

Summary of 28th Breakfast@Sustainability's workshop results

SUMP 2.0: Reshaping the EU SUMP Guidelines

Four groups each working on a specific step of the SUMP cycle:

Group A: Agree on timing, responsibilities and budgets of measures
(Moderator Ana)

Group B: Plan for monitoring and evaluation (Moderator Lasse)

Group C: Create political support for and adopt the Action Plan (including its content, adoption, creating ownership of the plan, political aspects) (Moderator Marko)

Group D: Procure, manage and monitor plan and measure implementation
(Moderator Siegfried)

Discussion questions (optional for the groups):

1. What challenges are you usually facing in this step?
2. What are the solutions to overcome them? Which methods, approaches or tools work well?
3. What kind of additional guidance or improvements are needed in the SUMP Guidelines on this step (from the perspective of various contexts, e.g. smaller cities, cycling measures, safety perspective)? Are any major steps missing in the 2nd half of the cycle?

Summary of Group A “Action Plan development - agree on timing, responsibilities and budgets of measures”

(Moderator: Ana Drăguțescu)

Challenges

1. Financial / funding related

- Reluctance / lack of enthusiasm and knowledge in accessing EU funds;
- Cities include certain measures in the Action Plan because it has been previously agreed they will be funded – if they are aware of the fact that funding a specific measure will be hard to achieve, then they will not include the measure or they will keep it at the bottom of the prioritised list;
- There are sometimes competing priorities in measure listing and it is difficult to deal with this.

2. Community / citizens related

- In order for the Action Plan to be effective, people have to accept it – get approval from citizens – develop community awareness;
- Citizens are very often interested in a smaller scale approach – micro-level / neighbourhood level;
- Engaging different actors is often challenging – in order to get valuable feedback (there is an obvious need of innovative participation activities).

3. Political support

- Finding arguments for politicians is a very difficult task – related to what’s stated below.

4. Governance - European / national / regional / local level

- Local guidance from national level that aligns with European level is needed;
- Mobility planning is not mandatory – this makes the argumentation for politicians very difficult;
- Implementation of the measures included in the plan is not mandatory. Very often Action Plans are developed and eventually hidden in a drawer – no measure is implemented;
- Very often, there is no focus on commuters and on integrating the city in the wider context of the regional level;
- Sometimes responsibilities overlap and it’s complicated to work.

5. Planning

- Smart planning is need and missing - balance of short-term and long-term planning (think both for the present and for the future);
- Lack of skills, knowledge, capacity in the cities for Action Plan development and for measures implementations (technical specificities);
- Prioritising the measures and developing packages / finding synergies are difficult tasks;
- Lack of vision for the planners working in the city, constrained by lack of funding (especially in the small cities);
- There’s a huge inertia of people working in cities (still thinking transport in the traditional way) – fear of taking over the responsibility to change.

Solution / suggestions for the new Guidelines

1. Sometimes cities have their own guideline for developing a Mobility Plan and these guidelines should be aligned with the national / European level (see the case of Portugal presented by Maia);
2. Explanation of different types of funding opportunities – in relation also to the private sector - to create a market place for mobility solutions is needed. A suggestion would be to Include key questions / check lists that the cities would have to tick in order for them to be able to work with the private sector. Develop more skills on funding opportunities and on accessing funding.
3. Direct connection from the Guidelines to other tools (existing guides, tools, projects – any extra information is useful and appreciated);
4. Adapt also to the national environment – not too general;
5. The Action Plan should also focus on legal and organisational aspects;
6. Smaller cities should be encouraged to team up with the region and other cities within the region;
7. Sharing information on how much a specific measure would cost, highlighting also the benefits for the city if that measure would be implemented (well explained), will help in arguments offered to politicians. A comparison with other infrastructural work that would require a bigger investment and would not be as sustainable, is always appreciated;
8. Recommendations from the national level or related to the national level – very often the cities feel they are not supported enough by the national level;
9. Keep a politician's image connected to this concept;
10. Involve final users in designing and implementing the measure (the case of Lille Metropole).

Summary of Group B “Build monitoring and evaluation into implementation”

(Moderator: Lasse Brand)

Indicators: Which ones to choose and how to use them

- Important distinction to be made between 1) evaluating general city-wide progress (the SUMP as a whole) and 2) evaluating individual measures

Characteristics of a good set of indicators

- Covers all relevant dimensions
 - Includes not only transport indicators, but also indicators for related aspects, such as environment, economy, social, health
 - Includes quantitative and qualitative indicators
 - Measures not only outcomes, but also the process of plan development and the quality of the plan document itself
 - Includes a feasible number of relevant indicators which are realistic for the city to monitor and get data for

- Good indicators
 - Are measurable
 - Are feasible to measure in terms of cost + equipment
 - Are easy to communicate
 - Are really reflecting the goal
- Process
 1. Choose the best/right indicators (the ones that really can give you answers about the evolution of your measures and goals)
 2. Assure that exists data to support the indicators
- Challenge: Defining parameters and criteria in evaluation requires a political approval: what should be monitored and measured? This may slow down the evaluation process. Also risk for political influence which results to show and which not.
- Challenge: Ensure coherence in the process of going from indicators to planning the data collection process and to also provide evidence of interest for end users

EU minimum set of indicators

- An EU minimum set of indicators four urban mobility and SUMP would help, which takes into account the characteristics of a good set of indicators (see above)
 - Short list of mandatory indicators for general progress
 - Longer list of possible indicators for identifying problems
- Recommendation to have 2 families of indicators:
 1. Detailed for technicians
 2. Simplified core indicators

Qualitative indicators

- Very important not to rely only on planners' perceptions, but also to use citizen panels/events
- Qualitative evaluation is needed to get a complete picture, only quantitative indicators are not sufficient

Communication towards citizens (and politicians)

- Transform indicators into a small and selected group of figures that citizens care about (for communication)
 - E.g. use citizen groupwork to define what "better" means for citizens, what they care about
- When defining indicators, define detailed indicators for technical purposes and simplified core indicators for political purposes

Useful approaches for small cities

- Urban transport roadmaps tool
- Small targeted surveys instead of big surveys
- GSM Data
- Social media survey (but important to be careful not introduce selection bias)
- Use closer social ties/community in smaller cities
- ...

Good examples

- Gent (Connected trams, evaluation plan)
- Antwerp (20 indicators, stakeholder group)
- “Curieuzeneuzen”: little device to measure air quality at many points (<https://curieuzeneuzen.be/>)

Data: How to collect and manage it

Data management & governance

- Centralized data management in municipality would be ideal
- Data collection
 - Indicators responsive to measures
 - Cost-effectiveness

Cooperation with non-municipal organizations that have relevant data

- Challenge: Data interoperability, APIs
- Cooperation with non-municipal/non-state actors
 - Sometimes have to force them to provide data
Example: Finnish law that makes it mandatory for PT operators to share data
 - Negotiate with them & exchange data (to make it attractive for other actors)
- National action point for data (new EU law)
- Example Maia: PT data sharing with Porto Metropolitan to also do it for other aspects

Summary of Group C “Create political support for and adopt the Action Plan”

(Moderator: Marko Horvat)

Question 1: “Challenges” discussion:

- When the question of SUMP implementation comes to political level, in some countries/cities cars and car-oriented policies (parking management, more roads etc.) are perceived “right wing”, while the public transport is perceived “left wing”. This could be taken into account in the action plan and SUMP previous steps.
- Approach towards politicians should be in a way for them to understand how promoting SUMP implementation would make them more popular in the eyes of citizens. Moreover, existing developments that are a part of “current mobility situation” in a city should be used as a visual and evidence before the politicians, so that they understand how planning and implementing does make a difference.
- Since mobility and mobility related problems might not be high in the political agenda and priority for some politicians, politicians should be presented with a larger picture of SUMP benefits: how SUMP implementation leads to better economy in a city (businesses might benefit etc.), health and accessibility.

- An idea: what if politicians are approached with a list of problems, and then to explain how a SUMP can help in solving these problems.

- Why is there a problem with a political support? When it is time to adopt the action plan, is that the first time politicians see and “meet” the SUMP? If yes, this should be changed and politicians should be involved from the very beginning to be aware that adoption of the SUMP will be needed. If they do know about the SUMP, transparency and communication with them should be clear to understand the effort and resources (taxpayers’ money) already spent into writing the SUMP up to that phase.

- (Group identified 2 scenarios):

1 scenario: the political party changes -> should the SUMP development stop? It did not come out from the blue and it did involve many stakeholders, including citizens and the new political party should be compelled by that involvement and proceed with the SUMP. OR as an alternative, new political party embraces and commits to continue with the SUMP and gains political points.

2 scenario: political party stays and SUMP is carried on continuously. In this case, SUMP does not have to be “rushed” to be developed and implemented in one mandate (eg. Within 4 years).

- Emphasis in the group discussion was on citizens involvement and exploiting the local knowledge of the local specific context to present to the politicians (bottom up approach instead of top down)

- An idea: perhaps as a broader SUMP process would anticipate the politicians to be “peer-reviewed”, meaning that politicians in charge of SUMP would have to be checked by other politicians, creating more transparency and sense of commitment.

To compliment this idea, perhaps the political agenda or the “political situation” could be a part of the SUMP cycle, somewhere in the starting phase.

- Another turn in the discussion was the idea on city council to approve the SUMP, however, the group identified the problem in a dual party system, where none of the parties are strong enough to really make a difference, and yet strong enough to prevent the other party from making a change.

Conclusions from the discussion:

Perhaps some of the most relevant and most repeated conclusions overall were to include planning for SUMP in the political cycle, meaning to make politicians aware from the early stage, to include citizens involvement from earlier SUMP cycle steps. It would be important to do so in order to “leverage” the plan more (as citizens already gave input, gained a sense of ownership) and put pressure on politicians if needed. Finally, an overall understanding (also reaching into the solutions part) is to try to isolate SUMP adoption and implementation as much as possible from political cycles: once the action plan is improved, it should not be affected by political swings and turbulences.

Question 2: “Possible solutions” discussion

- What is the solution to influence politicians and approve the action plan? One solution is to show the evidence of measures (quantifiable evidence, health benefits, less mortality etc) and rely on visual tools: charts and “Before” and “After” pictures so that politicians can see the results of the measures.
- When presenting the action plan to politicians, focus has to be on the long-term vision/goal and some sacrifice has to be shown/recognised: not only discussing what we gain and what citizens lose, but use communication in a more clever way and state what we (or future generations) gain if citizens sacrifice something today (such as giving away or reducing private car ownership).
- Repeated solution from the first question is again to show SUMP as a solution to a problem (specific problem or a list of problems), instead of a SUMP being the problem that has to be solved.
- A “common language” has to be found between urban planners and politicians, so that they understand what difficulties each of them face. Perhaps the politicians are not aware of a certain problem until properly explained from the planners and other stakeholders. With the common language, the specific cultural context has to be taken into account (south vs east of EU, current problems such as immigration etc.).
- Again, peer-to-peer with other politicians could not only ensure commitment, but can also give politicians a chance to exchange knowledge from each other’s field.
- Perhaps a solution could be another funded program/platform with the “best practices” examples so that more cities could find it adoptable to their local needs. Also the “bad practices” example would be a good idea as confirmed by the group.

Conclusion from the discussion:

Overall solution could be in focusing on long-term vision of the SUMP, and including politicians from the beginning. In this way, they would be involved in the problematics to a greater extend, and could be clearer to them that SUMP will still be ongoing perhaps after their mandate.

Citizens should first be empowered and then leveraged to increase the importance of the SUMP, but also to be involved in the next steps and in the revision steps, to create sense of ownership and “publicly funded project”. Tunnel example: when a tunnel is being built somewhere by one government, and suddenly another government is in charge, the tunnel is still being constructed, because it is expensive and lengthy project funded with taxpayers’ money and serving the common good. This has to be also a perspective of a SUMP.

Summary of Group D "Procure, manage and monitor plan and measure implementation"

(Moderator: Siegfried Rupprecht)

Challenges

1. Territorial, TEN-T

- A small Dutch city has prepared an SUMP, but major source of traffic results from TEN-T road, rail and water networks running through the city centre. This traffic cannot be managed by the city, it has a disturbing effect on the SUMP implementation - Big infrastructure impacts small city mobility.
- In Romania a section of the TEN-T has been re-assigned and is now 80 km further South, while neither the SUMP in the first location, nor the new one are adequately covered in the respective SUMPs that are in the implementation phase.

2. Governance: responsibilities, involvement of stakeholders during implementation

- In Romania typically departments that have not yet cooperated during SUMP development (EU-affairs, procurement and technical works) have to work closely together. --> generally valid
- Responsibilities between PT operator, suppliers and various technical departments is often problematic.
- Governance during implementation:
 - problem of cross-border transport and in metropolitan regions
 - problem of cooperation between local, regional, national levels
- Cooperation of private and public stakeholders complicated by legal barriers, no culture of cooperation, not clear whether profits e.g. made by car sharing companies getting access to public space are acceptable
- The population in suburban areas is still registered (and votes) in the main city, suburban leaders therefore do not feel accountable to their needs

3. Monitoring during implementation

- Available capacities in municipalities not sufficient for monitoring performance of (complex) policies/ measure packages
- Data is missing also in implementation phase, not only in analytical phase
- Timetables and impacts of major projects are hard to plan

4. Traditional transport plans (SUMPs only on cover page)

- Often easy to implement (infrastructure is focus), but lost opportunity from a change management perspective

5. Lack of local suppliers in small markets, leading to higher costs

6. Political interference during tendering, implementation due to change in leadership, changes in political priorities leading to serious disruption

Solutions

1. Monitoring, data

- Collect data (on level of "functional city") more regularly than census, e.g. micro census, household transport surveys (e.g. as in Germany).

- Coordinate data analysis, combine monitoring results on metropolitan area/ functional city level
- Agree clear definitions of indicators (nationally, EU), including for basic concepts e.g. “modal split”.
- Ensure during analytical phase that data needed for implementation monitoring is collected early.
- Legislation needed to facilitate emergence and strong operational capacity of metropolitan areas and institutions on level of functional city – and assign monitoring tasks (e.g. new unit); transport authority could be starter

2. Tendering

- Legal problem of having to choose cheapest offer (requires very specific quality criteria in tender, or risk of buying low quality products/ services) → need for change to “most advantageous offer” (national legislation/ EU?).
- Joint tendering for SUMP-related products and services
- Tender platform already for lower threshold than TED (national/ EU)
- Could there be “tender templates” for key SUMP-related products and services that could be used by many transport authorities/ in various countries?
- Publication of tenders in several languages (e.g. EN/ DE/ FR) to increase market?

3. Exchange

- Exchange good practice on tendering for SUMP-related products and services – also on monitoring practices/ tools.
- Organise study visits to develop expertise and allow policy makers to understand how new mobility solutions can work in practice (to motivate them to support tendering/ building innovative solutions)
- Create a new “Benefits of SUMP” section in new Guidelines targeted at local decision makers (focus on costs and benefits from a local quality of life perspective).
- Develop transferability studies (going beyond descriptive good practice texts) that summarise innovative measures for decision makers (start with problem → solutions → impacts, incl. financial)
- Organise an exchange on “new vehicles”, e.g. Chinese scooters disrupting SUMP implementation

4. Dealing with rapid change

- Build a “foresight exercise” into analytical phase, e.g. assume that new mobility products/ services becoming available in cities like San Francisco becoming available soon in own city – anticipate how to deal with them? → contribute results from CIVITAS Advisory Group on Game Changers!

5. Good Practice contribution: Oradea Metropolitan Transport Authority

- Steps:
 - Project supporting data collection for metropolitan area
 - Development of joint strategy
 - Attract EU-funding leading to metro-level projects
 - Agree on competence for metropolitan entity and find legal arrangement (form of NGO with delegated powers)
 - Joint investment form own sources