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SUMPs for BSR | SUMP training programme module 1

12 steps of developing a SUMP in Gdynia

Challenges and lessons learned



Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



Co-funded by
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SMART GREEN MOBILITY

SUMPs for BSR

Why Gdynia needed a SUMP?

SUMP is not a document. It is a decision to change the city.

- Medium-sized port city in the Baltic Sea Region
- Compact city centre with limited public space
- Strong pressure from private car traffic
- Many existing strategies and sectoral plans
- Mobility decisions taken across different departments



SUMP OBJECTIVES VS EVERYDAY WORK

The main challenge was not a lack of vision, but the gap between strategy and everyday decisions.

AMBITIOUS

OFFICIAL
ADOPTED BY CITY
COUNCIL

PUBLIC
CONSULTATION

GENERAL IN
DEFINITION

SMART

LONG TERM
ELABORATION

How do we make a big strategy
part of everyday life?



CLOSE
THE
GAP

LACK OF
KNOWLEDGE ON
STRATEGIC GOALS

TOO MANY
DOCUMENTS VS
TIME

CROWD
PSYCHOLOGY

PUBLIC INTERESTS
VS INDIVIDUAL
NEEDS

SUBJECTIVE
OPINIONS

WORK HABITS

RESISTANCE TO
CHANGE



From a document to a working process

How SUMP became a management tool in Gdynia

- **From a strategic document → to a management tool**

SUMP stopped being “just another strategy” and became a reference point for daily work across departments.

- **From isolated actions → to a shared process**

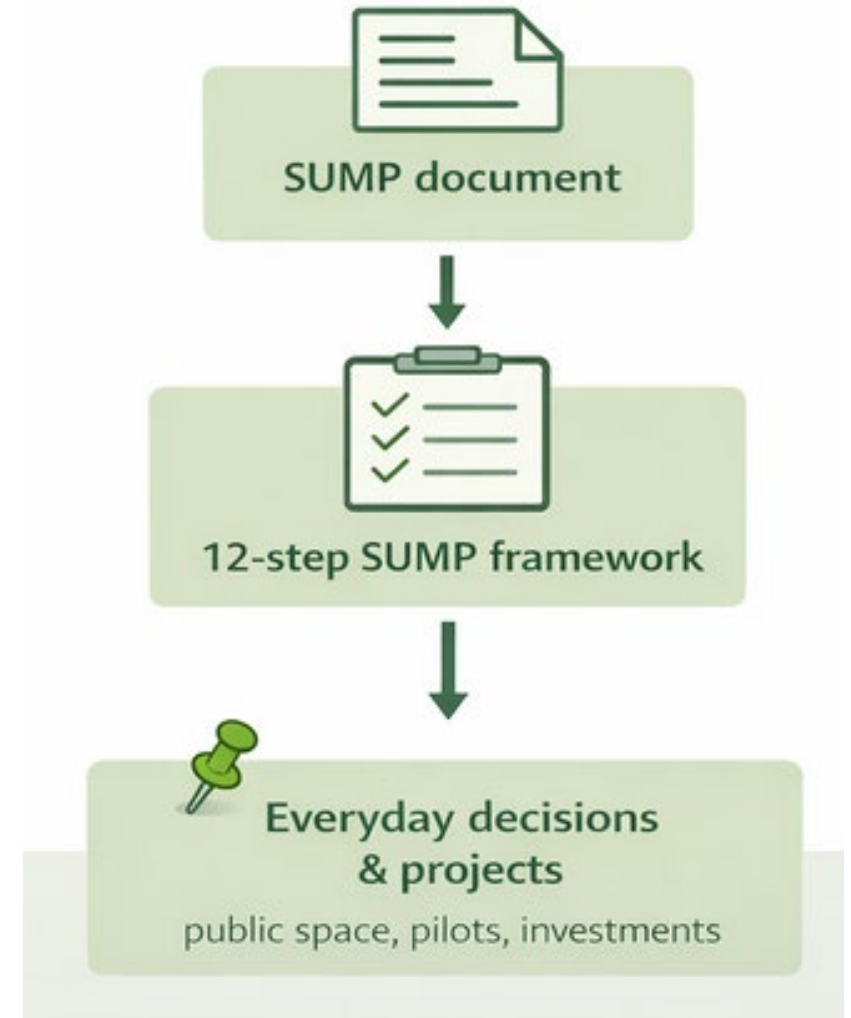
The 12-step SUMP framework helped organise work, not as a checklist, but as a common logic of action.

- **From plans → to pilots and real-life testing**

Strategies were translated into pilots, small-scale interventions and concrete spatial decisions.

- **From assumptions → to learning through monitoring**

Monitoring and evaluation were used to learn, adjust actions and improve future decisions.



The biggest shift was organisational, not technical.



From strategy to action. What was actually implemented

How SUMP influenced real decisions, pilots and learning in Gdynia

PILOTS

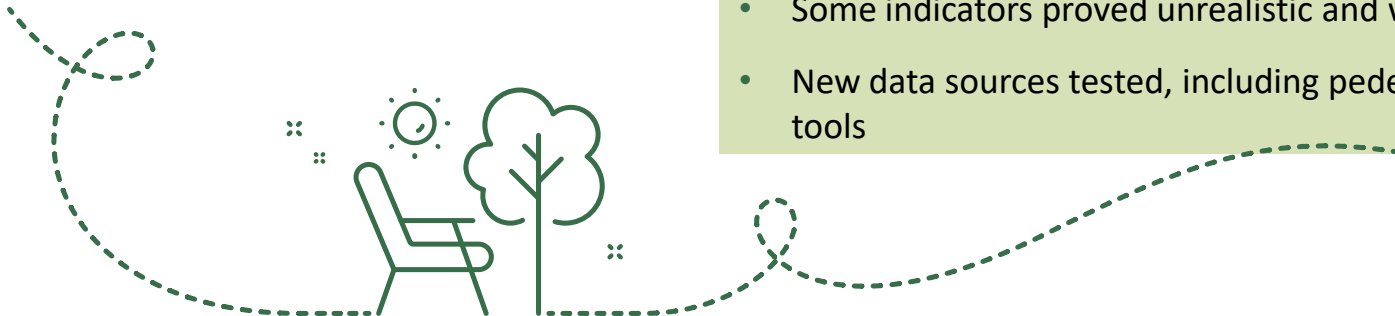
- *Testing ideas before full implementation*
- Small-scale pilots in public space used to test design and mobility solutions
- Pilots treated as decision-support tools, not final investments
- On-site feedback collected and used to adjust solutions

DECISIONS

- *SUMP as a reference point for everyday work*
- SUMP used to prioritise projects and justify investment decisions
- Strategic goals translated into concrete design and mobility choices
- Document referenced across departments, not only by transport planners

LEARNING

- *Monitoring and data informing next steps*
- Monitoring and evaluation used to adjust actions, not only to report progress
- Some indicators proved unrealistic and were simplified over time
- New data sources tested, including pedestrian and cyclist detection tools



Lessons learned from Gdynia's SUMP process

1. SUMP is a political and organisational process not only a technical one

Changes in political priorities and decision-makers strongly influence the implementation of action plans. Continuity needs to be actively protected.

2. Stakeholder engagement must happen at many levels

From decision-makers and city councillors, through district councils, to different group of residents. Finding *ambassadors* in each group helps spread understanding and reduce resistance.

3. Dialogue works better than pressure

Talking repeatedly about the same goals, using different language and formats, helps build trust. Pilots and small experiments lower resistance and make benefits visible.

4. SUMP needs to be explained as a roadmap, not a restriction

Clear, measurable goals combined with a realistic vision help people understand *why* the document matters and how it supports everyday decisions.

✕



Lessons learned from Gdynia's SUMP process

5. Internal dialogue is as important as public consultation

SUMP implementation depends on everyday cooperation between departments and municipal units. Without shared understanding inside the administration, strategic goals remain abstract and hard to apply.

6. Monitoring and evaluation are often underestimated but crucial

In practice, M&E is frequently carried out by very small core teams, often manually. Simple, realistic indicators adapted to **local capacity** work better than **complex systems** that cannot be maintained.

7. SUMP implementation requires negotiation and moderation skills

Conflicts between goals are inevitable – for example between mobility, greenery, safety or parking. The ability to moderate, negotiate and explain trade-offs is essential to move forward.

8. External support helps, but ownership must stay in the city

Externally prepared SUMP risk being too generic if they are not rooted in local realities. Strong internal ownership is necessary to keep the process alive despite staff turnover and changing



Advice on replicability. What other cities should prepare for

Based on Gdynia's in-house SUMP process



Team and internal capacity

- Core team of 1–2 people, often without formal mandate.
- SUMP was developed mainly in-house, as an additional responsibility.
- This requires strong individual commitment and long-term continuity.



Time pressure and political cycles

- Political changes strongly affect implementation.
- Each change in leadership means renewed explanations, rebuilding understanding.
- and re-anchoring the role of SUMP in decision-making.



Participation and resistance

- Engagement is time-consuming and initially increases resistance.
- Dialogue, careful language and pilots help lower opposition.
- Real change usually takes 3–12 months to be socially accepted.



Data, monitoring and realism

- Monitoring is mostly manual and capacity-limited.
- Not all indicators proved implementable in practice.
- Simple, realistic indicators and new tools (e.g., AI-based detection) work better.



Advice on replicability. What other cities should prepare for

Based on Gdynia's in-house SUMP process

What made the process work

- On-site surveys and consultations
- Quantitative data + qualitative feedback
- Clear link: diagnosis to implementation



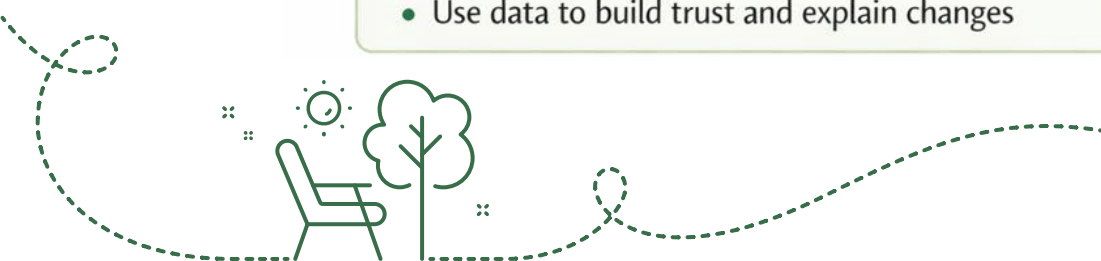
Key transferable elements

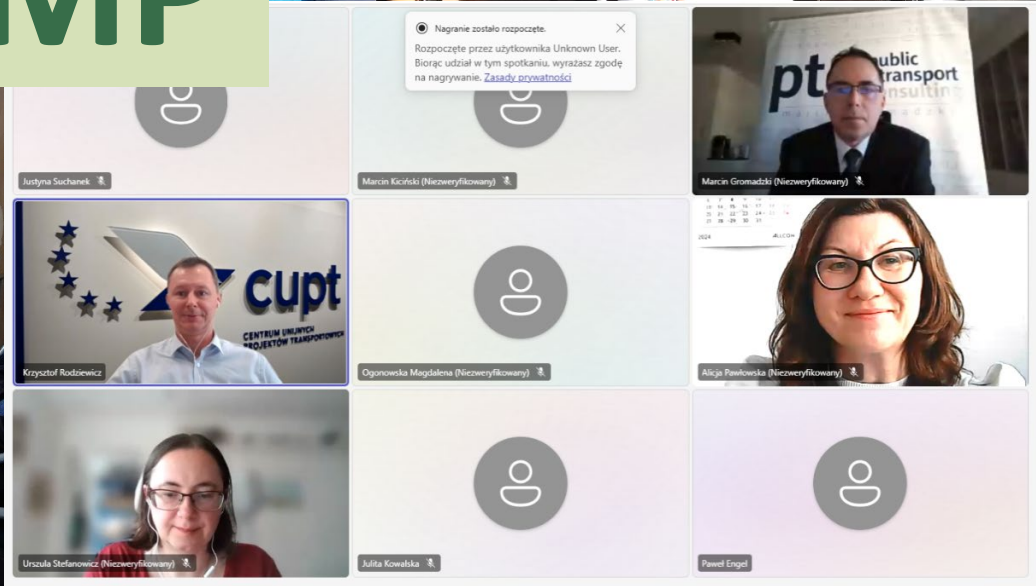
- Simple survey & consultation framework
- Focus on intermodality & user experience
- Testing ideas before full roll-out



What other cities can take from Gdynia

- Listen first, not last
- Integrate transport & public space
- Use data to build trust and explain changes





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 Working together on cycling strategy, SUMP update and international projects.

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Thank you!

