RECHARGE AND REFUEL: SUPPORT FOR POLISH CITIES/ URBAN AREAS/ METROPOLITAN AREAS IN PREPARARATION OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN MOBILITY PLANS (REFORM/SC2022/102)

Project public brief

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Context of the project

The project is funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument, managed by the European Commission Reform and Investment Task Force (SG REFORM).

The aim of the Project is to provide support to Polish cities/urban areas/metropolitan areas to prepare and implement the concept of SUMPs in accordance with the Guidelines of the European Commission. The project aims to achieve 2 distinct but inter-locking outcomes:

1. Improved urban mobility planning in maximum of 15 Polish direct beneficiaries in the form of SUMPs.
2. Increased knowledge regarding SUMPs in Poland.

The project focuses on supporting Polish public sector authorities in improving the capacity regarding urban mobility planning in Poland through the analysis of existing needs of selected city/urban area/metropolitan areas, by providing support to SUMPs preparation for **15 direct** beneficiaries and recommendations on citizen engagement and SUMP's national coordination as well as the organization of events and conferences on different thematic aspects of SUMPs. The following 3 FUAs received direct support to develop and finalise their Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP): **Czwórmiasto** (Four City Initiative), **Elbląg** and **Podhale** (**Nowy Targ**). In addition, 12 FUAs received technical assistant to develop their SUMPs: **Tarnów**, **Leszno**, **Piła**, **Konin**, **Gniezno**, **Rzeszów**, **Nowy Sącz**, **Krosno**, **Wałbrzych**, **Union of Municipalities and Counties of the Western Subregion of Silesian Voivodeship**, **Iława**, **Biała Podlaska**.

Through **activity 4**. In all cases, the planning process was conducted in close coordination with the respective local authorities and stakeholders. Throughout the work, continuous dialogue with FUA representatives was maintained, enabling the incorporation of ongoing comments, updates, and clarifications into the draft documents.

Since the 1990s, Poland has experienced significant changes in urban mobility and the establishment of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs). Various cities have taken proactive measures to tackle complex issues such as urbanisation, increased motorisation, and a struggling public transport system. Kraków and Warsaw were the first cities to create and approve transport policies based on sustainability principles. While the development of SUMPs is optional for Polish cities, some have produced and adopted documents that align with the SUMPs criteria to varying degrees. Nevertheless, mobility in functional urban areas in Poland presents a considerable challenge. To enhance the effectiveness of transport investments, there is a need for better coordination between mobility and urban planning, facilitated by the implementation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs). These plans are formulated with consideration of all relevant urban policy areas, in collaboration with appropriate management levels, and aim to integrate various transport modes, road safety, freight transport, mobility management, and intelligent transport systems.

Presentation of the Beneficiary Authority

The Ministry of Infrastructure is an office of government administration serving the minister in charge of the following branches of government administration: transportation, maritime economy, water management and inland navigation.

The mission of the **Ministry of Infrastructure** is to create and implement the state's policy on the Polish transport system, maritime and water management, and to provide Polish citizens with access to modern infrastructure and high-quality services of a sustainable transport system, rebuilding the shipbuilding industry and increasing the safety of the transport system.

Strategic objectives:

- sustainable development of modern and safe transport infrastructure, construction, modernization, maintenance and protection of public roads, including highways, railroads, airports, seaports and navigation infrastructure,
- improving Poland's transportation accessibility through, among other things, the implementation of major transportation corridors and supporting the development of transportation services,
- creating rules and system solutions for passenger and cargo traffic on the road, rail, air, sea, inland waterways, as well as the conduct of transport activities through the development of draft legal acts and non-legislative documents, participation in international structures and organizations, conclusion of bilateral agreements, cooperation with industry and social partners and the scientific community,
- implementation and supervision of investment activities on the railroads to counteract the transportation exclusion of the various regions of Poland,
- building an integrated and coherent transport network with strategic projects,
- supporting the integration of various modes of transport through the construction and modernization of multimodal hubs,
- carrying out activities to reduce the negative impact of transport on the climate and environment, including support for the development of sustainable transport technologies,
- creating conditions that increase safety, in all modes of transport,
- activities to increase the competitiveness of Polish transport through the creation of modern technical and technological solutions, including the use of alternative fuels,
- creation of principles and system solutions for collective water supply and collective sewage disposal through the development of draft legal acts and non-legislative documents, cooperation with industry, local government and social partners and the scientific community,
- ensuring conditions for the effective functioning of the system of protection against flooding and minimizing the effects of drought in Poland.

Within the Ministry's structures, a **Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans Competence Center** has been established. The **Competence Center** is tasked with:

- organizational and clerical support for the Steering Committee for Support of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans,
- coordination of advisory support to local government units in the process of preparing, implementing, monitoring and updating Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans,
- acquisition and updating of data for monitoring the progress of cities in implementing Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, in accordance with the European Commission guidelines for urban mobility monitoring indicators, including maintenance of a repository of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans,
- ensuring the operation of a system of assessment and evaluation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans,
- support coordination of the Cohesion Policy with other funds (e.g. InvestEU, RRF) and programs centrally managed by the European Commission,
- monitoring activity at European Commission level in the area of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans/Sustainable Urban Mobility Indicators (SUMI),
- dissemination of knowledge and best practices on the preparation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans and in the area of Sustainable Urban Mobility Indicators.

Description of the needs

The need for a comprehensive support for Polish cities and urban areas in the preparation and implementation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) is underscored by several critical factors.

Firstly, there is a pressing requirement for Polish urban areas to align their SUMPs with the Guidelines of the European Commission. This alignment is essential for ensuring compliance with European standards and best practices in urban mobility planning. As such, technical support is necessary to guide cities in this process, helping them to navigate the complexities of regulatory requirements and implement effective mobility strategies.

Secondly, enhancing the competencies of urban areas in planning and executing transport investment projects is vital. Many cities lack the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively leverage European funds for transport initiatives. The project aims to address this gap by providing targeted capacity-building efforts, equipping local authorities with the tools and expertise needed to develop and implement successful transport projects.

For cities that already have a SUMP in place, there is a clear need for support in evaluating these existing plans and preparing new ones. This indicates that current plans may not be fully effective or reflective of the evolving urban landscape, necessitating a thorough review and potential revision to better meet the needs of the community.

The planned measures for supporting cities are extensive and multifaceted. They include assessing the competencies of specific urban areas, verifying existing SUMPs, identifying key stakeholders within administrative structures, and assisting in the preparation of tender documents for SUMP implementation by external consultants. This comprehensive approach is designed to address various challenges faced by urban areas, ensuring that all aspects of SUMP development and implementation are considered.

Additionally, the need for training and workshops on SUMPs highlights a significant gap in understanding and expertise among stakeholders. By providing educational opportunities, the

project aims to foster a deeper comprehension of sustainable mobility planning, enabling local authorities and stakeholders to engage more effectively in the process.

Finally, the project places a strong emphasis on active engagement with citizens and stakeholders. Developing guidelines for citizen participation in the SUMP process is crucial for fostering inclusive planning that reflects the perspectives and needs of the community. This engagement is essential for building public support and ensuring that mobility solutions are tailored to the unique characteristics of each urban area.

In summary, the project addresses a range of needs related to urban mobility planning in Poland, including compliance with European standards, capacity building, evaluation of existing plans, comprehensive support measures, training opportunities, and community engagement. By addressing these needs, the project aims to enhance the effectiveness of sustainable transport solutions in Polish cities and urban areas.

Methodology

The project utilised a detailed methodology to advance SUMP adoption within Poland's railway sector, engaging a diverse group of stakeholders and drawing upon best practices from across the EU.

Inception Phase (Month 0 – Month 1): This initial phase consisted of organising and running a kick-off workshop and the development of an inception report, setting the project foundations on a solid base to ensure smooth implementation of the core tasks that follow, especially when it comes to understanding the local context and expectations of the stakeholders.

"AS-IS" Analysis (Month 2 – Month 7): The aim of this activity is to prepare a diagnostic “opening report” for 15 direct beneficiaries (city/urban area/metropolitan area), so that the shortlist of 3 can be created for further elaboration of SUMPs under Activity 4., this phase involved analysing existant studies and conducting supplementary stakeholder analysis. The final Polish beneficiaries identified were: Nowy Sącz, Nowy Targ/Zakopane, Tarnów, Krosno, Leszno, Piła, Konin, Elbląg, Wałbrzych, Union of Municipalities and Counties of the Western Subregion of Silesian Voivodeship, Four-City Initiative (City of Tarnobrzeg, Commune of Stalowa Wola, City and Commune of Nisko, Commune of Sandomierz), Gniezno, Iława, Biała Podlaska, Rzeszów.

Preparation of a summary interim and final report on the support to SUMPs (Month 8 – Month 29): The activity consisted of supporting the preparation of SUMPs for a maximum of 12 direct beneficiaries, out of the 15 cities/urban areas/metropolitan areas identified during activity 2. The activity included assisting direct beneficiaries which will tender SUMPs out to an external consultant and assisting direct beneficiaries which will develop a SUMP in-house.

Preparation of 3 finalised SUMPs for the chosen 3 direct beneficiaries (Month 8 – Month 30): The aim of this activity was to elaborate SUMPs for three of the direct beneficiaries covered under activity 2.

Development of a communication toolbox for Citizen’s participation (Month 2 – Month 9): The aim of this activity was to develop a “toolbox” serving as direct guidelines for citizen’s participation in the SUMPs process on the basis of good practices gathered.

Preparation of a visual identify of the project, including project website (Month 2 – Month 29): The aim of this activity was to prepare visual identification of the project. This included project website and news; social media presence, posts; visual identity and template documents.

Organisation of 3 national annual conferences (Month 7 – Month 29): The organisation of three annual Polish National SUMP conferences was instrumental to promote the necessity and benefits of SUMPs in the Polish context, together with the results achieved by the project.

Preparation of 10 national seminars on different thematic aspects of SUMPs (Month 6 – Month 29): To further raise awareness and increase technical knowledge on SUMP, the project foresaw the organisation of 10 seminars for different stakeholders on different thematic aspects of SUMPs preparation, implementation, evaluation and monitoring.

Drafting a report on EU good practices in SUMPs national co-ordination (Month 2 – Month 12): The project team elaborated a comparative analysis of different forms of governance of the SUMPs process in different EU Member States. This included Analyse good / bad

practices and lessons learned and detailed presentation of three EU Member States with particular relevance for Poland.

Preparation of a final report (Month 29 – Month 30): The report included key findings; lessons learned (challenges that arose throughout the project and how we confronted them); key milestones and timelines with immediate priorities and interdependencies; Post-project recommendations summary; A summary (factsheet) – a project brochure.

Key deliverables and activities of the project

Activity 2 consisted of preparing a diagnostic "opening report" for 15 direct beneficiaries (functional urban areas) so that a shortlist of 3 beneficiaries could be created for further SUMP preparation under Deliverable 4. The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the diagnostic reports prepared for the 15 beneficiaries participating in the project. The report presents the most important strategic documents relating to transport and urban mobility issues, introduces stakeholders, and assesses their needs.

Activity 3a and 3b focused on providing Technical Assistance to 12 Polish Functional Urban Areas (FUA) in developing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan – either in-house or externalised. The FUA involved in this task were: **Tarnów** (externalised SUMP), **Leszno** (externalised SUMP), **Piła** (externalised SUMP), **Konin** (in-house SUMP), **Gniezno** (externalised SUMP), **Rzeszów** (in-house SUMP), **Nowy Sącz** (externalised SUMP), **Krosno** (externalised SUMP), **Wałbrzych** (externalised SUMP), **Union of Municipalities and Counties of the Western Subregion of Silesian Voivodeship** (externalised SUMP), **Iława** (externalised SUMP), **Biała Podlaska** (externalised SUMP). While some FUAs successfully took key steps toward preparing their SUMPs, overall progress across the project varied. Nevertheless, all FUAs benefited from access to tailored materials, guidance, and capacity-building resources, including through the project website and knowledge-sharing activities, which helped lay the groundwork for future advancements.

Through **activity 4** three FUAs received direct support to develop and finalise their Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP). The FUAs involved were development activities for three Functional Urban Areas (FUAs): **Czwórmiasto** (Four City Initiative), **Elbląg** and **Podhale** (**Nowy Targ**). In all cases, the planning process was conducted in close coordination with the respective local authorities and stakeholders. Throughout the work, continuous dialogue with FUA representatives was maintained, enabling the incorporation of ongoing comments, updates, and clarifications into the draft documents.

The primary objective of **activity 5** was to develop a "toolbox" that offers clear guidelines for citizen participation in the SUMPs process. This endeavour required analysing best practices, recommending methodologies for public consultations, presenting methods to influence citizens' mobility choices, and suggesting processes for involving citizens throughout SUMP preparation and implementation stages. The chosen countries for the research exercise and best practices were **Greece, Slovenia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, The Netherlands**.

Activity 6 activity focused on creating a cohesive visual identity for the project. The key deliverables included designing and launching the project website, which featured updates and news, as well as establishing a social media presence with regular posts and engagement, https://sumps.pl/en/. The websites host information on key project's deliverables including reports, brochures and webinar recordings. Additionally, a distinct visual identity was developed, along with template documents for consistent branding.

The goal of **Activity 7** was to organise three national annual conferences. The first conference, titled "*Sustainable Urban Mobility*," was held on **13 June 2023 in Warsaw**. The second conference, focusing on the "*Development of the Concept of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP)*," took place on **27 May 2024 in Poznań**. The third conference, centred on "*Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning*," was conducted **in Kraków on 3 April 2025**.

In line with the objective of **Activity 8** consisted in organising **10 seminars**, 7 webinars and 3 seminars. All beneficiaries were invited, but also other stakeholders in the network of the Polish Ministry of Infrastructure. Below is an overview of the events organised:

Table 1: Overview of the 10 seminars

Title	Date	Format (online or offline)
Webinar #1 – What constitutes a good SUMP	22/05/2023	Online
Webinar #2 - SUMP Evaluation system	08/11/2023	Online
Webinar #3 "Cooperation in the Functional Urban Area – examples and good practices from Poland"	22/01/2024	Online
Seminar #4 Engaging stakeholders in preparing Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans	23/04/2024	Offline
Webinar #5 Technological Innovation in Urban Mobility	20/06/2024	Online
Webinar #6 Data management	09/10/2024	Online
Seminar #7 Cycling infrastructure in sustainable mobility planning	12/12/2024	Online
Webinar #8 Shared mobility and intramodality in Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning	27/02/2025	Online
Seminar #9 Optimisation and management of space for urban mobility	10/06/2025	Offline
Seminar #10 Efficiency and accessibility of public transport	25/06/2026	Offline

Activity 9 focused on gathering information regarding Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) practices in EU Member States that could serve as examples for the future Polish SUMP model. The final output was a report detailing EU good practices in national coordination of SUMPs. The six EU Member States selected for analysis were chosen based on several criteria, most notably the similarity of their national contexts to that of Poland, including aspects such as general economic development, geographic circumstances, policy decision-making, and characteristics of national transport and the environment. The countries chosen were **Slovenia, Belgium, Austria, France, Hungary, and Germany**.

Consultation with stakeholders and workshops

Throughout the project, consultation with stakeholders and the organisation of workshops played a pivotal role in ensuring effective collaboration and the successful development of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs). The project adopted a comprehensive approach to stakeholder engagement, recognising the importance of involving various actors in the planning process to gather diverse perspectives and insights.

Stakeholder consultation began with the preparation of a diagnostic "opening report" that assessed the needs of 15 direct beneficiaries, which included functional urban areas. This report laid the groundwork for identifying key stakeholders and understanding their priorities, enabling the project team to tailor subsequent activities to better meet their needs (**Deliverable 2**).

Technical assistance was provided to 15 Polish Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) in developing their SUMPs, with a strong emphasis on maintaining continuous dialogue with local authorities and stakeholders. This collaborative approach ensured that stakeholders were actively involved in the planning process, allowing for the incorporation of their feedback and insights into the draft documents. Regular communication fostered a sense of ownership among stakeholders, which is crucial for the successful implementation of the SUMPs (**Deliverable 3a, 3b, 4**).

Workshops and webinars were integral to the project's stakeholder engagement strategy. A series of online and offline events were organised to educate stakeholders on best practices, methodologies, and innovations in urban mobility planning. These events facilitated knowledge sharing and collaboration among participants, helping to build a network of engaged stakeholders committed to advancing sustainable urban mobility (**Deliverable 8**).

Additionally, the project developed a "toolbox" that provided clear guidelines for citizen participation in the SUMP process. This resource was designed to empower stakeholders and citizens alike, offering methodologies for public consultations and strategies for involving the community throughout the preparation and implementation stages of the SUMPs (Deliverable 5).

Overall, the project's commitment to stakeholder consultation and the organisation of workshops created an inclusive environment that encouraged active participation, knowledge sharing, and collaboration. This approach not only enhanced the quality of the SUMPs developed but also laid a strong foundation for future advancements in sustainable urban mobility planning in Poland.

Main findings and lessons learnt

The project uncovered several important findings and lessons that will guide future efforts in Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning (SUMP). While some Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) made notable progress in developing their SUMPs, the overall advancement varied across the project. Nonetheless, all FUAs benefited from tailored materials, guidance, and capacity-building resources provided through the project website and knowledge-sharing initiatives, which helped establish a solid foundation for future improvements in urban mobility planning.

Key factors that facilitated progress included a clear political mandate and consistent local leadership, particularly in municipalities that had already incorporated mobility planning into broader strategic frameworks. In these instances, local governments exhibited a better grasp of procedural and organisational requirements, enabling them to form internal working groups and initiate procurement processes. Additionally, the support from technical consultants was instrumental. In cities such as Gniezno, Leszno, and Krosno, contractors offered practical assistance with drafting tender documents and interpreting national guidelines. Where there was sustained engagement from both local officials and the support team, the initial phases of SUMP development were successfully completed. However, these positive instances were more the exception than the norm. In most FUAs, success relied on individual administrative capabilities or external incentives rather than a systemic commitment to sustainable mobility planning.

The project also highlighted various structural and institutional challenges. A significant concern was the lack of awareness among local decision-makers about the strategic importance of SUMPs. In many FUAs, there was a limited understanding of the long-term advantages of integrated mobility planning, resulting in political indecision and delays in even taking initial steps. This issue was compounded by the absence of dedicated personnel within municipal structures, especially in smaller cities where mobility is not prioritised as a distinct policy area.

Another ongoing challenge was the sluggish pace of inter-municipal cooperation within FUAs. Delays in formalising agreements on roles, responsibilities, and financing mechanisms often stalled the planning process. Additionally, the lack of secured funding for SUMP development during the project period led many cities to halt activities or shift their focus to preparing annexes for Integrated Territorial Investment (ZIT) strategies, which were viewed as more immediately actionable.

Public participation also posed challenges, as engagement activities were frequently seen as mere formalities rather than meaningful opportunities to influence policy content. Many FUAs found it difficult to generate interest among residents, particularly when mobility planning did not seem to directly affect their daily lives. Overall, the project demonstrated that technical support alone is inadequate without robust institutional backing, political commitment, and targeted funding to ensure the continuity and successful completion of mobility planning processes. These insights and lessons learnt will inform future initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable urban mobility in Poland and beyond.

Expected results

The project is anticipated to enhance the development and implementation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) across Polish Functional Urban Areas (FUAs). By providing tailored technical assistance, resources, and capacity-building opportunities, the project aims to empower local authorities to effectively integrate mobility planning into their broader strategic frameworks. As a result, it is expected that municipalities will demonstrate improved understanding and commitment to sustainable mobility practices, leading to more coherent and actionable SUMPs.

Furthermore, the project seeks to foster greater stakeholder engagement and public participation in the planning process, ensuring that the voices of local communities are heard and considered. This inclusive approach is likely to result in SUMPs that are not only technically sound but also reflective of the needs and preferences of residents.

Additionally, the establishment of a knowledge-sharing network among stakeholders, facilitated through webinars, seminars, and a dedicated project website, is expected to promote the exchange of best practices and innovative solutions. This collaborative environment will enhance the overall capacity of FUAs to address urban mobility challenges effectively.

Ultimately, the project aims to create a lasting impact on urban mobility in Poland, contributing to more sustainable, efficient, and accessible transport systems that align with national and EU policy objectives. Through these efforts, the project aspires to lay the groundwork for future advancements in sustainable urban mobility planning, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in the sector.

Expected impact

The project is expected to significantly impact the advancement of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) throughout Polish Functional Urban Areas (FUAs). By equipping local authorities with tailored technical support, resources, and capacity-building initiatives, the project aims to strengthen their ability to incorporate mobility planning into their overarching strategic frameworks. This is likely to lead to a deeper understanding and commitment to sustainable mobility practices among municipalities, resulting in more integrated and actionable SUMPs.

Moreover, the project intends to enhance stakeholder involvement and public engagement in the planning process, ensuring that local communities' perspectives are acknowledged and integrated. This participatory approach is anticipated to yield SUMPs that are not only technically robust but also aligned with the needs and aspirations of residents.

In the long run, the project aims to create a sustainable impact on urban mobility in Poland, contributing to the development of more efficient, accessible, and environmentally friendly transport systems that align with both national and EU policy goals. Through these initiatives, the project aspires to establish a foundation for ongoing progress in sustainable urban mobility planning, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within the sector. However, the achievement of these outcomes and the overall impact of the contract depend on the extent to which Poland adopts and implements the deliverables, along with the broader policy environment.

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