



City Centre Distribution, Groningen, The Netherlands

To find a solution for the heavy traffic and environmental problems the City of Groningen decided to control the freight deliveries into the city centre with the help of several measures, e.g. special time-windows for distribution.



Background & Objectives

Being the largest city in the north of the Netherlands, Groningen is a regional economic centre with 175,000 inhabitants. A lot of inner-city problems like traffic problems and connected with this environmental problems lead to a decrease of quality of life. One reason is the commuting situation in the greater area of Groningen. Half of the people who work in Groningen live in the outskirts or in the regional area. About that deliveries into the city centre have caused an additionally traffic volume with the consequence of a high noise level and air pollution. Results from a former Traffic Circulation Plan from 1977 weren't very satisfactorily because the relevant economic key-players were not involved and therefore especially shop owners in the centre were very unsatisfied with this new policy. After a reestablishment of conversation between the official authorities and transport companies, a new approach called 'City Centre Better' was tried in 1994. In this project all the main players have been involved from the beginning on, so that the project process could be influenced by as many parties as possible who are involved in this problem. It should guarantee an efficient and economical solution especially for the transport companies and a satisfactorily answer regarding the environmental problems and the quality of life from the view of the cities' authorities.

Implementation

The Municipality of Groningen initiated the project in close co-operation with representatives of the local business and several market parties. An experiment for a better accessibility of the city centre for transport services was introduced. For two distribution companies delivering goods from the outskirts into the city centre it was allowed to make their deliveries outside the time window all the day. Therefore, the companies gained a better efficiency and the local authorities a better living and environmental situation. In consequence of this experiment an Advisory Commission for distribution issues has been set up by the City Council to supervise the test.

This was the basis for a successful PPP. In 1998, the project became a new direction towards more structural policy. The new additionally measurements have been the permission for 3.5 tonnes trucks to use the bus lanes and cross sections during the defined time windows. Nowadays the foreseen transport companies for the delivery of the city centre rises up to three distributors whereas even three more are under discussion. The partners committed themselves to bring input and way of solution into the pilot project. But there is no financial commitment between the involved partners. The philosophy has been that both partners benefit from this partnership.

The following measures have been the result of the contractual PPP:

- Enlargement of the pedestrian area
- Time-windows for distribution in the car-free areas between 5-11 a.m. and 6-8 p.m.

Conclusions

The research activity in Groningen has shown the positive reaction from all parties and positive results (i.e. no problems with flow public transport, less transport time in the inner city area). On the one hand, the deliveries became more efficient and more economical for the transport operators. On the other hand, the environmental situation and the quality of life has become better. In the future a further improvement of the policy of co-operation will be continued. It should be aimed to support this policy and project by additional technical applications like the usage of more environmental vehicles or maybe a concept of underground logistics.

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