

# Integrated Low-Carbon Strategies



A Policy Brief from the Policy Learning Platform on  
Low-carbon economy

October 2021



**Interreg  
Europe**



European Union | European Regional Development Fund



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## Summary

Public authorities across Europe have an important role to play in the development of a sustainable and low-carbon economy, with transformations needed in every sector and area of public life. As such, multiple actors are involved in setting up strategies to direct public policy, across multiple departments and levels of governance – covering areas such as housing, building codes, land-use, transport, energy, climate change mitigation and environmental policy. These strategies, often developed in silos, need to be harmonised and integrated to ensure that all are pulling in the same direction, and to make optimal use of limited resources. As well as cross-departmental (horizontal) co-operation, vertical co-operation between levels of government also needs to be enabled. A number of projects and regions have already investigated the integration process and their results and guidelines can provide a number of lessons for others on how to optimally use resources, share data, engage with stakeholders and work across boundaries to develop and achieve regional aims.

## Europe 2050: Strategies for a sustainable, low-carbon economy

The European Union has high ambitions for reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, decoupling economic growth from resource use, and ensuring a socially balanced transition. The European Green Deal aims to achieve all three, while also contributing to economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This will entail action being taken on climate, energy, transport, industry, agriculture, the environment and oceans, research and innovation, as well as mobilisation of finance and human resources. The level of action needed will require significant mobilisation of both finance and human resources, and there is much work to do. Regions and cities will be at the forefront of these efforts, ensuring actions are fit to regional characteristics and contribute positively to regional development.

The result is that national, regional, and municipal governments must develop strategies and mobilise resources effectively and efficiently, while engaging with stakeholders and citizens to make them active participants in the transition. The number of sectors to be considered, often currently tackled with individual strategies, is exhaustive: buildings, mobility, energy, water, waste, agriculture & natural resources, clean air, smart specialisation, circular economy, industrial transition, SME development, tourism, and spatial planning, to name but a few. *Out of necessity, this brief will focus primarily on low-carbon related matters, specifically energy and mobility, but touch also upon other topics such as smart cities strategies, land-use planning and climate adaptation.*

Modern governance is hugely challenging, with public authorities needing to balance the needs and desires of many stakeholders, at multiple levels, often with conflicting interests and limited budgets. Creating an individual strategy and vision for one single area is challenging enough, let alone trying to harmonise and integrate with other sectors. Even related issues, such as energy and transport, are typically managed by different administrative departments and are not under the authority of a single decision-maker; and within a single area like transport, fragmentation can be high, with different leads on cycling, public transport, air quality, urban planning, and parking.



This leads to a huge amount of inefficiency, with resources spread thin, and with strategies often pulling in different directions. It can lead to a lack of consistency between goals and objectives and incentivise stakeholders to take actions beneficial to one goal, but detrimental to another. Without wide enough horizontal integration, working with neighbouring municipalities, results can also be suboptimal, and without co-ordination, situations can arise in which different departments are collecting the same data multiple times, not realising another department has done so, whilst then using different measurements and units, resulting in difficulties to synchronise and compare data.



### Good Practice 1: PALET Regional Energy Strategy and SUMP Integration

The Region of Parkstad Limburg (Netherlands) has, since 2015, been implementing the PALET project (Parkstad Limburg Energy Transition), a joint initiative by the region's eight municipalities to be 'energy-neutral' by 2040, through increased energy efficiency and generation of renewable energy.

To reach this goal, the Region gathered municipal coordinators, external experts and stakeholders together, one day a week for seven months, for intensive exchange to help each municipality develop its own individual plans and a joint regional strategy. By 2017, the region had adopted its [PALET Integrated Action Plan](#) covering energy savings, sustainable energy generation, infrastructure and transport, as well as containing all municipal plans. The first version covers 2016-2020 with new plans to be written for every four-year period to 2040.

The region recognised the importance of tackling transport in the framework of its energy ambitions, being responsible for 16% of energy consumption. So, one of the key ambitions of the region, supported by the [REFORM project](#), has been to integrate its Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) into PALET, becoming the 'Infrastructure, Traffic and Transport' pillar of PALET 2021-2024. The region will strengthen collaboration between mobility, sustainability, and spatial planning departments, on the one hand, and between municipalities, on the other. The resulting [REFORM Action Plan](#) sets out the programme 'Think SUMP', to discuss with cross-departmental policy-makers and stakeholders how to reduce the energy intensity of transport, including bicycle infrastructure, clean city distribution, e-mobility and public transport.

In 2020, the region completed the development of its new SUMP, now a pillar of PALET, and replaced the region's previous transport plan with carbon reduction, sustainable energy, and improving liveability as its core principles. The [new SUMP came into force in January 2021](#) covering all eight municipalities and demonstrating the value of cross-departmental and multi-level governance approaches.

Click to [find out more about this good practice](#) or to discover [Limburg's REFORM Action Plan](#).



There can therefore be significant efficiency gains by increasing co-operation between different levels of government, between departments, and between neighbouring regions and municipalities.

## European initiatives and support

Regional development policy is primarily an investment policy and is often described as the area where European policy is actually implemented on the ground. High-level European goals and targets need to be implemented at the national and regional levels, the closer to the citizen, the better. Whilst the main tools for implementing European policy are the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs) and their mandatory Operational Programmes, there are many initiatives either initiated or supported by the European Commission aiming to help regions develop strategies and plans to reach European goals. The most relevant for the low-carbon economy are listed below.

### Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs)

In 2008, the European Union adopted the Climate and Energy Package, which was accompanied by the launch of the [Covenant of Mayors](#), aiming to support local authorities in devising and implementing sustainable energy strategies for the 2020 energy targets. In 2015, the scope was broadened, integrating climate considerations into the newly renamed Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, supporting objectives beyond 2020. Signatories under the Covenant of Mayors had to create a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) setting out how they would reach 2020 targets. Under the new Covenant, signatories must create Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs), showing how they will reduce carbon emissions by at least 40% and also adapt to climate change.

A SECAP must contain an assessment of the local context, including energy use, a baseline CO<sub>2</sub> emission inventory, an emissions reduction target, and actions planned to reach that target, setting out responsibilities and costs. On the climate adaptation front, the SECAP must include a risk and vulnerability assessment to identify regional threats from climate change and propose adaptation strategies. To assist in development, the Commission provides [SECAP Guidelines](#), as well as the [Urban Adaptation Support Tool](#). Once submitted, the SECAP is reviewed and approved by the Covenant of Mayors Office and reviewed every two years.

### Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP)

Following the White Paper on Transport (2011) and the Urban Mobility Package (2013), the European Commission promoted the concept of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP), with the aim of supporting sustainable transport in urban and suburban areas. SUMP should cover the full 'functional urban area' – the city and the areas connected to it by frequent traffic flow, not only the area within the administrative region. They provide a long-term vision, objectives, targets and actions, and involve a participatory process for stakeholder engagement. Vertical and horizontal integration is a necessity, enabling co-ordination between different levels of government, different departments, and neighbouring administrations.



SUMPs need to consider how to develop integrated and sustainable transport for people, goods and logistics, tackle environmental and health impacts such as air quality and noise pollution, and guarantee accessibility to transport with specific focus on vulnerable users (disabled persons, cyclists, pedestrians), while also improving quality of life and promoting safety. The timespan for implementation of a SUMP varies but is typically at least ten years. Whilst carbon emissions reduction is a required indicator, there is no overall target. The Commission provides support for the creation of SUMPs through the Eltis and CIVITAS initiatives. [Eltis the Urban Mobility Observatory](#), provides access to self-assessment tools and guidelines for SUMP development, while [CIVITAS](#) provides peer exchange, networking, and training, as a network of cities.

### **Smart Specialisation Strategies for Sustainability**

The Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) concept was introduced by the European Commission in EU Cohesion policy starting in 2014 as a place-based innovation policy to support regional prioritisation of innovation based on a bottom-up discovery process (the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process). Regions identify their strongest research, innovation, and entrepreneurial assets to select a limited number of priorities to focus on leading to socio-economic development. For more on S3, see the Policy Learning Platforms' Policy Brief on [Smart Specialisation Strategy](#).

For 2021-2027, S3 becomes S4 – Smart Specialisation Strategies for Sustainability – aiming to improve sustainability and inclusiveness by connecting regional strategies with EU-wide policies and aims, focusing on synergies between innovation, sustainability, infrastructure, and skills. The update to S4 is voluntary for regions, and the Joint Research Centre has begun the process of developing methodologies in pilots with ten European regions. The JRC has also explored integration between S3 and [Recovery and Resilience Plans](#).

### **Smart Cities Strategies**

Although not mandatory under EU legislation, the Commission has widely supported the Smart Cities approach and the development of Smart City Strategies. Smart cities make use of data and digital solutions to make networks and services more efficient, for the benefit of citizens, and strategies have an intimate link with energy, industry, and transport policies. Indeed, smart city strategies themselves are highly integrated strategies, requiring collaboration amongst a wide number of departments for success.

The Commission has supported smart city strategies through the [Smart Cities Marketplace](#), integrating the former EIP Smart Cities and Communities and the Smart Cities Information System. It considers issues including sustainable mobility, sustainable districts and built environment, integrated infrastructures, knowledge sharing and open data governance.

### **National Frameworks**

Adding to the complexity is the need to match-up regional strategies with national level strategies, with strong regional aspects:



- **National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs)**: These were introduced under the Regulation on the governance of the energy union and climate action of 2018 ('Governance Regulation') and cover energy efficiency, renewables, greenhouse gas emissions, interconnections and research and innovation.
- **Long-term decarbonisation strategies**: Required by the Paris Agreement, these national strategies cover a thirty years period from 2020-2050 and need to be aligned with the NECPs. The process for setting out these strategies can be found the Governance Regulation, and they are updated every ten years. The EU itself also has its own long-term strategy.
- **Long-term Renovation Strategies**: Under the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, each EU Member State has been required to create a strategy to decarbonise the building stock by 2050 and will be integrated into NECPs. The strategies must contain an overview of the national building stock, policies to stimulate deep renovation, target the worst performing buildings and energy poverty, and an overview of initiatives to promote smart technologies and skills, with milestones to 2030, 2040, and 2050.

### Good Practices for Integration and Harmonisation of Strategies

With such a wide number of planning documents and aims, co-ordinating and integrating strategies and plans can significantly improve the effectiveness of action, achieving synergies and economies of scale, to make best use of resources. This can involve setting up a long-term regional cross-sectoral vision that integrates multiple areas of the economy, developing common tools and methodologies, single databases and harmonised data collection for the region, establishing new governance structures, and common monitoring systems. They can then also be supported with common communication and awareness campaigns, integrated stakeholder engagement approaches, and new support instruments, such as cross-sectoral funding instruments.

Luckily, there have already been several projects and frontrunner regions which have experimented in implementing integrated strategies and approaches. These include Horizon 2020 projects such as SIMPLA (see box), and the various examples identified by Interreg Europe projects, presented in green boxes throughout this document. In this section, we will examine some key actions and provide examples of successful implementation.

#### **SIMPLA Project & Guidelines for Harmonisation of Energy & Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning**

The [SIMPLA project](#) ('Sustainable Integrated Multi-sector Planning'), funded under Horizon 2020, sought to enhance the capacity of small and medium-sized municipalities to foster harmonised energy and mobility planning by providing guidelines, case studies, recommendations, training and coaching.

SIMPLA culminated by creating a new set of guidelines for the [European Platform on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans](#), operated by Eltis. The guidelines, '[Harmonisation of Energy and Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning](#)', give advice to regional authorities on how to harmonise strategies, whether the region already has the strategies or is starting from scratch.

The guidelines present some operational principles for harmonisation:



1. All departments taking part in the process (mobility, environment, land use planning, etc.) should have a **shared vision and objective**;
2. All departments should work jointly and **actively co-operate**;
3. A single, qualified project manager should take on **leadership** of the process;
4. Robust **project management** techniques are essential, with great effort needed to co-ordinate activities, manage multidisciplinary teams and define a work plan with clear tasks and milestones.

In terms of the actual development, the guidelines see five stages in the process:

1. **Initiation:** The first step is securing **political commitment** for the harmonisation process, informing decision-makers about the benefits of harmonisation, and arranging meetings to find a common vision, discuss what needs to be done and who should be involved. This also presents an opportunity to discuss other strategy harmonisation (e.g., land-use planning). Next, the region needs to establish its **cross-sectoral harmonisation team**, bringing together the heads of relevant departments to define the harmonisation team and degree of involvement, and begin to set up joint structures and tools.
2. **Planning:** The team next needs to perform an **analysis** of the current situation and how SUMP and SECAP are managed, looking for where improvements are possible, relevant legislation and documents that may need to be changed, and available sources of data and information. Identifying **stakeholders** is the next step, working out their role and how to engage them in the harmonisation process. Finally, the team will create its **work plan**, identifying areas for harmonisation, setting out SMART objectives, listing resources, identifying constraints, setting out responsibilities and specific actions, and creating a schedule for action.
3. **Implementation:** At the political level, a common **vision** for the region needs to be defined: what will the region look like in ten years? **Data sharing and data collection** needs to be jointly enabled with common units and storage standards, accessible by all. **Reference years and monitoring schedules** need to be harmonised, and then, **harmonisation of actions** in the mobility section of the SECAP and SUMP needs to be performed, checking synergies and correlations between actions. Finally, the revised SUMP and SECAP are submitted for **formal approval**.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** This step **monitors** the harmonisation process and assesses the work done, to identify potential issues and take corrective action if needed.
5. **Updating and continuation:** The guidelines, finally, recommend a joint **review** of the plans every two years to assess impact and document lessons learned for future strategies.

For more, see the [SIMPLA project website](#) or read the Guidelines, '[Harmonisation of Energy and Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning](#)'.

### Setting up a single team for horizontal and vertical collaboration

As identified by SIMPLA, a first step in any integration or harmonisation involves setting up the governance structure, bringing together the relevant actors, preparing the project team, developing a single vision, setting priorities, and clarifying responsibilities between actors, including setting who will lead the process of integration and development. This can be set up as a new inter-departmental team (as in Helsinki, see Good Practice 2) or, depending on scale and ambition, as an entirely new department, pooling multiple expertise profiles (as in Velenje





– Good Practice 3), or co-ordinating multiple neighbouring municipalities to work together and make efficient use of resources (as in Rome, see Policy Improvement: Rome’s Energy Office Management Board).



**Good Practice 2: Integrated planning process of land use plan, housing strategy and transport system plan**

The Helsinki Region Transport Plan (HLJ 2015) was drawn up to integrate land-use planning, housing strategy and transport planning, in response to an ever-growing urban population. The plan was developed for, and in co-operation with, all fourteen of the city’s municipalities, working with both policy-makers and officials in different departments. Therefore, the overall strategy, vision and targets were steered through multiple governance levels, in co-operation with different sectors and all municipalities.

The joint plan came about by creating cross-municipal expert groups on land use, housing, and transport, as well as an integrated project group to steer the process in co-ordination with Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority. The result was that, for the first time, an integrated approach was taken to ensure that both transport and urban structures could be sustainably developed.

Development of the plan also involved a thorough impact assessment, presentations and consultation events for stakeholders and consultation with officials from different sectors to collect their views.

[Click here to find out more about this good practice](#) or check out this [presentation from the Policy Learning Platform’s event on Citizen-Focused Urban Mobility](#).



**Policy Improvement: Rome’s Energy Office Management Board**

Lazio’s Regional Energy Plan (2017) aims to improve regional competencies in energy planning, support energy planning, and enable sustainable energy use. It recognises the Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy as a key tool for achieving the Plan’s objectives and dedicates support to local authorities to help them adhere to the Covenant and implement SECAPs.



However, the region had difficulty in deciding how to make use of financial resources available to it, and saw a need to strengthen co-ordination of, and support to, municipalities in elaborating and implementing their SECAPs. As a [result of lessons learned in the SUPPORT project](#), the partner Metropolitan City of Rome has now established an Energy Office Management Board, which launched in 2019, in collaboration with the Region Lazio. The EOMB shares information with the municipalities on how to use regional funds to implement SECAP actions, monitors their implementation, drafts feasibility studies for joint actions and organises seminars for technical staff. By 2020, the EOMB had received 24 expressions of interest from local municipalities wanting to partake in joint activities, four of which have already adhered to the Covenant, and 20 of which intend to do so.



### **Good Practice 3: New municipal office for regional restructuring and economic development**

Velenje, Slovenia, a coal-intensive region, is looking to shift its economy to a sustainable model, but the transformation needed is not slight. Recognising the challenge of restructuring the regional economy and moving to sustainable economic development, the city's council decided to set up a new office for developing an economic regional vision and strategy, as well as planning investments and projects, comprised of a multi-disciplinary team. The new city office combines expertise from sustainable development, tourism, geology, sociology, administrative sciences, and economics, amongst others, to ensure that multiple aspects and views are taken account of in the planning process. The approach is interesting – the city has carved out a single responsible office, rather than cross-departmental co-operation, making clear where responsibility lies, while bringing a wide variety of expertise and views into the decision-making process.

[Click here to find out more about this good practice.](#)

## **Developing a regional vision**

Many of the changes that are needed to reach a low-carbon economy are capital intensive and require substantial lead-time, making it expensive and difficult to change direction if priorities change – an inevitability when policy-makers are changed at election time. Additionally, being reactive to emerging challenges will always be more expensive and challenging than being proactive and planning in advance. Developing overall regional strategies with a long-term vision and wide stakeholder buy-in can be a way of setting a long-term direction and voiding such U-turns. This can be an intensive process, with significant effort to engage stakeholders and bring together relevant policy-makers and departments. One such example can be seen



in Extremadura's 2030 Green and Circular Economy strategy (see Good Practice 4), which has set out a vision for the region with co-operation from politicians, businesses and citizens and has developed a structure to enable individual actors to register their own actions and projects in the framework of the strategy.



#### **Good Practice 4: Regional strategy towards a green and circular economy for Extremadura by 2030**

The Spanish Autonomous Community of Extremadura faces several challenges: high rates of inequality, increasing population, impacts on biodiversity, the effects of climate change, and the need to move towards a low-carbon economy. [EXTREMADURA 2030](#) is a single, integrated strategy for green and circular regional development, uniting and aligning financial, material, and human resources.

The strategy is comprised of seven thematic areas (Green and Circular Economy, Climate Change and Sustainability; Energy, Water and Waste; Science, Technology and Innovation; Land, Productive Resources and Economic Sectors; Employment, Entrepreneurship and Investment; Sustainable Municipalities and Territories; and, Citizenship), and twenty-four strategy lines (such as Sustainable Transport, Industrial Transformation, and Sustainable Energy). The strategy provides a number of grants, including for circular economy in agri-food companies, wastewater treatment, and development of policies to tackle energy poverty, and energy savings and efficiency. Almost 900 individual actions have already been performed in the framework of the strategy.

Extremadura 2030 also enables participation of citizens and businesses, who can become promoters and implement projects, and the platform additionally provides training materials and access to online courses.

[Click here to find out more about this good practice](#)

### **Shared databases, data collection and tools**

Data collection is a major activity for public authorities, being essential for understanding the territory's base level, informing decision-making, and measuring improvements. Often departments collect similar data, but do not share it. The development of single databases, pooling data from numerous sources, and the development of common tools for understanding the data, can help to significantly cut down on a department's workload and save resources, which also enable departments to understand how their actions can influence other sectors and policy areas. Two examples are provided below: Karlovac (Good Practice 5), which developed a single Geographic Information System to integrate climate and energy policy into



spatial planning, and Barcelona, which develops a single energy dashboard for all its municipalities (Good Practice 6).



### Good Practice 5: Green spatial plan of the city of Karlovac

Karlovac, in central Croatia, signed up to the Covenant of Mayors in 2010 and completed its Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) in 2012, working with REGEA, the North-West Croatia Energy Agency. In May 2020, the city authority approved its Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) and to create the necessary conditions for implementing foreseen measures, and ensure integrated planning, the city began to modify its spatial and zoning plans. The result is a new Green Spatial and Zoning Plan, enabling pathways for sustainable development and environmental protection to be set and enforced.

The work began with preparation of a spatial, urban energy analysis, defining energy problems, needs and infrastructure, and a GIS map of the urban area with data on energy use. Based on the conclusion of the analysis, a set of guidelines for integrating energy and climate measures in spatial and zoning plans will be developed to define actions within the city limits. It will also include definitions of low-carbon, or carbon-free zones, in which fossil fuel use will be limited, and use of green infrastructure and renewable energy use will be mandated.

[Click here to find out more about this good practice](#)



### Good Practice 6: Barcelona's Metropolitan Energy Dashboard

Barcelona's Metropolitan Energy Dashboard collects data on energy use from all 35 municipalities of the metropolitan region into a single database and visualisation, with real-time consumption data of public buildings and installations, such as public lighting. The dashboard stores all the energy information from points of public consumption, compares the energy indicators from each municipality to highlight best performers and those with most chance for improvement, and helps policy-makers in all municipalities and at regional level to prioritise energy policies, and continually monitor performance. The Metropolitan Energy Dashboard is a good example for other regions of horizontal pooling of data to enable integrated regional energy development.

[Click here to find out more about this good practice.](#)



## Common actions and instruments

As well as developing common databases, regions can also choose to integrate informational programmes, awareness raising activities and even funding programmes to prioritise projects that achieve multiple regional priorities. One such example is Lazio’s Aprilia Innova (Good Practice 7), a joint Local Development Plan which allocated ERDF funding to projects which could meet multiple regional aims.



### Good Practice 7: PLUS - Local Urban Development Plan

The Local Urban Development Plan (PLUS) of the Lazio Region, Italy, was launched in July 2011 to achieve the 20-20-20 energy and climate objectives. The plan aimed to tackle both socioeconomic and environmental issues at the urban level, providing funding from the ERDF to projects that could tackle four related issues: recovery of public space and buildings; social inclusion and territorial cohesion; improvement of environmental conditions, urban mobility and transport; and promotion of entrepreneurship. Calls were open to municipalities of more than 25,000 people, and each proposal had to cover a well-delineated urban area. PLUS could provide inspiration for other Managing Authorities looking to fund projects in their strategy frameworks – funding projects that link sustainable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable mobility and wider urban regeneration investments together.



[Click here to find out more about this good practice.](#)

## Support under Interreg Europe

Several Interreg Europe projects explore how to improve the efficiency of planning and strategy development in the low-carbon economy transition. These projects identify and share good practices and experiences to develop regional action plans which can improve their policy frameworks.

	<p><b>Supporting the clean energy transition of coal-intensive EU regions</b> DeCarb looks to decarbonise coal intensive regions through the improvement of nine policy instruments – primarily Operational Programmes and Energy Strategies – but with a focus on sustainable, regional development, many of the project’s good practices focus on cross-sectoral and cross-departmental initiatives. <a href="#">Click to visit the DeCarb website.</a></p>
	<p><b>Innovations in Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans for low-carbon urban transport</b> InnovaSUMP aims to introduce new innovations into SUMPs, including integration with energy, smart cities, and other regional strategies. The</p>



	<p>project has devised action plans for its eight regions, and has already achieved new integrated strategies (<b>See box: Recommendations SUMP 2.0</b>). <a href="#">Click to visit the InnovaSUMP website</a>.</p>
	<p><b>Towards low carbon city districts through the improvement of regional policies</b>                  LC Districts focuses on enabling the transition to low-carbon districts and municipalities, looking specifically at building performance, district heating and cooling, and policies and governance for the transition. <a href="#">Click to visit the LC Districts website</a>.</p>
	<p><b>Integrated regional Action Plan for Innovative, Sustainable and low carbon Mobility</b>                  REFORM has sought to support the development of SUMPs and Operational Programmes to be able to fund their implementation. It has explored the role of ICT, data collection and stakeholder engagement in the process. <a href="#">Click to visit the REFORM website</a>.</p>
	<p><b>Support Local Governments in Low Carbon Strategies</b>                  SUPPORT has explored the development of SEAPs and their implementation in regions, with a focus on energy efficiency programmes and measures. This has included examining issues of cross-departmental and cross-municipal data management and stakeholder engagement. <a href="#">Click to visit the SUPPORT website</a></p>

**Does your region need support in defining new strategies?**

Interreg Europe, through its [Policy Learning Platform](#), provides a number of services to both ongoing projects and the wider regional policy [Community](#). As well as operating the [Good Practice Database](#), drawing together the best of the good practices identified by projects, and providing a [Knowledge Hub](#) of policy briefs and articles, the platform offers On-demand [Expert Support](#), including a helpdesk, matchmaking service and peer reviews to assist regions in their transition:

- Via the [Policy Helpdesk](#), Policy-makers may submit their questions to our helpdesk to receive a set of resources ranging from inspiring good practices from across Europe, policy briefs, webinar recordings, information about upcoming events, available European support and contacts of relevant people, as well as recommendations on matchmaking and peer review opportunities.
- A [Matchmaking](#) session is a thematic discussion hosted and moderated by the Policy Learning Platform and designed around the policy needs and questions put forward by the requesting public authority or agency. It brings together peers from other regions in Europe to present their experiences and successes to provide inspiration on overcoming regional challenges.
- [Peer Reviews](#) are the most deep and intensive of the on-demand services, bringing together peers from a number of organisations for a two-day working session to examine the specific territorial and thematic context of the requesting public authority of agency, discuss with stakeholders, and devise recommendations.



### **Recommendations: SUMP 2.0**

Nicosia Municipality (Cyprus), co-ordinator of the InnovaSUMP project, sought to improve and modernise its SUMP, the Nicosia Mobility Master Plan, bringing nine partners together to discuss innovative approaches to drafting and managing its strategy. As well as the Master Plan, Nicosia also has a SECAP and a Strategic Action Plan for Smart Cities, but the measures were not harmonised. The city set about making a new SUMP 2.0, harmonised with their SECAP, and involving stakeholders from several different administrative units and levels, including the national Ministry of Transport. The new SUMP will measure emissions from transport and set targets for reductions to contribute to climate obligations. Another project partner, the Municipality of Kordelio-Evosmos, part of Thessaloniki (Greece) has also begun the process of integrating SUMP and SECAP, having established co-operation between the two teams and amended its Operational Programme to be able to fund the integration process.

The work of the project has resulted in some lessons of interest for other regions also looking to improve their sustainable transport and energy strategies, including incorporating tourism and mobility planning, and integrating SECAP and SUMP.

### **Tourism-Mobility Integration**

InnovaSUMP considered how to jointly address these sectors which are usually considered separately, recognising mobility as an integral part of tourist activity. It has supported collaborative planning among different levels to integrate tourism, transport and land-use measures to meet both tourism development and urban development goals, considering the trade-off between inhabitants and visitors. InnovaSUMP demonstrated how this integrated approach can fit into the SUMP methodology, making recommendations:

- Ensure political and institutional ownership by working with the tourism board, transport authority, transport organisation and suppliers, hoteliers, restaurants and tourists;
- Co-create a vision with citizens and stakeholders which provides socially fair, economically viable, environmentally friendly and healthy mobility and tourism;
- Obtain all possible data about tourism, and if not available, organise data collection and design surveys for mobility behaviour and preferences, targeting both citizens and tourists;
- Identify indicators for all objectives, specifically SMART targets and indicators that reflect local specifics and conditions;
- Create and assess a long-list of measures with stakeholders, including targeted promotion of sustainable mobility options for visitors, demand management in peak season, flexible transit services and land-use planning;
- Define an integrated package of measures in your harmonised strategies that combine tourism, transport, and land-use related measures.



- Monitor and evaluate measures, including tourism performance and impacts, overall appeal, access, infrastructure and visitor services.

### Energy-Mobility Integration

InnovaSUMP considered SUMP-SEAP/SECAP integration, specifically how to achieve co-ordination between key stakeholders and between relevant authorities, with the aim of adopting an integrated set of strategies and actions to combine transport, environment, and energy and land-use measures.

- Combine data sources in a joint database on energy, environment, climate and mobility;
- Develop a common vision and communicate the vision and main objectives to stakeholders and the public;
- Create an inter-departmental core team of transport and environment authorities and set up working units to avoid duplication of effort;
- Identify indicators for all objectives that can be used to evaluate both plans;
- Create a list of measures with stakeholders, specifically low-carbon mobility actions that contribute to both plans;
- Harmonise the timeframes of the plans, namely their reference years, and the timing of their monitoring.

For more on Nicosia's policy improvement, see the Policy Learning Platform's story, '[Harmonising sustainable energy and transport planning](#)', or discover InnovaSUMP's recommendations in the presentation, '[Methodological advances: the 'InnovaSUMP overlay' - complementarity to SUMP2.0 Guidelines](#)'.

## Recommendations & key learnings

- Europe, and the world, face a significant moment of transformation if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and enable a just transition for citizens. A significant level of **strategy development and resource mobilisation** will be needed to meet our goals.
- Strategies which are developed in silos are often inefficient and result in suboptimal results at best, but actively work against other goals, at worst. There is significant scope for **harmonisation and rationalised use of resources**.
- Make use of the available resources and **learn from other regions** – there are several guidelines and case studies from which to learn before starting the process of integration. In particular, the SIMPLA Guidelines on SUMP-SECAP harmonisation are an excellent tool, and the lessons from InnovaSUMP can also provide valuable guidance.
- Many local and regional authorities will be in the process of upgrading a SEAP to a SECAP – take this opportunity to also **consider harmonisation with other strategies** and to involve multiple departments in discussions.
- Mobility and energy planning require not only different skills, but also often have different philosophies and assumptions. **Take time to build a common view** and common vision to





ensure everyone is on the same page. The experience of Extremadura is a strong example of bringing departments and stakeholders in line to a common guiding strategy.

- **Rethink the administration's organigram** in view of the growing importance of decarbonisation. Institutional reforms may be a pre-requisite for developing integrated strategies – at the very least, new cross-departmental teams are needed (as in Helsinki), but new departments could also be created (as in Velenje and Rome). Either way, it needs to be clear that a single entity is responsible for overseeing the process, defining new processes, taking on overall project management and monitoring implementation.
- **Create a joint database** of data on energy, environment, climate, and mobility, accessible by all relevant departments. This helps to avoid duplication of effort in data gathering, but using common data and indicators also enables joined up strategy development. Both Karlovac and Barcelona demonstrate the benefits.
- Where stakeholders are the same, a **common stakeholder group and approach** can help to keep all on the same page and keep them aware of, and involved in, the common vision while avoiding conflicts between interests. This will also help to reduce resource and effort use.
- Use the ERDF and other structural and investment funds to **create single support programmes** which can fund projects that to enact multiple strategies – such as smart cities, sustainable mobility, and sustainable energy strategies – as Lazio has done. In this way, you can emphasise how these actions are joined up, evaluate how projects contribute to all relevant strategies, and avoid the need for project developers to have to pool different funds.
- If your region needs support, **consider a Policy Learning Platform Peer Review**. You can apply at the [Interreg Europe website](#).

### Sources and further information

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- OECD, Aligning Policies for a Low-carbon Economy (2015)
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- UNDP, Charting A New Low-Carbon Route to Development (2009)

*#LowCarbon #Strategy  
#Cities #District  
#EnergyTransition*



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October 2021



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