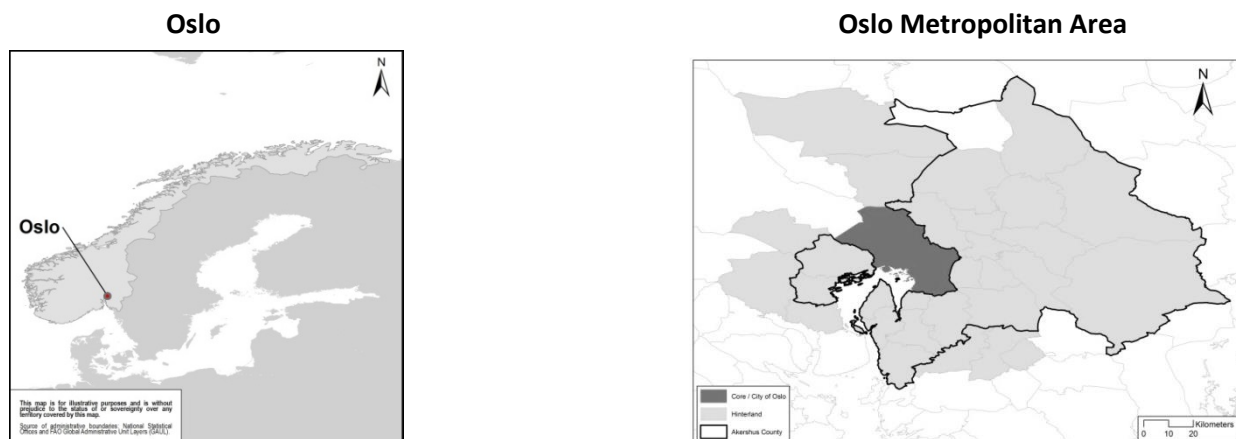


# OSLO, Norway

*Summary from the report "Resilient Cities"*

## Overview of Oslo



Source: Based on the OECD definition of functional urban areas. Own illustration.

## Oslo's administrative structure

Oslo is the capital city of Norway and is almost entirely surrounded by Akershus County, which accounts for the majority of Oslo's hinterland.

## Key figures

	Population (2015)	Unemployment rate (2014)	GDP per capita
Oslo	647 676	3% (metropolitan area)	NOK 728 605 (2013)
Norway	2 165 802	3.1% (Q4)	NOK 3 792 759 (2014)

## Challenges for Oslo's resilience

- *How to foster internationally competitive enterprises*

Norway's economy largely benefits from oil-related industries that boost national economic output, and many of these oil-related industries are based in Oslo. As such, Oslo's economy is sensitive to external shocks, such as the recent fall in oil prices. Therefore, economic diversification and improving entrepreneurship and innovation are critical for reducing the reliance on the petroleum industry. While the city has made a considerable effort to diversify its industrial base, much remains to be done to develop internationally competitive local clusters and policies to support the development of more internationally competitive/oriented business enterprises that have become important as part of the innovation and entrepreneurship strategy.

- *How to accommodate increasing migration in urban areas*

Inflow population has accelerated the diversity of citizens' background. Oslo is an ethnically diverse city, 31% of its population are of foreign origin (2015). Oslo's strong population growth from abroad, coupled with the relocation of families to areas with more affordable housing in the neighbouring regions, has posed housing challenges and has resulted in an uneven increase in the city's density and building pressure on the capacity of physical and social infrastructure. Oslo and much of the urban area in Akershus are surrounded by a legally binding green forest belt, preventing urban expansion in greenfield sites. The City of Oslo (2016) has identified that current transport capacity is insufficient to manage the anticipated growth in jobs and population.

## ***Elements for building resilience in Oslo***

### **Economy**

- *Entrepreneurship and innovation have been surging in Oslo*, through a number of support programmes such as the online help service called “Oslo Start-up”.
- *The alliance approach to increase competitiveness consists in the Oslo Regional Alliance* which involves 78 local neighbouring authorities which collaborate to improve economic diversity and regional well-being, for example through the “#ProjectOsloRegion” strategy.

### **Society**

- *Oslo has an active civil society* which for instance participates to the formulating of the master plan for Oslo’s urban development.
- *Foreign-born residents and socially disadvantaged groups are supported through various programmes* such as “Diversity in Focus in Academia” and “Diversity in the Workplace”.

### **Environment**

- *Oslo’s compact city strategy intends to accommodate increasing population sustainably*, thanks to its core City Plan (2014), effective land-use policies, the “Oslo’s Master Plan” and the “Regional Plan for Spatial Development”.
- *Oslo’s dense development for access to services is addressed by the intensification along public transport arteries*, for instance through the regional plan of the Akershus County Council.

### **Institutions**

- *Oslo adopts a long-term vision based on policy co-ordination at a metropolitan scale* with the Oslo-Akershus Joint Regional Plan for Spatial Development (2008) which includes a development vision for the metropolitan area through 2050.
- *Oslo coordinates its policies with the national government* which has a representative in the Oslo-Akershus region for supervision and resolution of planning proposals that conflict with the national government.

### **Conclusions**

- An early awareness of the dependence of Oslo’s economy on Norway’s oil industry has funnelled attention to evolving other economic sectors, such as the digital economy and financial services. The city’s economic adaptability would be therefore strengthened by supporting emerging sectors, in particular the digital economy.
- In the face of increasing population, Oslo and its surrounding county of Akershus are co-ordinating the planning across the metropolitan area in spatial planning, transport and economic development. This co-ordination facilitates a better integration of transport services across the metropolitan region, as well as to manage the development of new housing and public infrastructure that have been outlined in Oslo’s 2008 Master Plan.
- The integration of Oslo’s economy into global markets beyond the long tail of services in the oil industry could be further improved. Efforts to support business clusters and start-ups could benefit from a closer co-operation with the private and academic sector, for example for developing skills and business services necessary to support a growing start-up environment. This could further develop Oslo’s entrepreneurial community and increase the international connectivity of its economy.