



**Osloregionen**

# **Talent Attraction Management in Greater Oslo:**

**How to improve the reception and  
integration of international talents?**

by Ingrid Helene Garmann Johnsen



# Executive Summary

Norwegian regions are competing against other destinations both for talents and businesses. The two are related since a reliable supply of talent is a factor in business location. Talent attraction management is about the region's ability to attract and retain talent in knowledge-intensive sectors, and can be seen as one way to strengthen a region's competitiveness by ensuring access to key competencies in knowledge-intensive business.

Oslo continues to grow its reputation as a city region with unique attractions for adventurous global talent. However, there are also challenges related to talent attraction and retention. This report examines more closely *why international talents choose to relocate to Greater Oslo, how they have experienced using welcoming services, and the integration into Norwegian work life and society*. By focusing on the experiences of talents that have come to the region to work in knowledge-intensive sectors, the study aims to bridge the knowledge gap and help identify the weak links in the talent attraction management ecosystem.

The empirical data presented in this report is based on a case study examining international talents' experiences related to working and living in Greater Oslo. Based on the insights from the case study the report presents the identified gaps in Greater Oslo's talent attraction management ecosystem, as well as suggestions for measures that can help fill these gaps.

The empirical findings show that Oslo's talent performance is improving. For instance, gender access and equality, high quality Internet platform, and the quality and efficiency of transport are all important advantages that drive high performance and attraction. However, in areas that are regarded as extremely important to the talent equation, such as wages, costs and housing affordability, Oslo is not measured favorably relative to other medium sized cities. However, by communicating the attraction factors such as work-life balance and a well-regulated labor market, that make Oslo stand out in international comparison, the impact of wage gap and high costs of living can be outweighed.

Oslo stands out amongst Scandinavian city regions for its high scores related to retaining talent compared to its ability to attract it. And the improvement that the region has made can be seen as a means for retaining talent rather than as an attractor of new talent. Another general finding is that quality of life drivers of talent performance continue to outweigh labor market drivers. There is a potential to make the qualities that Oslo has to offer and the opportunities in terms of career development more known among the target talent groups. More emphasis should thus be put on marketing Greater Oslo as a talent destination. There is also potential to make use of the competencies of international students in the regional labor markets, as a high percentage of international students leave the country after graduation.

Regarding the reception and integration of talent, the findings show that the welcoming services offered work reasonably well, but that there is room for improvement regarding the coordination between public authorities and in making the service offer more efficient. A concrete example is related to reducing the processing times for getting a Norwegian identification number.

There is room for better and more extensive services targeted at integrating talents and their families into the Norwegian society. Lack of integration is still a barrier to retaining talents, and efforts should be made to make sure that talents and their families have access to social and professional networks, and get a thorough introduction to Norwegian society and culture upon arrival in Norway.

Lack of language skills is a significant barrier to employment for spouses. Expectations around Norwegian skills should be more clearly communicated to international talents who wish to relocate to the region. This would also help raise the motivation of the international talents to learn the language, and ease the integration in the long term.

Lastly, in the international benchmarks Oslo's weakest performance for talent is for ease of meeting people. And difficulties in socializing and meeting people were brought up by several of the interviewees and mentioned as a main barrier to integration. There is thus a potential to look into how to strengthen the social integration of talents.

Based on the insights from the case study, the following are suggestions for concrete measures to strengthen the talent attraction management ecosystem in Greater Oslo:

## **1. Talent attraction**

### *a. More awareness about the qualities of living and working in Greater Oslo.*

- Campaigns aimed at specific talent groups.
- Collaboration with private sector to advertise job opportunities for international talents.

## **2. Talent reception**

### *a. Strengthen welcoming and “soft landing” services.*

- Ensure smoother processes/better coordination around getting required documentation such as social security number, bank account, housing etc.
- Mentorship program for newly arrived expats.
- Practical information in English (how to apply for kindergarten, how to open a bank account, how the tax system works etc.).
- Introduction manual to Norwegian society and culture.

## **3. Talent integration**

### *a. Strengthen social integration for labor immigrants and their families.*

- (Free) language course.
- Access to social and professional networks for spouses.

### *b. Support the stay of international students.*

- Access to relevant part-time jobs during studies.
- Placements/internships as part of studies.
- Information about Norwegian working life and job opportunities early upon the students' arrival in Norway.

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Diving into the Oslo Fjord at Sørenga. Photo: VisitOSLO/Thomas Johannessen







# Introduction

## Background for the study

Ever since Richard Florida introduced the notion of the creative class as a key driver for economic development in the early 2000s, cities and regions have increasingly focused their attention towards attracting talent (Florida 2002). Florida's main argument is that people, as human capital, are the key economic growth assets and those cities that succeed in attracting members of the creative class, i.e. people who work in information-age economic sectors and in industries driven by innovation and talent, have a competitive advantage (Florida 2005a). And according to Florida (2005b) there is a global competition to attract the creative class.

In recent years more attention has been given to the importance of the regional and local level of competitiveness for firms and industries. The argument is that many firms and industries to a large extent rely on what is referred to as unique and 'sticky' local conditions. As Porter (1998) argues, while economic globalization refers to more far-reaching value chains and knowledge networks that lead to an increasing flow of goods, information, people, and money across the globe, paradoxically, geographical location still remains fundamental to competition.

In this context it is argued that economic growth is concentrated in larger urban regions and clusters of businesses where proximity and knowledge-sharing lead to innovation. And competition is based on knowledge creation that underpins innovation activity rather than price competition. This means that firms compete in order to create new knowledge faster than their competitors (Maskell and Malmberg 1999). As such, knowledge has become a crucial asset in contemporary production systems,

and knowledge creation is a key process when it comes to sustaining or increasing competitiveness (Lundvall 1992).

## Why talent attraction management in Greater Oslo?

Norwegian regions are competing against other destinations both for talents and businesses. The two are related since a reliable supply of talent is a factor in business location (OECD 2014). Talent attraction management is about the region's ability to attract and retain talent in knowledge-intensive sectors, and can be seen as one way to strengthen a region's competitiveness by ensuring access to key competencies in knowledge-intensive business.

*Greater Oslo* is a regional territory comprising 7 counties in Eastern Norway<sup>1</sup>. It is the country's largest competence and industry region with 245,000 companies and 2.5 million inhabitants. The region encompasses shared normative interests and economic specificity (e.g. Cooke 1998) as well as integrated labor and housing markets. The region comprises a large share of the country's knowledge-intensive sectors. In a national context the region is the specialist within knowledge-intensive business services (e.g. consulting/management, technical services and operative services), cultural industries and experience economy, trade as well as other private services. The region has about 40 formal cluster and business network organizations related to environmental and energy technology, bioeconomy, life sciences and ICT systems. It also has the country's largest clustering of universities and colleges as well as research institutes (Onsager *et al.* 2017).

<sup>1</sup> The 7 counties make up NUTS 3 level regions in the NUTS statistical regions of Norway. The following counties are included in the Greater Oslo region: Oslo, Akershus, Hedmark, Oppland, Østfold, Buskerud and Vestfold.

*Talent Attraction Management (TAM)* is about strengthening the region's competitiveness by profiling the region as an attractive place for investors, entrepreneurs, students and employees in knowledge-intensive businesses. It is "a holistic, integrated approach to efforts at the local, regional and national level aimed at attracting and retaining talent" (Andersson *et al.* 2016, p. 30). Talent attraction is not only about attracting international talent but also about the management of the talent attraction ecosystem. This involves talent attraction, talent reception, talent integration and talent reputation, in order to ensure that the region presents a coordinated and consistent marketing and service offer (Andersson *et al.* 2016). In addition there is an increased focus on the possibility for talent mobility within and across organizations and regions.

Much has happened in the Greater Oslo region over the past five years. For example, there has been a strong development of start-up ecosystems with the establishment of co-working spaces and incubators, and Oslo has become a more relevant place to start new businesses. This has also contributed to a high start-up rate in parts of the region (Onsager *et al.* 2017). At the same time, Oslo continues to grow its reputation as a city with unique attractions for adventurous global talent (Moonen *et al.* 2019). The influential INSEAD Talent Competitiveness Index ranked Oslo 3rd out of an expanded 115 cities this year, only beaten by Washington D.C. and Copenhagen (Moonen *et al.* 2019). The city's high living standards, good healthcare and high level of life satisfaction are now starting to be recognized in measures of talent attraction. In recent years Oslo has also become more renowned for its ability to attract professionals with families, partly due to low pollution levels, and strong maternity and paternity laws (Clark *et al.* 2018).

However, there are also challenges related to talent attraction and retention. Whilst Oslo's ability to attract and retain talent has improved, the cost of relocation affects Oslo's position in terms of appeal for prospective talent. Furthermore, the city performed below par in an index measuring expat perceptions of the ease of settling in, due mainly to difficulties in socializing (Clark *et al.* 2018).

### **Aim and scope of the study**

Although there are indicators of how the Greater Oslo region performs in relation to talent attraction, there are still many questions that remain unanswered. This report examines more closely why international talents choose to come to the region, and what concrete measures can be implemented in order to ensure the retention of existing talent and attraction of new talent.

More specifically, the study looks at *why international talents choose to relocate to Greater Oslo, how they have experienced using welcoming services, and the integration into Norwegian work life and society*. By focusing on the experiences of talents that have come to the region to work in knowledge-intensive sectors, the study aims to bridge the knowledge gap and help identify the weak links in the talent attraction management ecosystem.

In the context of this study a talent can be seen as "a person who can contribute to the prosperity of the place (and workplace) in a world where knowledge, creativity and innovation are key factors" (Andersson *et al.* 2014, p. 13). The definition of talent used is limited to *employees in knowledge-intensive sectors*. Knowledge-intensive sectors is a collective term referring to industries that are often high-tech, innovative and that attract highly educated manpower.

## Introduction

Examples of such sectors are manufacturing; market service industries such as finance, insurance and telecommunications; business services; education; health; and cultural and creative industries.

The empirical data presented in this report is based on a case study examining international talents' experiences related to working and living in Greater Oslo. The study is based on two main sources of empirical data: in-depth interviews with international talents who live and work in Greater Oslo, and an international benchmarking study provided by Business of Cities that looks at Oslo's talent performance in relation to peer regions. In addition to the empirical data gathered, secondary data from published reports and books have been reviewed. Based on the insights from the case study the report presents the identified gaps in Greater Oslo's talent attraction management ecosystem, as well as suggestions for measures that can help fill these gaps.

## Structure of the report

The remainder of the report is structured as follows: chapter 2 outlines the talent attraction management model which is used as a theoretical framework for analyzing the empirical data in the report. In chapter 3 the case study design of the empirical data gathering is discussed. Chapter 4 provides empirical findings from the qualitative interviews with international talent, the benchmarking study provided by Business of Cities and the desk study involving a review of available reports and documents. Lastly, chapter 5 provides concluding remarks as well as suggestions for concrete measures to be implemented by public officials and stakeholders in order to strengthen the talent attraction management ecosystem in Greater Oslo.



*The Oslo Opera House.  
Photo: VisitOSLO/Nancy Bundt*

# Talent Attraction Management (TAM)

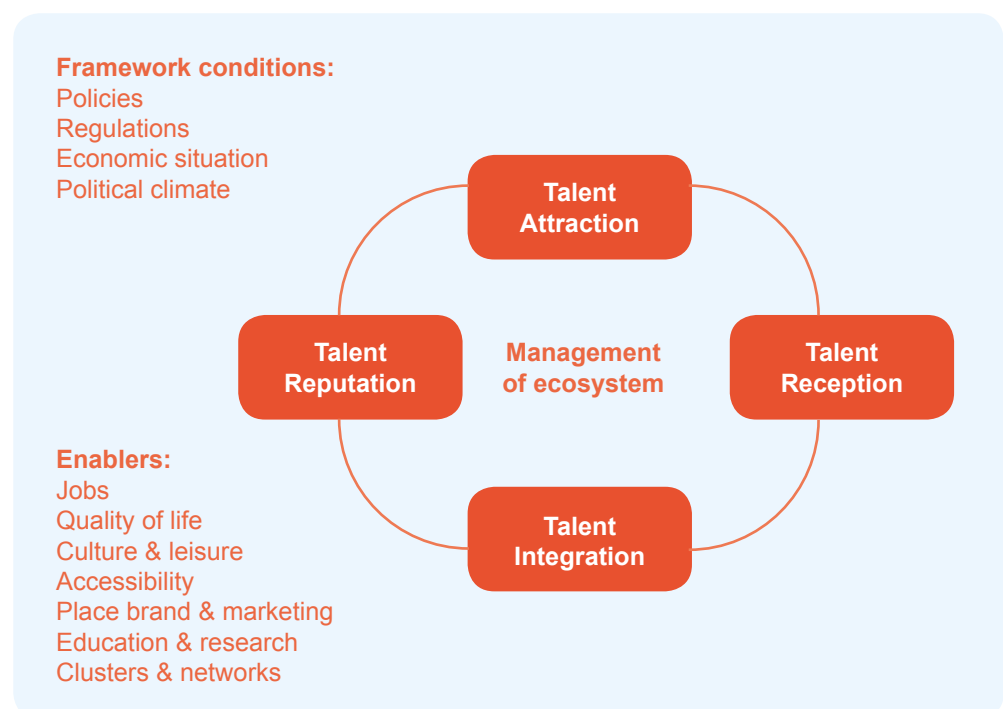
In the context of this report the Talent attraction management (TAM) model serves as a theoretical framework for the analysis of the empirical material. The model is also useful for thinking about how to follow up the recommendations in the report in a practical and integrated manner.

## What is TAM?

*Talent Attraction Management (TAM)* "is a holistic, integrated approach to efforts at the local, regional and national level aimed at attracting and retaining talent" (Andersson *et al.* 2016, p.30).

Figure 1 outlines the aspects that a place needs to manage in order to be attractive for international talent (Andersson *et al.* 2016). The cornerstones of TAM, as outlined in the figure, involve five types of activities: 1. talent attraction; 2. talent reception; 3. talent integration, 4. talent reputation and 5. management of ecosystems.

In addition there are a number of framework conditions and enablers that a place needs to work actively with in order to be attractive to talent, such as influencing policies (e.g. immigration, tax policy), political climate (e.g. creating awareness of the need to be open to labor immigration), accessibility (e.g. physical and digital infrastructure) and education and research (e.g. schools, universities, lifelong learning) (Andersson *et al.* 2016, p. 30).



**Figure 1.** Cornerstones of talent attraction management  
Copyright: Andersson, King-Grubert & van Hest, modified from Future Place Leadership

## Talent Attraction Management (TAM)

Successful talent attraction and retention involve working actively with all aspects of TAM. Individual activities are typically carried out by different stakeholders such as public sector organizations, private companies and universities. However, TAM also involves management of the talent attraction ecosystem in order to ensure that the region presents a coordinated and consistent marketing and service offer (Andersson *et al.* 2016, p. 30).

It is important to note that TAM is built on the idea that each step reinforces the following steps. This means that, for instance, the more efficiently the attraction efforts are carried out, the more talents will need reception (Andersson *et al.* 2016). Furthermore, the better the reception a person gets in the welcoming phase, the easier the integration will become in the subsequent phase. This means that there is a need to work in parallel with the different aspects of the model in order to ensure a well-functioning talent attraction management ecosystem.

According to Andersson *et al.* (2016) it is important to acknowledge that the talent attraction management ecosystem implies a multi-stakeholder set-up. This means that many different stakeholders with different objectives, priorities and mandates need to be involved in order to ensure that a comprehensive and coordinated chain of activities and services can be offered.

Managing the ecosystem is therefore about coordinating organizations, networks, people and teams that represent multiple place-based stakeholders. One cannot rely on one organization to manage and control the whole process in a hierarchical manner. Rather, it is about orchestrating the processes through quadruple helix collaboration involving different public, private, academic and societal stakeholders.

### TAM as analytical framework and practical tool

In the context of this report the TAM model is used both as an analytical framework and a practical tool to understand the different elements that have to be in place in order to successfully manage the talent attraction management ecosystem.

As a first step in working with TAM, the region should put emphasis on the activities where insufficient or weak links are identified (Andersson *et al.* 2016). The purpose of the empirical case study presented in this report is to pinpoint some of these weak links and come up with concrete suggestions for measures that can help strengthen the ecosystem. In this regard the TAM model is useful in structuring the empirical material and identifying the type of activities that should be prioritized.

A next step in working with TAM in Greater Oslo will be to focus on implementing some of the recommendations for follow-up measures that are outlined in this report. In this phase it will be relevant to discuss activities and strategies and how to organize them. In the *Handbook on Talent Attraction Management for Cities and Regions*, Andersson *et al.* (2014) outline possible organizational models and partnerships for TAM. The first step focuses on *mobilization*, which includes the following elements:

- A stakeholder analysis identifying key actors that should be mobilized.
- Create a “burning platform” amongst stakeholders – find arguments for why we need to work with TAM.
- Engage in open dialogue with key stakeholders (in the quadruple helix – business, academia, public sector and civil society) about their needs and motivations for collaborating.



The insight from the study presented in this report will lay the foundation for initiating a dialogue with the key regional stakeholders to discuss possible projects and activities that can be carried out in collaboration.

The following chapter outlines the research design for the empirical part of the study presented in this report.



Vippa Food Court. Photo: Oslo Region Alliance

# Case study design

The research design is “the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of study” (Yin 2003, p. 19). The empirical data presented in this report is based on a case study. A case study is a research method involving a close, thorough and detailed examination of a subject area, as well as the related contextual circumstances. The “case” studied may be a person, organization, event or action that exists at a particular time and place. A case study can include both qualitative and quantitative data and relies on multiple data sources.

## Methodological triangulation

Methodological triangulation (Silverman 2006) involves using more than one method of collecting data, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires and documents. The justification for using multiple methods is based on the need to get a broader picture of the subject area. Methodological triangulation also helps ensure the robustness of the study.

The case study presented in this report is based on the following data sources:

- a. Interviews with international talents who have come to Greater Oslo to work in knowledge-intensive sectors.
- b. Review of relevant literature (reports, books, policy documents).
- c. An analysis of 100 urban indexes and benchmarks that address factors relevant to talent attraction and retention provided by Business of Cities.
- d. Stakeholder workshop on how to improve talent attraction management at a regional level.

## Interviews with international talent

The purpose of the interviews is to find out about people's experiences or perceptions of a phenomenon or event. More specifically, the interviews provide insight into international talents' perception of Greater Oslo, their needs and preferences regarding settling in and integrating into the Norwegian society and work life, as well as their satisfaction level and what could be improved in order to make the transition smoother.

During the course of 4 months (March–June 2019) 17 international talents were interviewed. The interviews followed a semi-structured setup. This means that the interviews were guided by predefined questions that outlined the main themes<sup>2</sup>. The main themes of the interview guide are based on the cornerstones of the TAM model, namely talent attraction, talent reception and talent integration. However, a semi-structured setup also provided room for adapting the questions to each interview, and exploring relevant topics that emerged during the conversation. The interviews took place face-to-face and over the phone. In one case the answers to the interview questions were provided in written by the interviewee.

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<sup>2</sup> For a complete interview guide see Appendix A.



The interviewees were selected based on *variance selection*, i.e. the goal is to capture different experiences, opinions, arguments, perceptions and perspectives. The following criteria form the basis for selection of informants: *geographical spread* (representation from different parts of Greater Oslo), *industry* (representation from different sectors), *nationality* (representation from the EU and non-EU countries) and *family/non-family* (representation of talents who came with and without spouse/family)<sup>3</sup>. The interviewees were found through contacts in industry cluster administrations, universities and business incubators. *Referral sampling* was also used, which means that the interviewees themselves were asked to recommend potential contacts in their own network. The use of different information channels in order to get hold of interviewees helped ensure that the views and experiences of the expats were not biased.

### Literature review

The case study includes a review of relevant literature related to talent attraction management. The literature review provides important sources of information for understanding the broad subject of talent attraction management in general, but also how this plays out specifically in the Norwegian context. For instance, in 2014 the OECD published a report "Recruiting Immigrant Workers: Norway 2014". The report provides thorough insight into Norwegian labor migration policy, as well as concrete recommendations for improvements. The analysis of the empirical findings presented in chapter 4 also relies on the findings in the OECD report as an important source of information.

### International benchmarking study

Another important source of empirical data is an analysis of 100 urban indexes and benchmarks, where Oslo is included, that address factors that are relevant to talent attraction and retention. Business of Cities, an urban intelligence firm based in London, has carried out a "deep dive" into the data in order to explain Oslo's performance in global talent benchmarks<sup>4</sup>. In particular they assess: a) *Which factors are the real reasons for Oslo's high or low performance in talent benchmarks;* b) *Which factors are most influential in affecting talent performance overall;* c) *How much Oslo's ratings in talent benchmarks are due to objective performance criteria (that are judged in advance to be the ones that are most important to talent choices and perceptions), and how much they are down to actual recorded perceptions;* and d) *Whether Oslo's talent performance varies depending on the audience, the familiarity with Oslo and the kinds of talent being compared.* The analysis provided by Business of Cities is presented together with the other empirical data in chapter 4, and feeds into the analysis of how to improve the reception and integration of international talents in Greater Oslo.

<sup>3</sup> An anonymized overview of interviewees is presented in Appendix B.

<sup>4</sup> The full analysis provided by The Business of Cities is presented in Appendix C.

## Case study design

### Stakeholder workshop

A first draft of this report was presented to a group of stakeholders that participated at a workshop held on May 8 2019 in Oslo. In connection with the planning of the event, a stakeholder analysis was performed in order to identify regional actors that should be mobilized. The final list of stakeholders included a wide variety of representatives from business, academia, public sector, cluster organizations and talents.

A total of 20 people attended the workshop, which was centered on the following topic: “How can we improve talent attraction management in Greater Oslo?”. A summary of the discussion in the workshop can be found in Appendix D.

In the following chapter the empirical findings from the case study are presented.



VisitOSLO/Sadan Ekdemi

Øya Music Festival. Photo: VisitOSLO/Sadan Ekdemi

# Empirical findings

The following chapter presents the main empirical findings from the case study, which are based on qualitative interviews with international talent who are living and working in Greater Oslo, a review of available reports and documents, and a global talent benchmark study provided by Business of Cities (2019).

The findings from the case study lay the foundation for suggesting concrete measures to be implemented in collaboration with different stakeholders in order to strengthen the talent attraction management ecosystem in Greater Oslo.

## Norwegian labor immigration policy

In Norway the Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is responsible for labor market policy in general and policies related to labor immigration more specifically. One of the main objectives of the Norwegian labor market policy is to contribute towards high labor force participation and good utilization of the labor force. Labor immigration is one means of meeting the labor demands.

The most recent White Paper on labor immigration in Norway was published in 2008. White Paper no. 18 (2007–2008) outlines three main developments that are specifically related to labor immigration in Norway:

1. Through globalization the working life is becoming increasingly international. It gives workers and employers access to an expanded labor market. At the same time, it places demands on international expertise and diversity in Norwegian working life, and results in greater competition for certain types of labor between countries.

2. Labor immigration helps meet the demand for labor and to remove bottlenecks in the labor market as well as curb price and cost developments.
3. Increased labor immigration to Norway affects both working life and society in general. It presents challenges related to safeguarding the Norwegian work life model, and integration into Norwegian society, both by the labor immigrants themselves and by their families.

In a report from 2014 where the OECD did a review of Norway's labor migration policy, it is argued that the White Paper on labor immigration from 2008 was prepared at a time where employment growth was strong and unemployment rates were low (down to 2.5 percent by the end of 2007). Throughout Europe the economic situation was favorable, and this gave the impression that labor would be scarce and that Norway would have to compete for labor abroad in order to maintain its workforce (OECD 2014).

Although Norway is less affected by the concern relating to global competition for talent compared to many other countries, future demand is likely to increase for certain categories of skilled workers according to the OECD (2014). Examples of such categories are technology, engineering and the extraction industry – global fields in which Norwegian employers compete worldwide. In addition there will be an increased demand for people working in the health sector.



## Empirical findings

The need for labor immigration is also documented in a report from 2013 where Oslo Chamber of Commerce looked at competence immigration to Norway. The report shows that in recent years there has been a need for almost all types of skilled labor in Norway. According to The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration's (NAV) annual company survey it is estimated that the lack of labor amounts to 59 450 persons in 2019. This is an increase of 15 050 people compared to 2018 (Kalstø 2019). It is within property management, and business and professional services that the deficiency is most prominent. As much as 20 percent of the companies within these sectors reported that they had failed to recruit employees within the past three months. This number is higher than what has been reported in recent years (Kalstø 2019). There is also a high deficiency in the health and social services, as well as within the construction industry (Kalstø 2019).

Norway is characterized by very high levels of migration from the European Economic Area (EEA) and growing but small-scale labor migration from countries outside the EEA (OECD 2014). Since 1954, Norway has been part of a common Nordic labor market, and has since 1994 participated in the open European labor market within the European Economic Area (EEA) and European Free Trade Area (EFTA). Through the EEA Agreement and the EFTA Convention, Norway has given its support to increased cross-border mobility between these countries. Through the European labor market, laborers have the formal right to work and live in Norway without special restrictions. This grants access to a large potential workforce.

While immigration from the EEA/EFTA area involves free movement of people, immigration from third countries is to a far greater extent governed by national rules (White Paper no. 18 2007–2008). The Immigration Act outlines specific rules and regulations for labor immigration from countries outside the EEA/EFTA. A scheme for early work was introduced from May 1 2016, which enables employees to start working before the work permit is available. The purpose of the scheme is to facilitate easier recruitment of skilled labor to Norway.

According to the OECD (2014) the labor market policy for skilled migrants is relatively open, fast and simple in international comparison, and businesses that wish to hire skilled workers from outside the EEA face few obstacles. The permit conditions offered through the standard skilled-work permit in Norway compares favorably to the EU Blue Card and to similar permits in other EU countries.

However, Norwegian policy on labor immigration lacks a specific focus on the recruitment of high-skilled labor or specialists and how to retain them. According to the OECD (2014), high-skilled workers who come to Norway often leave, even if their employer would like to keep them. Furthermore, the spouses of skilled workers often struggle to find jobs, and this may cause the whole family to leave. The OECD also points out that international students provide a potential resource for Norwegian companies. However, in contrast to what is the case in other OECD countries, international students in Norway are less likely to start working in Norway after graduation (OECD 2014).



The OECD suggests the following measures in order to attract and retain talent in the Norwegian labor market:

- Identify target areas where Norway represents a strong competitor for skilled workers who would be more likely to stay.
- Market tertiary education as a pathway to employment in Norway.
- Strengthen services for labor migrants and their families.

### **Job mobility and welcoming services**

There are a multitude of actors offering to help international employees seeking job opportunities in Norway, as well as settling and integrating into the Norwegian society. Table 1 below provides examples of available job mobility and welcoming services.

NAV EURES can help job seekers and employers find employment or suitable candidates in other European countries. NAV cooperates with other European labor authorities and the European Commission through the EURES network (European Employment Services) with the aim to help employers who need to recruit foreign workers, or to help individuals who wish to apply for employment in other EEA countries. Furthermore, *Info Norden*, which is owned by the Nordic Council of Ministers, offers practical information about working, studying and running a business in the Nordic countries. The Nordic countries have a common Nordic labor market and joint Nordic agreements, including social security and educational opportunities. The main objective is thus to offer information to individuals who are looking to move within the Nordic region.

One of the main points of information for workers from abroad looking to work in Norway is the site *Work in Norway* ([workinnorway.no](http://workinnorway.no)), a web portal with advice and information about how to apply for jobs, Norwegian working life and practicalities around relocating to Norway. The portal is made in collaboration between the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, the police, NAV, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, and the Norwegian Tax Administration, and offers links to official websites that provide useful information before labor immigrants arrive in Norway, as well as information that will help during their initial work period. The portal also provides information to Norwegian employers wanting to recruit foreign workers to Norway and to foreign companies who want to sell their services in Norway.

A next point of information for migrants once they have arrived in Norway is the web portal *New in Norway* ([nyinorge.no/en/](http://nyinorge.no/en/)), which is run by the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity. The portal targets both labor migrants and family migrants and offers practical information from public offices about the Norwegian society.

At the local level the *Service Centre for Foreign Workers* (SUA) offers a physical meeting place where the Labour Inspection Authority, the police, the Norwegian Tax Administration, and the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration work together to provide guidance for foreign workers who come to Norway. This is a service offered in five cities in Norway, namely, Oslo, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim and Kirkenes.

## Empirical findings

Name of initiative and managing company/ organization	Short description of initiative	Geographical coverage
<i>NAV EURES</i> – <i>European job mobility</i> (The European Commission)	NAV can help job seekers and employers find employment or suitable candidates in other European countries. <a href="https://www.nav.no/en/Home/About+NAV/NAV+EURES+Services">https://www.nav.no/en/Home/About+NAV/NAV+EURES+Services</a>	Europe
<i>Info Norden</i> (Nordic Council of Ministers)	Web portal that offers information for persons who move between, work, study or are looking to start a business in the Nordic countries. <a href="https://transition.norden.org/en/info-norden">https://transition.norden.org/en/info-norden</a>	Nordic countries
<i>Work in Norway</i> (Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, the police, NAV, Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, Norwegian Tax Administration)	Web portal with advice and information on applying for jobs, working life and relocating. The website also applies to Norwegian employers wanting to recruit foreign workers to Norway and to foreign companies who want to sell their services in Norway. <a href="http://www.workinnorway.no">www.workinnorway.no</a>	Norway
<i>New in Norway</i> (The Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity)	Web portal for labor migrants and family migrants. <a href="http://www.nyinorge.no/en/">www.nyinorge.no/en/</a>	Norway
<i>The Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA)</i> (Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, the police, Norwegian Tax Administration, Norwegian Directorate for Immigration)	A service center that provides an efficient application process and guidance for foreigners who come to Norway to work. There are five SUA service centers, one which is located in Oslo. <a href="http://www.sua.no/en/">www.sua.no/en/</a>	Norway
<i>Relocation Services</i> (Oslo Chamber of Commerce)	Tailor-made relocation programs for assignees who come to Norway to work. Business-to-business. <a href="https://www.chamber.no/">https://www.chamber.no/</a>	Norway
<i>New in Halden</i> (Halden municipality)	Website with practical information about living and working in Østfold. <a href="https://www.halden.kommune.no/english/Sider/side.aspx">https://www.halden.kommune.no/english/Sider/side.aspx</a>	Østfold county
<i>Visit Oslo</i>	Official travel guide to Oslo. <a href="https://www.visitoslo.com/">https://www.visitoslo.com/</a>	Oslo, Akershus, Østfold, Vestfold, Hedmark
<i>Relocate to Norway – r2n.</i>	Private company located in Oslo providing professional and long-term relocation solutions. <a href="https://www.relocate2norway.no/">https://www.relocate2norway.no/</a>	Oslo
<i>Oslo Business region</i> (Oslo municipality)	Website with practical information about starting a business in Oslo. <a href="http://www.oslobusinessregion.no/">http://www.oslobusinessregion.no/</a>	Oslo

**Table 1:** Examples of job mobility and welcoming services

The table does not contain an exhaustive list of all available services, but rather examples of the services that public and private actors at the national and regional levels offer.

The service center can issue a registration certificate (*registreringsbevis*) for EU/EEA nationals, it can help foreign workers apply for a tax deduction card (*skattekort*) and get a Norwegian identification number. However, most foreign workers must book an appointment with the police before visiting the Service Centre for Foreign Workers.

There are also several private companies who offer practical assistance for foreign workers who come to Norway. Many of the larger companies and universities in the region use the services of the relocation companies.

The OECD study concludes that the system for applying for a work permit is well functioning and that processing times are relatively short compared to other OECD countries (OECD 2014). Furthermore, the permit conditions offered by a standard skilled-work permit in Norway compares favorably to the EU blue card, and to other similar work permits in EU countries (OECD 2014). The creation of the service centers for foreign workers (SUA) in several cities in Norway has also substantially reduced processing times according to the OECD (2014).



Norwegian University of Life Sciences. Photo: Oslo Region Alliance

## Empirical findings

### Oslo's performance across different talent factors

For the purpose of the case study presented in this report, Business of Cities (2019) has done a benchmarking analysis focusing on how Oslo performs in global talent indexes<sup>5</sup>. In the following the analysis from the benchmarking study is presented and discussed in

relation to the qualitative interview data and findings from secondary reports. The below chart (Figure 2) shows what factors are most important across the 100 benchmarks that measure talent, and how Oslo scores relative to its peers across each of these factors.

<sup>5</sup> The full analysis is presented in Appendix C.

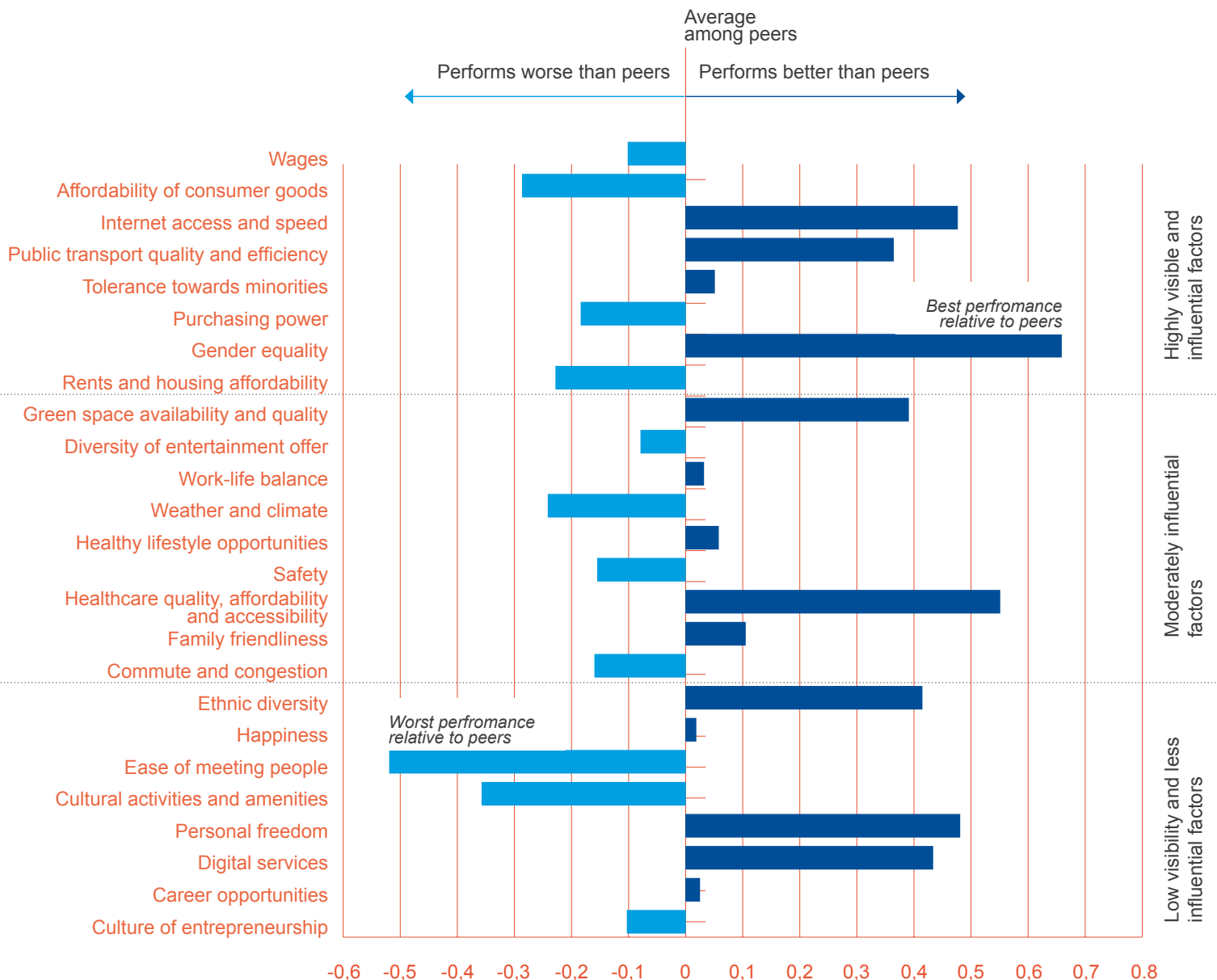


Figure 2: Which factors are most important in shaping talent performance, and how Oslo performs in them relative to its peers (Business of Cities 2019)

According to Business of Cities (2019) the key observations from this analysis are:

- Wages, costs and housing affordability remain extremely important to the talent equation, and Oslo is not measured favorably in this area relative to other medium sized cities. This is the main reason as to why there is a ceiling to Oslo's overall talent performance relative to others.
- Oslo's strong performances in terms of gender access and equality, high quality Internet platform, and the quality and efficiency of transport are all important advantages that drive high performance and attraction, especially for entrepreneurs.
- Oslo performs well in many areas that are important but less decisive, such as the quality of healthcare, the level of personal freedom, access to green space and lifestyle, and the adoption of e-government services.
- Oslo's weakest performance for talent relative to its peers is for the ease of meeting people and the breadth and the range of cultural activities and amenities. This is partly because performance and perceptions have not yet caught up with Oslo's cycle of investment in culture over the past decade.

Another interesting finding is Oslo's weak performance regarding safety. In the report *Oslo: State of the city 2019* Oslo's low score on personal safety is explained by the fact that "new regional datasets on actual crime levels have highlighted that Oslo has a murder rate that is higher than more than half of its European peers (8th highest rate out of 20 cities)" (Moonen *et al.* 2019, p. 22). However, according to Moonen *et al.* (2019) this is an area where more comprehensive assessments of safety that will emerge over time should be an advantage for Oslo.

### **Talent attraction and retention**

Looking more closely at what makes Greater Oslo an attractive city region for talent, Oslo stands out among Scandinavian cities for its high scores related to retaining talent compared to its ability to attract it (Figure 3) (Business of Cities 2019). Performance in attracting and retaining residents is relatively equal for Copenhagen and Helsinki, and for Stockholm the opposite is true; its ability to attract residents is stronger than its ability to retain it (Figure 3) (Business of Cities 2019). Compared to Oslo's 50 peer cities, Oslo ranks 20th for attraction and 8th for retention (Business of Cities 2019).

The improvement that the region has made so far have registered more in the benchmarks as a means for retaining home-grown talent than as an attractor of new talent (Business of Cities 2019). This view is also reflected by the interviewees; very few knew much about the region and the qualities that the region has to offer before they moved to Oslo. Rather, they were attracted to the place because of a specific job opportunity or study program. However, after experiencing the qualities that the region has to offer, the majority of interviewees state that they do wish to stay for the longer term due to factors such as work-life balance, quality of life and efficiency of public transport. Stable political climate and family friendliness are also some of the attraction factors that the interviewees highlight. Many of the interviewees also experience that there are good opportunities for career development and job mobility within the region.

The flat hierarchical structure is mentioned as one of the factors that make it favorable to work in Norway. High salary levels and relatively suitable costs of living are also mentioned as attraction factors.



## Empirical findings

For students, high quality courses in English as well as no tuition fees are some of the main attraction factors. This means that the wage gap and high costs of living that are shown in the international benchmarking study (see Figure 2) may be outweighed by factors such as quality of living and a well-regulated labor market.

The OECD study has shown that talent retention is weaker for international students, meaning that more international students leave the country after finalizing their studies compared to other OECD countries. This is mainly due to difficulties in entering the labor market (OECD 2014). Some interviewees have highlighted the difficulties in navigating available jobs and the lack of support when trying to enter into the labor market, especially for international students who are studying in Norway and who want to

stay after the end of graduation. The visa requirements for job search visas are also a hindering factor that in many cases forces international students to leave the country after graduation. There is thus a potential to increase the number of international students who stay after graduation by helping them finding relevant jobs. This can be done through placements and internships during the course of the studies and through job fairs and matchmaking with potential employees upon graduation.

In summary, Oslo records excellent fundamentals for talent attraction and retention, due to a high and gradually improving quality of life, access to urban amenities and public services and high levels of personal freedom. However, one reason why Oslo does not yet achieve its full potential is high costs (perceived or measured) relative to wages (Business of Cities 2019).

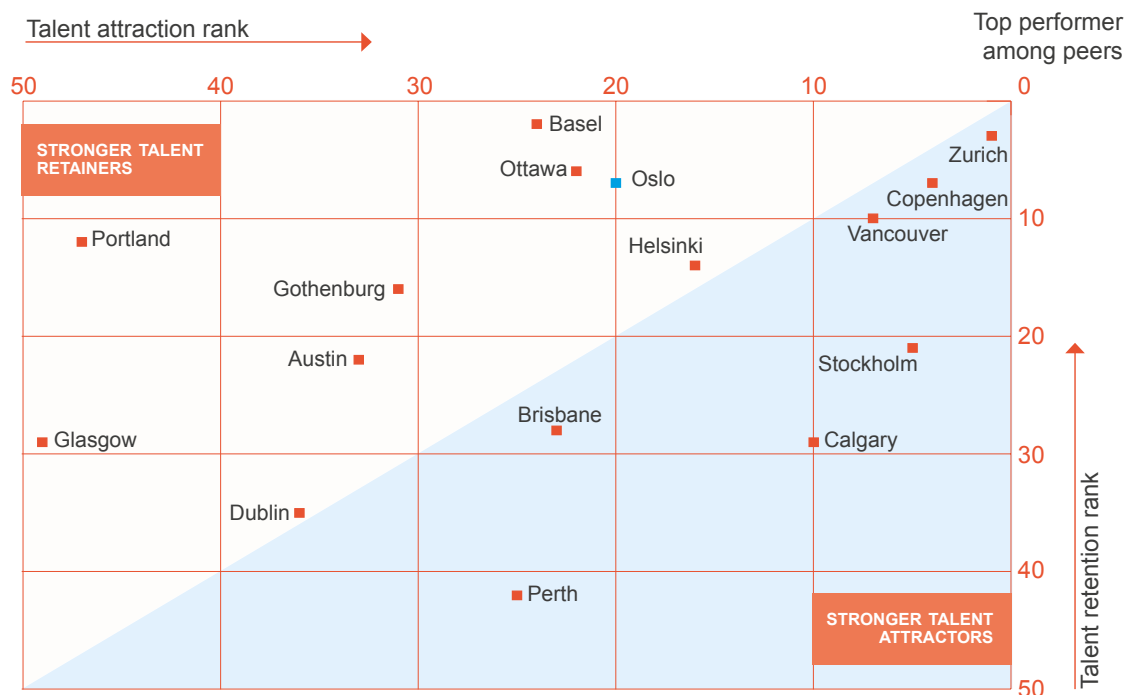


Figure 3: Oslo's performance in attracting and retaining residents compared to Scandinavian neighbors and most comparable peer cities (Business of Cities 2019)



### **Talent reception**

The interviews with international talents have focused on how they experienced the move to Oslo. The talents interviewed have used the welcoming services offered by both public and private actors.

For a majority, the *Work in Norway* website proved useful in navigating the practicalities around moving to Norway. However, many of the interviewees reported that upon arrival in Norway they experienced some delays in getting an appointment with the police and getting issued a Norwegian identification number. In many cases the process of getting a Norwegian identification number took between 2 to 6 months. As a result, many of the interviewees were not able to open a bank account and receive their salary during their first few months in Norway.

The talents who have been offered help through a professional relocation service, all report that the process of getting a Norwegian identification number, finding a place to live, getting a bank account, getting a kindergarten space etc. was smooth and problem-free. However, the majority of the interviewees did not use professional relocation services and were left to handle the practicalities themselves.

When asking the interviewees what could be improved in terms of how they experienced the welcoming services, many responded that there should be better coordination between public authorities (e.g. the police and the tax office) and that the process of getting the identification number should be more efficient. Within the first week of their arrival foreigners need to get an appointment at the police to register their arrival. Currently the waiting period to get this appointment can be up to 6 weeks in Oslo. The appointment with the police is followed by an appointment at the tax authority to get an identification number. Many experienced that the

waiting lines at the police were long and that they were not able to get an appointment at the police within the first few weeks of their arrival. Several also reported that the information provided by the Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA), which provides guidance for foreigners who come to Norway to work, was not clear enough, and that the service provided could be more smooth and time-efficient.

Another issue raised by the interviewees is the lack of practical information offered in English. Only one bank provides information about how to open a Norwegian bank account in English. Information concerning how to apply for kindergarten, how to renew your driver's license etc. is only provided in Norwegian. The overall feedback is that more systemized information about living and working in Greater Oslo is needed, including practicalities related to school, kindergarten, housing, but also how to integrate into the Norwegian society and understanding Norwegian culture. The OECD (2014) also points out that there is room for improvement regarding welcoming services for migrants and their families. According to the OECD, labor migrants are left out of the well-developed integration structure in Norway, which has been largely designed for humanitarian migrants and their families. Several interviewees have suggested that upon arrival, labor immigrants should be offered a booklet with practical information for new residents.

### **Talent integration**

The degree of integration into Norwegian society has a major impact on whether talents decide to stay. Labor migrants are often accompanied by their families, which in many cases imply a highly educated spouse (OECD 2014). However, evidence show that spouses of labor migrants, particularly from non-EU countries, constitute an unused potential for Norway, as labor migrants

## Empirical findings

with an inactive partner is more likely to leave the country (OECD 2014).

The interviewees who brought spouses have had different experiences related to the ease of integration of the partner. In some cases the spouse was able to find a job immediately upon their arrival in Norway, while in other cases the spouse spent up to one and a half year looking for a job.

According to the interviewees one of the major barriers preventing spouses from entering into the labor market is language skills. The OECD report from 2014 also highlights that the lack of language skills is a significant barrier to employment for qualified immigrants in Norway. Many employers require employees to speak Norwegian, even though it is not specifically highlighted in the job advertisement. Language is also regarded as a barrier to integration at the workplace. However, required language skills vary according to industry. In academia and parts of the private sector that is more internationally oriented, fluency in Norwegian is not a requirement. However, in the public sector or smaller companies with a Norwegian customer base, fluency in Norwegian is an important requirement. Many of the interviewees therefore point at the need to inform about the expectation to learn Norwegian to international students as well as in the communication directed at recruiting foreign talents. If employers would communicate more clearly that they have an expectation that expats learn Norwegian within a certain amount of time, this would also help raise the motivation of the expats to learn the language, and ease the integration in the long run.

Another barrier to finding a job is that most jobs are advertised in Norwegian portals such as finn.no and written in Norwegian, which limits the scope of the job search for the spouses.

Many of the interviewees have pointed out that the Norwegian labor market is network-based, meaning that many jobs are not advertised and that employers to a large extent hire people within their own network. Consequently, access to social and professional networks is one way of easing the integration of talents and their spouses.

In the international benchmarks, Oslo's weakest performance for talent is for ease of meeting people (Business of Cities 2019). Difficulties in socializing and meeting people were brought up by several of the interviewees and mentioned as a main barrier to integration. It is a common cultural trait that Norwegians separate their professional and private spheres, and to a lesser extent socialize through work than what might be the case in other countries. Many interviewees point to the fact that Norwegians are active in sports and that the key to integration is to join a local sports team.

Few of the interviewees have been in contact with the municipality relating to services such as language courses or other services they might need to integrate into Norwegian society. Many have pointed out that it would be beneficial if the municipality would offer an initial number of language course lessons and an introductory course explaining Norwegian culture to encourage the integration and cultural understanding.

When asked about the importance of access to international schools, the interviewees who were accompanied by their family all respond that the Norwegian school system is perceived to have a high quality of education, and that they prefer their kids to attend the local school rather than an international one. Many see kindergarten and schools as important arenas for socializing and integrating into the Norwegian society and culture.

# Conclusions and recommendations: How to strengthen Greater Oslo's talent attraction management ecosystem?

This report has focused on talent attraction management in Greater Oslo. It has looked at why international talents choose to come to the region, and what concrete measures can be implemented in order to ensure the retention of existing talent and attraction of new talent. Through different sources of data the study has tried to answer the following questions: *why do international talents choose to relocate to Greater Oslo, how have they experienced using welcoming services, and how have they experienced the integration into Norwegian work life and society?*

*Talent Attraction Management (TAM)* is about strengthening the region's competitiveness by profiling the region as an attractive place for investors, entrepreneurs, students and employees in knowledge-intensive businesses. Talent attraction is not only about attracting international talent but also about the management of the talent attraction ecosystem, involving talent attraction, talent reception, talent integration and talent reputation, in order to ensure that the region presents a coordinated and consistent marketing and service offer. In addition there is an increased focus on the possibility for talent mobility within and across organizations and regions.

By focusing on the experiences of talents that have come to the region to work in knowledge-intensive sectors, the study aims to bridge the knowledge gap and help identify the weak links in the talent attraction management ecosystem in Greater Oslo.

The empirical data presented is based on a case study that examines the international talents' experiences related to working and living in Greater Oslo. The study is based on two main sources of empirical data: in-depth interviews with international talents who live and work in Greater Oslo, and an international benchmarking study that looks at Oslo's talent performance in relation to peer regions. The empirical findings have provided insights that make up the basis for concrete recommendations on how to improve the reception, integration and retention of international talent.

## **Main empirical findings**

The empirical findings show that Oslo's talent performance is improving. For instance, gender access and equality, high quality Internet platform, and the quality and efficiency of transport are all important advantages that drive high performance and attraction. However, in areas that are regarded as extremely important to the talent equation, such as wages, costs and housing affordability, Oslo is not measured favorably relative to other medium sized cities. However, by communicating the attraction factors such as work-life balance and a well-regulated labor market, that make Oslo stand out in international comparison, the impact of wage gap and high costs of living can be outweighed.

Oslo stands out amongst Scandinavian city regions for its high scores related to retaining talent compared to its ability to attract it. And the improvement that the region has made can be seen as a means for retaining talent rather than as an attractor of new talent. Another general finding is that quality of life

## Conclusions and recommendations: How to strengthen Greater Oslo's talent attraction management ecosystem?

drivers of talent performance continue to outweigh labor market drivers. There is a potential to make the qualities that Oslo has to offer and the opportunities in terms of career development more known among the target talent groups. More emphasis should thus be put on marketing Greater Oslo as a talent destination. There is also potential to make use of the competencies of international students in the regional labor markets, as a high percentage of international students leave the country after graduation.

Regarding the reception and integration of talent, the findings show that the welcoming services offered work reasonably well, but that there is room for improvement regarding the coordination between public authorities and in making the service offer more efficient. A concrete example is related to reducing the processing time for procurement of a Norwegian identification number.

There is room for better and more extensive services targeted at integrating talents and their families into the Norwegian society. Lack of integration is still a barrier to retaining talents, and efforts should be made to make sure that talents and their families have access to social and professional networks, and get a thorough introduction to Norwegian society and culture upon arrival in Norway.

Lack of language skills is a significant barrier to employment for spouses. Expectations around Norwegian skills should be communicated more clearly to international talents who wish to relocate to the region. This would also help raise the motivation of the international talents to learn the language, and ease the integration in the long run.

Lastly, in the international benchmarks Oslo's weakest performance for talent is for ease of meeting people. And difficulties in socializing and meeting people were brought up by several of the interviewees and mentioned as a main barrier to integration. There is thus a potential to look into how to strengthen the social integration of talents.

### Recommendations for follow-up measures

The empirical findings confirm that Greater Oslo has many of the fundamentals that support long-term talent to thrive, however, while there are several initiatives focusing on different aspects of talent attraction and retention, there are opportunities to coordinate the efforts through collaboration between regional stakeholders.

The case study has also identified gaps within three of the core areas of the talent attraction management model. The suggested measures listed below are meant to help fill these gaps and strengthen the talent attraction management ecosystem at a regional level:

## **1. Talent attraction**

### *a. More awareness about the qualities of living and working in Greater Oslo.*

- Campaigns aimed at specific talent groups.
- Collaboration with private sector to advertise job opportunities for international talents.

## **2. Talent reception**

### *a. Strengthen welcoming and “soft landing” services.*

- Ensure smoother processes/better coordination around getting required documentation such as social security number, bank account, housing etc.
- Mentorship program for newly arrived expats.
- Practical information in English (how to apply for kindergarten, how to open a bank account, how the tax system works etc.).
- Introduction manual to Norwegian society and culture.

## **3. Talent integration**

### *a. Strengthen social integration for labor immigrants and their families.*

- (Free) language course.
- Access to social and professional networks for spouses.

### *b. Support the stay of international students.*

- Access to relevant part-time jobs during studies.
- Placements/internships as part of studies.
- Information about Norwegian working life and job opportunities early upon the students' arrival in Norway.

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StartupLab. Photo: OBR/Damian Heinisch





## Appendix A

# Interview guide

### Background and attraction

Tell me a little bit about yourself (nationality, educational background etc.)

Why did you end up in Oslo/region?

When you were looking to work abroad, what factors did you take into account in making your final choice?

How important was the place itself, compared to the specific employer, when you chose to move?

Why did you end up relocating to Oslo/region?

What were your expectations before you arrived in Oslo/region?

What attracted you to move?

Were your expectations met?

### Reception and integration

How were the welcoming and soft landing activities? (Visa, social security number, finding a place to live etc.)

How was the transition to living in Oslo/region?

If you brought partner/spouse/children, how has integration been for them?  
Was it easy for the partner to find a job? Were you offered any help in finding a job for the partner or school for the child(ren)?

Are there any tools (apps, websites etc.) that have been specifically helpful to you that you can recommend for other talents that come to the region?

### Retention

What are the main qualities about living and working in Oslo/region?

Are there certain things you would like to change/improve?

How likely is it that you would stay in Oslo/region if you were to change employer?

Are there good opportunities for talent mobility within the Oslo region?

Are you considering relocating to another region? If so, why and where?

Do you have any suggestions as to how regional authorities/companies/organizations can improve the services related to the welcoming of international talent?

## Appendix B

# Overview of interviewees

<i><b>Interviewee no</b></i>	<i><b>Geographical spread</b></i>	<i><b>Industry</b></i>	<i><b>Nationality</b></i>	<i><b>Duration of stay</b></i>	<i><b>Family yes/no</b></i>	<i><b>Gender M/F</b></i>
1	Hamar	University	UK	<1 year	no	F
2	Hamar	University	UK	<1 year	no	M
3	Hamar	University	India	<1 year	yes	M
4	Oslo	Private company	USA	1–5 years	no	M
5	Oslo	Private company	USA	1–5 years	no	F
6	Oslo	Public sector / municipality	Brazil	>5 years	yes	F
7	Lillestrøm	Research institute	Spain	>5 years	no	F
8	Lillestrøm	Research institute	USA (China)	1–5 years	no	M
9	Lillestrøm	Research institute	Germany	>5 years	no	F
10	Lillestrøm	Research institute	India	<1 year	no	F
11	Oslo/Bærum	Research institute	Switzerland	1–5 years	yes	F
12	Oslo	Research institute	USA/Belgium	1–5 years	yes	F
13	Oslo	Private company	Malaysia	1–5 years	yes	F
14	Oslo/Bærum	Research institute	France	<1 year	yes	F
15	Oslo	Private company	France	>5 years	no	M
16	Oslo	Private company	Syria	<1 year	yes	M
17	Oslo	Private company	Australia	>5 years	no	M



## Appendix C

# Explaining Oslo's performance in Global Talent benchmarks by The Business of Cities march 2019

The global competition for talent has become a core agenda for businesses and employers, and also for cities and regions for whom a base of talented and skilled professionals is essential to compete in more globally traded sectors of the economy. Talent also fuels the innovation ecosystem that helps cities to generate the next cycle of jobs, improve efficiency and diversify their economies.

As a result, cities are focusing on how they provide the full set of services and systems to attract and accommodate talent: marketing, place branding, recruitment, and also 'soft landing' activities, settlement programmes, social and professional networks, and job and employer diversity.

For this reason, the world is measuring cities and talent closely. Out of more than 500 global urban indexes and benchmarks that currently exist, 200 of these address factors relevant to talent attraction and retention, and nearly 10 % analyse talent and human capital directly. Overall, Oslo appears in 65 % of these measures. In this review we have taken a wide view and considered all measures, including the indicators that make up full indexes, wherever possible.

The world is interested in Oslo as a place where talent already thrives and finds a home. This is reflected in Oslo's high visibility in talent related measures, which has improved over time. Over the past 18 months, Oslo has appeared in nearly 75 % of measures that relate to the city's ability to attract and retain talent. This study uses these to undertake a full analysis to explain why Oslo performs well, what areas it can realistically improve, and what areas are not addressed by these measures.

In particular we assess:

1. Which factors are the real reasons for Oslo's high or low performance in talent benchmarks<sup>1</sup>.
2. Which factors are most influential in affecting talent performance overall.
3. How much Oslo's ratings in talent benchmarks are due to objective performance criteria (that are judged in advance to be the ones that are most important to talent choices and perceptions) and how much they are down to actual recorded perceptions.
4. Whether Oslo's talent performance varies depending on the audience, the familiarity with Oslo and the kinds of talent being compared.

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<sup>1</sup> Where this note benchmarks Oslo, it is against the same peer group of 50 cities as in the State of the City Report series (see appendix).

Overall, this note shows that:

1. Oslo continues to perform better in measures that focus on the region's ability to retain talent than for talent attraction. This reflects the fact that the improvements that Oslo region has been making – linked to public space, connectivity, and amenities – have so far registered more in the benchmarks as a means for retaining home-grown talent than as an attractor of new talent.
2. Issues of affordability (e.g. costs, purchasing power and wages) still have the biggest influence on Oslo's overall talent performance, followed by quality of infrastructure, equality and inclusion and tolerance towards foreigners. Perceptions of Oslo's efficient public transport and commuting system are also important.
3. Oslo's improved talent performance is mostly the result of ongoing improvements to the city region's objective performance. It is less driven by changing recorded perceptions of residents, visitors and others familiar with the city.
4. Oslo's ratings in talent benchmarks mostly reflect its ability to serve the needs and perceptions of existing and long-term residents. Its appeal to expatriates, visitors, or those who have potentially never visited the city region is not as fully or accurately assessed. This is an important ongoing priority.
5. Oslo's talent performance is slightly stronger in studies focused on factors that are important to long-term talent (e.g. families), than in those that focus on the region's appeal to younger, single people or medium-term entrepreneurs. Oslo's growing job opportunities and diversifying economy – the pull of the regional labor market – are not yet as visible as the pull of the city's quality of life offer. Quality of life drivers continue to outweigh labor market drivers in shaping overall regional talent performance.
6. Overall, Oslo records excellent fundamentals for talent attraction and retention, due to a high and gradually improving quality of life, access to urban amenities and public services, and high levels of personal freedom. One reason Oslo does not yet achieve its full potential is due to high costs (perceived or measured) relative to wages, particularly among entry level jobs. This creates a ceiling to Oslo's overall talent performance.

## Appendix C

### Part 1: Oslo Across the Different Talent Factors

Looking at the 100 global studies in which Oslo is included, many factors affect how it performs for talent. Some are more visible, more frequently measured, more highly weighted, than others. This means that some factors are more influential than others in determining how Oslo rates. We have observed three sets of factors (see Table 1).

The factors that matter most in the talent benchmarks	Factors with medium influence	The factors that matter least in the talent benchmarks
Wages	Green space availability and quality	Level of ethnic diversity
Affordability of consumer goods	Diversity of entertainment offer	Happiness
Internet access and speed	Work-life balance	Ease of meeting people
Public transport quality and efficiency	Weather and climate	Cultural activities and amenities
Tolerance towards foreigners and minorities	Healthy lifestyle opportunities	Personal freedom
Purchasing power	Safety	Digital services
Gender equality	Healthcare quality, affordability and accessibility	Career opportunities
Rents and housing affordability	Family friendliness	Culture of entrepreneurship
	Commute and congestion	

*Table 1:* Factors measured in all talent benchmarks in which Oslo appears over the past 18 months.

## What Benchmarks Can and Cannot Tell Us

When viewed collectively, city benchmarks can tell a city like Oslo a lot about:

- How important Oslo is perceived as a place to measure for talent.
- How Oslo is rated on objective, measurable strengths and flows of talent.
- Which aspects are its competitive strengths, and how this compares with recorded perceptions.

But the data and design of benchmarks also mean that for those interested

- Most benchmarks do not analyse the *experience* of talent upon immediate arrival in a city, granting little insight into that city's management of the 'welcome' for talent.
- The perception data does not break results down by the preferences of different kinds of talent (e.g. by age/geography/sector/seniority.)
- Many of the performance benchmarks themselves are mostly based on a weightings system that reflects the inferred needs of talent, rather than surveys or subjective preferences. Some also reflect limited data availability.

## How does Oslo do across the key factors that shape talent performance?

The below chart shows what factors are most important across the 100 benchmarks that measure talent, and how Oslo scores relative to its peers across each of these factors (see Figure 1).

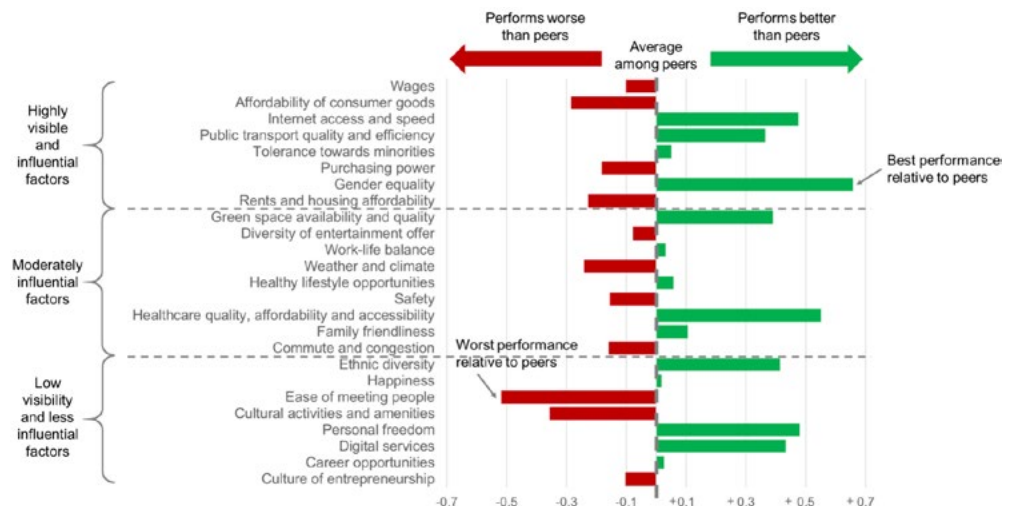


Figure 1: Which factors are most important in shaping talent performance, and how Oslo performs in them relative to its peers.



## Appendix C

The key observations from this analysis are:

- Wages, costs and housing affordability remain extremely important to the talent equation, and Oslo is not measured favorably in this area relative to other medium sized cities. This is the main reason as to why there is a ceiling to Oslo's overall talent performance relative to others.
- Oslo's strong performances in terms of gender access and equality, high quality Internet platform, and the quality and efficiency of transport are all important advantages that drive high performance and attraction, especially for entrepreneurs.
- Oslo perform wells in many areas that are important but less decisive, such as the quality of healthcare, the level of personal freedom, access to green space and lifestyle, and the adoption of e-government services.
- Oslo's weakest performance for talent relative to its peers is for the ease of meeting people and the breadth and the range of cultural activities and amenities. This is partly because performance and perceptions have not yet caught up with Oslo's cycle of investment in culture over the past decade.

### **Oslo in the perception measures**

Just over 80 % of talent studies are based on objective performance criteria, while just under 20 % are shaped by recorded perceptions. The rise of big data, crowd-sourced online platforms and global surveys means that these studies now grant important and direct insights into how both global and domestic talent perceive the city.

Perception measures have certain advantages over performance criteria, such as:

- Index producers may measure what they think matters rather than what real groups of people, and particular demographics, might actually find compelling or attractive in a city.
- Focus on certain kinds of corporate expat talent, at the expense of entrepreneurs, immigrant communities, and others that may require services for long-term residents.

Only 5 % of these studies are based on the perceptions of people who may potentially have never experienced the region, while nearly 30 % are based on the perceptions of people who have at least some experience of it. The majority reflects the perceptions of long-term migrants or permanent residents. Oslo's perceived talent ratings are predominantly based on the views of those currently based in the city region, and less on those who may wish to live there or once lived there and now do not.

Factors that widely shape perception scores	Factors that shape perception somewhat	Factors that do not strongly influence overall perception scores
Purchasing power	Green space availability and quality	Ease of meeting people
Transport quality and efficiency	Range of entertainment offer	Cultural activities and amenities
Family friendliness (activities, childcare, workplace)	Safety	Personal freedom
	Life Happiness	

**Table 3.** Factors identified in measures containing a perception element in which Oslo appears over the past 18 months.

In purely perception-based measures, Oslo performs very highly relative to its peers, ranking 10<sup>th</sup> out of 50 cities. This is reflective of a consistently above average level of happiness and urban life satisfaction:

- Oslo ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the world in an index on happiness, which surveyed country residents on their happiness levels (Homeday).
- In a world-renowned global citizen survey, Oslo is among the top 10 of perceived cities in which to live (Mori IPSOS).
- Oslo is also in the top 25 cities globally for its performances for resident satisfaction with public transport (Zipjet), and for expert opinion on the best cities in which to raise a family (Homeday).

### **Talent attraction vs Talent retention**

Overall, more studies measure elements related to Oslo's ability to retain talent than its ability to attract it. Of the 100 studies reviewed for this note, 51 primarily consider elements that are more related to talent retention, and the other 22 look mainly at elements related to attraction.

Breaking down the studies in this way shows that Oslo stands out among Scandinavian cities for its high scores related to retaining talent compared to its ability to attract it. Performance across the two talent dimensions is relatively equal for Copenhagen and Helsinki, and for Stockholm the opposite is true (its ability to attract talent is stronger than its ability to retain it). Looking across Oslo's 50 peer cities, Oslo ranks 20<sup>th</sup> for attraction. But looking at retention Oslo only ranks 8<sup>th</sup> (see Figure 2). Improvements carried out by the Oslo region has tended to register more in the benchmarks as a means for retaining home grown talent than as a means of attracting new talent.

On the attraction side, Oslo is publicly rated as having good opportunities for women and high living standards. But its overall performance for attraction is held back by moderate scores for salaries in new technology jobs, the number of sunshine hours and vacation days as well as high income tax levels in comparison to other cities.

## Appendix C

Oslo's score for talent retention, however, benefits from high standards of public services, quality and access to green space as well as ease of commute. In other words, Oslo performs very well in areas that encourage talent to stay.

The results indicate that Oslo has many of the fundamentals that support long-term talent to thrive, ranking 12<sup>th</sup> out of its peer group for this measure. As the best ranked Scandinavian city region in this category, Oslo benefits from its high family purchasing power, strong maternity and paternity laws and numerous opportunities to pursue a healthy lifestyle. For medium-term entrepreneurial talent, Oslo ranks 17<sup>th</sup> out of its 50 peer cities, due to a combination of good mobile speeds, a strong work-life balance and high-quality working spaces, but salary and cost equation is slightly behind other global tech hubs. Quality of life drivers of talent performance continue to outweigh labor market drivers, which are not yet as visible in the benchmarks as one might expect (e.g. job opportunities, diversification of the economy etc.).

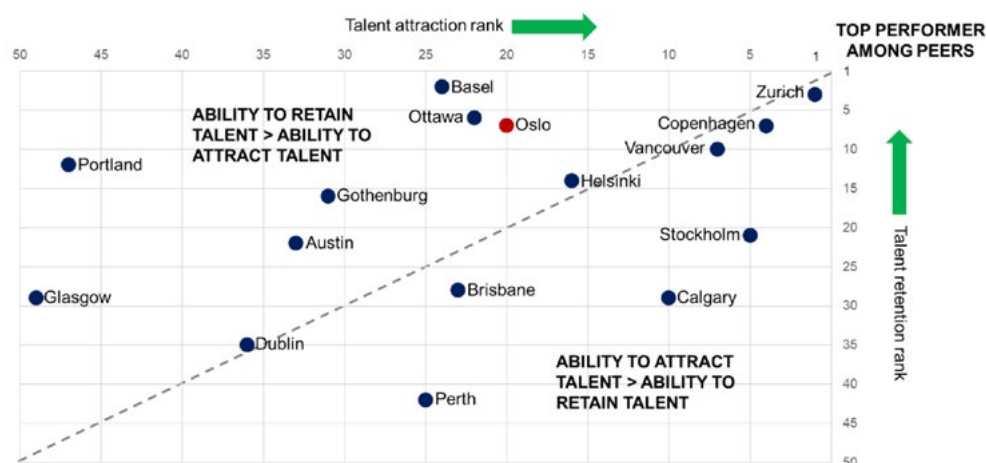
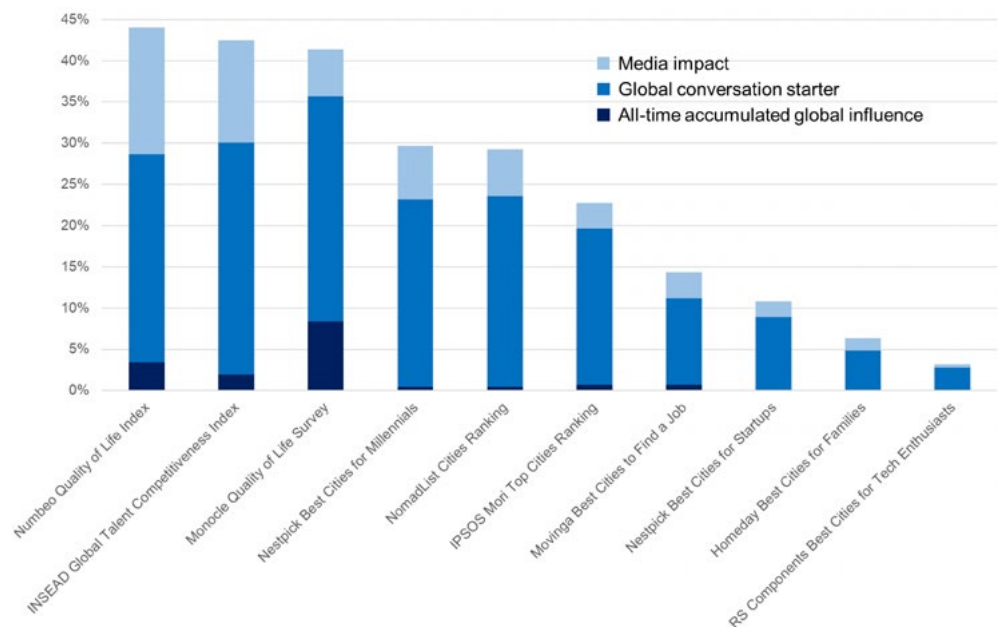


Figure 2: Oslo's performance in attracting and retaining residents, compared to Scandinavian neighbors and most comparable peer cities.

## Part 2: The Breakdown by Index

There are a number of talent indices. These have varying levels of influence, and different ways of measuring Oslo.

Many newer measures of talent performance are beginning to capture the global imagination, particularly in their ability to drive the global conversation and generate media impact. The INSEAD Global Talent Competitiveness Index, the Numbeo Index, the Nomad List Cities Ranking, and the Monocle Magazine Quality of Life Survey are all part of this group of influential talent benchmarks (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Composite global influence of, and interest in, the most influential talent benchmarks in 2018\*

**Source:** Google. \*Relative to the Mercer Quality of Living Survey, which receives a composite score of 100% (3 x 33%) due to it being the strongest performer in all three categories.

\*\*Individual category scores calculated by comparing each index to the Mercer Survey, where Mercer receives a score of  $100/3 = 33\%$ .



## Appendix C

### *Numbeo Quality of Life Index*

- **Who is the index aimed at?** Numbeo is an online global database that analyses country and city performance, aimed at those considering moving to a new city and who want to compare cities like for like to determine which might be more suited to them.
- **Why is it important, whose sentiment is it really assessing?** Data is crowdsourced and 100 % based on perception measures drawn from information given by city residents, mobile talent and global travellers on various factors in their respective cities.
- **What does it show about Oslo?** In 2019, Oslo ranks 86<sup>th</sup> out of 226 cities for Quality of Life, just ahead of Stockholm. This year's Purchasing Power Index sees Oslo rank 140<sup>th</sup>, above Stockholm and Copenhagen, and only narrowly behind global metropolises like New York, Seoul and Amsterdam.
- **What are the real factors it is measuring?** Strongly influenced by purchasing power, cost of living, affordability of housing, and real and perceived air pollution, crime rates, healthcare quality and traffic handling.

### *INSEAD Global Talent Competitiveness Index*

- **Who is the index aimed at?** Decision makers in city regions interested in understanding the global talent competitiveness landscape and developing strategies to improve their own performance.
- **Why is it important, whose sentiment is it really assessing?** Now in its third edition, the 2019 report places a special emphasis on how entrepreneurial talent is being encouraged, nurtured and developed worldwide, revealing that cities rather than countries are developing stronger roles as talent hubs and will be crucial to reshaping the global talent scene.
- **What does it show about Oslo?** In this year's ranking, Oslo ranks 3rd overall, behind Copenhagen and Zurich. Of the five key components for city competitiveness measured in the index, Oslo ranks in the top 10 for its ability to grow and globalise its talent pool (e.g. due to strong social networking capabilities, and high levels of tertiary education enrolment, and a critical mass of intergovernmental organisations). The region's top 20 performance for talent retention is a reflection of high scores for personal safety and the density of healthcare practitioners, but a moderate-to-low score for affordability.
- **What are the real factors it is measuring?** The index reviews the ability of 114 cities to attract and retain talent, and grow, support and globalise their talent base, by considering factors such as GDP per capita, environmental quality, the presence of Forbes Global 2000 companies, R&D expenditure and quality of living.

#### *Mercer's 20<sup>th</sup> annual Quality of Living Survey*

- **Who is the index aimed at?** Professional talent and international businesses considering sending employees overseas for work.
- **Why is it important, whose sentiment is it really assessing?** The index reviews expatriates' quality of living in 231 cities globally – helping companies make informed decisions about where to post their employees around the world.
- **What does it show about Oslo?** Oslo has increased its ranking by 6 places compared to last year – overtaking a mixture of high-performing mid-sized cities such as Stuttgart and Helsinki and global hubs such as San Francisco, whereas Stockholm's position has faltered slightly due to a decrease in perceived safety. This is most likely due to Oslo's real improvements – in connectivity, amenities and the public realm – now beginning to register in the benchmarks. This year's special feature on sanitation reveals that several Nordic cities rank among the top 10 cities globally, with Helsinki in 2<sup>nd</sup> and Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm all tied in 8<sup>th</sup> place.
- **What are the real factors it is measuring?** Indicators focus on real factors that play a significant role in attracting professional talent to cities, such as the affordability of housing and goods, safety and socio-political environment (political stability, crime, law enforcement etc.).

#### *Monocle Quality of Life Survey*

- **Who is the index aimed at?** Monocle, a global magazine with an interest in cities and urban life, publishes an annual Quality of Life ranking for their reader base to review.
- **Why is it important, whose sentiment is it really assessing?** The ranking largely derives from visitor and urban traveller perceptions of cities, on the basis that is important for cities to understand this demographics' view in an era of enhanced mobility.
- **What does it show about Oslo?** Oslo is ranked as the 25<sup>th</sup> best city in the world, reflecting the capital's commitments to fostering liveability through investment in cycle lanes, museums and infrastructure. Out of the three Nordic capitals mentioned in the ranking, Helsinki is the only one to have increased its performance over the past 12 months (from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> best city), whereas Stockholm and Oslo have held steady at 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> place respectively.
- **What are the real factors it is measuring?** Monocle is a comprehensive perception-based ranking, which considers 16 indicators ranging from cost of housing to work-life balance, and from access to nature to cultural amenities and attractions. In reality, cities that manage to foster a dynamic business environment whilst retaining tight-knit neighbourhood communities generally top the ranking – this year Munich, Tokyo and Vienna.

## Appendix C

### *Nestpick Millennial City Ranking*

- **Who is the index aimed at?** Millennial talent, defined by Nestpick as young, digitally native, entrepreneurial, mobile and well-travelled professionals.
- **Why is it important, whose sentiment is it really assessing?** The ranking compares 110 cities around the world that are either successfully attracting this demographic or have potential in becoming a new millennial destination. Although largely based on objective performance, where perceptions are considered, they tend to reflect the sentiment of permanent residents or expatriates in any one city.
- **What does it show about Oslo?** Overall, Oslo ranks 70<sup>th</sup> place globally, which means it is on a par with Boston and Zurich, but lagging behind nearly all of its measured most comparable peer cities except for Brisbane and Perth. The Norwegian capital performs well in measures such as public transport satisfaction, Internet speed and openness, but its overall performance is held back by low scores on the factors that millennials see to be most important, which are more heavily weighted in the ranking (e.g. affordability of housing and consumer goods, career opportunities and university performance).
- **What are the real factors it is measuring?** The index measures what Nestpick have determined as the four main concerns for millennials following extensive survey-based engagement with this demographic: work availability, cost of living, openness and tolerance and the “fun” factor.

### *Nomad Score*

- **Who is the index aimed at?** Nomad List is a real-time database that tracks the performance of over 2,000 cities globally. As per its name, the ranking is geared specifically towards ‘Nomads’ – professionals looking to discover new places to live and work based on the quality of life they could lead there.
- **Why is it important, whose sentiment is it really assessing?** Sourced from a combination of online public data, crowdsourced information and user input, the database considers both performance indicators (e.g. cost of living and Internet speed), and traveller and expatriate’s perceptions (e.g. of happiness, tolerance and “fun”).
- **What does it show about Oslo?** Oslo performs strongly for its Internet speed, air quality, safety, availability of co-working spaces, freedom of speech and happiness. However, the big issue of cost drags Oslo’s overall Nomad Score down significantly (2.2 out of 5), making it the lowest ranked Nordic capital city. This shows the importance of cost to Nomads looking to move to another city.
- **What are the real factors it is measuring?** Despite measuring over 23 indicators, ranging from traffic safety to wi-fi availability and citizens friendliness to freedom of speech, the heavy weighting on affordability means that cities such as Bangkok, Prague and Medellín perform very strongly, scoring more than 3.75 out of a maximum 5 points.

#### *IPSOS Mori Top Cities Index*

- **Who is the index aimed at?** Predominantly city governments and city-regional advocacy groups interested in uncovering how visible their city is in the global imagination of what represents a “good” city for different groups.
- **Why is it important, whose sentiment is it really assessing?** Data is solely perception-based, and is sourced from the opinions of more than 18,000 global travellers, expatriates and residents across 25 predominantly OECD countries.
- **What does it show about Oslo?** The fourth edition of the index, which calculates the number of times each city is identified as a “top three” city in each of the three categories, sees Oslo rank 16<sup>th</sup> overall, putting it among the top 10 in Europe (just above Madrid and Copenhagen). Oslo is particularly recognised for its living environment, ranking in joint 6<sup>th</sup> place with London, Amsterdam and Toronto for the number of times people rated the city as a top 3 city in which to live globally. The results also show that Oslo is more likely to emerge as a favoured city in which to live among baby boomers and generation X (making up 15 % and 14 % of the population) than among millennials or generation Z populations.
- **What are the real factors it is measuring?** The IPSOS Mori Top Cities Index ranks 60 cities based on their perceived status as cities in which to live, do business and visit.

#### *Nestpick Startup Cities Index*

- **Who is the index aimed at?** Entrepreneurial talent seeking to work in the start-up sector and looking for guidance about where they will have the best quality of life and be able to retain most of their earnings.
- **Why is it important, whose sentiment is it really assessing?** The Nestpick Startup Cities Index is based on the premise that start-ups act as a key catalyst in encouraging professionals to move to a new city.
- **What does it show about Oslo?** Oslo ranks 33rd out of 85 cities overall, and notably ahead of global hubs such as New York, London and Chicago. Oslo’s strong performance is buoyed by high scores for gender equality (2<sup>nd</sup>), quality of healthcare (13<sup>th</sup>) and the dynamism of its start-up ecosystem (25<sup>th</sup>) compared to other cities, and by a slightly lower cost of living than the likes of these established global gateways. Ultimately, the city’s moderate score overall is reflective of low scores for income tax, (82<sup>nd</sup>), affordability (73<sup>rd</sup>) and safety (62<sup>nd</sup>), which prevent the city from being rated as entrepreneur-friendly as, for example, Helsinki, Singapore or San Francisco.
- **What are the real factors it is measuring?** The index ranks cities based on an equal weighting of five categories – start-up ecosystem, salary, social security, affordability and quality of life.



## Appendix D

# Summary of discussion at stakeholder workshop held on 8 May 2019

A stakeholder workshop was organized on May 8 2019 at Mesh in Oslo. The topic for the workshop was: “Talent attraction management in Greater Oslo – how can we attract and retain international talent?”

The workshop gathered 20 participants from academia, private and public sector, including representatives from municipalities, start-ups, talents, welcoming services, and tourism as well as talents.

The first part of the workshop included a presentation of the draft report “Talent attraction management in Greater Oslo: how to improve the reception and integration of international talent?”. The presentation ended with a list of measures to strengthen the talent attraction management ecosystem in Greater Oslo.

After the presentation the participants were divided into four groups where they were asked to pick out one or two of the measures and discuss how to follow up these measures in collaboration. After 45 minutes of discussion the groups presented their solutions to the other participants.

Several topics were touched upon in the plenary discussion:

- Norwegian work culture: how can we better explain Norwegian work culture to international employees? University of Oslo organizes a mini-course for international employees that focuses on “how to work with Norwegians”.
- There is an aversion, especially amongst small and medium-sized companies, to hire international employees. To help change attitudes around this we could showcase the success stories from companies who have hired international talent.
- Universities have little focus on how to integrate international students into the job market. However, experiences also show that there are visa restrictions that make it hard for international students to be able to stay in the country to apply for jobs. Traineeships could be one way to solve this issue and help international students find relevant jobs. In Bergen they organize an international job fair each year where there is speed dating between companies and international students. Could this be replicated in Oslo? There is also a need to have closer collaboration between the universities and companies regarding these issues.
- We need to explore in more detail why many Norwegian companies are skeptical towards international employees.
- What can we do to integrate spouses into the labor market?
- The SUA office in Oslo should have employees that welcome the international jobseekers and help guide them through the whole process of getting a work permit, a social security number etc.

- Oslo is working with a new welcome site (digital welcome service) for international residents who come to Oslo municipality. The site will provide practical information around the following topics: moving to, living, studying, business, working and leaving. The municipality has had a close dialogue with Copenhagen municipality in developing the digital welcoming service. Halden municipality in Østfold County has also developed a landing page with practical information for international residents.
- Storytelling around Oslo and what the region has to offer is an important tool in order to make the region more visible to the talent target group. The talents themselves could also be used to communicate this story.
- We need to create a sense of urgency around talent attraction the importance of being attractive to international talent.

**Sekretariatet for  
Osloregionen**

[www.osloregionen.no](http://www.osloregionen.no)

Rådhuset  
0037 Oslo