

# THE INNOVATIVE STATION-FREE BIKE SHARING SYSTEM FROM CHINA

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The innovative station-free bike sharing system implemented in Beijing (China) is being adopted in more than 100 cities of the world.

Through this system the bicycles are available to ride anytime and anywhere without the need to reach a central station place. Thanks to the GPS-enabled app it is possible to search the bikes available everywhere in the city that are typically fitted with GPS locators. People use the app to scan and unlock a nearby bike and ride to their final destination for a small fee, charged electronically, which is equal to 0.5 - 1.0 yuan (7.4 US cents) for a 30-minute ride.



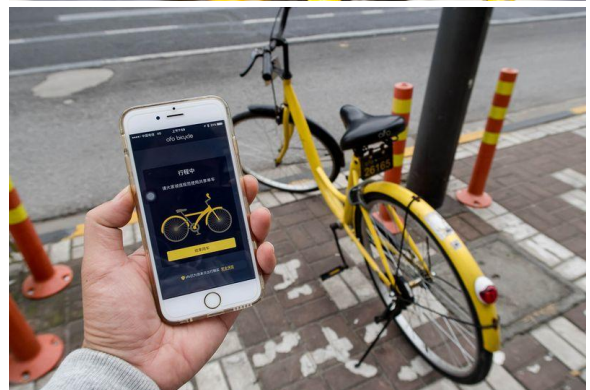
Bicycles traditionally ruled everywhere in China and, until the turn of the century they were the main form of transport. In this framework in Beijing and abroad this successful business bike sharing model solves what planners call the *first-mile-last-mile problem* helping people get from their homes to a bus stop, for example, or from a subway station to their final destination.

The innovative bike-sharing system in China is heated up by two companies, [Ofo](#) and [Mobike](#). Found in 2014 as a student project, Ofo was supported by the internet technology, pushing forward its station-free bicycle-sharing-system. Today these two companies are valued [more than \\$1 billion each](#) taking up more than 90 percent of China's bike-sharing market and are backed by big-name investors.

According to the China E-Commerce Research Center, there were 18.9 million users of shared bicycles nationwide at the end of 2016. The number is expected to hit 50 million by the end of 2017. The sharing economy is expected to grow in China [by 40% annually](#) to account for more than 10 percent of the country's GDP by 2020. 10 million are the shared bikes actually available in Chinese cities.

The Chinese bike-sharing model is more convenient than others because users can get and leave bicycles anywhere, even in remote neighborhoods, a ready to use commodity. The innovative system is going global also because with respect to other external competitors, it doesn't require government subsidies.

Chinese governmental policies are encouraging the adoption of the green two-wheels transport system because more connectivity increases access, lowers



environmental impact and enhances transportation. The congested city sidewalks have led to urban management actions and to logistics services concerned with the two-wheelers, and today the bike-sharing industry and the government cooperate to enhance the mobility system throughout the country.

In order to ensure rational allocation of bicycles along streets and public squares, avoid thefts of spare parts to sell, in collaboration with major bicycle manufacturers and bike-sharing operators, the China's Ministry of Transport has come up with a few guidelines to both, boost and regulate this thriving sector. On July 2017 a set of industry [standards](#) on the production, operation, and maintenance of shared bikes, and regulating the management of deposits, handling of customer complaints, and compensation for users were released.

Additional benefits, as induced investments and consumptions, include new job opportunities and manufacturing business, the production of the vehicles for sharing, bikes maintenance and infrastructure building, as primarily the bike paths, or more central stations where it is possible to return damaged shared bicycles to be fixed. Specific employment and taxation policies are being developed to assure the sharing economy's growth and companies will have to start offering insurance to their customers, too.

The station-free bike-sharing-system is actually expanding into new markets. Mobike is available in 130 cities in the world, including locations in Japan, European countries and United Kingdom and has recently been awarded by WWF with the [Climate Solver Sustainable Urban Mobility Special Award](#). Ofo is present in more than [50 Chinese cities as well as in London and Singapore](#), with plans to be in 20 countries by end of 2017, including Japan, Spain, France, Germany and the Philippines.

Thanks this new technology, accessible to students and professionals from many cities in the world who commonly use mobile phones, the shared bikes systems can be part of green urban transport plans and contribute in solving urgent problems like congestions and pollution.

## To know more

[Ofo website](#)

[Ofo in Facebook](#)

[Mobike website](#)

[Article in english.gov.cn](#)

[Articles in news.xinhuanet.com](#)

[Article in Chinadaily.com](#)

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[Bicycle sharing system in Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bicycle_sharing_system)

