

Bonn, Germany

Enabling companies to address mobility management



A leader in eco-mobility, the City of Bonn already has a committed city administration, good infrastructure and other factors in place. The city is now exploring how businesses can also contribute to better, smarter, and more sustainable mobility. Through the company mobility management project “Companies Solve Mobility Problems” a definitive step is being taken to resolve issues around citizens’ commuting needs and the impact of such movement on the environment.

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Abstract

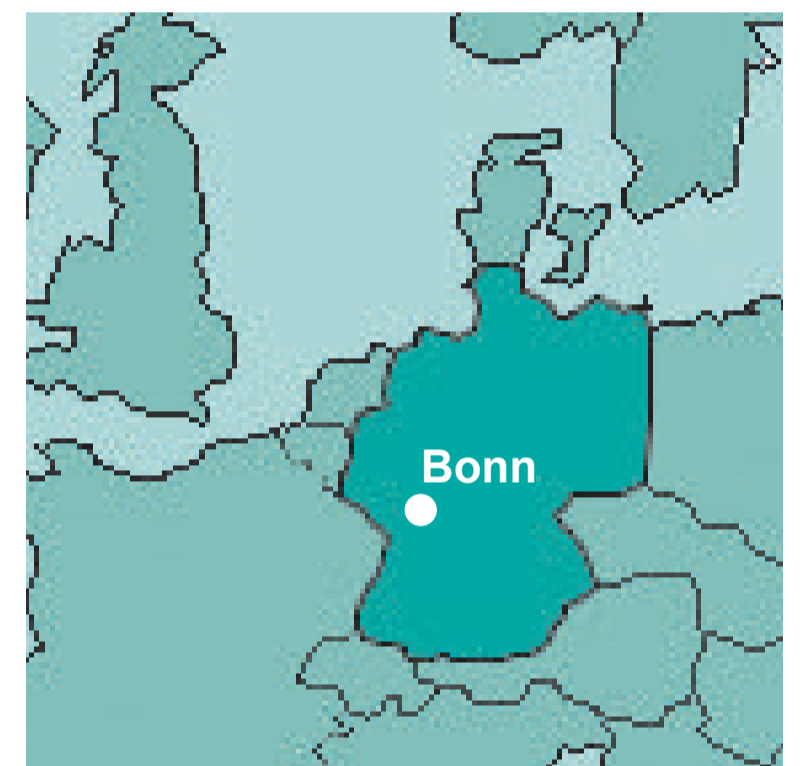
As commuting represents some of the biggest daily movements of citizens and vehicles, astute management of movements by employees, deliveries and visitors can lead to significant environmental, health and energy savings. Through the project "Companies addressing Mobility Management" the City of Bonn actively sought to explore how businesses could also contribute to better, smarter, more sustainable mobility in the city, with the underlying premise that when company mobility management is done in an integrated manner with municipal policies and priorities, the impacts can be even greater than when done in an individual and fragmented manner. The project brings together scientific, expert and policy perspectives to create a broad and systematic basis for company mobility management. An extensive and successful empirical assessment of employees’ mobility habits, business attitudes, and perceptions of mobility issues and consultations was conducted. However, attempts to motivate companies to take advantage of the mobility management consultations were less successful. Undeterred, the City and its partners recognize that proper engagement with the business community is essential and hope to reconnect with this constituency in a further edition of the project.

The importance of company mobility management

Mobility management is a demand-oriented approach that seeks to influence modal choice before a trip is taken. Often this is managed on a wider urban scale, yet major generators of traffic and movement, such as businesses, can also take steps to help their staff move in a better way. Company mobility management requires a long-term strategy employed by an organisation to promote more sustainable transport among staff and visitors, even extending to delivery services.

The implementation of a workplace travel plan involves taking a very close look at existing mobility patterns and seeking to provide a number of services to alter how people move to and from the company location, e.g. information provision, carrying out awareness-raising work, negotiating improvements to the physical infrastructure of the site, providing incentives to change behaviour and also working with suppliers of transport services, such as public transport operators. By taking action at the site-level a host of benefits can be reaped such as reductions in CO2 emissions, savings in terms of time and costs, reduced congestion and improved health.

Support from senior management is essential in ensuring that the travel plan becomes part of the corporate vision and culture. Significant necessary investments in personnel might include a mobility coordinator or team necessary to ensure that a plan that is appropriate for the company in question is developed, implemented and evaluated. The larger the company, the greater the need for coordination and follow-up.



Population

327,913 inhabitants (2011)

Land area

141.22 square kilometers

Municipal budget

1,074,963,468 EUR (2013)



Bonn is an ICLEI member since February 2000.

Case Study

Bonn in context

Bonn is a city of change, ever ready to adapt and innovate. It was the capital of Germany from 1949 – 1991. Though the seat of government has since moved to Berlin, Bonn remains firmly a federal city and still hosts a number of national ministries and government functions.

In the last 15-20 years, Bonn has successfully engineered a transition from mainly governmental functions to an internationally competitive business structure. This process is driven by a group of companies highly ranked in the German stock index, such as Deutsche Telekom and Deutsche Post, and a further 16,000 small and medium-sized enterprises. Dynamic technology clusters have emerged as a result of the close exchange between business and science in the region, for example in the field of information and communication technologies and the health sector.

As the German United Nations City, hosting 18 UN organisations, Bonn has developed its new international profile. The strong growth in the knowledge-intensive services, as well as the close interaction between the city and the business and science communities make Bonn particularly attractive. These assets are being recognised by an increasing number of residents: Experts predict that Bonn will see the highest population growth of all cities and counties in Nordrhein-Westfalen. At the end of 2011, 327,913 people resided in Bonn (City of Bonn, website).

This offer and the catchment area of the city, which is wide and well connected, means that there is a major influx of people into the city each day. The result is often congestion, pollution and frayed nerves. The project “Companies addressing Mobility Management” led by the City of Bonn, together with representatives from academia, public transport operators and consultants seeks to explore how businesses can play their part to find creative solutions to mobility problems in a participatory manner.

About the “Companies addressing Mobility Management” project

Together with members of the scientific community, municipal utility company and consultancies, the City of Bonn sought to create a participative approach to finding solutions for increased EcoMobility. The process and outcomes should help to facilitate all employees and employers to make decisions from a different perspective and to find answers to the question of how the city of the future might look.

The project was ambitious in its scope. By taking these steps, the city wanted to reward people who choose more environmentally friendly modes of transport. It is also a concrete step towards improving the portfolio of sustainable infrastructure in the city. As well as working towards the more efficient use of company fleets, through the work done the city also wishes to promote the uptake of shared use, whether that is biking, car sharing or carpooling. By exploring workplace travel planning, the project aimed to save employers and employees costs in both the medium and long term.

Best Practice – Brussels Capital Region

The Brussels-Capital region currently provides employment to about 680,000 people. More than half of these workers live outside the region and 57% of them travel to work by car, most of them driving alone. To make commuting more efficient, a decree requiring a company mobility concept for any company and organisation of more than 200 workers or employees came into effect on 1st July 2004. The measure aims to involve around 280 sites and 240,000 workers, which constitutes around 35% of total employment in the Brussels region. Over the course of three years, the introduction of company travel plans in the Brussels-Capital region brought about a 5% decrease in the share of cars in the modal split for commuters in workplace to home journeys.

As mentioned above Bonn has become a centre of excellence for business leaders and innovators. Company image is very important in succeeding in the competition to hire the best and brightest brains. By facing the issues surrounding mobility head on and implementing company-led mobility management, companies can boost how they are perceived. Further, putting such plans in place can also lead to cost savings in the mid to long term, as well as more loyal and productive employees.

Funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, within the framework of the City of Bonn's participation in the national "ZukunftsWerkStadt" project, "Companies addressing Mobility Management" ran from 2012 to 2013.

Research for action

Without a thorough assessment of employee travel habits and predispositions it would not have been possible to make any assumptions about the extent of the need for the mobility management consultations with businesses in Bonn and its surroundings. For this reason, the first pillar of the project was an extensive survey of employees and employers. The second pillar of the project was to conduct individual consultations with companies tailored to their situation.

The response rates to the surveys were very solid, which was a highly positive start to the project. The first survey conducted examined the mobility behaviour of 1,330 employees in 17 companies. The second collected the perceptions of 178 companies on how they viewed workplace mobility management. In addition, a survey focusing on health & mobility was conducted collecting the views of 1,341 employees and 22 managers.

The employee perspective

In terms of modal choice, unsurprisingly cars were the most popular outside of urban centres. The density of bike ownership is greatest within the cities. Public transport is extremely popular amongst journeys originating in Cologne, as reflected through an extremely high uptake of the "Jobticket" offer. Many households who do not have a car have the Jobticket, which is a good value monthly public transport ticket.

More than a third of the respondents travel 5-15km to work, with the average journey across all being 21.7km. In terms of journey time, more than half travel for 30-60 minutes. Distance and journey time play a large role in terms of modal choice.

Correlations were seen between income level and modal choice. Higher income households favour the car. When asked about attitudes towards the purchase of a new car, the majority (46%) said that price was an important factor. When asked if they would pay the premium to purchase an electric car 67% replied negatively. Cyclists repeated this pattern, with the majority shying away from the extra investment costs of acquiring an electric bike.

Looking at why people make the modal choices they do, car drivers gave very pragmatic reasons. Time saving, flexibility, comfort and weather conditions all rate highly. Those taking public transport did so primarily because it was affordable. Other reasons quoted were the positive benefits for the environment, weather conditions and out of habit. Biking and walking were fuelled by similar

Best Practice – University of Freiburg

The University of Freiburg in Germany is a major employer in the city. Not only does it generate the movements of over 35,000 students plus staff daily, the attached university training hospital is one of Freiburg's largest employers. In developing its mobility management concept, it held regular meetings with the local public transport operator to improve accessibility and set up an "Environment and Transport" working group. Travel information is offered to all new staff and a jobticket scheme is in place. Biking and carpooling are actively promoted and a new parking strategy with cost redistribution has been enacted. The University successfully advocated and found financing for the creation of a stop "Klinikum" on the light-rail route that runs by the hospital.

Source: Eltis – the urban mobility portal (a)

Alcatel-Lucent, Zurich

A global player in the communications solutions sector, Alcatel-Lucent's operations in Zurich was faced with major parking shortages following an intake of 400 staff. Working together with the City of Zurich's Mobility in Business office, they were able to draw up a plan to avert the shortage and make a positive contribution to the company's environmental footprint. As well as a suite of complimentary measures, the approach focused on raising parking space fees to approx EUR108 per month. Those staff then relinquishing their space received a voucher for the Swiss National Railways of about EUR 620 per year. About 60% of staff members in Switzerland use the financial contribution towards public transport costs and use public transport to get to work in an easy and comfortable way.

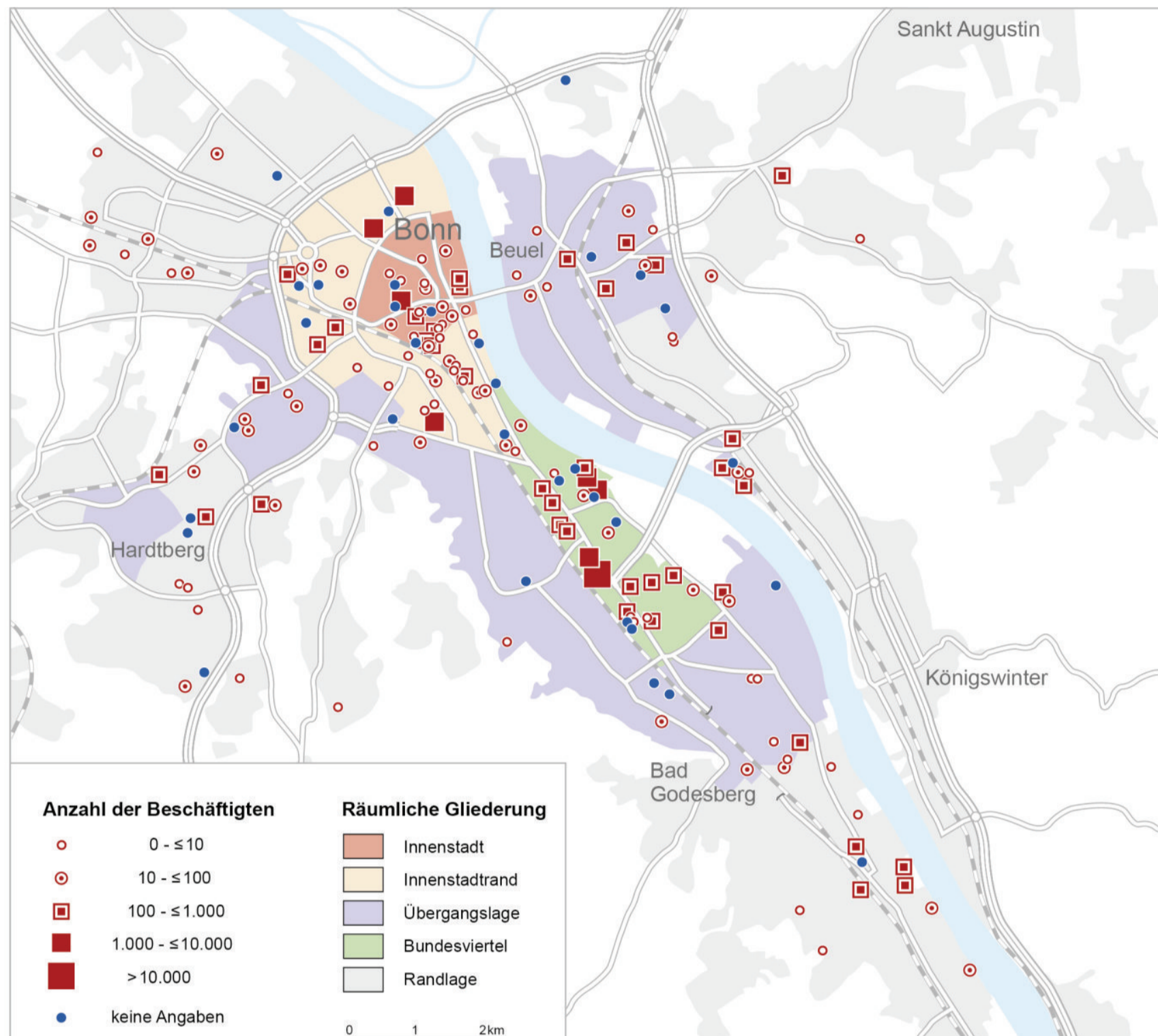
Source: Eltis – the urban mobility portal (b)

motivations, although cyclists also cited safety and walkers cited the calm as motivations for their choices. Interestingly, a topic very close to the active travellers' heart, weather, was not mentioned.

Distribution of companies involved in the survey, by number of employees (Anzahl der Beschäftigten)

The Business perspective

Source: Geography Institute, University of Bonn



Whereas employees were surveyed on their travel behaviour and attitudes, 178 companies spread across Bonn were also asked to provide input on their corporate culture, current mobility-related facilities and their receptiveness for more coordinated mobility management. The companies were mainly concentrated in the inner-city areas, but the Federal Quarter and outskirts were also represented.

For more than half of the companies surveyed the improvement of accessibility was deemed important or rather important, whereas more than a third was of the opposite opinion. The bigger the company, the more important were improvements in accessibility. The highest levels of those attaching importance to this were in the city centre. In the outskirts, also the edge of the city centre, improvements in this field were rated as unimportant.

In general, companies feel that there is a high level of satisfaction in relation to the level of connectivity with the existing transport infrastructure. In the city centre companies are most unsatisfied with the road connections; while in the Federal Quarter 81% are satisfied with these. In peripheral locations there was no dissatisfaction reported whatsoever.

When the issue of receiving a mobility management consultation was raised, it transpired that the larger the company, the greater the willingness for interviews or mobility advice. Reasons companies cite for exploring company travel planning are increased employee satisfaction, increased productivity, image boosting, health promotion and positive environmental impact. Concrete mobility-related reasons were only subsequently mentioned.

Networking for success

By creating intensive exchange between the relevant stakeholders the project sought to create a basis for broader, more systematic company mobility management. Such actors include company managers; employees, works councils & trade unions; chambers of commerce; environmental & transport associations; public transport operators; local, regional, state and federal transport policy makers and planners; private consultants and media.

From fact finding to knowledge sharing

The second pillar of the projects activities were the comprehensive mobility consultations to take place between company mobility management specialists and the companies themselves. The aim of these discussions were to clearly outline how the volume of traffic generated by workers could be reduced in order to reduce traffic jams preventatively, as well as reduce the high mobility costs to the company and consequences for society in terms of stress levels, health, environment and energy.

The attempt to motivate companies to take advantage of the mobility management consultations was less successful than the high response rates to the surveys. Although some companies did receive a consultation, this number was much

lower than hoped or expected. The interest on the part of the management of companies in the topic of accessibility and the related mobility problems and possible solutions was very low, even though this did emerge from the survey process as something of an issue in certain locations. It appears that the subjects of traffic jams and parking issues are neither perceived as important nor urgent, as it is often reported and sensationalised in mass media.

Also the limited duration of the project proved too short to be able to reach out to companies in a meaningful way. The logistical challenges of finding time in the schedules of busy management executives and consultants in the time allowed were difficult to overcome.

Neither at the opening nor closing workshops were there high numbers of business participants. The key audience of the project did not seem to have grasped the possibilities made available to them through the project. This result requires that new instruments be developed to effectively reach out to companies. As such, this serves as a motivation and impulse for further exploration and a follow-up project.

Lessons learned

An extensive data reservoir is a great asset in policy development and in determining where there is a particular need for action or where support for any particular mobility measure exists.

Proper engagement with the business community is essential. Reconnecting with this constituency must be a key feature in any further edition of the project. Patience and a different communications approach is necessary to get a critical mass of companies participating in a scheme. To this end, chambers of commerce and other industry networks will be engaged as multipliers.

Sufficient time must be available in which to carry out the consultations. Members of the business community have busy schedules and there must be flexibility to accommodate this, in order to get the ball rolling and stimulate the perception of such consultations as a positive asset.

Next steps

The project coordinators have the intention to seek funding for a follow-up project that above all will grapple with the psychological, organisational, institutional and ideologically barriers to uptake of mobility management consultation among companies. Chambers of commerce will be engaged as multipliers for any approach and leading mobility management networks will be involved in an intensive experience exchange.

Budget and Finances

The Federal Government of Germany funded the project. Consultations to companies were offered at no cost. In future, these will have to be covered by the companies themselves.

Wolford - An example from Bregenz, Austria

The Wolford company creates high-quality fashion and hosiery. It is based in the city of Bregenz, Austria and employs ca. 1,600 employees. Though not facing any acute transport issues, the company wanted to develop a more environmentally-friendly image and so promoted cycling as a commuting option. A number of measures were put in place, including the relocating of the cycle parking closer to the office entrance and moving car parking away from the entrance; Establishment of a cycle service, maintenance and air pump station; Changing facilities and showers for cyclists; Company pool bicycles and cycling information and competitions for employees. Within the period the proportion of employees cycling to work rose from 18% to 35%. Over the same period, the proportion travelling by car fell from 33% to 21%.

Source: TOOLBOX for Mobility Management
Measures in Companies (a)

BASF - An example from Ludwigshafen, Germany

Due to the high prevalence of accidents and high traffic levels generated by employees, BASF took action at their Ludwigshafen, Germany, location which employs 53,000. A transport working group was established in order to develop a general transport plan made up of 11 interconnected projects. These included i.a. the following : Promotion of car pooling; designated car pool parking facilities close to the factory entrances, providing convenient interchange to the company bus system; Better integration with the public bus system and rail network in relation to working times; and cycling was promoted by the provision of 15,000 company pool cycles and 10km of on-site cycle tracks. The results included an increase in the number of car pool vehicles carrying 3 people from 50 to 1,300 over six years, an equivalent decline of 2,600 vehicles per day. On-site car accidents decreased by 44%.

Source: TOOLBOX for Mobility Management
Measures in Companies (b)

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