

Quick Reference Guide

Joint Sustainable Energy & Climate Action Plan

What is a joint Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP)?

A joint SECAP refers to a plan that is carried out collectively by a **group of neighbouring local authorities**. This means that the group engages in building a common vision, preparing an emission inventory, assessing climate change impacts and defining a set of actions to be implemented both individually and jointly in the concerned territory. The joint SECAP aims at fostering **institutional cooperation** and **joint approaches** among local authorities operating in the same territorial area.

Why a joint SECAP approach?

In 2012, the possibility of preparing a joint SECAP was officially introduced in the Covenant of Mayors initiative as a result of feedback and recommendations from its signatories. The introduction of an option to develop what is now known as the joint SECAP aimed at aligning the action plan development process with the needs expressed by local authorities.

Some municipalities have realised that a joint approach to energy and climate change mitigation and adaptation planning allows for **achieving more effective results** than an isolated one, as in some circumstances, opportunities for high-impact actions can be more easily identified within the administrative boundaries of an aggregation of neighbouring local authorities.

This can be the case for instance for measures targeting public transport, local energy production, water management or the provision of advisory services to citizens, with **higher potential for attracting investment due to the bigger size and lower risk**. Furthermore, municipalities involved in joint implementation of measures can also sometimes benefit from economies of scale, such as in public procurement.

In addition, some municipalities face the problem of **lack of human and financial resources** to achieve the Covenant commitments. Thus, it becomes easier for them to **bundle efforts** on action plan preparation, implementation and monitoring.

Who can carry out a joint SECAP?

The joint SECAP approach is specially designed for the case of **small-sized municipalities** within the same territorial area, i.e. ensuring territorial continuity, with indicatively less than 10,000 inhabitants each. **Inter-municipal networks** (i.e. **union of rural municipalities** and **Local Action Groups, union of mountain municipalities, river basin group of municipalities**, etc.) and **urban agglomeration**, like a metropolis and its suburbs, are encouraged to consider carrying out a joint SECAP instead of single SECAPs.

What is the difference between joint SECAP option 1 and option 2?

The difference between the two joint SECAP options can be summarised as follows:

Option 1 - individual GHG reduction commitment: each signatory in the group **individually commits** to a set joint target, e.g. carbon neutrality by 2050 and is thus required to complete its **own action plan**. The SECAP can contain both **individual and shared measures**. The impacts on energy savings, renewable energy production and GHG emissions reduction corresponding to the joint measures should be divided among each municipality sharing these measures in their individual SECAP templates. **Each member of the group has to upload the action plan document** onto their individual profile and **each Municipal Council has to approve the SECAP document**.

Option 2 - shared GHG reduction commitment: the group of signatories **collectively commits** to a set joint target, e.g. carbon neutrality by 2050. In this particular case only a single **common action plan template** is to be filled-in by the group of signatories. The SECAP can contain both **individual and shared measures** (at least one shared measure should be included). **The action plan document to upload is a common one** and includes all the members of the group, thus, **each Municipal Council has to approve it**.

	Individual SECAP	Joint SECAP option 1	Joint SECAP option 2
GHG Emissions Reduction Target			
Emission Inventory			
SECAP Actions			
SECAP Municipal Council Approval			
SECAP Template Submission			
SECAP Document Submission			
Signatory Profile on the Website			

 individual |  shared

In both cases, the group of signatories is strongly encouraged to appoint a **body/authority responsible for coordinating the SECAP development and implementation process**. It is recommended this work be delegated to the respective Covenant Territorial Coordinator or other possibilities include the appointment of the most active or advanced municipality among the group or the agglomeration in the case of urban areas. Other possibilities include the appointment of the most active or advanced municipality among the group or the agglomeration in the case of urban areas.

How to join the Covenant of Mayors in case of opting for a joint SECAP?

Local authorities willing to join the Covenant of Mayors initiative and adopt a joint SECAP should undertake the following steps:

	Present the Covenant of Mayors <u>commitments document</u> (separate or collective commitment).
	Once an official resolution has been adopted by the Council, mandate the mayor – or equivalent representative – to sign the <u>adhesion form</u> (option 1 or 2 available on the <u>library webpage</u>).
	After signature, the first municipality registered <u>online</u> will then register the whole group, by indicating the type of joint adhesion and uploading the individual duly signed adhesion form. The other municipalities in the group, after individual registrations and uploading of individual duly signed adhesion forms, will select the already created group from drop-down menu.

Can existing individual signatories decide to do a joint SECAP?

Yes, individual signatories may realise that they would prefer to carry out a joint approach. In these cases, they can modify their initial adhesion by proceeding as follows:

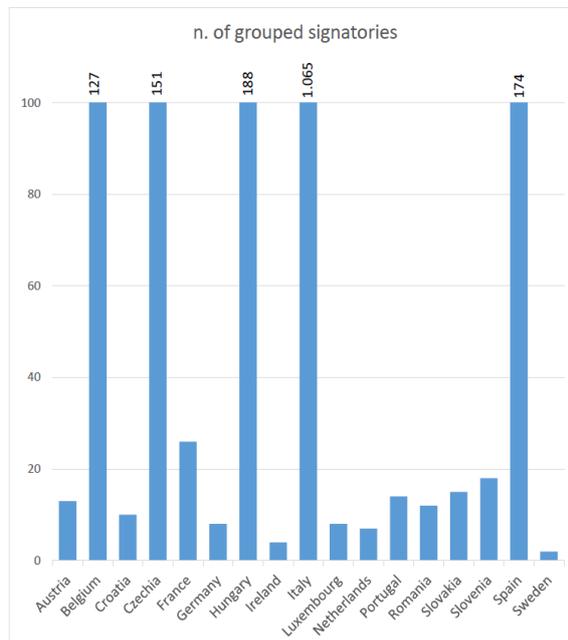
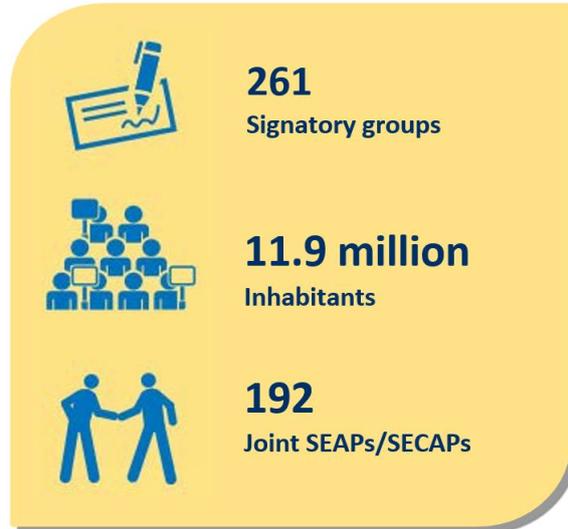
- Contact the Covenant of Mayors Helpdesk** (info@eumayors.eu) with the following information:
 - Name of the existing individual signatories and name of the group;
 - Name of the body/authority responsible for coordinating the work.
- The Covenant of Mayors Helpdesk evaluates the information sent** depending on the status of the signatory in MyCovenant.

How many local authorities have adopted the joint SECAP approach?

By March 2023, 261 groups of local authorities have adopted the joint SECAP approach, of which 199 have opted for the joint SECAP Option 2 (shared GHG reduction target). These groups represent **1.842 municipalities** and cover **11.9 million inhabitants**. Almost 67% of these signatories are from Italy, where the grouped approach has been seen to be suitable due to the small size of most of the municipalities (*Comune*).

On average, the groups are composed of seven municipalities with a **population** of around **45.500 inhabitants per group**. Furthermore, 144 groups have submitted a joint SEAP/SECAP Option 2 and 215 municipalities (belonging to 48 groups) have submitted a joint SEAP/SECAP Option 1.

Country	Count of grouped profiles	Count of municipalities covered	Sum of population adhesion
Austria	1	13	28.846
Belgium	18	127	2.191.765
Croatia	2	10	23.392
Czechia	15	151	180.050
France	6	26	730.687
Germany	1	8	48.248
Hungary	10	188	378.873
Ireland	1	4	197.508
Italy	175	1.065	6.620.431
Luxembourg	1	8	22.603
Netherlands	1	7	639.114
Portugal	2	14	204.773
Romania	1	12	43.370
Slovakia	1	15	25.420
Slovenia	1	18	196.685
Spain	24	174	341.711
Sweden	1	2	6.181
Total	261	1.842	11.879.657



Number of grouped profiles, signatories involved and represented population in EU countries. Source: JRC (2023), based on data submitted in MyCovenant (cut-off date March 2023).

How is the joint SECAP being adopted in practice?

Mount Vesuvius area, Italy

A small group composed of three municipalities in southern Italy – Palma Campania, San Giuseppe Vesuviano and Striano – have decided to develop a joint SECAP with a common vision (Option 1, shared commitment). The joint SECAP elaboration was coordinated by the **Shared Office for Sustainability** (UCSA, Ufficio Comune per la Sostenibilità Ambientale), an internal service provider for the three municipalities on environment, energy and climate related issues. The joint SECAP includes both **adaptation and mitigation targets**, and identifies three main measures: bundling of public lighting with building renovations in public tendering; deployment of energy communities to tackle energy poverty; raising awareness for youth generation on circular economy topics.

Key Facts

Municipalities: 3
Inhabitants: ~ 53,000
Joint SECAP year: 2020
2030 CO₂ Target: 61%

Bundling public lighting with building renovation projects represents a win-win strategy to attract investors. **Energy communities** will be established involving different members both from public and private sectors, with the aim of producing and managing renewable energy for their own use, to feed surplus energy produced into the grid and/or to store energy. **Raising awareness for youth generation on circular economy** is being promoted by activating synergies with the ERASMUS+ CEYOU project (Circular Economy for Youth), involving UCSA as partner. The goal of the project is to promote a **permanent forum on circular economy for young people**, empowering them to take positive actions within their local communities, building a network and exchanging ideas at local, regional, national and European levels. UCSA also supports the local authorities in the implementation of measures focusing on **public buildings, public lighting and energy communities**.

This joint SECAP shows how local authorities can meaningfully **engage citizens** and make them key actors in the transition towards a low carbon economy.

Gorenjska region, Slovenia

The eighteen municipalities of the Gorenjska region have decided to carry out a joint SECAP (Option 2, individual commitments) for the whole territory, aiming to kick-off a long-term process to identify and implement energy efficiency actions; to provide citizens with access to safe, sustainable and affordable energy; and to adapt to the impacts of climate change. More energy efficient and resilient territories will be created by the development of **new renewable energy sources** and the establishment of **smart networks and services**. An inclusive and tailored **communication and engagement strategy** is a

Key Facts

Municipalities: 18
Inhabitants: 205,717
Joint SECAP year: 2018
2030 CO₂ Target: 40%

common and crucial measure of the joint SECAP for all municipalities.

The joint SECAP defines **adaptation and mitigation targets** and the identification of project areas, including a detailed analysis of climate and energy related sectors. It promotes the establishment of public-private partnerships for the implementation of common policies, programs, and projects approved by all the municipalities of the region. The main focus areas of this joint SECAP are the promotion of energy efficiency and climate friendly society, the improvement of air quality, the establishment of the regional Center for Renewable Energy Sources, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change; and the **implementation of actions to tackle energy poverty locally**.

In 2020, a **SECAP working group** was established, with the role of addressing SECAP related issues, making suggestions for SECAP updating and improvement, and assessing the quality of SECAP implementation.

Three cities from the Gorenjska region have been selected to join the **100 climate neutral city mission** and to develop the climate city contract, involving citizens, research organisations, and the private sector, paving the way to reach more ambitious targets at the regional level.

Resources

Guidance materials

- [Guidebook 'How to develop a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan \(SECAP\)' - Part 1: The SECAP process, step-by-step towards low-carbon and climate-resilient cities by 2030](#)
- [Guidebook 'How to develop a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan \(SECAP\)' - Part 2: Baseline Emission Inventory \(BEI\) and Risk and Vulnerability Assessment \(RVA\)](#)
- [Guidebook 'How to develop a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan \(SECAP\)' - Part 3: Policies, key actions, good practices for mitigation and adaptation to climate change and Financing SECAP\(s\)](#)
- [Joint Adhesion Infographic](#)
- [CoM-Europe FAQs \(specific chapter on Joint Adhesion benefits\)](#)

Inspiring EU projects

- <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/jointsecap>
- <https://compete4secap.eu/home/>
- <https://ceesen.org/en/about-ceeseu/>
- <https://adriaalliance.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/home>
- <https://2isecap.eu/>

Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy Office
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