



European
Commission



HOW THE EU HELPS NORTHERN SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS

Europe's northern sparsely populated areas face a common set of challenges linked to their remoteness, limited human capital and at times difficult climatic conditions.

EU support can help them overcome these hurdles by facilitating new forms of economic activity and promoting greater use of e-technologies and innovative partnerships – ultimately improving people's lives. The EU-funded Green Drive Region project is one such example.

Championing fossil-free car travel throughout Inner Scandinavia

An EU-funded project worked with six regions across Norway and Sweden to encourage individuals and municipalities to switch from petrol and diesel cars to those powered by green alternatives such as electricity, hydrogen and biofuels.

People who live in Inner Scandinavia need their cars to get around what is a largely rural and sparsely populated area. Moreover, traffic between Sweden and Norway has increased in recent years due to growth in the cross-border labour market. While both countries are committed to reducing emissions from transport, the majority of citizens and organisations still rely on diesel and petrol cars because of a lack of infrastructure for fossil-free alternatives.

The EU-backed **Green Drive Region** project brought together local authorities and industry players to share competences and exchange experiences in order to make it easier for people to make more sustainable road journeys.

Even though the project has had little direct influence on sales, it has created enthusiasm locally, and developed important arenas for interaction between the public, businesses and officials. It also worked with local municipalities to build strategies that move them towards a fossil-free car fleet.

The six regions which took part in the project were Akershus, Hedmark and Østfold in Norway and Värmland, Dalarna and Gävleborg in Sweden. Municipalities from these regions were encouraged to implement strategies and plans for the introduction of more vehicles powered by electricity or biofuels.

One municipality, Skedsmo in Akershus, developed such a strategy with the help of the Green Drive Region team. Lessons learned in the process are now being shared with other local authorities on both sides of the border.



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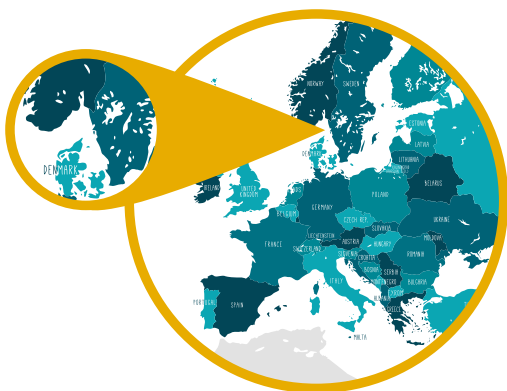
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Encouraging change

The project also provided support for the development of strategies to introduce more of the vital infrastructure that is required to support fossil-free vehicles, such as fast-charging points and biofuel stations. Workshops and training days centred on the introduction and use of such infrastructure. Experts from electricity companies and car dealerships took part, as well as local authority personnel and elected representatives.

In addition, the project prepared a feasibility study for the production and use of hydrogen fuel in the region, concluding that it is possible to realise this goal with relatively minimal infrastructure.

Local politicians, municipality staff and members of the public were also given the chance to drive fossil-free cars and find out about refuelling infrastructure. Test runs of cars powered by alternative fuels took place throughout the project area. The project also helped to get 24 municipalities to sign 'bidding boards' to affirm their commitment to sustainable transport and reducing emissions.



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GREEN DRIVE REGION

Project full name: Green Drive Region

Sectors: Transport

Project website: <http://greendriveregion.com/nn/>

Total cost: EUR 2 900 000

EU CONTRIBUTION: EUR 916 000

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

PROGRAMME: Interreg V-A Sweden-Norway Programme

Project start/end: 2015 to 2018

