



Quick Reference Guide

Grouped SECAP analysis

Why the grouped Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) analysis?

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, in charge of analysing the action plans, has found that many active **Covenant Coordinators** have taken over the responsibility of developing local authorities' SECAPs, using a **common methodology and data sources**. This has led to a new approach for SECAP evaluation based on a cluster of plans within the same province or region. The SECAP grouped analysis was put in place in 2013 and it consists in a thorough **analysis of the methodology** and some **reference SECAPs** by the JRC. The Coordinators are entrusted with the role of communicating the results of the JRC's feedback to all the signatories who submitted an action plan on the basis of the same methodology and to liaise directly with the JRC. On the one hand, this approach allows signatories to receive a **faster feedback** regarding their action plans. On the other hand, it is less time consuming on the Coordinator side, as they receive a feedback on the methodology and on the reference SECAPs that can easily be applied to all the other signatories of the group. The added value of this grouped analysis resides also in the opportunity offered to **discuss methodological questions with the JRC** and to **reinforce the role of Covenant Coordinators**.

Who is eligible for the grouped SECAP analysis?

The grouped analysis was specially designed for the case of **Coordinators adopting a common methodology** for developing SECAPs for the local authorities within their territory. Coordinators that have not directly developed the SECAPs, but that can confirm that the plans can be analysed following a grouped approach are also eligible. This is often the case of plans adopting a methodology developed by a local energy agency or a consultant company.

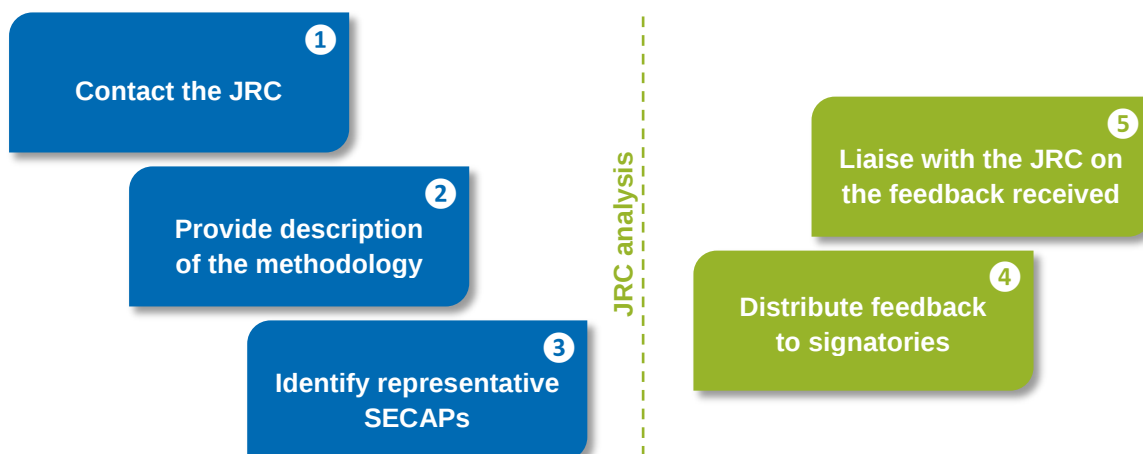
What does the JRC analysis consist of?

The **JRC will analyse thoroughly the methodology** developed by the Coordinator or other body as well as some reference SECAPs. Based on this information, the JRC will be able to provide a comprehensive **feedback on the methodological aspects** and their compliance with the Covenant of Mayors principles outlined in the [SECAP guidebook](#). The JRC will also provide a detailed **feedback report on the sample of analysed SECAPs**. Providing that the methodology is in line with the Covenant principles and the reference SECAPs are accepted, the JRC will approve all the SECAPs involved in the grouped analysis. Similarly to the individual SECAP analysis, the evaluation of the reference SECAPs focuses on the assessment of a set of **eligibility criteria** (see below). Failure to meet these criteria will prevent SECAP acceptance by the JRC. The analysis focuses as well on the consistency of the data provided.

- ✓ The SECAP must be approved by the Municipal Council or equivalent body.
- ✓ The SECAP must clearly specify the Covenant mitigation (i.e. at least 40% CO2 emission reduction by 2030) and adaptation commitments.
- ✓ The SECAP must be based on the results of a comprehensive Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI) and Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment(s) (RVAs).
- ✓ For mitigation, the SECAP must cover the key sectors of activity (Municipal, Tertiary, Residential and Transport):
 - The Baseline Emission Inventory must cover at least three out of four key sectors.
 - The mitigation actions must cover at least two out of four key sectors.

What are the steps to follow?

Coordinators willing to participate in the grouped SECAP analysis approach should undertake the following steps:



- 1 **Contact the JRC** via jrc-com-technical-helpdesk@ec.europa.eu to express the interest in participating;
- 2 Provide a **detailed description of the methodology** adopted, including:
 - Description of the regional context;
 - Identification of the data sources used (energy consumption, production, emission factors);
 - Description of the methodology to prepare the emission inventory;
 - Description of the priority areas of intervention and of the key actions to be implemented (and their impacts);
 - Description of how the Coordinator supports and coordinates the signatories.
- 3 Identify one **representative SECAP** for the JRC to analyse for each population size groups:
 - < 3,000
 - 3,001 – 10,000
 - 10,001 – 50,000

For the municipalities with population above 50,000 inhabitants, their SECAPs will be analysed on a one to one basis by the JRC. To group their SECAPs, Coordinators could also identify different criteria instead of the proposed ones by population size (e.g. population density, geomorphology, typology, dynamics, etc.).
- 4 After JRC analysis, **distribute the feedback** to all signatories.
- 5 **Follow up the feedback** on the methodology and on the representative SECAPs. Subsequently, the JRC can organise a follow up meeting (via phone/videoconference) to discuss the issues raised in the feedback report and the solutions identified by the Coordinator.

If the Coordinator was not directly involved in SECAPs development, then the Coordinator will be asked to first perform an eligibility check of each SECAP and communicate the outcome to the JRC. JRC will provide detailed guidance to the Coordinator on how to carry out the eligibility check.

Note that the Coordinator can **liaise with the JRC at any stage of the action plan development** to discuss any methodological questions they may have.

What happens with subsequent submissions under the same Coordinator?

When a Coordinator intends to deliver more SECAPs after the grouped SECAP analysis carried out by the JRC, then two situations can happen:

- The Coordinator confirms that subsequent submissions are **compliant with the methodology** previously analysed and with the representative SECAPs, and thus the **JRC directly approves those SECAPs** without any further analysis;
- The Coordinator has **revised the methodology** and has thus to provide an updated description and identify new representative SECAPs for each population size threshold, so that the **JRC carries out a new grouped SECAP analysis** for the new set of submitted SECAPs.

What happens if there is one SECAP with specific characteristics among the group of SECAPs?

Such cases might happen when there is one particular city with characteristics very different from the others of the group. This can be the case of a city with a district heating network or with a permanent transport line. In such cases, the Coordinator should communicate it to the JRC which will perform a separate analysis of the SECAP.

How is the grouped SECAP analysis being applied in practice?



Province of Limburg, Belgium

The [Province of Limburg](#) together with some partners developed a common approach to prepare the SEAPs of 42 of its municipalities. The Province commissioned a **scientific study** to define the concept of **climate neutrality** and to ascertain the **feasibility of its ambitious objectives**, which was the basis for the approach applied to the municipalities. The support of the Province consisted in **providing all the necessary data** to municipalities in order for them to calculate their Baseline Emission Inventories. Other tools were also made available to the municipalities, such as **'Sustainable building scan'** providing information on the different measures that can be taken in the buildings sector or the **'Renewable energy scan'** giving insight into the renewable energy potential and constraints in each municipality's territory. Furthermore, a **'model SEAP'** was provided to municipalities as the basis for their own SEAP, which can be tailored by using the specific tools developed. For the grouped SEAP analysis, the Province of Limburg provided the JRC with the **description of the methodology**, including the 'model SEAP'. The following SEAPs were indicated by the Coordinator as a **representative sample** and have received individual feedback from the JRC: Bocholt, Peer, Zonhoven, Lommel and Beringen. The SEAPs of Genk and Hasselt were individually analysed, having more than 50,000 inhabitants. Afterwards, the Coordinator has informed the JRC of the submission of two more SEAPs developed according to the same approach and the JRC has proceeded with their direct acceptance.

Out of the 221 municipalities in the [Province of Girona](#), 191 have joined the Covenant of Mayors so far. The Province of Girona has promoted the initiative among the local authorities in its territory as a huge opportunity to **enhance territorial cohesion** and to contribute to **multi-level governance**, also counting with the support of other bodies. The Province has collaborated with CILMA (*Consell d'iniciatives locals per al medi ambient de les comarques de Girona*) on the development of a common methodology to be followed by all signatories. When defining the methodology, CILMA could constantly take advantage of **JRC's technical support** via e-mail and phone, in order to **ensure compliance with the Covenant principles**. A spreadsheet to collect all the data needed to calculate the emission inventories and a **model of SEAP** have also been provided to signatories as a basis to draft each individual SECAP. Since the Province is not directly drafting the SEAPs for its coordinated municipalities, it has **committed to pre-check each SEAP** before the official submission. To this end, each municipality was required to send to the Province an editable copy of the SEAP, in order to:

- ensure the homogeneity;
- assess the compliance with the methodology;
- evaluate the consistency of results;
- assess the credibility of the actions.

The procedure undertaken by the Province was as follows: after the preliminary check, the Province issues a **validation document** (*Document de validació del PAES*) and gives one month time to the signatory to amend its SEAP and send the final version to the Province. Afterwards, the final version of the SEAP is submitted by the Province. 45 SEAPs have been submitted so far. The **reference SEAPs** are currently being assessed by the JRC via the grouped approach. In order to support the role of the Province of Girona in the SEAP grouped analysis, the JRC has participated in a **video-conference meeting** organised by the Province and attended by all its signatories.

Province of Teramo, Italy

In close collaboration with the energy agency (AG.EN.A - Agenzia per l'Energia e l'Ambiente), the [Province of Teramo](#) has developed the SEAPs for all the 47 municipalities in its territory. The agency has developed, specifically for the territory, a **tool that could be used by each municipality to calculate their emission inventories**: the model is based on a mixed data approach: 'top-down' (starting from regional/provincial databases of energy and emissions) and 'bottom-up' (from real data at the municipal level). The Province has provided JRC with a note describing in detail the approach and the equations used in the model for each sector of the emission inventory. The following aspects were described in the **reference SEAPs**: the Coordinator supports municipalities in the implementation of actions (especially those that require a coordination effort), takes care of the organisation of awareness raising events on sustainable energy use and manages a Covenant [webpage](#) addressed to citizens and stakeholders on the official website of the Province. The Province of Teramo could also benefit from the financial support provided by Abruzzo Region, which has funded some actions through the European Regional Development Fund. The reference SEAPs analysed by the JRC were Valle Castellana, Mosciano Sant'Angelo and Roseto degli Abruzzi. Teramo was the only SEAP in the group from a city with more than 50,000 inhabitants.