Embedding Equity Considerations
in Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Planning (SECAP), Implementation and Monitoring Processes

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1 Why consider equity and vulnerability?

1.1
Climate change impacts will negatively affect some people more than others

While all people across Europe face climate change-related risks, the impacts are not evenly distributed[1]. The burdens of transitioning away from fossil fuel energy sources, for example, are disproportionately borne by Europe's coal region workers, families and communities[2]. Similarly, while many Europeans are consuming more energy to cope with increasingly extreme temperatures, it is particular sub-groups that are pushed into energy poverty, further exacerbated by the 2022 energy crisis[3]. Women are among those most affected due to historical pay gaps and engagement in lower paying sectors[4].
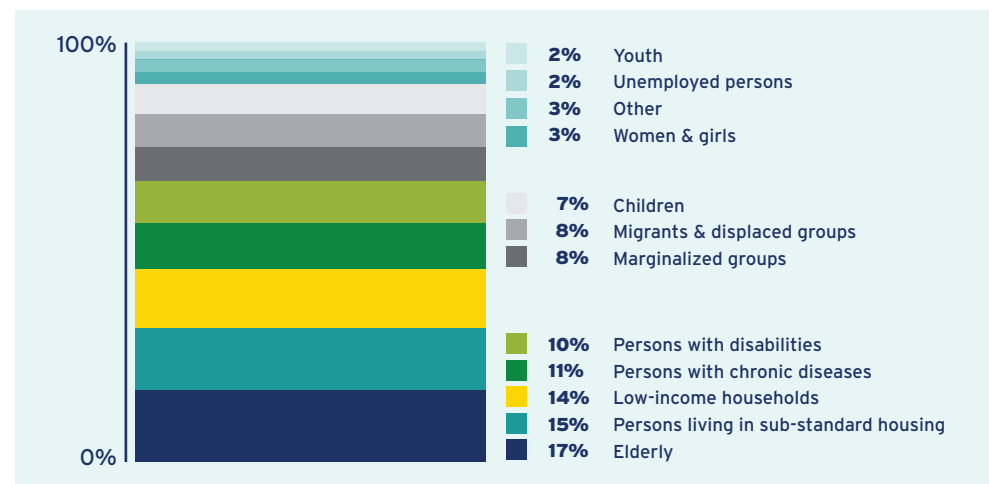
The fact that particular groups of people are feeling the effects of a more unstable climate earlier and more severely is a result of their greater vulnerability to climate change. Vulnerability derives from the combination of … (see figure 1).

Figure 1
Aspects of Vulnerability
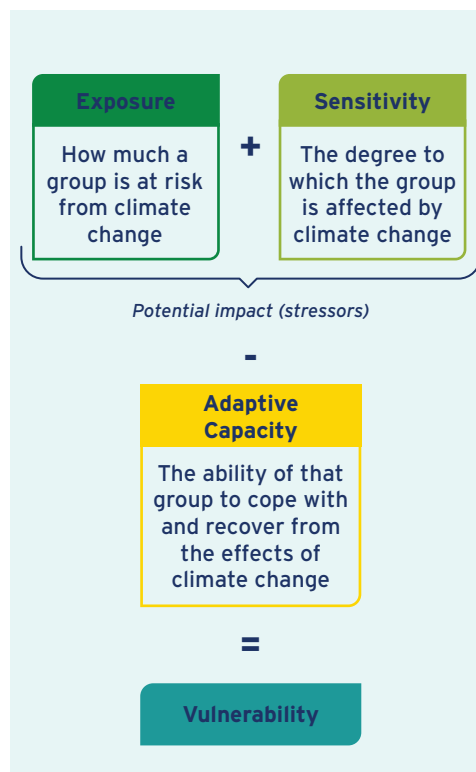
Affected groups include lower income groups, immigrant groups, Indigenous peoples, children and pregnant women, older adults, vulnerable occupational groups, some communities of color, persons with disabilities, and persons with preexisting or chronic medical conditions. Figure 1 below captures the most commonly identified vulnerable groups reported in 2021 under the adaptation pillar of the Covenant of Mayors Europe[5].

Figure 2
Covenant of Mayors Europe 2021 Report Vulnerable Group Identification

%	Group
2%	Youth
2%	Unemployed persons
3%	Other
3%	Women & girls
7%	Children
8%	Migrants & displaced groups
8%	Marginalized groups
10%	Persons with disabilities
11%	Persons with chronic diseases
14%	Low-income households
15%	Persons living in sub-standard housing
17%	Elderly

1
European Commission. EU Adaptation Strategy

2
Wuppertal Institute. Just Transition Toolbox_EN.pdf Nextcloud

3
European Commission. Energy Poverty Advisory Hub

4
Romano, V. Women more likely to fall into energy poverty EU Parliament warns – EURACTIV.com.

5
Joint Research Council. The Covenant of Mayors in Figures and Performance Indicators: 6-year Assessment

1   Why consider equity and vulnerability?

1.2

There are compelling reasons why municipalities should care about achieving equitable outcomes for vulnerable groups

Intrinsically, equity or fairness is important in and of itself. Emerging out of theories of justice, all people share a common human dignity, and therefore should be treated as equals, with equal concern and respect[6]. Placed within a climate justice context, "all people – regardless of race, color, national origin, or income – are entitled to equal protection from environmental and health hazards caused by climate change and equal access to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies"[7].

A more instrumental argument for seeking equitable outcomes is that inequity contributes to the erosion of trust and community life and is linked to the poor functioning of institutions such as markets, governance and law and order, resulting in greater social instability and conflict[8]. Inequality and social exclusion also undermine actions to promote greater resilience and adaptation capacity[9].

Equity: The state in which, regardless of identity, all are free from oppression and have equal access to – and are sufficiently supported to fully participate in – rights, resources and opportunities.

6
Bird, K. Building a fair future: why equity matters ODI

7
American Public Health Association & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Climate Change and Health Playbook Adaptation Planning for Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. American Public Health Association

8
Wilkinson, R. & Pickett, K. The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better Allen Lane, 2009.

9
Adger, W. N., Safra de Campos, R., Siddiqui, T. & Szaboova, L. Commentary: Inequality, precarity and sustainable ecosystems as elements of urban resilience. Urban Studies 57, 1588-1595 (2020)

2 Using the SECAP process to ground equity efforts

2.1
The SECAP process and corresponding equity entry points

While achievement of equitable outcomes through climate action is an ultimate end goal, this guidance note promotes the idea that this can only be realised by making equity an operational principle embedded within all facets of municipal governance, management and operations.

The processes of developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a SECAP provide practical and effective entry points that support the achievement of this goal.

Figure 3
Covenant of Mayors step-by-step

Its core elements are comprised of:
• A Strategy that articulates the vision, goals, high level targets, human and financial capacities and stakeholder engagement ambitions
• A Baseline Emissions Inventory (BEI) and selected Mitigation Actions
• A Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment(s) (RVAs) and selected Adaptation Actions
• A Monitoring Emission Inventory (MEI) within two years of having submitted the SECAP.

This guidance note supports local authorities in identifying equity entry points at each of these corresponding SECAP stages, with examples provided in the different sections of the guide indicated below.

SECAP Process	Section of Guide
Strategy Development	3.1 / 3.2.1
A Baseline Emissions Inventory (BEI) and selected Mitigation Actions	3.2.2
A Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment(s) (RVAs) and selected Adaptation Actions	3.1 / 3.2.3
SECAP Implementation	3.3
SECAP Monitoring	3.4

2   Using the SECAP process to ground equity efforts

2.2
A tool also to support internal equity capacity

Embedding equity considerations in policies, plans and programs is a journey with no definitive end point. It requires authentic commitment, critical self-reflection, capacity building investments and a empowerment of citizens and communities to take part in the democratic dialogue on climate. This must then be followed by courageous and continuous action and review.

As such, this guide is not designed as a set of prescriptive steps, nor an exhaustive list of possible actions. Rather it highlights potential entry points at different stages of the SECAP process for embedding concrete equity considerations and actions. It also aims to inspire additional thinking and acting within and across municipal teams, and alongside external stakeholders.

In this way, the guide also serves as a tool to support municipalities build their internal capacity around equity, justice and addressing vulnerability. It provides critical questions that local officials are encouraged to individually and collectively reflect and act on.

Finally, in the spirit of peer learning and exchange, the guide places a spotlight on equity-related efforts already under implementation by local authorities. These exemplars aim to motivate and inspire.

The guide provides critical questions that local officials are encouraged to individually and collectively reflect and act on.

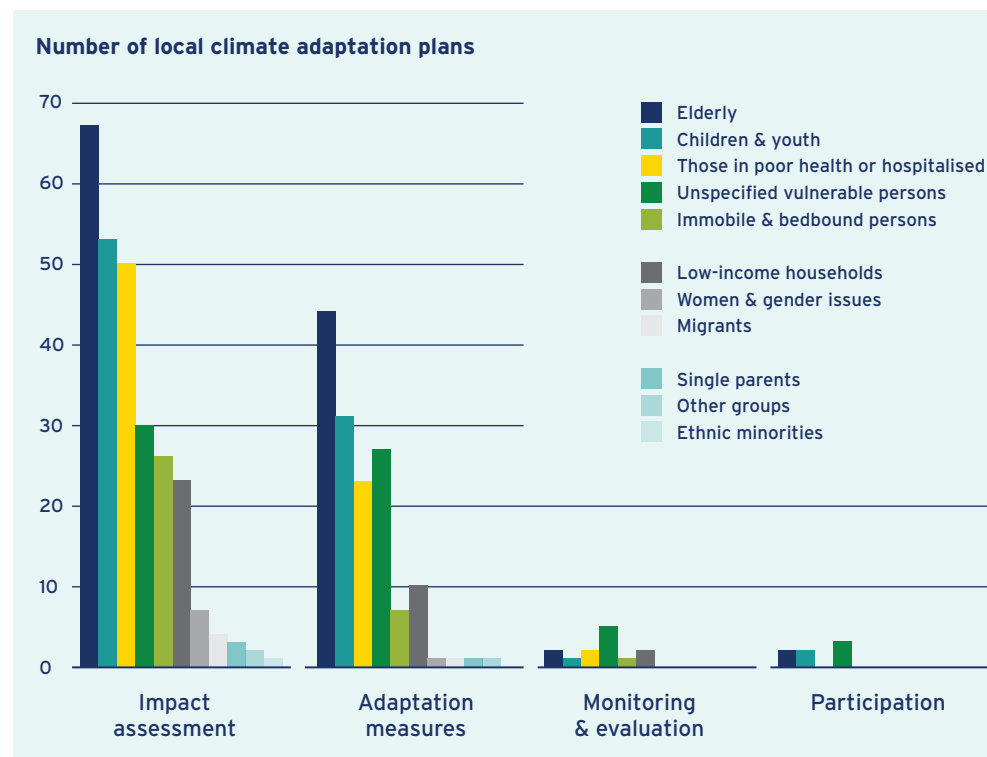# 3   Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle

3.1
Authentic engagement with vulnerable groups throughout the entire SECAP Cycle

The methodology endorsed by the Covenant of Mayors relies on an integrated and inclusive climate and energy planning, implementation and monitoring process, in which local stakeholders play an active role. The involvement in these processes of those vulnerable groups identified in section 1.1 is particularly important. This is because in many situations, inequities that exacerbate vulnerabilities arise out of exclusion of specific communities in decision-making. For example, historical top-down decision-making approaches to economic transitions in coal regions have sometimes led to local stakeholders feeling powerless, and the creation of narratives around 'losers' or 'victims', resulting in increased resistance to change[2]. This can be reduced through local ownership and leadership of transition processes. Indeed, community members who are experiencing (or have historically experienced) inequity are the foremost experts on what needs to change so that SECAP processes deliver solutions that best meet their needs.

Yet there is still significant work to be done in this regard. A 2022 study by Reckien et.al. of 137 local adaptation plans from 23 EU countries show that while more contemporary local adaptation plans consider a broader range of vulnerable groups in impact assessment and planning of adaptation measures compared to older ones, there is still inadequate consideration of these groups in monitoring and evaluation efforts and insufficient opportunities for their participation, illustrated in figure 4 below[10].

Actively acknowledging that climate change will have a more adverse impact on some groups than others helps us to begin to identify who benefits and who is marginalised from climate action or inaction. From that, appropriate responses can be developed.

Figure 2
Consideration of vulnerable groups in local climate action plans

Number of local climate adaptation plans

Legend:
- Elderly
- Children & youth
- Those in poor health or hospitalised
- Unspecified vulnerable persons
- Immobile & bedbound persons
- Low-income households
- Women & gender issues
- Migrants
- Single parents
- Other groups
- Ethnic minorities

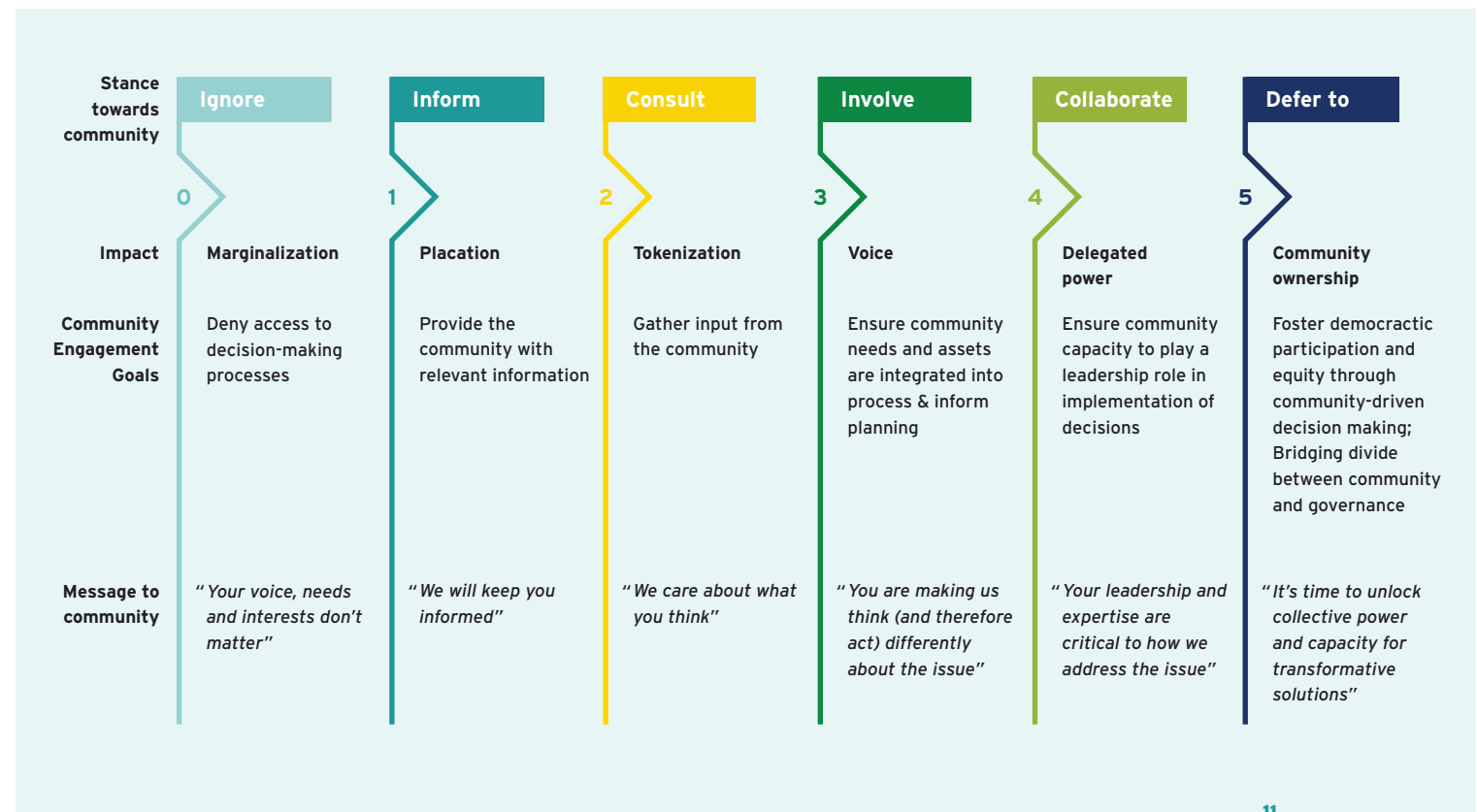X-axis categories: Impact assessment, Adaptation measures, Monitoring & evaluation, Participation

10
European Environment Agency. Towards 'just resilience': leaving no one behind when adapting to climate change Publications Office, 2022

3   Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle

But doing community engagement in such a way that we move towards true community ownership requires significant time, effort, resourcing and commitment at all levels. It also means being explicit about what exactly those community engagement goals are. Different goals and their associated impacts are illustrated in the below spectrum[11].

Figure 5
The spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership
by Rosa Gonzalez in affiliation with Facilitating Power and Padres Unidos

Stance towards community	Ignore	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Defer to
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Impact	Marginalization	Placation	Tokenization	Voice	Delegated power	Community ownership
Community Engagement Goals	Deny access to decision-making processes	Provide the community with relevant information	Gather input from the community	Ensure community needs and assets are integrated into process & inform planning	Ensure community capacity to play a leadership role in implementation of decisions	Foster democractic participation and equity through community-driven decision making; Bridging divide between community and governance
Message to community	"Your voice, needs and interests don't matter"	"We will keep you informed"	"We care about what you think"	"You are making us think (and therefore act) differently about the issue"	"Your leadership and expertise are critical to how we address the issue"	"It's time to unlock collective power and capacity for transformative solutions"

11
Gonzalez, R. The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership

3   Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle

A move towards community ownership translates into vulnerable groups sharing influence and control over resources, problem definition, and solution making. Power-related equity is increased by valuing their unique expertise in planning, implementation and monitoring processes. At the same time, process-related equity is increased as these same groups are given equal access to government leaders, are consistently engaged, and have overcome the barriers that limit engagement.

Engagement Entry Points

Integrated and inclusive climate and energy planning, implementation and monitoring processes, engaging active stakeholder participation

Ways to Embed Equity

In practice, this may include:
- Being present in communities without asking for anything and listen
- Where relevant, making space for owning or acknowledging past harms inflicted on particular groups
- Developing a community collaboration strategy, ensuring barriers to participation are identified and overcome
- Guided by the community collaboration strategy, engaging vulnerable community stakeholders as essential partners in the upfront and ongoing planning, budgeting, and design of climate action plans, policies, and projects
  - Subsequently, openly acknowledging and showing that the contribution of vulnerable groups is valued
- Investing in vulnerable community partnerships toward climate literacy, community capacity, and youth leadership
- Recognising that trust building requires ongoing and consistent attention.

Key questions to ask at this stage

→ Who has access to government leaders?
→ Who is consistently engaged or not?
→ What are the different kinds of barriers that limit engagement (access to information, engagement platforms, language accessibility, time and childcare, etc.), and how might they be overcome?
→ Who has influence and control over resources?
  • Does this align with who is most marginalized from the benefits?
  • Is power over resources, problem-definition, and solution-making shared?
→ Who is the expert – and can we expand this to be more inclusive?
→ Who has the power to determine the strategic agenda?
→ Are we intentionally striving to build trust?
→ Are we acknowledging the critical contribution of vulnerable groups to our work?
→ What does "ownership" mean to our community and how can we promote it?

3   Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle

Spotlight → Lisbon's Participatory Budgeting Process[12]

Lisbon was already a European leader with the 2008 introduction of a municipal level participatory budgeting process, empowering citizens to choose how a part of the annual budget was to be spent, in line with community priorities. But in 2019 the city further evolved this successful approach into a green budgeting exercise. Following a similar model to that of its successful traditional participatory budgeting, it complements intensive in-person engagements and debates with web-based platforms for citizen voting and proposal submission. Building further upon this, this green variant calls for the submission of projects with measurable and achievable climate mitigation and/or adaptation goals. Awarded the city's 'Green Seal', the successful projects are then integrated into the City Council's Plan of Activities and Budget, with the consolidated plan finally reviewed and approved by the City Council and the Municipal Assembly.

Importantly, the process has made an explicit effort to engage all groups of citizens. Feedback in 2019 revealed that participation was felt to have been dominated by a specific age-group of citizens. To instead make the process more inclusive and create opportunities for less engaged groups such as youth, seniors and migrants, some processes were 'de-digitalised' to make participation more accessible. A shift back to forms of physical gatherings is providing welcome entry points for groups with less tech savvy or access.

Spotlight → Kispest's Citizen Survey[13]

In 2015, the Hungarian district of Kispest began development of its local climate adaptation plan. Recognising the importance of citizen engagement for understanding the main climate change impacts on the local population, Kispest developed a citizen survey to complement their existing national level quantitative data.
The survey served the dual objectives of engaging local citizens in the process of climate adaptation, and gathering the necessary information to identify priority fields of action for their SECAP. This resulted in the integration of citizen experiences and preferences into the Kispest adaptation plan and eventual SECAP. Actions that were developed in direct response to survey priorities included:

- Thermally insulating buildings to improve thermal comfort and protect citizens from heatwaves.
- Strengthening local food supplies resulting in the revitalisation of a garden culture through the free distribution and exchange of seeds, planting of fruit trees and currant bushes in public buildings, a marketing campaign aimed at the differentiation of local producers, and the development of local catering based on local products, creating local job opportunities.

12
Center for Public Impact. Green Participatory Budgeting: Lisbon, Portugal. Centre For Public Impact (CPI)

13
Covenant of Mayors Europe Tackling local needs: the development of an adaptation strategy using a citizen survey

3 Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Planning Phase

3.2
Embedding Equity in the SECAP Planning Phase

3.2.1
Strategy Development

The SECAP process outlines a number of key steps for undertaking overall strategy development, found on pages 13-16 of the SECAP reporting guideline document.

A more recently developed reporting and monitoring guideline on energy poverty complements this guideline. Example entry points for practical equity-targeted actions are presented here.

Engagement Entry Points	Ways to Embed Equity
Vision and Commitment	The process of establishing a shared vision for what the climate, sustainable energy and adaptation future of a municipality looks like offers a unique opportunity to capture and incorporate community aspirations for the future of their town. Through their inclusion, the likelihood of ongoing commitment for implementation of that vision is increased. A critical equity action in ensuring representatives from these groups have a seat at the table and a safe space to voice their perspectives.
Coordination and Organisational Structures Established, Staff Capacity Allocated	This primarily focuses on a local authority's internal readiness to embed equity in all aspects of governance and operations. At its core it requires a shared team commitment to collectively evolving internal culture, policies, and practices. Examples of what this might look like include: • Leadership articulation and follow through on a commitment to supporting internal capacity and capability building related to advancing equity. • Development of an internal "equity readiness" action plan that makes all team members accountable for building and subsequently applying newly-gained capacity and knowledge. • The creation of safe spaces for staff to partake in honest dialogues around equity. • Reflection on the degree to which the internal team itself reflects the identities of the members of the vulnerable communities it serves. The outcome of this reflection may involve undertaking targeted recruitment to increase representation of particular groups within government structures. • Ensure staff have the more technical, subject matter knowledge and skills to effectively address the challenges facing vulnerable citizens, with energy poverty mitigation being one such example.

→

3 Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Planning Phase

Engagement Entry Points	Ways to Embed Equity
Involvement of Stakeholders & Citizens	See **Section 3.1**
Selection of Adaptation Options, Strategy in case of Extreme Climate Events	The process of assessing possible adaptation options should always follow a rigorous risk and vulnerability assessment process, described in section 3.2.3 below. But in advance, decisions need to be made around the method that will be used to assess identified adaptation options, including what criteria will be used to assess options against. These decisions directly affect the likelihood that equity considerations, and the needs of vulnerable groups, are centered within decision making. The three most common approaches used for assessing adaptation options are: • Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) • Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) • Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) Detailed descriptions for each of these methods can be found within the Covenant of Mayors Europe Urban Adaptation Support Tool. Here we simply highlight the most commonly cited equity-related limitation of each option. The CBA method requires all potential adaptation benefits to be measured and expressed in monetary terms, which makes it challenging to capture more intrinsic benefits or equity outcomes such as a sense of security, belonging or wellbeing. Similarly, while the CEA assessment method allows for some adaptation benefits to be expressed in non-monetary quantifications, is often critiqued for failing to sufficiently account for social aspects, implementation feasibility or co-benefits, all of which can contribute strongly to equity outcomes. →

3 Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Planning Phase

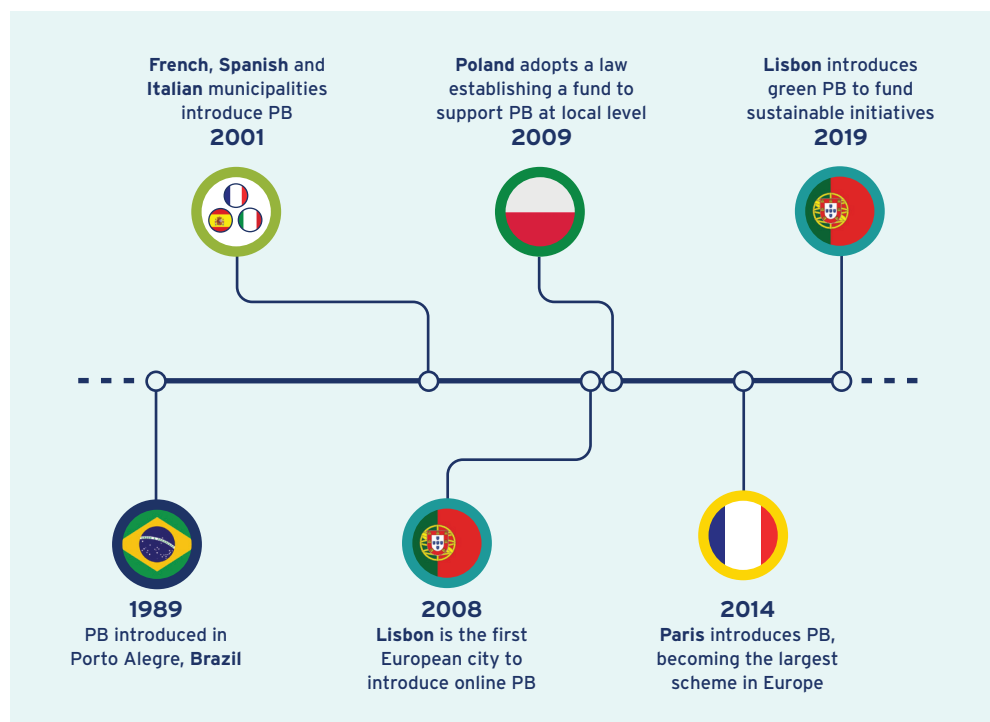| Engagement Entry Points	Ways to Embed Equity
Selection of Adaptation Options, Strategy in case of Extreme Climate Events (continued)	→ From an equity perspective, the MCA approach is arguably the most comprehensive and inclusive in that it generally integrates both financial and non-financial criteria, and also includes other criteria that emerge out of the established MCA process of engaging a diverse group of stakeholders within the assessment process. But MCA's can be expensive and protracted processes, with their potential undoing being spending insufficient time at the onset in engaging, and adequately compensating for the time of members of vulnerable groups in the process.
Overall budget for financing and implementation sources	A municipal budget is the most important annual statement about its values and priorities, making it a critical entry point for embedding equity. Some good practice examples of how this can be done include: • The development of participatory budgeting processes that allows for direct community involvement in municipal spending decisions (see **figure 6** next page). • Use of equity and budgeting tools during budgeting processes. These tools prompt departments to assess how a proposed budget might disproportionately impact particular vulnerable communities, as well as questions of how funds could instead be re-allocated to advance racial, socio-economic or other forms of equity. • Development of equity budget statements. These may form part of the budget narrative of projects or programmes, and may include articulation of the local authority's equity budgeting policy, approach to fair pay for everyone involved in the projects, description of how intellectual property and sovereignty of community expertise are treated and how long-term community relationships are honoured. Alternatively, it may manifest as an overall, macro level statement of how equity is addressed across the entire budget, clearly stating where equity is embedded within programmes, as well as identification of where equity-specific budget lines have been proposed.

3   Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Planning Phase

Figure 6
Participatory budgeting: An innovative approach
Europort.europa.eu

French, **Spanish** and
Italian municipalities
introduce PB
2001

Poland adopts a law
establishing a fund to
support PB at local level
2009

Lisbon introduces
green PB to fund
sustainable initiatives
2019

1989
PB introduced in
Porto Alegre, **Brazil**

2008
Lisbon is the first
European city to
introduce online PB

2014
Paris introduces PB,
becoming the largest
scheme in Europe

Key questions to ask at this stage

→ Do we have an equity policy or plan?
→ Does our team have the skills and
capacity to ensure the equitable
treatment of vulnerable groups in our
policies, plans and projects?
→ Do our projects offer quality-of-life
improvements that matter to these
vulnerable communities?
→ Do they reflect the priorities of
vulnerable communities?
Are our projects designed to
maximise the co-benefits for
vulnerable community members?
→ Are we intentionally siting
climate adaptation actions in the
communities that need it most?
→ Is there consistency between our
equity intentions and aspirations,
and how we allocate our resources?

3   Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Planning Phase

Spotlight → Vulnerability Assessment in Slovakia[14]

The Carpathian Development Institute (CDI) in Slovakia undertook an assessment of social vulnerability to heat waves and high temperatures in the cities of Trnava and Košice, with the aim of informing the design and implementation of adaptation measures using nature-based solutions. The Zapad borough of Košice was chosen as the pilot study due to factors including high population density and high numbers of schools, hospital and elderly homes that hosted vulnerable members of the community. A long list of vulnerability and exposure indicators were collected at a 200m x 200m grid cell resolution level. This was then overlayed by heat mapping, providing a much greater understanding of where potentially vulnerable individuals or communities resided. This ultimately informed the roll-out of the local government-led programme for cooling both outdoor and indoor public spaces through such means as green infrastructure, artificial shading, shading of windows, and use of reflective surfaces.

Figure 7

Vulnerability to heatwaves, Kosice q) concentration of vulnerable people and facilities (represented as yellow and red dots); b) summary map of all weighed factors

Concentration of vulnerable people and facilities

Summary of all weighed factors

● People   ● Facilities

3 Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Planning Phase

3.2.2

Emissions Inventory Development and Mitigation Options

Developing an emissions inventory is a critical first step in identifying the most effective actions for reducing future emissions. While this process itself is arguably a relatively equity-neutral accounting process, it is when using the inventory to inform possible mitigation actions that local officials and stakeholders must begin to ask equity-centered questions.

The most important question is which individuals, groups or communities are likely to be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by possible mitigation actions over the short, medium and long term. Similar to the concept of adaptive capacity introduced in section 1.1, an individual or community's 'mitigative capacity15 also depends on factors such as race, gender and income. Where potential mitigation actions are likely to lead to negative burdens on particular groups, local officials must consider which supplementary policies or activities can be implemented to eliminate such burdens.

Two examples are provided to illustrate how a selected mitigation action might have negative equity or justice implication, with examples of alternate courses of actions given[15]:

- In one location, incentives for the use of electric vehicles that included subsidies for purchase and exemptions from local traffic restrictions were mainly used for the acquisition of second cars which benefitted from the exemption of toll charges and traffic limitations. This inadvertently undermined the public transport policy's goals, widening inequalities and reducing sources of local tax income. An alternative course of action could have been around creation of policies to reduce use of private cars, that could have generated benefits for low-income households by improving public transportation systems.

- Measures such as carbon taxes or utility rate structures that aim at to incentivise energy efficiency via market mechanisms through increasing the price of energy often create disproportional burdens for low-income, multi-family households and can lead to increased energy poverty. Alternate courses of action with greater equity outcomes may include promoting solutions that lower electricity bills, for example via the creation of energy communities and/or ECSO (Energy Service Company) models for social housing renovation[16]. Alternatively, as a complement to rate structure approaches, municipalities could consider promoting one-stop-shops for energy poor citizens in order to avoid cut offs, instead supporting citizens with paying their electricity bills. In other situations, carbon tax revenues could be earmarked for supporting those in more vulnerable situations[17].

Ideally, mitigation actions should lead to improved equity outcomes for individuals, groups and communities. For this to happen, both the synergies and tradeoffs between mitigation and adaptation-related actions need to be identified upfront. A useful Covenant of Mayors Europe guide that identifies some of these potential tradeoffs within the framework of a SECAP can be found here[18].

15
Luddon, V., Le Den, X., Colaiacomo, E., Finello, F. & Landes, F. Social Impacts of Climate Mitigation Policies and Outcomes in Terms of Inequity (2021)
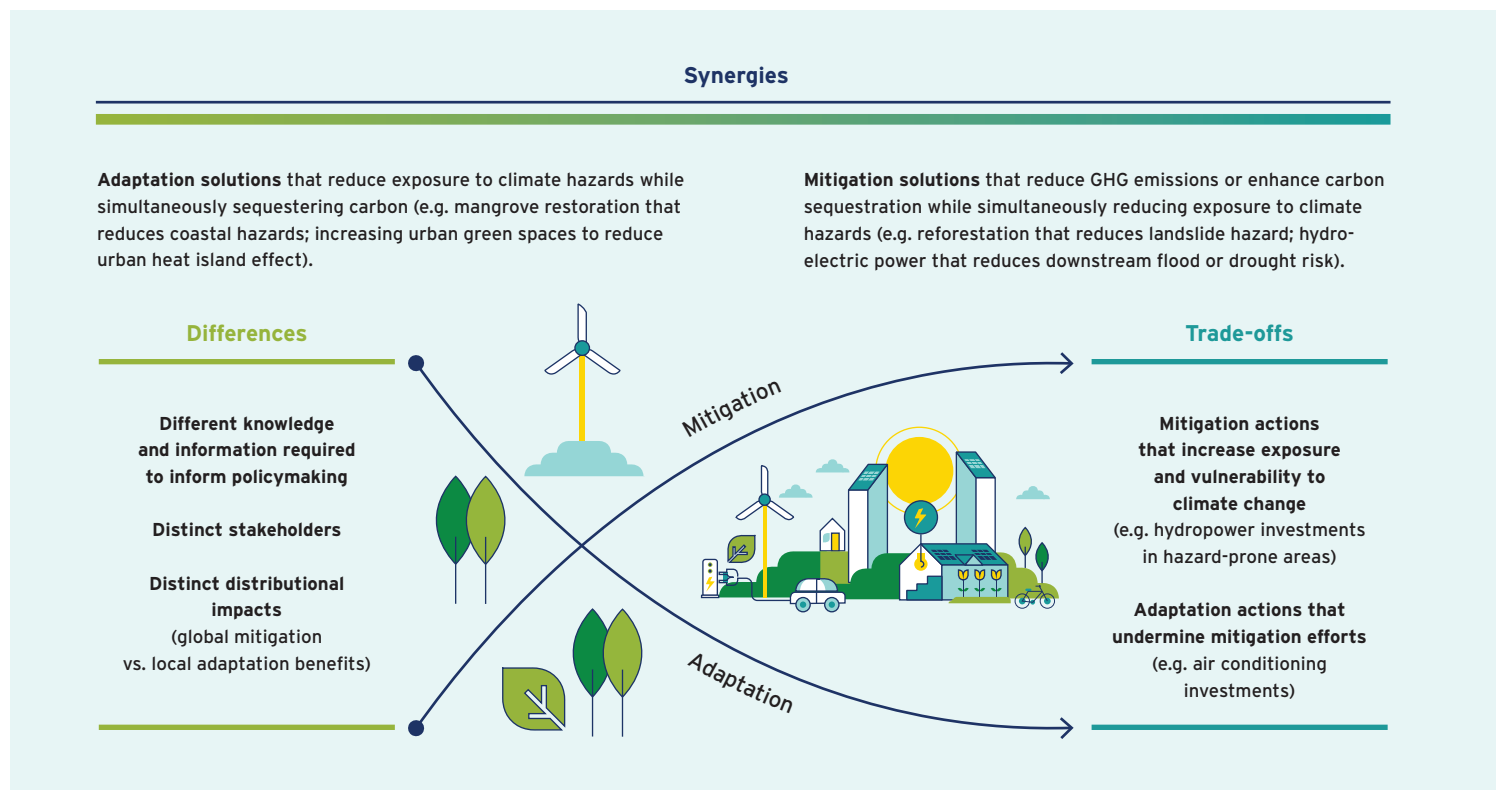
16
European Commission Energy communities

17
BEUC
The consumer checklist for Fair and Efficient Carbon Pricing. (2020)

18
Covenant of Mayors Europe Upgrading from SEAP to SECAP For Integrated Climate Action: A Quick Access Guide. (2019)

3 Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Planning Phase

Figure 8
UNEP 2022 Adaptation Gap Report

Synergies

Adaptation solutions that reduce exposure to climate hazards while simultaneously sequestering carbon (e.g. mangrove restoration that reduces coastal hazards; increasing urban green spaces to reduce urban heat island effect).

Mitigation solutions that reduce GHG emissions or enhance carbon sequestration while simultaneously reducing exposure to climate hazards (e.g. reforestation that reduces landslide hazard; hydro-electric power that reduces downstream flood or drought risk).

Differences

Different knowledge and information required to inform policymaking

Distinct stakeholders

Distinct distributional impacts
(global mitigation vs. local adaptation benefits)

Mitigation

Adaptation

Trade-offs

Mitigation actions that increase exposure and vulnerability to climate change
(e.g. hydropower investments in hazard-prone areas)

Adaptation actions that undermine mitigation efforts
(e.g. air conditioning investments)

Key questions to ask at this stage

→ What individuals, groups or communities might be disadvantaged by a potential mitigation or adaptation action?

→ Are there additional policies or activities that might reduce or eliminate this disproportionate burden?

→ Have we adequately considered the synergies or trade-offs between mitigation and adaptation actions?

- Have we engaged communities in the process of undertaking this review to ensure their lived experience is taken into account?

3 Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Planning Phase

3.2.3
Risks & Vulnerabilities and Adaptation Actions

Risk and vulnerability assessments are critical mechanisms for identifying the people and places most vulnerable to climate change at the local level.

- Risk assessments focus primarily on the projected changes in climatic conditions, inventory of potentially impacted assets, the likelihood of the impact happening and the resulting consequences.
- Vulnerability assessments emphasise exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity of systems, assets and populations.
- Integrated risk and vulnerability assessments address both the vulnerability to and the impacts of climatic hazards.

The act of undertaking an assessment signals an intention to develop strategies and programmes for dedicated schemes and measures that protect vulnerable groups from the biggest shocks and stresses, build their adaptive capacities to withstand and bounce back, and use the opportunity to address some of the systemic issues that created the vulnerabilities in the first place.

These assessments help answer questions such as[19]

→ What are the key exposures and sensitivities leading to vulnerability, and how effective are the applied coping strategies?

→ What are the key consequences of climate change impacts on the environment and human well-being?

→ What are the adaptation responses that could address the estimated impacts of climate change while helping build resilience in natural and human systems?

→ What are the types of interventions, capacities, and main steps needed to be undertaken to implement adaptations?

[19]
Bizikova, L., Habtezion, Z., Bellali, J., Moussa Diakhite, M. & Pinter, L. IEA Training Manual - An integrated environmental assessment and reporting training manual

3 Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Planning Phase

While there are different approaches for carrying out risk or vulnerability assessments, the activity generally consists of:

1 Determining and projecting likelihood and severity of shocks and stresses, and

2 Assessing the adaptive capacities of different individuals and communities to these stresses and shocks.

These first two elements are identified and quantified by combining the smallest geographic units available of geospatial data, socio-demographic characteristics, the natural and built environments, and indicators of climate exposure.

Having done this, the next two steps are:

3 Integrating and mapping vulnerabilities by overlaying the data from the first two steps and presenting the results in some kind of spatial format, and

4 Using this information to identify a collection of possible adaptation options, and subsequently undertaking of some kind of cost/benefit analytical process to arrive at a set of adaptation activities that the local authority commits to implementing.

A focus on vulnerability, and not just risk, ensures that equity considerations are central to this process. A non-exhaustive list of recommended resources to guide local authorities in undertaking these assessments include:

- Covenant of Mayors Europe Urban Adaptation Support Tool
- Energy Poverty Advisory Hub (EPAH) Handbook 1: A Guide to Energy Poverty Diagnosis
- UNEP's Vulnerability and Impact Assessment for Climate Change Module
- UNDP's Guide on Mapping Vulnerability at Sub-National Level
- C40's Assessing Risks In Cities Tool Box

A focus on vulnerability, and not just risk, ensures that equity considerations are central to the process.

3   Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Implementation Phase

3.3
Embedding Equity in the SECAP Implementation Phase

While the SECAP process itself is primarily focused on planning and subsequent monitoring, it is the implementation of the plan that moves municipalities towards emission neutrality and climate resilience. This section presents a number of equity entry points to consider during this implementation phase.

Engagement Entry Points

Economic development

Ways to Embed Equity

While there is much focus on the negative economic impacts of climate change, there is also the opportunity to direct the large investments needed to mitigate and adapt towards initiatives that also present equitable economic development opportunities.

For example:
- Local procurement - Subnational governments carry out more than 60% of total public procurement in OECD countries[20]. This presents local authorities with significant opportunities to enhance economic equity through engaging new and more diverse sets of vendors and contractors such as minority businesses or underrepresented entrepreneurs. Other opportunities can be created including social criteria in procurement processes. For example, the municipality of Eeklo, Belgium is explicit about their preference for community ownership of energy supply in new tenders, currently requiring a minimum level of 30% of citizen ownership[21].

This may also include fostering the use of socially responsible public procurement practices including via social award criteria that create opportunities for people most affected by the green transition.
- Green jobs – Establishment of an equitable green jobs strategy that advances sustainability and living wage opportunities for vulnerable community members. This may include designing programs for upskilling and reskilling workforce to ensure clean energy transition that include vulnerable groups.

→

20
OECD
Unlocking the Strategic Use of Public Procurement in Bratislava, Slovak Republic. (OECD, 2021)

21
CLES. Eeklo, Belgium CLES

3 Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Implementation Phase

Engagement Entry Points	Ways to Embed Equity
Ongoing Community Engagement	Engage vulnerable community stakeholders as essential and informed partners throughout the implementation cycle. In practice this could look like: • Building trust and managing change through consistent engagement and communication • Building community capacities • Publicly acknowledging communities for their contributions, and facilitating community ownership of mitigation and adaptation actions in order to ensure equity. Some examples of how to do the latter can be found in this 2022 <u>Covenant of Mayors Europe webinar</u>[22].
Real time monitoring	Real time monitoring of the equity impacts of adaptation and mitigation actions assists with the timely identification and rectification of activities that cause maladaptation or other negative unintended consequences. To increase the usefulness of real-time monitoring of project equity impacts, municipalities should invest in developing useful equity indicators (see section 3.4 below), and at a minimum, all data collected should be disaggregated by race and gender. Processes for collection, analysis and reporting must then be developed and institutionalised.

3 Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Implementation Phase

Spotlight → Green Jobs in Pozzuoli[23]

This project sought to reduce urban poverty in the neighbourhood of Monterusciello, a new public housing district comprised of 20,000 residents with low-income, high unemployment levels, and the existence of significant unused spaces. Through creation of a new agro-urban industrial landscape, the project aims included the creation of urban agricultural work and training opportunities for community members. Having worked through and overcome a range of implementation challenges, this project has delivered against most of its initial objectives. Noteworthy elements included its strong participative approach and ongoing dialogue with the local community, the links it created between schools, training and young people searching for work, its links to school systems, its strong partnerships thanks to the leadership of the Municipality of Pozzuoli, and the strong public/ private partnership model that supports long-term financial sustainability of the project.

Key questions to ask at this stage

→ Are we proactively purchasing products and services from businesses that reflect the community in which we are working?
  • And are we collecting the right data/information to help us understand who it is in fact that we are purchasing from?
→ Are we thinking about and working to mitigate risks of
→ projects leading to displacement and/or gentrification?
  Are we continuing to build trust with the vulnerable communities we serve?
  Are we collecting sufficient or the right kind of data to identify whether our project is resulting in increased resilience of vulnerable populations to climate impacts?
  • Can we be sure that we are not reinforcing or entrenching existing systemic inequities?

23
Urban Innovative Actions. MAC (Monterusciello Agro City): A courageous, creative, concrete and inclusive project
UIA - Urban Innovative Actions

3   Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Monitoring and Evaluation Phase

3.4
Embedding Equity in the SECAP Monitoring and Evaluation Phase

Monitoring and evaluating (M&E) the results of adaptation and mitigation actions is critical not only for accounting for public funding and learning what works and doesn't and adjusting programmes accordingly.
It is also fundamental for revealing their impacts on different individuals, groups and communities over time and using this knowledge to ensure that actions and policies do not exacerbate or create new inequalities or unintended effects[24].
The below table identifies the keys steps in developing and implementing an M&E system, with particular attention to equity entry points.

M&E Entry Points	Equitable Treatment of Vulnerable Groups in Practice
Developing a monitoring framework	A monitoring and evaluation strategy is a critical component of any adaptation or mitigation strategy/plan. Only through implementation of the M&E strategy can officials and stakeholders understand the effectiveness of interventions and where corrections or adjustments need to be made, particularly in relation to negative unintended impacts of actions. As such, an articulated objective of any effective M&E strategy should be the need to measure the equity impacts of all activities.
Indicator Development	Indicators are the specific, observable and measurable characteristics that reveal whether or not a particular policy or programme is making progress towards achieving a specific outcome. Equity indicators, more specifically, help to measure existing disparities faced by disadvantaged groups of people, and whether such disparities are growing or shrinking as a result of a particular activity. • Examples of general equity indicators include: median annual income, unemployment rates, levels of rent burden, number of households without access to the internet, educational attainment, means of travel for work commutes, and health disparities, households unable to keep house adequately warm/cool. • Examples of Adaptation and Mitigation focused equity indicators include: Percentage of population vulnerable to natural hazards, distance from a green space/park, noise level from traffic, percentage of monthly income spent on energy costs. →

[24]
Breil, M. et al. 'Leaving No One Behind' in Climate Resilience Policy and Practice in Europe.: Overview of Knowledge and Practice for Just Resilience. (2021)

3   Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Monitoring and Evaluation Phase

M&E Entry Points	Equitable Treatment of Vulnerable Groups in Practice
Indicator Development (continued)	→ Indicator development is not a simple process, particularly because the practicalities of eventually collecting the data for each indicator must be taken into consideration. To support cities in initial thinking about possible equity indicators for their adaptation and mitigation activities, one useful resource is C40/WRI's comprehensive indicators database[25], part of a broader guidance-note in equitable planning processes. Specifically focused on energy poverty, this joint CoM/Energy Poverty Advisory Hub resource explains the limits and application suggestions for 21 different indicators. Consistent with all other sections of this guide, agreeing on programme indicators should occur via a participatory and inclusive process that allows affected groups and communities to contribute. This process is also useful for increasing community support and participation in eventual data collection, particularly when considering the need for data disaggregation, discussed here below.
Collecting disaggregated data	To understand the equity impact of mitigation and adaptation actions on different groups of people, cities need to make intentional decisions about which data to disaggregate. Data disaggregation means breaking down large data categories into more specific sub-categories. Common categories to consider include: Lower income groups, migrants, women, racial, ethnic or religious minorities, people with disabilities, elderly and children, informal communities, and outdoor workers. Important to note, the greater the disaggregation, generally the more expensive and time-consuming the data collection and eventual analysis processes become. And so it is important to go back to the objectives set out in the monitoring and evaluation framework, and with community stakeholders determine what is the most essential data to have.

3 Embedding equity considerations in the SECAP cycle
Monitoring and Evaluation Phase

A non-exhaustive list of recommended resources that can guide local authorities in undertaking these monitoring and evaluation assessments include:

- Quick Reference Guide: Monitoring SECAP Implementation
- RESIN – Supporting Decision Making for Resilient Cities Monitoring and Evaluation Guide

Key questions to ask at this stage

→ Is understanding equity impacts a specific objective of your Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy?

→ Have you identified indicators that address equity and the social wellbeing of the community?
  - Were community members involved in the process of selecting these indicators?

→ Are you collecting disaggregated data on a regular and timely basis so you can better understand the positive of negative impacts of your activities on more vulnerable groups or communities?

→ Are you sharing and discussing the results of monitoring and evaluation activities with the communities you are engaging with to help inform future programme directions and strategies?

Spotlight → Barcelona's Climate Action Plan[26]

Barcelona's Climate Action Plan 2018-2030 centers equity and climate justice throughout all of its 18 action lines, explicitly stating the need to ''put the most vulnerable people at the centre of climate policies''. It acknowledges the different realities of people residing within its ten districts, recognising that with more climate change, an increasing number of communities will be affected by energy poverty, extreme heat and reduced access to water. Importantly, having acknowledged this, its comprehensive monitoring framework includes indicators to help the city track how this plays out over time, allowing for readjustment of efforts. Some example indicators that help reveal equity outcomes include:

- Number of journeys made in specific transport services for vulnerable people
- Number of households that have had their basic utilities cut off (gas, water and electricity)
- Heat-related morbidity and mortality
- Proximity of green spaces (percentage of the population less than 5 minutes from a quality green space)
- Number of energy advice point consultations
- Budget for international cooperation projects designed to improve climate justice.

With indicators having been calculated at the start of the plan, as the plan's baseline, updates are made annually. Monitoring results are then published every two years, complemented by evaluation meetings with the public to ensure citizen participation in the monitoring and evaluation of all collaborative citizen projects.

25
C40 & WRI Ross Center. How to tackle climate change and inequality jointly: practical resources and guidance for cities

26
Barcelona City Council Climate Plan 2018-2030

Embedding Equity Considerations

in Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Planning (SECAP), Implementation and Monitoring Processes