

Inside the Ride: How DECATHLON designs the Future of Cycling



Editorial



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As our world navigates profound environmental and urban shifts, the challenge of mobility has become a defining opportunity. In growing cities, residents are demanding more sustainable and accessible ways to travel. Cycling is meeting this demand, emerging not just as a practical transport solution, but as a symbol of conscious, modern living.

At Decathlon, we've believed in this potential for decades. Since the 1980s, when we started designing our very first bikes in-house, we've invested in making cycling more accessible, more reliable, and more enjoyable, for beginners to top athletes alike. Today, we assemble and sell more than 450 bikes every hour worldwide, a testament to the global appetite for mobility. That vision has shaped everything we do. Because we don't just design for movement. We design products that are ready to play, ready to ride, and ready to last.

Becoming a mobility partner is a journey we've been building steadily, by listening to users, designing closer to real use, and creating systems that favour durability and flexibility. Our approach goes beyond the product: we design apps to expand the service ecosystem, offer subscription and second-life models to boost circularity, and invest in durable, qualitative bikes built to last and be shared.

In 2025, this commitment takes on symbolic meaning. As the Tour de France departs from Lille, just steps away from our global headquarters and the B'TWIN Village, our home of cycling innovation, we are proud to show the world what this vision looks like : from elite performance to everyday motion.

We know the challenges ahead are complex. But we also know this: cycling can be a powerful lever for change, helping cities breathe, helping people move, and helping us all ride forward, together.

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Irwin WOUTS

DECATHLON General Manager Sport Domain - Cycling - Mobility - Urban gliding

40 years of design cycling The story of Decathlon's cycling revolution



In 1976, the same year Decathlon opened its very first store, a few bicycles quietly took their place among the shelves, sourced from small regional manufacturers and sold under a generic label. It wasn't meant to be revolutionary. And yet, it sparked something. A belief. A vision. A quiet determination to one day **do more than simply sell bikes : to create them**.

By the mid-1980s, that ambition had turned into action. In 1986, Decathlon designed and built the **Challenger** bicycle frame : the first gear entirely imagined, developed by Decathlon teams. It started a journey that would redefine how performance and accessibility could coexist on two wheels. This pioneering bike didn't just represent a new product; it became the spark that led to the creation of **Decathlon Production**, a dedicated in-house structure focused on designing, testing, and manufacturing equipment entirely "made by Decathlon".

From the 90', everything accelerated

In 1999, Decathlon introduced the **B'Twin 5**, representing a true revolution for cyclists, a symbol of versatility launched with the slogan: «*As comfortable everywhere as anywhere else.*» It struck a chord with everyday riders looking for design, quality, simplicity, and value. In 2005, the **Supportiv bib shorts** set new standards in comfort and support, reflecting Decathlon's growing appetite for technical excellence.

**4+ million bicycles produced
each year**

Then came transformation

In 2006, Decathlon Cycle officially became the brand **B'Twin**, a name that would soon resonate across Europe as a reference in everyday cycling. But the ambition didn't stop at daily commuters. In 2000 B'Twin entered the professional arena, becoming the **technical partner of AG2R cycling team**. The road to elite racing had begun.

The momentum continued in 2009 with the launch of the **B'Twin Club**, a community platform offering advice, route planning, and ways for cyclists to connect. One year later, the opening of the B'Twin Village in Lille marked a bold new step : a 184,000 m² hub dedicated entirely to cycling innovation, design, and testing.



Building closer to the ride

Today, Decathlon is Europe's leading bicycle manufacturer and retailer. This leadership is rooted in a robust industrial strategy that prioritises proximity, agility, and sustainability. **In Europe, 95% of Decathlon bikes are assembled locally, while in China, the figure reaches 100%.**

To support this, Decathlon relies on a **network of 125 suppliers** and operates **two company-owned factories**, one in France (AML) and one in China.

By partnering with manufacturing hubs in Romania, Italy, Poland, and Portugal, the brand also strengthens its ability to adapt quickly to market needs, reduce environmental impact, and contribute to a more resilient European mobility ecosystem.

Nearly 40 years after that first bike frame, our ambition has grown, not changed. What began as a mission to democratise cycling has evolved into a commitment to make the bike a transformative asset for society.

Today, we explore new ways of learning, moving, and playing through cycling: from family mobility with our cargo bike range, to intuitive innovation like Owuru, the first CVT automatic motor developed by Decathlon to simplify e-biking in daily life.

Racing into the future

In recent years, Decathlon's vision for performance cycling has reached new heights with the rise of Van Rysel. Born in Lille and built on decades of know-how, Van Rysel channels the brand's racing spirit into cutting-edge road bikes and apparel. In just a few seasons, it has earned its place at the elite level, now equipping world-class athletes, including Decathlon AG2R La Mondiale team at the 2025 Tour de France Grand Départ.

1/4 bikes assembled in the EU is by Decathlon

Our mission : Making cycling for all



For nearly four decades, Decathlon has pursued a clear ambition: to make cycling more accessible, not just in terms of price, but in experience. From entry-level models to expert gear, every product is designed to remove barriers: intuitive, reliable, and ready to ride. Whether it's a child's first pedal, a commuter's daily journey, or an athlete's peak performance, the same principle applies : **cycling should be easy to begin, rewarding to continue, and available to everyone.**

From first pedals to everyday rides

Our commitment starts at the beginning: with adaptive bikes for young children, learning tools, and step-by-step support for those discovering or rediscovering cycling. We place particular focus on balance bikes, the most effective and intuitive way for children to learn to ride confidently and quickly. Unlike traditional stabilisers, which tend to delay balance acquisition, balance bikes foster real autonomy from the start.

In-store advice, digital tutorials, and co-designed innovations help remove friction from the first experience. Whether it's learning to ride, choosing the right size, or building confidence in traffic: everything is thought through, tested, and made easy to use.

This inclusive approach is rooted in a belief: that **cycling should be open to everyone**. And as cities and lifestyles evolve, the bicycle is gaining new meaning; not only as a sport, but as a smart, sustainable way of moving through the world.

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Beyond accessibility, cycling is a powerful force for good. It contributes to health and well-being, creates quieter, safer cities, and helps reduce our environmental impact. At Decathlon, we believe that by encouraging people to ride more, we are not only enabling personal journeys, we are also preserving the very nature we seek to enjoy.

Irwin WOUTS

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Understanding tomorrow's cyclists

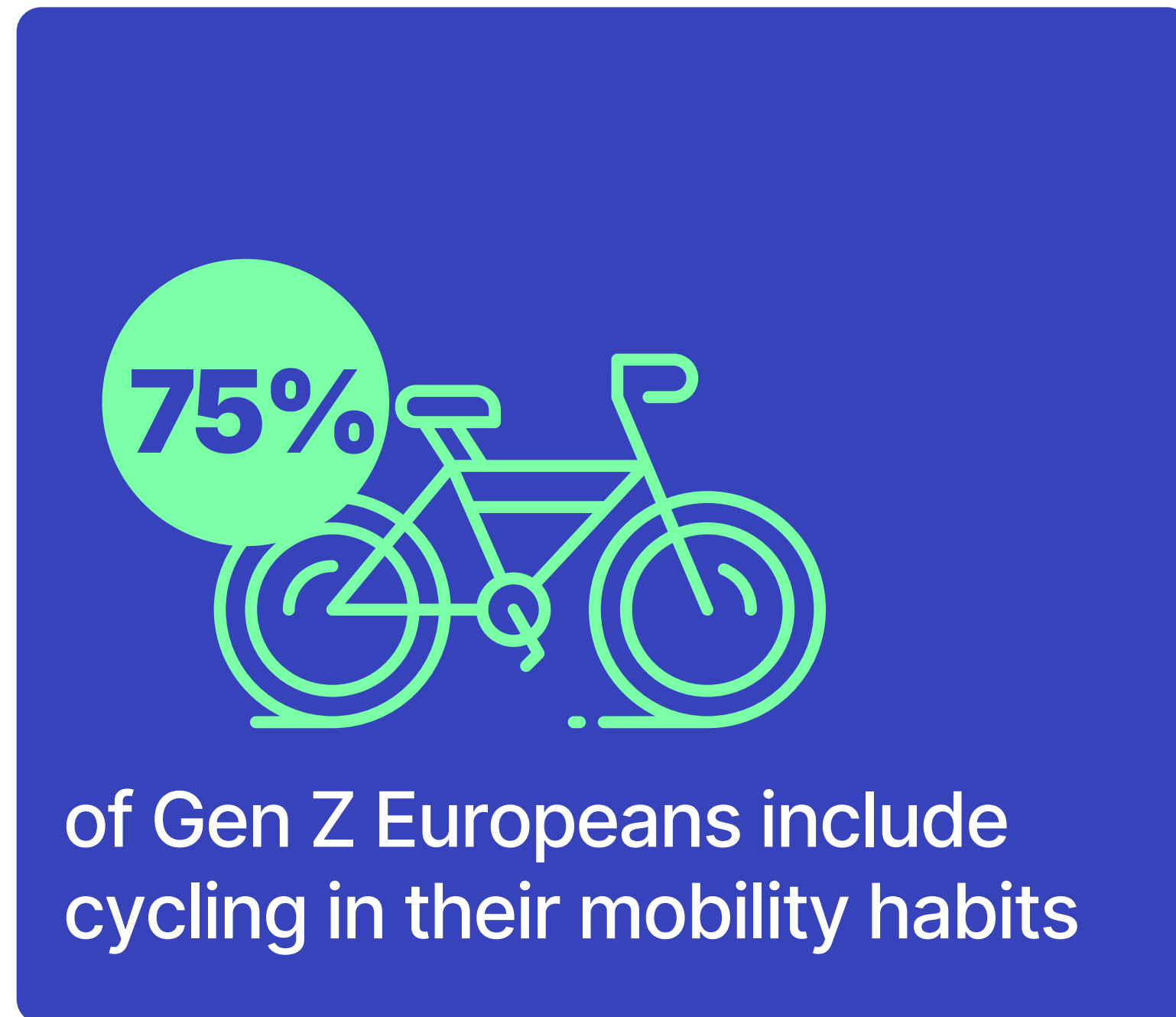
As cities evolve and environmental concerns grow, cycling is emerging as a key mode of sustainable mobility. It's economical, low-impact, and aligns with the desire for healthier, freer ways to move.

Across Europe, public policies are encouraging this shift through improved infrastructure and incentives. But while interest is rising, particularly among Gen Z, barriers remain. To better understand these dynamics, Decathlon conducted a cross-European survey¹ on how young people experience cycling.

The findings confirm a generational shift: **cycling has become a lifestyle choice for young Europeans**, especially in urban settings where freedom, well-being, and environmental consciousness are increasingly central. Nearly **75% of young adults cycle regularly**, with over half riding at least once a week. Their motivations go far beyond mobility: 79% cycle to stay fit, 68% value the freedom and flexibility it offers, and 64% see it as a way to reduce their environmental footprint.

While leisure and sport remain the most common uses, this generation is increasingly open to making cycling part of their daily routine. Yet **safety concerns and infrastructure gaps remain critical barriers**. Notably, 62% cite risky driver behavior, and 50% point to the lack of dedicated cycle lanes as major deterrents. Just half of respondents consider their city truly suitable for everyday cycling.

This rising demand calls for action. Young cyclists are clear about what they need to make cycling a more frequent, practical part of their lives: **more protected bike lanes** (54%), **secure parking** (43%), and **financial support for purchasing bikes** (31%) rank high on their list of priorities. These insights reinforce a growing movement, one that calls for solutions that are accessible and aligned with everyday needs. It's in this space that Decathlon has a meaningful role to play: by listening, innovating, and designing cycling experiences built for the realities of today's youth and for the future of mobility.



Inside the B'twin Village



Inside the B'twin Village, cycling products and experiences are not just imagined: they're observed, built, tested, and continuously improved. This is where Decathlon's design philosophy comes to life: creating meaningful, user-centred products that respond to real-world needs.

Opened in 2010 on the site of a former air field turned into a tobacco factory, the B'TWIN Village is Decathlon's dedicated hub for cycling. At the heart of a region steeped in cycling heritage, this **50,000m² site** brings together over **1,800 teammates** with a shared ambition: to innovate, test and deliver better experiences for all cyclists.

Everything at the B'TWIN Village is designed to accelerate product development and bring teams closer to the user experience. Under one roof, you'll find:

- **Design studios** working side by side with engineers;
- **Test labs and climate chambers** simulating extreme conditions;
- **On-site test tracks**, where products are ridden and refined daily.
- **Retail and service areas**, to offer a complete user journey, including expert advice, repair workshops, and hands-on trials.

Designing by experience, not assumption

At the heart of B'TWIN Village, the **API (Prototypes Lab)** plays a vital role in turning ideas into tangible, testable gears. This open-access workshop is where designers, engineers, and prototypists collaborate closely to give form to their concepts, not just to be tested, but to be industrialised at scale.

This hands-on, iterative approach enables teams to feel the product as users would. In the case of the three-wheel bike for toddlers, because 3-year-olds can't express detailed feedback, the team built a **full-scale adult replica** of the child's bike to let designers experience the ergonomics themselves. This led to a seemingly small, but essential change: a brake lever positioned closer to the handlebar, making it easier for tiny hands to grip and use.

Prototyping at Decathlon isn't just a step in the process, it's a way of thinking that places user experience, not assumption, at the core of every design decision.

23 laboratories and workshop facilities



Where products are pushed to the limit

At the far end of the B'TWIN Village lies one of its most intense rooms: the «**Torture Test Lab.**» Here, over 4,000 internal tests are carried out each year : helmets are crushed, frames are pushed to their limits, and components endure thousands of mechanical impacts, far beyond typical use. Every product under development goes through this rigorous gauntlet to ensure its reliability, durability, and above all, safety.

But at Decathlon, testing isn't just about meeting expectations, it's about exceeding them. All products, whether governed by official standards or not, are systematically tested to ensure they **outperform market norms by at least 20%**. This uncompromising approach guarantees long-term robustness, even under extreme conditions.

And the process doesn't stop once the product hits the shelves. User feedback is continuously monitored, and if any item drops below a 4-out-of-5 average rating over 12 months, it's removed from sale.

Designing with, not just for, cyclists

User knowledge sits at the core of every decision. Whether it's urban commuters, children, or pro athletes, the B'TWIN Village is constantly gathering insights through:

- **Co-creation sessions**, where products are built in collaboration with everyday users;
- **Field tests** that include real-life cycling scenarios;
- **Rapid feedback** loops between usage and design.

While product managers stay close to the field, gathering insights through user testing, observations, customer reviews, studies, and benchmarking, engineers bring these ideas to life, mastering technical feasibility, quality, and cost control. Designers meanwhile, shape the overall experience: defining product architecture, visual identity, ergonomics, and complementary gear.

Together, they form a continuous loop between ideation and iteration so that B'TWIN Village nurtures a space where engineering meets empathy and where every decision is informed by use, not assumption.

DECATHLON AG2R LA MONDIALE :

A new chapter in professional cycling

In 2024, Decathlon became co-namer of DECATHLON AG2R La Mondiale cycling team, marking a significant step in its commitment to high-level cycling. This partnership runs through 2028.

56 riders

(World Tour, Development Team, Junior Team)



Together on the road

DECATHLON AG2R LA MONDIALE team embodies a vision of professional cycling that is ambitious, committed, and firmly focused on the future. With deep French roots and a rich history, the team embraces a **forward-thinking approach built on performance, transparency, and shared progress.**

Together with Decathlon, the team shares a deep conviction: elite sport should be a driver of innovation, but also a source of inspiration. On the roads of the races and in the design labs, riders and technical teams work hand in hand to push boundaries, develop cutting-edge products, and make them accessible to as many people as possible.

Alongside Decathlon, the riders are part of a broader journey where every challenge and achievement feeds a collective ambition. It's a team where excellence is pursued with humanity, and where the joy of riding remains at the heart of everything.

VAN RYSEL : Designed in Lille, raced worldwide

At the heart of this project lies Van Rysel, road cycling' expert brand. Entirely conceived in Lille, Van Rysel is the only brand in the world to design the full kit for the cyclist, from bike frame to jersey, from helmet to shoes.

Each product is the result of a deep, ongoing collaboration between Van Rysel's design teams and the professional riders of DECATHLON AG2R LA MONDIALE. Tested throughout the season in the world's most demanding races, every item -from road bikes to racing apparel- is reworked again and again to **meet the precise expectations of elite athletes.** Nothing is left to chance: weight, thermoregulation, comfort, etc.

Because Van Rysel believes that cycling excellence shouldn't be reserved for the few but should serve the many; the very same bikes, bib shorts, helmets and jerseys developed for professional racing are made available to all cycling enthusiasts.

A vision of circularity



Built to last, designed to ride again

At Decathlon, sustainability is embedded into the way we design, use, repair, and re-use products across their entire life cycle. This philosophy truly comes to life in the world of cycling where we're creating a fully circular experience. Through rental models, repair workshops, or second-life initiatives, the goal remains clear: to **extend product life, reduce environmental impact, and make high-quality cycling more accessible** to more people.

**1,730 repair workshops
worldwide**

Subscription: A new way to ride

At Decathlon we are reimagining the way people access bikes : shifting from ownership to long-term, usage-based models. The goal: make high-quality bikes more affordable, more maintainable, and more sustainable through subscription.

We first piloted this model back in 2018 with "**Btwin Kids**," a monthly subscription service for children's bikes, designed to support growing families with flexible, circular access to quality gear. Since then, we've expanded our offer to reflect a wider range of needs and uses:

- **Leasing plans** for higher-end adult bikes and e-bikes, with 12-, 24- or 36-month commitments
- **"D RENT"**, our most flexible programme giving riders access to a bike or e-bike from a "bicycle library," with minimal commitment starting from just €1.50 per day

Repair first: A culture of maintenance

Across our network of Decathlon stores, **our technicians are here to keep bikes rolling safely, smoothly, and for as long as possible.**

Whether it's routine maintenance or a complex repair, we're committed to extending the life of every product we design.

Our dedicated teams are continually upskilled to handle a wide variety of needs, including:

- **Maintenance and diagnostics**
- **Mechanical and electronic repairs**
- **Customisation and performance upgrades**

Second life : Extending the ride

At Decathlon, giving bikes a second life is a growing part of how we operate. Across many of our stores, returned or pre-owned bikes are taken back, checked, refurbished, and resold at accessible prices, with full transparency and warranty included. This service is now standard, designed to extend the life of our products while making cycling even more affordable and sustainable.

In Germany, we've gone one step further by partnering with **Rebike Mobility**, a specialist in circular e-bikes. Based in Munich, Rebike operates Europe's largest e-bike refurbishment centre, giving a second life to high-tech mobility solutions from leasing and rental fleets through proprietary, advanced repair methods and a fully integrated value chain.



From the way we design to the way we ride, circularity is not an option. It's a responsibility and a powerful lever to unlock broader access, better usage, and a more sustainable way forward.

In 2024, this commitment took a new dimension with the publication of Decathlon's Mobility Transition Pathway Pledge, a roadmap for transforming transport across Europe by promoting cycling as an active, efficient, and inclusive mobility solution, capable of decarbonising cities, easing congestion, and improving public health.

KEY FIGURES

December 31st, 2024

ECONOMIC

- Net sales = 16.2 billion euros
- Net result = 787 million euros
- Digital sales share (ecommerce, connected orders in stores, external marketplace) = 20%
- Global presence = 79 territories
- Number of stores = 1,817
- Number of products sold = 1.18 billion

PLANET

- Absolute carbon emissions = -2.8% (-13% since 2021)
- % of electricity from renewable sources consumed = 84.8
- Number of second-hand products sold = 1.35 million
- Countries with a second-hand offering = 39
- Number of repair workshops = 1,730
- % of sales generated by products benefitting from an ecodesign approach = 48.5

PEOPLE

- Number of Teammates = 101,100
- Ratio women/men teammates = 46.6% women - 53.4% men
- Nationalities = 87
- % of employees proud to work at Decathlon = 89.1%
- Number of teammates having shares in the Group = 53,518
- % of teammates having shares in the Group = 52,9%
- Number of new projects supported by the Decathlon Foundation = 96
- Number of people benefiting from the projects supported by the Decathlon Foundation = 395,072
- Number of countries with new projects supported by the Decathlon Foundation = 21

About DECATHLON

Decathlon is a global sports brand that caters to everyone, from beginners to elite athletes, designing innovative sports products for all levels of practice. With 101,100 team members and 1,817 stores worldwide, Decathlon and its teams have been working since 1976 to fulfill an ongoing ambition: to get users moving with the wonders of sport, helping them to be fitter, happier, and to create a sustainable future.

More information: decathlon-united.media

Media Contacts

Olivier PEDRO-JOSE - Global Head of Media & Public Relations
Pierrick DENIAU - Media Relations Officer
international.media@decathlon.com



**We ride to move - ourselves, our cities,
our future.**

To school, to work.
To train, to compete.
To think, to feel, to just be.

On a bike, we find rhythm.

We find community.
We find freedom.
We find flow.

Every ride is a statement.

That we belong on the road.
That we're building a better way forward.
That sport can move more than bodies - it
can move people.

**Because when movement feels this good,
the question isn't why - it's when.**

**Ready to play?
Ride to Move. By Decathlon.**

