

Germany's National Cycling Plan

Cooperation between the Federal Level and the Länder

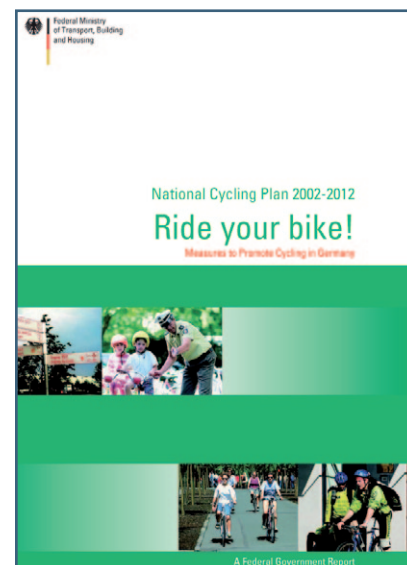
Policy resolution

In 2002 the German Parliament passed a resolution to institute a National Cycling Plan. This political move was spurred on by the demands of the German Cycling Association (ADFC), the German Transport Association (VCD), and the German Länder and municipal representatives. There was broad support for the resolution across party lines and among all parliamentary groups in the German Parliament. Within the period 2002–2012, the German federal government is supporting municipalities through projects and information and public relations initiatives in an effort to promote cycling in Germany within the framework of a sustainable transport policy. The National Cycling Plan was ratified for the ensuing legislative periods via the coalition agreements between the CDU/CSU and SPD in 2005 and between the CDU/CSU and FDP in 2009.

The National Cycling Plan – unlike the German Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan – does not foresee the creation of a national network of cycling paths; it is conceived to approach “cycling as a system”, and thus comprises a programme for non-investment projects to promote cycling.

The call for a German National Cycling Plan was modelled on the Dutch Bicycle Master Plan (Masterplan Fiets). The German master plan accounts for the federalist structure of the German government and the division of responsibilities among the federal, Länder and local governments as per the subsidiarity principle.

Cover image: Cycling as a system – the guiding concept behind the German cycling promotion strategy



National Cycling Plan
2002–2012 in English

Contents

Policy resolution	1
Division of responsibilities for cycling policy	2
Federal Government-Länder Joint Working Group	2
Bicycle portal	3
Bicycle academy	4
Non-investment cycling projects	4

Joint implementation of the National Cycling Plan through the federal government, the Länder and, equally important, on site in the municipalities rests upon these four pillars:

1. The Federal Government-Länder Joint Working Group on Cycling;
2. The Internet Bicycle Portal www.nrvp.de, as a common operational platform and information pool;
3. The Bicycle Academy, which offers regional training;
4. The federal aid programme for non-investment measures.

General division of responsibilities for cycling policy

Municipal transport policy, and therefore the promotion of cycling, is the responsibility of local governments (administrative districts, cities and municipalities). Local governments are responsible for the upkeep and construction of municipal roadways and paths. The Länder are responsible for the upkeep and construction of state roads, as well as for providing the municipalities with funds. First and foremost, the federal government is responsible for providing the legal framework; it bears responsibility for the construction and upkeep of motorways and also oversees policy areas relevant to cycling (the environment, health, the economy).

Since 2010 cycling policy has been the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development (BMVBS), Department UI31 – “Pedestrians, Public Transport, Cycling”. An advisory council on cycling consist-

ing of representatives from academia, associations and municipalities advises the BMVBS.

The Länder also fund municipal measures, such as cycling facilities on main local roads and offering Bike&Ride at train stations. The Länder are responsible for formulating the legal and infrastructural framework for cycling policy as well as for public transport, and for providing support to their municipalities. Finally, it is incumbent upon local governments to oversee local cycling policy in general, i.e. to plan and implement specific projects. Outside the boundaries of larger cities, local governmental authorities in administrative districts often assume a coordinating role for many smaller cities and municipalities in their regions.

The National Cycling Plan introduced the use of federal transport funds for non-investment projects. Moreover, cycling policy benefits from projects that are supported by federal funds for urban development, environment policy, preventative medicine and research.

Federal Government-Länder Joint Working Group on Cycling (B/L-AK – pillar 1)

In 1998 the federal government and Länder formed a voluntary panel for the coordination of cycling policy in Germany, the Federal Government-Länder Joint Working Group on Cycling (B/L-AK). The B/L-AK is supervised by the BMBVS Working Group on Cycling and includes representatives from several federal ministries, all the Länder, leading municipal associations, Deutsche Bahn (German Railways), cycling and cyclist associations, as well as other players (see fig. 2).

The cycling B/L-AK serves as a forum for the mutual exchange of information between decision-makers and interest groups who shape cycling policy. It is therefore a key organ of vertical integration. Other players from the private and non-profit sectors, leading municipal associations, trade associations and Deutsche Bahn are involved in the B/L-AK's cycling promotion decision-making process.

Topics addressed by the Federal Government-Länder Joint Working Group on Cycling:

- Regulatory framework: optimizing the legal framework by granting municipalities more flexibility and room to manoeuvre; review of relevant regulations pertinent to the framework of cycling policy;

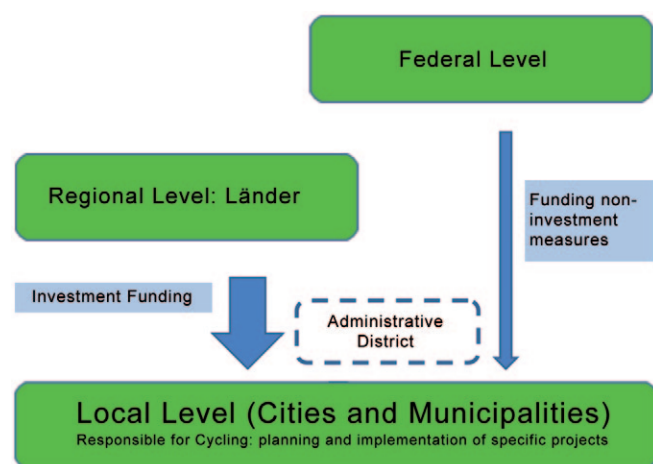


Fig. 1: Basic financial structure of cycling promotion

To learn about the cooperative implementation of cycling promotion at the local level, see: Cycling Expertise No. O-2 “Municipal Cooperation to Promote Cycling”

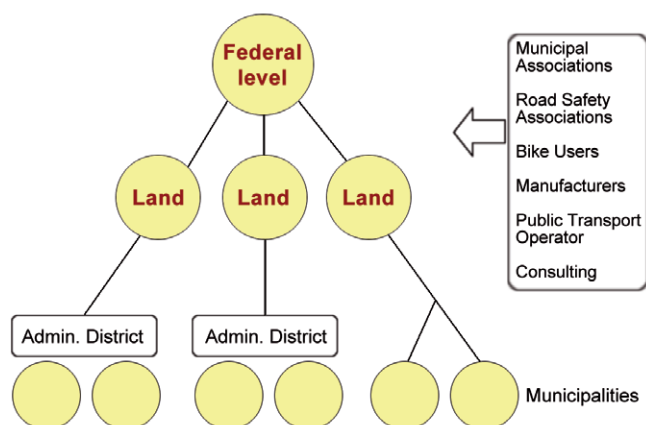


Fig. 2: Administrative levels coloured in red: Composition of the Federal Government-Länder Joint Working Group on Cycling

- Coordination: providing an overview of target-oriented operational levels and programmes aimed at promoting cycling at the various governmental levels;
- Funding: reviewing both expenditures and funding instruments for the practitioners database funding handbook (Förderfibel) and finding approaches to reforming the financing of cycling policy measures;
- Tourism: promoting intermodality, with railway transport, marketing and enhanceing of transregional bicycle paths;
- Communication: exchanging best-practice examples, including effective public relations measures, national and international knowledge transfer, organization of expert panels, workshops, addressing the issue of cycling as transport/cycling in various forms of media, establishing strategic public-private partnerships, target group-oriented publicity campaigns, such as mobility management for businesses et al.

Bicycle portal www.nrvp.de (pillar 2)

In the context of the National Cycling Plan, and in the course of the amendments to the German Road Traffic Regulations (StVO) and the Administrative Regulations for the Road Traffic Regulations (VwV-StVO), a comprehensive corpus of expertise has been gathered in recent years via research initiatives (such as those by the BMVBS, the Federal Highway Research Institute (BASt) and the Federal Environment Agency (UBA), the guidelines and recommendations

of the Road and Transport Research Association (FGSV), and studies and best-practice examples from local players. A broad repository of pooled know-how like this was long unavailable to practitioners and experts.

Difu has been overseeing the expert exchange portal for the German National Cycling Plan (Fahrradportal) at the Internet address <http://www.nrvp.de> since 2004. An internal area with more than 200 registered users facilitates cooperation and coordination among the specialists in the B/L-AK on Cycling and among those in other committees responsible for cycling policy at the federal level in Germany. A comprehensive area accessible to the general public contains (as of May 2010) around 5 000 entries on federal initiatives and funding measures, practical examples from the federal government, the Länder and municipalities, news updates, a literature database and a list of events.

The portal is becoming increasingly more accessible to non-German speaking specialists: the National Cycling Plan is available in several languages (English, Spanish, French, Russian), subject-specific literature is published in English in the literature database, practical examples from non-German speaking countries are published in two languages, and the publication of the available editions of „Cycling Expertise“ represents yet another step towards further knowledge transfer.

A newsletter regularly published in German keeps approximately 1 300 subscribers informed about the latest developments, and it also provides municipalities with crucial information on changes in cycling policy.



Home page of the Bike Portal in German

Sources:

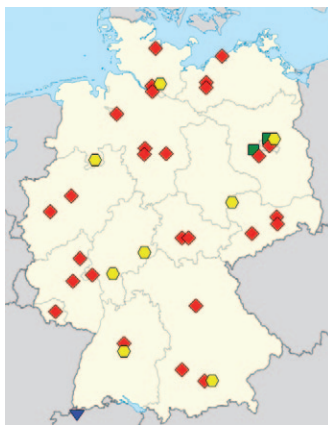
National Cycling Plan 2002–2012 “Ride Your Bike”:
<http://www.nrvp.de> (<http://edoc.difu.de/edoc.php?id=YFGDITZ2>)
 Second German federal government cycling report on the state of cycling in the Federal Republic of Germany, 2007:
http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/original_1018367/Zweiter-Fahrradbericht-der-Bundesregierung-barrierefrei.pdf (in German)

Links:

Downloads: Funding guidelines, application forms, bulletins:
<http://www.nrvp.de/foerderung-bund/foerderung-nrvp/antragstellung.phtml> (in German)
 Measures supported within the context of the National Cycling Plan: <http://www.nrvp.de/foerderung-bund/foerderung-nrvp/massnahmen.phtml> (in German)

Bicycle academy (pillar 3)

With funding from the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development (BMVBS) and the support of the German Association of Cities (DST), the German Association of Administrative Districts (DLT) and the German Association of Towns and Municipalities (DSTGB), the German Institute of Urban Affairs (Difu) operates the Bicycle Academy (*Fahrradakademie*), which offers further training on cycling promotion in Germany to municipal players.



- ◆ One-day seminars
- ⬡ Two-day seminars
- Conferences
- ▼ Excursions

Seminar locations for the Bicycle Academy for 2008/2009 and 2009/2010

Bicycle Academy events are offered and organized throughout Germany. This provides target groups with the opportunity to visit high-quality training sessions in the vicinity. The

annual programme includes day-long and multi-day seminars and excursions to various locations. In 2009/10 additional seminars were held to update participants on the latest technical developments and the concomitant emendations to the legal framework. These changes make it easier for municipalities to designate specific transport surfaces for cycling traffic, to open one-way streets for two-way cycling traffic, and, consequently, to pass more stringent provisions restricting cycling traffic on footpaths in order to protect pedestrians and improve transport safety.

The Bicycle Academy deals with the topics:

- Structural issues related to cycle path construction;
- Traffic safety and cycling;
- Legal issues related to cycling;
- Communication and cooperation to promote cycling

Speakers include experienced experts and practitioners who work in research and implementation. This mix of speakers addresses issues close to cities and municipalities of all sizes and also appeals strongly to administrative districts, state-run companies, regions and planning authorities. The number of participants at individual events, and

overall, has grown steadily since the inception of the Bicycle Academy. In the first three years 71 seminars, conferences and subject-relevant excursions have taken place; they included 370 presentations, 130 different speakers and 3700 participants. The Bicycle Academy is seen as a “brand name” among cities and municipalities – and increasingly among administrative districts and Länder authorities – which stands for high-quality, practice-oriented training.

Non-investment cycling projects of the National Cycling Plan with federal funding (pillar 4)

Through the National Cycling Plan (NRVP), the federal government is promoting cycling as an integral part of sustainable urban and transport development, and in doing so is making important contributions in the policy areas of environment and climate protection, urban development, transport safety and health. The federal government has taken on an active role in cycling promotion by assuming the role of facilitator and coordinator and by conducting competitions, campaigns, conferences and pilot programmes.

These measures are financially supported through a funding programme that has been earmarked with three million euros in the federal budget annually since 2008. These funds are used to finance visible public relations measures and campaigns, research initiatives, informational measures, advanced and further training programmes, transport safety improvement measures as well as the general promotion of dialogue, and the dissemination of information in all areas on which cycling has a positive impact. The supported measures cover a broad range of spheres of action:

- health,
- environmental issues,
- urban development,
- transport,
- transport safety,
- and tourism

are of particular importance. Measures can also be employed as investments – e. g. for urban development pilot projects. The funding possibilities available in the framework of the National Cycling Plan are defined in a funding guideline. All funding proposals submitted are reviewed by the advisory council on cycling and selected by BMVBS.



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