

Summary:

Person travel in Norwegian trade and industries

The purpose of this project has been to improve our knowledge of trade and industry's person travel, including which problems they experience with respect to transport supply and infrastructure and how these may be resolved. The work comprises three sub-projects. Sub-project 1 sheds light on issues relating to trade and industry's interregional and international trips, with special emphasis on air travel. Sub-project 2 addresses work-related travel in cities, paying special attention to traffic problems which workmen face. Sub-project 3 takes a closer look at some of the key issues associated with commuting and access to manpower.

Sub-project 1: Business trips and market communication

Good communications are of the utmost importance to trade and industry's growth potential and competitiveness. This is especially relevant to the many Norwegian businesses whose operations are located relatively peripherally in both a national and international context. Sub-project 1 evaluates business travellers experiences with the infrastructure and services connected to interregional and international travel. Data is based on personal interviews with managers in 13 selected companies from various regions of the country, combined with an Internet survey of the companies' employees.

The data reveal that the companies are heavily reliant upon travelling. Travel is important for maintaining contact with clients and suppliers, but the geographical organisation of the businesses also necessitates a lot of travel. Several of the companies operate on a global scale, with management structures transcending national boundaries. The dearth of specialised expertise requires key staff to undertake a lot of travelling since they are used in various tasks and operations at the companies' premises all over the world.

Respondents express beliefs in increased travel in years to come, reflecting the increasing focus on international markets. Telephone and video conferences are seen as alternatives to travelling in cases where the people concerned know one another, for example in connection with intra-company management meetings and situation reports; but in other cases the need for face-to-face meetings remains paramount.

Many people find travelling tiresome, and the people who travel the most are the ones who are least satisfied with the air services. More important than the costs of travelling is the need to arrive at the destination as quickly as possible. More

direct flights, improvements in efficiency at airports and greater reliability (fewer delays) are all key aspects to improving the situation for the travellers.

Because of all the time wasted on other things instead of being used on efficient flying time, many people point out that trains are a viable alternative on some routes, given that the total travelling time is not much longer than the time it takes to fly, including getting to and from airports and waiting time.

Sub-project 2: Work-related travel in cities

In cities, traffic bottlenecks such as traffic jams and lack of parking places can result in delays, reduced effectiveness and increased costs for businesses. Sub-project 2 considers trade and industry's experiences of the traffic conditions in Oslo and Akershus. A survey among workmen who rely on car transport in their work was conducted, as well as a smaller survey among other workers who travel in their work.

Traffic congestion and insufficient parking are major problems for workmen in Oslo and Akershus. Three out of four experience that traffic jams and parking problems cause stress in their work day. About 60 percent stated that they arrive late for appointments on a daily or weekly basis because it takes longer to drive than they had anticipated, and almost two out of three arrive late on a daily or weekly basis because it is difficult to find a parking space. Problems related to traffic congestion and inadequate parking are greatest in the central areas of Oslo. Eight out of ten respondents answered that the shortage of parking is a very serious problem in the centre of Oslo, and two out of three of the respondents think that traffic jams in the afternoon are a very serious problem in this part of the city. The availability of parking improves the further away from the centre you go, and in the outer regions of Oslo and in Akershus this is considered to be a relatively small problem. However, traffic jams in the morning and afternoon are a problem across the whole of the greater Oslo area, including Akershus.

Half the respondents think that it would be very beneficial to their work situation if more people travelled to work using public transport, but the vast majority do not believe it would help their work situation if a rush-hour tax were imposed.

Sub-project 3: Business and industry's needs related to commuting

Recruitment of qualified manpower is crucial for trade and industry's competitiveness. In regional and transport politics one is interested in how developments of the road network can expand the peripheral areas around the regional centres and thereby help to improve access to manpower.

However, what this type of strategy can achieve is relatively limited. Even if we assume a relatively significant upgrading of the road networks, analyses conducted within the present project show that this will have only limited impact on the commuting potential. This is because the road networks around the regional centres' are already of a high standard. In addition, the improvements in travel time have the greatest effect in fairly sparsely populated areas or in the outer parts of the surrounding areas where there is substantial resistance to travelling. These evaluations apply if we assume the use of cars for work-related

travel. This is the most common mode of transport to work. With the exception of travel to work places in the largest cities, cars are used in over 95 percent of motorised work-related travel.

However, there are exceptions. This applies especially to the central region of Eastern Norway where high-speed intercity trains have helped expand the commuter belt around Oslo. Gradually the commuter belt has grown to encompass Fredrikstad, Tønsberg and Hamar. Also in areas which could realistically have their road networks expanded and thereby substantially reduced travel times, one can expect to see some significant effects as long as the measures will impact areas with sufficient population density.