



The Oslo Pass - Oslo (Norway)

Brief summary of the measure and its origin

The Oslo Pass is marketed and administered through visit Oslo, which was established in 1984 modeled after the Stockholm pass, which was the first European city combination pass of its kind from the early eighties. Later came passes in Gothenburg (Sweden) and Copenhagen (Denmark) modeled after the Stockholm and Oslo passes. The Oslo Pass has become a template for cities across Europe, and Visit Oslo has been active in helping other cities to establish their passes, anywhere from Moscow to Palermo. The work has been done in conjunction with European Cities Marketing (www.visiteuropeancities.com), an interest organization for city tourism offices in Europe. The latest efforts have been made to establish passes in Eastern European countries.



The Oslo Pass gives you free entry to 33 museums and attractions, free travel on all public transport within zone four, free parking in all Oslo municipal car parks, free entry to outdoor swimming pools, free lunch cruise, free winter walks, discounts on sightseeing, car hire, Tusenfryd Amusement Park, ice skate - and ski rental, and special offers in restaurants, shops, entertainment and leisure

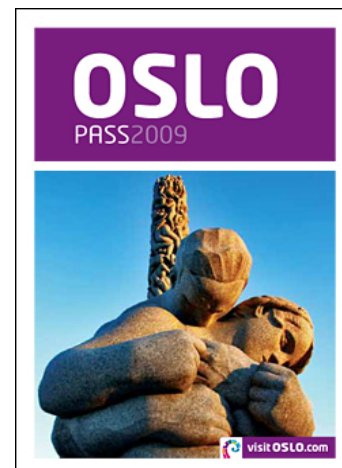
venues. You decide whether you want a card that is valid for 24, 48 or 72 hours. The card is valid from the time you stamp it. From that point on, it is valid for the number of hours indicated on it. Along with the Oslo Pass, you will receive a booklet, describing all the benefits for Oslo Pass-holders.



Oslo Passes for children (from 4 to 15 years old) are available at reduced rates and is also valid for retired persons (67 years and older) for the same price.



The Pass is valid in all attractions that are described in the Oslo Pass booklet and entitles you to an unlimited travel by metro, bus, tram, local trains and on the ferry boats to the islands in the inner Oslo fjord.





VisitOSLO is also participating in EU project OSSATE, which is a collaboration project between different organisations in Europe (both destination management companies and handicap organisations). Together they have created common checklists on different levels, and information about the facilities at hotels, museums and restaurants are presented in a common interface on the web site www.europeforall.com. VisitOSLO uses the same information base here on its own website, but with its own search function and the possibility to create your own profiles.

VisitOSLO has gathered the information based on OSSATE's level 2 access audit, which implies that VisitOSLO as an independent party has visited and audited the venues according to a comprehensive checklist provided by the project partners.



Key Stakeholders involved in the implementation of this measure

Regarding the Oslo Pass development and operation, there have been few barriers and problems along the way. All relevant actors have been in on the deal from day one. In most cases new attractions or tourism businesses join the Pass within the first year of operation. The key organizational set up is that the Pass is organized as an independent non-profit unit with a member-based control board. Visit Oslo has no commercial interest in the proceeds from the Pass, and is only involved in administering and marketing the Pass. The control board is made up of representatives from the participating businesses and organizations, and the control board decides on the distribution of the proceeds from the Pass. Visit Oslo is allotted a marketing budget for the Pass, which they are free to administer and can use it in concert with the regular Oslo City marketing material and web site. The participating member businesses and organizations self-report the usage of the card by tourists in their establishment, and the control group distributes the share of the proceeds to each individual member according to the reported visitor numbers.

The key stakeholders involved in the measure implementation are:

- Visit Oslo (City tourist office)
- Ruter (Public transport company)
- The Oslo Municipality
- Tourism industry

Main problems and barriers occurred

The Oslo Pass has encountered few barriers since the start in 1984 as the second city Pass (after Stockholm's) to be established in Europe. It has been very successful with its stakeholder cooperation, and been a template for other cities across Europe. However, a common problem for such passes in many other cities in Europe is a)



conflict regarding cost-and-revenue sharing between actors; and b) copying of the concept by aggressive non-tourist-office private companies.

There is not yet an electronic registering system in place so visitor numbers are still manually registered but Visit Oslo is working on implementing an electronic system shortly.

In some cities the Tourist offices have had problems with private actors that have tried to copy the concept for commercial reasons. One example is London, where a private business has successfully developed a private pass, The London Pass, without involving the local Tourist office.

In some cases that may work well, but in other cases it might not be beneficial for the overall tourism industry in the city. In some cities there has been some conflict because some members may want to offer lesser benefits for the tourists than others. The standard may be an e.g. 20% discount, while some members may only want to give 10% off. That creates a confusing system of discounts for the user, and it creates problems both in terms of tourist value-added and conflict of revenue distribution among members. In Oslo, all actors adhere to the standard discounts or offerings, while in e.g. Stockholm there has been reported problems with certain members wanting to deviate from the standard, and thus shirk on the expense of others.

Quantification of investments

No direct investments have been done, since this is mostly a cooperative effort to create added value for tourists to enhance the city's attractiveness. It is not a capital-demanding measure requiring substantial investments.

Description of the services developed within this measure focused to emerging travel needs and in ensuring an equal access to tourism for all (reduction of barriers and social exclusion)

The Oslo Pass gives you free entry to 33 museums and attractions, free travel on all public transport within zone four, free parking in all Oslo municipal car parks, free entry to outdoor swimming pool, free lunch cruise (only with the 72 h pass), free winter walks, discounts on sightseeing, car hire, Tusenfyrd Amusement Park, ice skate - and ski rental, and special offers in restaurants, shops, entertainment and leisure venues.



Included in the Pass are also free guided tours, like the Winter Walks, with a certified city guide. There are seven tours available, and many of the 72-hour Pass users go to at least three tours with the Pass. The tours may allow tourist to return to points of interest or other establishments on their own that they have seen or become familiar with during the trip.

The Oslo Pass is quite unique because it gives the user access to all local public transport, regardless of mode. The Pass can be used on buses, subway/metro, street trams, harbor boats, and trains within Greater Oslo. It involves both the Ruter local public transport company and the Norwegian State



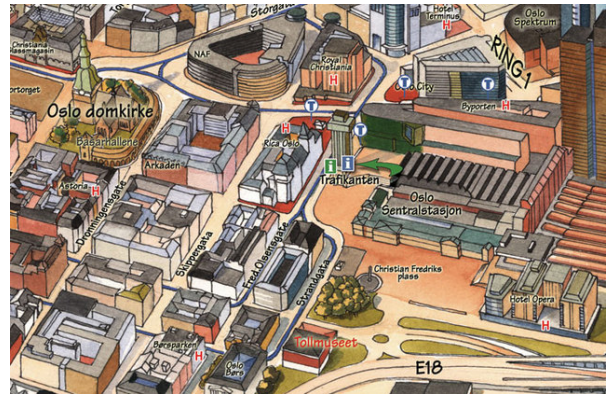
Railways (NSB), including train rides to the Fair & Convention center in neighboring town Lillestrom. The hassle-free public transport access is a key attribute of the Pass, and users can travel anywhere in the city and surrounding areas without any further ticketing. Very few cities have gathered all public transport on the hands of 1-2 transport companies like in Oslo, and where there are many transport companies participating, cross-supplier cooperation is more difficult to achieve.

The pass also entitles the user free parking at any metered public parking space, which is a great user advantage, since downtown parking is quite expensive in Oslo. A VIP-version of the Pass with extra privileges is also given to visiting members of the press and media, so they can fully enjoy Oslo's tourist attractions, which often creates favorable PR in international media for the city. Local city administrators are also given a supply of the VIP-version of the Pass for distribution to official guest to the city, which creates political goodwill and similar benefits.

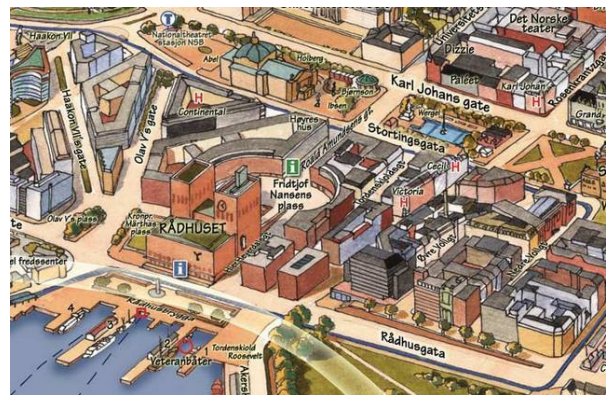
There is also a special Oslo-Package, where the Pass is provided as a discount rate along with a hotel booking at participating hotels. The Pass also gives access to selected Norway Elite division soccer games, and discounts at local commercial attractions, like Oslo's theme park Tusenfryd.

With the Pass there is also a free guide book in various languages which describes all attractions, museums, and food and beverage places, the transport system, and other relevant information. This also gives participating members an opportunity to market themselves in the guide, especially for SMB establishments with limited marketing budgets.

There is also an Oslo Package available, where the Pass is included with a stay at the cities cooperating hotels at a discounted price.



Map Tourist Information by the Central Station



Map Tourist Information by the City Hall



Contribution provided by the measure in the improvement of the tourist destination attractiveness in terms of accessibility¹ as well as in terms of quality of services²

To sum up, the Oslo Pass is successful mainly because of the following reasons:

- A very comprehensive benefit package, creating substantial value - added for the tourist users at a reasonable price
- All public transport is included, no conflict among suppliers
- A non-profit organization administers the Pass; and there is a member selected board which determines the budget and revenue distribution
- Visitor numbers are registered electronically, which eliminates manipulation with Pass visitor reporting.
- Almost all tourism businesses and public museums and attractions participate, so that the Pass gives access to virtually all points of interest
- An equal level of discounts and offerings are provided by all commercial members
- The Pass is also used as PR-tool benefitting all actors/stakeholders
- (Soon visitor numbers will be registered electronically, which eliminates any manipulation with Pass visitor reporting.)

The Pass and its various add-ons (VIP & Oslo Package and guide book) create beneficial synergies in marketing.

Approximately 2.5 million tourists have visited the city's museums with the Oslo Pass during the past 10 years. Another key attribute is free access to all public transport in Greater Oslo, which increases the tourist's mobility

¹ door-to-door services

² e.g. better, user friendly and more appropriate information, hospitality, effectiveness

vastly, and reduces their transport cost substantially. Oslo is a relatively expensive city, and taxis and car hire are especially expensive. The Pass thus offers a low cost transportation alternative. With participation from virtually all tourism suppliers and points of interest in Oslo, it also increases the tourists' action radius and activity level, which in turn usually increases tourism expenditure and tourist satisfaction.

Surveys and direct feedback from tourist Pass users indicate very high satisfaction with the product. Visit Oslo has no updated official statistics on how much the pass is used in public transport, but interview surveys indicate that Pass user tourists use public transport frequently while in Oslo. Better statistics will be available when the paper version will be changed to type that can be used for an electronic registering in public transport.



The card is quite unique in the way that it provides free access to all city museums and all local public transport. According to VisitOSLO, most city visitors state that they would like to visit at least two museums while in town, but Pass users state that they have visited more museums than two since they have free access to all museums. The Pass often creates additional visits to smaller museums, particularly the ones close to major museums or points of interest. For instance, visitors with the Pass will often visit the smaller nearby Holocaust museum at Bygdøy after seeing major attractions like the Kon-Tiki and Fram museums in Bygdøy, Oslo. According to VisitOSLO, feedback from



participating members indicates that the Pass has created additional visitors.

The Pass is also passed out to Oslo's citizens for free a few times a year, as a part of the Visit Your Own City- program, and on one such day small museums like the Reptile museum profiled in the Pass material, experienced more than 1000 visitors in one day, which is much more than usual.

The Pass Guide book also works as an encyclopedia for Oslo museums and sights, and helps smaller museums and tourism business with limited marketing means to get profiled and noticed by tourists. For instance, a new helicopter-tour company, Heliwing, joined the Pass membership in their first year of operation, and provided a 15% discount with the Pass. That landed them 5-6 groups of customers with the Pass in their first year as a Pass member business.

Environmental aspect and implications



The Pass greatly encourages the use of public transport instead of private or hired car and taxi usage, which reduces city center congestion and pollution.

Economic development of the destination in terms of new investments generated by the measure

No major investments have been done; it is not really applicable in this case.

Safety and security aspects and related impact

The pass encourages the use of public transport, which is in general quite safe in Oslo. It reduces the dependence on car - based transport, which in some cases could be considered safe for tourists. It also reduces the need to walk in areas considered less safe at night. Beyond that, the measure does not have a major impact on safety and security, and is not really intended to do so either. The tourist safety and security situation is generally quite good in Oslo.

The employment and career prospects for local people

Some small-medium size tourism businesses are partly dependent on the extra business created by the Pass. It also increases or maintains the number of visits to public museums and attractions which are partly dependent on tourists for being able to keep doors open. The Pass also gives small businesses an opportunity to market themselves through the Pass and Visit Oslo's official marketing material, and thus gains synergies through pooling of marketing expenses.

Acknowledgments

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