

## Congestion charge

Institutional cooperation

Sweden – Stockholm

### → Context, objectives and target group

The aims of the Stockholm congestion charge (formally a tax) were to reduce traffic and congestion, cut journey times, and to improve environmental conditions in the inner city of Stockholm. The congestion charge is an example of a measure addressing residents' travel habits, helping to achieve the objectives of sustainable urban mobility planning in Stockholm. The Stockholm congestion charge has been referred

to as a successful example of how mobility management can be used to bring about significant decreases in congestion and travel times in big cities. Extensive evaluation provides information and experiences that may be of help for other cities considering to introduce a congestion charge or tax.

### → Description of the activities

The development of the congestion charge was initiated in 2003 when the Stockholm City Council adopted a majority proposal to conduct a trial implementation of congestion charging in the inner city of Stockholm. The trial was very successful and resulted in a 20% reduction in traffic volumes. The development of the system and the introduction of the tax involved intensive political and public debate, extensive institutional cooperation, and public participation. Also strong leadership was demonstrated as well as professionalism from institutions, key individuals and consultants. The increased level and quality of public transport services was also an important factor. One factor that has been put forward as essential for achieving political support was the integration of the congestion charge with the national transport planning process. This gave local and regional politicians more influence over the national investments. Other success factors include (a) a technical system that ran smoothly, (b) successful information campaigns, (c) a visible level of congestion reduction, and (d) extensive involvement of scientific and other expertise, both in the planning phase and in the evaluation. For example, transport models were used successfully for forecasting the effects of the charge.

### → Communication

Extensive information campaigns were organised before the actual congestion charge trial and introduction, addressing both the function of the system and the availability of alternative transport modes. However, the trial as such can also be seen as a main information campaign. In addition, there was an intensive debate in the media during the preparatory phases, which may have contributed to the public being well informed.



## → Costs and who paid them

The City of Stockholm played a key role in preparing the congestion charge, including to secure funding, but also the central government allocated a significant budget. The decision to channel gross congestion charge income into regional investment, notably towards public transport, was decided during the development phase.

## → Barriers

Numerous barriers to implementing the congestion charge trial have been identified, ranging from political polarisation to institutional, legal and financial uncertainties and opposition from the public and various organisations.

## → Drivers

Also several success factors have been identified, for example extensive institutional cooperation, public participation, leadership, professionalism from institutions, key individuals and consultants, and coordination with increased public transport provision.

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## → Contact information

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## → Details

References: Gullberg A and Isaksson K, 2009, Congestion taxes in city traffic. Lessons learnt from the Stockholm trial, Nordic Academic Press; Börjesson M, Eliasson J, Hugosson, M B and Brundell-Freij K, 2012, The Stockholm congestion charges – 5 years on. Effects, acceptability and lessons learnt, Transport Policy 20, 1-12; Eliasson J, 2014, The Stockholm congestion charges: an overview, CTS Working paper 2014:7.

- Annual evaluation reports (in Swedish):  
[www.stockholm.se/Fristaende-webbplatser/Fackforvaltningssajter/Trafikkontoret/Trangselskatt/Program-for-uppfoljning/](http://www.stockholm.se/Fristaende-webbplatser/Fackforvaltningssajter/Trafikkontoret/Trangselskatt/Program-for-uppfoljning/)
- More information and evaluations can be found on the website of the City of Stockholm:  
[www.stockholm.se/Fristaende-webbplatser/Fackforvaltningssajter/Trafikkontoret/Trangselskatt/](http://www.stockholm.se/Fristaende-webbplatser/Fackforvaltningssajter/Trafikkontoret/Trangselskatt/)



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