

# Mobility Management in the Nordic Countries



A short compendium of final report.

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# Summary

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Mobility Management is a broad concept, the objective of which is to reduce dependence on the private car for personal transport. The basic means of achieving this are offering better information about alternative transport modes and more attractive services. The central aim is to encourage actors that generate traffic to develop various ways to promote public transport, cycling, walking, car pooling, car sharing, E-work etc. There is a wide range of measures available to select from: public transport information, employer paid public transport, car parking regulation, company bicycles etc.

The most active counterparts, promoting Mobility Management in the Nordic Countries, have been the ministries of transport and environment. The National Road Administration has played a key role especially in Sweden. The European Union has also acknowledged Mobility Management as an approach that is in line with an overall demand-oriented strategy to tackle traffic problems in a sustainable way. Many national and local regulations and guidelines affect commuter transport and especially the choice of transport mode. Income tax, the key policy instrument at the national level, falls within this context. At the local level, instruments mainly relate to physical preconditions with parking supply being accentuated. Car parking at work places is considered as a taxable fringe benefit in Sweden within certain limits. Company cars, operating within an environmental frame, are favoured in Swedish taxation.

In Sweden Mobility Management services are often provided by a local traffic office (Trafikkontor). Solutions developed for Gothenburg and Lund are presented in this report. One of the largest Danish Mobility Management related projects, “The Bike Busters Århus”, was introduced as early as 1995. The commuter oriented “Pendlerkontor” in Copenhagen was established in 2002 in order to provide transport planning services to companies and public organisations. The SMART project in Norway activated several companies to carry out Mobility Management schemes in the Oslo area. In Finland a variety of local projects has been carried out and the interest in Mobility Management is growing rapidly.

When launching a Mobility Management project it is important to show direct financial benefits for the companies involved. They commonly derive from savings related to car parking and improved health of employees. Personal health is usually the main motivating factor for employees. Clear support from management is vital to ensure continuity of the work. The national authorities can support companies by developing the policy instruments, financing practical pilot projects and disseminating information on best practices. The Nordic Countries share a range of common features that motivate future co-operation in the field of Mobility Management, leading along the path towards sustainable transport.

# Introduction

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## The background and aim of the study

When striving to reduce private car dependence many different and optional ways of travelling are needed. The Mobility Management concept points out that the private sector (employers, organizers of special events etc.) could and should carry its responsibility for offering a wide variety of travel modes: favouring those that have the least harmful impacts on the environment and that possibly have positive effects on public health. Reducing private car dependence is not the sole responsibility of public administrations.

A problem in setting up a Mobility Management programme has been that the different tools for planning and implementation do not clearly fit into any traditional organisational segment. Also, the direct benefits of Mobility Management initiatives are quite difficult to demonstrate and calculate. That is probably the reason why employers usually do not offer any other transport services than normal car parking or company cars. As these tools are supported and justified by building regulations and tax codes, they are normal and accepted. Many other tools have not been used because there has not been sufficient demand for them.

Mobility Management is of growing interest in Scandinavia. Sweden especially has been very active in launching practical projects, the results of which have been quite promising. The Swedish National Road Administration, in fact, also initiated this project. With other The Nordic Countries also carrying out several surveys and pilot projects, the theme has a strong potential to develop further. The The Nordic Countries could well utilise the experiences gained from each other because of common societal features, city structure, company culture and natural conditions.

The aim of the project was to:

- A. Collect, analyze and inform on Nordic Mobility Management activities related to commuter traffic.
- B. Provide an overview of and make recommendations on policy instruments related to Mobility Management in the The Nordic Countries.
- C. Evaluate the impacts of Mobility Management actions and identify the most effective ones.
- D. Strengthen national as well as Nordic cooperation in Mobility Management.

The main focus of this work is on commuter traffic. This topic has been widely studied but still needs much more development. This specific area of Mobility Management could be a forerunner when widening the implementation of Mobility Management to encompass e.g. leisure time travel.

## Survey methods and study structure

The project was carried out in two phases. In the 1<sup>st</sup> phase Mobility Management and related policy instruments were reviewed on a national basis. This included the preparation of case studies that formed the central task in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase. Interviews supplemented literature reviews in phase 2.

In this report, chapter 2 provides an overview of the Mobility Management concept and its interpretation. Chapter 3 analyses the role of Mobility Management in Nordic and EU transport policy. The policy instruments affecting commuter transport and especially modal split are introduced in chapter 4. Examples of Mobility Management projects and actions are described in chapter 5. Finally, chapter 6 gives recommendations for future promotion of Mobility Management in The Nordic Countries.

## Subscribers and consultants

The Nordic Council of Ministers financed the project and the Council's thematic group "Hållbar Mobilitet" supervised it. Group members were:

Sweden:	Stefan Andersson (chairman)
Denmark:	Lars Olsen Hasselager, Peder Mandrup Knudsen
Norway:	Ole Hagen, Trond Kråkenes
Finland:	Risto Saari, Leena Silfverberg
Iceland:	Johan Gudmundsson
Nordic Council of Ministers:	Helena Wallin

The main contractor was WSP LT-Consultants Ltd (Finland) and it was assisted by country subcontractors (Sweden, Denmark, and Norway):

Finland:	Maija Stenvall (Project Manager), Björn Silfverberg/ WSP LT-Consultants Ltd.
Sweden:	Phase 1. Ann-Sofie Atterbrand (née Nilsson), Phase 2. Johanna Skur / WSP Sweden
Denmark:	Thomas Krag/ Thomas Krag Mobility Advice
Norway:	Phase 1. Olav Kasin/ Syklistenes Landsforening. Phase 2. Brita Jorde/ NatUrban

The lay-out of the report is made by Natalia Martamo and language checking by Peet Ranniste at WSP LT-Consultants.

# Future promotion of Mobility Management in the Nordic Countries

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A number of actions can be taken in order to promote Mobility Management. At the company level the actions relate just as well to policy instruments as marketing and information. Most important is to find an effective package of measures and to create positive prototypes. The administration should put more effort on marketing the issue, financing pilot projects and shouldering the responsibility for longer-term development and evaluation.

Policy instruments should give a clear message that environmentally sustainable and healthy modes are favoured. More important than numbers (taxable value, deduction limits etc.) are the principles behind policy instruments. The psychological effect can be even more powerful than the monetary benefit a person receives from a policy instrument. Most policy instruments handle only car driving (company cars, parking norms) which gives a message that other modes are not included in the systems an employer should be handling. For companies the main marketing arguments are the economic benefits of Mobility Management.

National figures concerning taxation of benefits, compensation rates, deduction limits etc. are always affected by several external factors, such as the overall income tax, fuel price etc. An absolute comparison is thus not relevant. The policy instruments available seem to be quite similar in the different countries, except for the Swedish practice of taxation of car parking and environmentally friendly cars.

This chapter includes recommendations on actions that could promote Mobility Management on a Nordic level. The recommendations are formulated by the MOPPI consult group and do not represent the official opinion of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

## Developing policy instruments

### **A Developing EMAS and ISO certificates to include transport**

Companies and other organizations are increasingly implementing and developing environmental and quality management systems. Environmental management systems help companies and other organizations to define major environmental impacts related to their activities, indicators to measure these impacts and potential actions to reduce the harmful ones. The environmental management systems require that organisations define and measure their environmental impacts. However, the systems as such do not provide tools or set criteria for the definition and measurement of impacts. The travel behaviour of the companies' staff is seldom taken into consideration in environmental systems due to the lack of awareness and knowledge of the impacts of the travel patterns. Commuter traffic is often seen as an area where the employer should not be

involved. This is a fact even though commuting problems can have remarkable impacts on availability of labour and effectiveness of work.

Transport issues would be focused upon if the guidelines and lists of possible actions and indicators would be a part of the management system. Since many of the environmental and quality management systems are standardised or otherwise defined at an international level, it is important to look at the systems not only at an organisational level but also at national and international levels. Therefore it is recommended to establish contacts to some European or global organisations such as ISO, EFQM, EMAS, IQNet and European co-operation for Accreditation (EA). For example ISO has a global coverage with 200 country organisations. The role of the standardisation organisations is to provide feedback on the final results and recommendations. At the local level, the counterparts are those having the right to ratify national standards.

It should be also considered whether the promotion of Mobility Management could be closely integrated into such European and international processes as the Cardiff process within the European Union, Pan-European Programme on Transport, Environment and Health within UNECE and WHO, Environmentally Sustainable Transport within OECD and Urban Sustainable Travel within ECMT.

#### **B Company public transport fare**

All The Nordic Countries could work on changing the taxable value of company sponsored public transport fare. A common pressure to change the taxable value could accelerate the individual decision-making. The Danish examples need to be followed up. In case the tax scheme is changed in Finland, the effects should be studied and the experiences disseminated in The Nordic Countries.

#### **C Car parking as a taxable benefit**

The Swedish example of car parking as a fringe benefit should be analysed. The principle could be activated in all The Nordic Countries. This so-called “stick measure” should be carried out in connection with some “carrots”, e.g. a company sponsored public transport fare. A single stick measure defining car parking as a fringe benefit, with a certain value, will surely gain strong opposition. If directed to the whole labour force at same time and with a reasonable taxable value and period of transition, this measure could be supported.

#### **D Company cars**

The company car system is not very affordable to single persons as such but the psychological effect of such a system is remarkable. The company car should be regarded as complementary “company ticket”.

Car-sharing should be better utilised. For employers it is favourable to provide employees the possibility to use car-share cars rather than providing them with their own parking space. For employees the system can provide the possibility to use a car for casual purposes at a reasonable price.

Company cars using more environmentally sound (hybrid, electricity etc.) technologies should have a lower taxable value than combustion engine cars. Free car parking and exemptions could be directed to cars using environmentally sound technologies. There should be some common guidelines for The Nordic Countries.

### **E Deductions in commuting**

The impacts of commuting expense deductions are connected to scattered settlement patterns. Long commuter trips and deduction benefits increase car driving and public transport. This is a system where employment policy, in terms of promoting a larger labour pool, and environment policy are clearly contradictory. The question of how to change this structure should be put on the agenda.

### **F Mileage allowances**

The mileage allowance system, in any event, should be changed so that if a competitive (time and money wise) public transport connection exists it should be favoured. This is already the situation mainly for the public sector. This policy is in the hands of individual companies that also decide whether work during travelling on duty can be accepted as working hours. The compensation limit is a national decision. The guidelines could be included in collective labour agreements.

Favouring public transport is “a carrot” for employers also because of road safety reasons.

The mileage allowance from cycling could be the same as for car driving.

### **G Include travel plans in the building permit process**

A common model is needed to include company travel plans within the building permit process. The model would demonstrate how transport (staff, freight, visitors) is to be organised in a sustainable manner and the advantages that employers would gain from this. The guidelines would cover physical conditions at the estate (parking, social premises) as well as models for action. The Nordic Countries have a similar seasonal variation and the modal split differences between summer and winter should be taken into account. The power to activate this model is in the hands of local governments but good examples would clearly make the work easier. Several international examples (GB etc.) can be used in formulating it.

### **H Model for a commuter travel survey**

A common travel survey model would be useful. Each country's views on the questions to be asked and ways to adapt it to an Internet format should be utilised. Swedish examples, the SMART project, the Norwegian Road Administration and the Danish Association for Municipalities have already made quite a lot of progress on this. Some questionnaires are also available from the Finnish side.

### **I Tax-free cycling provisions**

Reasonable, practical, cycling provisions (bicycles for employees, rainwear, maintenance and repair services etc.) should be made available by the employer without tax consequences for the employee. This would promote cycling to work along with better bicycle parking and social premises provisions. This action is a national question and should be discussed separately in each country.

## **Cooperation actions**

### **J Nordic cooperation in spreading information via web sites**

Several web sites link the experience and the experts. Some of the sites are administered by private companies and some by authorities. For companies it would

be useful to find information and Mobility Management tools in the domestic language. The national road administrations or ministries dealing with the topic could serve as administrators of such information web sites. There should be one independent web site in each country collecting and linking information on Mobility Management. These web sites could link further to sites provided by consultants etc.

#### **K Annual Nordic seminar on recent development**

An annual Nordic meeting on Mobility Management would be useful for disseminating information and for setting up a network for individuals working actively on Mobility Management issues. The aim of such seminar would be to active new counterparts (e.g. companies, labour administrations and representatives from different transport modes) and to follow up and introduce recent projects. Also the latest EU-projects and their findings should be covered.

The main issues covered in the annual meeting could be following:

- Progress in introducing policy instruments and common Nordic recommendations
- Overview of company projects implemented in each country
- Introducing EU-financed Mobility Management projects
- Developing evaluation methods for Mobility Management actions

The organisations invited to the meeting could be the:

- Related ministries
- National road administration
- Regional and local administration
- Large companies and labour organisations
- Researchers and consultants

The material should be disseminated to larger domestic interest groups. The media should be invited. Study tours could be arranged in conjunction with the seminars.

#### **L Campaigning and networking activities**

Such campaigns as European Mobility Week and European Car Free day are important awareness raising activities. Cooperation within these European wide activities should be continued and even highlighted in the Nordic cooperation. Also linkage to EPOMM should be ensured from each Nordic country. Participating in annual European Conference on Mobility Management (ECOMM) is a good way for gathering and spreading information among various experts on sustainable transport. Each country should utilize the advantage of EPOMM and its best practise information on Mobility Management.

## Developing evaluation methods

Mobility Management actions need to be evaluated especially from an economic point of view. In case studies presented in this report evaluation has been carried out in several ways but mostly using qualitative parameters e.g.:

- travel questionnaires- before and after surveys on travel behaviour
- health checks
- interviews and questionnaires on the acceptance of a project or single action

Economic parameters had not been used in any of the cases. Bike Busters' did ask project participants how much individual savings had been reached from changing travel behaviour. The project did not, however, calculate any financial costs and benefits for employers.

In Sweden the evaluation of mobility plans has been formulated into a SUMO system (System för utvärdering av mobilitetsprojekt). SUMO is a new system for planning, follow up and evaluating of different actions aiming at affecting traffic and traffic behaviour. SUMO is an advanced version of MOST-MET system adapted to Swedish circumstances in the road traffic sector. MOST-MET is an evaluation tool that was developed in the EU project MOST (Mobility Management Strategies for the next Decades) on Mobility Management during 2000-2002.

SUMO is based on tested methods and based on the concept of measuring the effects at various levels. SUMO is formulated in a simple way and does not differ remarkably from other evaluation systems. The unique part is that with the assistance of SUMO, indicators and results can be displayed at different levels. The system enables tactical evaluation in a project where it is difficult to show short-time results, since a major part of the work focuses on attitudes and behaviour, which is a process that takes a lot of time. SUMO is thus usable in a Mobility Management project where the aim is to gain long-lasting behavioural change in travel habits.

SUMO as well as MOST-MET are systems that could be utilized in planning large and long-lasting Mobility Management projects. The models ensure that relevant indicators and evaluation resources are set and people are committed to them already in the planning phase. The model could also be translated into other Scandinavian languages. Other Mobility Management tools e.g. TAPESTRY (travel behaviour) and OPTIMUM (land-use approach) could be as well more easily utilised if they were multi-lingual.

## Activating companies

Most promising employer and company segments are:

- Those who have plans to change location and need more information on the impact of relocating for employees including travel costs
- Service sector where employees can be reached by e-mail and information widely disseminated via intranet/internet

- Companies having a quality and environment management system. This, though, is not always a necessary motivator.
- Companies that have huge costs and lack of parking places or problems in employee health. To solve or relieve these problems by Mobility Management, however, needs strong marketing.

Mobility Management in commuting can be approached from two directions. Behavioural change can be reached by affecting employers that, in turn, provide and market sustainable transport services to their employees. Employers should then be well aware of the other social factors other than commuting which affect single person travel habits. Pendlerkontoret at HUR, partly Vision LundBy and also the SMART project are examples of this kind of employer-oriented approach.

Another possibility is to contact employees directly. In this way knowledge about the psychology behind individual travel behaviour can be understood more easily. The disadvantage is that tools that the employer could provide are not used and that “group pressure and support” is lacking. BikeBusters is an example of an employee-oriented approach. It is not a pure example of Mobility Management because it does not directly activate the employer, the generator of the traffic.

Successful Mobility Management projects use both approaches. In Lundby and also at Pendlerkontoret the contact was directly to the employee but also at a very personal level (single route planning etc.). A successful Mobility Management project needs adequate resources, a long-term commitment from all counterparts and visible improvements. The changes in modal split are most important from the societal point of view. Employees can be activated by economic facts or positive publicity. Employers need a personnel benefit, health factors being one of the most important.

Companies having EMAS or ISO systems may be a bit more interested in this kind of work. If certification does not require actions on transport matters, interest for the project may cease. That is what happened, for example, in one company in SMART. The most important thing is to find companies having real personal interest (e.g. lack of parking spaces, recruitment problems) and active people with high a position and thus power in the companies.

Mobility Management needs public investment. Political support has to be high if the projects are to be long lasting. HUR Pendlerkontor, BikeBusters, Vision Lundby and LundaMats had strong political commitment and quite large budgets that also enabled evaluation.

Visible improvements during the project are crucial. Employees and employers cannot be committed to a long lasting project without direct and visible improvements. In Pendlerkontor, company bikes were seen as a positive action. In Vision Lundby, the “user group in public transport” was one of the most successful actions as well as personalised journey planning. Bike Busters donated free bikes and other equipment to its target group.

The first phase of the project is usually a travel questionnaire. The projects should also have very visible improvements right from the start. Furthermore, the company’s administration should be involved well before launching the project to employees. Thus e.g. a new bus stop or bicycle route can be achieved very quickly. This

motivates people to continue with the effort to promote and use sustainable transport modes.

Encouraging companies to work with Mobility Management can be accomplished primarily in three ways:

- A sustainable mobility plan is required by law or municipal regulation.
- A sustainable mobility plan is required in quality and environment systems.
- Mobility planning and projects are activated and subsidised by the public sector.

There are many potential partners that could and should cooperate in activating companies. At the national level they are mainly:

- Ministry of Transport
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Labour
- Ministry of Health Affairs
- National Road Administration
- All providers of sustainable transport services

At the local and regional level counterparts are municipalities and the regional transport administration. Also employment and economic development centres, as well as regional organizations of health and environment administrations, could take participate. The role of NGO's can be substantial both as a pressure group and as an expert. The role of Association for Municipalities should be significant as it is in e.g. Sweden and Denmark.

Activating and supporting companies in Mobility Management initiatives can in principle be done in two ways:

- by giving information
- by granting finances in order to allow the purchase of mobility expertise as an outsourcing service

At the first stage when companies do not voluntarily act both kinds of support are needed. Also the information should be provided by someone with the resources and authority to act. Recruiting or nominating that kind of person also needs investments. General literary information is important but it is even more important is to have some kind of local focal point which can provide specifics.

Companies need very practical tools and also marketing material e.g.:

- What kind of benefits employers can gain from Mobility Management.
- How to map current travel habits, problems and expectations.
- What kind actions could be carried out – which are the most effective and what are the costs and benefits.
- How should the selected actions be activated in practice.
- Where to get material for information campaigns.
- How to inform and market about the actions.
- What kind of local rules and national legislation should be taken into account when providing different services.

Every company/organization is different, and there are no universal solutions. Key success factors seem to be:

- Anchoring the project at high levels of management, in order to secure motivation and resources for sufficient periods of time.
- Full finance by public authorities should be considered in "pioneering phase".
- Sufficient time for the project to develop and bring about results.
- Adequate resources for practical work with companies.
- Well-defined and segmented target groups.
- Personal skills and motivation of the people in charge.
- Carefully planned before/after-surveys with sufficient time in between.
- Well-defined and well-known goals and targets.
- Sufficient marketing, resources and patience.



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