

Quick Reference Guide

Joint Sustainable Energy Action Plan

What is a joint Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP)?

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

Why a joint SEAP approach?

In 2012, the possibility of preparing a joint SEAP was officially introduced in the Covenant of Mayors initiative as a result of feedback and recommendations from its signatories. The introduction of the joint SEAP option aimed at aligning the SEAP development process with the needs expressed by local authorities.

Some municipalities have realized that a joint approach to energy planning allows **achieving more effective results** than an isolated one, as in some circumstances opportunities for high-impact actions can be more easily identified within the administrative boundaries of an aggregation of neighbouring small local authorities. This can be the case for instance of measures targeting public transport, local energy production or the provision of advisory services to citizens. Furthermore, municipalities involved in joint implementation of measures can also sometimes benefit from economy of scale, such as in public procurement.

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

Who can carry out a joint SEAP?

The joint SEAP approach is specially designed for the case of **small-sized municipalities** within the same territorial area, i.e. ensuring territorial continuity, with indicatively less than 10,000 inhabitants each. An **urban agglomeration**, like a metropolis and its suburbs can also consider carrying out a joint SEAP instead of single SEAPs.



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

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

1) Option 1 - individual CO₂ reduction commitment: each signatory in the group **individually commits** to reducing CO₂ emissions by at least 20% by 2020 and is thus required to complete its **own SEAP template**. The SEAP can contain both **individual and shared measures**. The impacts on energy savings, renewable energy production and CO₂ emissions reduction corresponding to the joint measures should be divided among each municipality sharing these measures in their individual SEAP templates. The key data of each SEAP template will be published in each signatory's individual profile on the [Covenant website](#). The **SEAP document is common** for all signatories in the group and should be **approved by each City Council**.

2) Option 2 - shared CO₂ reduction commitment: the group of signatories **collectively commits** to reducing CO₂ emissions by at least 20% by 2020. In this particular case only a single **common SEAP template** is to be filled-in by the group of signatories, which are listed under a **grouped signatory profile** on the public website. The SEAP can contain both **individual and shared measures** (at least one shared measure should be included). The key data of the common SEAP template will be published in the grouped signatory profile on the [Covenant website](#). Similarly to option 1, the **SEAP document is common** to all signatories and should be **approved by each City Council**.

	Individual SEAP	Joint SEAP option 1	Joint SEAP option 2
CO ₂ Emissions Reduction Target			
Emission Inventory			
SEAP Actions			
SEAP City Council Approval			
SEAP Template Submission			
SEAP Document Submission			
Signatory Profile in the Website			

 individual |  shared

In both cases, the group of signatories is strongly encouraged to appoint a **body/authority responsible for coordinating the SEAP development and implementation processes**. It is recommended to delegate this work to the respective [Covenant Territorial Coordinator](#). Other possibilities include the appointment of the most active or advanced municipality among the group or the agglomeration in the case of urban areas.

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

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



Present the Covenant of Mayors commitments to each City Council involved in the group.



Once an official resolution has been adopted by the Council, mandate the mayor – or equivalent representative – to sign the adhesion form (option 1 or 2 available in the library webpage).



After signature, complete the registration online by indicating the type of joint adhesion and uploading the duly signed adhesion form for each municipal council.

Can existing individual signatories decide to do a joint SEAP?

Yes, individual signatories may realize that they rather prefer to carry out a joint approach. They can modify their initial adhesion by proceeding as follows:

- 1) **Contact the Covenant of Mayors Helpdesk** (info@eumayors.eu) with the following information:
 - Name of the existing individual signatories and name of the group;
 - Information on the population covered by the group;
 - Name of the body/authority responsible for coordinating the work.
- 2) Once the Covenant of Mayors Helpdesk acknowledges the information sent, **proceed with the adhesion procedure as described above**.

How many local authorities have adopted the joint SEAP approach?

By July 2014, 71 groups of local authorities have adopted the joint SEAP approach, from which 65 have opted for the joint SEAP option 2 (shared CO₂ reduction target). These groups represent over **500 municipalities** and cover **2.7 million inhabitants**. More than 80% of these signatories are from Italy, where the grouped approach has shown to be suitable due to the small size of most of the municipalities (*Comune*).

On average, the groups are composed by seven municipalities with a **population** of around **40,000 inhabitants per group**. Furthermore, about **45%** of the signatory groups have submitted their joint SEAP.



How is the joint SEAP being adopted in practice?

Isola d'Elba, Italy

The eight municipalities of Elba Island have decided to carry out a [joint SEAP](#) (option 2) for the whole island territory. This was triggered by the Province of Livorno, the **Covenant Territorial Coordinator** for the area. The choice was based on the desire to **combine human and economic resources** in SEAP development and implementation as well as the opportunity to **achieve better results** than having each municipality acting alone. The SEAP of Elba Island is the first step towards a more **ambitious long-term goal** of making Elba Island carbon neutral. A **working group** including representatives from all municipalities, the province and consultants was established in order to support the task of data collection, define the target and the measures to achieve the target. The Province of Livorno has proposed a **SEAP 'governance model'** to its municipalities that defines the creation of **public-private partnerships**. This was seen as a success factor for guaranteeing the implementation of the SEAP measures. The SEAP provides a detailed characterisation of the measures by identifying their costs, the support from private actors or the necessary means of financing, e.g. ESCOs. Some of the common actions targets include the modification of buildings' regulation in order to foster energy efficiency and renewable energies and the collaboration between the municipalities and the tourist operators in order to reduce energy consumption from tourist accommodations. The SEAP of Elba Island was distinguished in 2014 with the **A+CoM award**, an annual prize that rewards outstanding SEAPs in Italy.

Key Facts

Municipalities: 8

Inhabitants: 31,317

SEAP year: 2013

2020 CO₂ Target: 30% (2004)

Kerry Local Authorities, Ireland

Key Facts

Municipalities: 4

Inhabitants: 145,000

SEAP year: 2013

2020 CO₂ Target: 20% per capita (2008)

'It is vital that we lead the way for better communities. Working together in order to achieve the aims of the Sustainable Energy Action Plan will certainly lead to this' (Mayor of Kerry in SEAP of Kerry Local Authorities, 2013). The four Kerry local authorities decided to strength collaboration in preparing a [joint SEAP](#) (option 2) for their territorial area in 2013. **Kerry County Council** was selected as a lead exemplar **Sustainable Energy Community (SEC)** by 2011. Previous to this an **Energy Management Team** was formed in 2008. Both the **SEC Steering Group** and the **Energy Management Team** are leading the implementation of the SEAP in Kerry. The Energy Management Team is comprised of representatives from all Kerry County Council sections.

In addition to Kerry County Council representation, the SEC Steering Group also has representation from **local businesses and energy users**. Amalgamation of the four Kerry Local Authorities in June 2014 and the development of other ongoing projects including the SmartReFlex project (co-financed by the [Intelligent Energy Europe](#) programme) and the Transition Kerry project will serve to **reduce energy dependency** by energy conservation and to strive for the development of local energy sources able to meet the identified and efficiently managed demand, and consequently to reduce leakage from the local economy and improve the quality of life of its citizens. Measures foreseen in the SEAP are **integrated** with strategies or recommendations foreseen in other plans, such as the County Development Plan. Many of the energy efficiency measures have been undertaken on a joint basis, such as the public lighting ESCO (Energy Service Company) project.

Five small-sized municipalities, located in the Stura, Orba and Leira (S.O.L.) valleys west of Genova, have decided to **join efforts** in the preparation of a **joint SEAP** (option 2). Given their size, pre-existing cooperation activities and common territorial identity, the decision to pool resources and follow this joint approach was quite straightforward. Four of the municipalities are located in the Regional Natural Park of Beigua and are certified by ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System). Joining the Covenant of Mayors was thus seen as a natural evolution of the measures already being carried out by the municipalities involved. Province of Genova, the **Covenant Territorial Coordinator**, has played a key role in overseeing the process and providing the necessary **technical support**, with the cooperation of its in-house foundation 'Muvita'. In particular, the Province has provided data for the Baseline Emission Inventory. The development of the SEAP counted with the **involvement of different stakeholders** since the beginning of the planning process. They were involved in the definition of a scenario for the future of the community as well as in the definition of the priorities. The SEAP of Valli S.O.L. has set an ambitious level of at least 20% CO₂ emissions reduction to be achieved by each municipality. In order to reach the target, the SEAP comprehensively describes the actions to be implemented by each municipality. As an example, three biomass plants using local energy resources have been built in three municipalities as part of an **integrated action**, involving as well the Province and the Region of Liguria. The joint SEAP development has been carried out with the support of the **Energy for Mayors** project (co-financed by the **Intelligent Energy Europe** programme).

Key Facts

Municipalities: 5

Inhabitants: 13,255

SEAP year: 2012

2020 CO₂ Target: 26% (2005)

Mezilesí, Czech Republic

Key Facts

Municipalities: 5

Inhabitants: 1,995

SEAP year: 2014

2020 CO₂ Target: 45% (2005)

The **joint SEAP** (option 2) of Mezilesí was prepared in the context of the **100% RES communities** project (co-financed by the **Intelligent Energy Europe** programme). The SEAP covers five **rural municipalities** that have received mentoring and coaching to develop their joint SEAP via the project. Those five municipalities were already used to work together as part of other programmes (e.g. Leader programme), but it was the first time they collaborated in the energy field. One of the main reasons for this cooperation was related to the **ease of achieving the Covenant Commitments**, including the CO₂ emissions reduction target, **jointly instead of individually**. One of the municipalities (Kněžice) has been able to be self-sufficient in terms of heat and electricity demand thanks to its CHP plant running on biogas. The plant also produces wood pellets for heating houses in the neighbouring area. One of the key actions of the joint SEAP will be to replace the heating systems in households by more efficient ones and to shift from coal, wood or gas currently used to **wood pellets locally produced** in the micro-region. One of the benefits of the joint SEAP approach is the possibility for those five municipalities to meet and discuss the future of their common territory. This has been possible through a **specific SEAP group** created with representatives from all the five municipalities plus external experts. Furthermore, within the 100% RES communities' project, the Mayors and technicians from the five municipalities also had the opportunity to participate in study tours and learn from more experienced municipalities.