

# Deliverable Summary

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## Context and Purpose

The “Safer Road to School” project focuses on enhancing pedestrian safety as part of Bologna’s Urban Traffic Master Plan that was approved in 2007.

Together with the Municipality of Bologna, many different actors have jointly developed this measure, such as private associations, city districts, schools and the Municipal Police Department.

Three are the main “fields of actions” foreseen by this measure:

- 1) Safer path realisation
- 2) Awareness raising on road safety
- 3) Activation of Pedi-bus service

Thanks to this measure, the city of Bologna has the opportunity to create safer paths (both via structural improvement and safer behaviours promotion), new consciousness and habits for both children and parents.

Following the creation of the necessary “pedestrian mobility culture” through ad hoc training courses organised by the Municipal Police Department in the schools, the measure aims to organise a real Pedi-bus service consisting in a walking school bus where groups of children accompanied by a few parents walk along fixed routes (refer to summary contents for more details).

Purpose of the present Deliverable is to give a complete overview of the actions undertaken by the Municipality of Bologna in safer path realisation, either from a structural or an educational point of view, in order to create the necessary precondition to activate the Pedi-bus service.

## Summary Contents

In order to realize “safer road to school” the Municipality of Bologna has undertaken two different types of actions:

- 1) a fundamental action of structural interventions to make some areas close to schools safer
- 2) a gradual and continuous action of training and education in the schools and on the streets, in order to teach to children and students of different ages how to correctly behave on roads.

### Action 1

In the framework of the first action and in accordance with the Urban Traffic Safety Plan, the interventions undertaken by Bologna Administration are going to follow the next three paths (please refer to measure 5.1 – Urban Traffic safety Plan):

- a) Traffic Engineering
- b) Protection of weak users
- c) Road Control

#### a) Traffic Engineering

Interventions on detected black spots have been performed to improve the quality of road infrastructure and safety.

#### b) Protection of weak users

In order to reduce the number of injuries and deaths, the PGTU (Urban Traffic Plan) foresees a standardization of the infrastructural interventions in favour of the weak users safety, that can be summed up as follows:

- presence of traffic lights at intersections
- building of roundabouts
- traffic islands
- 30 km/h zones

#### c) Road Control

The Vigilance Plan foresees:

- The speed control
- The alcohol control

In the context of these actions, during Mimosa Project the civil works to make safer the

area around the primary school Felice Battaglia have been completed and a series of measures boosted both cycling and walking modes and the realization of specific cycle paths and sideboards protected from traffic and safe pedestrian crossing points.

Beside this, in the last reporting period, a specific project to make safer the areas around 9 selected elementary schools (outside MIMOSA) has been completed. The project consists in the realization of different interventions, such as pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes, roundabouts, traffic lights and intermediate traffic islands. The interventions will be completed by spring 2012.

## Action 2

The second action foresees a constant **activity of Training and Education towards schools** in order to promote a **sustainable mobility consciousness** towards new generations.

This set of actions is undertaken within a close collaboration with Bologna Municipal Police Department, who organized many training courses (both in schools and on the streets) addressed to different types of schools (kindergartens, primary and high schools) in order to spread education and better knowledge about road safety.

In particular, during the last edition of the European Mobility Week (EMW), there has been a high involvement of schools for some special sessions dedicated to the “Cycling in safety” theme. The event “Cycling in safety” comprised a safe cycling course for schoolchildren, organized by the Bologna Municipal Police Department. Children on bicycles were guided by Municipal Police officers through a cycle path designed in the middle of Piazza Maggiore (the central square of Bologna). Officers explained the meaning of road signs, the basic traffic rules and the basic principles of safe riding. At the end of the short course, children were rewarded with a symbolic driving license and gadgets to make them aware about road safety. During the 2011 edition of the EMW in two days the course involved 777 children.

During the period between autumn 2010 and autumn 2011, for example, Bologna Municipal Police Department organized the following training courses:

- From October 2010 to April 2011 a special project for 5 years old children started, with bike rides and puppets show (1980 children)
- During 2011 the “alcohol not cool program” that involved high school students with theoretical and on the road courses, has been also organized.
- Other important courses about road security have been prepared including 50 special projects (e.g. moped courses with the use of driving simulators, practical teachings and first aid notions that involved 500 students).
- From January to April 2011, 57 training courses for junior and high school students have been realized by Police Department in order to give them motorcycle competence certificate for moped (1100 students have been involved).
- In May 2011 Mini-Olympics with two paths for bikes and motorcycles (300 students) have taken place.



**Figures 1 & 2 – Cycling in safety course organized by Municipal Police Department during 2011 European Mobility Week**

In the context of the two actions illustrated in the previous paragraphs, Bologna Administration decided to launch an important service, called “**Pedi-bus**”, a walking school bus where groups of children accompanied by some parents walk along fixed routes. There are several stops along the route where children can join the **Pedi-bus**, similar to a regular bus route. The best route is identified together with parents.

**Pedi-bus** is a “**co-operation activity**” proposed by the Municipality of Bologna, which involves districts, schools, parents and Municipal Police Department, in order to **create a synergy** between parents (workers) and children (students) daily movements.

From the Municipality perspective, **Pedi-bus** can be seen as the **final output** of the two previous actions, because it can be organised only after some specific interventions executed nearby schools aiming to improve road safety and after some training activities with parents and schoolchildren.

These meetings and training activities are of two typologies: meetings with schools and parents aimed to inform about **Pedi-bus** functionalities; and specific training activities addressed to students for increasing awareness on road safety and spreading a better knowledge, which represents the fundamental background to consciously adhere to **Pedi-bus** service.

In May 2011 a pilot project on **Pedi-bus** started in the San Domenico Savio primary school. The subcontracting for this project was not directly funded by MIMOSA (even if the internal staff working in the organisational activities was the same working in measure 5.2), but was a good preparatory experiment for **Pedi-bus** implementation in other schools. The pilot project, completed in June 2011, consisted of 5 **Pedi-bus** paths; it involved about 40 students out of 200 students enrolled. The **Pedi-bus** was available on the outward trip from May to June 2011 (end of the school year).

Under the guidance of the Municipality of Bologna and a research centre promoting sustainable mobility called Centro Antartide, a plan was drawn up with the help of both parents and children. It foresaw an optimised **Pedi-bus** home-to-school route with stops, registration for children and voluntary “bus driver” and “conductor” roles.

The Pedi-bus brings quite a dramatic change of habits in terms of independence and safety. Experts and psychologists from the Centro Antartide were available to assist parents. Fears about letting their children go by themselves were addressed and parents were asked to reflect on urban mobility, their children growth and the necessity for them to be physically active.



**Figures 3, 4 & 5 – Preparatory Training activities and laboratories for Pedi-bus activation and map of the paths**

Children from their side were made aware of the behaviour required to join the Pedi-bus safely, as well as about cultural information of routes. The people involved

received safety jackets and gadgets to help them on their way.



***Figures 6, 7, 8 & 9 – Pedibus service in San Domenico Savio School***

A special campaign to inform drivers on the Pedi-bus activation was organized by

Bologna City Council in cooperation with the Municipal Police Department. Children belonging to the San Domenico Savio school and involved in Pedi-bus, with the support of Municipal Police Agents, distributed informative leaflets about Pedi-bus to car drivers to create social awareness about the service. The leaflet headlines can be translated like “we were born to walk”.



**Figure 10 – A schoolchild distributing Pedi-Bus leaflet to car drivers**

In May 2011 the Emilia-Romagna Region held a stakeholders meeting entitled “Community Planning for Safer Home-School Routes” addressed to towns of the region. To disseminate information on Pedi-Bus to more stakeholders on an on-going basis, a smart video was also produced (in Italian) and presented during the meeting. The video is now available on You Tube.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pYtQFvaPOk&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pYtQFvaPOk&feature=player_embedded)

In June 2011 the Municipality published a tender in order to select a company to manage activities related to the preparation and activation of Pedi-bus in the 5 schools selected for the project. The public bid for the Pedi-bus realisation in the 5 selected schools has been awarded and the first organisational meetings with schools and districts have been organised. The service will start again in May 2012.

## Functional Use

The purpose of the present Deliverable is to give a complete overview of the efforts undertaken by the Municipality of Bologna in order to create “Safer roads to school”, combining structural interventions with specific Training actions carried out in collaboration with the Municipal Police Department, in order to raise awareness on road safety towards schools, parents and students, and, as the final output of a complex

path, that cannot abstract from the previous steps, put into operation the Pedi-Bus service.

## Lessons learned

The “Safer Road to School” project, in perfect accordance with the Urban Safety Plan objectives and the mobility management policies foreseen in the safety plan for young people, not only contributes to increase safe students movements, but also gives to future generations a bigger knowledge of the criticalities linked with road traffic and makes them aware of the existing alternatives to the car and the motorcycle.

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