Electric bicycles, the solution for urban mobility?

17th June 2024

To participate in this webinar, please register HERE

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Background

In recent years there has been a proliferation in the use of e-cargo / e-bikes in many cities around the world. These bikes have minimal environmental impact and the potential to improve sustainable urban transportation and promote cleaner cities by locally reducing harmful emissions and reducing traffic congestion. They also provide opportunities for employment creation and livelihoods.

Electric powered bikes are revolutionizing urban transport for short and medium range distance. They are becoming cheaper and less energy demanding every day. E-bikes are able to increase quick manoeuvring against cars, providing increased safety and comfort in hot climates or hilly places. They also provide health benefits as cycling promotes cardiovascular health and strengthens muscles.

While e-bicycles offer many advantages and there is a growing demand for it, there are a number of challenges to adopting it as a primary mode of transportation. These include the high infrastructure and maintenance cost. For e-bikes to be adopted widely, infrastructure such as bike lanes, parking facilities, and charging stations need to be established. Clear regulations and guidelines are also required to address issues such as speed limits, licensing, and where e-bikes can operate to ensure the safety of e-bike riders. The right infrastructure,
safety, and regulatory considerations must be put in place for e-bikes to play a significant role in promoting sustainable and efficient mobility in cities.

This webinar will bring together cities to explore the benefits, challenges and solutions that e-bikes are bringing to our cities, and how they could, exponentially contribute to a more sustainable urban mobility.

**Proposed questions for presenters**

1. What are some of the limitations to adopting e-bikes as a means of transportation? What are the differences between urban and rural settings?
2. What role can local government play to respond to the opportunities and threats presented by e-bikes?
3. The investments required to implement supportive infrastructure to promote the use of e-bikes is significantly high. In what ways can the government expand and reform funding sources for supportive infrastructure?
4. What are some of the socio-economic and environmental benefits of using e-bikes?
5. What is next? What are the technological advances out there?

The webinar will bring together some cities experiences to share their innovative approaches to urban mobility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07.00 – 07.02</td>
<td>Welcome and introduction by Diana Lopez, Advisor, cities and local governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.02 – 07.07</td>
<td>Opening remarks by the Moderator, Petr Suska, UNDP Senior consultant on urban innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.07 – 07.17</td>
<td>Sharing best practices and lessons learnt from projects implemented, by Rikesh Shah, Rikesh Shah, Mobility Expert at Innovate Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.17 – 07.21</td>
<td>Questions from speakers to the first presenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.22 – 07.29</td>
<td>Overview of the current state of electric bicycles, covering issues on rules and regulations as well as safety, Patrick Kayemba, Chairperson for FABIO-First African Bicycle Information Organization, Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.30 – 07.35</td>
<td>Questions from speakers to the second presenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.36 – 07.43</td>
<td>Sonal Kulkarni, Urban Strategist, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.45 – 07.55</td>
<td>Q&amp;A from the online public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The speakers

Rikesh Shah is recognised as a thought leader and an international speaker on public sector innovation with many years of practical and academic experience at leading organisations and institutions. Rikesh is the Head of the Innovation Procurement Empowerment Centre on part-time basis – a UK government-funded initiative to stimulate more market innovation for the public sector to create more value from the £300Bn spent each year. Rikesh also provides consulting services on transport, innovation, technology and data through Innovate Today to cities and organisations across the world. Previously, Rikesh led Transport for London’s award-winning innovation team to create new value through advances in new technology for London by working with start-ups, corporates, academia, accelerators and venture capitalists. He was responsible for creating TfL’s first Innovation Hub which has delivered some pioneering projects on areas such as air quality, road safety, active travel, enhancing customer experiences to retail and property development. Rikesh was also responsible for TfL’s world leading open data programme which has 17,000 registered users, 700 apps powered by TfL data used by 42% of Londoners which an independent review stated that it’s worth to London is £130m per annum. He also was actively involved during the 2012 Olympic Games and TfL’s response to COVID-19. After TfL, Rikesh worked for PA consulting to advise public and private sectors in transport and aviation on open innovation and open data. Rikesh sits on the London transport museum board as a non-executive director, as well as a civic innovation director (non-executive director) at cities today, the global public innovation think tank. Rikesh also served on the Mayor of London’s Smart London Board from 2016 to 2023.

Ms. Sonal Kulkarni has a bachelor’s in architecture and masters in urban planning from the School of Policy, Planning and Development at the University of Southern California. Over the past 10+ years she has worked extensively in the government on infrastructure for sustainable mobility. She led the team from the Directorate of Urban Land Transport, Government of Karnataka in the Smart Cities Mission’s Cycles for Change initiative where Bengaluru was chosen as one of the winners for planning and executing cycling infrastructure during the COVID times. As part of this initiative various innovative strategies were tested including shared bicycle lanes, slow streets, Pedal Port (a self-help kiosk for bicyclists, etc.) She was involved in the strategizing and designing of the first dockless bicycle sharing system in Bengaluru through the permit system. She started her career in the government by anchoring community outreach activities like the longest running Open streets campaign in the country, Cycle Day and Open Streets and assisted in designing the unique Sustainable Mobility Accords which empowers communities through innovative funding towards taking action to make their neighbourhoods move towards sustainable mobility. She has played a key role in bringing to the city UMI award winning Church Street First, a fully pedestrianised street piloted in the CBD of Bengaluru. She currently serves as the Chief Research and Innovation
Officer at the Directorate of Urban Land Transport, Government of Karnataka heading the Centre for Research & Innovation (CERI) to provide the necessary impetus to support research initiatives and accelerate innovation in sustainable urban mobility in the State of Karnataka. She is also the Director of Strategic Partnerships, Marketing and External Communications at the BYCS India Foundation and the co-founder of Urban Morph, a collaborative urban solutions incubator to nurture sustainable urban initiatives, working at the intersection of urban planning, technology and behavioural sciences.

Patrick Kayemba is a development professional, researcher, trainer, and social change advocate with over 25 years of experience in coordinating and managing development projects. He holds a Master of Arts degree in community-based development and a bachelor’s degree in development studies from Nkumba University, Uganda. He further strengthened his expertise with an MBA in Transport Economics and Logistics Management, he has a post graduate diploma in transport planning and management, and a diploma in project planning and management. He has specialized in policy advocacy on issues of Sustainable Transport and Governance. Patrick is an Advocate of good governance, democracy, and sustainable transport (active transport). He has delivered papers on different topical issues as a keynote speaker or discussant in several national, regional, and international conferences in the same line Patrick has moderated/ facilitated conferences exposing him to quick analytical thinking and interjections He is an anti-corruption activists and beliefs in social Justice for all people men, women, PWD, children and people of different social economic and political statuses. He initiated the idea of adopting the cable cars as a public transport innovation for Kampala in 2013 among other things and positions of responsibility and an advocate of the same in Africa, and an advocate of E- bicycle transport solutions. He is the associate director for European Institute for Sustainable Transport (EURIST) and chairperson of FABIO Uganda.

The moderator

Petr Suska is a UNDP Senior consultant on urban innovation and the CIO at the City of Prague through his engagement at the municipal company OICT Prague, where he oversees the city’s smart city projects, the data platform and innovation management. Petr is also a senior advisor to the director of the Fraunhofer institute, where he previously led a team with a focus on urban systems economics and innovation. Petr is also a senior consultant at the UNDP. Petr has extensive experience from both the private and public sector.