Interreg

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SUMMA

Interreg 2021-2027
Italy – Croatia CBC Programme

SUMMA – Sustainable Multimodal Mobility in Adriatic Coastal and Hinterland Areas

Priority Axis: sustainable maritime and multimodal transport
Specific objective: Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross border mobility

D.1.2.1 Strategy for Intermodal Mobility Solutions

Final version 1.0 – October 2026



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SUMMA

PROJECT SUMMA

Work package	1		
Version	1.0 (Final)	**Date**	October 2026
Type	Report		
Availability	Public		
Responsible partner	ISIG		

This deliverable was prepared by ISIG, with support from Arcadya Srl in the facilitation of selected participatory activities and in the development of specific components of the Strategy. ISIG coordinated the work and is responsible for the final content.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

D121 – Strategy for Intermodal Mobility Solutions represents the main strategic output of WP1 – Designing Cross-Border Strategies and brings together the analytical, participatory and implementation-oriented components developed throughout SUMMA. The Strategy builds on the cross-border evidence produced in D111 – *Cross-border Sustainable Mobility Report*, the territorially grounded analysis and stakeholder engagement developed in D112 – *Pilot Site Sustainable Mobility Reports*, and the practical lessons learned through the development and implementation of the WP2 Pilot Activities. Its purpose is to translate this cumulative evidence into shared principles and strategic recommendations supporting more sustainable, integrated and effectively connected mobility systems across the Italy-Croatia Adriatic coastal and hinterland areas.

The drafting process followed a structured sequence moving from existing SUMMA evidence and pilot implementation experience to preliminary strategic hypotheses, stakeholder validation and integration, prioritisation, and final strategic recommendations. The evidence underpinning the Strategy highlights that the central challenge for the SUMMA territories is not simply the availability of different transport modes, but their ability to operate as parts of coherent, accessible and reliable intermodal travel chains.

Stakeholder validation substantially confirmed the strategic framework while introducing important implementation qualifications. The resulting Strategy is organised around six strategic recommendations connected by a transversal recommendation: **establish** permanent coordination mechanisms for intermodal mobility; **prioritise** investments that improve the continuity of complete intermodal journeys; **develop** integrated passenger information and ticketing based on interoperable data and long-term governance; **improve** the attractiveness of sustainable alternatives before relying on behavioural incentives; **formalise** cooperation and data-sharing arrangements among mobility providers; **engage** tourism destinations and other mobility attractors as active partners in mobility management. The transversal recommendation stresses that these measures should be implemented as mutually reinforcing components of the same mobility system rather than as isolated actions: governance and provider cooperation enable service and digital integration, while physical connectivity, service quality and accessibility create the conditions for more sustainable mobility choices.

From a cross-border perspective, the Strategy highlights that the greatest added value is generated where mobility challenges cannot be effectively addressed by individual territories or organisations acting alone. In particular, coordination across administrative boundaries, cooperation among mobility providers, interoperable information and ticketing systems, and the continuity of travel chains across different territorial scales can transform fragmented multimodal offers into more coherent intermodal systems. The SUMMA Strategy therefore provides a shared framework through which locally grounded solutions can contribute to a more integrated, sustainable and connected Adriatic mobility area.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Strategy and Role within the SUMMA Project

D121 – Strategy for Intermodal Mobility Solutions represents the main strategic output of WP1 – Designing Cross-Border Strategies and the point at which the analytical, participatory and implementation-oriented components of SUMMA are brought together. As stated in the Application Form, Activity 1.2 stems directly from the analyses developed under Activity 1.1 and is intended to produce a cross-border strategy for logistic and mobility solutions connecting ports with airports, railways and urban areas, with the broader objective of strengthening intermodal mechanisms and advancing sustainable mobility across the Italy-Croatia Programme area.

The Strategy is therefore conceived as the result of a progressive evidence-building process, integrating the results of the end-user and stakeholder engagement process implemented in the Pilot Areas and re-elaborating the relevant information contained in D111 and D112, as well as the practical knowledge obtained through the development and implementation of concrete mobility solutions, studies and investments in WP2. The relationship is intentionally two-directional: the Strategy provides a broader framework supporting the development and potential transferability of the Pilot Activities, while implementation experience and the lessons learned by Project Partners contribute to refining the final strategic recommendations.

D121 consequently performs a synthesis and translation function. It brings together the cross-border perspective of D111, the territorial and stakeholder-based evidence of D112 and the implementation experience of WP2; it then exposes the resulting strategic implications to a final structured stakeholder validation process. Through this process, recurring issues are transformed into consolidated strategic orientations while territorial differences and implementation conditions are retained rather than eliminated.

The final purpose is to identify shared principles, enabling conditions and transferable approaches through which local and regional mobility systems can become more sustainable, better integrated and more effectively connected with wider national and cross-border transport networks. The resulting recommendations are intended to provide policy-makers with evidence on the opportunities associated with intermodal mobility, support informed decision-making and capitalise on the lessons learned through the implementation of the SUMMA Pilot Activities.

1.2 Structure

D121 is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides the Scope and Methodology according to which the SUMMA Strategy for Intermodal Mobility Solutions has been drafted, validated and re-elaborated.
- Chapter 3 summarises the Key Findings from both the cross-border and the Pilot Sites levels, arising from both the analysis of intermodal mobility systems and from the implementation of SUMMA Pilot Activities.
- Chapter 4 presents the Validation Path towards the SUMMA Strategy.
- Finally, Chapter 5 presents the final version of SUMMA Strategic Recommendations.

2 Scope and Methodology

D121 – Strategy for Intermodal Mobility Solutions represents the strategic synthesis phase of the analytical and participatory process developed throughout SUMMA. For this reason, the Strategy builds progressively on the knowledge generated by the previous project activities and translates it into a set of strategic orientations for strengthening sustainable and intermodal mobility in the Italy-Croatia Programme area. Its methodological approach is therefore based on the consolidation, comparison and triangulation of different forms of evidence, combining cross-border analysis, territorially grounded findings, stakeholder knowledge and practical experience deriving from the development and implementation of the SUMMA Pilot Activities.

The methodological sequence can be summarised as in the figure below:

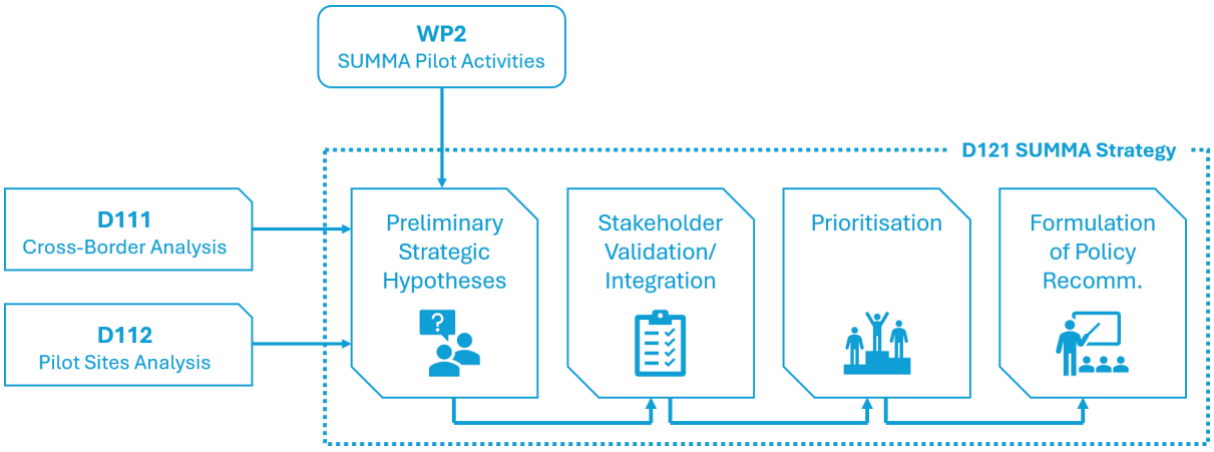


Figure 1: SUMMA D121 Methodological sequence

Existing SUMMA evidence and pilot implementation experience have nurtured the preliminary strategic hypotheses. Stakeholders validated and integrated them, prioritising the different measures according to strategic relevance, feasibility and cross-border added value. After the stakeholder input has been collected, consolidated strategic orientations and policy recommendations have been formulated. This sequence is intended to preserve a clear link between the evidence produced during the project and the final strategic recommendations, allowing for the contribution of relevant stakeholders to be consistently embedded along this path. The dedicated D121 stakeholder engagement activities therefore constitute an intermediate step through which evidence-based propositions have been confronted with

professional, institutional and operational knowledge before being translated into the final Strategy.

The SUMMA Participatory Model provides the methodological framework connecting these different stages. Developed within D111 and subsequently operationalised at Pilot Site level through D112, the Model conceptualises mobility through the notion of a Mobility Ecosystem, in which transport infrastructure and services interact with users, mobility providers, public authorities, regulators, mobility attractors and other relevant territorial actors. It consequently makes it possible to interpret mobility challenges not as isolated technical problems, but as the result of interactions between territorial conditions, rules, available services, stakeholder roles, mobility behaviours and user needs. The Model combines this analytical perspective with a participatory process based on Community Evaluation, Stakeholder Evaluation and the definition of appropriate Participation Strategies, following the approach proposed by the Council of Europe and ISIG (2017; 2020).

For the purposes of D121, the function of the Participatory Model evolves from the primarily analytical and locally oriented role it played in D112 towards a strategic and cross-territorial function. The local applications of the Model have already provided information on how mobility conditions are experienced, interpreted and potentially transformed in different Pilot Areas. D121 capitalises on these results by using the Mobility Ecosystem as a common lens through which recurring issues can be compared across territories and translated into strategic questions. At the same time, the Model supports the identification of the stakeholder profiles required for the final validation process and provides a framework for interpreting differences between perspectives rather than treating disagreement as a methodological weakness.

In this sense, the purpose of the methodology is to identify shared strategic conditions and transferable principles starting from the combination of cross-border and local analyses enriched by the lesson learned of Local Partner developing SUMMA WP2 Pilot Activities and relevant stakeholders. This allows D121 to move from evidence to strategy without losing the multi-scalar logic underpinning SUMMA: cross-border challenges are interpreted through local experience, while local solutions are considered in relation to wider regional, national and cross-border mobility systems.

2.1 Exploiting Previous Deliverables Contributions

As highlighted in the introduction of this Chapter, the SUMMA Strategy drafting starts by taking stock of the previously defined analyses, which are exploited in the Strategy through a process of structured synthesis validated by relevant stakeholders.

The first evidence stream is provided by D111 – Cross-border Sustainable Mobility Report. Through literature analysis, market analysis, expert interviews and end-user surveys, D111 developed the cross-border analytical baseline for the project and identified recurring obstacles and enabling conditions affecting sustainable and intermodal mobility in the Italy-Croatia Programme area.

The second evidence stream is provided by D112 – Pilot Site Sustainable Mobility Reports, which brings these broader issues to the territorial scale. D112 combines locally available mobility and modal-split evidence, territorially relevant survey results and stakeholder participation in order to assess how common mobility challenges are experienced in different Pilot Areas. In particular, its participatory activities were designed not only to validate existing evidence, but also to develop future scenarios and to strategically frame the SUMMA Pilot Activities within wider local and regional mobility systems. D112 thus provides D121 with territorial qualifications, user-centred evidence and implementation-oriented insights that complement the more general findings of D111.

A third input is provided by the WP2 Pilot Activities and their related deliverables. For the purposes of D121, these outputs are considered not only in terms of the technical solutions, studies or investments they produced, but also as sources of lessons learned during the development and implementation of the Pilot Activities. This implementation knowledge was complemented by the experience shared by Project Partners during SUMMA's in-person and online project meetings, where progress, practical constraints, adaptations and enabling conditions associated with the different Pilot Activities could be discussed collectively.

The combination of these three evidence streams provides the analytical basis from which a limited number of preliminary working hypotheses could be formulated and subsequently exposed to stakeholder scrutiny.

2.2 Drafting the Preliminary Hypotheses

The preliminary hypotheses represent the intermediate methodological step through which the evidence generated by SUMMA is translated into a form suitable for structured stakeholder discussion. They were developed through a thematic synthesis of the main findings emerging from D111, D112 and the implementation experience associated with the WP2 Pilot Activities.

The drafting process first involved identifying recurring challenges, enabling conditions and relationships across the different evidence sources. Cross-border findings were compared with local evidence in order to distinguish issues that appeared repeatedly across territories from those that depended on specific geographical, institutional or socio-economic conditions. Implementation experience from the Pilot Activities provided an additional perspective for identifying practical dependencies and conditions that could influence the feasibility of potential strategic directions.

Related findings were subsequently grouped into broader strategic areas of meaning. This step intentionally reduced the complexity of the underlying evidence: rather than asking stakeholders to discuss a large number of individual observations, each preliminary hypothesis condensed a set of interconnected findings into a sufficiently clear proposition around which different perspectives could be compared. At the same time, the hypotheses were kept broad enough to allow territorial differences, implementation conditions and additional issues to emerge during discussion.

Within D121, the preliminary hypotheses act as working propositions and discussion devices. Their function is to make the implications of previous SUMMA evidence explicit enough to be confronted with stakeholder knowledge, while avoiding the presentation of preliminary analytical interpretations as predetermined strategic conclusions. The Focus Group methodology presented below mirrors this principle, allowing participants to confirm, challenge, modify and/or complement the hypotheses (and not simply to approve or reject them).

The preliminary hypotheses consequently perform a bridging function between analysis and strategy. They preserve the traceability of the final orientations to the evidence generated throughout SUMMA, but they also create an open space in which stakeholders can reinterpret that evidence and contribute additional knowledge. Only after this process of validation,

qualification, integration and prioritisation are the working propositions translated into consolidated strategic orientations and final policy recommendations.

2.3 Validating and Integrating the Preliminary Hypotheses: SUMMA D121 Focus Groups

Two Consortium-scale Focus Groups were designed to validate and integrate the Preliminary Hypotheses, developed as described in Par. 2.2 taking stock of the previously defined analysis of sustainable and intermodal mobility, as described in Par. 2.1.

The Focus Groups therefore represented a subsequent step in the strategy-development process. Their function has been to assess whether the strategic implications derived from the existing evidence were considered relevant and realistic by stakeholders and to identify the conditions under which they could be implemented.

2.3.1 Objectives and Participants

The Focus Groups had five main purposes:

1. Validate the preliminary strategic hypotheses derived from previous SUMMA research and stakeholder evidence.
2. Refine or qualify the hypotheses by identifying the conditions under which they are considered relevant and feasible.
3. Identify missing strategic issues that are not sufficiently captured by the preliminary framework.
4. Prioritise the proposed strategic orientations according to relevance, feasibility and cross-border added value.
5. Identify key implementation conditions, including responsible actors, governance needs and major barriers.

Given the limited duration of the sessions, the Focus Groups were not intended to produce a detailed implementation plan for each strategic orientation. Their purpose was instead to provide a structured validation and prioritisation step that could inform the drafting of SUMMA final recommendations.

The Focus Groups involved a wide range of stakeholders, as previously selected at a local level by SUMMA Local Partners, as well as SUMMA Local Partners themselves, bringing the direct experience of Pilot Activities implementation. The objective was not to reach a statistical



representativeness, but the inclusion of complementary and informed perspectives across the mobility ecosystem.

Existing SUMMA stakeholder mappings and previous engagement activities have been used by SUMMA Local Partners as the primary basis for participant identification.

The online Focus Group took place on 8 September 2026, with 18 registered participants. The Mentimeter export recorded 15 voter profiles, all containing at least one response. Among respondents who provided information on their role, reported categories included project partner representatives, mobility users and a mobility provider.

The in-person Focus Group was held in Caorle on 17 September 2026, in connection with the SUMMA Final Event. The Mentimeter export recorded 15 voter profiles, of which 14 contained at least one response. Attendance exceeded the number of Mentimeter respondents. Among respondents who provided information on their role, reported categories included project partner representatives, mobility users, mobility providers and mobility attractors.

Response numbers varied across questions.

2.3.2 Structure and Activities

The two Focus Groups have been differentiated mainly in terms of interactive modality:

- The first Focus Group has been held online, enabling broader involvement of project partners and cross-border stakeholders.
- The second Focus Group has been organised in person in Caorle, in connection with the SUMMA Final Event, thus gathering local stakeholders and SUMMA partners;

Both Focus Groups had the duration of around 120 minutes and were structured according to the same following sessions, thus allowing for a systematic comparison of the results:

2.3.2.1 Stage 1 – Opening and contextualisation

During this stage, the facilitator briefly introduced through a slide presentation:

- The purpose of D121.
- The role of the Focus Group within the SUMMA participatory process.
- The distinction between existing project evidence and preliminary strategic hypotheses.
- The structure of the session.

Participants were informed that the hypotheses are working propositions rather than predetermined conclusions and may therefore be confirmed, challenged, modified or complemented. This introductory stage remained concise, taking approximately 10–15 minutes, including short participant introductions.

2.3.2.2 Stage 2 – Discussion of the preliminary hypotheses

The central part of the session focused on the preliminary hypotheses. For each hypothesis, participants first provided a rapid individual assessment using a five-point Likert agreement scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree).

The responses were collected through an online poll system. The rating was followed by a focused qualitative discussion addressing three core questions:

- Do you agree with the proposed strategic direction?
- Under which conditions would it be effective or feasible?
- What should be modified or added?

In a first part of the session, the facilitator avoided addressing every possible sub-question for every hypothesis. The objective was to identify the most relevant arguments, qualifications and disagreements rather than exhaustively discuss all implementation details. In a second phase, participants were asked to introduce considerations about supporting arguments, conditions and qualifications, disagreements or risks, proposed modifications and additional issues. Approximately 45-50 minutes were reserved for this stage.

2.3.2.3 Stage 3 – Identification of missing issues

After the discussion of the preliminary hypotheses, participants were asked whether any important strategic issue has not been adequately covered. The purpose was to ensure that the structure of the Focus Group did not constrain participants to the preliminary framework.

Additional issues could have been recorded as new strategic hypotheses or as complementary considerations to be addressed in D121. Approximately 5–10 minutes were reserved for this stage.

2.3.2.4 Stage 4 – Final prioritisation

Rather than assessing relevance, feasibility and cross-border added value after every individual hypothesis, these criteria have been applied once, at the end of the discussion. Participants assessed each strategic orientation according to:

- Strategic relevance – i.e., the extent to which the strategic orientation addresses key mobility challenges and contributes to the objectives of sustainable and intermodal mobility pursued by SUMMA.
- Feasibility – i.e., the extent to which the strategic orientation can realistically be implemented, considering technical, institutional, financial and operational conditions.
- Cross-border added value – i.e., the added value generated by addressing the mobility challenge identified by the strategy in a cross-border context.

Hypotheses were ordered by participants according to these features. This approach reduces repetition and enables participants to compare the different strategic orientations after having discussed them collectively. Approximately 10–15 minutes were reserved for this stage.

2.3.2.5 Stage 5 – Closing synthesis

Reaching the conclusion of the Focus Group, the facilitator summarised:

- The hypotheses receiving the strongest support.
- The main qualifications or disagreements.
- Any new issues emerging from the discussion.

Participants were then invited to add one final recommendation if they considered that an important point was not captured. The closing stage took approximately 5 minutes.

2.3.3 Data Management

The Focus Groups have been recorded with participants' explicit consent. Participants received clear information concerning:

- The purpose of the activity
- Voluntary participation
- Recording arrangements
- Use of the results
- Confidentiality
- Treatment of personal information.

The analytical material included:

- Audio/video recording, where authorised

- Facilitator notes
- Structured note-taking templates
- Poll or rating results
- Shared-board outputs
- Final hypothesis-validation matrix
- Participant profile summary.

Statements have been analysed and reported in anonymised or role-based form.

2.3.4 Potential Limitations

The Focus Groups provided qualitative and contextual evidence rather than statistically representative results. The findings may have been influenced by:

- The number and composition of participants.
- Uneven representation of stakeholder categories.
- Differences between in-person group dynamics and those of the online group.
- Participant familiarity with SUMMA.
- Social desirability.
- Differences between local and cross-border perspectives.

Structured individual assessment before discussion, neutral facilitation, systematic note-taking and the use of the same analytical framework across both sessions helped reducing these risks. The Focus Group findings complement, rather than replace, previous SUMMA evidence. Strategic recommendations have been developed through triangulation between previous project research, stakeholder engagement and the results of the two Focus Groups.

2.4 Analysing Focus Group Results

2.4.1 Structured Hypotheses Assessment and Thematic Qualitative Analysis

The Focus Groups outputs have been analysed through a combination of structured hypothesis assessment and thematic qualitative analysis. For each hypothesis analysed in the Focus Group Stages 2-3, the analysis recorded the following features:

Table 1: Analytical dimensions of SUMMA D121 Focus Groups outputs

Analytical dimension	Output
Initial assessment	Individual agreement rating
Validation status	Validated / Modified / Contested / Not validated
Main arguments	Key reasons supporting or challenging the hypothesis
Proposed modifications	Relevant qualifications or reformulations
Additional issues	New themes emerging from the discussion

This analysis is combined with that of the prioritisation made in Focus Group Stage 4, when the hypotheses were assessed according to strategic relevance, feasibility and cross-border added value. The qualitative analysis allows to identify:

- Areas of convergence
- Relevant disagreements
- Territorial differences
- Differences between stakeholder profiles
- Key enabling conditions
- Additional strategic issues.

The analysis deployed a deductive component, based on the preliminary hypotheses, and an inductive component, allowing new themes to emerge.

2.4.2 Comparative Analysis

The two Focus Groups have been analysed separately at first. Subsequently, results have been compared using the same analytical framework. The comparison identified:

- Hypotheses validated in both groups.
- Hypotheses requiring similar modifications.
- Issues receiving different assessments.
- Differences between Italian/local and broader cross-border perspectives.
- Strategic orientations displaying particularly high cross-border added value.
- Additional proposals emerging only in one group.

2.4.3 Output Integration

The final analysis distinguishes between four types of strategic evidence:

1. Evidence-supported and stakeholder-validated orientations – Strategic implications already supported by previous SUMMA evidence and substantially confirmed by Focus Group participants.
2. Evidence-supported orientations qualified by stakeholders – Strategic implications supported by previous evidence but requiring specific conditions, modifications or territorial qualifications.
3. Stakeholder-generated orientations – Additional strategic proposals emerging from the Focus Groups that were not included in the preliminary hypotheses.
4. Contested issues – Strategic questions on which relevant differences remain and for which the Strategy should avoid presenting a single stakeholder position as consensual.

This classification supports transparent translation of stakeholder engagement into Par. 4.3 and the final recommendations of D121.

3 Key Findings from Cross-Border and Pilot Site Sustainable Mobility Reports (D111-D112)

3.1 The Adriatic Cross-Border Mobility Context

The Italy–Croatia Programme area is characterised by a mobility system in which everyday travel, tourism flows and cross-border movements overlap across different territorial scales. Coastal cities and tourism destinations coexist with smaller urban centres, rural areas and hinterlands, while ports, railway stations, airports and road networks perform complementary functions within passenger journeys. This territorial configuration makes mobility a particularly relevant factor for accessibility, territorial cohesion and the functioning of local economies.

The challenge addressed by SUMMA originates precisely from this context. The project was designed in response to two interconnected issues affecting the Adriatic coastal and hinterland areas: traffic congestion, particularly during the tourist season, and still underdeveloped multimodal connections between ports, airports, railways and urban areas. SUMMA therefore aims to improve connectivity between coastal destinations and their hinterlands, while strengthening access to wider transport networks and, in particular, the TEN-T network. The cross-border dimension is central to this approach: mobility systems on the two sides of the Adriatic are not isolated systems, but parts of a wider functional area shaped by tourism, economic exchanges and passenger movements.

3.1.1 A Strongly Car-Dependent Context

At national level, mobility patterns in both Italy and Croatia continue to show a strong dependence on private road transport, although recent trends also point to an increasing role for public transport, active mobility and other sustainable alternatives.

In Italy, approximately 36.7 million people travelled on an average day in 2025, corresponding to 71.8% of the reference population and generating approximately 91 million daily trips. Most mobility takes place over relatively limited distances: more than two thirds of users travel less than 50 kilometres per day. Work remains the main reason for travelling and accounted for 33.6% of trips in the first half of 2025, while study-related mobility accounted for a further 5.4% (ISFORT, 2025). These figures indicate that the Italian mobility system is largely shaped by recurrent and predominantly local movements, alongside leisure, tourism and other non-systematic travel.

Private cars nevertheless remain the dominant transport mode. In the first half of 2025 they accounted for 60.8% of trips in Italy. At the same time, lower-impact transport modes have progressively recovered from the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Walking represented 20.6% of trips, while cycling and micromobility reached 5.2%, exceeding the 5% threshold for the first time. Public transport also showed signs of recovery, accounting for 8.9% of trips during the same period. Overall, journeys classified as sustainable mobility – including public transport, walking, cycling and micromobility – reached 34.7% in the first half of 2025, compared with 33.4% one year earlier and 35% in 2019 (ISFORT, 2025).

The coexistence of these trends is significant for the development of intermodal strategies. On the one hand, sustainable modes are progressively recovering and diversifying the range of mobility options available to users. On the other hand, private cars remain the reference mode for a majority of journeys and public transport has not yet become a default alternative across much of the country. Territorial disparities further affect this balance: public transport use is substantially stronger in large urban areas than in medium-sized and smaller centres, where car dependence tends to be greater (Designers Italia, 2022). This difference is particularly relevant for a project such as SUMMA, whose areas of interest include not only larger cities and major transport nodes but also coastal destinations and hinterland territories where population density, demand patterns and service provision may differ substantially from metropolitan contexts.

A similar combination of car dependence and progressive strengthening of collective transport can be observed in Croatia. According to the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 88.2 million passengers were transported by rail, scheduled road, air and maritime transport in 2025, representing an increase of approximately 5% compared with 2024. Rail passenger numbers increased by 7.3%, scheduled road transport by 5.3%, while maritime and coastal passenger transport recorded more moderate growth (Croatian Bureau of Statistics – DZS, 2025). Urban public transport also recorded increasing passenger volumes, indicating a renewed role for buses and trams in everyday mobility. Anyway, the national picture needs to be interpreted in light of the specific territorial configuration. In the Croatian coastal territories the railway network has only a limited territorial presence and, in several cases, does not directly serve the main coastal destinations. Rail then plays a more marginal role in local coastal mobility than national passenger figures alone might suggest, increasing the importance of road-based public transport, maritime services and effective connections with inland railway nodes.

Road transport, therefore, remains structurally dominant. Passenger cars accounted for approximately 77.9% of vehicle-kilometres travelled by vehicles registered in Croatia in 2024 (Croatian Bureau of Statistics – DZS, 2025). The simultaneous growth of public transport demand and continued prevalence of private vehicles indicates that the transition towards more sustainable mobility cannot be understood simply as a substitution of one transport mode with another. Rather, it requires the development of transport chains in which rail, bus, maritime services, cycling and walking can provide credible and convenient alternatives for different segments of the journey.

3.1.2 From Multimodality to Intermodality

This consideration is particularly important when distinguishing multimodality from intermodality. As highlighted in SUMMA D111, multimodality may describe the presence of different transport modes within the same territory, whereas intermodality requires those modes to be effectively connected and able to operate as parts of a coordinated journey. The existence of railway services, buses, maritime links, cycling infrastructure or airports does not, in itself, guarantee an intermodal system. Effective intermodality also depends on the physical accessibility of interchange points, timetable coordination, passenger information, ticketing arrangements and the possibility for different categories of users – including tourists, elderly passengers, people travelling with luggage and cyclists – to transfer between modes without excessive barriers (SUMMA, 2026a).

Available Italian data illustrate this gap between modal availability and actual intermodal use. Despite the broader recovery of sustainable mobility, journeys combining more than one motorised transport mode represented only 2.8% of motorised trips in the first half of 2025, compared with 3.2% in 2024 and 6.5% in 2019 (ISFORT, 2025; Designers Italia, 2022). The figure suggests that the recovery of individual sustainable modes has not yet been matched by an equivalent recovery in their integration.

Evidence collected directly from SUMMA end-users complements this broader picture. The SUMMA survey of long-term residents (the complete methodology, sample analysis and detailed survey results are presented in SUMMA D111, Chapter 5.1.) confirms that private car use remains structurally dominant, particularly as travel distance increases, while public transport and intermodal travel already play a relevant but uneven role across the project area. The survey also shows that daily mobility is largely concentrated over short and medium distances: for work or study trips, 29.4% of respondents travel less than 5 km, 26.5% between

5 and 10 km and 21.0% between 10 and 20 km, while 23.1% travel more than 20 km. A similar pattern emerges for other daily activities, for which 28.7% of trips are below 5 km and 36.4% fall within the 5–10 km range. These figures indicate a significant potential for modal shift where sufficiently attractive alternatives to private car use are available.

Respondents also identify a relatively consistent set of conditions that could encourage a shift towards more sustainable mobility. Higher public transport frequency received the highest average score among the proposed measures, at 4.36 out of 5, followed by extended routes and operating hours at 4.21 and higher commercial speed at 4.13. Improved infrastructure and greater public transport reliability both scored 4.07, while stronger intermodality scored 4.04, more affordable public transport 4.00 and integrated ticketing 3.85. The results therefore suggest that behavioural change depends not on a single incentive, but on a combination of service availability, frequency, reliability, travel time and integration across modes.

From the perspective of SUMMA, this represents a relevant structural issue: strengthening sustainable mobility requires not only improving individual transport services, but also making combinations between them sufficiently simple, reliable and attractive to compete with direct car travel. The issue becomes even more significant in coastal and tourism-oriented territories, where transport demand changes considerably according to season and where the relationship between mobility and territorial accessibility is particularly strong.

3.1.3 Tourism Mobility in the Adriatic Area

Tourism represents one of the main generators of mobility in the Adriatic area. Croatia provides a particularly clear example. In 2025, commercial accommodation establishments recorded 20.7 million tourist arrivals and 94.8 million overnight stays. Foreign tourists represented 85.1% of arrivals and more than 90% of overnight stays (Croatian Bureau of Statistics – DZS, 2025). These flows are strongly concentrated geographically. Istria recorded approximately 28.3 million overnight stays in 2025, accounting for almost 30% of the country's total, while Istria, Split-Dalmatia and Primorje-Gorski Kotar together generated around two thirds of Croatian tourist nights (Croatian Bureau of Statistics – DZS, 2025).

This concentration confirms the centrality of the Adriatic coast within the Croatian tourism system and, consequently, the pressure that seasonal visitor flows can exert on coastal mobility networks. Transport systems in these areas must respond simultaneously to the needs of residents, workers and visitors, while demand can vary considerably between peak tourism periods and the rest of the year. For transport planning, this creates a challenge that is

not limited to capacity: mobility services need to remain functional and financially sustainable throughout the year while also being capable of accommodating strong seasonal increases in demand.

Italy–Croatia tourism relations add a further cross-border dimension. Italian tourists generated approximately 4.3% of foreign overnight stays in Croatia in 2025, corresponding to around 3.7 million nights. Their presence was particularly significant in Istria, where they accounted for 5.9% of foreign overnight stays, or approximately 1.6 million nights (Croatian Bureau of Statistics – DZS, 2025). Conversely, Italy is also an important destination for Croatian travellers, especially because of geographical proximity and the attractiveness of Northern Italian regions for short stays, cultural tourism, shopping and mountain tourism (InfoMercatiEsteri, 2026).

These flows should not be interpreted only as tourism statistics. They generate mobility demand across the Adriatic and within destination territories, creating travel chains that can include long-distance and local components. A visitor may reach a destination area by car, aircraft, ferry or train and subsequently depend on regional rail, buses, cycling, walking or other last-mile services. The sustainability of the overall journey therefore depends not only on the mode used to cross a national border or the Adriatic Sea, but also on the quality of connections between gateways and final destinations.

Available evidence nevertheless points to a continued strong role for road-based mobility in tourism. At the broader Italian level, road-border crossings represented 49.4% of inbound tourist flows in 2023, compared with 47% travelling by air, while private cars remained the preferred mode for a large proportion of Italian trips (ISPRA, 2026). These figures cannot be read as a direct modal split for Italy–Croatia travel alone; however, they provide relevant contextual evidence of the continuing importance of road mobility for international and tourism-related travel.

Ferry services remain strategically significant for specific Adriatic corridors and for passengers travelling with cars, motorcycles or camper vans, while air connections play a growing role for longer-distance and shorter-duration trips. The resulting picture is therefore one of multiple available modes whose relevance differs depending on geography, season, user profile and journey purpose.

The findings of the SUMMA Tourist Survey provide complementary evidence from the users' perspective (the complete methodology, sample analysis and detailed survey results are

presented in SUMMA D111, Chapter 5.1.). The survey collected 803 valid responses across the Adriatic project area and confirms that access to tourism destinations remains strongly car-oriented. The private car was by far the most frequently indicated primary mode for reaching the vacation area, selected by 74.5% of respondents. Other primary modes were considerably less prominent, including air travel at 16.9%, buses at 12.1%, ships or boats at 8.3%, trains at 8.0% and bicycles at 5.1%. These percentages should be interpreted as modal-use indicators rather than mutually exclusive shares, since respondents could indicate both primary and secondary modes.

At the same time, the survey points to a more diversified mobility pattern once visitors have reached their destination. The overall satisfaction with transport choices was relatively high, averaging 4.27 out of 5, but lower satisfaction levels were recorded among tourists using public transport: average satisfaction among those reaching the area by bus was 3.76 and by train 3.75, compared with 4.30 among car users. Within the destination, bus, tram and trolleybus users recorded an average satisfaction score of 3.62, again lower than cyclists at 4.34, motorbike users at 4.31 and pedestrians at 4.19.

The conditions identified by tourists for greater public transport use further clarify where improvements are needed. Extending routes and operating hours received the highest average score, at 4.00 out of 5, followed by shorter waiting times through higher service frequency at 3.93, integrated ticketing and network systems at 3.84, and clearer and more accessible passenger information at 3.80. The findings therefore point to a two-stage mobility pattern: access to Adriatic tourism destinations remains heavily dependent on private cars, while local mobility offers greater scope for walking, cycling and public transport, provided that services are sufficiently extensive, frequent, integrated and easy to understand.

This distinction is particularly relevant for SUMMA because it highlights the need to address both access to coastal destinations and mobility within them through coherent intermodal travel chains. Long-distance networks and local mobility systems have different functions and should not be conflated, but they must be coordinated. Major transport connections may enable passengers to reach a region, while regional and local services determine whether they can complete their journey without relying on a private vehicle. In this sense, connectivity between ports, airports and railway corridors on the one hand, and cities, coastal destinations and hinterland areas on the other, becomes a critical component of sustainable mobility.

Previous SUMMA analysis also identified several recurring factors that can weaken such travel chains. These include: low service frequencies, limited coordination of timetables, multiple transfers, incomplete routes, fragmented passenger information and the absence or limited development of integrated ticketing. In cross-border contexts, these operational issues may be compounded by different regulatory frameworks, administrative responsibilities and technical standards. The result can be a transport offer that is multimodal in principle but fragmented from the user's perspective (SUMMA, 2026a).

The territorial dimension is equally important. Coastal destinations and major urban centres often attract a considerable share of mobility demand, while surrounding hinterland and lower-density areas may have more limited access to public transport. This imbalance affects not only tourism mobility but also the everyday accessibility of employment, education and services. Strengthening connections between coastal areas and their hinterlands therefore has both an environmental and a social dimension: it can contribute to reducing pressure from private vehicles in high-demand destinations while also extending access to transport opportunities beyond the main urban and tourism poles.

Against this background, the strategic challenge for the Italy–Croatia Adriatic area cannot be reduced to increasing the number of sustainable transport options. The available evidence indicates that different modes and emerging mobility solutions already coexist across the Programme area, although at different levels of maturity. The most significant challenge is to improve their integration: physically at transport nodes, operationally through coordinated services and timetables, digitally through accessible information and ticketing, and institutionally through cooperation among the authorities and providers responsible for different parts of the journey.

This is the context within which SUMMA develops its Strategy for Intermodal Mobility Solutions. The objective is not to replace local or regional mobility planning with a single cross-border model, but to identify strategic conditions and transferable approaches through which local transport systems can become better connected to each other and to wider Adriatic and European networks. From this perspective, intermodality represents the connecting principle between sustainable urban mobility, coastal–hinterland accessibility, tourism management and cross-border connectivity. The central issue is therefore not merely whether alternative modes are available, but whether passengers can combine them into coherent, accessible and reliable journeys across modes, territories and national borders.

3.2 Insights from the Local Analysis and Pilot Activities Implementation Path

D112 – Pilot Site Sustainable Mobility Reports provides the local counterpart to the cross-border evidence discussed in Par. 3.1. Its contribution to D121 lies in showing how recurring cross-border challenges materialise under different territorial conditions and which conditions local stakeholders consider necessary for sustainable mobility solutions to become effective. This is complemented by information coming from Local Partners while implementing their Pilot Activities within SUMMA.

3.2.1 Private-Car Dependence and the Need for Credible Alternatives

A first recurring finding concerns the persistence of private-car dependence, although its intensity and underlying causes vary substantially across the Pilot Areas. In more dispersed territories such as Riviera Friulana and Labin, limited public transport coverage and the spatial distribution of settlements constrain the availability of realistic alternatives. In larger urban and metropolitan contexts such as Pescara and Split-Dalmatia County, the challenge is instead connected to service quality, congestion, connections between central and peripheral areas and the capacity of public transport and active mobility networks to offer competitive alternatives. The Zadar analysis similarly highlights substantial car dependence among working-age residents despite the relatively short distances characterising a large share of daily trips.

The local analyses therefore reinforce an important distinction for the Strategy: car dependence should not be interpreted simply as an individual behavioural preference. Across the Pilot Sites, respondents and stakeholders repeatedly associated modal choice with the availability, frequency, reliability, affordability, accessibility and practical usability of alternative services. Accordingly, policies seeking to change mobility behaviour are more likely to succeed where users are first provided with credible options capable of responding to their everyday mobility needs.

This point emerged particularly clearly from the participatory activities. In Pescara, affordability and frequent and reliable connections were identified as central conditions for encouraging public transport use, together with better cycling facilities and simplified integration with the regional MaaS (Mobility as a Service). In Labin, stakeholders explicitly stressed that measures reducing car dependency would only be acceptable if functional,

reliable and understandable alternatives were available, advocating a gradual development of public transport rather than restrictions unsupported by alternative services.

The implication for D121 is that behavioural change should be understood primarily as an outcome of a well-functioning mobility system. Communication, incentives and awareness-raising can facilitate transition, but they cannot substitute for adequate transport services, accessibility and infrastructure.

3.2.2 From Individual Measures to Integrated Territorial Mobility Systems

A second cross-cutting insight is that local stakeholders consistently interpreted sustainable mobility as a system-integration challenge rather than as the development of individual transport modes or isolated infrastructure projects. The same principle assumes different forms depending on the Pilot Area, but the underlying requirement is the continuity of the overall journey.

In Caorle, for example, stakeholders emphasised the need to move beyond individual cycling routes towards a continuous, safe and legible network connected with public transport, the hinterland and wider regional and cross-regional cycling systems. Cycling infrastructure was regarded as serving both tourism and everyday mobility, while signage, digital and non-digital information and services were considered necessary complementary elements. In Riviera Friulana, cycling was similarly understood as complementary to – rather than a substitute for – public transport, with particular emphasis on integrating bicycles, trains, buses and boats and on ensuring continuity across municipal boundaries.

The same system perspective emerges in other contexts. In Pescara, stakeholders linked the proposed Single Ticket to the wider MaaS4Abruzzo framework and to connections between the city, port, airport and railway station. In Labin, public transport, parking management, pedestrian accessibility, micromobility, access management and possible new infrastructure were explicitly discussed as mutually dependent components of one mobility system rather than separate interventions. Split-Dalmatia stakeholders similarly framed the desired future around stronger connections between transport hubs, urban centres and surrounding territories.

These findings also underline the importance of the functional territorial scale. Mobility flows frequently exceed municipal boundaries, especially where commuting, tourism and coastal–hinterland movements interact. The strategic unit of analysis should therefore not necessarily

coincide with administrative boundaries: the relevant scale is the mobility chain linking origins, destinations, gateways and interchange points.

Tourist mobility further reinforces this conclusion. D112 shows that access to tourism destinations and mobility once at destination may follow very different patterns. In several Pilot Areas, tourists predominantly reach the territory by private car but subsequently make greater use of walking, cycling or other local modes. The strategic challenge is therefore not only to improve mobility within tourism destinations, but also to connect local sustainable mobility systems with the long-distance modes and gateways through which visitors reach them.

3.2.3 Future Scenarios and Conditions for Change

The scenario-making exercises carried out within D112 provide an additional contribution to D121 by moving the analysis from the current mobility situation towards the conditions required to achieve a desired future scenario. Although the exercises were adapted to local circumstances, a broadly coherent vision emerged across the Pilot Areas.

Stakeholders envisaged future mobility systems characterised by stronger and more accessible public transport, safer and more continuous pedestrian and cycling networks, effective interchange points, improved first- and last-mile connections, better passenger information, lower-emission mobility and stronger connections between coastal areas and their hinterlands. The scenarios also repeatedly highlighted the importance of reducing fragmentation: between transport modes, between neighbouring administrations, between infrastructure and services, and between individual projects and longer-term territorial planning. D112 consequently concludes that the desired transition requires integrated systems rather than isolated interventions.

At the same time, the pathways towards this vision differ according to territorial conditions. Pescara stakeholders emphasised maintained cycling infrastructure, low-emission last-mile mobility, more traffic-free urban areas, clear communication and integration with MaaS. Riviera Friulana participants envisaged public transport as the backbone of the system, complemented by continuous cycling infrastructure, co-mobility and stronger integration between buses, trains, bicycles and boats. In Labin, the preferred pathway was explicitly gradual: realistic pilot public transport services should be introduced and tested before scaling up, complemented where necessary by micro-transport or demand-responsive services. Split-Dalmatia stakeholders highlighted the need for stronger rail and public transport services, improved hubs, active mobility and long-term coordination between institutions.

Cultural and behavioural change was also repeatedly identified as an enabling factor, but the local discussions consistently linked such change to the material characteristics of the mobility offer. Education, awareness and communication remain important – particularly in relation to active and micromobility, as demonstrated by the Zadar stakeholder panel – but they are most effective when accompanied by safe infrastructure, clear rules and viable mobility alternatives.

3.2.4 Strategic Framing of Pilot Activities and Implementation Conditions

The strategic framing exercises carried out within D112 also provide a direct bridge between local analysis and D121. Stakeholders were invited to consider not only whether the SUMMA Pilot Activities responded to locally identified mobility needs, but also how individual interventions could contribute to broader mobility strategies, what complementary actions would be required and at which territorial or governance level responsibilities should be addressed. This was an explicit function of the D112 methodology.

The resulting evidence suggests that Pilot Activities are most valuable when understood as building blocks of wider mobility systems. In Pescara, the Single Ticket was linked to the regional MaaS and to the integration of major transport gateways. In Labin, the Pilot Activity was interpreted as a bridge between the strategic direction established by the SUMP and the gradual implementation of concrete services, with operational feasibility, user demand and institutional capacity determining the pace of expansion. In Split-Dalmatia County, the Resnik Port–Split Airport study was recognised as addressing a strategically relevant intermodal interface, while stakeholders simultaneously stressed the dependence of future implementation on funding, national-level involvement and institutional coordination.

3.2.5 Conclusions

The local evidence, coming also from the direct experience of Local Partners implementing WP2 SUMMA Pilot Activities, adds therefore an implementation dimension to the broader cross-border findings of D111. Infrastructure, digital integration or new services alone are insufficient if the institutional, operational and financial conditions required for their continuity are absent. Maintenance, organisational responsibility, cooperation among authorities and providers, user acceptance, territorial coordination and the ability to scale or adapt solutions over time are all part of the effectiveness of an intermodal intervention.

Pilot Site analyses and lesson learned through the implementation of Pilot Activities indicate that SUMMA's local interventions address different expressions of a common strategic challenge: making sustainable and intermodal mobility sufficiently reliable, accessible, convenient and understandable to represent a realistic alternative to private-car use. The diversity of the Pilot Activities is therefore an asset for D121, as it allows the Strategy to draw lessons from different entry points – cycling, public transport, interchange hubs, integrated ticketing, low-emission services, air–sea connectivity and micromobility – while identifying the common conditions under which these interventions can become part of durable and transferable mobility systems.

4 Strategy for Intermodal Mobility Solutions Validation Path

4.1 From SUMMA Evidence to Strategic Hypotheses

The SUMMA Strategy for Intermodal Mobility Solutions builds on the evidence progressively developed throughout SUMMA WP1, with the contribution of SUMMA WP2 lessons learned. The evidence presented in the previous sections indicates that the main challenge is not simply the availability of different transport modes, but their capacity to operate as parts of coherent travel chains. Physical discontinuities, fragmented institutional responsibilities, limited coordination between services, incomplete passenger information, non-integrated ticketing systems and uneven digital interoperability can all reduce the attractiveness of intermodal travel. These barriers are particularly relevant in coastal and hinterland areas, where seasonal demand, lower-density territories and the relationship between major mobility gateways and final destinations create additional coordination requirements.

The strategic drafting process therefore translated the evidence collected through SUMMA into six preliminary hypotheses.

As presented in Par. 2.2, these hypotheses were conceived as working propositions rather than predetermined conclusions. Their purpose was to condense the main strategic dimensions identified through previous project activities into a manageable framework that could subsequently be tested, qualified and prioritised by stakeholders. This approach reflects the

broader SUMMA participatory logic. Stakeholders were not involved only as sources of information, but as contributors to the interpretation and validation of the Strategy.

The six hypotheses addressed regulatory and governance coordination, physical connectivity, information and ticketing integration, behavioural conditions affecting users, cooperation among mobility providers and the role of mobility attractors. They correspond to the main dimensions originally foreseen within the SUMMA Intermodal Mobility Framework and were formulated as follows.

Table 2: Preliminary strategic hypotheses submitted to stakeholder validation

Code	Strategic dimension	Preliminary hypothesis
H1	Regulatory and governance coordination	Effective intermodal mobility requires stronger coordination between public authorities, transport operators and other relevant actors, while regulatory and administrative fragmentation remains a major obstacle to integration at both local and cross-border level.
H2	Physical connectivity and missing links	Infrastructure priorities should focus on missing links, interchange points and connections between strategic mobility gateways and tourist areas, rather than on isolated modal infrastructure.
H3	Integrated information, ticketing and MaaS	Making intermodal travel competitive with private-car journeys requires simpler and more integrated passenger information, journey planning and payment, while MaaS solutions should build on reliable transport services and interoperable data.
H4	Mobility users	Behavioural change depends primarily on making sustainable intermodal options reliable, convenient and understandable; promotional or financial incentives can support adoption but cannot compensate for poor service quality.
H5	Mobility providers	Mobility providers require appropriate incentives, coordination mechanisms and governance conditions to share data, align services and cooperate across organisational and territorial boundaries.

H6	Mobility attractors	Mobility attractors, including tourism facilities, major employers, ports, airports and visitor destinations, can play an active role in encouraging sustainable and intermodal access rather than acting only as destinations of mobility flows.

The hypotheses cover distinct dimensions of intermodal mobility, but they should not be interpreted as independent policy fields. Several of the relationships identified during the subsequent validation process demonstrate that they are strongly interconnected. Integrated passenger information, for instance, depends on cooperation among transport providers and common governance arrangements; behavioural change depends on the existence of reliable transport services and convenient interchange conditions; and infrastructure investments generate greater intermodal value when they are coordinated with service planning and passenger information.

The hypotheses were therefore used as an analytical framework through which these interdependencies could be explored rather than as six separate or competing policy options.

4.2 Participatory validation of the strategic hypotheses

4.2.1 Focus Group validation process and overall results

The six preliminary hypotheses were discussed through two Focus Groups organised as part of the final stage of the D121 participatory process. The first session was held online and enabled participation from a broader range of stakeholders and project-related actors. The second session was organised in connection with the SUMMA Final Event in Caorle and provided a more territorially grounded perspective, as well as incorporating the contribution of SUMMA Local Partners.

Both sessions used the same six hypotheses and the same general assessment structure in order to ensure comparability, applying the methodology illustrated in Par. 2.3. The two sessions produced different levels of qualitative interaction. The online Focus Group generated both quantitative ratings and a comparatively substantial discussion of implementation conditions. The session held in Caorle provided useful quantitative assessments and final prioritisation results, but generated fewer qualitative contributions.

The initial agreement ratings indicate that all six strategic dimensions received overall positive consideration, although the degree of support differed across hypotheses and between the two sessions.

Table 3: Average agreement with the six preliminary hypotheses (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)

Hypothesis	Online FG	Caorle FG
H1 – Regulatory and governance coordination	4.6	4.2
H2 – Physical connectivity and missing links	4.1	3.9
H3 – Integrated information, ticketing and MaaS	4.6	3.7
H4 – Mobility users' behavioural change	3.4	3.7
H5 – Mobility providers' cooperation	4.0	4.1
H6 – Mobility attractors	4.0	3.4

Note: Agreement scores are arithmetic means of valid individual ratings collected through Mentimeter, rounded to one decimal place. Each hypothesis received 10 valid ratings in the online Focus Group and 9 in the Caorle Focus Group.

The online results show particularly strong agreement with H1 and H3, both scoring 4.6 out of 5, followed by H2 at 4.1 and H5 and H6 at 4.0. H4 received the lowest score, at 3.4, suggesting that the formulation concerning behavioural change required greater qualification. In Caorle, H1 again received a high level of agreement at 4.2, while H5 scored 4.1. H2 scored 3.9, H3 and H4 3.7, and H6 3.4.



Figure 2: Agreement with preliminary hypotheses – Online Focus Group (extracted from Mentimeter)



Figure 3: Agreement with preliminary hypotheses – Caorle Focus Group (extracted from Mentimeter)

The results should not be interpreted as a statistical ranking of policy priorities. The Focus Groups were qualitative and participatory exercises rather than representative surveys. Nevertheless, the ratings provide a useful indication of the degree to which the strategic propositions derived from previous SUMMA evidence were recognised by the stakeholders involved.

A first finding is the absence of any hypothesis receiving an average score below the midpoint of the scale. The validation exercise therefore did not identify any strategic dimension that stakeholders considered fundamentally misplaced. Instead, the discussion mainly generated qualifications concerning how the hypotheses should be translated into policy and implementation arrangements.

4.2.1.1 Validation and qualification of the six hypotheses

4.2.1.1.1 H1 – Regulatory and governance coordination

H1 received one of the strongest levels of support across the validation exercise. The online Focus Group assigned it an average agreement score of 4.6/5, while the Caorle session assigned 4.2/5. The qualitative discussion reinforced the underlying proposition that intermodal mobility depends on coordination between public authorities, transport providers and other relevant actors.

Participants nevertheless moved beyond a generic call for cooperation. The online discussion explicitly referred to the need for a permanent coordination structure or working board, potentially operating at regional level, and to the importance of maintaining visibility over the entire mobility chain rather than addressing individual services in isolation. Participants also linked coordination to improved integration between public transport, walking and cycling and to more efficient mobility during periods of seasonal demand.

The strategic implication is therefore that coordination should be treated as an institutional requirement rather than as an informal or temporary form of cooperation. Project-based collaboration can support experimentation, but effective intermodal systems require mechanisms capable of operating beyond the duration of individual projects and across administrative and organisational boundaries.

Validation status: evidence-supported and stakeholder-validated, with implementation qualifications.

4.2.1.1.2 H2 – Physical connectivity and missing links

H2 received an average agreement score of 4.1/5 in the online Focus Group and 3.9/5 in Caorle.

The results support the principle that infrastructure planning should prioritise functional discontinuities within intermodal travel chains rather than isolated modal investments. In the SUMMA context, these discontinuities may concern interchange points, first- and last-mile connections, access to ports, airports and railway stations, and links between major mobility gateways, tourism destinations and hinterland areas.

Compared with H1, H3 and H4, H2 generated relatively limited qualitative discussion during the online session. This should not be interpreted as indicating lower relevance; instead, it suggests that the underlying proposition was comparatively straightforward for participants.

A more significant qualification emerged from the final prioritisation exercise. H2 was considered highly relevant and feasible, but its assessed cross-border added value differed considerably between the two groups. This indicates that not every physical infrastructure intervention should automatically be classified as a cross-border strategic priority. Its cross-border relevance depends on whether the intervention strengthens a wider travel chain, connects strategic gateways or removes a discontinuity affecting mobility across territorial or national boundaries.

Validation status: evidence-supported and stakeholder-validated, with a qualification concerning the scale at which cross-border added value is generated.

4.2.1.1.3 H3 – Integrated information, ticketing and MaaS

H3 was among the most strongly supported hypotheses in the online session, receiving 4.6/5, while the Caorle group assigned it 3.7/5.

The qualitative discussion strongly supported the need for integrated passenger information. Participants referred to the value of a single integrated platform for journey planning, real-time information and ticketing across different transport modes. They also stressed the need to

improve the accessibility of information outside major urban areas, where passengers may have fewer sources of transport information.

At the same time, participants introduced an important implementation qualification. Integrated platforms depend on the willingness and capacity of multiple operators to provide reliable and updated data. The discussion highlighted the difficulty of maintaining information within a single platform when different operators use different organisational or data-management systems.

Participants also raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of digital solutions developed exclusively within temporary projects. One contribution explicitly noted the risk that project-specific applications may no longer be maintained after project closure. This implies that digital integration should not be treated merely as the development of another application. Sustainable MaaS and passenger-information solutions require institutional ownership, interoperable data, clear responsibilities for updating information and long-term operational arrangements.

The Focus Group therefore substantially reinforced the original hypothesis but shifted the emphasis from technological solutions in themselves towards the governance and interoperability conditions that make those solutions viable.

Validation status: evidence-supported and stakeholder-validated, with substantial implementation qualifications.

4.2.1.1.4 H4 – Mobility users' behavioural change

H4 generated one of the most important qualifications to the preliminary strategic framework. It received the lowest agreement score in the online session, 3.4/5, and 3.7/5 in Caorle.

The qualitative discussion nevertheless confirmed the underlying relationship between service quality and behavioural change. Participants stressed that sustainable mobility alternatives must be clear, simple and easy to use, with integrated or simplified ticketing and affordable prices. The discussion also highlighted the difficulty of changing established car-dependent habits where public transport or intermodal alternatives are not perceived as reliable or convenient.

A further qualification concerned territorial differences. Participants explicitly distinguished between dense urban areas and rural or lower-density areas, where the provision of conventional high-frequency public transport may be more difficult. In these contexts, demand-responsive transport and MaaS-based approaches were identified as potentially relevant options.

The discussion therefore suggests that the Strategy should avoid framing behavioural change as a matter of persuading users to make more sustainable choices independently of the transport system available to them. Behavioural change should instead be understood as the result of creating conditions that make sustainable alternatives sufficiently credible.

This leads to a reformulation of H4: the primary strategic objective is not to "change users", but to enable users to change through reliable, convenient, understandable and affordable mobility alternatives.

Validation status: evidence-supported but significantly qualified.

4.2.1.1.5 H5 – Mobility providers' cooperation

H5 received relatively consistent agreement across both sessions: 4.0/5 online and 4.1/5 in Caorle.

The online discussion highlighted several practical barriers to cooperation between mobility providers. Participants noted the difficulty of obtaining transport data, the need for external coordination and the importance of assigning explicit responsibility within individual organisations for checking and maintaining data. They also suggested that temporary project arrangements may facilitate cooperation during implementation but do not necessarily create lasting organisational mechanisms.

These observations reinforce the relationship between H5 and H3. Integrated information, ticketing and MaaS depend directly on the capacity of providers to share data and align services. Provider cooperation therefore cannot be considered a secondary behavioural issue; it represents one of the institutional foundations of service integration.

The findings suggest that incentives may be useful, but should be accompanied by clearer governance arrangements, common standards, designated responsibilities and, where

appropriate, legal or contractual mechanisms supporting data sharing and service coordination.

Validation status: evidence-supported and stakeholder-validated, with stronger emphasis on institutional and organisational conditions.

4.2.1.1.6 H6 – Mobility attractors

H6 received 4.0/5 in the online Focus Group and 3.4/5 in Caorle, the lowest score recorded in the latter session.

The hypothesis remains relevant to the SUMMA context, particularly given the importance of tourism destinations, major visitor attractions, ports, airports and other high-demand locations within Adriatic mobility systems. However, the more cautious assessment suggests that the role of mobility attractors is less immediately defined than the institutional responsibilities addressed under H1 or H5.

For strategic purposes, the concept therefore requires a more operational interpretation. Mobility attractors can contribute to sustainable mobility by promoting sustainable access options, integrating mobility information into tourism and visitor communication, supporting employee mobility planning, collaborating with transport operators and facilitating first- and last-mile connections.

The strategic value of H6 consequently lies less in identifying a new category of mobility policy and more in ensuring that major generators and destinations of mobility are incorporated into planning and service coordination rather than treated as passive endpoints.

Validation status: partially validated and requiring operational clarification.

4.2.1.2 Final prioritisation of the strategic orientations

After discussing the six hypotheses, participants were asked to compare them according to three different dimensions: strategic relevance, feasibility and cross-border added value. The purpose of the exercise was to distinguish between orientations that may be strategically important, practically implementable or particularly relevant in a cross-border context. The rankings show that these dimensions do not coincide automatically.

4.2.1.2.1 Strategic relevance

The online Focus Group ranked the hypotheses as follows:

1. **H1** – Regulatory and governance coordination
2. **H4** – Mobility users' behavioural change
3. **H3** – Integrated information, ticketing and MaaS
4. **H2** – Physical connectivity and missing links
5. **H5** – Mobility providers' cooperation
6. **H6** – Mobility attractors.

In Caorle, the ranking was:

1. **H2** – Physical connectivity and missing links
2. **H1** – Regulatory and governance coordination
3. **H3** – Integrated information, ticketing and MaaS
4. **H4** – Mobility users' behavioural change
5. **H5** – Mobility providers' cooperation
6. **H6** – Mobility attractors.

Table 4: Strategic relevance ranking

Rank	Online Focus Group	Caorle Focus Group
1	H1	H2
2	H4	H1
3	H3	H3
4	H2	H4
5	H5	H5
6	H6	H6



Figure 4: Ranking of the hypotheses by strategic relevance – Online Focus Group (extracted from Mentimeter)

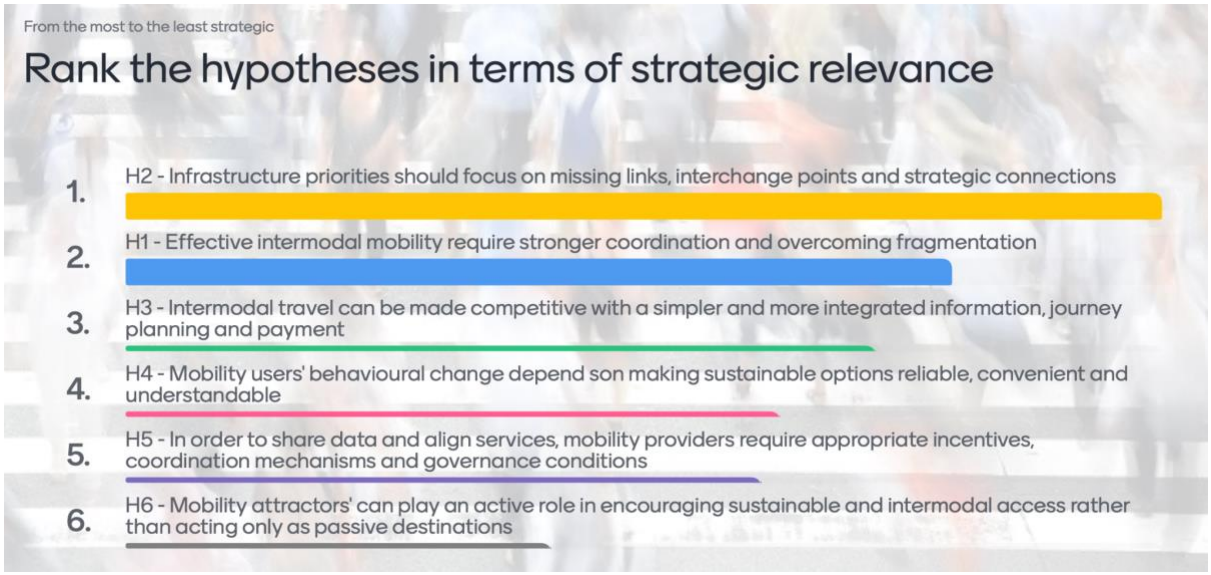


Figure 5: Ranking of the hypotheses by strategic relevance – Caorle Focus Group (extracted from Mentimeter)

The results show both convergence and variation. H1 and H3 occupy relatively high positions in both groups, while H5 and H6 remain lower in the strategic-relevance ranking. The main difference concerns H2 and H4: the Caorle group placed physical connectivity first, whereas the online group gave greater priority to behavioural conditions.

This divergence can be interpreted as a difference in perspective. Participants may recognise similar overall strategic needs while assigning different relative weight to infrastructure, governance and user-related measures depending on their territorial/professional experience.

4.2.1.2.2 Feasibility

The online Focus Group ranked feasibility as follows:

1. **H2** – Physical connectivity and missing links
2. **H6** – Mobility attractors
3. **H5** – Mobility providers' cooperation
4. **H3** – Integrated information, ticketing and MaaS
5. **H1** – Regulatory and governance
6. **H4** – Mobility users' behavioural change

The Caorle Focus Group produced a different ranking:

1. **H1** – Regulatory and governance
2. **H2** – Physical connectivity and missing links
3. **H4** – Mobility users' behavioural change
4. **H5** – Mobility providers' cooperation
5. **H6** – Mobility attractors
6. **H3** – Integrated information, ticketing and MaaS

Table 5: Feasibility ranking

Rank	Online Focus Group	Caorle Focus Group
1	H2	H1
2	H6	H2
3	H5	H4
4	H3	H5
5	H1	H6
6	H4	H3



Figure 6: Ranking of the hypotheses by feasibility – Online Focus Group (extracted from Mentimeter)



Figure 7: Ranking of the hypotheses by feasibility – Caorle Focus Group (extracted from Mentimeter)

The feasibility rankings show greater divergence than the strategic-relevance rankings. H2 is the only hypothesis occupying a top-two position in both groups. By contrast, governance coordination, behavioural change and digital integration are assessed quite differently.

This result suggests that stakeholders broadly recognise similar strategic challenges but do not necessarily share the same assessment of implementation conditions. In particular, governance reforms and integrated digital systems may be considered highly desirable while still being perceived as difficult to implement depending on administrative context, institutional capacity, data availability and existing cooperation arrangements.

4.2.1.2.3 Cross-border added value

The cross-border added value ranking provides one of the most relevant findings for the SUMMA Strategy.

The online Focus Group ranked the hypotheses as follows:

1. **H1** – Regulatory and governance coordination
2. **H2** – Physical connectivity and missing links
3. **H3** – Integrated information, ticketing and MaaS
4. **H4** – Mobility users' behavioural change
5. **H5** – Mobility providers' cooperation
6. **H6** – Mobility attractors.

The Caorle Focus Group produced the following ranking:

1. **H5** – Mobility providers' cooperation
2. **H3** – Integrated information, ticketing and MaaS
3. **H1** – Regulatory and governance coordination
4. **H6** – Mobility attractors
5. **H4** – Mobility users' behavioural change
6. **H2** – Physical connectivity and missing links.

Table 6: Cross-border added value ranking

Rank	Online Focus Group	Caorle Focus Group
1	H1	H5
2	H2	H3
3	H3	H1

4	H4	H6
5	H5	H4
6	H6	H2

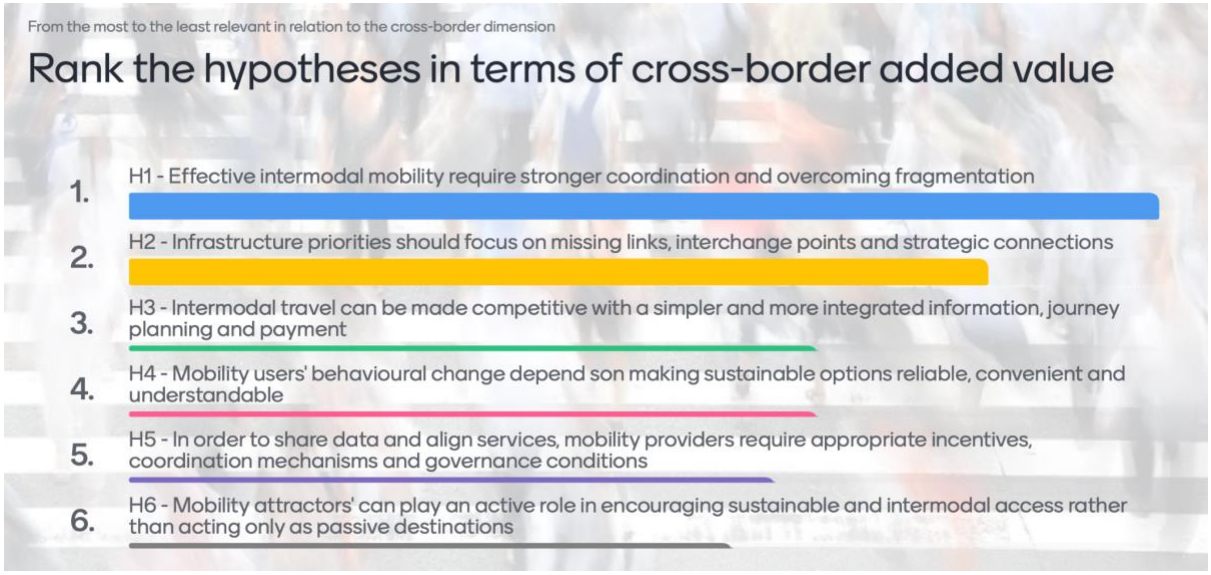


Figure 8: Ranking of the hypotheses by cross-border added value – Online Focus Group (extracted from Mentimeter)

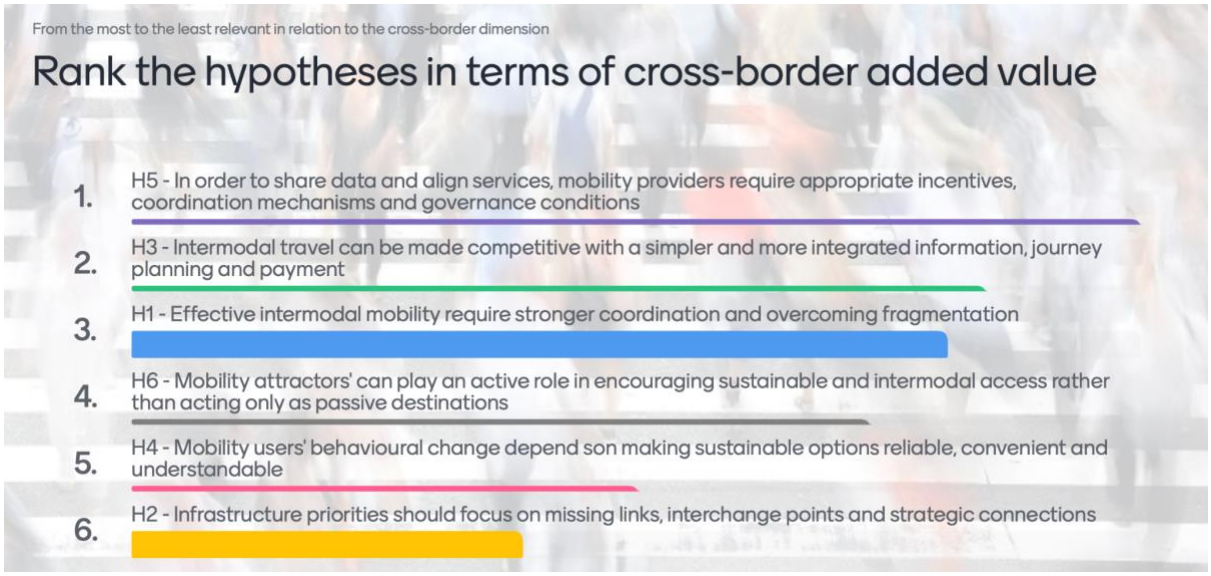


Figure 9: Ranking of the hypotheses by cross-border added value – Caorle Focus Group (extracted from Mentimeter)

Although the ordering differs, a common pattern can be identified. Governance coordination, cooperation among mobility providers and integrated passenger information and ticketing occupy prominent positions when the cross-border dimension is considered.

This is strategically significant for SUMMA. It suggests that cross-border added value does not arise only from physical connections between territories. It also arises from the ability to connect institutions, operators, data systems, services and passenger journeys across administrative boundaries.

The difference concerning H2 is particularly informative. The online group considered physical connectivity highly relevant to the cross-border dimension, while Caorle ranked it last. Rather than interpreting this as a contradiction, the result suggests that infrastructure produces cross-border added value only where a physical intervention addresses a genuinely cross-border or trans-territorial travel chain. Local infrastructure improvements may be strategically valuable without necessarily requiring cross-border coordination.

4.2.1.2.4 Conclusions

Overall, the prioritisation exercise confirms that the six hypotheses should not be reduced to a single ranking. Strategic relevance, feasibility and cross-border added value capture different dimensions of decision-making. An orientation may be highly relevant but difficult to implement, or locally feasible while generating limited cross-border added value.

The final Strategy should therefore combine these dimensions rather than selecting only the highest-ranked hypothesis.

4.2.1.3 Additional issues emerging from the validation process

The Focus Groups also provided participants with the opportunity to identify strategic issues not fully captured by the six preliminary hypotheses.

The Caorle session generated three explicit additional considerations:

- The need for wide-area sustainable mobility plans, differentiated according to different user targets and subsequently interconnected across territories.

- The need to use data on existing and potential users and to consider regulatory measures affecting access and traffic circulation.
- The importance of the economic convenience of intermodal travel for users.



Figure 10: Input on major missing issues that should be addressed in the Strategies – Caorle Focus Group (extracted from Mentimeter)

These contributions do not necessarily justify the creation of a seventh independent strategic hypothesis. Instead, they reinforce three cross-cutting principles that should inform the consolidated SUMMA Strategy:

- First, mobility planning should operate at a functional territorial scale. Where mobility flows extend beyond municipal boundaries, isolated local plans may be insufficient and should be coordinated with neighbouring territories.
- Second, strategy and service design should be evidence-based and demand-sensitive, using information on current and potential users to differentiate measures according to mobility needs and territorial conditions.
- Third, sustainable intermodal mobility must also be economically attractive. Affordability should therefore be treated as part of the quality of the mobility offer rather than as a separate promotional incentive.

These additional issues complement rather than replace the six preliminary hypotheses and have been incorporated as transversal conditions within the consolidated strategic orientations presented in the following section.

4.3 Consolidated Strategic Orientations

The Focus Group validation overall confirmed the content of the six preliminary strategic dimensions. Participants positively assessed their relevance while introducing important qualifications concerning governance continuity, implementation feasibility, service quality, interoperability, affordability and territorial scale. The preliminary hypotheses can therefore be reformulated as six consolidated strategic orientations for the SUMMA Strategy.

In a broader perspective, the six orientations show that the SUMMA Strategy is based on a system-integration approach. Effective intermodality depends on the combined improvement of governance, infrastructure, transport services, data integration, provider cooperation and user conditions rather than on isolated interventions.

4.3.1 SO1 – Establish durable multi-level governance mechanisms

Intermodal mobility requires stable coordination between public authorities, transport providers and other relevant actors. Stakeholder contributions indicate that cooperation should move beyond temporary project-based arrangements and be supported by recurring or permanent coordination mechanisms, with clearly identified responsibilities and an overview of the entire mobility chain.

4.3.2 SO2 – Close functional gaps in intermodal travel chains

Infrastructure priorities should focus on discontinuities that prevent passengers from completing coherent intermodal journeys. Particular attention should be given to interchange points, first- and last-mile connections, links between ports, airports, railway stations and final destinations, and connections between coastal areas and hinterlands.

4.3.3 SO3 – Develop integrated information, ticketing and MaaS on interoperable foundations

Integrated passenger information, journey planning and ticketing can reduce the complexity of intermodal travel, but only where they are supported by reliable transport services, interoperable data and cooperation among mobility providers. Digital solutions should

therefore be designed with clear institutional ownership and long-term maintenance arrangements.

4.3.4 SO4 – Enable behavioural change through reliable, simple and affordable alternatives

Behavioural change should be treated as the result of an attractive mobility offer rather than as an independent policy objective. Sustainable alternatives must be sufficiently reliable, understandable, convenient and economically competitive before promotional or financial incentives can generate lasting effects.

4.3.5 SO5 – Create enabling conditions for cooperation among mobility providers

Transport providers need appropriate governance, technical and organisational conditions to share data, coordinate services and cooperate across organisational and territorial boundaries. Formal responsibilities, common standards and structured coordination mechanisms are therefore essential components of effective intermodal mobility.

4.3.6 SO6 – Involve mobility attractors in sustainable access and mobility management

Tourism facilities, major employers, ports, airports and other mobility attractors should be involved as active partners in mobility planning. Their role may include communicating sustainable access options, cooperating with transport providers, supporting first- and last-mile solutions and contributing to the management of seasonal or concentrated mobility demand.

4.4 Policy Implications and Strategic Recommendations

The following table shows the evolution of preliminary hypotheses, stemming from the analysis performed in D111 and in D112, and from the lessons learned while implementing WP2, through the stakeholders validation and prioritisation, and resulting in the consolidated strategic orientations:

Table 7: Path from preliminary hypotheses, through Focus Group validation towards consolidated strategic orientations

Preliminary hypothesis	Validation outcome	Main qualification emerging from the Focus Groups	Consolidated strategic orientation
H1 – Regulatory and governance coordination	Strongly validated	Coordination should be stable, multi-level and supported by clearly assigned responsibilities	**SO1 – Establish durable multi-level governance mechanisms**
H2 – Physical connectivity and missing links	Validated	Priority should be given to functional gaps affecting complete travel chains rather than isolated infrastructure	**SO2 – Close functional gaps in intermodal travel chains**
H3 – Integrated information, ticketing and MaaS	Strongly validated but implementation-sensitive	Digital integration depends on interoperable data, reliable services, provider cooperation and long-term ownership	**SO3 – Develop integrated information, ticketing and MaaS on interoperable foundations**
H4 – Mobility users' behavioural change	Validated with significant qualification	Behavioural change depends primarily on service quality, simplicity, affordability and territorial context	**SO4 – Enable behavioural change through reliable, simple and affordable alternatives**

H5 – Mobility providers' cooperation	Validated and strengthened	Data sharing and service integration require formal governance, organisational responsibility and common standards	**SO5 – Create enabling conditions for cooperation among mobility providers**
H6 – Mobility attractors	Partially validated and requiring clarification	The role of attractors should be defined through concrete mobility-management responsibilities	**SO6 – Involve mobility attractors in sustainable access and mobility management**

The validation also identified a number of cross-cutting principles that should apply across all six strategic orientations. These include planning at the scale of functional mobility patterns rather than administrative boundaries alone; using mobility data and user evidence to support decision-making; ensuring the economic attractiveness of intermodal travel; differentiating measures according to territorial and user needs; and providing long-term institutional and financial continuity beyond individual project cycles. These issues emerged as additional considerations during the participatory process rather than as a separate seventh hypothesis.

The Focus Group prioritisation also confirmed that strategic relevance, feasibility and cross-border added value do not necessarily coincide. Some measures may be highly relevant but difficult to implement, while others may be locally feasible without generating significant cross-border effects. The Strategy should therefore avoid selecting interventions on the basis of a single criterion and instead consider the relationship between strategic importance, implementation capacity and the specific added value generated through cross-border cooperation.

From this perspective, the cross-border added value of SUMMA lies particularly in areas where fragmentation cannot be addressed by individual territories or organisations acting alone. Governance coordination, cooperation among mobility providers, interoperable information

systems and the integration of travel chains across administrative boundaries represent the dimensions in which cooperation can generate the strongest additional value.

The resulting strategic approach is therefore based on a simple principle: sustainable intermodal mobility depends less on the number of available transport modes than on the quality of the connections between them. The role of the SUMMA Strategy is to identify the governance, infrastructure, service and behavioural conditions through which those connections can become more reliable, accessible and transferable across the Adriatic coastal and hinterland area.

5 SUMMA Strategic Recommendations

5.1 Six (Plus One) Strategic Recommendations

Based on the consolidated orientations and the Focus Group validation, six strategic recommendations and one additional transversal recommendation are proposed.

Recommendation 1 – Establish permanent coordination mechanisms for intermodal mobility

Local and regional authorities should promote stable coordination structures involving transport providers, infrastructure managers, tourism actors and other relevant stakeholders. Where mobility chains cross territorial or national boundaries, these structures should also support coordination at cross-border level.

Recommendation 2 – Prioritise investments that improve the continuity of complete intermodal journeys

Infrastructure planning should focus on interchange points, first- and last-mile connections, coastal–hinterland accessibility and links between strategic gateways and final destinations. The strategic relevance of an intervention should be assessed according to the extent to which it removes a functional gap within the overall travel chain.

Recommendation 3 – Build integrated passenger information and ticketing on interoperable data and long-term governance

MaaS and digital mobility solutions should be developed on the basis of reliable transport services, common or interoperable data standards, clear responsibilities for data maintenance and long-term institutional ownership. Priority should be given to connecting existing systems rather than multiplying isolated applications.

Recommendation 4 – Improve the attractiveness of sustainable alternatives before relying on behavioural incentives

Policies aimed at changing mobility behaviour should primarily improve service frequency, reliability, operating hours, affordability, passenger information and ease of interchange. Promotional or financial incentives should complement, rather than substitute, an adequate mobility offer.

Recommendation 5 – Formalise cooperation and data-sharing arrangements among mobility providers

Public authorities and transport providers should establish clear mechanisms for data exchange, timetable coordination, integrated services and, where feasible, ticketing integration. Cooperation should be supported through common technical standards, designated organisational responsibilities and appropriate governance or contractual arrangements.

Recommendation 6 – Engage tourism destinations and other mobility attractors as active partners in mobility management

Mobility attractors should be encouraged to provide information on sustainable access, cooperate with transport operators, support employee and visitor mobility planning and contribute to first- and last-mile solutions, particularly during periods of high seasonal demand.

Transversal Recommendation – Implement sustainable mobility measures in an integrated way

The effectiveness of the above presented recommendations depends on their functional combination. Governance coordination and provider cooperation enable digital integration; physical connectivity and service quality create the conditions for behavioural change; and mobility attractors can reinforce sustainable travel choices only where credible alternatives already exist.

5.2 Indicative Implementation Guidance

The following table provides indicative first steps for applying the six recommendations. The actors and territorial scales identified should be adapted to local needs, institutional

responsibilities and available resources. These steps should be considered together, in accordance with the transversal recommendation on integrated implementation.

Table 8: Indicative first steps for applying the SUMMA strategic recommendations

Recommendation	Actors to involve	Suggested initial step	Relevant scale
1 – Permanent coordination mechanisms	Local and regional authorities, transport providers and infrastructure managers	Establish a recurring coordination forum and identify responsibilities for addressing gaps across the mobility chain.	Local and regional; cross-border where travel chains cross national boundaries.
2 – Continuity of intermodal journeys	Public authorities, infrastructure managers and transport providers	Identify priority gaps at interchange points and in first- and last-mile connections, considering complete passenger journeys.	Functional travel corridors, including coastal–hinterland connections.
3 – Integrated information and ticketing	Public authorities, transport providers and mobility platform managers	Map existing information and ticketing systems, identify interoperability requirements and assign responsibility for maintaining information.	Local and regional systems, with cross-border interoperability where relevant.
4 – Attractive sustainable alternatives	Public authorities and transport providers	Assess service frequency, reliability, operating hours, affordability and ease of	Local and regional, differentiated by territory and user group.

		interchange against residents' and visitors' needs.	
5 – Cooperation among mobility providers	Transport providers and coordinating public authorities	Define arrangements for data exchange and service coordination, including organisational responsibilities and common procedures.	Networks of providers serving connected territories and travel chains.
6 – Engagement of mobility attractors	Tourism destinations, major employers, other mobility attractors and transport providers	Coordinate sustainable-access information and identify opportunities to improve employee and visitor mobility and first- and last-mile connections.	Destinations and their surrounding functional mobility areas.

5.3 Dissemination and Future Use of the Strategy

The SUMMA partners plan to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise their shared commitment to the dissemination and future use of this Strategy. The MoU is intended to be signed by all project partners and to support the promotion of the recommendations within their respective institutional and territorial contexts.

The Strategy provides a common reference for future mobility planning and cooperation. Specific implementation arrangements will depend on the institutional responsibilities, available resources and planning processes of the actors involved.

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