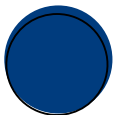
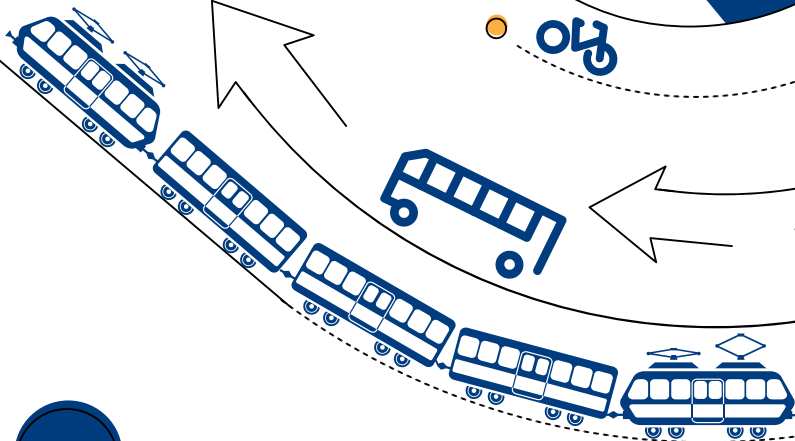


Strengthening the Role of Local Government Associations in Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning in South-East Europe

NALAS Policy Position on
Sustainable Urban Mobility and
Recommendations for
Local Government Associations



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21 April 2026, Sibiu

List of Abbreviations

EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
LG	Local government (cities and municipalities)
LGA	Local Government Association
MS	Member state
M & E	Monitoring and evaluation
NALAS	Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe
NSSP	National Sustainable Urban Mobility Support Programmes
WB	Western Balkans
SEE	South-East Europe
SUM	Sustainable Urban Mobility
SUMP	Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan
TC	Transport Community
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network
WB framework	Policy Framework and Roadmap for Integrated Sustainable Urban Mobility in the Western Balkans

Introduction



Sustainable urban mobility (SUM) is increasingly recognised as a key component of economic development, environmental sustainability, and quality of life in LGs across Europe and the Western Balkans (WB). In recent years, the European policy framework has significantly strengthened the role of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) as a central planning instrument, particularly through the EU Urban Mobility Framework and the revised Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Regulation.

In response to these developments, the *Policy Framework and Roadmap for Integrated Sustainable Urban Mobility in the Western Balkans* (WB framework) has been developed to support WB partners in establishing structured, national-level systems for SUM planning. The WB framework is the result of a joint effort of key regional partners active in the field of SUM, including the Transport Community (TC), GIZ, NALAS and CIVINET Slovenia–Croatia–SEE. It focuses on the development of National SUMP Support Programmes (NSSP) as the central mechanism for enabling LGs to prepare and implement high-quality SUMPs. It defines the governance structures, institutional responsibilities, and key components required at national level, including coordination mechanisms, technical support, financing instruments, and monitoring systems.

Within this overall system, cities and municipalities (LGs) are responsible for the preparation and implementation of SUMPs, while national authorities play a key role in creating the enabling framework. However, effective implementation also requires strong intermediary actors that can facilitate cooperation, support capacity development, and ensure communication between different levels of governance.

In this context, national associations of municipalities and cities (Local Government Associations-LGAs) represent an important but often underutilised component of multi-level governance within the SUM governance system. Their position between LGs and national institutions enables them to play a key role in supporting LGs, representing their needs, and contributing to the development and implementation of national support frameworks.

This document is designed as practical guidance for NALAS member LGAs on strengthening their role in supporting sustainable urban mobility (SUM) planning. It complements WB framework by focusing specifically on how LGAs can contribute to the preparation and implementation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs), through functions such as capacity development, knowledge exchange, policy dialogue, and cooperation with national and international stakeholders.

Given that NALAS covers a geographically diverse region of South-east Europe, including WB economies and EU Member States, LGAs operate in different institutional and policy contexts. This document therefore adopts a flexible approach, recognising different levels of development and proposing a range of possible roles and activities that can be adapted to national circumstances.

Finally, the document positions LGAs within the broader governance system for SUM, acting as a bridge between LGs and national authorities, and as a key partner in the development and implementation of NSSPs. In doing so, it contributes to strengthening multi-level governance and supporting a more systematic and coordinated approach to SUM planning across the NALAS region.

Partners involved in the development of the WB framework

The WB framework was developed jointly by four partners active in SUM in the region: the Transport Community (TC), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), CIVINET Slovenia–Croatia–South East Europe (CIVINET), and NALAS. Together, they brought complementary perspectives from regional transport policy, technical assistance, city networking, and LG representation.

The TC provides the regional policy framework for transport cooperation and supports alignment with EU transport policy and TEN-T requirements. GIZ contributes through technical assistance, capacity building, and support to pilot activities in sustainable urban mobility. CIVINET acts as a regional platform for knowledge exchange, peer learning, and dissemination of good practices. NALAS contributes the perspective of LGs and their representative associations, with a particular role in linking the framework to the needs and capacities of LGAs across the region.

Urban mobility planning in South-East Europe



The NALAS region covers a highly diverse institutional and policy landscape for sustainable urban mobility planning. It includes WB economies, where SUMP development is still largely emerging and often depends on project-based support, as well as EU Member States, where SUMP is increasingly linked to national support frameworks and, for urban nodes, to obligations stemming from the revised TEN-T Regulation. As the WB framework highlights, the region is still marked by fragmented policy and regulatory frameworks, limited national guidance, weak monitoring systems, and insufficiently institutionalised support for LGs. In most WB economies, urban mobility policy is still only partially regulated through sectoral legislation, while more advanced legal provisions such as mandatory SUMP adoption, regular revision, quality assurance, and monitoring remain largely absent. At the same time, EU policy developments are creating increasing pressure to move from project-based approaches towards more structured and coordinated national systems for SUMP planning, especially through the growing role of Nssp and the implementation of TEN-T requirements for urban nodes.

The following analysis is based on responses from 8 NALAS members collected through the Quick Response Request mechanism. These responses confirm that this diversity is reflected in the different stages of SUMP maturity across the region. In some economies, SUMP development is still at an early stage. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the topic is still developing, with only a limited number of LGs having prepared or initiated SUMP-type documents and with structured support still weak. In Albania, only Tirana and Shkodra currently have SUMPs, although a number of other LGs are in preparation. In Moldova, no LG had an adopted SUMP in 2020, while by 2025–2026 several LGs had adopted or elaborated such plans, including Ungheni, Bălți, Cahul, Soroca and Comrat, with Chişinău still awaiting formal adoption. In Türkiye, SUMP uptake has increased, especially among metropolitan municipalities, but the process is still described as largely project-based and not yet fully institutionalised.

A second group of economies shows a more advanced, though still incomplete, development path. Serbia and Montenegro stand out in this respect. Serbia moved from only a few adopted SUMPs in 2020 to around fifteen adopted, revised or ongoing SUMP processes by 2026, while Montenegro already had three adopted SUMPs in 2020 and is now moving towards implementation, new plans in Bar and Berane, and a second-generation SUMP for Podgorica. Croatia also shows a relatively developed practice, with nine LGs having adopted a SUMP by 2020 and two additional LGs by

2025. These examples suggest that in parts of the NALAS region SUMP is beginning to develop into a more regular planning instrument, although in much of the WB most SUMPs are still first-generation documents and national support systems remain weak or incomplete.

The survey also shows clear differences in the role and maturity of LGAs. In some economies, LGAs already play a relatively active role in supporting SUMP development. The Serbian SCTM has provided direct technical support to LGs developing SUMPs, created a certified training curriculum, established an expert working group, and coordinates the European Mobility Week together with the ministry. In Montenegro, the Union of Municipalities has been one of the drivers of SUMP-related activities, including support for the first local SUMPs, pilot projects, training, and advisory support. In Croatia, ODRAZ has developed a wide range of activities related to dissemination, training, project support, and cooperation with ministries and academia.

In other economies, LGAs involvement is emerging but still constrained by limited resources, project dependence, and a weak national framework. Where national frameworks for SUM are weak, LGAs often lack clear counterparts at national level, stable policy processes to engage in, and structured support measures around which they could build a stronger role. Albania's NAMA has developed learning platforms and policy inputs through projects and expresses strong interest in a more active role, but also stresses that this depends on dedicated human and financial resources. Moldova's CALM is active in policy consultations and sustainable mobility-related dialogue, but its activities have so far been more indirectly related to SUMP. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is willingness to strengthen the LGAs role, but structured cooperation with higher levels of government is still limited and the topic remains insufficiently prioritised. This confirms that the role of LGAs cannot be assumed to be the same across the region; it ranges from information and coordination roles to direct technical support, advocacy, and policy dialogue.

Despite these differences, the responses show a strikingly consistent picture of the main obstacles faced by LGs. Financial constraints are the most frequently mentioned barrier, especially regarding the implementation of measures after a SUMP has been prepared. Other recurring challenges include limited administrative and technical capacity, weak data availability, lack of political support, insufficient public understanding of SUM, and weak vertical coordination between local and national levels. These findings strongly confirm the analysis in the WB framework, which identifies exactly these weaknesses as systemic barriers to wider and more effective uptake of SUMP planning in the region.

Overall, the NALAS region can be understood as a space of differentiated yet broadly similar trajectories of SUMP development. Some economies are still building basic awareness, first-generation plans and initial LGAs capacities; others are moving towards more structured support systems and stronger links with national ministries; and EU Member States are increasingly operating within a more formalised regulatory

environment shaped by TEN-T and related EU frameworks. For NALAS, this means that a one-size-fits-all approach would not be appropriate. The value of this document lies in recognising that LGAs in the region start from different positions, but that across all contexts they can play an important role in bridging LGs and national authorities, supporting capacity development, facilitating exchange, and gradually helping to institutionalise SUMP planning within broader national support systems.

Slovenia with an advanced SUMP system

Slovenia is recognised as one of the more advanced economies in Europe in the field of SUMP policy and support. Its first national SUMP support programme was established in 2012 and has since been regularly updated, while the current system is underpinned by the Comprehensive Transport Planning Act (2022) and the Rules on SUMP (2023). The national framework combines legislation, funding incentives, guidelines, quality control, monitoring and evaluation, and a national platform for information, education and promotion.

For the purposes of this document, Slovenia is a particularly relevant example for the NALAS region. By 2026, more than 190 out of 212 LGs are expected to have a SUMP, many already in their second generation and some in their third, confirming Slovenia's position as a country with both a high level of SUMP coverage and a mature national support system.



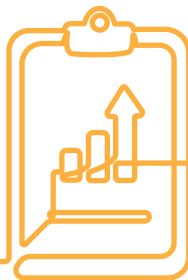
The role of LGAs in supporting SUM planning



Within the broader governance system of SUM planning, LGAs can play an important intermediary and support role. While LGs are the main actors responsible for preparing and implementing SUMP, and national authorities are responsible for establishing the legal, policy and institutional framework for SUM, LGAs can help connect these two levels and make the system function more effectively in practice.

This role is particularly relevant in the NALAS region, where institutional contexts, levels of SUMP maturity and national support structures differ significantly between economies. In some contexts, LGAs already act as active promoters of SUM through training, coordination and technical support, while in others their role is still emerging and focused mainly on information sharing and advocacy. In both cases, LGAs can help strengthen the enabling environment for SUM by representing the needs of LGs, facilitating exchange between LGs, supporting capacity development, and improving communication with national and international partners.

LGAs can serve as platforms for cooperation, knowledge transfer and structured dialogue, helping to translate strategic policy objectives into practical support for LGs. At the same time, LGAs can also play an important motivating role by encouraging LGs to engage more actively in SUM planning and implementation, while also signalling to national authorities the need for clearer frameworks, stronger support mechanisms and more consistent policy attention to this field. In this sense, LGAs can create a form of a “soft” pressure in both directions: towards LGs, by promoting good practices, raising awareness and encouraging more ambitious action, and towards national institutions, by articulating local needs, demonstrating demand for support, and advocating for the development and implementation of NSSP. In this way, LGAs can contribute to multi-level governance and to a more coherent, better coordinated and more dynamic system for SUM planning across the NALAS region.



Examples of the role of municipal associations in mobility policy

Examples from Flanders, the Netherlands and Sweden show that associations of municipalities can play an important role in supporting local governments in the field of mobility policy, even where they are not formally responsible for SUMP. In Flanders, the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) provides municipalities with information, training, thematic support and opportunities for exchange, illustrating how an association can combine advocacy, guidance and practical services for its members. In the Netherlands, the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) plays an active role in mobility-related policy dialogue and supports municipalities through policy positions, guidance and practical inputs on issues such as sustainable and smart mobility, accessibility and mobility data. In Sweden, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR/SKR) supports municipalities and regions through policy development, sectoral guidance and cooperation in areas such as traffic, infrastructure and public transport. Together, these examples show that municipal associations can contribute to mobility policy in different but complementary ways: by representing local interests, supporting knowledge exchange, providing guidance and training, and helping connect local governments with national policy processes and wider sectoral developments. (vvs.be, vng.nl, skr.se)

The following subchapters outline the main functions that LGAs can perform within this broader governance system and the areas in which they can provide added value to their members, by focusing on:

- A** — Policy dialogue and cooperation with national institutions
- B** — Supporting the development and implementation of NSSP
- C** — Coordination and knowledge exchange between LGs
- D** — Capacity development, training and advisory support
- E** — Data collection, monitoring and reporting
- F** — Cooperation with regional and international initiatives

A

Policy dialogue and cooperation with national institutions

LGAs can play an important role in improving communication and coordination between LGs and national ministries and institutions responsible for transport, spatial planning, climate, energy and regional development. In many parts of the NALAS region, LGs face barriers that cannot be solved locally, including unclear responsibilities, weak inter-sectoral coordination, lack of stable funding, limited guidance, and insufficient policy attention to SUM. WB framework also stresses that effective SUM systems require clear governance arrangements, stronger vertical coordination, and more structured cooperation between national and local levels.

Possible activities of LGAs in this field include:

Representing local needs in national policy processes

LGAs can gather recurring needs, constraints and proposals from LGs and present them to ministries and agencies in a structured way. This helps ensure that national policies are informed by local implementation realities and that support measures respond to actual LG needs. Survey responses from the NALAS region show that LGs often struggle with limited capacity, weak coordination and lack of funding, making this representation role particularly important.

Participating in consultations, working groups and advisory bodies

LGAs can contribute to the preparation or revision of laws, strategies, action plans, guidelines and public funding instruments relevant for SUM planning. They can take part in national working groups on transport, urban development, climate or spatial planning and ensure that the perspective of LGs is included from the start. This is particularly relevant in economies where SUM is still emerging and institutional frameworks are not yet fully established.

Promoting more structured vertical coordination

In many economies, communication between LGs and national institutions is still ad hoc and project-based. LGAs can act as link and advocate for more stable forms of coordination, such as regular consultations, thematic coordination meetings, or permanent contact mechanisms. This reflects the logic of the WB framework, which links effective SUM systems to clearer governance and more predictable multi-level coordination.

Encouraging stronger political attention to SUM

LGAs can help raise the visibility of SUM as a national policy issue by demonstrating that LGs need more than individual projects. They can advocate for clearer legal

bases, stronger ministerial engagement and more consistent support for local implementation. In this sense, LGAs can apply constructive pressure in both directions: encouraging LGs to engage more actively with SUM, while also encouraging national institutions to provide stronger frameworks and support.

Promoting more structured vertical coordination – the example of Regional Mobility Centres in Slovenia

Slovenia's Regional Mobility Centres provide a useful example of a more structured coordination layer between the national and local levels. Their role is to support SUM planning and its promotion in the regions, acting as a link between the state and LGs. In practice, they provide professional support to LGs in SUM planning and management, while also giving the national level better insight into mobility conditions and needs in different regions. Their tasks include support for regional planning, assistance to municipalities and the responsible ministry, coordination with spatial development, and promotion of SUM at regional level. This example is relevant because it shows how a more permanent intermediary structure can strengthen vertical coordination, improve communication between levels of governance, and support a more consistent implementation of SUM policies across territories. For LGAs, it also illustrates a possible future direction: although they are different types of institutions, LGAs could gradually develop a similar intermediary role by becoming more structured platforms for communication, support and coordination between municipalities and national authorities. (sptm.si)

B Supporting the development and implementation of NSSP

NSSP are becoming a central part of the European policy approach to SUM. The EU and the WB frameworks both treat NSSP as the main mechanism through which national authorities support LGs in preparing and implementing SUMP. NSSP typically include guidance, training, technical support, financing mechanisms, monitoring systems and coordination structures. In the NALAS region, however, such systems are still uneven and in many economies remain weak, incomplete or project-based.

Possible activities of LGAs in this field include:

Defining LGs needs for NSSP

LGAs can identify what kinds of support LGs actually need in order to prepare and implement SUMP. This may include funding, technical expertise, training, data support or implementation guidance. By collecting this feedback, LGAs can help national authorities design NSSP measures that are realistic, proportionate and useful for different types of LGs.

Supporting communication of NSSP to LGs

Even where national support measures exist, LGs may not always understand what is available or how to use it. LGAs can help communicate national guidance, funding schemes, procedures and timelines to their members in a clear and accessible way. This is especially important in contexts where administrative capacity is limited and LGs need practical mediation between national frameworks and local action.

Contributing to implementation of NSSP measures

LGAs can act as delivery partners for parts of NSSP, especially in areas such as awareness-raising, training, dissemination of information, peer exchange or practical support to LGs. The WB framework explicitly foresees LGAs as supporting partners in governance, training, guidelines and capacity-building activities. This means that LGAs do not only advocate for NSSP, but can also help make them operational.

Providing feedback on how NSSP function in practice

Once support frameworks are in place, LGAs can help evaluate whether they are actually working for LGs. They can identify gaps, bottlenecks and barriers, and propose adjustments. This supports the principle of continuous improvement, which is also present in the WB framework's phased approach to NSSP development.

Contributing to implementation of NSSP measures – the example of Flanders

Flanders provides a useful example of how support measures can be translated into practical tools for local governments. At regional level, mobility policy is supported by a broad set of thematic guidance documents, including the one for cycling infrastructure and guidance on accessible public space, parking and related mobility measures. These documents give municipalities practical standards, examples and recommendations on issues such as bicycle parking, accessible design, and the integration of mobility and public space planning. The Flemish example is relevant because it shows one concrete type of activity that LGAs could support within broader NSSP implementation: helping municipalities access, understand and use thematic guidance on key SUM topics. Even where LGAs do not prepare such documents themselves, they can still play an important role by initiating and disseminating them, translating them into practical local guidance, organising training around them, and helping municipalities apply them in planning and implementation.

C

Coordination and knowledge exchange between LGs

One of the most practical and visible roles of LGAs is to act as a platform for exchange between LGs. In the NALAS region, LGs often work in isolation, with uneven access to expertise and limited opportunities to learn from each other. At the same time, the survey responses show strong demand for peer learning, knowledge-sharing and transfer of tested solutions. The WB framework also identifies promotion, awareness and peer exchange as an important part of effective SUM systems.

Possible activities of LGAs in this field include:

Facilitating peer learning between LGs

LGAs can create spaces where LGs exchange experience on SUMP preparation, implementation and revision. This may include regular meetings, thematic workshops, peer exchanges or structured learning groups. Such formats are particularly useful where some LGs are only starting while others already have experience with first- or second-generation SUMP.

Disseminating good practices

LGAs can identify examples of successful approaches in areas such as public transport, walking, cycling, parking management, stakeholder engagement or implementation of pilot measures. They can then disseminate these in ways that are accessible to LGs, helping reduce duplication and improve the quality of local action.

Connecting LGs with similar challenges

LGs differ in size, resources and planning context. LGAs can help connect those facing similar issues, for example small towns, metropolitan areas or LGs at early stages of SUMP development. This makes exchange more targeted and practical.

Ensuring continuous exchange

Many exchange activities in the region still depend on donor projects or external funding. LGAs can help turn these into more regular and predictable formats, so that knowledge exchange continues even outside individual project cycles. This can contribute to a more permanent support environment for SUM.

Coordination and knowledge exchange between LGs – the example of the Slovenian Sustainable Mobility Platform

The Slovenian Sustainable Mobility Platform provides a useful example of how an information and exchange platform can evolve into a broader support environment for SUM. The platform brings together guidance materials, examples of practice, tools, current information, events and thematic content related to SUM and SUMP. In this way, it does not function only as an information page, but as a broader knowledge environment that supports municipalities, experts and other stakeholders in understanding and applying SUM-related approaches in practice. This example is particularly relevant for LGAs in the NALAS region because several WB associations, with GIZ support, have already established initial web platforms on SUMP. The Slovenian case shows how such initiatives can gradually develop further — from basic information-sharing tools into more comprehensive platforms for knowledge exchange, capacity development and ongoing support to municipalities. (sptm.si)

D Capacity development, training and advisory support

Limited technical and administrative capacity is one of the most consistent findings across the NALAS survey. LGs often lack staff, specialised knowledge, experience with data collection, or capacity to move from planning to implementation. The WB framework identifies capacity development, expert pools and advisory support as core components of NSSPs. In many contexts, LGAs are well placed to help provide or organise this support.

Possible activities of LGAs in this field include:

Organising training programmes and workshops

LGAs can provide regular training for local staff, decision-makers and local consultants on SUM, SUMP, participation methods, implementation planning, monitoring, or links with climate and spatial planning. Trainings can be introductory or advanced and should reflect the different levels of readiness among LGs. Several NALAS members already identified training as one of the most useful and realistic support roles for LGA.

Preparing practical guidance

LGAs can help LGs by preparing or disseminating practical materials such as checklists, templates, introductory guides, model terms of reference, or summaries of relevant

national and EU requirements. This can make SUM processes more accessible, especially for LGs with limited prior experience.

Mobilising external expertise

Not all LGAs will have their own SUM specialists. In such cases, they can still play a useful role by identifying external experts, universities, civil society organisations or project partners that can support LGs. This approach was explicitly mentioned by NALAS members as realistic in contexts where internal resources remain limited.

Providing basic advisory support and guidance

LGAs can act as a first contact point for LGs interested in starting work on SUM. Even where they do not provide full technical assistance, they can help members understand the process, identify relevant support opportunities, and take initial organisational steps. This type of light advisory support can be particularly valuable in economies where structured national support is not yet fully available.

Supporting SUMP implementation

The survey responses also show that the gap between planning and implementation remains a major issue. LGAs can therefore extend their support beyond drafting documents and help LGs think about implementation sequencing, pilot actions, communication and links to funding. This makes their support more relevant to practical change on the ground.

Capacity development in practice – a GIZ-supported regional SUMP training model

A useful example of practical capacity building in the WB region was a regional SUMP boot camp organised with the support of GIZ for participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The training brought together representatives of local governments, universities and civil society organisations and was designed to build a regional pool of experts able to support cities and municipalities in the development of SUMP and related advocacy activities. The programme included core SUMP principles, case studies and good practice examples, methods for public participation and stakeholder involvement, the role of decision-makers in the planning process, and discussion of gender aspects in urban mobility planning. An important outcome of the training was not only stronger individual knowledge, but also the creation of cooperation links between participants, who were expected to continue supporting LGs through workshops, advisory work and further dissemination activities. This example is relevant for LGAs because it shows how targeted training, if organised in a structured way, can help create a practical support network for municipalities in the field of SUM.

E

Data collection, monitoring and reporting

In most of the NALAS region, one of the weakest elements of SUM support is the lack of structured information on the status of SUMP, implementation progress and recurring barriers across LGs. The WB framework identifies monitoring, evaluation and data systems as one of the core components of an effective NSSP. Given their proximity to LGs, LGAs can contribute significantly to building a stronger evidence base.

Possible activities of LGAs in this field include:

Collecting information on the number and status of SUMP

LGAs can periodically gather information from members on whether they have a SUMP, what stage it is in, whether it has been adopted, revised or updated, and which implementation steps have already been taken. This can help provide a clearer national or regional picture where official databases do not yet exist.

Identifying implementation barriers across LGs

LGAs can systematically collect information on obstacles faced by LGs, such as lack of funding, weak data, procurement difficulties, limited expertise or lack of political support. Aggregating such information makes it easier to identify common patterns and communicate them to national institutions.

Common indicators and reporting

LGAs can encourage LGs to use common indicators and reporting formats where possible. Even simple harmonisation of reporting practices can improve comparability and make local progress more visible. This can also prepare LGs for stronger national or EU reporting expectations in the future.

Contributing to databases and monitoring systems

Where national or regional databases are being developed, LGAs can help feed them with information from LGs and support data flow between levels of governance. This is especially relevant in economies where national monitoring systems are still weak or incomplete.

Using data to support advocacy and policy improvement

The value of data is not only technical. LGAs can also use aggregated evidence to strengthen advocacy for better support frameworks, more targeted funding, clearer guidance and stronger institutional attention to SUM. In this way, monitoring supports both learning and policy influence.

Data collection and monitoring – the example of Catalonia’s Observatory of Mobility

Catalonia provides a useful example of how mobility data can be organised into a broader knowledge and monitoring system. The Observatory of Mobility of Catalonia brings together data, indicators, reports and thematic information on mobility trends, infrastructure, accessibility, modal split, road safety and sustainability. Rather than serving only as a statistical portal, it functions as a reference point for evidence-based mobility policy and long-term monitoring. This is relevant for LGAs because it shows how a structured information environment can support better-informed decision-making, clearer communication of trends, and more consistent reporting across territories. For LGAs in the NALAS region, a similar approach could support the collection and aggregation of local information on SUM and SUMP, while also helping connect municipal experience with wider national and regional policy processes. (omc.cat)

F Cooperation with regional and international initiatives

SUM development in the NALAS region has so far often been driven or accelerated by regional initiatives, donor programmes and international cooperation. The WB framework explicitly recognises the role of TC, GIZ, NALAS, CIVINET in supporting governance, knowledge exchange, methodology development, financing and capacity building. LGAs can help LGs connect to these wider support structures and benefit from them more effectively.

Possible activities of LGAs in this field include:

Supporting regional cooperation through the NALAS network

LGAs can strengthen SUM development through structured regional cooperation within the NALAS network. The NALAS Thematic Expert Group on Climate Resilience and Sustainable Urban Mobility can support this by facilitating exchange between member LGAs, coordinating joint learning and advocacy activities, and helping transfer regional experience into practical support for members. This is particularly valuable in a region where countries are at different stages of SUMP development.

Connecting LGs with regional initiatives

LGAs can inform members about relevant regional and international initiatives, including NALAS activities, TC processes, GIZ support, CIVINET cooperation, EU projects and donor programmes. This helps LGs access opportunities that they might otherwise miss.

Facilitating participation in projects

LGAs can help LGs join project consortia, connect with peer LGs, or identify suitable partners for regional and international calls. In this way they can lower the entry barrier for smaller or less experienced LGs.

Sharing information on funding opportunities

LGs often lack time and capacity to track project calls and funding instruments. LGAs can play a practical role by identifying, filtering and sharing relevant opportunities related to SUM, climate, transport or urban development. They can also help LGs understand which types of projects and measures are likely to be fundable.

Bringing knowledge into local practice

LGAs can act as translators of external knowledge. They can take lessons from regional and EU experience and adapt them into more practical formats for LGs, helping ensure that international learning leads to local action. This is especially important in the NALAS region, where project-based knowledge is often available but not always systematically transferred into domestic practice.

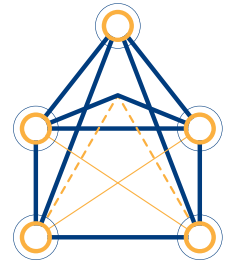
Building continuity beyond projects

A recurring challenge in the region is that support often depends on temporary project cycles. LGAs can help create continuity by keeping networks active, retaining knowledge, and ensuring that LGs continue to benefit from contacts and learning after projects end. This makes them an important bridge between short-term initiatives and longer-term institutional development.

Bringing knowledge into local practice – the example of CIVINET Slovenia–Croatia–SEE

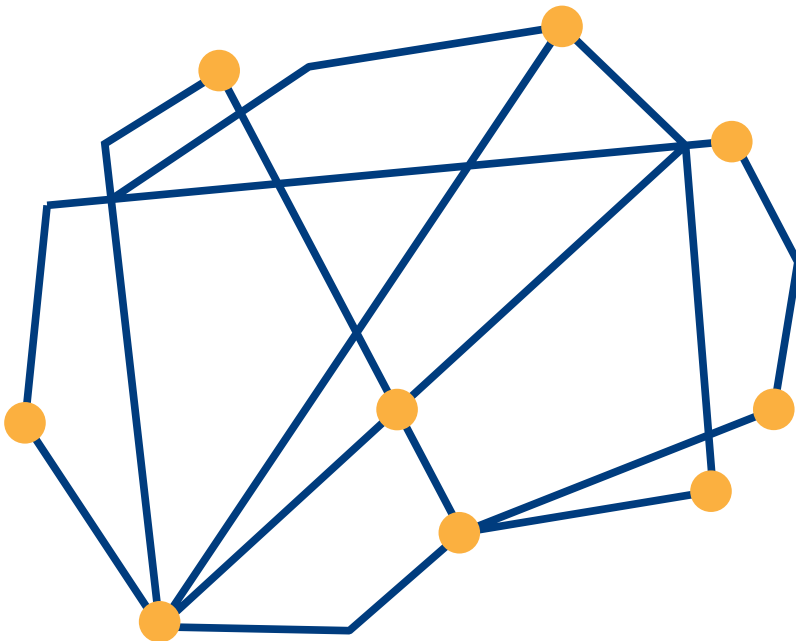
CIVINET Slovenia–Croatia–SEE is a regional network that helps turn knowledge on SUM into practical support for cities and stakeholders in South-East Europe. Active since 2013, it brings together members from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia and promotes exchange of good practices, peer learning and cooperation on sustainable mobility projects. Through conferences, webinars, workshops and study visits, it helps transfer European policy and practical experience into local and regional contexts. This makes it a useful example of how regional platforms can support capacity development and bring knowledge into practice across the WB region. (civitas.eu)

Roadmap for strengthening the role of LGA



This chapter provides a practical roadmap for LGAs that wish to strengthen their role in supporting SUM planning. It proposes a phased approach, distinguishing between short-term, medium-term and long-term steps. The roadmap is intended as a flexible orientation rather than a fixed model, recognising that LGAs across the NALAS region start from different institutional positions, capacities and levels of engagement in SUM.

In some economies, LGAs are only beginning to engage with SUM and may initially focus on awareness-raising, information sharing and mapping the needs of LGs. In others, they may already have experience with training, project support, policy dialogue or coordination with ministries and international partners. The roadmap therefore reflects different entry points, while offering a common direction of development: from basic support functions towards a more structured and recognised role in national SUM governance and NSSP implementation.



Phase	Main focus	Possible actions	Expected result
Short-term	Establishing a basic support role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> map the status of SUMP among LGs identify common needs and barriers share basic information on SUM and SUMP organise initial workshops, consultations or exchange events establish contacts with ministries, national agencies and key partners 	LGAs become recognised as an entry point for SUM-related information, dialogue and exchange
Medium-term	Consolidating services and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop regular training activities prepare practical guidance materials and simple tools facilitate peer learning between LGs participate in consultations, working groups and advisory processes support communication and selected implementation elements of NSSP collect more structured feedback from LGs on needs, barriers and progress 	LGAs become a more established intermediary actor that provides practical support to LGs and strengthens coordination with national institutions
Long-term	Becoming a structured partner in SUM governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute to monitoring and reporting systems support the use of common indicators and reporting formats participate in the design and review of NSSP measures act as a delivery partner for selected support functions support implementation-oriented learning and continuity beyond projects strengthen advocacy based on evidence collected from LGs 	LGAs become an institutionalised part of the support environment for SUM and a recognised partner in national SUM governance

This roadmap should not be understood as a rigid sequence. Depending on their capacities and national context, some LGAs may already be active in medium- or long-term areas, while others may need to begin with more basic support functions. Its value lies in providing a realistic direction of development that can be adapted to different starting points across the NALAS region.

This policy has been prepared by NALAS with the support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), as part of the Regional Climate Partnership between Germany and the Western Balkans, on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

