



## Economic Brief 2 : Key Recommendations

### Arctic Transport: Environmental, Social and Geopolitical Concerns

Transport is a crucial element across Arctic societies. Many communities are located in remote and isolated places, thus depending on agile, affordable and available means of transport for travel to jobs, access to social services, and for the distribution of food or raw materials. Private vehicles are broadly considered to be a necessity, a fact that poses a significant challenge to ongoing zero-net emissions transport initiatives. In the JUSTNORTH policy brief on Arctic Transport, we take a closer at the challenges of developing a just and environmentally responsive transport sector in the region.

Transport connects the local Arctic to global networks. While there are plans to increase worldwide connectivity via existing and new rail and maritime routes, thawing permafrost is making some roads impossible to use. If these changes open up economic opportunities for countries with increased transport capacity, it will also affect local communities. Increasing infrastructure for transport poses environmental and social risks, such as the disturbance of traditional livelihoods and natural landscapes.

Transport projects and challenges in the region are deeply connected with justice concerns. Although the push towards transport decarbonisation has an undeniable apparent environmental value, it may also negatively impact the poor segments of society. As transport infrastructure investments and tax incentives are concentrated in major urban zones, access to electric mobility is geographically uneven, to the detriment of rural areas. Moreover, as more climate action plans and policies are adopted, they risk being prioritized over social sustainability.

What key factors need to be addressed to pave the way for a just and sustainable transport sector in the Arctic? The following are among the main findings and recommendations in this policy brief:

- 1 Investment should be oriented to public transport, given its essential role in a fair distribution of transport opportunities across social groups.**
- 2 Greater attention to the connectivity within and between rural areas should be given in transport policies, so as to ensure more equal transport opportunities. Access to charging infrastructure should be equally distributed.**
- 3 New investments to develop rail connections through Nordic countries are important, with particular emphasis on implementing a unified gauge system (distance between the rails) across Europe.**
- 4 Incentive programs supporting the purchase of EVs should be predictive and planned for the medium-term in order for consumers and markets to have more information and thus to invest with a higher degree of trust.**
- 5 Overall, development of transportation policies must take into consideration local communities' perspectives in order to better respond to their needs as well as to reduce the negative impacts derived from said policies.**

