

Abstract

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The direction of transport performances

Traffic results from people's and businesses' transport needs. People and businesses take care of part of transport themselves. Transport services are also provided on a commercial basis.

On the basis of objectives presented in documents issued by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the State Audit Office concluded that the ministry's transport-policy goal is

- to reduce total traffic volumes
- to minimize traffic performances with the exception of freight traffic
- with regard to passenger traffic to change market shares for different modes of transport in the desired direction, though this is not specified precisely.

Objectives concern vehicle traffic. Without measures influencing traffic and transport choices, the ministry's transport-policy objectives and vision of traffic in the future cannot be realized.

The present audit focused on the use of resources under the control of the Ministry of Transport and Communications and measures aimed at influencing traffic in order to achieve the ministry's objectives. Infrastructure was taken for granted in the audit.

The audit report refers to measures on the part of the Ministry of Transport and Communications which are aimed at influencing people's and businesses' transport choices as the direction of transport performances.

The theme of the audit was to seek answers to questions concerning what measures the Ministry of Transport and Communications uses to influence supply and demand in the area of transport services, what resources the ministry uses for this activity, what level of productivity is achieved in the use of resources and on what grounds the overall effects of influencing markets, including probable long-term effects, can be considered successful from the viewpoint of citizens.

The ministry needs the same information which is required to answer the questions addressed by the audit in result management related to the direction of transport performances. Result management was in use throughout the period covered by the audit.

According to audit observations, the ministry's only explicit transport-policy objective is for carbon dioxide emissions in 2010 not to exceed the level in 1990. Of course it is possible that this objective will be achieved without any measures on the part of the ministry, as a result of improvements in vehicle technology.

The direction of transport performances also has other objectives besides those related to environmental protection. One objective is to lower the volume of vehicle traffic with the

help of measures increasing demand for public transport services and reducing the use of private cars. Another objective is to ensure the supply of public transport services in areas where public transport is unprofitable because of limited demand. Means to achieve this objective include the use of public funds to support public transport.

Measures related to the direction of transport performances have focused on passenger traffic and freight traffic. With regard to freight traffic the ministry's assumption is that competition on the market is the most effective way to divide transport between commercial activity and traffic provided by service providers' potential customers themselves and to shape the market shares of different modes of transport so that the result is good for the national economy.

The audit indicated that result management at the Ministry of Transport and Communications does not operate in a way which corresponds to the targets sets in the operating model. Consequently information was not available so that the audit could be conducted in the manner intended when the topic was included in the audit plan. For this reason it was not possible to answer questions concerning the result achieved in the direction of transport performances or the productivity of resources used in this area.

When the result management system was introduced, the guiding idea was that agencies should be viewed not only as service producers but also as economic units which produce performances and which have social effects. The task of a public administration unit using result management is to achieve effects and performances with the lowest possible amount of available resources. Therefore attention must constantly be focused on economy and productivity. The Government report on the reform of public administration which was submitted to Parliament on 11 October 1990 called for attention to be focused on raising productivity in public service production so that it would be comparable to the development of productivity in private service production. This objective is still in force.

Achieving this objective requires that public administration units monitor the development of productivity and simulate methods which are used in the private sector to ensure improvements in productivity. From the viewpoint of achieving the objectives set for the result management system, developing accounting is a key question. Producing information on economy requires cost accounting. Productivity calculations also require the measuring of results, which involves monitoring the use of resources to achieve different social effects and performances.

The audit indicated that the Ministry of Transport and Communications does not employ cost accounting. The shift to result management does not appear to have changed activities related to the direction of transport performances essentially compared with the practices which were followed before the shift to result management.