

NORWAY, THE GREEN PATH

Norway, a country of 5.2 million people and one of the richest countries in the world, is trying to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet ambitious climate goals. Many Norwegians today are taking part in the world's most ambitious governmental effort to reduce the use of fossil fuels.

Norway has become a global model of how to get the public interested in buying electric vehicles. The country has the highest proportion of electric car registrations in the world—by a long margin. According to a recent study, 1/3 of all new car registrations were of electric vehicles.

This interest in electric cars is attracting the attention of researchers and government officials from around the world. Some people wonder if the Norwegian program is an efficient way to reduce air pollutants. And some elements of the program simply may not be possible in other countries. But for many, Norway is showing a **path** forward.

At first, it seems ironic that electric cars are so popular in a country that is one of the world's biggest producers of oil (Norway is the world's 7th largest producer of petroleum). But Norway also has many fast rivers, allowing it to generate almost all of its electricity from hydropower. As a result, Norway's electricity is clean and relatively cheap. Countries where much of the electricity is generated by power plants burning coal, like the U.S., China, or Germany, would not see as many environmental benefits from switching to electric vehicles.

Electric cars, however, are not popular in all countries with fast rivers. So what does Norway have that others don't? In a word: incentives. Norwegians pay some of the world's highest taxes, but they also receive huge benefits for buying electric cars. An electric vehicle pays no road tax or registration fee, no sales tax, and no **value-added tax**. Public parking is free; **tolls** on roads, bridges, and tunnels are free, and it is free to transport electric cars on ferries. In addition, electric cars can be charged for free at public charging points, and they can also travel in restricted bus lanes.

Those incentives are working. Electric vehicles now account for 2.5 % of all cars in Norway. After more than a decade of government support, officials had expected that there would be 50,000 electric cars on Norway's roads by the end of 2017. The government program has been even more successful than hoped: by September 2015, over 66,000 all-electric cars were in use. The American luxury car manufacturer Tesla, which only makes fully electric cars, sells approximately 30 % of its cars in Europe, and its largest European market is Norway.

Naturally, all those incentives cost a lot of money. In fact, the incentives have been so successful that some of them will be reduced in the future. Electric car owners will have to pay 50 % of the road tax starting in 2018, and all of it in 2020. Local governments can now decide if they offer free parking and free tolls. Many smaller cities have said that they will start treating electric cars like all other vehicles because they need the extra cash to repair bridges and tunnels. Free charging of electric vehicles will probably remain, however, because Norway has so much inexpensive hydroelectric power. The effect of eliminating some incentives for electric cars in Norway remains to be seen, although in Japan, electric car registrations fell by 20 % when some incentives ended. The green approach, although widely supported by Norwegians, may turn out to be too expensive, even for a rich country.

Text adapted from *The New York Times* (October 19, 2015)

path: camí / camino
value-added tax: IVA
toll: peatge / peaje

Part 2: Writing

Choose ONE topic. Write about number 1 or 2. Minimum length: 100 words.

[4 points]

1. Cinemas in many towns and cities across the country are closing because of a lack of public. Imagine that the only cinema left in your town is about to close. Write a letter to your local newspaper arguing in favor of keeping the cinema open.
2. Explain a bad travel experience you have had. Give as many details as possible about places, people and things that went wrong, and how it all ended up. You may include some funny anecdotes, if there were any.

Grammar	
Vocabulary	
Text	
Maturity	
Total	
Nota de la redacció	