

## **DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES DESIGNED TO AVOID NEED FOR TRAVEL (START)**

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**CLIENT:** *European Commission DGVII (Transport) - RTD Programme*

**YEAR:** *1997-1999*

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:**

Measures to reduce road travel could have positive impacts for travellers, who benefit from a reduction in congestion, and for the wider community, who benefit from an improvement in the environment.

These positive effects may, however, be counterbalanced by other, negative, economic and social impacts or they may have significant financial implications. If decision-makers believe these negative impacts may be large, or the financial implications disproportionate, then travel reduction measures may not be implemented. As it has been pointed out in the literature that 'traffic reduction' has in recent years become a popular objective or 'cause' among quite a wide range of organisations. This is because it is simultaneously able to serve the needs of a number of different interest groups.

A reduction in traffic levels could, in certain circumstances, contribute toward a reduction in the damage being done to the environment, improve road safety, benefit the functioning of the economy and reduce the relative disadvantage of certain groups within society.

It is no surprise, therefore, that measures which could lead to a reduction in traffic levels are currently supported by groups as diverse as environmentalists and industrial lobbyists.

Despite the current 'popularity' of measures to reduce road travel, it is important to be clear that 'traffic reduction' cannot be pursued as the single, or ultimate, objective of policy.

If traffic reduction were the only policy goal it could be quite easily achieved, for example by closing roads or by making car travel illegal.

These, albeit extreme, examples serve to show that the formulation of policy must also take other considerations into account.

The purpose of the START project was to examine this matter further.

The study was awarded by EC Directorate General VII - Transport - in the IV Framework Research Programme launched by the Commission on achieving the objectives of the Common Transport Policies; it was carried out by a consortium of 5 consultancies from four European member states.

The START project had two main objectives:

- (i) to quantify the impact of measures to reduce road travel and assess their wider impacts in order to highlight barriers to implementation and find ways of making measures more acceptable and
- (ii) to produce an action plan of policy packages to reduce the need for road based travel, covering all levels of decision making, ensuring it is flexible enough to be applicable to different parts of the EU.

There was also a subsidiary objective related to the implications of pricing and other travel reduction strategies on road infrastructure financing and cost recovery plans.

#### *The Consortium*

The international consortium in charge for the study is led by ME&P (UK).

Other partners are TRT Trasporti e Territorio S.r.l. (IT), ECOTEC (UK), MECSA (E) and VTT (SF).