



## 1. Introduction

The city of Turnhout is a small city (with  $\pm$  40.000 inhabitants) situated in the northern part of Belgium near the border with the Netherlands. It is part of the region of Flanders with a GDP per capita of index of 116 compared to the EU-average (EUROSTAT, 2010). Together with three neighbouring municipalities, it forms the City Region of Turnhout ( $\pm$  80.000 inhabitants), an inter-communal partnership responsible for the development of the sustainable urban mobility plan. The mobility department of the four municipalities implements the actions stemming from the SUMP. However, the implementation of all cross-municipal border mobility measures of this SUMP, of all mobility management measures and the consultations with the regional public transport operator is done on the level of the city region.

The city of Turnhout is a very compact city: about all destinations anywhere in the city are within 5km distance. A high proportion of the total catchment population lives in the urban area; also main services (e.g. schools, health and administrative) are situated within the urban area. The landscape is flat and the climate is moderate. The share of cycling in Turnhout (for all travel motives) is, overall, high compared to the rest of Belgium. Turnhout is neither an historical nor a university city but it attracts a net influx of people commuting to the city everyday. So, it is neither dominant over nor influenced by other cities.

Turnhout has two city bus lines and is the starting and end

point of many regional bus lines. The bus system (vehicles and services) is operated by one regional bus operator (De Lijn). But the City region of Turnhout has negotiated a one-tariff-zone and reduced fares for all bus trips within the city region.

Due to its peripheral location near the border, the connection with Turnhout's terminus railway station is poor with only two arrivals/departures per hour.

A sort of ring road connects the city with the regional road network and a motorway is situated in the south of the city. About 200kms (86% of the roads) are municipal roads controlled by the local government. Car ownership in Turnhout per 10.000 inhabitants amounts to 456 cars and is more or less stable in the last ten years.

The city's own land use plan forms the basis of the mobility policy in city region of Turnhout. About 74% of all building permits are delivered autonomously by the city. Parking policy and parking standards are local policy responsibility and the city is able to spend most (not all) of the revenues from its parking policy autonomously.

## 2. Process

### 2.1 Preparing for the assessment

The city's main interest in the SHIFT-scheme was to get a useful tool to improve the operation of the city services. This tool should be integrated within the operational structure of the city, not too demanding in terms of time investment nor data gathering. The self-assessment aspect prevails over the possibility of an EcoMobility label and benchmarking.

The study area for the pilot testing is the city of Turnhout and not the city region. The main rationale for this choice was the availability of the data for calculating the indicators – the three other municipalities of the city region don't have a GIS system – and ease of composing the EcoMobility working group. However all working group members agreed it would be interesting in a second phase of the exercise to open up to the city region of Turnhout, which is the optimal scale to analyse EcoMobility.

The working group consisted of 4 persons of the city's administration: the mobility officer (Dept. of Roads, Green and Mobility), the sustainability officer (Dept. of Environment), the coordinator of projects on land use and mobility (Dept. for Project Management), the prevention officer (Dept. for Safety and Prevention).

### 2.2 The self-assessment

The self-assessment took place in the period May–September 2012. Overall four working group meetings were organized. During the first WG-meeting, the SHIFT-scheme was presented and the mutual expectations were explained. Furthermore the indicators were presented and for each indicator a WG-member responsible for gathering the necessary evidence was appointed.

Working group 2 and 3 were completely devoted to evaluate all individual indicators based on the evidence compiled by the working group members (Overall about 5 hours). The decisions concerning the scores for all indicators was done by consensus of the WG members. The moderation of the debates and the reporting was done by the SHIFT-advisor, the compilation of all the documentation was coordinated by the mobility officer. There was no recourse to external experts during the self-assessment.



Graph: Modal Split of Turnhout

During the fourth and last working group meeting, the main conclusions were discussed and the main points for further improvement were clarified based on the excel charts (overall EcoMobility score, score by categories and by indicators). During this meeting, the working group members also evaluated the SHIFT process.

### 2.3 The external audit

The external audit took place in November 2012. The auditor went through the self-assessment report, the indicator evidence and the City profile factors provided the city of Turnhout. For those indicators where evidence was not clear,

additional information or extra evidence was requested from the project leader and the external advisor and discussed in a meeting with the project leader of the city of Turnhout.

The verification process resulted in a lower score for 3 indicators (E3, TSS1 and TSS10) and a refusal of one indicator score (RI4) due to insufficient data. The overall EcoMobility score after audit was 62%. Taken into account the city profile factors, the final EcoMobility score for Turnhout became 58%. The process of taking into account Turnhout's profile factors resulted in a decrease of the maximum score of several indicators under influence of CPF "city management and finance" while for other indicators the maximum score was increased because of CPF "size of population".

In the results chapter the final EcoMobility scores after audit are looked into in more detail.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Overall result

Turnhout's overall EcoMobility score of 62%. Turnhout scores best on the Enablers, achieving 77%. With regard to the Transport System and Services, the overall score was 62%, and the city scores very low with the indicators for Results and Impacts (47%). This is mainly due to the fact that for 4 of the 7 indicators simply no reliable data are available.

More details on the performance regarding the separate categories are presented below.

### 3.2 The enablers: internal municipal processes

Strengths in the Enabler category are the resources made available in the city of Turnhout to deploy EcoMobility both in terms of personnel (E3-score 4) and in terms of financial budgets (E4 score 5). Turnhout has a large mobility service (4 FTE) and moreover, there is a smooth cooperation between this department and others as well as within the inter-municipal context of city regional partnership.

Turnhout scores very well in terms of citizen participation, it builds on a long tradition in this regard and always looks for new formulas to involve difficult target groups not only to communicate with but also to have them thinking along with plans and projects. The explanation for the rather mediocre score on vision, strategy and leadership has to do with the small political support for strategic projects with high potential for EcoMobility impact. Overall, however, the vision of EcoMobility is very well reflected in the SUMP which, in its turn, builds on a strong EcoMobility oriented vision within the spatial structure plan of Turnhout. Knowledge of societal and user needs and Monitoring, evaluation and review are weaknesses in Turnhout's enablers. In some areas, Turnhout is already doing a good job (e.g. monitoring of parking policy) but it could do much more in this field which could also be of help to gain political will for EcoMobility in the longer run.

### 3.3 Transport systems and services: the measures taken

Turnhout scores pretty well in its policy to reduce the need for mobility (total score 77%) which is particularly due to its policy on urban planning in new project developments (TSS2).

Also facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in Turnhout are overall scoring sufficient to good (67%).

The pedestrian network is direct with lots of short cuts. Most intersections can be crossed safely, waiting timings at traffic lights are limited and the main streets in the city centre have uninterrupted sidewalks. A major limitation at present is the large backlog in maintenance of the sidewalks. Also the cycling network is evaluated well with overall comfortable bicycle lanes, but nevertheless important improvements are to be made in building a direct and fast cycle network (most of these improvement are already in the planning phase). Maintenance of paths (including stray routes) is systematically addressed.

The local public transport system (read: bus system) is assessed as being effective. The coverage of the bus network is good; the competitive speed of the buses as compared to the car can still be improved on a few bus connections between the centre and residential areas. However it might not be forgotten, that the compactness of the city makes cycling often a better alternative to the car than the bus. The ease of use and the information on the bus system remains mediocre with the complex regional bus network notwithstanding the one-tariff zone for buses in the city region of Turnhout.

On the set of measures that aim to give priority to EcoMobility, Turnhout scores currently overall inadequate (score 47%). The scores for Turnhout’s ambitious car parking policy are currently still mediocre (score 3 out of 5). The proportion of car-free and low speed streets (measured as percentage of the total length of streets and squares) is currently 11%. For this figure, Turnhout only achieves a score of 1 to 5. The planned introduction of a 30km zone in the city centre could bring Turnhout to score 2 in the short run.

Also on the indicator regarding “Information and mobility

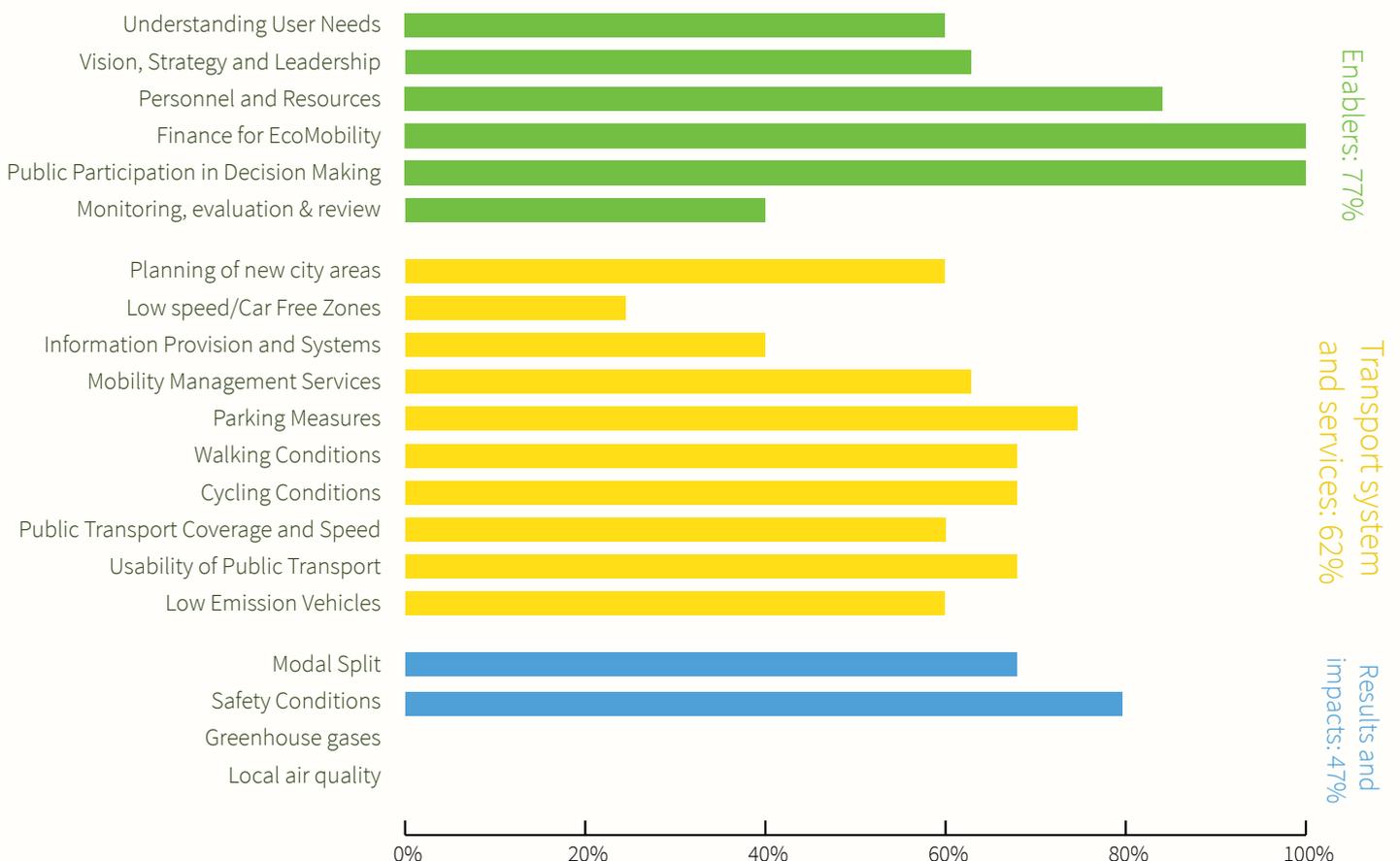
management”, Turnhout’s score remains rather moderate. The city is very active in this field towards the target group of schools but a green commuter plan for its own administration is still lacking. Also local businesses and commercial sites are not (yet) systematically targeted. Regarding mobility management services to promote a lifestyle without a car, different services are already in place (car sharing, bike hiring, bus on demand). A weakness here is the poor visibility of these services; an integrated campaign promoting all services might give the usage a boost.

Concerning the accessibility of the transport system and services (public domain and public transport) in Turnhout, the working group recognizes that improvements can be done in this field. In the planning phase of designing the public domain and during the maintenance of sidewalks the accessibility aspect might be given more attention. The train platforms are currently not accessible enough. Some of the bus stops and public transport vehicles are accessible but others aren’t as their accessibility is beyond the control of the city.

### 3.4 The results and impacts: the long term effects

As said already in the section 3.1 the total score is very low. Due to lack of information on the environmental performance of the transport, for calculating the energy efficiency and greenhouse gases, there is a lack of information on the distances travelled by motorized vehicles in Turnhout per vehicle and fuel type. Ideally, a mobility survey of a sample of household residents is required for this. The city of Turnhout does not have air quality monitoring data to measure local air quality (PM10, NOX) at its disposal either. Performances of the

## EcoMobility SHIFT Result for Turnhout, Belgium



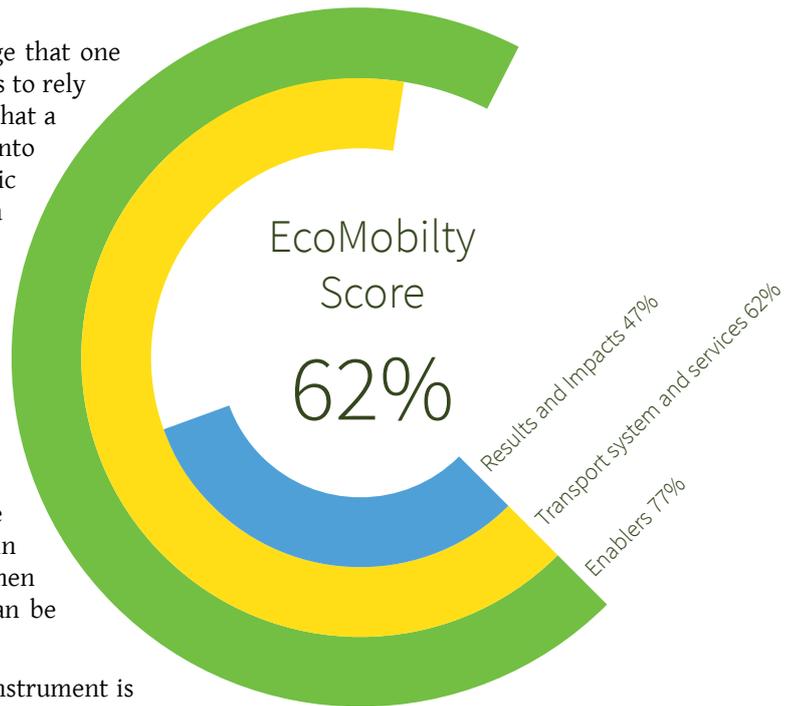
public transport system in terms of number of public transport trips per capita are low. Although there is not a high score to be expected for the city, there is a big lack of adequate figures on PT-performance.

## 4. Evaluation

A combined self-assessment and audit has the advantage that one is compelled to put figures on paper and no longer needs to rely on gut feeling. Another positive issue of this scheme is that a complete overview of the EcoMobility aspects is taken into consideration including planning, environment, traffic and mobility management. It was useful to discuss in a working group, the vision and the cooperation between the different services involved. Because the evaluation only on ecomobility go, miss the evaluation of the overall mobility policy. It was felt however as a shortcoming that not the overall transport and mobility policy was analysed; more in particular, the fact that traffic safety and the role of enforcement by the local police not being included was considered as a disadvantage.

Another remark made was that the results of the exercise should not remain too abstract; should not be kept within the working group. It is important to inform the aldermen and management so that EcoMobility improvements can be introduced in all the departments.

Hence the advice to the address of the creators of the instrument is to make improvement proposals as concrete as possible. Cities must also adopt a good system to store the information collected and to ensure follow-up of priorities set. ICT applications within the city government can play an important role for inter-departmental issues to integrate.



## About EcoMobility SHIFT

EcoMobility SHIFT is a total quality management scheme for cities, with an assessment and an external audit. During the assessment stage, 13 criteria are assessed using 28 indicators. A municipal stakeholder group evaluates the effectiveness of a city's sustainable transport policies and actions in terms of environment, accessibility, safety and equity. It is the first scheme of its kind to include all of the following three elements: the policy environment (Enablers), the actual measures (Transport Systems & Services) and the effects of these on the transport system (Results & Impacts). For each indicator, descriptions of performance levels on a scale of 1 to 5 help the group to discuss and decide using quantitative and qualitative information. The resulting 28 levels of municipal performance are given a weight and grouped into criteria before being added up to an EcoMobility score.

For more information on EcoMobility SHIFT:

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Project funded by:

