

Rental systems – cooperation between electricity company and nature park

Introduction

Many touristic regions have now discovered the pedelec as a new means of transportation for leisure activity. Also in the Austrian nature park „Almenland“ (province of Styria) a new pedelec rental system has been established. For this reason, the VERBUND (Austria's biggest electricity company) and the regional association „Naturpark Almenland“ have founded the „VERBUND Mobile Power Region GmbH“ (MPR), a company that has now purchased 50 pedelecs of the Swiss „Flyer“.

Facts and Figures

The pedelecs (40 bicycles of the C-series and 10 bicycles of the S-series (mountain bikes)) can be rented at 5 rental stations and the battery can be exchanged at 3 battery exchange stations. Local touristic businesses or restaurants host the rental stations and use a special software that has been developed by the MPR. If someone wants to rent a pedelec he/she has to submit her/his name and address which is then entered into a software programme that automatically establishes the contract. The contract has to be signed before use. After returning the pedelec the end-time is entered into the programme which calculates the price. The rates are the following: C-series (1h: 6€, 4h: 12€, 1 day: 17€), S-series (1h: 7€, 4h: 14€, 1 day: 20€). The bill can then be paid in the modes as offered by the operator. For every rented pedelec the operator receives a commission. At the end of every month the earnings of the rental less the commission are transferred to the MPR.

For 2011, the MPR plans to additionally establish a fixed rental station at the lake from where the surrounding businesses can rent the pedelecs for a monthly fee per pedelec. As described above, the customer has to sign a contract. With this contract the customer assumes the liability for the pedelec. This means he is responsible for parking and locking the pedelec accordingly. Every hotel has a list with the prices for the spare parts according to the supplier „Flyer“. If some part of the pedelec breaks the customer has to pay for this broken part. At the end of the year the MPR takes stock of the pedelecs. If one is missing, the business that gives the pedelec is charged the asset value of the pedelec. Amortization period for determining the asset value is 5 years, e.g. if a 2,5 years old pedelec was missing, the hotel would have to pay half of the original price. Optionally, the businesses that participate in the long-term renting have the possibility to contract a theft insurance. The servicing of the pedelecs is done by a local retailer who is commissioned by the MPR.

Box of advice

- Energy suppliers can be possible partners for your pedelec rental system.
- Look for local partners such as restaurants, hotels or touristic facilities where rental stations can be placed.
- Choose pedelecs of a high quality that do not break down easily.
- Clarify the liability with the customers; consider a theft insurance for the pedelecs.
- Look for a local retailer who can do the servicing of the pedelecs.

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