



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Report No. 31 (2006–2007) to the Storting
Introduction and Summary in English

A Tolerant, Secure and Creative Oslo Region

Report on the Capital Region of Norway



Promoting tolerance, security and creativity in the Oslo Region

Report No. 31 (2006–2007) to the Stortinget

Introduction and summary

The policy objective of the Norwegian Government is to facilitate and promote the development of all Norwegian regions – the metropolitan region of Oslo and other regions alike – capitalizing on the strengths of each region and deploying mechanisms appropriate to their individual resources and capacities.

A unanimous Parliament asked the Government to prepare a Report on the Oslo Region, in connection with Parliament's response to Report no 31 (2002–2003), «Large city Regions». The new Report should in particular explore the role of Oslo as Norway's capital and largest city; issues related to the governance of the region; and issues concerning Oslo as a metropolitan region. The Government affirmed its commitment to prepare the Report in 2005 and the work has been synchronized with other political processes in pursuance of the majority Government's political platform.



The 19 counties of Norway



Oslo and other capitals (1) in Northern and Central Europe.

(1) St. Petersburg is also marked on the map.
Map: Oslo Teknopol

1 The Metropolitan Region of Oslo – Opportunities and challenges – joint responsibilities of local, regional and national authorities

As Norway is a land of promise, promise is what characterises the capital and its metropolitan region. In Norway's system of government, local and regional authorities have a particular responsibility to enact integrated policies in order to encourage local and regional growth. The White Paper on the Capital Region should therefore not be taken as an attempt by central government to supplant local government, but to illustrate the importance of Government policy to development in the region. National policy is designed to promote local responsibility and good local solutions. In the event of particular challenges in the metropolitan area, the Government will allocate state resources directly to facilitate the success of national policy goals.

The Government is committed to continue the dialogue on the issues of the White Paper with local and regional stakeholders, both the Oslo Region Alliance, created in 2004 and the affected county authorities and municipalities.

1.1 Government's vision for the Metropolitan Region of Oslo

The Government will pursue a consistent policy for the Metropolitan Region of Oslo with a view to promoting a tolerant, secure and innovative region in the interest of the region's citizens and business community, and indeed of the country at large.

Oslo boasts a highly diverse cosmopolitan mix – culturally, socially and economically. As such it is an excellent seedbed for creativity and innovation. A tolerant, accommodating attitude is a vital ingredient of efforts to facilitate participation and inclusion of all segments of the population. In Oslo, in several neighbouring municipalities and in the nearby city of Drammen, the proportion of ethnic minorities is higher than elsewhere in the country. Reducing disparity in living standards that separate certain immigrant groups from the region's majority population represents a significant challenge.

The Government urges the municipalities of the region to strengthen their welfare solutions. The Metropolitan Region of Oslo should have the best opportunities to provide a safe and secure environment for all residents. Security for life and property is central to quality of life. A safe capital region is important for business, and over the longer term it can affect international competitiveness.

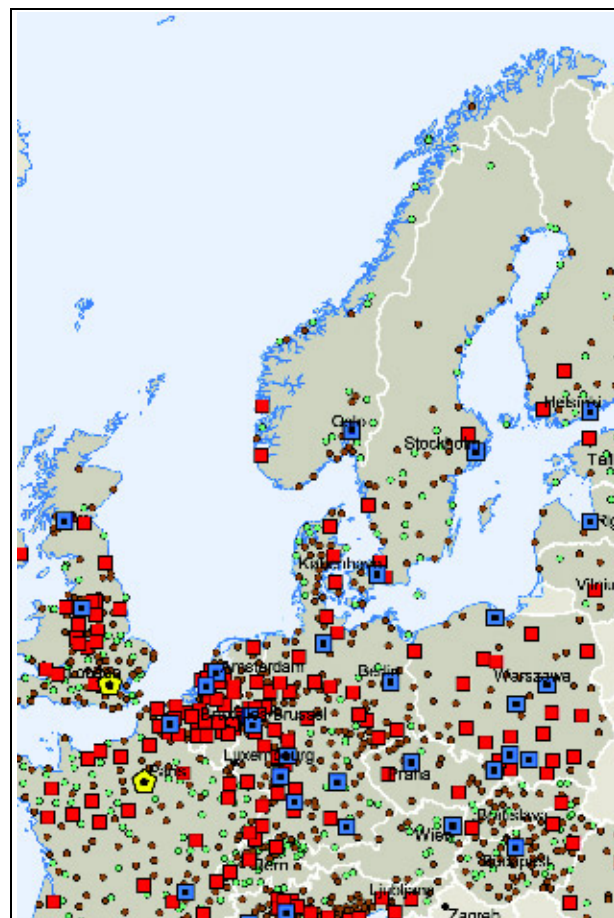


Figure 1.1 Functional urban regions in Northern Europe

A cut from an ESPON-map (ESPON project 1.1.1 Potentials for polycentric development). Main functional urban regions of Europe. (The map does not necessarily express the view of the ESPON surveillance committee).

The policy set out by the Government for the capital is based on the principles of the Nordic model. Creation of wealth through production must go hand in hand with a fair and efficient redistribution. High productivity in society as a whole relies on good public welfare services. If the Oslo Region can utilise its resources and encourage innovation in business, industry and the arts, the whole country stands to gain.

To release these potentials, good governance is needed. There is a substantial challenge for Authorities in the region to encourage economic growth and engage constructively with business and industry. There is a great capacity for innovation in the Oslo Region, but it requires all parties to work purposefully together to take better advantage of the region's assets. The Government pledges its support to this end.

1.2 Oslo Region's unique possibilities

Oslo is a capital city, a metropolitan area, and the core of a dynamic region. The Oslo Region has a highly distinctive potential for development. The city is an important centre for the Norwegian economy, cultural life and knowledge system, and the Oslo Region has more than a quarter of the Norwegian population.

Several strong sectors and clusters are of great importance to the region and the country, and the region should utilise in a better way its opportunities for expanding in a global market. The whole country will take advantage of a more attractive and internationally competitive capital region. The Government will take steps together with regional stakeholders and authorities, to support the capital city in its role as an engine of growth for all parts of the country.

1.3 Positive diversity – social challenges – sustainable urban development

The Government will work to promote greater equality and equitable distribution of assets. Comparatively speaking, incomes in the Oslo Region are high, but the gap in living standards is wider here than the country as a whole. The urban society must meet these social challenges for the region's full potential to be realised.

More than a fifth of Oslo's residents belong to an ethnic minority. The policy of the Government encouraging integration and inclusion of members of ethnic minorities is of particular relevance for Oslo. The Government is pleased to see that Oslo City Council is working at the front line to promote community participation and integration of ethnic minorities. The Government pledges its support for these efforts. To ensure the integration and par-

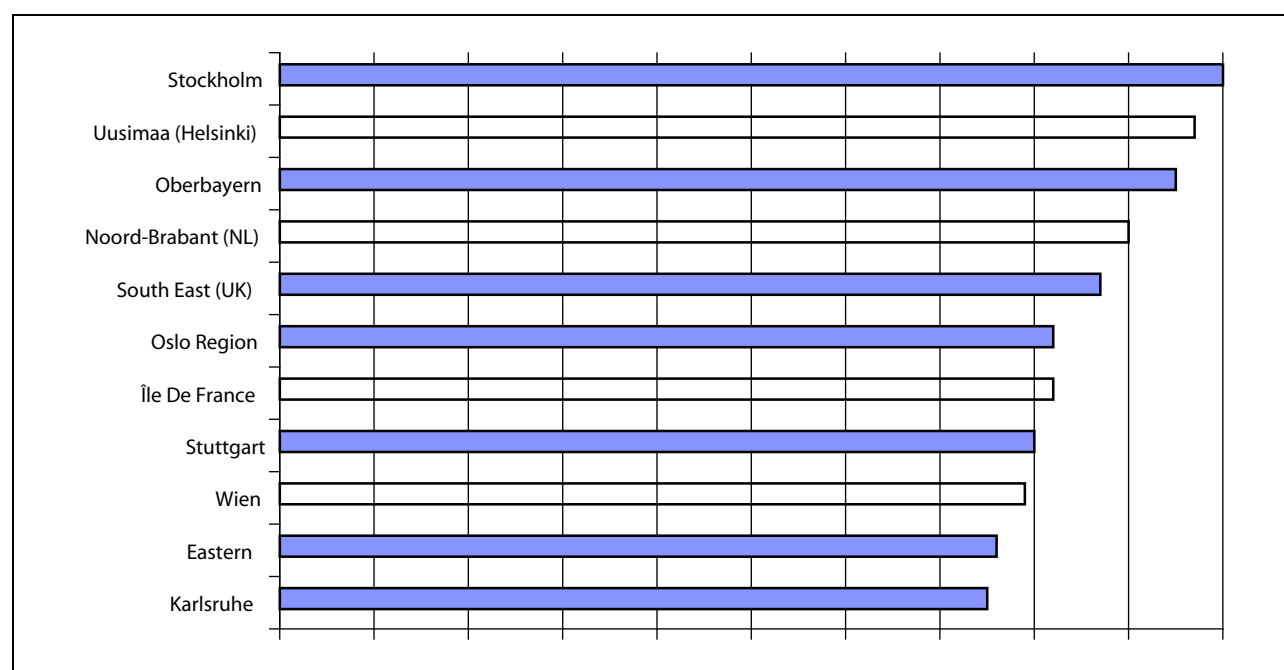


Figure 1.2 The ten most innovative regions of Europe

European Innovation Scoreboard 2003 (www.cordis.lu/trendchart)

ticipation of all members of the community of Oslo is of great importance for Norway as a whole.

Oslo's prosperity and strength will always be embedded in the sum of all its residents, districts and neighbourhoods, and the surrounding region. The Government is committed to sustainable urban development in a wider social, economic and environmental sense, along with carefully considered neighbourhood development efforts in the various parts of the region.

Local policies must be designed to meet local challenges. The Government will, however, actively support regeneration of the urban district of Groruddalen in order to improve the neighbourhoods and boost living standards, environment and integration, and invites Oslo City Council to a partnership to develop a community development programme for Søndre Nordstrand.

1.4 Strong growth – possibilities and challenges

The population of Oslo, and the Oslo Region, is growing rapidly. As population density rises, land

and infrastructure come under increasing pressure, as do other valued aspects of the urban environment. Regional policy should aim at alleviating problems arising from this development in the Oslo Region. Local authorities must take action to ensure balanced growth in their own cities and region. Local authorities should therefore initiate action to provide a favourable urban environment for all segments of the population; ensure efficient infrastructure and sensible land use; increase housing provision; provide adequate welfare services; and give business and industry opportunity to grow and develop.

Growth creates challenges, but also gives the local and regional authorities the opportunity to shape the development pattern in the region. Oslo and its metropolitan area face several unique issues which the Government will address in various action plans. The Government will accommodate its regional policy – under which policy on the Greater Oslo Region belongs – to the needs of the different regions in the country.

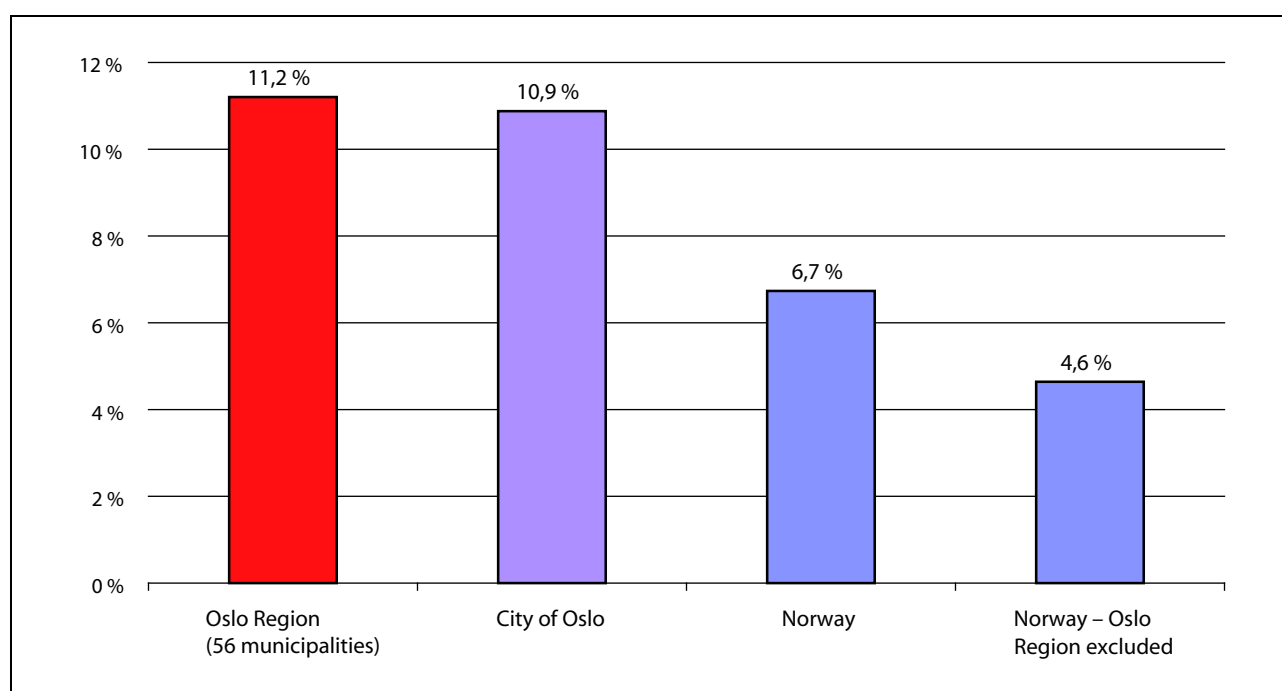


Figure 1.3 Population increase 1997–2007 for Oslo and other parts of Norway

Data: Statistics Norway

2 Norway is in need of a national policy for the Capital Region

A strong Capital Region is an advantage for the whole country, and it is of vital importance that the opportunities of this region are well utilized. The City of Oslo and its metropolitan region face a series of particular challenges which the Government will follow up on different levels. The Government will follow a differentiated regional policy for the regions, including the Capital Region. The Government's policy for the Capital Region could be seen from three angles:

(1) Local and regional responsibility and authority

- A national regulatory framework for all municipalities and county authorities (regions) shall enable local and regional authorities to take responsibility for welfare and development

The Government policy for the Oslo metropolitan area should provide incentives and financial scope for local and regional authorities to meet their responsibilities. The Government's action to improve the financial situation of municipalities throughout the country gives them wider economic leverage to address their responsibilities. The general Purpose Grant Scheme for the municipalities will be reviewed so that both growing and shrinking municipalities can meet challenges posed by demographic change.

It is important to the Government that local and regional authorities have the means to reach their objectives and accomplish their strategic plans. The Government will propose, a revision of the Planning and Building Act in 2008. State bodies and agencies will work with local authorities to come up with practical solutions and pro-active measures to speed the implementation of local and regional plans on sustainable urban and regional development.

The public sector reform (Report to the Storting No. 12 (2006–2007) *Regional strengths – Regional Future*), seeks to underpin regional democracy and regional growth. The Oslo Region needs a sufficiently robust governance model to address the extensive commitments and administrative issues across of the region's present internal borders. The

Government has launched four models for consideration in the consultations to be held in the region.

(2) Consequences of national policies

- The Government's regional policy is designed to facilitate prosperity and growth in all regions of the country. In its policy for the Greater Oslo Region, presented in this White Paper, the Government is assessing the best way of designing state policy instruments to the particular conditions in the Oslo Region and supporting its particular strengths.
- Because Oslo is the capital of Norway, a preponderance of central government business takes place here, and national policy in several areas has important effect on the Greater Oslo Region.

The Government is committed to education, research, innovation and culture in the capital. It is important that the Oslo Region can help develop Norwegian know-how and culture to high international standards. A robust Oslo Region not only benefits the region's inhabitants, institutions and businesses, but benefits the country as a whole. Investments in Oslo as a communications node for the whole country will have immediate benefits for the metropolitan region as well.

National policy instruments promoting social welfare and other sectors should be designed to address opportunities and challenges faced by all regions of the country, including the Metropolitan Region of Oslo.

It is important to ensure effective implementation of broad national policies and allocation of responsibilities in the Oslo Region. This applies to many sectors and policy areas such as social welfare, living conditions and income distribution, environment and climate, economic growth and transport, know-how and culture. However tasks and responsibilities are allocated and structured within and between central government sectors, it must be done with a view to accommodating the needs of the Oslo Region. This will necessitate consultation and collaboration with local authorities,

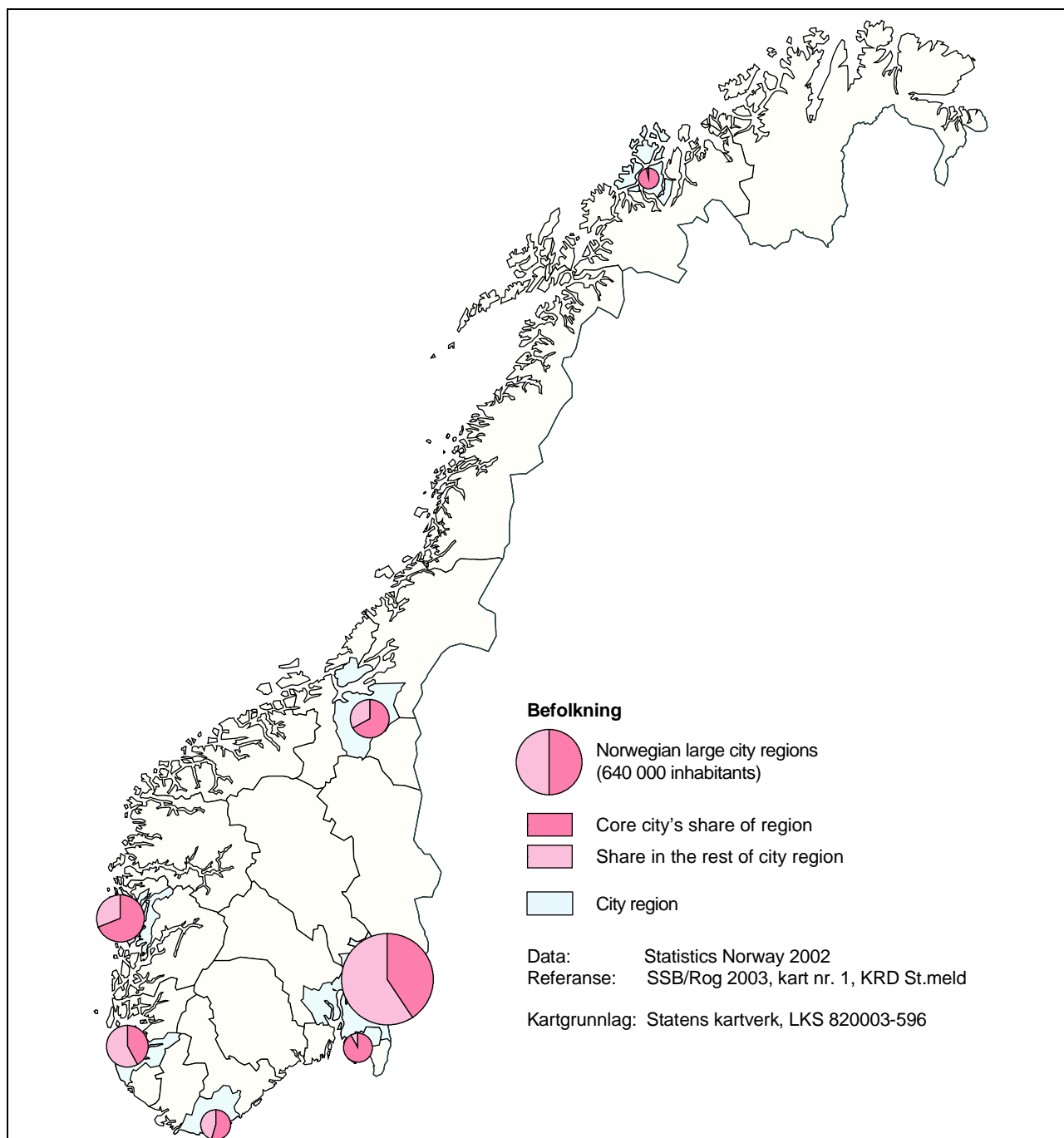


Figure 2.1 Population of Norwegian large city regions: Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim, Kristiansand, Fredrikstad and Tromsø (ranked by size of the region)

Norwegian large city regions
Data: Statistics Norway 2002

Table 2.1 Inhabitants in Norway (2007)

Norway	4 700 000
South Eastern Norway (including Oslo)	2 350 000
Southern Norway	270 000
Western Norway	1 220 000
Mid Norway	410 000
Northern Norway	460 000

and execution in conformity with the tasks and organisational structure of each individual sector.

(3) Particular challenges in the City of Oslo and the metropolitan region

- Where the capital and Greater Oslo Region are faced with challenges of an exceptional nature, the Government will consider targeted state response to ensure that essential tasks can be performed

Issues of note here include social integration and community participation, inequality in living conditions, safety and security, public transport, and the

consequences of a large government activity. The administrative challenges in the region are unusual as well.

The issue of equitable distribution in the Capital Region has a national dimension. The Government is especially concerned that measures to boost employment rates, ensure reliable, adequate housing and a dependable income have an adequate design.

The Government is aware that certain areas of the capital face particular challenges. The Government will therefore give priority to regeneration efforts in the city districts of Groruddalen and Søndre Nordstrand.

3 Regional governance – the challenges of the Metropolitan Region of Oslo

The Metropolitan Region of Oslo has the highest population density and density of its built up areas of any Norwegian region. The region is dynamic and fast-growing, however divided into many political and administrative units. In many ways, its complexity makes it more difficult to govern; and the challenges affecting regional governance involve several dimensions at once.

The structure of regional government of today is not adequate to meet the needs of the region. These issues must be addressed because decisions taken in one municipality can have major ramifications elsewhere. For the sake of both democracy and efficiency, it is vital to ensure that decision-making in the region is truly coordinated and takes account of ramifications for the entire area.

Governance challenges are most evident in the field of regional land use and transport policy, and in connection with the statutory duties of local and regional government. The lack of horizontal and vertical coordination between regional land use and transport policies creates a significant problem. Attention has been drawn to the need to improve vertical coordination (i.e., between central, regional and local government) in relation to certain particular tasks of the state. This need for vertical coordination is particularly evident in the transport sector. There are fewer and less urgent challenges to coordinated government in the delivery of welfare-related services.

The Government considers that issues affecting the governance of the Oslo Region should be addressed in order to:

- Enable a more integrated governance of the functional region
- Meet the region's environmental and climate challenges with integrated policy
- Facilitate coordinated land use and transport planning under regional control
- Strengthen and enable practical coordination of public transport to increase regional transport efficiency and harness the region's potential for economic growth.

The reform of the public sector proposed by the Government in Report to the Storting No. 12

(2006–2007) *Regional strengths – Regional Future*, should enable and stimulate dynamic and viable democratic regional government and robust municipalities able to take advantage of regional strengths for the benefit of the residents, commerce and the wider community. Capacity for growth in Norwegian regions will be strengthened by competence-building, by encouraging innovation and business development, by addressing difficulties caused by long distances, by creating viable local communities and stimulating the sustainable use of natural resources. The reform creates a new framework under which challenges of governance in the Oslo Region can be assessed and discussed.

Reform of the public sector will also facilitate a more effective allocation of responsibilities, enabling a better conduct of local, regional and national issues. Forward-looking solutions to issues affecting government in the Greater Oslo Region will also increase collaborative efforts to stimulate wealth creation and international competitiveness, and give them added authority and effectiveness. For this to succeed, central government and private stakeholders must work closely together.

Reform of the public sector (including changes to the division of competencies and amendments to the planning laws), will encourage broader, more effective regional coordination in the Oslo Region. The Government urges partners to devise a model of governance for the Oslo Region which, in addition, paves the way for these opportunities in this complex region. The Government will conduct a three-stage process:

1. The first stage was the Report No. 12 (2006–2007) *Regional strengths – Regional Future*. The White Paper sets out four alternative strategies for improving regional organisation in the

Table 3.1 Inhabitants in Oslo Region (2007)

City of Oslo	550 000
First ring of municipalities	300 000
Second ring of municipalities	300 000
Third ring of municipalities	400 000

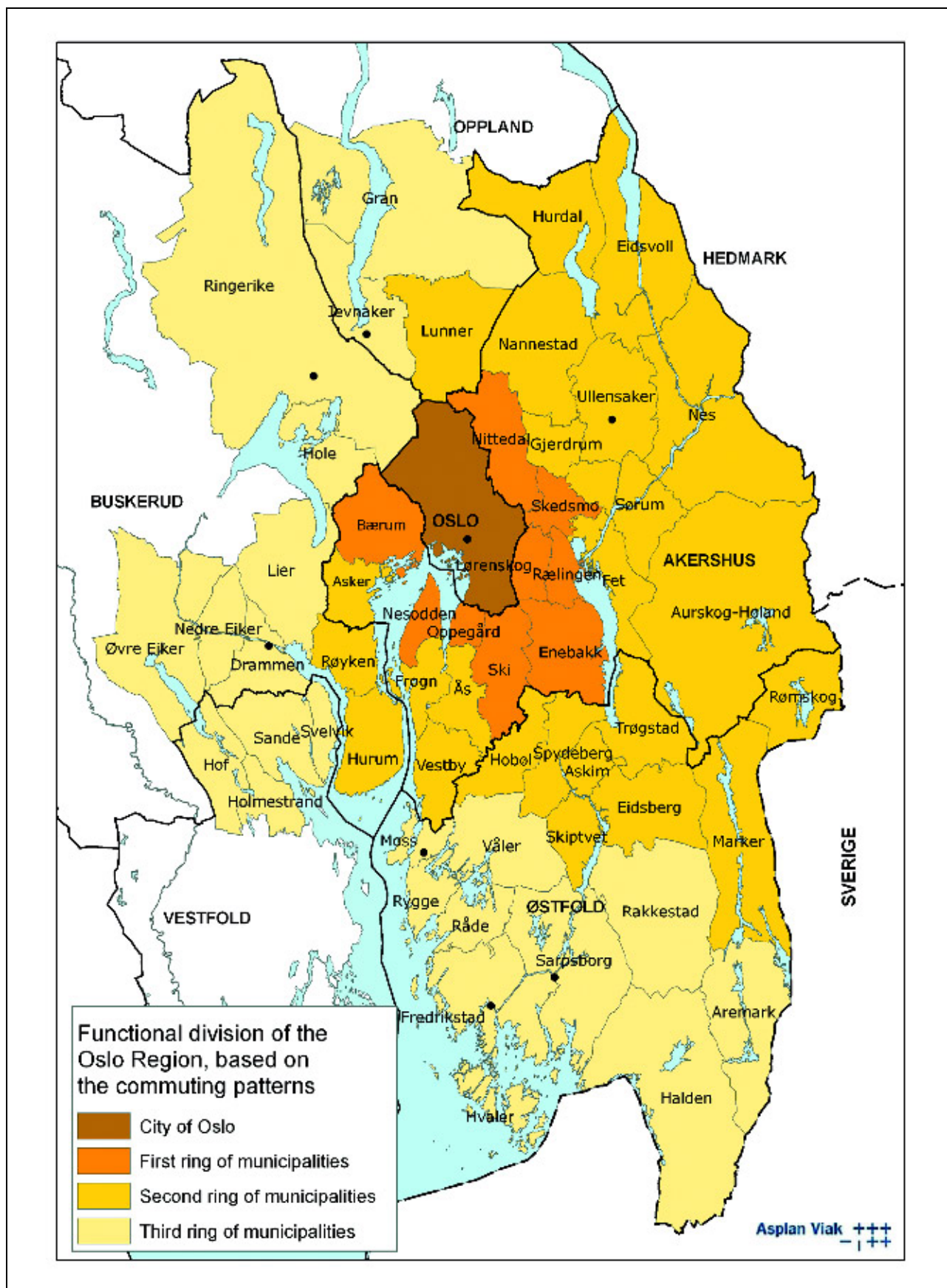


Figure 3.1 The functional urban area of Oslo – showing rings of regional integration around the capital
The municipalities included on the map are all members of The Oslo Region (a formalised alliance of 56 municipalities and three county authorities).

Greater Oslo Region. The Government has invited stakeholders in the Oslo Region to discuss and select their preferred model of regional organisation, and indicate how they envisage the geographical boundaries.

2. In the second stage, 2008, the Government will propose a model of government before Parliament, after consulting with the elected bodies in the region,
3. The reform will be implemented in 2010.

By majority vote, Parliament approved in May 2007 the Government's assessment of the issues affecting the Oslo Region, while emphasising that certain government tasks should be handled by political decision-making bodies with the mandate to view the Oslo Region as a unified entity.

4 Summary of the Report

The Government's White Paper on the Capital Region sets out for the first time a policy framework devoted entirely to the Capital Region. The Government encourages a spatial conception of public policy to complement traditional sectorial views that tend to characterise public policy. This will give a clearer picture of interaction and dependencies in the Oslo Region while highlighting and addressing environmental, social and economic issues through an integrated approach.

The Government will pursue a differentiated regional policy. It is designed to sponsor regional growth based on the particular strengths of each individual region. This applies as much to the Greater Oslo Region as to other regions. It means that political and economic measures and incentives designed for the Oslo Region will differ from those for other regions.

4.1 A strong Capital Region – an advantage for the whole country

A metropolitan region like Oslo is the most attractive if the social environment and standards of living are good, and there are jobs for all. This will make the region more attractive internationally as well. The capital is our largest city; a centre of know-how and a dynamic financial and cultural arena. The skills, capacities and creative drive of its residents are important assets to business and industry. A welcoming social climate, shaped by tolerance, security and reliable welfare services are qualities which give Oslo a comparative advantage internationally. The Government is also mindful of the dynamic interdependencies between the capital and the rest of the country; regional policy in general and policy for peripheral districts will therefore also benefit the capital.

Having the role of a capital city, Oslo has great influence. The people of the city are a great resource, with many migrants from all parts of the country, a young workforce, many students, a preponderance of highly qualified people and large ethnic minority community.

The Metropolitan Region of Oslo develops increasingly as a functionally integrated urban

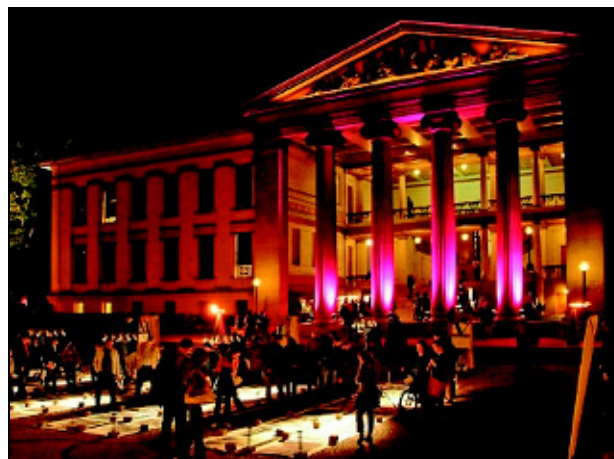


Figure 4.1 The University of Oslo – celebrating the Oslo cultural night 2007.

Photo: Oslo municipality

conurbation. But with a rapidly growing population and strong economic growth, the City of Oslo faces new challenges. Being the heart of the region a large proportion of the region's jobs are located here, causing extensive commuting. Oslo's distinctive economic advantage lies in its knowledge-intensive business-to-business services, and top quality research and education facilities. The wider region is a significant market for goods and services, while manufacturing industry is robust on the outskirts of the region.

4.2 Living conditions and welfare

One of Oslo's features is the wide disparity in living conditions and income. One finds both the country's best and worst living conditions. Inequalities are wider in Oslo than the rest of the country with respect to health, housing standards, qualifications, employment, income and use of social services. Average incomes in Oslo are high compared to the national average as Oslo is home to a group with extremely high incomes in a Norwegian context, but the city is also home to many with low incomes. Oslo has the biggest communities of immigrant background in Norway. As living stan-

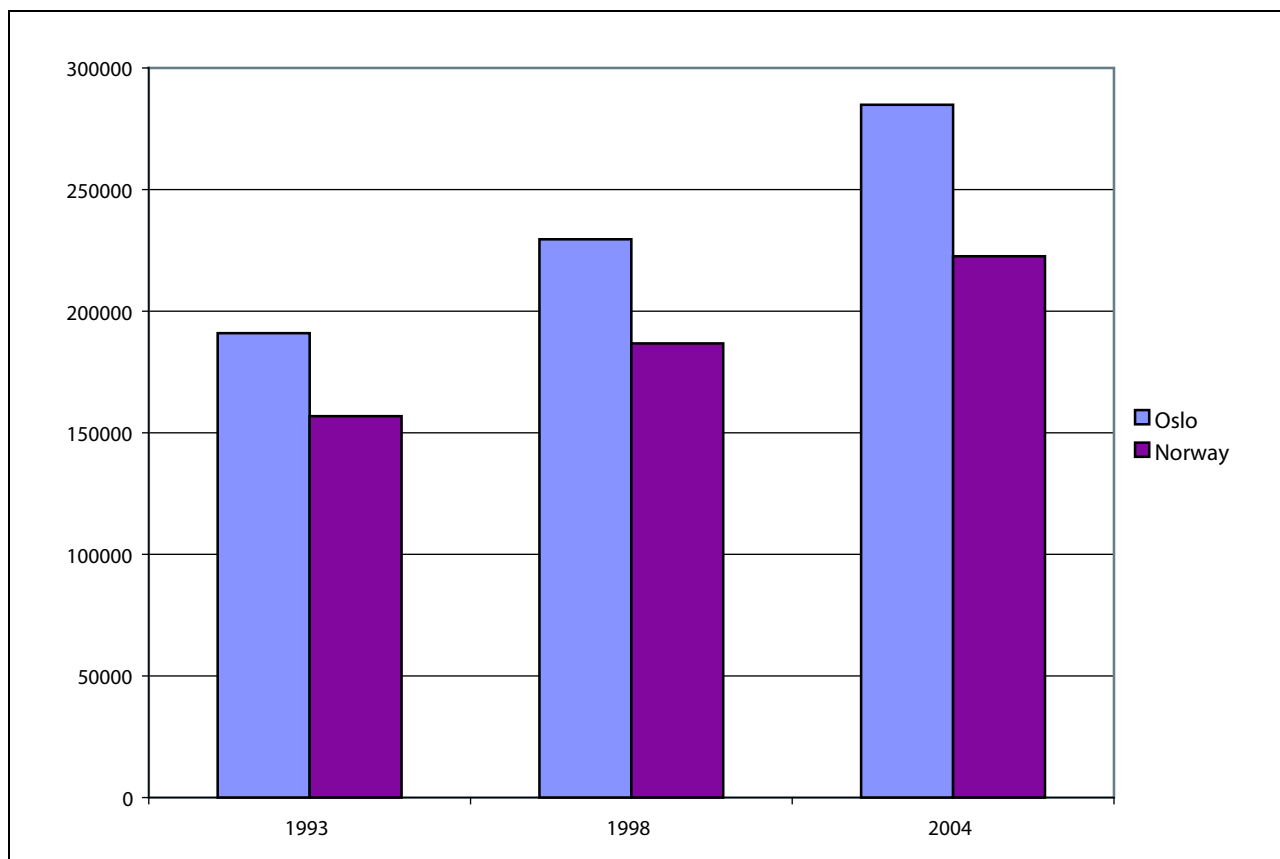


Figure 4.2 Total income in cash per inhabitant in the City of Oslo and Norway. Fixed 2004 prices

Source: Statistics Norway

dards of the immigrant population are beneath the average, this sustains the inequality gap of the community of Oslo.

The City of Oslo has a high level of revenues, though some comparisons show that welfare service delivery is at the national average. Oslo is the «odd man out» having the largest social differences.

The Government is committed to reducing inequality in income and living conditions. Local government and the state's welfare agencies have an important job to do here. Municipalities are responsible for a number of key welfare services and development-related tasks within their borders. National economic policy, labour market policy and social security policy have a significant role to play in ensuring the success of this objective – in the capital as well, where the challenges are often greatest.

The national goals – of good quality of life, equal opportunities for all and equitable distribution of living conditions – apply to the capital just as to the other municipalities. The Government's policy of strengthening the municipal sector adds a significant contribution to local councils' capacity

to provide welfare services and promote development. The Government will take action to help Oslo meet the particular challenges within its borders. Insofar as the issues appear first and are most severe in Oslo, the whole country can learn from lessons gained in designing and executing new policy mechanisms.

4.3 A region of diversity and tolerance

One of Oslo's major strengths and attractions is its thorough metropolitan mix. The city is home to people from all corners of the country and, indeed, the world. Oslo's ethnic minority community is highly diverse and has been a major factor in the rapid growth in population. Thirty-two per cent of the non-Western immigrant community of Norway lives in Oslo. The surrounding municipalities have a large share of immigrants as well. We need a more tolerant social climate so that neighbourhoods, businesses and the community as a whole have a chance to capitalize on the new opportunities afforded by a diverse population. We need to develop cultural life as a meeting ground for people

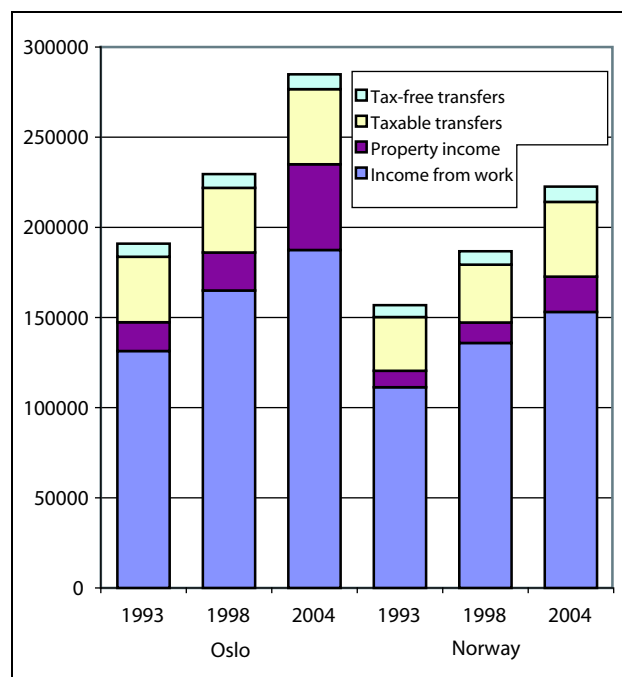


Figure 4.3 Different sources of income 1993–2004. NOK per inhabitant.

Source: Statistics Norway

with different backgrounds. The Government wants all, irrespective of background, to have the opportunity to realise their full potential, to the benefit of both the individual and the community. It is crucial, in the view of the Government, to increase the rate of employment among members of non-Western ethnic minorities. Many recent immigrants and refugees in Oslo have an urgent need to learn Norwegian and to acquire other skills to stand a chance as they enter the labour market and community life in the wider sense.

Including everybody into the community, whatever one's ethnic origins, is an important policy objective. The Government's policy on welfare and inclusion is intended to address ethnicity-related discrimination. The Government will extend and strengthen the action plan that was put in place to promote integration and inclusion of immigrant communities. The action plan provides for a number of strategies and measures to this end, and the Government will work closely with local authorities to effect their implementation.

4.4 Children, schools and growing up in the city

An increasing number of the country's children are growing up in Oslo and Oslo Region. One third of Oslo's children are themselves recent immigrants or children of immigrants. A high standard of childcare and education is vital for children whatever their background – social, economic and linguistic – to enjoy a good childhood and a chance to develop social skills in interaction with other children, to learn to speak, read and write Norwegian, learn foreign languages and have advantage of good instruction. The steps taken by the Government to provide every child with a place at a day-care institution, and primary and secondary education's knowledge reform, offer a helping hand to local authorities responsible for delivering good quality services for children and adolescents. The Government has asked Parliament to consent to the sale of state property to local authorities at assessed value to ensure a day-care place for every child as quickly as possible. New measures shall reduce the number of adolescents dropping out of school. The Government will support action taken by Oslo City Council to address special needs in day-care and primary and secondary education. Two measures aimed at regenerating the urban districts of Groruddalen and Søndre Nordstrand are free childcare for a core number of hours a day, and extended school activities. The Government will strengthen these efforts with further support.

4.5 A secure capital city

The right to safety and security is a right enjoyed by all. Crime rates in Oslo are the highest in the country, but the city nevertheless ranks as one of the safest capital cities in the world. The Government is working to increase safety and is supporting the Oslo Police Force as it implements its vision «Oslo – The safest capital city in the world». It is the Government's objective to improve police performance in the areas of crime prevention, detection, rapid response and rehabilitation capacity. The Government therefore wants the police to enhance safety and security through accessible and visible police in all areas of the city. The police should step up its presence in crime hotspots as well as generally to discourage criminal activity, to make all residential areas of the city equally safe, and to alleviate fears of insecurity especially among young women and girls.



Figure 4.4

Photo: Sveinung Bråthen

The police shall move to combat organized gang crime effectively. The police have started a comprehensive anti-gang crime programme. It is a powerful, long-term program that will continue for as long as criminal gangs need to be held in check and youngsters be prevented from joining them. The Police shall have the resources necessary to make the city safe for residents and to carry out national duties in the capital that require exceptional expenditures.

The Government has proposed an increase in funding for the Oslo Police Force in the revised national budget 2007, and the Government will continue to review the resource situation of the police force in light of the serious challenges.

4.6 Culture and creativeness

National institutions, a large number of artists and a large audience make Oslo a major player in the life of the arts and culture in Norway. Artistic activity in Oslo should hold to the highest international standards. Government will seek to achieve to cultural diversity and seek to promote wide participa-

tion in the arts and cultural life, providing an equal opportunity for all to join in.

Oslo is home to almost 40 per cent of the active, professionally organised artists in Norway. Cultural life improves the quality of life of many people in the Greater Oslo Region. The Government is drafting plans to extend and develop the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design. The state is a partner in the construction of new, important theatres and centres of dance, folk music, folk dance, jazz, popular music and rock genres. The arts are an important part of the profile of the city and create a positive image for visiting foreigners and Norwegians.

High levels of activity in the arts are good for economic development as well. Many of the country's businesses in the culture sector are based in the capital. The arts are an important source of knowledge and creativity, and create new product niches, ideas and experiences. The Government will publish a plan of action to strengthen the commercial footing and wealth creating capacity of the arts and culture-based businesses. The cultural sector is a clear instance of the direct effects of national policy for Oslo.

4.7 An innovative and internationally competitive region

The Nordic model of growth and welfare has allowed Norway to develop a strong economy and excellent quality of life. Businesses need a positive business climate as well as a tolerant social climate. The Government is mindful of the opportunities for innovation and growth in an internationally competitive region. The interdependencies linking the Oslo Region with rest of the country are another important aspect.

Expertise in the private and public sectors in the Oslo Region is a crucial element of the Norwegian knowledge economy. Forty per cent of adults in Oslo and Akershus have higher education. Head office functions, R&D and universities are vital to the ability of the private sector to compete in an increasingly tough global market. The Oslo Region has half of the country's jobs in the commercial service sector (services for businesses). Businesses supplying knowledge-intensive services are important at all stages of the wealth creation process – both in the marine, oil and gas, metals and wood processing and power generating industries, as well as in local government and health enterprises.

An important challenge for the R&D sector, the business community and local and regional government is to translate new information and ideas into forward-looking innovations and value creation in the Metropolitan Region of Oslo. Regional stakeholders must work together to develop an innovation system; and national agencies must participate here too. The innovation potential of the metropolitan region is excellent, but stakeholders and interested parties must work to improve performance. Central government pledges its support by way of incentives and a clear, concrete and long-term partnership. The Government will seek to enhance infrastructure for innovation and research in the region. The Government appreciates regional stakeholders and their commitment to clusters for innovation and business development. Central government is eager to work with the Oslo Region to intensify international marketing of the region.

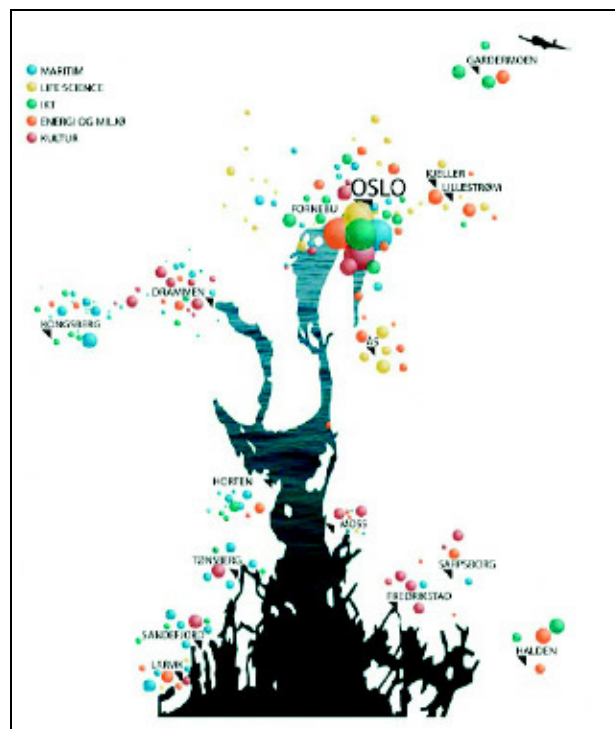


Figure 4.5 Bussiness and innovation clusters of the Oslo region: Maritime; Energy/environment; ICT; Culture; Life science. Map: Oslo Teknopol

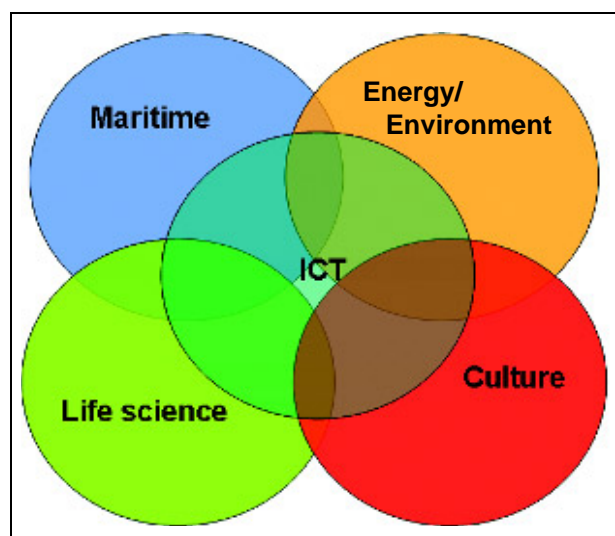


Figure 4.6 The five Oslo-clusters and their interference. The clusters are based upon the partnership of private industry, research and education institutions, and government.

4.8 An attractive capital and urban district regeneration

The Government wants to see dynamic cities act as engines of growth for the nation and regions. The Government will therefore institute a pro-active policy to develop the city's assets, strengths and opportunities. The Government will promote balanced growth in the Metropolitan Region of Oslo and implement measures to encourage community-wide participation and reduce inequality in living conditions in areas where these are critical issues. Ensuring good local communities and neighbourhoods in an attractive Oslo Region is a job for local government, but the Government is ready to take its responsibility as well.

The Government and the City of Oslo have entered into an agreement to ensure long-term sustainable development, higher standards of living and improved environmental conditions in the district of Groruddalen. Improvements will be made in the areas of transportation and environmental quality. Action will be taken to target living conditions and stimulate neighbourhood development, better housing, and local culture. Groruddalen is an important arena for encouraging integration and the participation of ethnic minorities.

The Government will share the cost of the following four programmes with the City of Oslo. 1) Environmentally friendly transport in Groruddalen; 2) Green structure, the river Alna and cultural environment; 3) Housing and community development; 4) Children, education, living conditions, cultural activity and social inclusion.

The Government will require an assessment of available localization options in Groruddalen when state bodies are due to relocate in the Oslo Region. This initiative will be discussed with Oslo City Council's urban development authorities.

The Government pledges its support of community development in Søndre Nordstrand, a programme targeting the specific problems of this area. The programme will encourage community participation, improve the neighbourhood, and strengthen the role of day care facilities, schools and after-school activities in promoting language skills, participation in the community, and child and adolescent development.

The state is a major stakeholder in the Oslo Region and the Government is committed to ensuring that state undertakings foster an attractive and sustainable city and region. The Government will therefore urge all state bodies and agencies to be vigilant about issues relating to location, design and architecture, management and use of real

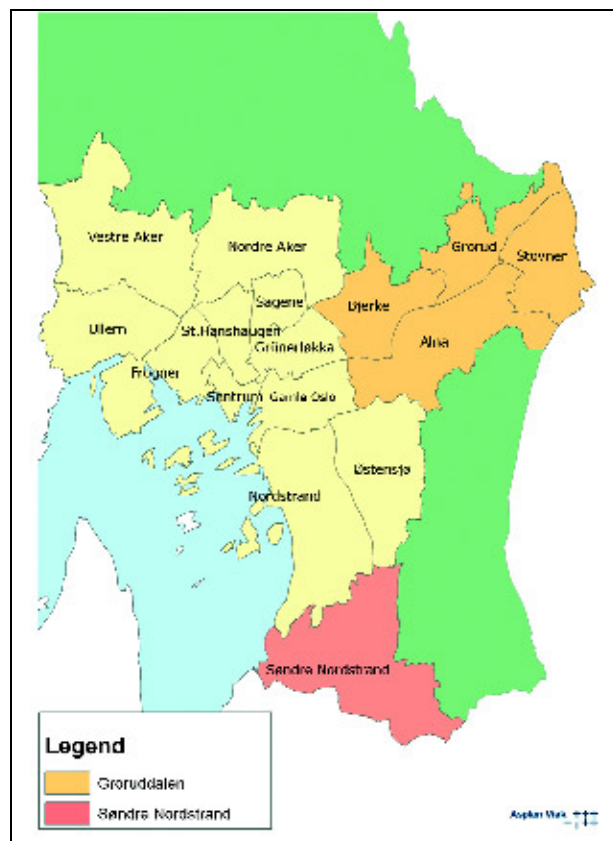


Figure 4.7 The districts of Groruddalen and Søndre Nordstrand in Oslo

The districts of Søndre Nordstrand and Groruddalen in Oslo – areas of the special partnership of the Government and the City of Oslo. Green colour: Forest districts of Oslo.

estate, and to build well-designed, practical buildings, facilities and areas to positively influence urban qualities.

It is a guiding principle of the Government that state undertakings and the use of government property should tie in with municipal plans for sustainable urban development and be situated in proximity to public transportation. The Government will promote sustainable urban development by deploying public buildings and property in accordance with a coordinated land use and transportation planning, and societal objectives.

4.9 Transport, environment and regional development

The municipalities which make up the Metropolitan Region of Oslo are closely integrated and inter-dependent both economically and socially – with a common housing and labour market, extensive commuting and intensive contact between businesses in various parts of the region. Rapid popula-

tion growth makes it increasingly urgent to resolve administrative problems in the region to create a well-functioning region and ensure environmentally sound development. Coordinated land use and transportation planning must direct physical urban development, and public transport must be better coordinated. Good regional governance will also empower the region and its potential for economic and social development.

Sustainable and environmentally friendly growth in the Metropolitan Region of Oslo is a Government objective. Government will present a Report on sectoral climate action plans, including targets and mechanisms to curb emissions of greenhouse gases, encourage use of public transport, reduce the growth in car use, extend cycle lanes and roads, concentrate urban growth in existing development areas, and cut emissions of greenhouse gases from stationary energy producers¹.

The Government is committed to preserving green spaces and developing green areas, and will present a bill which provides protection for the Oslo Forest preserve. The Government will invest in the railway network, including routes within the Oslo Region and between cities and towns in the Eastern Norway region, and will encourage increased use of public transport. The Government lauds the efforts of Oslo City Council and Akershus County Authority who are working together to develop the Oslo-package III programme for public transport. Cross-party consensus about the principle of «the road user pays» is essential if one is to find the resources to improve the transport system and running of the public transport system in the Oslo Region.

¹ Report to the Storting No. 34 (2006–2007).

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