

## Chapter 2

# Why is There a Need to Develop Capacity in Local Authorities



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**Abstract** SUITS was developed in 2015 and conducted between 2016 and 2021. It was developed specifically to address the climate change crisis through providing resources for local authorities to develop and implement sustainable transport measures. Such measures could take the form of, for example, traffic regulations and enforcement, new lower pollutant vehicles, new transport systems and services, or support for active forms of transport—cycling and walking. The development of such measures may require a strategic, integrated master plan (SUMP), but such an ambitious plan may not be possible for smaller local authorities.

Charles Michel, European Council President, stated in July 2020 that “**Climate neutrality is no longer a question of choice; it is beyond doubt a necessity**”.

The transport sector is the only fuel combustion sector which shows an increase in GHG emissions when comparing 1990 with 2018. Between these years, the total GHG emissions increased by 32%, or 231 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent. The volume of transport, measured as the amount transported times the distance, increased until the economic recession. However, fuel efficiency has not improved substantially enough to offset the increase in transport volume. The energy consumption in transport has increased by 37% from 1990 to 2018, in line with the increase in transport activity. Overall, transport has hardly improved its fuel efficiency. Almost all fuel used in transport consists of petroleum products and there has only been a marginal shift towards renewables.<sup>1</sup>

In 2019, EU leaders endorsed the objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2020, following commitments made by the EU and its member states in the 2015 Paris Agreement. One of the consequences of this was the European Green Deal which included measures such as:

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Climate\\_change\\_-\\_driving\\_forces#General\\_overview](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Climate_change_-_driving_forces#General_overview).

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- investing environmentally friendly technologies
- supporting innovation
- helping the development of cleaner forms of transport
- decarbonising the energy sector
- ensuring buildings become more energy efficient
- working internationally to improve global standards

To achieve climate neutrality means emitting less greenhouse emissions (and reductions in waste inter alia). Transport needs to shift towards more energy efficient, alternative and greener fuels. These need to be inexpensive, so that users can switch behaviour. However, consumers need to reduce their environmental footprint through behavioural change.

Cities are trying to adapt existing systems, services and infrastructures to prioritise the mobility of people and goods. New services have to be seamlessly integrated or replace existing ones, whilst the city continues to function. At the same time, streets and city centres are being reclaimed by people to make them more accessible, satisfying and life enhancing. A more considered understanding of transport has also led to an appreciation of its negative effects on human factors—health, wellbeing, mental health and stress—all of which are effected by the by products of transport—noise, pollution, lack of green spaces, time lost in traffic jams, etc.

Developing new transport services not only enables more sustainable vehicles and operation, but also provides cities with opportunities to assess problems and inequities in current transport provision and make sure that future transport is fit for the needs of smart cities and provide higher quality of service and quality of life for citizens.

H2020 CIVITAS SUITS (<https://www.suits-project.eu>) fits into this wider picture though its efforts to help cities invest in environmentally friendly technologies (through business models and innovative financing) and helping the implementation of sustainable forms of transport.

Delivering on the EU's sustainable mobility agenda is the responsibility of local authorities, in particular, their transport or mobility departments. Positioned after a period of austerity, the downsizing of local governments through budget cuts, outsourcing, squeezing labour costs and restructuring of public services saw a rise in inequalities between cities. The 'landscape of austerity urbanism' saw an unequal impact of austerity measures on declining and failing cities [15].<sup>2</sup> Therefore, smaller cities have a continuing capacity gap which need to be addressed to ensure that they are able to focus on sustainable mobility planning in the future.

Public and more recently active and sustainable forms of transport are strong policy instruments which local and regional policy makers can use to effect environmental policies, urban development, mobility management and social inclusion. Public transport can support a great number of the public values (Veeneman et al.

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<sup>2</sup> Peck, J. (2012) Austerity urbanism. *American cities under extreme economy*, *City*, 16, 6, 626–655.

2006<sup>3</sup>) related to these policy fields: from a healthier environment to economic development, from fighting global warming to local upgrading, from reducing congestion to increasing participation.

At the time of writing the initial proposal, the main challenges for the transport sector were ‘creating a well-functioning Single European Transport Area, connecting Europe with modern, multimodal and safe transport infrastructure networks and shifting towards low emission mobility, which also involves reducing other negative externalities of transport. From a social perspective, affordability, reliability and accessibility of transport are key’ [5].<sup>4</sup>

The EU remains committed to encouraging all sizeable cities to follow the SUMP<sup>5</sup> guidelines, which set out a clear process to develop Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, which will help to reduce climate emissions related to urban transport. For example, during SUITS, we saw our Italian and Lithuanian partners working on SUMPs.

However, uptake of SUMPs across Europe has been relatively slow, despite multimillion-euro investment, incentives and the added bonus that systematic planning of integrated transport yields more fundable and well thought out proposals. H2020 CIVITAS Prosperity<sup>6</sup> reported that SUMP adoption had risen from 800 in 2013 to 1000 in 2017, with the number in preparation rising from 160 to 350. Countries in SUITS ranged from ‘forerunner’ to ‘engaged’ status in terms of SUMP development. The 3 main barriers to starting a SUMP<sup>7</sup> are lack of political will, lack of budget (budgets may be available for planning, but not implementation) and no data. Other potential issues are that it is a new process, many LA employees struggle with the concept of sustainable, integrated transport; the traditional transport planning approach is embedded and remains focused on infrastructure and motorised traffic; small cities, with reduced transport departments are in ‘firefighting’ mode, addressing current problems so lack the resources to start on this or commission external agents; the length and complexity of the process (with many feedback loops) which may take years to complete. Therefore many cities have started to install sustainable modes of transport in the cities (especially bike and car sharing and micro mobility), without an overall SUMP.

As a project SUITS was designed to, and has been able to provide supportive training and introduce sustainability concepts to smaller local authorities, for example, during webinars and multiplier events. Funded as one of three projects, along with SUMPS-UP and PROSPERITY under the CIVITAS call, the primary

<sup>3</sup> Veeneman, W.W., Van de Velde, D.M. and Schipholt, L.L. (2006) The value of bus and train: public values in public transport. In *Proceedings of the European Transport Conference*, Strasbourg, France (pp. 18-20). September.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2018) *Transport in the European Union, Current trends and issues*, DGMOVE, Accessed 02/02/2021. Downloaded from <https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/2018-transport-in-the-eu-current-trends-and-issues.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/urban-mobility/reinforcing-uptake-sustainable-urban-mobility-plans-sumps>.

<sup>6</sup> [https://sumps-up.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Tools\\_and\\_Resources/Reports/SUMPs\\_Up\\_D5.1\\_SUMP\\_in\\_Member\\_States\\_report\\_28022018\\_final\\_doc\\_without\\_annexes.pdf](https://sumps-up.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Tools_and_Resources/Reports/SUMPs_Up_D5.1_SUMP_in_Member_States_report_28022018_final_doc_without_annexes.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> <https://ecf.com/what-we-do/urban-mobility/sump>.

focus of SUITS was not on the creation of SUMP per se, but rather on supporting small to medium local authorities develop sustainable, integrated mobility plans. 44% of EU urban citizens live in ‘medium-sized’ city regions of less than 500,000. For such cities, the development of a SUMP may not be appropriate. However, these cities still have problems of pollution, congestion and transport inequalities. Their capacity and openness to engage in integrated and sustainable mobility planning has to be supported in ways that work for them.

Firstly, because lack of knowledge and resources place smaller local authorities, their citizens and stakeholders at a significant disadvantage in challenging, leading, promoting or implementing new sustainable transport measures.<sup>8</sup> This is to the detriment of social, economic, health and wellbeing. Congested cities are not attractive to businesses (e.g. in terms of disruption to supply chains, Weisbord and Fitzroy [23]). Cities which are unpleasant to live in will not attract new residents who place an increased emphasis on sustainable, seamless mobility and the quality of urban spaces. This gap can be reduced by building the capacity of local authority employees through training and provision of tools and measures to gather data.

Secondly, organisational issues or cultural gaps in capacity may exist in LAs, which make a SUMP difficult to start. The prevalent silo mentality<sup>9</sup> and hierarchical structure of traditional LAs<sup>10</sup> may significantly affect the speed at which SUMP or technological innovations are adopted. Taking a socio-technical approach to capacity building was fundamental to the project. This means that one of our starting points was looking at the organisation and culture within which SUMP or sustainable transport measures were being developed, and assessing what organisational changes needed to be made to make this easier. Organisational culture includes the company vision, values, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, beliefs and habits. The need to consider such factors is not recognised in technology led projects, which may inadvertently result in further widening existing gaps in knowledge and capacity.

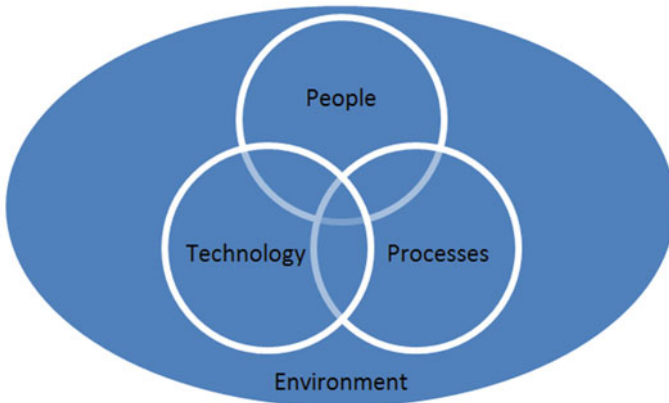
Fuchs and Shehadeh [10]<sup>11</sup> described the need for Departments of Transportation (in the US) to change, suggesting that *‘DoTs that focus on older travel models will be unprepared to serve new kinds of demand. They will also be slower to convert growing data sets into actionable plans and projects that further support these changing trends. Conversely, those that actively embrace change have the opportunity to shape the future of transportation as well as urban, suburban, and rural development’*. They argue that departments dominated by civil engineers may be slow to adapt, and prone to groupthink. Increasing workforce diversity and exposing more senior and traditional departmental managers to best practices and new information is key as

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.bestufs.net/download/BESTUFS\\_II/key\\_issuesII/BESTUFS\\_RecommendationsII.pdf](http://www.bestufs.net/download/BESTUFS_II/key_issuesII/BESTUFS_RecommendationsII.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/careers/soft-skills/silo-mentality/>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.itproportal.com/features/breaking-down-the-silos-how-local-authorities-benefit-from-more-collaborative-working/>.

<sup>11</sup> Fuchs, S. and Shehadeh, R. (2017) The department of transportation of the future, McKinsey and Co, October 19, Accessed 03/02/2021. Downloaded from <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/travel-logistics-and-transport-infrastructure/our-insights/the-department-of-transportation-of-the-future>.



**Fig. 2.1** Socio-technical approach

they are organisational gatekeepers. They concluded that *‘Radical innovation will be challenging; yet it has been done before, and it can be done again. DoT leaders should acknowledge that the imminent changes to transportation are about to redefine their existing structure and models. They should be visionary, pragmatic, bold and courageous in the years ahead, and stakeholders must coalesce to support them in their transformation. With these measures firmly in place, DoTs can act today to establish a sturdy foundation for the future’*.

To address these concerns, SUITS took a socio-technical approach (e.g. Mumford 2000)<sup>12</sup> to developing capacity in S-M sized local authorities. Through its outputs (documented in Sect. 2.1), it has shared best practice from larger and medium-sized authorities, providing tools and methods which meet the requirements of S-M cities to increase capacity to plan, finance and implement sustainable transport measures and create new business opportunities (Fig. 2.1).

For SUITS, capacity building encompasses the sum of the capabilities of the local authority; the ability of the group or organisation to learn and adapt (here our focus was on the mobility or transport department), and the performance of the organisation in delivering research and having an impact on policies and practice. Organisational culture operates on, within, and is influenced by.

- aspirations,
- strategy,
- organisational skills,
- human resources,
- systems and infrastructure and
- organisational structure.

<sup>12</sup> Mumford, E. (2000) Socio-Technical Approach to Systems Design. *Requirements Eng* 5, 125–133 <https://doi.org/10.1007/PL00010345>.

as such, all areas need to be considered, if the ultimate goal is to create a learning organisation which is resilient, adaptable, innovative and enabling (for employees). The need to develop resilience within LA's was tested during the covid pandemic. During this time the LA's within SUITS were able to draw on, and apply the work of the project to the rapid restructuring needed to address the challenges of the pandemic.

By working closely with city partners over 4 years, insights were gathered about the barriers and enablers to transport planning, where capacity needed to be developed, better tools provided, communication channels enhanced and where integrated freight and citizen data could be used. Relevant training material and tools were provided to bridge existing knowledge gaps supported by tailored organisational programmes to promote sustainable thinking and implementation.

## 2.1 Brief Overview of the Project

This section provides a brief summary of the H2020 CIVITAS SUITS project as a way of providing a rationale for the following chapters.

SUITS was a four-year Research and Innovation Action, which aimed to increase the capacity of local authorities to develop and implement sustainable, inclusive, integrated and accessible transport strategies, policies, technologies, practices, procedures, tools, measures and intelligent transport systems that recognise the end-to-end travel experiences of all users and freight.

To achieve this, it developed a set of tools relating to planning, financing and implementing sustainable transport measures. In developing and validation these, the project directly supported capacity enhancement in nine local authorities (Valencia (Spain), Rome and Turino (Italy), Transport for West Midlands (UK), Kalamaria (Greece), Alba Iulia (Romania), Palanga (Lithuania), Dachau and Stuttgart (Germany)). Each country had variations in approaches to developing and financing sustainable urban mobility and dealing with problems associated with freight and passenger transport. Together they provided a test bed for the development and use of SUITS capacity building material. Cities committed to SUITS varied from small cities and adjunct towns with little capacity or experience in urban mobility planning (e.g. Dachau and Palanga), to acknowledged leaders in sustainable transport systems (e.g. Valencia and Rome).

The project outputs are available freely online, in multiple languages and formats as guidelines, webinars, e-courses, training manuals, decision support tools and interactive software from our project web site,<sup>13</sup> partners site<sup>14</sup> and the ELTIS portal.<sup>15</sup> Many are described in this volume. Together they target the areas shown in Fig. 2.2.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.suits-project.eu/>.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.mypolislive.net/>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.eltis.org/resources/tools/suits-capacity-building-toolbox>.



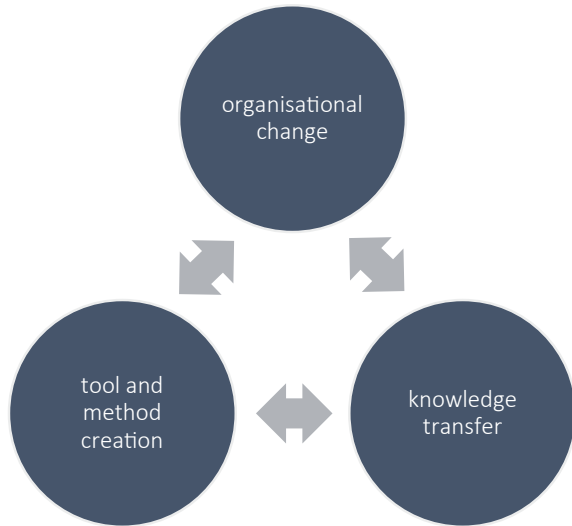
**Fig. 2.2** Specific areas targeted in the project.

This information can help LAs and policy makers make the case for socially and economically sustainable investments in transport. More specifically, SUITS targeted:

1. Organisational change in work practices as a capacity building exercise in its own right, but also to allow/set the stage for individual training and sustainable urban mobility planning (SUMP)
2. The need for integrated urban mobility planning of both freight and passengers based on the capture and use of information relating to the diversity of active, private, public, shared and multimodal forms of transport, journey types and travellers/freight.
3. The need to exploit future transport technologies to improve transport efficiency and enhance quality of life at the same time as humanising technology by creating opportunities for citizen engagement.
4. The need to maximise the effectiveness and sustainability of transport measures through transferable best practice and new funding models and create sustainable opportunities for new business entrants).

Therefore, the primary aim of SUITS was to develop a more holistic approach to capacity building which could support the development of SUMPS and sustainable

**Fig. 2.3** Main components of the project



transport measures which recognised the context in which these were developed. This meant that the project had three main foci as shown in Fig. 2.3.

In terms of the structure of the project across the four years, the first 18 months was spent understanding the local authorities and developing tools for self-auditing of capacity gaps and development of KPIs. Each LA audited its organisational capacity, revealing a wide range of issues where they needed development. Not all related specifically to sustainable transport measures, pointing to the need for a more holistic approach. These were rank ordered and performance measures created, producing a list of actions that each LA would address during the project. Additionally, each LA selected sustainable transport measures which would provide opportunities to use project outputs and evaluate impact.

The following 18 months was spent developing and delivering organisation changes and the capacity building programme, which can be transferable to other LAs. In accordance with European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) best practice, external experts, formed of non-LA partners provided research results to LEVER–Development Consultants SA (Greece) who developed the capacity building programme (CBP). Assisting partners include Coventry University (UK), Ilmenau University of Technology (Germany), Integral Consulting R&D (Romania), EUROKLEIS s.r.l and Politecnico di TORINO (Italy), SmartContinent (Lithuania), ITENE (Spain). The CBP supported:

- Cultural and behaviour change from a socio-technical, perspective at individual, organisational and institutional level.
- The collection and use of real time, open source and legacy data to inform urban mobility plans.



- The ability of local authorities to address the requirements of vulnerable and hard to reach groups and those not using sustainable modes of transport and resisting change.
- The integration of freight and passenger information and measures.
- Increasing the appreciation of the wider benefits of sustainable transport to citizens and cities.
- Sustainable and innovative financing for new transport measures.
- Compliance with new procurement directives.
- Development of appropriate evaluation methods and tools for sustainable transport and mobility needs.

The intention of the final year of the project (2020/2021) was to embed the knowledge and processes within the organisations and to measure impact of these on the development of sustainable transport measures. Many of the chapters in this volume provide examples of the activities undertaken by the local authorities and how these have been affected by the project, with overall impacts being discussed in the concluding chapter.

SUITS met its overall aims and objectives to produce a series of tools, processes and methods which could increase the capacity of small–medium local authorities to implement sustainable transport measures. The global pandemic has revealed new challenges and potential opportunities in the fight for climate neutrality. It is hoped that small–medium LAs, through the work of SUITS and its sister projects are in a better place to deal with these.

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