

**Summary:**

# **Experimental Measures for Public Transport**

## **Evaluation of the Process for Development of Public Transport in the Regions of Tønsberg and Drammen**

### **Background**

The experiment "Grants for the development of rational and environmentally friendly transport" was commenced by the Ministry of Transport and Communications in 1996 as a direct follow-up to the "Norwegian Trial Scheme for Public Transport". Within the new arrangement grants are allocated to packages of measures, in contrast to the Trial Scheme which largely financed individual projects covering a wide range of themes. In 1996 and 1997, between 25 and 35 million NOK was granted to such measures in four counties in widely spread regions of Norway.<sup>1</sup> In 1997, grants were allocated to four more counties in Eastern and South-eastern Norway.<sup>2</sup>

The county councils were invited to apply for grants from the Ministry and these have had the overall responsibility for the experimental measures. Invitations to the county authorities to participate were made following Parliamentary approval of the state budget for the ensuing year.

The measures are financed 50 per cent through the Ministry and 50 per cent by the local interested parties in the transport sector. In the majority of measures we find that the project organisation consists of local actors such as the county, municipalities and transport companies.

### **The task**

The essential work within any project is the process by which results are to be achieved. An evaluation of this process provides knowledge

on how future project measures should be organised. The problems to be considered are:

1. Has the process been successful based on specific criteria (planning, goals, organisation, information, co-operation)?
2. Has the process been successful from the viewpoint of the participants?
3. Has the process been such that it has contributed to needs-oriented, resource and environmentally friendly transport solutions?

We attempt to provide answers to the above problems with the aid of the following criteria for evaluation: Planning, goals, organisation, information, and circumstances relating to co-operation.

The Institute of Transport Economics has been given the task of evaluating the process for two of the measures, Buskerud (1997) and Vestfold (1996). The analyses are based on studies of documents and personal interviews conducted in February and March 1999 where we interview members of the Management Board in Vestfold and the Working Group in Buskerud.

### **The experimental measure in Vestfold (1996)**

The Ministry of Transport and Communications granted a total of 5 million NOK from the 1996 budget to a package of measures in Vestfold county. The measures were focused on the municipalities of Tønsberg, Stokke and Nøtterøy.<sup>3</sup> The measure was referred to as the

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<sup>1</sup> Østfold, Rogaland, Troms and Vest-Agder.

<sup>2</sup> Vestfold, Buskerud, Østfold and Hedmark.

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<sup>3</sup> Tønsberg is located on the western side of the Oslofjord. The total population of the three municipalities is about 65,000.

“Tønsberg Measure” and was financed locally by Vestfold County and the Norwegian Public Roads Administration Vestfold with grants of 2.5 million NOK each.

The work was organised along traditional lines for projects where the Chief County Communications Officer is the superior authority. In his charge is a management committee with representatives from the municipalities, NSB –Norwegian State Railways<sup>4</sup>, Norwegian Public Roads Administration Vestfold, Norwegian National Rail Administration, and the Main Committee for Transport in Vestfold county. The county is represented by the project leader and the Chief County Communications Officer. The management committee is responsible for the overall organisation. Eight working groups are responsible for the day-to-day practical operations of the projects.

The project leader’s responsibilities comprise the co-ordination of the management committee’s work, and to maintain the connections between the Ministry, the Management Board and between the board and the working groups. The project leader has also functioned as the secretary for the project and prepared documents for the Management Board throughout the entire process.

The measure comprises ten separate measures concerning public transport and improvement of conditions encouraging increased use of bicycle. The time frame for the measure intended that all projects should be completed by the autumn of 1998. However, certain projects have been delayed and the final report was deferred until the autumn of 1999. It is uncertain whether that project experiencing the most delay will be completed within this new time limit.

## **The experimental measure in Buskerud**

The Ministry of Transport and Communications granted 5 million NOK to the project package in Buskerud county as part of the 1997 budget.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> NSB also have responsibility for local bus services in certain rural districts

<sup>5</sup> Buskerud county is situated to the east of Oslo. The main town is Drammen with a population of about 55,000.

The individual projects are located in the municipalities of Drammen, Lier, Nedre Eiker and Øvre Eiker. All participants in the projects have contributed financially, but the major contributor is the county authority.

As part of the effort to concentrate on public transport in the district around the urban centre of Drammen, a joint project was commenced involving the local bodies as early as 1994. This was entitled *A new deal for public transport in the Drammen region*. The first phase of this project was partly supported by the Ministry of Transport and was concluded in 1996. In 1997, the project was restarted with the same objectives and parties as previously.

The activities are organised according to a traditional project organisation with the Chief County Communications Officer as overall leader. He is responsible for a Management Board where NSB, NSB Division for buses,<sup>6</sup> Drammen and District Omnibus company, the district taxi authority, the county division of the Norwegian Public Roads Administration, and the four municipal authorities mentioned above are represented. Under this board there is a Working Group with members of the same bodies as the board, but at a lower administrative level. The Working Group is responsible for four project groups with responsibility for carrying out the specific measures included in the measure. The county is represented by the Chief Communications Officer and project leader of the Management Board. The Project Leader also functions as leader of the Working Group and in the project groups where he leads two of these. He otherwise enjoys the same role as the project leader in Vestfold.

The package comprises ten measure defines according to four headings: Marketing, bus stops and infrastructure, accessibility, route development. A larger reorganisation of the route network, dependent upon the opening of the “Romerike Gateway”, a major railway artery linking the region to the main Oslo airport, and the accessibility projects have been delayed. Other projects are going according to plan, and some have been completed. The time limit for the measure originally intended that the final report would be delivered to the Ministry the autumn of 1999.

The measure has benefited from a sound organisation and also that this is the second stage of the project.

## Main conclusions

The criteria for evaluation provide the basis for the conclusions described below. Data collection and analysis has been made on the basis of these criteria.

### The local planning started too late

The counties commenced planning at a late stage. The reason for this was the tight time limits imposed by the Ministry. The announcement of the availability of funds came too late for the counties and municipalities to be able to take consideration of this in their budgets. In consequence it was not possible for the county authorities to be able to ensure the required 50 per cent financing for their part before the Ministry granted funds to the measures.

Local planning has also suffered from the short time limits. If these had been longer, ten more actors could have been involved in the process and evaluation by the political authorities could have taken place. In consequence, a more united local alliance could have been assured.

The time perspectives of the plans were revised under way as a result of unforeseen circumstances. In Vestfold, the plans were also revised regarding content and a tenth project included into the measure. The manner in which this occurred suggests that the Management Board came under pressure from one of the actors.

In both counties there was a clear delegation of responsibility within the planning process. The Ministry had made it clear at the commencement that the county authority had the overall responsibility. The counties have responded well to this. Further, they have had to act as guarantor to the Ministry as local financing was not ensured at the time when the contract with the Ministry was entered into.

### Few and poorly defined goals

*New Deal* has followed its goals from the initial phase. These may be seen as realistic within the framework of the project, sufficient in number, and the actors in the measure were well ac-

quainted and associated with the defined goals: The measures in the measure shall contribute to needs-oriented, resource and environmentally friendly transport solutions. These concepts were not defined more closely. We consider it to be a weakness when this is not done, and that the Vestfold measure in particular – which did not have clearly specified objectives – would have benefited from an overall objective. The reason for this is: The Vestfold measure focused on individual projects rather than the measure as a whole. This is emphasised in that the measure itself lacked a clear overall objective. The means were used as a supplement to the individual measures more than they contributed to the development of transport solutions.

One of the reasons for the differences between the measures may be that *New Deal* has been going over a longer period. *New Deal* has been concerned with its objectives since 1993 and profited by having a well established organisation.

### A clear but uncreative organisational process

The organisational structure selected are classic project organisations. The strength of this type of organisation is that it is orderly and clear. The central actors within local transport are included although they could have been more integrated into the planning phase. This increases their affiliation.

Initially, the decision-making structure in the organisations is clear. The participation organisations are on an equal footing. The Chief County Communications Officer is the superior authority. Nevertheless, there has been some uncertainty among the participating bodies as to whom is the 'complaints' authority' in the case of disagreement. It appears that the Public Roads Administration has undertaken a more dominant role than the other participating bodies, something which has led to unfortunate consequences.

The organisations' members communicate well. The work has also had a positive effect for communication in relation to co-operation outside the area incorporated in the measures.

The organisational model is not suitable to inspire creativity. This has been a disadvantage in that the Ministry's objective has been to de-

velop the various forms of transport. The local actors do not regard this as particularly problematic.

### **Generally satisfactory information**

The flow of information between the actors involved in the measures has generally been good. All the actors in the project have received satisfactory information, and the public has been informed where the project has been of public interest.

The actors regard the evaluation as a necessary evil on the process! One attitude which is constantly recurring is that the actors would prefer to use the available funds to public transport measures rather than to an evaluation of the projects. We consider that this is associated with the weakly defined goals structure of the project. Insofar as the goal structure is weak it is difficult to acquire a full acceptance for what needs to be evaluated.

### **The Public Roads Administration a dominant actor in the co-operation**

Our sources of information consider that co-operation has generally been good.

The Public Roads Administration is considered a very competent participant in the co-operation, in possession of great knowledge of and experience from public transport in general and planning in particular. The projects have benefited from this expertise. However, a large majority mean that co-operation with the Public Roads Administration has been poor. The problem here appears to be as follows: The Administration has shown little interest in participating in the trial projects. The reason for this is that the Administration is bound by inflexible regulations which are not capable of interpretation; the Administration does not take the smaller actors seriously, and it regards itself as a superior party in the projects. It is the only actor which exercises a veto in matters where the Administration plays a major role.

We have searched for the reasons for this situation in the role functions attributed to the county authorities and the Public Road Administration and in the traditional role of the latter as a 'heavy-weight partner' within the transport sector. The Administration has considerable experience in planning, and part of the reason

for the poor relationships between the Authority and the other parties may be that the Public Roads Administration is used to working in isolation and has problems in delegating responsibility to other authorities. It has been difficult for the Administration to find itself in another role other than a superior one.

Organisation in the Management Board in Vestfold county has been stable; in Buskerud there has been more variation during the programme, but the disadvantages accompanying this are partly outweighed that *New Deal* has an established structure which enables "newcomers" to be more easily integrated into cases.

### **Proposals for changes in the arrangement**

One important conclusion is that the proposals have generally made little contribution to the development of new transport solutions. These are not processes which could have made a contribution to this development. In consequence, the means granted to the measures have essentially comprised support to individual measures rather than what these grants ideally could have lead to.

An important change in the arrangement must therefore be to establish conditions for increased creativity in the measures. We therefore propose the following changes:

- ❖ The time frame for the measures should be changed. This would give the local actors greater opportunity for planning and defining their own objectives. Several actors can contribute to the important phases of the work. The measures must circumvent the constant time pressure they currently experience.
- ❖ The Ministry of Transport and Communications should require that the county authorities define the local objectives of the measures, something which will contribute to creativity. This will also result to the requirements for evaluation being more acceptable.
- ❖ The present measures should be formulated with their basis in plans which have been approved by local politicians. We suggest that the Ministry formulates this otherwise in their invitations to the county authorities such that the measures are based on plans

which do not comprise approved *projects*.  
This will provide the management boards

with a greater degree of freedom in respect  
of planning their own measures.