



# Report: Work Package 2

Executive summary of D2.8 deliverable, 'Implementation plan dealing with prioritising actions, monitoring and review'

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Aims and objectives**

This deliverable, 'Implementation plan dealing with prioritising actions, monitoring and review' focuses on the creation of realistic implementation plans for the cities' enhanced Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAPs), where actions included in the SEAPs are prioritised and selected based on key criteria such as costs, payback period, finance and economics, stakeholders, impact on energy targets, risks and alignment with the wider policy objectives of each city.

The main objective of this deliverable is to provide cities with an effective, straightforward tool, tailored for each city's individual circumstances, to help them prioritise the implementation of their SEAP actions. This deliverable also assists cities in understanding the pattern, timescales and key decision points for major investments so that time critical opportunities are recognised early enough to allow integration into their strategies, or to be seized as one-off opportunities.

A further objective is to encourage cities to think about how they will develop, manage and monitor their implementation plans, and evaluate the performance of their actions against targets, recognising that the plans and actions need regular review so that the city can adapt to grasp windows of opportunity.

### **City approaches**

The deliverable consists of three parts: prioritising actions; implementation plan; and monitoring and review. The prioritisation exercise allows cities to prioritise actions based on key criteria, or key areas for consideration by the cities, as follows:

- Policy interventions;
- Stakeholder assessment;
- Financial assessment (costs and payback);
- Financial assessment (funding);
- Energy assessment;
- Risk assessment;
- Integrated/cross sector opportunities.

The implementation plan then encourages cities to consider and visualise the planned implementation timescale for each action, bearing in mind the score each of these actions received in the prioritisation exercise. Finally, the monitoring and review part ensures that the cities have a clear monitoring strategy in place, including plans for the frequency of monitoring, awareness of data sources and their availability, consideration of criteria for assessing the success of each action, and plans for their review.

In order to successfully prioritise, plan the implementation, and monitor the success of the actions in the cities' enhanced SEAPs, an [Excel template](#) was developed for the cities to complete, with [accompanying guidance](#).

### Key findings

The template for prioritisation, implementation, monitoring and review provided cities with a tool to not only get a full picture on the specifics of each SEAP action, but also to think further on the prioritisation and implementation of those actions, considering various criteria that have an impact on their successful implementation over time. This should help the STEP UP cities to ensure the successful implementation of their SEAPs, and the actions therein, over the coming years – making significant contributions to city, national and European wide targets for climate and energy.

The table below summarises the key results from each of the cities, relating to the description, weighting, scoring, prioritisation, implementation, monitoring and review of the actions in each city's enhanced SEAP.

**Table A. Summary of the STEP UP cities' results**

	Ghent	Glasgow	Gothenburg	Riga
<b>Number of actions analysed</b>	52	33	15	47
<b>Sector containing the most actions</b>	Buildings, equipment & facilities	Buildings, equipment and facilities	Transport	Local heating/cooling production
<b>Key criteria for the city (weighted 3)</b>	Policy interventions, stakeholder assessment and integrated/cross-sector opportunities	Policy interventions	Energy assessment	Policy interventions, stakeholder assessment, financial assessment (funding) and energy assessment

<b>Scoring range of actions</b>	15-49	14-41	16-29	17-50
<b>Prioritisation of actions</b>	High: 27 Medium: 21 Low: 3 <sup>1</sup>	High: 10 Medium: 20 Low: 3	High: 7 Medium: 6 Low: 2	High: 19 Medium: 27 Low: 1
<b>Implementation timeframes</b>	2014-2019 (SEAP target date)	2014-2020	2014-2030 (Climate Programme target date)	2014-2020
<b>Key monitoring approaches and timescales</b>	Measuring the level of interest, outreach, involvement or usage; reviewing the timing and rates of implementation; understanding levels of investment, subsidies or loans; and assessing progress against targets	Levels of involvement, interest, investment or usage; or based on the results of the actions themselves	Quantitative: applied against the city's environmental and strategy objectives, using a model to estimate emissions. Qualitative: methodical assessment of the annual 'dialogue' and the work that is being carried out	Conducted in collaboration with relevant stakeholders
<b>Monitoring &amp; review timescales</b>	Monitoring: half yearly, annually, every two or three years, or monthly Review: annually, or every 2 or 3 years	Monitoring: annually or monthly, with some ad-hoc monitoring Review: annually, with some ad-hoc reviews	Monitoring: annually Review: every 3 years	Monitoring: annually Review: annually

### Learning points and recommendations

The cities' findings have highlighted a number of learning points, as follows:

- **Timing of the exercise:** for some cities, such as Riga and Ghent, the timing of the exercise did not fit well with the timing of the enhanced SEAP. Where this exercise came

<sup>1</sup> NB. This equals a total of 51 actions, rather than the 52 set out in Ghent's completed template. This is because the 'subsidies for heat pumps' action under local heating/cooling production has been analysed in this exercise as part of the 'subsidies for energy measures' action under residential buildings; the city has one budget for all energy subsidies so it is difficult to split these up.

after the SEAP had been approved and implementation was already underway, in many cases actions had already been prioritised and plans for implementation decided. However, despite this the cities still found it useful to carry out the analysis in order to clarify the actions and their impacts, identify any actions which will need closer facilitation and monitoring, check the feasibility of planned timings, and understand if any revisions were required to existing plans.

- **Subjective nature of the exercise:** cities were given the freedom to select the weighting and score for each criteria and action, based on the information available to them at the time of analysis – as a result, the scoring and priority level given to a set of actions in one city is likely to differ from the scoring and priority level that would be given if analysed by a partner in a different city, or even by a different representative from within the same city. This limits the comparisons that can be drawn between cities' results, and suggests that, if conducted by a different team or at a different point in time, the analysis may produce very different results.
- **Weighting criteria:** the template did not offer the flexibility to vary the weighting given to any one criteria as it was seen to be important to keep the weighting consistent in order to draw comparisons between the scores achieved by different actions. However, some cities, namely Ghent and Gothenburg, found it restrictive to use the same weighting for any one criteria for all actions, as the weighting can depend on the nature and importance of the action, not just the criteria.
- **Data gaps:** all four cities experienced difficulties gathering all the necessary data for the prioritisation exercise, especially on the costs and energy impacts of actions. This was particularly difficult for the large-scale, cross-sector actions or those linked to other actions and projects. Whilst the impacts of some actions are difficult to measure, quantify and assess, this makes it difficult to score and prioritise the actions. Having sufficient data, or at least estimates of this, is valuable in order to understand the potential benefits the actions offer and to assist with monitoring progress going forward.
- **SEAP actions are, by definition, priority actions:** some cities, including Riga, noted that actions have already undergone a selection and prioritisation process to be included in the SEAP, and are therefore all seen to be priority actions. This helps to explain why only a small number of actions were given low priority, but does not take away from the fact that it is a useful way of comparing between actions that have already been selected for

the SEAP, especially as municipalities with limited resources cannot give all actions the same priority.

- **Additional considerations for prioritisation:** all four cities prioritised their actions not just based on the scores achieved but also on various additional considerations relevant to their local contexts, which in some cases meant that high scores did not translate to high priority, and vice versa. This shows the value of having a flexible template which allows additional priorities to be factored in during the prioritisation exercise.
- **Resources required:** some of the cities, in particular Ghent and Glasgow, noted that the timing and resources required to complete the exercise were substantial, especially where data is required from multiple stakeholders. This made it difficult to complete the work, especially where there are other competing priorities. Glasgow also noted that more time could have been spent on the implementation exercise, in order to ensure that it can help create a more comprehensive picture of planning, stakeholder liaison, partial implementation, full implementation and debriefing. However, the exercise was still seen to be a useful way of evaluating the SEAPs and considering how best to prioritise actions.
- **Surprising results:** some cities, such as Glasgow, noted that the exercise presented some unexpected results – with some actions that were expected to achieve high scores performing less well, and vice versa. This in turn affected the priority level these actions were given, directly impacting on the implementation of these actions in Glasgow.

These learning points have helped to identify a number of recommendations for STEP UP cities and other cities considering developing and implementing their own SEAPs, as follows:

- **Prioritise SEAP actions as early as possible:** a prioritisation exercise of this level of detail can help to decide on the implementation timeframes of specific actions, if conducted early enough in the SEAP implementation process. Therefore, it is worth carrying it out once all SEAP actions have been agreed, allowing sufficient time and resources to conduct a thorough analysis.
- **Allow time to gather data and use estimates where data is unavailable:** whilst data gathering is time consuming, it is valuable for understanding the costs and impacts of actions and can help with the prioritisation process. If data is not available, make estimates based on similar projects or known averages, and follow up whether the estimated data matches reality during the implementation phase.

- **Consider the key criteria for the local context:** the template covered seven key criteria for cities to consider, and gave them the option to add their own – whilst this option was not used, it would be worth cities considering other key criteria unique to their own local context and including them in the analysis, so that the scores and priority levels achieved by specific actions reflect all key criteria for a city.
- **Learn from, and strengthen, low scoring actions:** all cities identified actions that achieved low scores against certain criteria. This highlights areas for the cities to focus on as the actions are developed further, especially where the actions have achieved low scores against criteria which are seen to be key for the city.
- **Adapt the template for other cities:** this template is comprehensive, and designed to go beyond the Covenant of Mayors' requirements in order for the STEP UP cities to analyse their enhanced SEAP actions in detail. To make it applicable to cities in the STEP UP learning network and beyond, it would be beneficial to adapt the template to stay closer to the minimal CoM requirements, ensuring it is flexible to local city contexts and enabling its use in a more interactive (e.g. workshop) setting.
- **Consider implementation and monitoring plans further:** using the template, cities focused on the prioritisation of actions, followed by giving a broad overview of plans for implementation, monitoring and review. Going forward, it would be valuable to use the findings of this exercise to develop more detailed implementation, monitoring and review plans to ensure that actions are successfully implemented and their potential environmental, economic and social benefits are fully realised.

### **Next steps**

The outputs from this deliverable will support the implementation and monitoring of the enhanced SEAPs in the cities, helping to guide and strengthen their implementation, and to refine the plans for monitoring and review. The exercise has highlighted a number of data gaps, which the cities will continue to fill as they move from planning to implementation of their SEAP actions.

The deliverable also contributes to the project's dissemination activities, providing valuable input to the [guidebook](#) which documents the STEP UP approach to enhancing SEAPs and provides advice and recommendations to other cities considering developing their own SEAPs, including those in the STEP UP learning network. It also provided useful input for STEP UP coaching activities by offering a tool to be shared and tested with, and potentially adapted by, the [STEP UP companion cities](#).