



EU INNOVATE

**SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION IN ACTION:
THE CASE STUDY “SNAPSHOT” SERIES**

VÉLIB’

Paris Goes Green With A Bike-Sharing Scheme



This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 613194

www.eu-innovate.com

July 2017

About EU-InnovatE

Between 2014 and 2016, the EU-InnovatE project investigated the potential of citizen innovation and sustainable entrepreneurship to achieve sustainable lifestyles in Europe by 2050. The following is one of a series of case study “snapshots” illustrating how new enterprises are being created by passionate, visionary individuals to benefit society at large.

The Case of Vélib’:

Paris Goes Green with a Visionary Bike-Sharing Scheme

A groundbreaking bicycle-sharing initiative set up in Paris in 2007 has up to 130,000 rentals each day. The Vélib’ scheme is a joint project between the Mairie de Paris (City Hall) and JCDecaux and has benefitted from end-user involvement throughout its development.

Over 6,000 self-service bicycle stations are located conveniently throughout the city. Its ‘green’ cycles are popular with Parisians and tourists and are helping reduce traffic congestion and pollution in the city centre. The scheme has in excess of 280,000 subscribers.

The Vélib’ scheme is available 24 hours a day and operates on a self-service basis. Cyclists use a contactless card or bank card to unlock a bike before riding off. Once users have arrived at their destination, cycles can be returned to another station, or retained for the return trip. Initially, Parisians were considered to be the scheme’s market, but it has also proved to be hugely popular with tourists and other visitors to the city.

The original founder of the scheme, JCDecaux is an international communications company that specialises in outdoor advertising. One of the company’s operations installs and maintains street furniture in return for advertising space. It uses revenue from advertising to fund the bike rental programme. Before the Paris cycle sharing scheme was introduced, JCDecaux set up its first scheme in Vienna in 2003 and subsequently in cities in Spain and Lyon, France.

Collaborative Innovation in Practice

End-user involvement has played an innovative role in the development and operation of the Vélib’ scheme and has encouraged an open dialogue between users, the Mairie de Paris and JCDecaux. The main areas of involvement include:

- A customer relations call centre set up and run by JCDecaux, which is end users’ first point of contact with Vélib’.
- Mairie de Paris created a Vélib’-dedicated blog in response to end-user interest. The blog serves as an informal communication channel between end-users and the scheme’s management.

- In 2010 a Vélib' User Committee was formed. Twelve people from different backgrounds and areas of Paris are appointed to serve for a period of two years. The committee meets several times a year with representatives from the Mairie de Paris and JCDecaux and is a forum for discussion about what works well, and what doesn't, and make recommendations and suggest new ideas.
- JCDecaux's own research department surveys Vélib' users for their feedback and ideas. Surveys achieve response rates of up to 30%, reflecting end users' strong support for the scheme.
- Focus groups are held with groups of Vélib' users to gather ideas and thoughts about how the scheme might develop in the future.

Summary of User-Driven Innovation

End user involvement has been in place since the early stages of the development of Vélib'. A wide variety of communication and engagement channels, and especially discussion and feedback from the User Committee, has assisted the piloting of new ideas and prototypes. End users have had an input in: the design of the bike and the materials from which it is made; the set up of communications; apps that help identify bike availability; and user tariffs.

Influence on Core Business

The bicycle-sharing scheme involved a change in JCDecaux's operations that were usually conducted on business-to-business lines. Vélib' required the integration of end-users in the development and running of the scheme and also collaboration with the Mairie de Paris and several other organisations. These included CitéGreen, a communications company that aims to encourage people's green behaviours, and Vélolution, a cycling association that seeks better road access and safety standards for cyclists.

JCDecaux's operations with partners in Paris have helped develop a culture focused on green mobility, and also one that seeks to support a wider sustainable-lifestyle. The Mairie de Paris ensures infrastructure and public policy is in place for Vélib' to succeed and provides an essential interface between JCDecaux and end users. For its part, CitéGreen, with its focus on community management, brings business-to-consumer expertise to the scheme.

Cross-Sector Relevance: Top Three Insights

- New business opportunities can be created by taking on a new business model (e.g., collaborative partnership) rather than continuing to depend on an existing business model (e.g., business-to-business).
- Involvement of end users from the outset in a business model can provide innovative insights and feedback that would otherwise not have been considered during planning and running an operation.
- Introducing a scheme that promotes green behaviours can deliver business, environmental, social and public relations benefits.

To Learn More About the Case...

Please contact the lead investigators from the EU-InnovatE research team:

Jennifer Goodman, Aalto University – jennifer.goodman@aalto.fi

Petra Fendt, ESADE Business School – petra.fendt@esade.edu

Further Information

Vélib' Paris: <http://en.velib.paris.fr>

JCDecaux Group: www.jcdecaux.com

Mairie de Paris: www.paris.fr

CitéGreen : <http://citegreen.com>

Vélorution: www.velorution.org

Aalto University: www.aalto.fi

ESADE Business School: www.esade.edu