



Overcoming economic constraints in Thessaloniki: Special prize recognising Thessaloniki's tremendous efforts despite a difficult working environment

Ioannis Palestis, Chairman of Thessaloniki Public Transport Authority (THEPTA)



Which event has kick started your SUMP development process?

We took the opportunity to develop a SUMP for the Metropolitan area of Thessaloniki in the framework of THEPTA's participation in the ATTAC/SEE programme. Facing major economic and social challenges as a result of Greece's entrance in Memorandum Era in 2010, the need for practical and low cost planning alternatives was met. THEPTA's strategic SUMP was officially approved in February 2014.

Which component of your city's SUMP is of specific strategic importance?

The introduction of a tramway system in Thessaloniki has been proposed by THEPTA as a mean for urban regeneration and reduction of external costs of transport. The main target now is to find the

financial resources and initiatives that will lead to the project's maturity and finally to implementation.

Which lessons have you learned throughout your SUMP process?

Sharing ideas and experiences is key to successful SUMP development. Our local Mobility Forums enabled active participation of the local stakeholders and helped communicating the SUMP to the public through campaigns, in conferences and networks. We also benefited from the support of our ATTAC transnational partners and could already identify areas for improvement for the next SUMP generation.

Why is monitoring and evaluation of the SUMP such a relevant topic for you?

Identifying problems or successes allows us to readjust the SUMP and

give priority to the implementation of certain measures. Also, monitoring and evaluation allows informing the local stakeholders and decision makers appropriately in order to demonstrate that the SUMP is worth continuing or requires modifications. We have established within THEPTA an in-house SUMP quality assessment unit in order to assess the quality of public transport services, and follow up the implementation of the measures proposed within the SUMP.

What's the next challenge for your city in the SUMP process?

We intend to include travel behaviour research in new measures, integrated pricing as well as financing measures in the next SUMP generation, or to develop tools and strategies for the sustainable mobility of tourists.

FYI

Words by **Dagmar Köhler**,
Communications Manager, Polis
www.polisnetwork.eu
www.eltis.org/mobility-plans