

Tools for strengthening pedestrian contribution to sustainable urban mobility

Background

Numerous studies indicate that pedestrians are important to achieving sustainable urban mobility. Walking is the most climate-friendly and the least space-consuming mode of transport. Pedestrian-friendly cities take up less area than other cities, which benefits the total carbon footprint. Pedestrian traffic also contributes to creating cities with human dimensions, which boosts the overall quality of life. Last but not least, walking contributes to improved health through increased physical activity and by reducing the emission of contaminants from motorised traffic.

Despite the increasing interest in walking, relatively few approaches and design tools have been developed for working systematically with pedestrian traffic. There is only sporadic knowledge about the reasons why people walk, how people use walking, and how planning and specific design can motivate people to walk more.

Project objective

The project will develop tools, approaches and concepts for strengthening pedestrian traffic. Focus is on developing knowledge in close collaboration with local users – potential pedestrians, planners and other actors.

The inclusive approach is important to understanding the needs of different users and designing relevant, useful solutions. For this, the concept of 'living lab' is applied. It means a living lab where different actors jointly develop, test and assess solutions.

The concept of living lab is unfolded in a knowledge-based process that is carried out in an open collaboration forum in four steps. First, data on pedestrian traffic in selected areas is collected and analysed to understand the special local dynamics. Then, local actors are involved, e.g., by being physically present in the local area and working on ideas with locals. Step 3 involves testing ideas in specific urban spaces and evaluating them. Step 4 takes experiences to a new city to be further enhanced. London, Oslo, Brussels and Copenhagen are included in the work.

Communication and use of experiences

Experiences are gathered and communicated to the public. The tools will also be used by the participants for both additional research and for practical consultancy services by the participants in Denmark, Norway and Sweden as well as in other countries where COWI operates.

Participants

The project will be carried out in cooperation between COWI DK, COWI Norge, COWI Sverige, Arkitema and Roskilde University.