Laying the foundations for monitoring and evaluating a SUMP in Dresden (Germany)

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In brief
To improve the mobility and quality of life for its citizens, Dresden developed a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) to meet the mobility needs of residents, businesses and the region for decades to come.

Part of its work involves initiating a process to monitor and evaluate its SUMP with the help of the 11 steps outlined in the SUMP planning process. This led to the SUMP's formal adoption in November 2014 and its selection as one of the three finalists for the 2014 European SUMP award. In 2015 Dresden will commence the final steps of the planning process.

Context
Dresden is the capital of Free State of Saxony and located in a valley on the slopes of the Elbe river. The city is dynamic and green with citizens (population 540,000) experiencing a high quality of life. The area of the city spreads over 328 Km2. About 62 per cent is covered by forest and green space.

In 2013 39 per cent of Dresdener travelled by car; 27 per cent got around on foot; 22 per cent used public transport; and 12 per cent cycled. Dresden has developed several transport planning documents over the last 60 years. However, the municipality is for the first time developing its SUMP using a very integrated and complex approach. With an increasing and ageing population, and financial constraints, Dresden needs a new strategic plan for mobility to make the city safer, more attractive, liveable and efficient.

Approved in 2014, Dresden’s SUMP has four main goals:

- Creating enduring, sustainable and eco-friendly mobility;
- Increasing social justice in mobility;
- Making efficient transport systems and reducing of the use of natural resources;
- Involving stakeholders and citizens in the open planning and decision-making process.

In action
Dresden conducted an ex-ante evaluation during the SUMP planning process using a combination of potential scenarios and an impact assessment. Thanks to the scenario analysis, the municipality had the opportunity to compare and assess the impacts of different scenarios in order to select the one which serves as a basis of the SUMP. The impact assessment then allowed it to make choices based on which would be the most efficient. In addition, measures were classified per cost categories in order to compare their cost-efficiency more easily.

Dresden also carried out evaluation activities for both the planning and the implementation processes. To assess the planning process, a survey was circulated in December 2014 to all bodies and partners involved to take into account their comments and feedback on the entire planning process. The SUMP is based on local monitoring and evaluation plan templates developed by the EU-funded CH4LLENGE project, an approach that Dresden has used in the last few years. Activities consist of the following steps:

Monitoring
Continuously collecting and analysing data during implementation

Evaluation
Systematically determining a measure’s merit and significance during and after implementation – with conclusions

Appraisal
Evaluating the impacts and worth of measures before implementation.
The plan includes a list of three indicators developed with CH4LLENGE support: core, additional and context. Core indicators are the most relevant, while context indicators describe external circumstances of urban mobility development (without specific objectives). Dresden started collecting data in January 2014, and the city expects to perform monitoring activities annually and a SUMP evaluation every three years. The results of the evaluation will be published so the municipality can include the feedback from stakeholders and the public into the SUMP.

Dresden organised a roundtable to involve partners and stakeholders in the process of creating, monitoring and evaluating the SUMP. Supporting the work of the roundtable is also a Scientific Advisory Board that discusses methods, goals and innovative approaches. Local government representatives were involved in the process through the roundtable discussions and meetings with planning policy spokespersons of all city council groups. Transparency is also a key part of the process. The various implementation and monitoring activities are performed by all stakeholders, ranging from political groups to a transport company, the regional transport authority and the police department.

The monitoring and evaluation of specific measures or bundles of measures will also be tested in Dresden. The adopted SUMP includes a list of these measures.

Results
The SUMP monitoring and evaluation started in November 2014, immediately after the political adoption of the plan. At the moment there are no evaluation results available. However, Dresden conducted an impact evaluation when thinking of an efficient system to monitor performance of SUMP measures. The German city has already got important findings: although the population and motorisation is growing, the use of private cars and car-traffic volume is decreasing. This development meets the adopted objectives of Dresden’s urban mobility development. In addition there is a strong political commitment for SUMP impact monitoring and evaluation. A monitoring and evaluation report will be published every three years; the first is planned for completion in 2017.

Challenges, opportunities and transferability
The first time the monitoring and evaluation plan was used it was in a very complex and comprehensive way. Collecting data proved more difficult than expected, so Dresden plans to standardise this process in the near future. As data are owned by several internal and external partners, collecting it has also proved to be a challenge. Other cities should take this into account when setting up this process. By standardising the results the city hopes to find a more efficient way to collect the data (e.g. collecting data for the indicator list every January).

The monitoring and the evaluation of a SUMP requires excellent co-operation between all involved parties, and significant financial and staff resources - the allocation of which Dresden intends to standardise for the next SUMP cycle. The co-operation of political and technical levels is also a challenge.

Dresden says that the CH4LLENGE template for SUMP monitoring and evaluation is a good guide when developing a local plan, and advises other cities to use city-specific indicators and partners to collect data. A great advantage, it says, is receiving data describing urban mobility development that can be matched to data of actual developments with political objectives.

Dresden intends to develop a strategy to learn from both the successes and failures of its SUMP. The city also wants to share this experience and plans to disseminate the results of its evaluation process via different communication channels (workshops, website, newsletters and press conferences). Dresden is strongly involved in European initiatives and makes use of available guidance and learns from the experiences of other cities.
In Depth

- CH4LLENGE project
- The City of Dresden
- Eltis news article on SUMP award

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