

Electric transport in Figueres, Spain

Keywords	Electric buses, PV panels, Motorbikes
Main photos	
Objectives	Implementation of a medium-term plan based on the incorporation of electric public transport, the creation of dissuasive car parks, cycle lanes, the extension of pedestrian areas and the formation of an inter-urban transport plan designed to reduce pollution, acoustic contamination and problems of access to the city centre of Figueres.
Description	<p>In 2007, Figueres decided to commence a twelve-year plan with the aim of creating a global sustainable transport system. The first action was the purchase of the first electric bus in Catalonia. In order to ensure the ecological viability of this project, the installation of PV panels on various municipal buildings has also been initiated in order to return to the national grid the energy consumed when charging this type of vehicle.</p> <p>The purchase of the bus was financed by the City Council of Figueres in collaboration with the Provincial Authority of Girona and the Government of Catalonia. As a result of having received such economic support, the bus whose original cost ascended to 240,000€ cost the citizens of Figueres only 48,000€. The second electric bus will be operative before November 2009 with further additions to the fleet foreseen for 2010 and 2011.</p> <p>At the same time, in order to ensure coherence to the project, the City Council has purchased a number of electric motorcycles for a pilot project in which municipal workers and a number of local police are travelling around the city on these vehicles.</p>
Results / Achievements	<p>Figueres is the first Catalanian and only the fifth Spanish city to put an electric bus in use. Thanks to its reduced size it is perfect for the narrow streets which until now were inaccessible to public transport.</p> <p>Although the initial cost of the vehicle may appear to be high, once operative it has proved to be extremely economical at a calculated cost of 7.5 a day.</p> <p>This is a zero emission vehicle which produces no acoustic contamination whatsoever.</p> <p>As a result, the citizens of Figueres have received the new vehicle with great enthusiasm. Its highly visual presence in the city greatly helps to create a general consensus concerning further actions of the Local Sustainable Transport Plan.</p>
Friendly advice for replication	<p>Certain factors should be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An electric bus is only sustainable if at the same time the city is prepared to invest in its ability to return to the national grid that energy consumed using renewable energy forms. • Once their useful life is concluded batteries still pose an important problem on a global scale. It is essential not to forget this drawback and is something which urgently needs to be addressed. • If your city has a great number of steep streets, an electric bus is possibly not the best solution. So as to be efficient, a route must be designed which permits a daily use of about 120kms. 6 hours are required to recharge the batteries.
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