

Sustainable, national transport planning: the role of goal based steering

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1. Objective

In Denmark, a research project on Sustainable National Transport Planning (SUSTAIN) has been established to advance the understanding of factors that enable and constrain the development and implementation of national, sustainable transport planning. Experiences from several countries will be studied, and neighboring Sweden and Norway have already been subject to analyses, since these two countries for a number of years have produced major, national transport plans based on transport policy goals and associated performance indicators. In the paper we analyze and discuss Swedish and Norwegian experiences as regards goal based steering and indicators in national transport planning

2. Data/Methodology

We distinguish between 'goal oriented politics', 'goal oriented management' and 'goal based steering'. The latter provides a link between the first two phenomena. Document analyses and qualitative research interviews form the empirical basis of the study. For Sweden 15 persons were interviewed including national politicians and civil servants. For Norway 12 interviews were carried out with national politicians.

3. Results/Findings

Our conclusions are that in both Sweden and Norway goal oriented politics is decoupled from goal oriented management, hence we do not observe full goal based steering. Goal based steering is probably not even feasible. Nevertheless, we find elements of goal oriented politics and goal oriented management, which could be of importance and value for sustainable, national transport planning.

4. Implications for Research/Policy

Two lessons can be learned from the Swedish and Norwegian experiences, if the aim is to move in direction of goal based steering. First, that clear connections should be established between policy goals and

indicators, and second, that it should be able to link goals to appropriate instruments that the authorities dispose of.