

Free electric biking in Águeda

Águeda, Portugal

Mayor: Gil Nadais

Electric bicycles appear to be the perfect alternative to walking and driving on the hilly slopes so characteristic of the Portuguese town of Águeda.

The electric bicycle scheme, piloted from June until December 2011, is one example of the many sustainable energy actions outlined in Águeda's Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP).

“This project, as part of Águeda's commitment under the Covenant of Mayors, contributes to a long-term strategy for urban mobility in Europe that focuses on the decarbonisation of the transport sector through electric vehicles.”

Gil Nadais, Mayor of Águeda



left to right: Gil Nadais - mayor, Jorge Almeida - deputy mayor, Celestino Almeida - leader of the municipal council, José Mota - councillor

The municipality purchased ten electric bicycles and designated ten parking areas dispersed over the territory, as well as a main parking station and a monitoring and management system. The monitoring system works on wireless technologies - a WiMAX system - that covers the territory of Águeda and allows the scheme's manager to identify, online and with real-time information, which bicycles are available, when they are in use and who is riding them. The electric bicycles are available for free to the public and represent an investment cost of €22,000 for the municipality.

By July 2011, 100 citizens had been recorded as regular users and nearly 1,000 journeys had



been undertaken. These journeys represent a combined distance of 4,000 kilometres, the equivalent of 335kg CO₂ emissions.

The conclusions of the pilot scheme are even more telling: after six months, by December 2011, 150 citizens made regular use of the bicycles and a total distance of 13,000 kilometres had been travelled within the city over 2,755 short journeys. The CO₂ emission savings of these journeys combined is two tonnes.

The impact of this bicycle scheme is far-reaching: fewer cars on the roads, cleaner air and less noise pollution by traffic while at the same time promoting mobility and economic development.

Given its success, Águeda has early 2012 purchased more electric bicycles and is working together with a private company to upgrade the monitoring system and web platform, as well as the security locks of the bicycles.

On a European scale, the electric bicycle scheme is easy to replicate for other towns whose hilly slopes can be discouraging for cyclists.

Águeda – key facts*:

- Águeda has 49,456 inhabitants and a surface of 335km²
- Signed the Covenant of Mayors on 12 November 2008
- Overall CO₂ emission reduction target of 33% compared to 2002 levels
- One of Portugal's most industrialised towns with over 4800 enterprises located on its territory
- The SEAP contains 20 main actions, broken down into 65 activities addressing the residential, agricultural, industrial, municipal and service sectors.
- The main focus of the actions is on infrastructure and behavioural change of citizens and companies.
- The implementation of Águeda's SEAP will result in an estimated €8 million of saving on energy bills for citizens, the municipality and businesses.

* Figures taken from [Águeda's Sustainable Energy Action Plan](#) available on the Covenant of Mayors website (in PT and in EN)

As a signatory to the Covenant of Mayors, the town of Águeda voluntarily commits itself to reducing its CO₂ emissions by 33% by 2020.

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