GOWITHFLOW'S ELECTRIC BIKE PROGRAM

Summary

As a mobility solution provider, GoWithFlow assisted the University of Porto in implementing an electric bike program for students and staff. The program contributed to reducing parking pressure and congestion, lowering greenhouse gas emissions and pollution and encouraging healthier lifestyles.

Company background

GoWithFlow is part of the Galp group and defines itself as a sustainable mobility resource management solution provider. They help businesses to transition towards low-emission fleets and provide tools to manage employees' mobility efficiently. The company manages thousands of vehicles, electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and consumers across multiple software and service implementations in corporations and communities worldwide.

The mobility context

GoWithFlow has put in place the electric bike program at the University of Porto. It is part of a national program in 15 higher education institutions, with the goal of placing more than 3,200 bikes on campuses across the country. The University has several buildings spread out throughout the city of Porto. Most facilities are easily accessible through public transport. Parking can be a challenge, especially for buildings in more central locations.

Best practice

GoWithFlow supports the operation of a fleet of 265 electric bikes available to students and academic staff for a 20€ monthly fee. The company offers a bike reservation system and an easy-to-manage monitoring system for program administrators. The program started in 2017, but the bikes were installed gradually during 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Users can use the mobile application, developed by GoWithFlow, to consult the individual indicators (like the kilometers biked and emissions avoided), access the location of the bikes in real time, and, if necessary, activate the theft mode.

Program administrators, in this case the University, can access information about the bike status in real time, program indicators and historical data through the GowithFlow platform.

Results

The bike program has a capacity of up to 265 users at the same time. In the beginning of 2021, over 163,000 km had already been biked by users, avoiding over 27,000 kgCO2eq emissions. The program has also contributed to reducing traffic in the urban area, supported healthier habits and reduced parking pressure in the region. Furthermore, GoWithFlow estimates that the program allowed commuters, the university and society to save around 13,000 euros in parking costs, fuel cost and the impact on users' health.

Overcoming challenges

The two main challenges were unforeseen bike exchanges (due to bike maintenance issues or user's desistance) and handling theft. To tackle them, GoWithFlow adapted the system integrating higher flexibility and integrated a theft mode. In two out of three cases, the theft mode allowed the bike to be located and recovered.