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
The French SUMP: PDU  
(Plan de déplacements urbains)

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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
- 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-makers
  - 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**?
Thank you!

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