



# National Cycling Plan

## Capacity Building for Cycling Expertise in German Cities

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Until the late 1990s, the share of cycling in German cities decreased to – on average - less than 10 percent. However, a couple of cities - like e.g. Münster in western Germany – have proven, that it is possible to realize a high share of cycling and various benefits occur in terms of cost-effectiveness as well as environmental objectives. In addition, Münster with a cycling share of almost 40 percent always rated top in comparison of livability in cities. In the context of such experiences, in 1998 the Federal Ministry of Transportation, Building and Urban Development (BMVBS) decided to introduce a capacity building programme and take joint action with the provinces to start a revival of cycling in German cities: the idea of the National Cycling Plan was born. This plan, which focused on capacity building in cities (based on a prior needs assessment), turned out to be an enormous success in the years 2000 and beyond.

The responsibilities for cycling in Germany rest mainly at the local level, e.g. construction and maintenance of municipal streets and cycling paths, implementation of specific projects such as cycling campaigns, bike parking etc. But the provinces provide additional funds for specific projects in cities (e.g. Bike & Ride at train stations) and for provincial cycling infrastructure, e.g. providing a network of federal long-distance bikeways or federal bicycle express ways. The Federal Government provides the legal framework and oversees policy areas relevant to cycling. The National Cycling Plan aims to increase the share of cycling and to strengthen awareness of cycling in municipalities and at province level. It combines federal government coordination of provincial investment programmes, capacity-building and campaigns. The plan was formally adopted in 2002 with a 10-year horizon until 2012 and consists of five pillars:

- Joint working group of federal government and provinces/states (Länder)
- Bicycle Internet-Portal
- Bicycle Academy
- Federal aid programme for non-investment measures

### Box 1 National Cycling Plan 2002-2012

The German National Cycling Plan 2002-2012 is based on a cooperation between the Federal Level and the *Länder*. It includes policy resolutions,



division of responsibilities for cycling policy, Federal Government-Länder Joint Working Group, bicycle portal, bicycle academy, non-investment cycling projects.

Download here: <http://www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de/en/>

### Pillar 1

The national-provincial joint working group - already established in 1998 – serves as the key coordination group between the national and the provincial level. It serves the exchange of information between decision-makers and interest groups, and integrates objectives of the National Cycling Plan and measures into provincial investment programmes.

- Regulatory framework: optimizing the legal framework by granting municipalities more flexibility
- Coordination: overview of target-oriented operational levels and programmes at various governmental levels
- Tourism: intermodality with railways, marketing and enhancing of trans-regional bicycle paths

On behalf of



of the Federal Republic of Germany

- Funding: reviewing expenditures/funding instruments (database and handbook on funding for practitioners), identifying approaches to reform the financing of cycling policy measures
- Communication: exchanging best-practice, PR measures, (inter)national knowledge transfer, organizing expert panels, workshops, establishing strategic public-private partnerships.



**Pillar 2**

Bicycle internet-portal (<http://www.nrvp.de>) is a public repository of pooled know-how with 5000 entries on:

- federal initiatives and funding measures,
- (inter)national practical examples
- news updates
- literature database
- list of events

It is complemented with a newsletter and an “internal area” for cooperation and coordination among cycling specialists at the federal level.

**Pillar 3**

The Cycling Academy, provides training to municipal administrations and planners. It is coordinated through the German Institute for Urban Studies (DIFU) and organizes trainings decentralized throughout Germany. The Academy informs participants on latest technical developments and changes to the legal framework and is funded by the Federal Ministry of Transportation, Building and Urban Development (BMVBS). Training topics are:

- Engineering of cycling infrastructure
- Road safety
- Traffic Management
- Urban Planning
- Public Transport
- Legal issues related to cycling
- Education
- Communication and cooperation to promote cycling

Thereby, the term “Cycling Academy” also serves as brand name for high quality practice-oriented training. Examples for training topics are e.g. designation of specific surfaces for cycling traffic, opening of one-way streets for two-way cycling traffic or provisions restricting cycling traffic on footpaths to protect

pedestrians and improve transport safety.

In addition to trainings, the cycling academy also organizes annually regional conferences that are located in a different city in order to facilitate direct exchange between planners

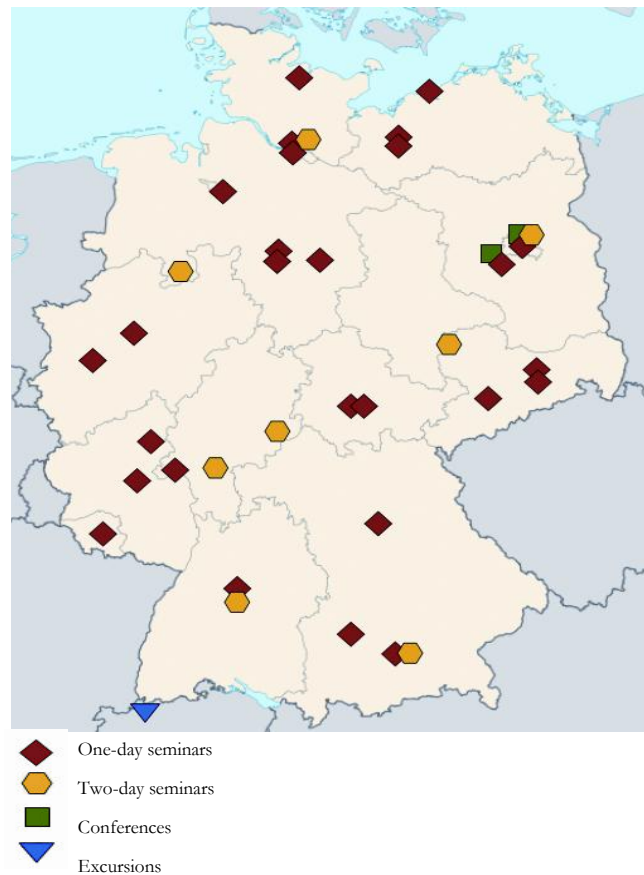
**Pillar 4**

Non-investment projects - federal funding (pillar 4).

As cycling contributes significantly to environmental and climate protection, urban development, road safety and health, the Federal Government considers cycling promotion as an integral part of sustainable development. Therefore the Federal Ministry of Transportation, Building and Urban Development facilitates and coordinates competitions, campaigns, conferences and pilot programmes and since 2008 earmarked 3 Mio. Euro annually in the federal budget for innovative cycling projects. Funding is allocated to:

- Public relations and campaigns
- Research initiatives
- Informational measures
- Advanced training programmes (cycling academy)
- Transport safety improvement measures
- General promotion of dialogue
- Dissemination of information on positive impacts of cycling

**Box 3 Activities of the Cycling Academy in Germany**



As a result of such efforts, many cities started cycling projects and revival of cycling. An impressive example is the city of Berlin, that increased its share of cycling from 10% in 1998 to 15% in 2010.

However, the approach is on up-scaling of good practice. Many cities started to improve cycling infrastructure, established “cycling units” in their administrations and started campaigns. As a result, cycling shows the highest growth rates of all transportation modes. Between 2002 and 2008, the share increased by 17% surpassing the increase of public transport and actually leading to a decrease of car-use for the first time since World War II. The National Cycling Plan can be seen as a great success. It has changed the image of cycling: now, the young people and the urban middle class acknowledge cycling as a modern and comfortable mode that is much more environmentally friendly than the car, as well as more convenient. Key to this success is the increased capacity at the local level and the political support on all levels.

**Contact**

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Published by:  
 Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
 Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  
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