

The Dutch national cycle network (LF-network)

The Dutch National Cycling Platform (Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform) has designed and developed a network of long distance cycle routes (so called LF-routes) throughout the Netherlands, with a total length of more than 4.500 km. With the support of the national government and regional authorities all of these LF-routes are signposted in two directions. The most important target group of the network are long distance cyclists; especially people that like to make cycle holidays – long or short.



The construction and the further development of the network is based on simple principles:

- Connecting touristic, rural areas and city centres; (city centres: because they are often interesting for the cyclists, because they give connection with public transport/railway stations and also because a big part of our target group is living in the cities – we give them an interesting cycle route to the rural area around the city);
- Using existing infrastructure: cycle-paths and quiet roads (safe, less traffic);
- Not creating the fastest routes, but routes where you can enjoy the landscape;
- Realizing good and logical connections between the routes (creating a network; cyclists can choose);
- Realizing good connections with regional/local routes and route networks;
- Realizing good connections with international routes;
- Passing a lot of points of interest (museum, viewing points etc.) and other places to stop (restaurants, accommodation for overnight stays etc.)



With the help of local experts (local authorities, but also local cyclists; making the routes also 'their' routes) we designed the definitive route, we signposted them and we produced maps. We also produced promotional material. We are now focussing on the maintenance of the network, on further product development and on marketing activities (based on a long term marketing strategy).

Effects using national cycle network

Based on recent survey under Dutch people (published in April 2009)

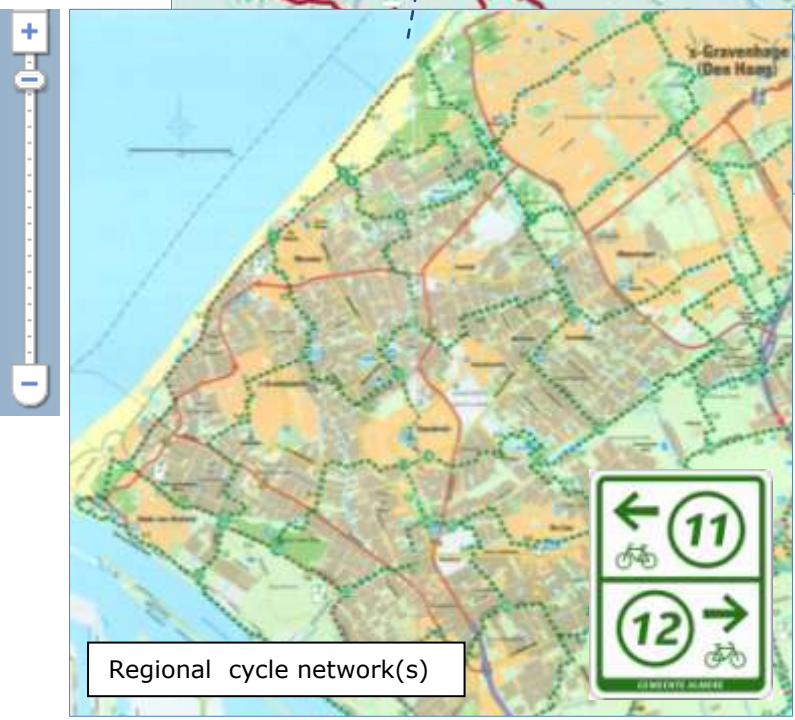
- 50% of the Dutch people (> 18 yr) know about the LF-network (2003: 43%);
- 16% of the Dutch people (> 18 yr) – about 2 million persons – use the LF-network (2003: 11%);
- Profile LF-cyclist (1), average age: 40% between 35-55 year, 43% 55 year and older;
- Profile LF-cyclist (2), average group size: 2,3 persons;
- Profile LF-cyclist (3): relative high (higher than average) education level and income;
- Yearly 460.000 cycle holidays via LF-routes (2003: 400.000);
- More than 3,6 million overnight stays/year (average of 8 overnight stays per cycle tour);
- Very popular addresses: private guesthouses (organized in foundation called "Friends of cyclists");
- Average length of a day trip during a LF cycle tour: 80 km;
- 82% of the LF-cyclists make a break for other activities;
- Most popular breaks: visiting café/restaurant (58%) and villages/cities (49%);
- Average spending during LF cycle tour: € 71 per day (consumptions: € 23, accommodation: € 26);
- Economic effects: about € 250 million per year (more than € 50.000 per year per km LF route!).

Routeoverzicht

— Bewegwijzerde Landelijke Fietsroute
1 Nummer LF-route



National cycle network



Regional cycle network(s)



Fietsplatform

In the Netherlands there are a lot of organizations (more or less) involved with recreational cycling/ cycle tourism. Because of that, there is always need of co-operation and co-ordination. Therefore Fietsplatform was founded in 1987 as an "umbrella-organisation" (public-private partnership, foundation). It is a small organization (10 employees, 100 volunteers). Members are the Dutch tourist' union 'ANWB', the Dutch cyclist' union 'Fietzersbond', the Union for cycle-touring clubs 'NTFU' and the national organization for the cycling industry in the Netherlands 'RAI'. The work of Fietsplatform is financially supported by the member organizations and the 12 Dutch provinces(/regions).

Together with the member organizations (and their individual members, the cyclists) and with the support of the national and regional authorities (Ministries and Provinces) Fietsplatform tries improve the facilities for recreational cycling/ cycle tourism in the Netherlands and the use of these facilities.

Fietsplatform has two main tasks:

1. *Functioning as a national expertise- and co-ordination centre*
Giving impulses to the improving and the promotion of recreational cycling/ cycle tourism in NL (collecting and exchanging information, benchmarking, pointing at specific problems, organizing excursions and study-trips);
2. *Functioning as the project leader for the National Cycle Network*
Development (signing), maintenance, improvement and promotion of the Dutch network of long distance cycle-routes (4.500 km) as a basis for cycle holidays and weekend trips.

(Recreational) cycling in the Netherlands

As a part of its role as national expertise centre, Fietsplatform published in April 2009 new figures about recreational cycling in the Netherlands. Some key figures:

- 18 million bicycles (16 million inhabitants); 84% of the Dutch people do own one or more bicycles;
- 2008: 1.4 million new bicycles sold (average € 688; e-bike very popular); 40% for recreation;
- Cycle infrastructure: more than 80.000 km (cycle paths and quiet roads);
- 205 million recreational cycle tours (one hour or more), made by 52% of the Dutch inhabitants;
- Average length cycle tour: 19 km. Average duration (incl. stops): 2,5 hour;
- 3.9 million holidays within NL with cycle tours; 1 million holidays with cycling as main activity;
- Economic effects (1): recreational cyclists spend in total about € 750 million per year on the road;
- Economic effects (2): recreational cyclists spend about € 450 million per year for bicycle equipment.



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