



# Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

A Policy Brief from the Policy Learning Platform on  
Low-carbon economy

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## Summary

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) are planning instruments for cities that encourage joined-up decision-making across sectors and between stakeholders, for providing high-quality, sustainable mobility. The SUMP concept is elaborated by the European Commission, and many support measures are provided at European level, to help cities to transition to more sustainable transport solutions.

## Urban Mobility Challenges

European cities face numerous challenges in driving down the cost and carbon-intensity of their transport systems as urban populations rise. With more than 60% of Europe's population living in cities, there is a great need to invest in new sustainable transport systems that can contribute to achieving Europe's climate targets, and increase comfort and convenience for urban inhabitants.

Transportation represents around a quarter of all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Europe. Within this, urban mobility is responsible for 40% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as well as 70% of all other pollutants from road transport. These pollutants have significant health impacts, contributing to a large and dangerous reduction in air quality in cities. If Europe is going to tackle its carbon emissions, and ensure the health of its citizens, then cities are a key space for change.

As urban populations rise, so does the number of vehicles on the road. City infrastructure is highly complex, and often struggles to keep up with the demand for vehicle space, leading to congestion, which is not only irritating for inhabitants and damaging for the environment, but also has significant economic impacts from reduced productivity and economic activity. The European Commission has calculated that congestion costs nearly 100 billion EUR per year; around 1% of the EU's GDP.

Cities also face challenges related to changing attitudes and new technologies. People are increasingly less likely to view vehicle ownership as being a necessity, as a result of both economic and social pressures. Cities need, therefore, to tackle the dominance of private cars, making more space for public transportation, cycling and walking, new sharing economy business models, and new ICT and internet integration.

## European Framework

The European Union has recognised that improving urban transportation can contribute to a number of its long-term political objectives, including socio-economic and climate related targets, and has therefore sought to support urban transitions. From 2001's Gothenburg Strategy, the European Union has aimed to develop an integrated and sustainable transport sector. The 2011 White Paper, 'Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area' set European transport policy in motion with long-term goals, including that by 2050 carbon emissions from transport should be reduced by 60%, with conventionally fuelled cars no longer used in cities. The strategy was followed up by the Urban Mobility Package in 2013,



setting out procedures and support mechanisms for developing Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans.

The Commission released guidance on how to devise such plans, taking account of the complexities of overlapping planning and management competencies within cities. The guidelines encourage policy-makers to tackle the entirety of an urban area, and bring together policy-makers from a number of different policy-areas and governance levels, with different stakeholders involved in urban transport.



### **GOOD PRACTICE: Revising the Greater Manchester SUMP**

The county of Greater Manchester contains one of the United Kingdom's largest metropolitan areas, the Greater Manchester Built-up Area. The county has had a SUMP since 2000, which is revised every five years in co-operation with the ten local authorities in the region. The revised SUMP, the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, is aligned with the Greater Manchester Strategy, the region's overarching economic strategy. In order to ensure that the SUMP was accurately reflecting requirements on the ground as well as future growth trends, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) developed evidence bases looking at six factors: economy and employment, society and community, urban development, environment and resources, technology and innovation, and, policy and governance. By centrally collecting data, TfGM were able to support all ten local authorities in developing the plan. The revision also linked closely with Greater Manchester's spatial planning, where powers have recently been devolved to the city. The plan considers numerous 'Spatial Themes', including connected neighbourhoods, travel across the wider city region, getting into and around the regional centre, city-to-city links and a 'globally connected city', enabling planning to take account of how people travel at present, and also consider how the city may change as it develops. By linking transport and land-use planning (where and how the city will develop in future) Manchester can make sure that new housing projects and other facilities are well catered by public transport, to avoid over-reliance on private cars.

Click here to find out more about the [evidence base](#) and [spatial approach](#)

The guidelines encourage the development of SUMP's with long-term vision, goals and objectives, covering the full urban area as well as the surrounding regions which are





economically and socially linked. SUMP should consider how to assess and monitor performance of the transport system and link different modes of transport; not only cars, buses and trains, but also walking and cycling. Furthermore, technical issues, infrastructure requirements, support policies (including financing) and information campaigns have to be taken into account. Specific consideration also needs to be given to integrating stakeholders through co-operation, co-ordinating and consulting, including businesses, civil society, public bodies at all levels, and citizens.

## SUMP Implementation and Challenges

A [2017 SUMP Needs Assessment Survey](#) showed that only 37% of responding cities had implemented a SUMP, varying greatly from 78% in France, to 6% in Greece. The report further revealed a number of driving forces, and barriers, to SUMP development.

Driving Forces include the availability of national funding, a governance framework that sets clear targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution, and political and public support. Some countries have established central national support centres, which can provide guidance and assistance to local authorities – such as training and quality checks. High awareness of SUMP and the SUMP concept is also a prerequisite.

On the other hand, barriers to SUMP development include the difficulties of achieving cross-administrative co-operation, as well as a lack of governance frameworks, political will and awareness. Technical know-how, data and capacity for implementing selected measures were also highlighted as challenges.

## Eltis, the Urban Mobility Observatory

To support regions with their SUMP, the EU Mobility Package set out a uniform methodology for local and regional authorities to foster low carbon mobility strategies, and established a dedicated information hub. The [Eltis](#) platform, financed by the [Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport](#) of the European Commission, is a one-stop shop for regional authorities looking to develop a SUMP. The website is divided into three themes:

- The **Discover** section provides a range of information including case studies that present successful examples of sustainable urban mobility initiatives and strategies, statistical data, and a summary of relevant EU legislation and policies;
- In **Resources** urban mobility professionals are given access to tools, guides, handbooks and reports, together with training materials, and a roundup of current EU funding accessible for local authorities;
- Finally, **Participate** provides access to the Eltis forum, where stakeholders can discuss matters related to sustainable urban mobility. A calendar of important conferences, meetings, workshops and networking sessions is also included.

Most importantly, however, the website provides [SUMP Guidelines](#), which guide regional authorities step-by-step through the development process. These are [currently in the process of being updated](#) and are expected to be published in 2019. The guidelines are supported by the [SUMP Self-Assessment Tool](#) which enables authorities to assess whether their SUMP complies with the European Commission's SUMP concept and guidelines.



## The SUMP Concept

### 1. Goals and objectives

A SUMP's central goal is improving the accessibility of urban areas and providing high-quality and sustainable mobility and transport to, through and within the urban area. It regards the needs of the 'functioning city' and its hinterland rather than a municipal administrative region.

### 2. A long-term vision and clear implementation plan

A SUMP presents, or is linked to, an existing, long-term strategy for the future development of the urban area and, in this context, for the future development of transport and mobility infrastructure and services. It equally includes a delivery plan for short-term implementation of the strategy, specifying the timing for implementation, clearly allocating responsibilities and identifying the required resources and finances.

### 3. An assessment of current and future performance

The Plan should build on a careful assessment of the present and future performance of the urban transport system by reviewing the current situation, establishing a baseline against which future progress can be measured, as well as defining performance objectives and related SMART targets to guide the implementation of the plan.

### 4. The balanced and integrated development of all modes

A SUMP fosters a balanced development of all relevant transport modes, while encouraging a shift towards more sustainable modes. The plan puts forward an integrated set of technical, infrastructure, policy-based, and soft measures to improve performance and cost-effectiveness with regard to the declared goal and specific objectives. It would typically address the following topics: Public transport, Walking and cycling, Intermodality, Urban road safety, Road transport (flowing and stationary), Urban logistics, Mobility management, Intelligent Transport Systems.

### 5. Horizontal and vertical integration

The development and implementation of a SUMP follows an integrated approach with a high level of co-operation, co-ordination and consultation between the different levels of government and relevant authorities. To facilitate this, appropriate structures and procedures should be put in place.

### 6. Participatory approach

A SUMP follows a transparent and participatory approach. The Local Planning Authority should involve the relevant actors - citizens, as well as representatives of civil society and economic actors – in developing and implementing the plan from the outset and throughout the process to ensure a high level of acceptance and support.

### 7. Monitoring, review, reporting

The implementation of a SUMP should be closely monitored. The progress towards the goal and specific objectives of the plan and meeting its targets should be assessed regularly on the basis of the selected indicators. Appropriate action should be taken to ensure timely access to the relevant data and statistics. A monitoring report should provide the basis for a review of implementation.

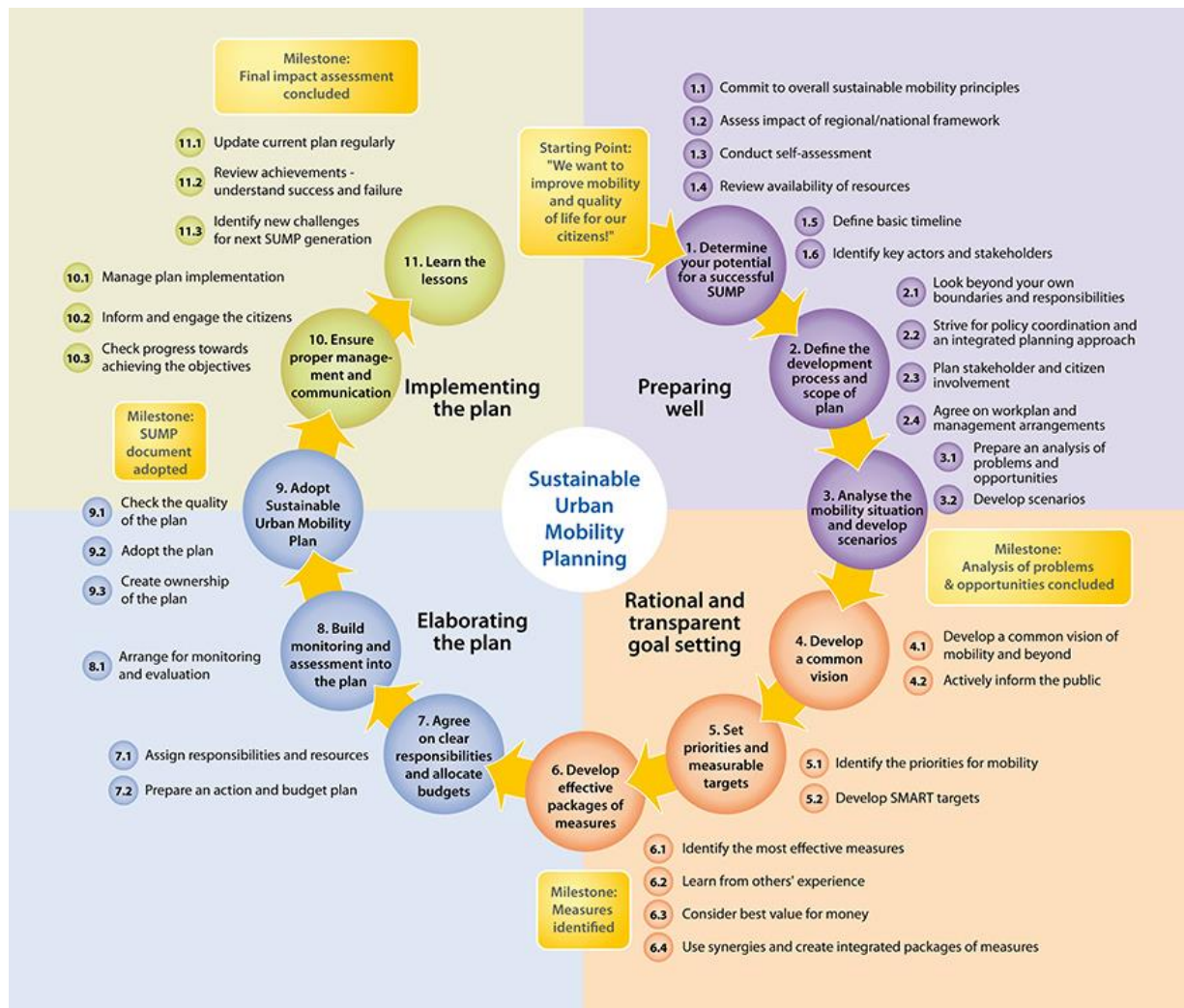
### 8. Quality assurance

Local Planning Authorities should have mechanisms to ensure the quality and validate compliance of the SUMP with the requirements of the SUMP concept.

Source: [Eltis](#)



The Commission’s guidelines for applying the SUMP concept is presented as a series of eleven steps, as elaborated in the SUMP Planning Cycle, below. The cycle includes a phase for learning from implementation and planning for SUMP revision.



Source: [Eltis](#)

## Other European Support

Beyond Eltis, a number of support tools and activities are funded by the European Union, to help regions to integrate sustainable mobility planning and solutions. The [URBACT](#) programme supports knowledge exchange and capacity building on sustainable urban development, including urban mobility. The initiative is funded by the European Regional Development Fund and EU Member States involving 550 cities across Europe.

The [CIVITAS initiative](#) supports local partnerships to implement and test novel urban mobility approaches in real conditions. The network is co-funded by the European Commission and supports demonstration projects of urban transport solutions, and operates working groups on the topics of planning and mobility management. The platform provides access to numerous good practices for regions to explore.



There are also a number of CIVITAS initiatives relevant to SUMP development:

- [CIVITAS SUMP-UP](#) brings together eight partner organisations and seven cities, to assist planning authorities to overcome barriers to SUMP development by providing capacity building, as well as, tailored information and support during development and implementation;
- [CIVITAS PROSPERITY](#) aims to promote and support take-up of SUMP in countries, regions and cities where there is low take-up at present, by providing mechanisms and tools for national and regional agencies to take the lead in SUMP development. Project activities include building professional capacity through peer-to-peer exchange programmes, and creating tailor-made training programmes;
- [CIVITAS SUITS](#) is creating tools on planning, financing and implementing sustainable transport measures to increase capacity building in nine local authorities with the aim of transferring project findings to smaller cities.

Finally, the European Union provides financial support for sustainable urban mobility through the [European Structural and Investment Funds \(ESIFs\)](#) and the [Connecting Europe facility](#). From the ESIFs, sustainable transport can be funded through both the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund. One of the four most important target areas for the ERDF is Investment Priority (IP) 4 'supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors', with the sub-priority 4.4 of 'promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures.'



### **GOOD PRACTICE: Supporting the preparation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans in municipalities**

In 2016, Slovenia's Ministry of Infrastructure allowed municipalities to co-finance their SUMP development up to 85% from the European Cohesion Fund (under IP 4.4), noting in 2014 that only eleven of Slovenia's 212 municipalities had created a SUMP. To date, more than 60 municipalities have now produced a mobility plan. Whilst European guidelines and good practices are useful tools, municipalities also need to be able to fund experts who are able to drive the process and engage all of the required actors. This approach can be replicated by other regions, and has proven very successful in stimulating development of SUMP. As not all regions have access to Cohesion Funding, it should be stressed that ERDF funding under the same Investment Priority can also be used.

[Click here to find out more about this practice](#)



Both the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund can furthermore be used to support sustainable transport under Investment Priority 7, 'promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures,' including sub-priorities on enhancing regional mobility through linking multimodal nodes (7b) and developing low-carbon transport systems (7c). ESIFs are managed through operational programmes, which are the main policy instruments targeted by the Interreg Europe programme. Regions taking part in Interreg projects are able to exchange experience and good practices to build upon previous successes, and perform evaluations and studies to ensure that European support is targeted to solving their regional challenges.



### **Innovations in Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans for low-carbon urban transport**

The InnovaSUMP project aims to introduce improvements in preparation, adoption and monitoring of SUMP based on the established EU methodology (as provided by the Eltis platform). It also looks to introduce new policies and measures to promote investments in sustainable mobility solutions, and explore how SUMP can contribute to urban regeneration, social inclusion and society empowerment. Ultimately, the project will develop new SUMP and elaborate enhancements to the SUMP methodology, to ensure that lessons from the project can be used by other regions. SUMP will be developed for eight of the project partners; Nicosia Municipality (Cyprus), City of Prague (Czechia), Devon County Council (United Kingdom), and the Municipalities of Ravenna (Italy), Kordelio Evosmos (Greece), Viseu (Portugal), Vilnius (Lithuania), and Iasi (Romania). InnovaSUMP has already succeeded in influencing two regional mobility plans, leading to the creation of a Bike Sharing System of 42 bikes in Kordelio Evosmos, and the first steps being taken in Iasi to acquire 100 new efficient buses, to replace the existing fleet. Nicosia Municipality has also been exploring how to integrate SUMP with Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAPs) and Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs), examining the many interlinkages between sustainable transport and energy use.

[Click here to visit the project website](#)





## Insights from the REFORM project

The REFORM project is one of eighteen Interreg Europe projects exploring sustainable mobility in Europe. In October 2017, the project organised a conference in co-operation with the Partnership for Urban Mobility of the [EU's Urban Agenda](#) and the Eltis Platform, to share the project's results, plans and experiences with the wider SUMP community.



### **Integrated Regional Action Plan for Innovative, Sustainable and Low-carbon Mobility**

The REFORM project is exploring how to support the implementation and deployment of SUMPs, and aims to ensure that 60% of local authorities have completed SUMP adoption in the partner regions of Central Macedonia (Greece), Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Parkstad Limburg (Netherlands) and Greater Manchester (United Kingdom). The project has identified twenty-six good practices related to SUMP development, which have been collected in the report '[EU good practices on sustainable mobility planning and SUMP](#)'. The project will also elaborate a policy paper and recommendations, a manual on transferability of good practices, and an action plan for each of the four project regions.

[Click here to visit the project website](#)

The joint conference was designed specifically for European cities and regions who are new to SUMPs, including the cities of the four REFORM regions. The conference focused on the topic of multi-level governance and partnership approaches, as urban mobility requires a high degree of horizontal and vertical integration. The conference considered the challenge of how to implement such integrated, multi-partner approaches in practice, in a way that respects the respective competences and responsibilities of all involved actors and delivers effective results in a timely manner.

The recommendations from speakers and attendees were collected based on the approach of the Urban Agenda's [Partnership for Urban Mobility](#) which looks at policy and decision making processes from three angles: better regulation, better funding and better knowledge exchange.



## Conclusions from the REFORM conference on multi-level governance

### Better Regulation

Whilst the SUMP guidelines are seen as a good basis for cities to think of integrated planning, they need to be adapted to the national context and be set in an overall national framework for sustainable development and transport. Some countries have created committees for adapting the guidelines, spanning over the remit of three ministries from infrastructure to transport, environment and energy. In certain cases, regions are particularly involved in these committees as they have been steering the issue locally, issuing regional guidelines prior to the national level.

A few speakers mentioned that they felt a clearer SUMP definition is needed, with more precise and concrete examples of what the content and process should be. Some representatives from different EU regional authorities have agreed that in many cases it is necessary to simplify and adapt the guidelines to the national or regional context. Interestingly, a similar process was used in the case of Slovenia and Greece. There is a debate on the necessity to have binding regulations on SUMPs, as SUMPs need to be prepared and implemented correctly, not just as box-ticking exercises. In the long term, it is important to communicate, give relevant and important messages about the reasons of developing SUMPs and to repeat them often rather than 'force' cities to formally adopt them.

### Better Funding

Linking SUMP development and adoption to funding for this, was mentioned by a few participants, as well as the need for funding SUMP preparation, which is a labour and cost intensive process. In this regional funds for SUMPs would be appreciated. In terms of earmarking funds, a portion should be reserved for SUMP evaluation and renewal as well as using budget to propagate and implement good practices which have been proved to work.

### Better Knowledge Exchange

Many participants felt the need to have only one point of information throughout the urban mobility sector. The main recommendation was to start from best practices when developing a SUMP and look for the success stories from cities with a lot of experience in this field. The regions can also play a role of regional competence centres about SUMP development to support cities (particularly medium sized) in the SUMP formulation and deployment. Finally, another recommendation addressed the need to update the SUMP guidelines and look towards the implementation of measures related to conventional modes and selection of measures for new mobility services – an area where small and medium sized cities require most assistance.

Find here the direct [link to the presentations and report](#) of the conference.



## Recommendations

- The production of mobility plans by local authorities is highly influenced by national and regional governance frameworks. National authorities need to ensure that governance frameworks are in place that allow local authorities to develop SUMP, in particular, by defining who does what in mobility management, clearly outlining responsibilities and interactions between authorities at different levels;
- National governments (or regional authorities) should provide a single contact point for SUMP, with the responsibility of raising awareness of these planning tools, as well as enabling access to the financial and knowledge support required;
- Authorities should take stock of how many SUMP have been developed in their region, in order to know where support is required. Consultation with the relevant authorities and stakeholders (public and private) can help in understanding the barriers to up-take (low awareness, lack of capacity, financial limitations, lack of data availability, challenges in cross-sectoral planning);
- Taking a leaf out of Slovenia's book; regions should allocate European funds to support authorities looking to develop SUMP, but lacking either financial or knowledge capacity. Learning from the REFORM project, financial resources should also be earmarked for the consistent evaluation and updating of SUMP, based on their performance;
- Integrating SUMP into broader planning and development strategies, as has been done in Manchester, with links to the Greater Manchester Strategy and spatial planning documents, helps to enable cross-departmental co-operation in transport planning and tap into existing political structures;
- As Nicosia Municipality is exploring, it is good practice to consider sustainable transportation in line with energy planning documents, such as SEAPs and SECAPs, ensuring low-carbon transportation is supporting the energy transition and reducing carbon emissions;
- As in Manchester, centralised data collection and SUMP development can also help local authorities to overcome resource limitations;
- As noted by the REFORM conference, regions looking to develop SUMP should build from existing good practices and from other cities which have developed them.

## Sources, further information

- European Commission – [Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area](#) (2011)
- European Commission – [Together towards competitive and resource-efficient urban mobility](#) and Annex, [a concept for sustainable urban mobility plans](#) (2013)
- Eltis – [Monitoring and evaluation: Assessing the impact of measures and evaluating mobility planning processes](#) (2016)
- CIVITAS – [SUMP Needs Assessment Survey](#) (2017)
- CIVITAS – [The Status of SUMP in EU Member States](#) (2018)
- CIVITAS – Manual on the integration of measures and measures packages in a SUMP (for [beginner](#), [intermediate](#) and [advanced](#) cities) (2018)

*#Mobility #SUMP  
#SustainableTransport  
#LowCarbon*



Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform on  
Low-carbon economy

Thematic experts:

Simon Hunkin & Katharina Krell

[s.hunkin@policylearning.eu](mailto:s.hunkin@policylearning.eu)

[k.krell@policylearning.eu](mailto:k.krell@policylearning.eu)

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