

## *Rupprecht Consult – An Interview*

*Rupprecht Consult introduces itself to the GPSM community.*



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Rupprecht Consult about the importance of holistic approaches and their successful application in the example of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans.

**GPSM: Could you briefly describe your consultancy and the main activities in the field of mobility and logistics?**

Our company is a fully independent private research and consultancy company, based in Cologne since 1996. Our mission is to contribute to sustainable development of cities and regions in Europe and worldwide. We are a committed team of internationally experienced consultants delivering quality services in the fields of urban and regional development, transport and mobility, environmental protection and, generally, innovation to society. Very often, we initiate and support networks of cities that share an ambition to try something new and that commit explicitly to share their experience with less advanced cities in order to mainstream improvements as widely as possible.

**GPSM: How do you define sustainability in your own work?**

“Live as if you lived forever.” This poignant explanation of the term sustainability also captures many aspects of what we aim to achieve in cities around the world: “Plan, manage and inhabit this city as if you could live there forever.” We therefore lend our support only to financially viable approaches. We realise and embrace the simple fact that socially unacceptable strategies are bound to fail in democratic societies. And we are personally and professionally motivated to contribute to the improvement of global ecological conditions in a necessary conjunction with local environmental factors. The latter includes, very importantly, those that matter for a fulfilled, healthy and socially rich human life.

**GPSM: What trends and developments are you facing in your work field?**

Hundreds of trends characterise our area of work: Technological, social, financial, cultural, political ones and others. We play a leading role in observing and analysing these trends and in teasing out their implications for practitioners in cities. One of the very important recent developments in the area of mobility is the growing realisation that isolated interventions can never produce step-change improvements. Instead, complex situations require a whole set of carefully orchestrated approaches that work hand-in-hand. SUMP (Sustainable Urban

Mobility Planning) provides the appropriate methodical toolkit for such holistic approaches. Our company is leading the international debate about this approach, both in terms of its conceptual further development as well as in its implementation.



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**GPSM: Which challenges/hurdles do you recognize while working towards sustainable mobility?**

There are of course many challenges to overcome. Our analyses of recent years show that two challenges in particular are among the most important bottleneck factors. And these are less ‘hard’, technical or financial factors. What matters much more is political will and citizen participation – and their productive interplay. In other words, it is the *process* that matters at least as much as the content of your strategy. Luckily, it is again the SUMP model that allows to tackle this challenge systematically with a very high degree of success.

**GPSM: What are your next activities / projects in international cooperation?**

We will continue to provide our experience and insights, advice and research services to individual cities, regional bodies, national agencies, international organisations etc. A typical example of this mode of working is our support for the Brazilian government to establish national SUMP guidelines. We play similar roles in several European countries, have previously worked in countries as diverse as Russia, Sri Lanka and China. One concrete product we are about to launch is a SUMP self-assessment and certification scheme, which assesses the methodical rigour, procedural quality and practical effectiveness of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans – regardless of where they were conducted.