

# REFORM

Interreg Europe



European Union  
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## REFORM Policy Paper

# STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF REGIONS IN SUMP DEVELOPMENT

### INTRODUCTION

Sustainable urban mobility planning is a planning concept that encourages a shift towards more sustainable transport modes and supports an integrated development of all modes. By adopting a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), many European cities aim at providing sustainable and high-quality mobility to meet the mobility needs of all users while also reaching local and higher-level environmental, social, and economic objectives, and ultimately making the city more liveable.

One of the core principles of sustainable urban mobility planning is to plan for mobility at the scale of the functional area which goes beyond the geographical boundaries of the city and corresponds to the existing patterns of people's mobility and goods' transportation. Therefore, metropolitan areas and regions have a key role to play in supporting the development and implementation of SUMPs at this scale. However, a legal and institutional framework which enables metropolitan and regional administrations to support municipalities in their planning activities is currently missing.

This policy paper intends to give a set of recommendations to strengthen the role of regions and metropolitan areas in the sustainable urban mobility planning process.

### SUSTAINABLE URBAN MOBILITY PLANNING & REGIONS

The Urban Mobility Package adopted in 2013 recognises that it is primarily the responsibility of the local actors to develop and adopt integrated strategies for sustainable urban mobility, action plans and monitoring frameworks.

The Urban Mobility Package highlights the important role of Member States for providing the right conditions for local activities and for ensuring that the action of the different levels of government within their territories is coordinated, complementary and mutually reinforcing. However, the role of regional or metropolitan areas is not mentioned.

The lack of coordination between several entities of the same region or metropolitan area can lead to unbalanced and fragmented actions among the different, even bordering, municipalities of the same urban areas.

**Giving regions a role of support to local authorities in sustainable urban mobility planning could deliver several benefits in terms of SUMP development and implementation:**

- **Harmonisation and integration of sustainable urban mobility planning approaches at a wider territorial scale, including the extra-urban dimension (e.g. polycentric areas, peri-urban areas);**
- **Efficient and timely delivery of plans at a regional level;**
- **Development and implementation of SUMPs by a larger number of cities in a region, including medium-sized ones;**
- **Durability of the effects of the support actions, thanks to a better harmonisation of the policies at different territorial levels (i.e. local and regional);**
- **Data exchange and integrated management for monitoring and planning purposes;**
- **Enhanced opportunities to fund mobility measures through Regional Operational Programmes of the European Regional Development Fund.**



## ALLOCATION OF A ROLE TO REGIONAL AUTHORITIES FOR SUMP ADOPTION & DEVELOPMENT

### WHY?

There are legal, institutional, technical and financial barriers, which hinder the capacities of regions to act as coordination bodies. These barriers include e.g. the fragmentation of responsibilities across different public authorities or the non-alignment of local SUMP time plans.

### HOW?

REFORM recommends to open a close **cooperation and consultation process between the national governments, the regional authorities and representatives of local authorities** to clarify the allocation of roles and responsibilities among the different levels of governance as regards the SUMP development, implementation and evaluation.



## ENSURING THE COMPLEMENTARITY OF SUMPS IN A REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT AND ENSURING THEIR CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS, STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

### WHY?

Several barriers arise when it comes to the complementarity between SUMPs and other sectoral plans and strategies. Those barriers include a sectoral “silo approach”, a lack of integration in the strategic planning approaches between the regional and local levels as well as the competition between different policy areas and objectives, promoted by different entities.

### HOW?

REFORM recommends to develop a **regional depository of local measures and plans** which would give a better overview of the current and future strategies, to identify the potential synergies and to avoid conflicting policies. Furthermore, the use of **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)** can prove particularly worthy for the collection, management and use of data from the municipalities and, thus the effective assessment and monitoring of current and future planning activities.



## ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A CONSTANT COMMUNICATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, STAKEHOLDERS AND CITIZENS, AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

### WHY?

Regions and metropolitan authorities face several issues regarding the cooperation with stakeholders and citizens. First, the “stand-alone” administrative culture of certain local authorities hinders the communication among municipalities and between local authorities and the stakeholders and the population. In addition, there is a lack of structured involvement of stakeholders in specific policy areas, as well as a lack of guidance (i.e. instruments and/or methodologies) at national or regional level on this issue. Finally, there are also tensions over competing interests – both between administrations, and between the different entities involved (i.e. administrations, stakeholders and citizens).

### HOW?

In order to create a common planning culture in a region, REFORM recommends to organise regular meetings with representatives of the local authorities of the region, technicians and relevant stakeholders to exchange opinions and experiences on planning and decision-making. REFORM also recommends to prepare awareness-raising events and campaigns and to launch open dialogues and active participation processes on sustainable urban mobility planning.

## ENHANCING REGIONAL CAPACITIES TO ENABLE REGIONS TO SUPPORT CITIES IN SUMP DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

### WHY?

Because they do not belong to the main authorities in charge of the development and implementation of SUMPs, staff of regional bodies sometimes lack experience and/or good examples of regional actions regarding supporting SUMP development. They might also experience a lack of technical skills, and knowledge on some specific areas of SUMP development and implementation. This hinders the capacity of regions to provide support to cities and to ensure a well-coordinated development of valid and successful SUMPs on their territories.

### HOW?

As a prerequisite, REFORM recommends the **organisation of training programmes on SUMP** development and implementation for the staff of regional bodies.

REFORM recommends to create **Regional Competence Centres on SUMP** development and implementation. These centres, managed by regions, could act as support bodies for local authorities, providing answers for all cities of the regions, adapted to the local contexts.

REFORM recommends to collect and make available existing knowledge and tools on SUMPs – especially those that are the most relevant to the type of cities in the region, or those that are available in the local language - in a **“SUMP knowledge library”**. This library should be managed by the region.

Finally, REFORM recommends to create **regional SUMP guidance and specifications**, based on the European ones, adapted to the local contexts and provided in the local language.

## ENSURING EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT MONITORING AND FUTURE PLANNING, THROUGH THE USE OF A COMMON REGIONAL SET OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### WHY?

Cities and regions do not necessarily use a common approach toward data collection and management and regions might face a fragmentation in the type and amount of data collected across cities, differences in data collection methodologies as well as a lack of skills and knowledge regarding the analysis and use of data.

### HOW?

REFORM recommends the use of common ICT tools to collect, manage and properly use data of municipalities and/or the development of **regional mobility data repositories**. Regional models that simulate and evaluate proposed planning activities and policies can also be developed.

## REGIONS TAKING THE RESPONSIBILITY AND/OR SUPPORTING LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS IN SECURING FUNDING FOR SUMPS AND ACTION PLANS IMPLEMENTATION

### WHY?

Many regions are facing issues regarding the non-continuity of funding, the prioritisation of measures to be funded or difficulties for ensuring funding for transformational infrastructure.

### HOW?

REFORM recommends to **align SUMP implementation plans with the Regional Operational Programmes** to maximise the funding of measures. An update of SUMPs at specific intervals, following the renewal of regional planning priorities could also facilitate the commitment of regional funding.

## CONCLUSION



The European Union supports SUMP take-up and acknowledges the importance of local administrations in mobility planning. Therefore, appropriate conditions must be adopted to facilitate the development of SUMP by local authorities. In this context, giving a stronger supporting and coordinating role to the regions could accelerate the adoption of SUMP by cities.

However, European regions show different degrees of maturity and awareness regarding the role they can play in SUMP take-up. Therefore, the development of specific high-level competences in SUMP within regional administrations will allow a greater support from their side to those local administrations willing to develop and adopt a SUMP.

Among the main benefits regarding a stronger involvement of regions in SUMP development and implementation are the access to funding sources thanks to the alignment of SUMP with Regional Operational Programmes and a better and more harmonised use of data to monitor and plan sustainable urban mobility measures.

A supporting and coordinating role for regions does not mean the transfer of planning responsibilities to regions, nor the interference into local contexts without considering the will and aspirations of single municipalities, of their populations and stakeholders. On the contrary, giving a more important role to the regions aims at further and better supporting cities and towns. This is a driver for securing necessary funds for their actions and measures and for coordinating projects that concern areas and populations larger than those included in the geographical boundaries of a city or a town.

## LIABILITY STATEMENT

The present Policy Paper has been jointly developed by the partners of the Interreg Europe project REFORM.

**This document serves as a reference for the four regions participating in the project:**

- the Region of Central Macedonia (Greece),
- the Region of Emilia-Romagna (Italy),
- Greater Manchester (UK), and
- the Region of Parkstad Limburg (the Netherlands)

This policy paper is available for adoption by other regional authorities all over Europe.



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