

**5<sup>th</sup> European Conference on  
Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans**  
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**C3 - Evaluating SUMPS: Monitoring, impact assessment,  
benchmarking and indicators**

***Assessing SUMPs in France: converging approaches for a  
complex reality***

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# The French SUMP: PDU (Plan de déplacements urbains)

## Who?

- **Local authorities for mobility** (LA - groups of municipalities)
- Mandatory for LA in cities over **100,000 inhabitants**
- **Possible for other LA**

## How?

- **Process defined by law** : elaboration, stakeholder involvement, public enquiry, evaluation, update, consistency with other thematic or regional / national plans, ...
- **Evaluation mandatory every 5 years and possibly leading to an update of the SUMP**

## What?

### 11 mandatory objectives:

- **Cross-thematic:** Sustainable development, mobility for all, safety, car use decreasing
- **Topics:** Public transport, intermodality, active modes, road network management and sharing, parking, freight, mobility management, electromobility

- **Since 1996** (created in 1982)
- **100 PDU**
- **50 % of Local authorities** engaged in mobility planning
- **66 % of the French population** covered by a mobility plan



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Laws and regulations provide no details on:

- What should be assessed
- How to assess



## **A study of 20 French LA conducted in 2012**

*"How do LA appropriate assessment and how do they process?"*

1. The reason for assessment
2. Who should assess
3. What should be assessed
4. On which area
5. How to assess



# Why local authorities assess, or the various reasons for assessment

## 1. A legal binding requirement

- ✓ Little used in practice
- ✓ **Mandatory after 5 years**
- ✓ **Mandatory before a revision** of the SUMP, usually for political reasons: abandonment or emergence of major infrastructure projects

## 2. A framework for carrying out diagnosis for drawing up a new plan

## 3. A mean of continuously adjust public policy



## Why local authorities assess, or the various reasons for assessment

1. A legal binding requirement
2. A framework for carrying out diagnosis for drawing up a new plan
  - ✓ The most frequent case
  - ✓ The assessment may also provide inputs for drawing up **other urban planning documents**
3. A mean of continuously adjust public policy



## Why local authorities assess, or the various reasons for assessment

1. A legal binding requirement
2. A framework for carrying out diagnosis for drawing up a new plan
3. **A mean of continuously adjusting public policy**
  - ✓ Not yet very prevalent, despite the development of observatories
  - ✓ **A real interest** in a context where resources are more and more limited
  - ✓ Relevant for the latest generation of SUMP with **a greater variety of measures:**  
combined effects, adaptation of measures and costs



# Who assesses: the tricky question of who bears the responsibility for assessment

- **In-house or outsourced assessment?**
  - ✓ The transport LA is legally in charge of the elaboration, implementation and revision of SUMP, but **no precision for evaluation**
  - ✓ An ambiguous position for the LA: **both judge and being judged**
  - ✓ Many LA set up a **SUMP monitoring committee** at technical and/or policy level
  - ✓ More and more LA draw on a **cross-functional mission**: assessment of different public policies
  - ✓ LA can **outsource assessment** or studies to external bodies: no real guarantee of neutrality but at least a different view on assessment
- **What resources to be devoted to it?**
- **Political involvement**





# Who assesses: the tricky question of who bears the responsibility for assessment

- In-house or outsourced assessment?
- **What resources to be devoted to it?**
  - ✓ Mainly depend on the **size** of the LA's area and on the **ambition** of the plan
  - ✓ Collaboration with **external entities** (e.g. town planning agencies) can be very beneficial: data collection, cross-analysis, ...
  - ✓ **When convinced** of the potential savings generating by a quality assessment, LA do usually not hesitate to devote **human and financial resources!**
- **Political involvement**



# Who assesses: the tricky question of who bears the responsibility for assessment

- In-house or outsourced assessment?
- What resources to be devoted to it?
- **Political involvement**
  - ✓ Essential for the **sustainability of resources** over time
  - ✓ Facilitates the **dissemination of the practice** of assessment within the LA
  - ✓ Fear of being **politically punished** for not achieving the pursued objectives
  - ✓ Fear of bringing into light **potential negative effects** generated by a policy
  - ✓ Assessment requires a critical mindset but is **not a judgement process**



## What should be assessed?

- **Deployment of the actions planned in the SUMP**
  - ✓ **A basic requirement** for assessment
  - ✓ **Rarely performed continuously**
- **Measurement of the effects of actions**
- **Level of achievement of the goals set by the SUMP**
- **Appropriation of the SUMP and of the mobility policy**



## What should be assessed?

- Deployment of the actions planned in the SUMP
- **Measurement of the effects of actions**
  - ✓ With the difficulty to **isolate their effects** from other effects: other local or national policies, exogeneous factors, ...
  - ✓ Implies to have **data and operational observatories**
  - ✓ The assessment has often **a more restricted scope** than the SUMP
- **Level of achievement of the goals set by the SUMP**
- **Appropriation of the SUMP and of the mobility policy**



## What should be assessed?

- Deployment of the actions planned in the SUMP
- Measurement of the effects of actions
- **Level of achievement of the goals set by the SUMP**
  - ✓ **Effectiveness and efficiency** of the measures
  - ✓ This requires to have defined **quantified and measureable objectives** in the plan...
- Appropriation of the SUMP and of the mobility policy



## What should be assessed?

- Deployment of the actions planned in the SUMP
- Measurement of the effects of actions
- Level of achievement of the goals set by the SUMP
- **Appropriation of the SUMP and of the mobility policy**
  - ✓ An emerging approach in France
  - ✓ Assess the appropriation **by the LA and SUMP stakeholders**: both technicians and decision-markers
  - ✓ Assess **inhabitants'** perception of the mobility policy or their degree of satisfaction



## On which area should assessment be conducted?

- **The LA's area is the core area**
  - ✓ With distinctions to be made between **different areas**: central / peripheral areas
  - ✓ Focus on specific areas depending on **specific topics**
- **A larger area is also to be considered**
  - ✓ Corresponding to **the real urban transport area** = the entire area over which people travel in and around the city
  - ✓ Implies **to overcome institutional frontiers**: collaboration with other LA, road and public transport operators



# How to assess, or the complex questions of methods and tools

- **Observatories: acclaimed tools**
  - ✓ **Provision of data** over time, for different topics, from different stakeholders, ...
  - ✓ Also very useful opportunities for **discussion and sharing between partners**
  - ✓ LA usually develop **a wide range of observatories**: SUMP, mobility, for specific topics (safety, environment, land use, ...)
- ... but also demanding tools to avoid a loss of momentum over time
- **Going beyond observatories**





# How to assess, or the complex questions of methods and tools

- **Observatories: acclaimed tools**
- **... but also demanding tools to avoid a loss of momentum over time**
  - ✓ **Formalize carefully** the partnership approach: commitment of all partners, raw data to be retrieved, harmonization rules, rules for accessing and using the data
  - ✓ **Question regularly the partners** on how useful they find the observatory and on solutions to improve it
  - ✓ The complex selection and definition of **indicators**
- **Going beyond observatories**



# How to assess, or the complex questions of methods and tools

- **Observatories: acclaimed tools**
- ... but also demanding tools to avoid a loss of momentum over time
- **Going beyond observatories**
  - ✓ **Other tools and methods:** opinion surveys, targeted studies, (mandatory) financial assessment of the mobility system, ...
  - ✓ Expansion of the scope of **participation** beyond institutional partners: make or keep mobility a public concern and maintain elected officials interested in the assessment over time



## Local practices still need consolidating on some issues

- How to distinguish the **effects of the SUMP** from other measures?
- How to assess the **level of achievement of objectives**?
- How to attain efficiency of SUMP measures in a context of **restricted public finance**?
- How to better link assessment of SUMP with public transport / mobility services **contracts**?

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# Thank you!

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