



Policy transfer must occur *within*, as well as between, countries

New research has investigated the possibility of transferring policy between EU Member States. It studied the outcomes of an EU-funded project that aimed to integrate land use planning and transport management across Europe, and identified barriers to transfer, which included language, differing planning traditions and difficulties in systematically adopting a policy across a nation. The study also highlights a role for EU projects in beginning the process of policy transfer.

The concept of mobility management (MM) aims to promote sustainable transport by changing the attitudes and behaviour of travellers. This can include 'soft' measures, such as information and education, and 'hard' measures, such as new tramlines, bike lanes and parking restrictions. Integrating MM with land use planning processes can ensure more sustainable new developments.

The study investigated the transfer of policy and practice in this area between Member States using the experiences of the EU-funded MAX-project¹, which aimed to improve MM and, like many European projects, to transfer knowledge and practice between Member States. The project involved five planning simulation workshops attended by planning professionals (including planners, architects, traffic engineers and public transport firms) in Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Spain, which all have little integration of transport and planning.

As part of these workshops, best practice examples of MM were provided to the attendees, in particular from the UK and Switzerland, and their transferability was discussed. For example, the UK has a tradition of Transport Assessments to predict increases in traffic caused by new developments, and in Switzerland, there are a number of measures, such as national maximum parking standards and environmental impact assessments for developments with more than 300 parking spaces.

In general, most participants accepted the benefits of MM measures but questioned whether the policies could be transferred to their country. A major reason given was the lack of alternatives to cars, as well as cultural differences in how different forms of transport were viewed. For example, bicycles are not widely used in Lithuania and cars are important status symbols. Measures which limit car use or car parking spaces are not well known and there is concern that they would be unpopular. This suggests that for successful transfer there must be a minimum infrastructure in place alongside public information and education. Another issue is the reluctance of private developers to rely on the public sector to provide this infrastructure. Legal and technical frameworks can also be problematic, for example, in Slovenia there is a construction by-law that needs to be changed in order to introduce parking standards, and in Germany money cannot be secured from developers for public transport improvements. Laws take time to change and this could significantly slow the process.

There was no obligation in any of the five countries to include MM in the planning process, but there are opportunities where MM could be negotiated with developers on a voluntary basis. The main barrier appears to be fear of competition between sites. This suggests that there may also need to be internal pressures to make MM beneficial, for example, problematic traffic congestion around the site.

More systematic adoption of MM throughout a single country would also address the fear of competition between cities/sites for new developments and businesses. It appears that the policy transfer process is two-stage; firstly from another country to a few supportive people in the "recipient" country, and then within that country by diffusion. The researchers also highlight the role that EU projects of this nature can play in initiating new policy ideas.

1. MAX-Project (Successful Travel Awareness Campaigns & Mobility Management Strategies) was supported by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Programme. See <http://www.max-success.eu/>.

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