists of core information, which is shared with the Cycling Master Planning Framework.

A discussion forum has been developed allowing registered users of the Velo.Info site to exchange information, opinions and experiences. These discussions are subdivided into thematic threads. Users can join existing threads or create their own discussion topics as appropriate.

A news page facility has been created and incorporated into the site. This page contains news of recent developments and forthcoming events. Cities are invited to vote on a pertinent topic in order to stimulate discussi

Related Projects:

- BypadLUTR/PLUMECLUSTER PROJECTS
- ARTISTSASICITYFREIGHT
- ECOCITYISHTAR
- PROMPTPROPOLISPROSPECTS
- SCATTER
- SUTRA
- TRANSPLUS

Parent Programmes:

FP5-EESD KA4 - City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage

Institute type: Public institution

Institute name: European Commission, Directorate-General for Research (DG Research)

Funding type: Public (EU)

Partners:

France:
Club des Villes Cyclables, Paris

Ireland:
Dublin Transportation Office

Netherlands:
Master Plan BV for Velo Mondial, Amsterdam; Goudappel Coffeng BV, Deventer; Stichting interface for Cycling Expertise Utrecht

Slovenia:
University of Maribor

Spain:
DSD BarcelonaUnited Kingdom:
TRL Ltd

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Key Results:

VeloInfo is a WWW based expertise centre that supports cities to incorporate the bicycle in urban

planning. Access to expertise on cycling is essential to a local authority that wishes to increase bicycle use, by regarding the bicycle as an ordinary and daily mode of urban transport. VeloInfo has the purpose to become a key centre of expert and knowledge on bicycle planning, supporting all European professionals on urban planning, infrastructure and transport. A critical mass of content has been established that, on the one hand, ensures a sufficient coverage of cycling expertise according to experts and, on the other hand, contains the answers for at least 80% of the search requests of the users of VeloInfo.

Cities can use VeloInfo to find bibliography and experts on cycling policy. Cities can also find other cities, to learn from each other's experiences and best practices. New potential users entering the VeloInfo web site are invited to use an interactive tool that helps them to find search terms and documents relevant for their specific situation. Besides, the guided tour tool gives a rough estimation of what can be achieved by implementing cycling policy, in terms of, e.g., reduction of exhaust emissions, congestion, and traffic safety. Experts can use VeloInfo to enlarge their expertise and to find other experts and local authorities that need support in developing cycling policy. All users participate in a network, which operates as a literature database, an expert system, and also as a discussion forum. VeloInfo thus offers a forum for the exchange of ideas, data, experience and expertise.

Policy implications

A conclusion of the first period was that Velo.Info should be more than an knowledge centre: it should be a management and planning tool. It is not enough to put key documents relating to cycling on the web, even if one uses the best search technology. Velo.Info should help city managers to develop their own plan to promote cycling.

The starting point would be: it is not enough to post policy documents on the web if one wants to help cities to make optimised urban planning that includes cycling. The web-based tool should include things such as: guidelines on the current and successful planning approaches, list and description of relevant cases studies, check list to assess the specific needs and requirements of cities, interactive approach to design its own planning and policy mix.

Within the Velo.Info project a number of answers were found:

- A database of information, powered by the Collexis search engine, that will allow retrieval of information relating to detailed concepts and combinations of concepts in five languages.
- A series of easy accessible entry-point briefings that inform those with limited knowledge of cycling how cycling can contribute to improvements in wider policy areas such as health, urban efficiency, environmental quality et al.
- A toolkit of key recommended references covering the main anticipated areas of interest for cities, consultants and user-groups.
- A Benchmarking database that allows participants to share information with one another about their characteristics and activities.
- A Case Study database that allows participants to share information with one another about specific initiatives and the data that they have gathered regarding the outcomes of the initiative.
- Moderated discussion groups that allow dialogue between participants.

These instruments have now been implemented in the website and database and lots of results are expected from them. This leaves however undisputed that cycling planning lacks a body of research work, indicating that more research is necessary in order to substantiate follow up research. Velo.Info needs other tools than the ones described above. It is common sense to assume e.g. that cycling is good for health and the environment. It is unknown however how much contribution a certain investment in cycling infrastructure will have towards partial solution of problems on city level.

STRIA Roadmaps: Smart mobility and services

Transport mode: Road transport

Transport sectors: Passenger transport, Freight transport

Geo-spatial type: Other