

# The “Mobility & Accommodation” Package on the Island of Elba: e-bikes for hotel guests

Elba Island

Tourism and Soft Mobility



## IN BRIEF

This article aims to offer a simple description of the measure adopted on the island of Elba within the Civitas Destinations project in order to improve soft mobility through the development of integrated package "mobility & accommodation": 40 e-bikes have been delivered to some accommodation facilities for a long-term rental service.

### For whom is this article intended?

 The article can be considered interesting especially by municipalities and public bodies who have to deliver services and infrastructures for the territory they manage and to face, at the same time, the availability of less resources. The rental services of e-bikes experimented on the Island of Elba is based on the costs sharing among the Municipalities of Portoferraio and Rio and the beneficiaries themselves and on the possibility to obtain electric bicycles at an advantageous price.

 The article includes a first technical description concerning how the measure was developed. Therefore, the measure is further described taking into considerations the hoteliers' point of view

## Overview:

The article describes the measure envisaged by the Civitas Destinations project relating the activation of integrated packages "mobility + accommodation". On the island of Elba, the measure was developed with the aim of promoting soft mobility among tourists, and in particular providing e-bikes for hotels' guests.

The staff of the two municipalities of Portoferraio and Rio have taken on a long and complex administrative procedure, composed of two parts, one aimed to select the rental operator and the other to find the accommodation facilities. For reasons of equity, in fact, public bodies must be extremely rigorous in identifying beneficiaries, both the intermediate and the final.

The objectives were however very clear: to work for the promotion of sustainable mobility among tourists, to facilitate the spread of bicycle use, to discourage the use of private cars and to give strength and vibrancy to the hospitality sector.

Due to the low availability of resources (the measure had to be adopted on a small scale, with experimental purposes), the staff of the two Municipalities decided to share the costs with the accommodation facilities that would have been selected, in this way being able to offer bicycles to more hotels and campsites.

### Challenges & Opportunities of Mobility & Accommodation initiatives

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To promote soft mobility on the Island discouraging the use of private cars</li><li>• To optimize small resources, sharing costs and goods with all the beneficiaries</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long-term rental of e-bikes to provide mobility service for hotels' guests</li><li>• Support hoteliers in providing mobility services for their guests</li></ul>

## E-bikes to enhance soft mobility and local economy

Every inch of the Island of Elba offers beautiful landscapes, wonderful beaches and treasures of nature and biodiversity. According to some hoteliers from Elba, therefore, the location is a relevant key of success for accommodation facilities; but it may not be enough. To be really competitive, accommodation facilities have to provide additional services for customers and to support them in whatever they need. Providing mobility services is a good choice, because moving quickly and easily is essential, especially considering the general tendency of tourists to reduce the length of the stay and the consequent need to optimize travel time.

On the Island of Elba, within the Civitas Destinations project, both the Municipalities of Portoferraio and Rio have provided e-bikes for some accommodation facilities with the long-term rental formula, in order to facilitate the activation of “mobility + accommodation” packages. The measure can be considered interesting for several reasons. First of all, the long-term rental of vehicles is a good way to test a new solution before dealing with a purchase. Furthermore, as the rental costs are shared among the Municipalities and the beneficiaries and not afforded only by the Municipalities themselves, it has been possible to rent a larger number of e-bikes and, consequently, to provide a benefit for a larger number of accommodation facilities. In addition, by virtue of the collective form of the initiative, a more advantageous price has been guaranteed thanks to the discount made by the rental operator.

### The long-term rental of 40 e-bikes: general description of the measure and the administrative procedure.

In the last two years, within the Civitas Destinations project, the two Municipalities of Portoferraio and Rio (Island of Elba) were committed in the implementation of the integrated “mobility & accommodation” package

Due to the strong touristic vocation of the Island, it has been considered quite important to contribute to the vibrancy of this sector, providing tools and opportunities for the implementation of the accommodation facilities’ offer.

Both the Municipality of Portoferraio and Rio decided to direct their efforts to the promotion of soft mobility, financially supporting hoteliers in a long term rental of e-bikes for their customers.

The decision came from a survey that has been held in advance among hoteliers, in order to better understand their needs and desires in terms of transport services for their guests and to collect ideas and suggestions about the general implementation of sustainable mobility. Some hoteliers and camping owners in different areas of the Island of Elba were interviewed, with a semi-structured questionnaire: people were asked the same questions (equal stimulus) but the answers were free and not pre-defined.

In the implementation of the measure the staff took into consideration also the citizens’ and stakeholders’ consultations that were held in the previous years within the Civitas Destinations project; those consultations were aimed to acquire information and opinion about mobility problems and implementation opportunities in order to draft a Sustainable Mobility Plan for the Island of Elba.

According to the collected data and opinions, the bike sector seemed to be one of the most promising.

Through a two-phase administrative procedure, one bike-rental operator and 11 accommodation facilities have been selected and directly involved in the measure.

Concerning the accommodation facilities, the selection criteria have been defined with the aim of setting out a ranking list considering the good practices of sustainability already adopted by them: energy and water saving, presence of photovoltaic panels, mobility services already offered and so on.

The operator was selected through the START system, an automatic procedure used in the calls for tender launched by Public Authorities.

When submitting tender documents, hoteliers have chosen for a 6-months or 1-year rental period, taking into account their opening period and the financial issue.

The procedure foresaw that the two Municipalities will have covered the costs with the contribution of Civitas Destinations for the first year (or six months) of experimentation, for the first transport to the Island of the bicycles and for the maintenance and assistance services for the first year. Rental service, maintenance and assistance costs for the second experimental period, instead, will have to be covered by the accommodation facilities themselves. Besides, if the test were successful, at the end of the rental period the e-bikes could be redeemed by the hoteliers.

Rental contracts were signed between every single accommodation facility and the e-bike company aiming at easing the instalments’ amount and the

payment deadline. In addition, agreements were signed between every single accommodation facility and the corresponding Municipality, in order to define every aspect of the measure: number, model and code of the rented e-bikes, type of rental service (one year or six months), amounts to be covered by the parties, etc.

Accommodation facilities had also to present a bank guarantee before the activation of the service, in order to avoid bad payment issues. The guarantee will be given back at the end of the two-years if all the costs will be covered properly. The administrative and financial procedure was quite complex, but it must be said that the accommodation facilities would have the advantage of receiving the e-bikes almost at half the original rental cost, thanks to the contribution of the two Municipalities and to the special prize given due to the collective formula of the action.

The type of e-bike that was chosen was of the brand Benelli, model "Classica LX", equipped with an electric motor, continuous rated power not exceeding 250W, battery with 360 W/h capacity, 3-speed Shimano (commercial value € 1.490,00) provided by the F.lli Gallo Auto S.A.S. company.

This city-bike model was specifically thought to fit the needs of the identified target users, mainly composed by tourists rather than sportive cyclists (who are usually coming on the island with their own bike).

### The e-bikes delivering day and considerations about the measure according to the accommodation facilities owners

On the 16th of June 2018 30 e-bikes were delivered to the following 8 hotels in the territory of Portoferraio: Hotel "Gli Acquerelli", "Hotel Mare", "Hotel Tirrena", "Hotel Scoglio Bianco", "Farmhouse Casa Marisa", "Apartment



Delivering of e-bikes to hoteliers in Portoferraio

Belvedere", "Hotel Biodola", "Camping Scaglieri". The delivering ceremony was attended by the City Councilors Angelo Del Mastro and Adalberto Bertucci.

Regarding the territory of Rio, during a ceremony held on 19 June 2018 at the presence of City Councilor Cinzia Battaglia, 10 bikes were delivered to the following three accommodation facilities: "B&B Il Melo Cotogno", "B&B Capo Pero" and "Camping Canapai".

At the beginning of summer 2018 the service was ready and available for guests.

One year after the activation, hoteliers were interviewed in order to have a feedback about the service. They provided interesting points of view, pointing out strengths and weaknesses.

They underlined that providing e-bikes for customers is a very good service in general, but mostly during the low season (May-June and September-October), because in summer it is too hot for tourists to move by bike, unless to be very fond and trained. In addition, due to the lack of a network of safe cycle paths on the island and the presence of many vehicles in mid-July and August, trips for untrained people are limited to short ride around the hotel area.

Some hoteliers have proven themselves to be more active than others in the dissemination activity. The service is described or even mentioned on the websites of all the accommodation facilities, but some of them during summer 2018 used to promote it also through social networks. Furthermore, the two Municipalities of Portoferraio and Rio have disseminated the measure on the local website and the social network local page, sometimes in cooperation with the accommodation facilities. In the future it could be useful to organise a stronger promotional campaign by a professional in the



Electric bike "Classica LX" model

advertising sector, in order to achieve better value for the measure.

Some hoteliers have pointed out also their little experience with e-bikes; for this reason at the beginning of the rental period they took a caution approach: they didn't promote very much the e-bikes to their customers and they used to have sometimes short bike-rides in order to acquire familiarity with the bike, the recharging

Moreover, Elba island seems to be more and more interested in the implementation of cycling, also considering the involvement of the seven Municipalities of the Island in the regional project "Ciclovia tirrenica", which is a strategic project with the aim of creating a unique cycle path (560 km long) along the coastline of the Region of Tuscany, Elba included.

In general, promoting e-bikes is expected to have positive effects encouraging tourists not to use their car to get around the island, thus reducing traffic and improving quality of life and the attractiveness of Elba for tourists.

### Learn more on this topic

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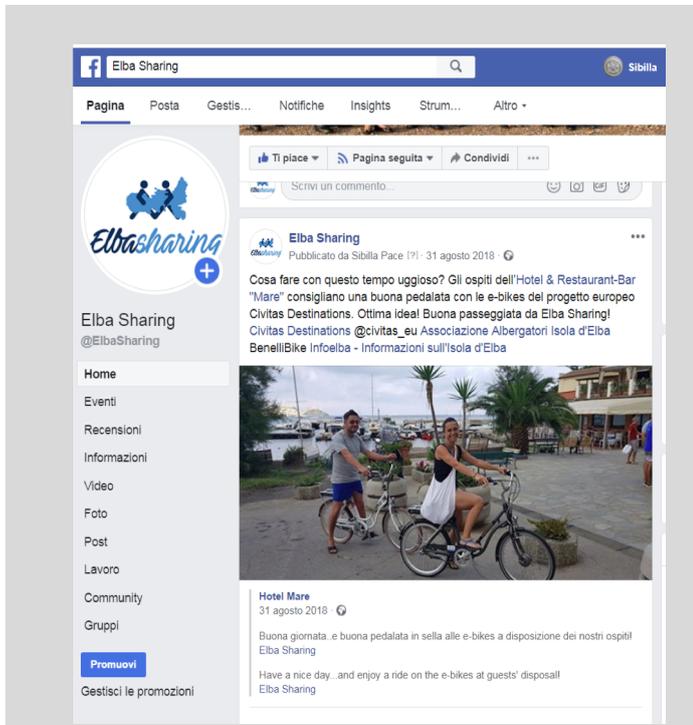
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Delivering of e-bikes to hoteliers in Portoferraio

mechanism, the lock-unlock system and so on. Gradually, they become more confident and more willing to promote the service. Some of them at the end of the first rental period were very enthusiastic not only for the new service provided to customers, but for the experienced smart mobility by themselves.

## Conclusion

The opinions provided by the hoteliers are very useful for identifying possible development and improvement scenarios of the measure, which may be adopted in the future.

Therefore, despite the fact that some of them have expected a greater demand for e-bikes from customers, providing alternative mobility solutions to tourists may be a real added value for the Island. In fact, the electric vehicles could really be the future of mobility on Elba. Despite the narrow streets and the lack of cycling routes, e-bikes represent a feasible option to move around the island respecting the environment. They could be used regularly for short distance trips.