

Own Your SECAP



Lessons Learned from Implementing SECAP Measures

Deliverable number	D2.2
Author	Christof Amann (e7 energy innovation & engineering) Marie Armbruster (e7 energy innovation & engineering)
Dissemination Level	Public (PU)
Date	29.02.24
Review	29.02.24 – Marika Rošā (Ekodoma)
Status	Final



Summary

For Deliverable 2.2 we summarise **key lessons learned from the implementation of SECAP measures** in 11 European countries. In order to get a comprehensive picture, we also look at the preparation of SECAP measures which has a direct impact on implementation of measures. Therefore, we **cover the entire development process** – from the preparation phase to the completion of the implementation of SECAP measures.

Based on the analysis, a list of general lessons can be drawn:

- In addition to general **political commitment**, it is important to have an approved SECAP (or similar document) that is well **integrated into the legal and administrative structure** and procedures of the municipality. It is essential to take account of **local conditions** and build on existing policies.
- Local authorities need to ensure that there are **sufficient human resources** with appropriate skills and competencies within the municipality. There should be a **working group** that is not too large (4-5 persons) and that includes **experts from different administrative units**. This working group is responsible for the development of the SECAP and for coordinating the implementation of SECAP measures. In addition to the availability of human resources, the necessary **financial resources** for the implementation of SECAP measures have to be secured.
- Interdepartmental communication and the **involvement of municipal staff, citizens and stakeholders** are highly relevant and should be promoted by local authorities.
- Successful and sustainable implementation of SECAP actions requires **monitoring and analysis of relevant data** and derived indicators.
- SECAPs should focus not only on **climate mitigation**, but also on **climate adaptation** and the prevention of **energy poverty**.
- While reducing energy costs is the main driver for climate and energy action in municipalities, the scope should be broadened by **integrating SECAPs into higher-level policies** and governance structures.
- SECAPs are **dynamic instruments** (“living documents”) that need to be regularly reviewed and updated. **Flexibility** is needed to respond to changing circumstances and framework conditions.



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1. Introduction

OwnYourSECAP concept

The basic idea of the OwnYourSECAP project is to support municipalities in developing (or updating) a sustainable energy and climate action plan (SECAP). Technical partners offer knowledge, templates, feedback and capacity building while it stays in the responsibility of the municipality to establish a working group with an energy manager, environmental manager and other relevant stakeholders, closely linked to the administrative units responsible for the development and implementation of SECAP measures.

3 different groups of municipalities are identified in the project (Figure 1): experienced municipalities, documented in this report, which already have a SECAP in place and aim for an update, less experienced municipalities which have to develop a SECAP and implement an energy management system (EnMS) and so called replication municipalities which are included in some of the communication formats allowing to share experience. Exchange between all municipalities - within the target country but also with municipalities from other countries from the project team - is one of the main benefits of the participation in the project. Learning from each other will help to increase the quality of the SECAPs and the following implementation. Furthermore, this structure ensures the continuation of the process after the termination of the project in 2025.

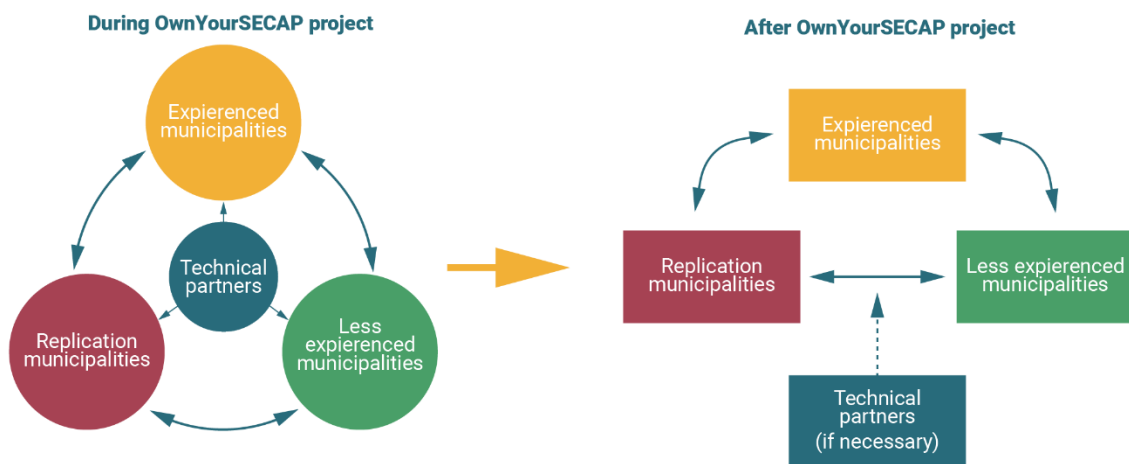


Figure 1: OwnYourSECAP concept



Project Partners

The OwnYourSECAP project is active in 11 European countries, with experienced technical partners in each of them. Project partners come from (in alphabetical order):

- Austria: e7 energy innovation & engineering, Vienna
- Czech Republic: SEVEN - SEVEN, THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY CENTER Z.U., Praha
- France: MTPi - MT PARTENAIRES INGENIERIE, Bordeaux
- Ireland: TEA - TIPPERARY ENERGY AGENCY LIMITED, Co. Tipperary
- Italy: SOGESCA s.r.l. Rubano
- Latvia: EKODOMA, Riga
- Poland: PNEC - STOWARZYSZENIE GMIN POLSKA SIEC ENERGIE CITES, Kraków
- Portugal: ISR - INSTITUTO DE SISTEMAS E ROBOTICAASSOCIACAO, Coimbra
- Slovakia: ECB - ENERGETICKE CENTRUM BRATISLAVA, Bratislava
- Spain: EV - EUROVERTICE CONSULTORES SL, Murcia
- Sweden: ESS - ENERGIKONTOR SYDOST AB, Växjö

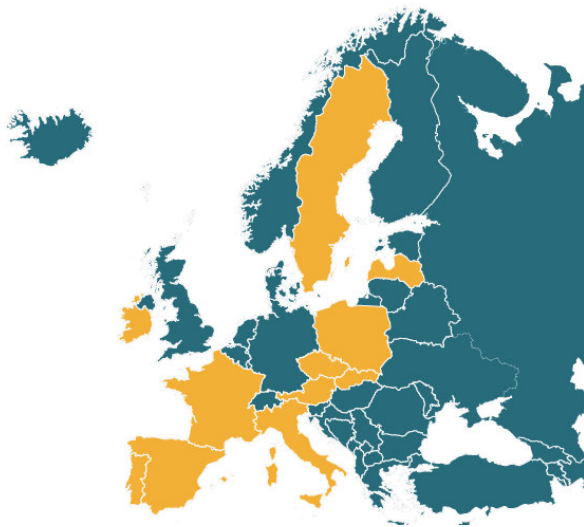


Figure 2: Overview of the project partners

Scope of this deliverable

Implementation of selected measures are monitored and documented by national project partners. In this report the focus is on lessons learned from the implementation of SECAP measures in the first period of the project.

In order to draw a comprehensive picture, we also have a look at the preparation of SECAP measures which has a direct effect on implementation of measures. Therefore, we cover the whole development process – starting at the preparation phase up to the completion of the implementation of SECAP measures.



2. Methodology

This report was prepared based on documents and information provided by all OwnYourSECAP project partners.

Internal Audits

First, it is based on internal audits, carried out by national partners with all experienced municipalities that collaborate with the project. In this internal audit, municipalities were assessed along the following dimensions:

- experience and current policy framework: availability and legal status of a SECAP, elements of the SECAP, implementation of an energy management system, quantitative and qualitative targets;
- capacities, competences and responsibilities: personnel resources (energy manager, environmental manager, working group etc.), internal communication, know how and involvement of employees and stakeholders;
- monitoring and evaluation: collection and analysis of data, availability of data for the public;
- selection and implementation of SECAP measures: procedures, consideration of climate adaptation and energy poverty, driving forces for the implementation of measures;
- financing: allocation of personnel resources and budgets, experience with external (third party) funding; and
- implemented SECAP measures and instruments: sectoral distribution of measures.

OwnYourSECAP reporting

The second source of information was the internal monitoring and reporting of the OwnYourSECAP project, consisting of deliverable 2.1 on selected measures, the description of SECAP measures based on a consistent template, and an overview table provided by all national partners.

Questionnaire on lessons learned

All OwnYourSECAP partners filled in a questionnaire on insights and lessons learned from the implementation of SECAP measured in their country. The questionnaire included all phases of the different development and implementation stages, including the approval, implementation, and monitoring of SECAP measures. In order to provide information that can be transferred to future activities and other municipalities, all areas of activities were summarized with a list of “Dos and Don’ts”. The results of these questionnaires are the main basis for this report D2.2.



3. Starting Point in Municipalities: Internal Audit Results

3.1. Results of the internal audits

Role of existing SECAPs

All experienced target municipalities have – at the time of the project start – either already developed a SECAP or, alternatively, a similar energy and/or climate-related action plan. The French municipality Lorient, for example, already works with a SECAP, while Slovakian Kežmarok follows their “local low-carbon strategy” and Morbylanga, Sweden, pursues its “climate strategy”. All these action plans have been officially approved (usually by the municipal or city council).

Depending on climate- and energy-related activities in each of the municipalities and the resulting strategic documents in this area which have been developed ahead of the OwnYourSECAP project, municipalities either depend on numerous strategic plans which are being followed in parallel (e.g., energy management system (EnMS), adaptation plan, urban sustainable mobility plan), or the SECAP/similar document represents the main planning document in the municipality in the field of energy and climate. In the case of Latvian Saldus, there is the so-called development strategy which has a higher position in the planning document hierarchy than the SECAP but is rather general and not as specific as a SECAP. It is important to highlight that in about two thirds of the municipalities there is no type of legal obligation to draw up a SECAP or similar action plan.

Available personnel resources and competencies

In 2022, the project start, a slight majority of the target municipalities had an appointed energy manager, while Italian Abano Terme and Vicenza, e.g., were both planning on creating a respective position in the near future. Furthermore – with only two exceptions – all municipalities started the project activities with the set up of energy and/or climate working groups. Some of them have been established in line with the project, in order to work on the OwnYourSECAP activities, and others have already existed beforehand. For example, Bydgoszcz, Poland, had a working group for its urban adaptation plan and also Portuguese Cascais established a group for the topic of climate adaptation.

When municipalities were asked to self-assess the competencies of the working group members in the matters of SECAP activities (from 0 – significant lack of knowledge – to 5 – highly competent), within most municipalities competencies were considered mediocre (between 2 and 4). Only one working group – in the Spanish municipality of Cieza, was classified as highly competent regarding to SECAP activities.

Financial resources and municipal budgeting

In response to the question if there is a specific amount of staff capacity (person months/hours) allocated for the implementation of the SECAP/similar document, for almost half of the



municipalities the answer was positive. While in some local authorities only one person was assigned with the implementation, in Lorient, e.g., the whole environment and energy department – which includes 7 full-time staff – was instructed to take part in the implementation process.

Moreover, in a vast majority of the target municipalities, a certain amount of the yearly budget has been dedicated to climate and energy related projects – in Morbylanga (Sweden), for example, explicitly for upcoming SECAP tasks. Furthermore, except for the ones we had no data available, all experienced local authorities already **have** applied for funding for energy efficiency measures through project proposals on national or international level before.

Cross-department communication & stakeholder involvement

Cross-department communication and municipal employee's access to relevant and available information tended to be rated as rather insufficient (from 0 – significant lack of communication – to 5 – high level of communication), with almost a third of the municipalities evaluating this aspect as only 1 or 2 out of 5. There is no target municipality where cross-department communication and employee's access to certain information was occurring at a high level.

The extent to which stakeholders and other employees have been involved in the implementation of SECAP measures until the time of the project start varies largely across different municipalities: Slovakian local authorities both rated this aspect 4 out of 5, while both Latvian municipalities rated this as 1 (significant lack of stakeholder/employee's involvement). Within other partner countries the issue differs from local authority to local authority: Polish Bydgoszcz assessed this as 4 and Polish Sztum only as 1, while in Morbylanga, Sweden, stakeholder involvement was evaluated as 3 and in Uppvidinge, Sweden even as 5, thus, the highest rating. One named issue regarding stakeholder and employee involvement is, e.g., that many municipal employees do not know about the SECAP targets. Another important challenge raised is how for some stakeholders the OwnYourSECAP goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is not a priority or primary target compared to the reduction of energy costs which lies in the focus.

Data collection and management procedures

About two thirds of municipalities both collect energy consumption and/or greenhouse gas emissions data systemically (e.g., on a monthly or annual basis) as well as further on an analysis of the collected data. Oftentimes – at least regarding energy consumption data – this is done in line with an implemented energy management system. In three of the other local authorities these energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions data are collected, but they are not analysed afterwards, while the remaining municipalities do not collect respective data in a structured way from the start.

Selection of measures & implementation procedures

Half of the target municipalities have defined clear procedures on how to select and implement SECAP measures for the near future while the others do not have defined procedures that have to be applied regularly.



A clear majority of local authorities in municipalities in countries covered (e.g. Uppvidinge, Vicenza, Lorient and Guimarães) has implemented either only or mostly climate mitigation measures as compared to, e.g., Spanish municipalities which have realised both mitigation and climate adaptation measures, and even single energy poverty measures in the last few years.

Measure implementation: difficulties and barriers

When asked to assess the level of difficulties in implementation of climate- and/or energy-related measures (on a level from 0 to 5), in over 85% of the cases the answer was 3 or higher. In more than 30% of the municipalities the level of difficulties was rated as 4 out of 5. Reasons which create these difficulties in measure implementation are challenges in cross-sectorial collaboration within the administration, a lack of personnel and financial resources, stakeholder involvement, missing procedures on implementation and the need for more motivation to change the way how work is done.

Measure implementation: driving forces

The main driving force for past implementation of measures energy and climate action plans or specific measures that was most frequently mentioned was energy costs. Two thirds of target municipalities stated energy as a driver for past measure implementation. Low energy efficiency, the availability of EU or national funding and a vulnerability to climate change are all drivers which were named as driving forces by about 50% of the target municipalities. Furthermore, EU climate policy played a role in one third of the municipalities questions whereas national climate policies were seen as a driver for implementation in only two municipalities.

Additional aspects mentioned include air pollution, the reduction of maintenance costs in buildings, raising the comfort as well as aesthetics of buildings.

Monitoring of SECAP & measure effectiveness

About half of partner local authorities have neither yet monitored their respective SECAPs/similar documents nor have they implemented a procedure to monitor the effectiveness of realized measures. Two municipalities have carried out SECAP monitoring but have no monitoring procedure implemented for monitoring measure effectiveness while for another two municipalities it is the other way around, meaning these have never monitored their SECAPs/similar documents but have a procedure for measuring action effectiveness. Furthermore, there are four partner municipalities which have done both: monitoring of their SECAP/similar document as well as implemented a procedure for measuring action effectiveness.



3.2. Main findings of internal audits

Based on the results of the internal audits carried out in the target municipalities, a list of general findings can be drawn up.

- It is important to have an approved SECAP (or similar document) that is well integrated into the legal and administrative structure and procedures of the municipality.
- Local authorities need to ensure that sufficient human resources with appropriate skills and competencies are available within the community.
- In addition to the availability of staff, the necessary financial resources for the implementation of SECAP measures need to be secured. In a more advanced state, climate budget mainstreaming should be applied to redirect administrative activities towards climate and energy measures.
- A significant lack of administrative integration of SECAP activities, which can be observed in most target municipalities, significantly hinders a smooth and successful implementation of measures.
- Interdepartmental communication and the involvement of municipal staff, citizens and stakeholders are highly relevant and should be promoted by local authorities. SECAPs should be well known to a wide audience within and outside the administration.
- Successful and sustainable implementation of SECAP actions requires monitoring and analysis of relevant data and derived indicators. Data collection should be carried out on a regular basis. It is necessary to define clear processes and allocate sufficient resources for data analysis in order to assess impact and learn from implementation.
- SECAPs should focus not only on climate mitigation, but also on climate adaptation and prevention of energy poverty.
- While reducing energy costs is the main driver for climate and energy action in municipalities, the scope should be broadened by integrating SECAPs into higher-level policies and governance structures.



4. Status of Measure Implementation in Experienced Municipalities

Austria

Focus on implementation of SECAP measures was on Ottensheim, where the technical partner provided support for the development of an innovative concept for the refurbishment and development of an existing cultural centre. It was also decided to carry out a detailed feasibility study on the development of a district heating system in the municipality. Furthermore, municipality decided to improve their energy data management and to start an initiative for an energy community. The working group consists of the mayor, the head of administration, the head of the environmental committee and the environmental manager. Implementation is ongoing.

Czech Republic

There have been 3 measures selected for each partner municipality - Žďár nad Sázavou and Tábor – for 2023. These include, e.g., thermal insulation and creation of a green roof of an apartment building and lighting modernisation at an Elementary School. Regarding each of the 6 measures, there was one public officer involved as well as one department and 1 external stakeholder. The design thinking approach has not been applied in the implementation phase. Half of the selected actions have been finished, while the rest is still ongoing.

France

The French partner – together with municipalities of Brest Métropole and the City of Lorient – has selected 6 measures in total for 2023, e.g. integrating climate into the municipal budget and optimising the municipal energy management system. 1-2 public officers have been included in the implementation phase, 1-7 departments (depending on the measure) and no other stakeholders. All six measures are still in progress.

Italy

12 actions in total have been defined for the first project year for Italian municipalities (10 for Abano Terme and 2 for Vicenza). Two examples are a new Urban Traffic Plan & new limited traffic zones and the development of a Water Management Plan. Within the implementation of each of the actions, 3-6 public officers participated, 2-3 municipal departments, and 1-5 external stakeholders. Partly, the design thinking approach was used during measure implementation. One action has been fully completed, while the others are all ongoing – with an exception of one measure for Vicenza that has not started yet.



Latvia

Six measures have been selected for the Latvian municipalities Tukums and three for Saldus, e.g. creation of energy efficiency competence centre and an update of the district heating plan for city of Tukums. The number of public officers involved reaches from 3 to 7 and the number of departments from 2 to 3. The design thinking approach has (partly) been applied for the implementation of most of the measures. Most actions are still ongoing, one has been finalised.

Poland

For Polish municipalities, 6 measures have been defined within the first year of the project. For each of them, one public officer has been involved, as well as one department and one external stakeholder. All actions are ongoing at the moment. The three measures for each municipality for the second project year have, too, already been selected, e.g. improving pedestrian, and cycling safety and the construction of an energy-efficient lighting infrastructure of the city. All actions are currently in progress.

Portugal

Among the six measures defined for Guimarães and Cascais are the development of a Biowaste Management Plan as well as the realization of an energy fund for families and stakeholders. Depending on the action, up to 10 public officers were included, as well as up to 4 departments and up to 18 external stakeholders. The design thinking approach was partially implemented. All measures are currently ongoing.

Spain

The six actions here include, among others, an improvement of the design and management of parks and gardens in the City of Lorquí and the switch in public lighting to LED technology in the old town. Up to three public officers have been included, 1-2 departments and up to ten stakeholders. The design thinking method has been applied for each of the actions. Except for one measure, all actions have been finished.

Slovakia

For Slovakian municipalities Spišská Nová Ves and Kežmarok, too, six actions have been defined. Within the implementation phase up to 7 public officers have been involved and up to three departments. In addition, 1-3 stakeholders were included, depending on the measure. All actions are currently in progress.

Sweden

For each of the Swedish municipalities Mörbylånga and Uppvidinge three actions have been defined (e.g. regarding water recycling and ventilation system change). 1-2 public officers were involved, the same goes for the number of included municipal departments. Implementation of measures is in progress.



5. Lessons Learned from Implementing SECAP Measures

5.1. Development of the SECAP and SECAP measures

Necessary resources for SECAP development

The resource most frequently mentioned by partners which is essential for a successful SECAP development are personnel resources/staff. It was noted how important the active role of internal staff is for the municipality to follow up with the SECAP implementation after development. The project team responsible for the SECAP development within the municipality should include a project coordinator as an intersection between interested and involved parties who also manages the SECAP development process, an energy and/or environmental manager and a political representative. It was suggested to prioritise municipal employees/politicians with interest and competence before formal position in the administration.

The responsible working group may also involve representatives or stakeholder of the public, however, when including the public this should follow a certain goal, e.g. identifying critical issues or disseminating good practices. In order to facilitate citizen involvement in a constructive manner it may be useful to include a community engagement specialist. Collecting feedback from the public regarding the SECAP contents might also be useful, allowing for timely adjustments and improvements. At the same time various partners emphasized the importance of drawing on additional technical expertise in order to ensure a qualitatively sound action plan, as technical expertise in municipal staff is oftentimes insufficient. It is also crucial to define a responsible unit/team/person within the municipality responsible for the SECAP – especially within the implementation phase. It was additionally mentioned to keep municipal senior management informed about critical project issues as their support is crucial throughout the whole SECAP (implementation) process.

Regarding financial resources, it is important to take their availability into account when developing the SECAP in order to ensure adequate funding the following implementation of defined measures. Furthermore, the development of a coherent stock database including technical details is necessary for a smooth SECAP development process.

Applied method for measure development

A couple of local authorities applied the design thinking approach for the development of SECAP measures. Additional methods included surveys, SWOT analysis (for considering municipality's strengths and weaknesses).

The BEI (Baseline Emission Inventory) was frequently used as a basis for measure development and workshops were held to explain baseline analysis results to the LA. Also, energy audit results were taken as input for measure development.



Types of indicators and their consideration in the SECAPs

Indicators defined within the SECAPs of target municipalities were mostly quantitative (e.g. reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by x% by 2035, with an appointed reference year). In the cases of climate adaptation and energy poverty areas, indicators for actions were both quantitative and qualitative, while regarding energy poverty, some municipalities only selected qualitative measures at this point.

Supporting/impeding factors regarding (SECAP) development process

What was stated by multiple partners is the importance of political commitment and support regarding successful SECAP development. This aspect goes hand in hand with the deployment of an adequate amount of personnel and financial resources – a factor also crucial for creating a qualitatively sound action plan which was stressed by several partners. Having the support of external expertise may also support the development phase.

Involving multiple municipal departments and therefore perspectives present another supporting aspect. More generally speaking, forming a balanced, well-sized and clearly defined project team – including a project manager – is a critical factor in the SECAP development process. A clear and realistic timeline for the data gathering phase, the data analysis, etc. might also be helpful.

A lack of interest from the political as well as administrative side, as well as fast changes in political priorities may impede the SECAP development. A critical challenge is the high workload of municipal staff that follows SECAP development in addition to other relevant tasks. Also, staff turnover can be an important impeding factor. Furthermore, municipal employees often do not have the necessary technical knowledge and skills.

Missing data represents another challenge, as well as collecting new data. It was also stated that a prolonged SECAP development phase might be hindering regarding implementing subsequent steps. Moreover, handling communication between the various involved parties and stakeholders can present a mayor challenge.



Dos and Don'ts in the SECAP development phase

In this paragraph, the most important recommendations are summarised as dos and don'ts. This summary is based on the experience of technical partners that have close relations to the target municipalities.

Dos		Don'ts	
1.	Secure political commitment	1.	Do not expect that knowledge and competence in the fields of energy and climate is appropriate
2.	Define a clear working group including technical experts as well as heterogenous stakeholders	2.	Do not create a working group that is too large (max. 4-5 persons)
3.	Set up regular meetings/exchanges with local authorities	3.	Do not leave the SECAP solely in the hands of the relevant administrative unit (typically: environmental or energy department)
4.	Take local conditions into consideration	4.	Do not take full control of the SECAP formulation process – rather guide local authorities to find their tailor-made solution
5.	Draw on best practice examples	5.	Do not force a one-size-fits-all approach – specific support to the pace and structure of the local authority is crucial
6.	Ensure a common understanding of basic project-relevant knowledge within the project group	6.	Do not start at zero but take existing strategic municipal documents and decisions into account
7.	Collect feedback from stakeholders and municipal employees	7.	Do not set unrealistic goals when defining measures
8.	Increase the awareness of employees in municipalities'	8.	Do not neglect input from external stakeholders – be open to discussions and adaptations of the SECAP
9.	Secure adequate data (e.g. energy data)	9.	Do not formulate too many actions – keep the action plan workable
10.	Consider social impacts and vulnerable population groups		
11.	Create a SECAP communication plan		

Table 1: Dos and Don'ts in the SECAP development phase



5.2. Implementation of SECAP measures

Integration into existing processes

What was stated by several project partners with regard to a successful integration of the SECAP into already existing process within municipalities is the high importance of considering existing policies and processes (e.g. superior strategic planning documents). This aspect should be acknowledged already in the SECAP preparation phase and it is widely seen as a major precondition for effectively implementing SECAP measures in a consistent and efficient way that avoids duplicity and confusion.

Secondly, the cooperation between various parties and stakeholders is essential for a successful measure implementation, meaning that certain communication processes are needed between these parties (political departments, administration units, etc.). Building a working group as for the OwnYourSECAP project might provide a sensible starting point for creating an internal structure with the main goal of sharing information. The SECAP is a cross-sectional document which should not remain in charge of only the energy or environmental department as an isolated initiative. Furthermore, it can help to foster the municipality's ownership of the SECAP and its measures which can then lead to a smoother integration of the action plan into existing processes compared to a document prepared by an external party.

Ensuring resources for measure implementation

The securing of sufficient resources – personnel and financial – is strongly interconnected with securing political understanding and support for the urgency of implementing SECAP actions. Gaining this support can come from highlighting past successes (e.g. good practice examples in other municipalities).

At the same time, SECAP implementation needs to be coordinated with municipal budgeting. Especially when it comes to the realization of concrete projects, coordination with the respective departments and their budget planning is important for successful implementation.

In addition – in order to provide adequate financing – it pays off to explore current grant opportunities and calls for international project proposals (e.g. at the European level). Ensuring a mix of public and private financial sources may also be a way to secure resources, especially for innovative projects.

Monitoring of measures and their effectiveness

The most central precondition for effective monitoring of measure implementation and a measure's effectiveness is defining measure-specific indicators which provide a quantitative and qualitative point of reference. Such key performance indicators (KPIs) may be the amount of greenhouse gas emissions reduced, the improvement of energy efficiency or the number of buildings renovated. Evaluating KPIs regularly (e.g. annually) is essential in order to find out if the measure implementation process is on track and if targets are reached.

Another way of monitoring measure implementation and effectiveness is to collect community feedback by surveys, which can provide a form of qualitative assessment.



An effective way to support monitoring processes within a municipality is the implementation of an energy management system. This does not only lead to a significant improvement in the database but also in a systematic process for energy savings and consequently to savings in costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

Supporting/impeding factors regarding measure implementation

Various factors which support a successful implementation of SECAP measures have already been mentioned at one point or another within this document, as a smooth implementation process is of course strongly interconnected with the development phase of the action plan.

Therefore, long-term political commitment – which may begin at the project preparation stage but ideally lasts until the actual implementation of selected measures and longer – is needed as a precondition for successful measure implementation. Almost every project partner named the aspect of political support as indispensable in this regard.

The issue of adequate financing of planned measures is on the one hand depending on the respective allocation of municipal funds. However, there also exist alternative financing models which local authorities can make use of, e.g. subsidies and grants or private financing options.

Another important precondition which was stated by multiple partners is the availability to sufficient (technical) data which goes hand in hand with the above-mentioned need for establishing monitoring processes. An endeavour only realizable when consistent data is available in order to monitor how measure implementation is moving forward. In case the planned targets have not been reached, corrective action can be taken in a timely manner.

It is important not to leave the SECAP and its actions unchanged for long. The action plan is supposed to be a “living” document which will undergo updates and reviews, as circumstances in the municipality might change a lot within a short period of time.

Climate and energy-related measures directly or indirectly affect citizens. It is therefore necessary to communicate planned actions timely and in a comprehensible way which may lead to higher acceptance within a municipality’s population. Rising awareness can also help to increase citizens’ understanding towards sustainability-enhancing actions. Other stakeholders affected by selected SECAP actions, too, need to be engaged into project activities at one point or another.

An aspect already mentioned which is central especially regarding successful measure implementation is the involvement of the multiple municipal departments which will have to do with the realization of SECAP actions. In order to secure long-term commitment of the administrative side of local authorities which in the end will mainly implement the planned measures, establishing communication processes between the project team and departments for once, and between different administrative departments on the other hand, is of great importance.



Setting up a very long and complicated SECAP document may impede the implementation process of defined measures. Furthermore, complex indicators attached to the selected actions can, too, make the implementation phase more difficult.

Do's and Don't's in the implementation phase

Dos		Don'ts	
1.	Disseminate municipalities' actions and show them as fore-runners of the implementation of certain measures	1.	Do not leave the document in the drawer; do not be afraid of changes
2.	Plan regular meetings each 3/6 months to keep the action plan active	2.	Avoid side-lining key stakeholders; their involvement is crucial for successful implementation
3.	Be flexible in adapting measures based on changing circumstances and emerging opportunities	3.	Do not underestimate the importance of public awareness and effective communication
4.	Improve data collection and monitoring procedures	4.	Avoid a rushed approach; thorough planning and steady progress yield more sustainable results.
5.	Use monitoring tools which make the work easier.		
6.	Define and collect data according to measure-specific indicators		
7.	Report on specific qualitative and quantitative targets for each action		

Table 2: Do's and Don'ts in the SECAP implementation phase



6. Examples of the implementation of selected measures

6.1. Example 1: Saldus, Latvia

Name of the selected measure

Optimization of municipal buildings, efficient use of buildings

Municipality

Saldus, Latvia

Areas of action

Climate mitigation, climate adaptation

Target Sectors

Municipal buildings; services sector; production of local thermal energy

Description of the measure

The municipality owns more than 100 properties, some of which are fully used. There are, however, many properties that are underutilized (e.g., the premises are half empty). Despite this, heating and other needs are provided in these buildings. Within the framework of this measure, the aim is to develop a building management plan of Saldus municipality, which will also include guidelines for efficient building management. The plan should set out criteria for comparing building occupancy and resource consumption. It should use data from the Energy Monitoring Platform. The heads of city and parish administrations or appointed specialists should be involved in the development of the plan.

Main selection criteria

There is political support; it is an important issue for the municipality (urgency)

Implementation plan (important milestones)

Planned at start of implementation: To develop and discuss criteria for the optimization of municipal buildings; to summarize the results of energy consumption in 2022 for each building; to evaluate all buildings according to the developed criteria and to create a classification of buildings of Saldus municipality; to prepare a template for the building instruction manual; prepare an action plan for the management of municipal buildings (for a specific time period) with objectives, actions and responsible persons; ensure discussions with all stakeholders



Status quo of implementation: Evaluated all buildings according to the developed criteria and created a classification of buildings of the municipality of Saldus region (27.06.2023)
Prepared a template for building use instructions (15.08.2023)
Prepared the first version of the municipal building management action plan (for a certain period) with goals, actions, and responsible persons (15.09.2023)
Ensured discussions with all involved parties (15.11.2023)

Implementation period: 01/2023-12/2023

Status: Ongoing

Number of involved public officers: 7

Number of involved departments: 3

Design thinking approach used (yes/no/partially): Yes

Implementation costs [EUR per year]: Human resource costs of the parties involved

Financing source: Municipal budget

Energy savings [GWh per year]

By implementing this measure (by introducing the criterion and the municipal building assessment system), energy consumption could be reduced by 1-3%, which would be equivalent to 190-580 MWh of the baseline of energy consumption of municipal buildings (2019-2021).

Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions [tons of CO_{2eq} per year]: 30-90 t CO₂

6.2. Example 2: Cieza, Spain

Name of the selected measure

Pedestrianization of streets in the city center

Municipality

Cieza, Spain

Areas of action

Climate mitigation

Target Sector

Mobility



Description of the measure

According to the emissions inventory, private and commercial transport is responsible for the highest percentage of overall emissions in the municipality. One of the pillars on which the SUMP (Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan) of Cieza is based on is the Soft Modes Plan, consolidating walking in the urban area, promoting the potential of cycling and in general increasing the quality and habitability of the urban environment. The objective of this action is to pedestrianise several streets in the city centre to achieve this transition gradually.

Main selection criteria

Political support and availability of funding

Implementation plan (important milestones)

Planned at start of implementation: The public procurement process has already been conducted, so now there is just a need to develop the execution work. This is planned to start during May 2023 and will last for 3 months. The end of implementation is expected for September 2023.

Status quo of implementation: There have been delays in the works of the company awarded the contract. It has, however, been possible to already reduce the number of parking slots.

Implementation period: 15/05/2023-30/09/2023

Status: Ongoing

Number of involved public officers: 1

Number of involved departments: 2

Design thinking approach used (yes/no/partially): Yes

Implementation costs [EUR per year]: 320,000 €

Financing source: The project is financed by European funds (ERDF) covering 80% of total costs. The remaining 20% will be co-financed by the municipality of Cieza.

Energy savings [GWh per year]: 0.01 GWh

Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions [tons of CO_{2eq} per year]: 2.02 t CO₂

Other impacts:

(1) Improvement of quality of life for citizens; (2) improvement of health of the citizenship; (3) creation of citizens' meeting places

This is the second pedestrianisation action of the municipality. In this sense, even though some complaints are expected, especially due to the lack of parking space and the removal of some of them due to the action, the success of the previous experience makes the municipal technicians feel positive about citizenship response. In addition, in the future, these areas are a potential opportunity for including more nature spaces and areas for recreation.