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The Urban Lab of Europe !

# The SASMob Project Journal N° 3

*Project led by the City of Szeged*



**URBAN  
MOBILITY**



# The SASMOB project

The **SASMob** project aims to tackle congestion, poor air quality and noise exposure by building a data-driven intelligent transport system based on a structured multi-governance model with both public and private companies and transport providers.

It is based on two interconnected pillars: employers mobility pledges coupled with a data driven intelligent transport system. The mobility pledges will adapt a successful practice already in place in Austin (Texas) by creating cooperation agreements between the urban authority and local employers in order to change institutional working arrangements (including commuting and telework deals). The intelligent responsive IT platform will collect and monitor commuting in order to shape a co-designed policy process based on human-vehicle infrastructure communication.

## **Partnership:**

- Municipality of the City of Szeged
- Szeged Pólus Development Non-profit Ltd
- Regional Environmental Center
- Urban Management of Szeged Municipality Nonprofit Ltd
- 1 higher education and research institute: University of Szeged
- Szeged Transportation Ltd -
- Centre for South-Alföld Transport Ltd
- Griffsoft Ltd
- IT Services Hungary Ltd
- Pick Szeged Ltd
- evosoft Hungary Ltd

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The summer is time to enjoy the long evenings, the night entertainments in the city, it is the festival season. It is time to even enjoy commuting to work. These last six months were fruitful and exciting times for the SASMob project, which started to get also external recognition. At company level investments included within the mobility plans have been finalised and SASMob was also involved in large scale, city-wide events. SASMob partnership became the engine behind city-wide sustainability events. External promotion of sustainable commuting got momentum in which the public transport company and some private partners took the lead organising company level health weekends, festivals and happenings on public transport vehicles. Successful boosting and promotion of Bike to Work campaign also meant that the city had per capita highest levels of cyclists in Hungary.

But not everything is rosy, since there are bottlenecks within project implementation. One of the key delay is the development of the SASMob App for decision making and carpooling. We will have to wait until the beginning of next year to finally check out the application in real operation.

With just over two thirds of the project lifetime it is also time to think about the future and the long-term sustainability of the project. Working on it the team of Economics Department of Szeged University has taken up the lead. Thanks to these efforts there are 7 new companies who signed declaration of intent to join the SASMob pledge.

## 2. GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Every change, let it be behaviour change or within institutional structures or working methodologies depends on individuals, on individual changemakers. People who are fully committed and enjoy the work they do, and it is visible for the outsiders as well. They are the one who can motivate other people to join, to follow. Just remember the example of Greta Thunberg, she alone could do more for climate consciousness than many large-scale, national or international organisations, with millions of EURs to spend. You might love or hate her, but she is more visible and emblematic for a large community of people fighting for climate change and for the future of the Earth.

Changemakers are the trendsetters, they are the ones who inspire also us to act and to join in. They buy us in. If we, as society want to manage change (any change in fact) we have to look for and empower these changemakers.

Szeged and within it SASMOB also have identified her own changemakers who inspire the partnership and who can persuade with their actions others to join the network.

The number one changemaker in Szeged is Sándor Nagy, the vice mayor of the city. His enthusiasm and conviction fuels others to act and he was also the one who personally persuaded many SASMOB partners to join.



*Vice-mayor Sandor Nagy campaigning for local elections on bike*





Ágnes Erdei and the evosoft team on company rental bikes

Another changemaker is Ágnes Erdei, site manager from evosoft and SASMOB mobility manager within the company. Although evosoft joined SASMOB after the project approval, evosoft became one of the first employers to implement the actions approved in the mobility plan. Thanks to evosoft SASMOB project has the first ambassadors, influencers not only at company but also at city level. Colleagues from evosoft supported the public transport company to promote the new option to take bikes on trams. As Ági explained to me: *“I do it, because I enjoy it, because it is important for me, personally.”*

*“At first my CEO was not very keen on joining SASMOB, he was worried about the administrative burdens and unnecessary efforts from the team. Two years passed, and now he agrees that I took full ownership of this project and that it is indeed successful within the*

*company. My role as site manager is to support our colleagues. SASMOB offered a brand new and subtle way to support our employees that even took them at surprise. They are really enjoying SASMOB actions.”*

So far so good for the employees but there is also a personal side to it: “On the other hand, I also find personal goals, personal accomplishment within SASMOB, since it requires creativity from my side. I can use my creativity to build up something from zero, such as the bike rental system. There was no example before us to follow, so we invented this system, we introduced and it and adjusting it as we go along with the usage. It gives me contentment that I can influence not only our colleagues but also their families. I am able to counterbalance at least a little bit the ecological footprint of our company.”

Personal engagement is also strong from the part of Viktor Ganyec, appointed mobility manager at Environmental Management Szeged Ltd (SZKHT). He is always first to act, first to introduce new initiatives: since 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2019 the company offers 2 extra days off for those who arrive to work by bike for more than 50% of all working days. SZKHT was also first to join the viral TETRIS challenge and Viktor also created the pop-up traffic sign park/challenge track and quiz for children. *“it delights me, that the extra paid leave days or the free bike rental system are popular among our employees.”*

SASMob project is successful only because it has many engaged enthusiasts who find new synergies, start new paths for mobility. These people love their work, and enjoy contributing to the common good in Szeged. Such people are

Ágnes Szóke-Tóth from Szeged Transport Company who seizes every opportunity to make public commuting fun and introduced many playful actions and inventions, Péter Rózsa, coordinating project communication actions, György Malovics from The University of Szeged to engage NGOs and other private stakeholders in mobility planning in the city and also from the university Vilmos Bilicki who, with the determination of a researcher is developing and fine-tuning the sensors to monitor mobility in the city. And the list is not full. SASMob project should celebrate the people who make the project happen.

photo4: Ambassadors of sustainable mobility: SASMob partner, evosoft team promoting the new possibility to take bikes on board on Szeged trams

# 3. MOST RELEVANT PROGRESS SINCE MARCH 2019

Progress was made on different levels during the last half year in Szeged. SASMob became a mature project with clear achievements and visible trends and influences over the city. While there are clear successes and achievements, but also visible challenges and bottlenecks in implementation to get through.

We expected new results and developments in 4 different domains in Journal2. There were considerable progresses in three domains, while one domain encountered further difficulties and thus delays. Let's have a view on them:

## 3.1 IT URBAN monitoring ready to provide travel information

IT URBAN monitoring is based on the merging of two data sources: wifi-signals and smart image deciphering based observation system. With the help of these two data sources it will be possible to "look inside" vehicles, to estimate not only the number of passing vehicles, but also the passengers within these vehicles. Sensors have been installed both at important, busy city locations – such as the Inner-City Bridge – and on public transport vehicles. Since data analysis will be done locally – which will also reduce the amount of data to be transferred to the central data managing platform – and only non-personal statistical data will be forwarded to the centre, the monitoring system correspond to EU GDPR regulations. The core within this patented monitoring system is the neuron network data

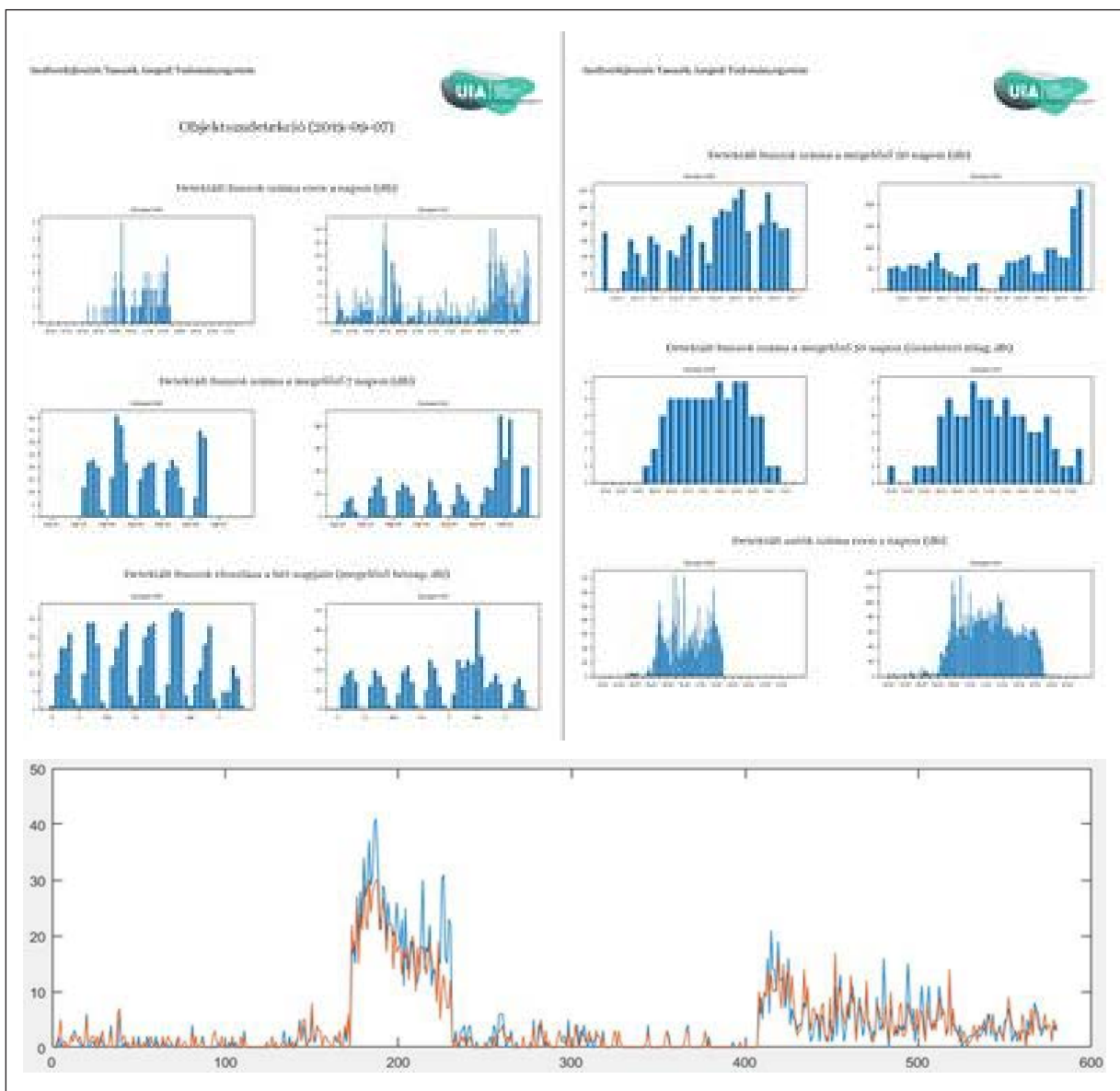
processing system. Neuron networks will be trained through data validation process. With the inflow of the first data the IT scientists are finetuning and training the sensors by matching mobility images detected automatically by the sensor with those observed within the validation set.

The first sensors have been installed during the summer months, both on city locations and on public transport vehicles and the first "data cleaning" and training of the neuron network system has been started. A short video has been prepared to explain the monitoring system, which will provide the first results in the next period: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u31DmuXdB8c>





1) Detecting objects through installed sensors



2) accuracy of the sensors (detecting) is very high for pedestrians and cars, it needs further training for cyclists

## 3.2 Visibility actions, mobility campaigns in full fledge

Szeged was successful to mobilise its citizens for sustainable and healthy mobility and commuting in the last months. According to the communication plan, during the good weather months in 2019 biking was in the focus of SASMOB communication and awareness raising activities, while 2020 the focus will be more on public transport.

Due also to the successful campaigns of the SASMOB team to mobilise employees to join the national Bike to Work campaign, Szeged became the first biking city of Hungary (outside Budapest). Szeged jumped to this first position from last year's 4<sup>th</sup> position, so managed to achieve its goal. During the spring and autumn 2-weeks campaigns, Szeged collected more than 10 000 biking days and more than 36 000 cycled kms. Besides the other planned programmes, festivals

and events were also successful. SASMOB managed many local side-events, such as breakfasts and campaigns at SASMOB partner sites.

The Szeged air show received more than 25 000 visitors, to which a new public transport service was created. The Szeged midnight tram run which started after the last tram rolled out, received many runners, among them the SASMOB team. Besides being a charity and a runners' community event it is also a way to promote public transport.

Private partners also became active and organised city-wide events: in April SzkhT organised the Earth's Day activities, in May Pick Ltd organised a family day, while in July evosoft organised a Health Day on the main square. Great success was the pop-up traffic-sign challenge trail among the participating children.



*SASMOB team on midnight tram run*



*Pop-up traffic-sign challenge trail for kids*



*Bikers' breakfasts within Bike to Work campaign*



Another fun activity in Szeged was that two of SASMOB partners joint this year's greatest viral

social media craze, the TETRIS challenge, to show the world the things they work with.



*Tetris challenge taken up within Szeged Environmental Management Ltd and Szeged Public Transport company*

I would conclude that SASMob partnership was successful to create fun activities and a visible presence at city-wide events, which is a good start. This was a good start for awareness raising, but still need more structural actions for behaviour change. A specific and important asset is that employees themselves are enthusiastic and willing to give their free time and their “face” to the SASMob project, thus they are happy to become local ambassadors, influencers. This

indeed is a great asset which must be used wisely. Personal persuasion is the most successful way of promotion, but ambassadors must be supported in this role.

Partners should use the winter period to get ready to more structural changes as well. This is a crucial aspect of the project, since the city-wide IT Trans App will work only if it gets high interest among the citizens.

### 3.3 App supporting the implementation of mobility plans

There are considerable delays related the IT JOB application, which is the weakest point of the project. The trade-off to develop a specific application might not pay for the delays during the development phase shortening the testing period. The development team of Griffsoft is

concentrating on the carpooling option to be managed within the given employers – as a way to maintain trust between driver and passenger. We will still have to wait until January 2020 to test the application.

### 3.4 Launching of upscaling activities

Just over the first half of project implementation, partners within SASMob project are thinking about how to maintain the momentum, how to keep the Smart Alliance working after the end of funding from Urban Innovative Actions. The University of Szeged is busy to make contacts with new employers in the city, making appointments, explaining, persuading them. Whether the partnership will be able to replicate and expand itself, is a strong indicator of project success.

the alliance. Together with Viktor Knezevics, head of BP team in Szeged, one of the new signatories to join SASMob we discussed their motivation, what is appealing in the cooperation and what would they expect from it. Here are some extracts from the interview, which is available at the UIA website:

What is clear that the private partners within the partnership are real changemakers, they are fresh, energetic and flexible. Open for fun activities and new ideas, they are ready to be mobility leaders in the city. Their enthusiasm is already fuelling new partners to join.



*“BP is ready to join the SASMob partnership” Viktor Knezevics, ceo of BP in Szeged*

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of October an employers’ meeting was held in the municipality of Szeged where 7 new companies expressed their interest to join



“If we want to belong to the community where we live, and we want to be active members of this community, we cannot make it better individually. Especially customs related to mobility to be changed requires the engagement of the whole community.

It is very important to see that so many important players in the city are in it. We feel this is an initiative we cannot stay out of. Also, I personally like the spirit of the cooperation, the way private companies are working together with the municipality in such a concerted and transparent way to make Szeged to become greener and more sustainable is appealing. This is great.

SASMob put down the fundamentals to work together in Szeged for sustainable mobility. It introduced innovative solutions, which can be further developed, also can be transferred also to other cities as well.

I think Szeged is just the right city size for experimentation and piloting. Szeged with its 10 000 inhabitants is already a complex system, but a comfortable sized city, where results can be solid and reliable with smaller risks of experimenting. Once there are results and good practices they can be transferred and introduced to larger ecosystems.” (Viktor Knezevics)

## 4. OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Challenges are manifold in implementing a complex project like SASMob, there are ones which we can plan and get ready for and others which come like a thunder. Non-predictable challenges were the manifold loss of important partners and internal changes in organisational structures which impede tight time framed project implementation. The project lost important partners already twice due to internal problems to these organisations, which is always difficult to manage, to involve the new partners, to share the already acquired knowledge, to pass the rhythm of the project. So far SASMob has managed these difficult times quite well and the new partners are well-integrated and caught the pace.

The SASMob community is a great place to belong to. People are enthusiastic about their roles, they really enjoy what they are doing and therefore most of the activities are running smoothly.

### Partnership working

In this third Journal I would like to highlight one specific implementational challenge, that of partnership working. It is a key aspect, a key benefit and a unique opportunity of UIA programme that it fosters local partnerships. This is an opportunity since institutional inertia is usually so high that it is difficult to create long-term partnerships for public goods. Within UIA there is an abundant experience about how these local partnerships work, what are the challenges and what are the imminent benefits of these project structures. It is evident that the required local partnership created an important learning process in Szeged.

It is a key implementational challenge to keep the partnership – with different working methodologies, different institutional goals, mechanisms and working in different policy fields - running and focused on the topic for 3-4 years.

In Szeged it was the municipality – before letting mobility problems escalating, trying to maintain the sustainability of the public transport system – who urged private partners to join the partnership. Private partners, while providing some benefits and developing some infrastructure for sustainable mobility options, were not structured in their approach towards commuting issues. Employment based mobility planning is not wide-spread in Hungary and support structures are not established for commuting, as it is already established and happening as a public service offered by public transport providers in other EU countries (ex.: France).

Thus, Szeged municipality initiated the project, persuaded partners to join. However, leading the partners on a day-to-day week on week basis, is more demanding. Processes within a public institution can be slow, must follow complicated rules and bureaucratic procedures. It is also a crucial factor: who is the day-to-day manager of the project, whether he/she has the authority to really lead the partner organisations, have authority and are experienced in motivating other employers.

While the idea to focus on this policy field came from the municipality it was very well received by the private partners. The topic of SASMob project resonated very well with their own interests. Once private companies understood their interest

and realised the benefits of the collaboration they became just as much, or even more engaged: in some cases, they even took over the role of initiators. What happened in Szeged is that private partners became the engines of the partnership working.

Cooperation in Szeged does not have a very strong day-to-day leadership (although the vice-mayor is a key figure, the project is lacking a higher ranking public official for a tighter management), it is more fluid and based on individual changemakers. The motivation for actions in Szeged comes from personal drive, from personal interests. You may introduce weekly project meetings – results will depend on personal engagement. This also means that those activities which are well-reflecting the interests of certain partners are advancing well, while others, more peripheral to the core interests of partners, are less advanced.

Due to the high level of personal engagement of project managers, the project level management, which at first look could seem a bit chaotic and loose, in terms of achieving change achieves important results. This is a striking revelation: whoever starts the cooperation for whatever reason: mobility is such a key factor for all of us living in cities that it will find partners, if will find support and cooperating partners.

It is also crucial that project managers within the different partner organisations developed good personal relationships. For example, during the monthly communication meetings partners visited each other’s premises, learnt about the work of the other partner organisations. While these visits could seem as superficial and insignificant for the implementation of the project, they turned out to be the binding force between the individual project managers.

**TABLE 1: MAPPING SASMOB AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED UIA CHALLENGES**

Challenge	Level	Observations
1. Leadership for implementation	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Besides continuous political support there is still need for a strong, targeted leadership for the everyday working and implementation of the project.</li> <li>Leadership is necessary for understanding work package connections and supporting communication and behaviour change campaigns</li> <li>Stronger leadership is necessary to create a city-wide momentum and better utilisation of synergies</li> </ul>
2. Public procurement	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procurements so far ensured high quality and incorporation of existing knowledge.</li> <li>Change and major change processes with the Programme Authority take longer than expected time, which delays some activities.</li> <li>Infrastructural procurements are also requiring longer than expected time, also internal approval processes are time consuming.</li> </ul>

Challenge	Level	Observations
3. Integrated cross-departmental working	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee mobility mapping ensured high awareness for the project within PPs.</li> <li>Employees are intrigued and engaged which imposes responsibility on partners to deliver change, also became ambassadors among peer employees</li> <li>Coordination of SASMob with other running mobility projects and infrastructural developments are fluent (SUMI, Low Carb and ROP projects).</li> </ul>
4. Adopting a participative approach	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canalization of ideas for innovative mobility actions from pro-active partners fuels mobility plan implementation among full partnership.</li> <li>Repeated withdrawal from partnership hit the project hard, although is managed smoothly, REC has been replaced by an equally experienced organization in transport management, Mobilissimus Ltd.</li> <li>Cooperation with local organisations (schools, civic organisations, bike repair shops, etc) to support and upscale the project results is time consuming and still needs momentum to develop.</li> </ul>
5. Monitoring and evaluation	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of monitoring activities started, setting baseline data for all indicators is an ongoing challenge.</li> <li>IT URBAN mobility mapping through data management requires extra caution for data management rules.</li> <li>Clear processes and indicators are necessary to measure the impact of the employer based mobility interventions.</li> <li>IT Trans sensors has been erected to collect high-quality data on city wide urban mobility patterns.</li> </ul>
6. Financial Sustainability	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To move the focus of mobility improvements from infrastructural investments to less tangible soft measures and campaigns will ensure financial sustainability.</li> <li>However, these soft measures, such as mobility campaigns and soft measures are harder to organize at city level, it requires higher cooperation among partners and external city based entities (civic organisations, art groups, schools, etc.)</li> <li>SASMob is right on the way to create synergies among partner and stakeholder organisations.</li> </ul>

Challenge	Level	Observations
7. Communicating with target beneficiaries	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative, innovative awareness raising actions require additional attention, media content provision will not be enough to raise public awareness and induce behaviour change.</li> <li>• City level communication improved a lot during the last 6 months. SASMob has been presented at many festivals and events across the city.</li> <li>• SASMob also boosted city wide participation at Bike to Work campaigns, creating successful synergies.</li> <li>• Cooperation between SASMob partners also resulted in communication events, such as image shooting.</li> <li>• Although some creative sparkles have been popped out (such as the sustainable superheroes), the creative spirit within SASMob partners could be better fuelled into communication actions. (flashmobs, guerrilla videos, funny posters, collectible magnets, jazz tramway nights, etc)</li> <li>• Strategic and predictable, regular communication actions are needed to sensitize the citizens.</li> <li>• Besides promoting the project SASMob, more attention could be given to make the core message of SASMob more understandable and tangible for the citizens of Szeged. Actions for behaviour change should be better formulated and targeted across the city. It is not enough that people know about the project, but they also must understand the importance of sustainable mobility for the benefit of themselves and for the benefit of the city.</li> </ul>
8. Upscaling	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project activities have been regarded within the Szeged community as forward looking and prestigious. SASMob is an important city-wide network which aims quality of life and sustainability of the city. A network which is worth taking part at.</li> <li>• Thanks to the efforts of colleagues from Szeged University Economics Department to knock on the door of singular employers, new employers are already following the work of SASMob and taking part of its activities. New companies, new partners to be involved in SASMob pledge will get support from the university and from Mobilissimus Ltd on mobility planning and will be slowly introduced into employer based mobility planning.</li> </ul>



During the Project Coordination Team meeting (which comes together every 6 months) on 20<sup>th</sup> of September, I distributed a short questionnaire on the implementation challenges. I feel it is important to see how the people running the project from the different partner organisations see the different challenges in front of them. It was already the second time to conduct this short survey. the previous one among others fuelled a stronger focus on communication activities, so it was interesting to see whether the partners

recognised this change within communication activities. It again provided a moment for self-reflection for all the partners. I have received 11 filled in questionnaires from most people responded with positive changes and better scores than in the previous questionnaire. Communication and upscaling were the areas with the most visible positive changes in implementation, but also with lowest scores. Monitoring and evaluation and project leadership received the highest scores for implementation.

## 5. WHAT WILL HAPPEN OVER THE WINTER IN SZEGED?

We are looking forward again a very busy period within SASMob project. Let's see the possible highlights of the next period:

- 1) Infrastructural development to be finalised – There are many smaller infrastructural improvements or changes in the city, including a new tram stop for the employees of SZKHT, the bike-tram intermodal stations, bike repair stations, awareness raising parklets, etc.– we will give a full report on all infrastructural improvements in March
- 2) Long awaited car-pooling service for SASMob partners will finally get in operation – the first experiences and data on usage should be available in March
- 3) SASMob superheroes got into action – a large scale public transport and sustainable mobility campaign through comic strips using superheroes
- 4) First results and mobility analysis from the monitoring system/sensors – hopefully already in the January Zoom-in we will be able to report on these monitoring results
- 5) SASMob going European – Szeged Municipality has applied and has been successful to organise a Civitas study visit during which Szeged will introduce its SASMob project – together with other mobility improvements – to 8-10 European cities. <https://civitas.eu/event/civitas-study-visit-szeged>

**Haladjunk együtt!**

**SASMOB HŐSÖK**

European Union  
European Regional Development Fund

Szeged Megyei Jogú Város

UIA URBAN INNOVATIVE ACTIONS  
The Urban Lab of Europe!

<http://sasmob-szeged.eu>

*Superhero characters have been created, we are waiting for their actions in comic strips to appear in Szeged*

Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) is an Initiative of the European Union that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges. Based on article 8 of ERDF, the Initiative has a total ERDF budget of EUR 372 million for 2014-2020.

UIA projects will produce a wealth of knowledge stemming from the implementation of the innovative solutions for sustainable urban development that are of interest for city practitioners and stakeholders across the EU. This journal is a paper written by a UIA Expert that captures and disseminates the lessons learnt from the project implementation and the good practices identified. The journals will be structured around the main challenges of implementation identified and faced at local level by UIA projects. They will be published on a regular basis on the UIA website.



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