



Report: Work Package 2

Executive Summary of D2.9 ‘Documentation of STEP UP approach to enhancing SEAPs’

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Project's coordinator: Richard Bellingham
E-mail: richard.bellingham@strath.ac.uk
Work Package leader: Inete Ielite
E-mail: inete.ielite@riga.lv

Executive Summary

Deliverable aims and objectives

Deliverable D2.9, 'Documentation of the STEP UP approach to enhancing SEAPs', seeks to report on the process and methodology applied in the enhancement of the STEP UP cities' SEAPs, and present how the cities have used, and taken advantage of, the STEP UP approach in this process.

Whilst this documentation is valuable in itself, the experiences have also been documented in order to share them with other cities, build knowledge amongst these cities, and help them to potentially adapt these approaches to their own local contexts. With this dual purpose in mind, the deliverable consists of two parts: this deliverable report; and a guidebook produced for the benefit of other cities developing, or considering developing, enhanced SEAPs, which is publically available online¹ and in print form (a compressed version is also available in Annex A). In this way, STEP UP is sharing the learning of the STEP UP cities with companion cities, the learning network of STEP UP and also a wider network of cities across Europe and beyond.

The guidebook provides recommendations and tools to cities, based on learning and examples from STEP UP cities. It also provides links to the materials that have been tested during the development of the enhanced SEAPs in the partner cities², which have been adapted for other cities to learn more about and use as appropriate. This deliverable report serves as a supporting document to the guidebook – documenting the STEP UP approach to show how information for this deliverable was collected from the cities, and how the content for the guidebook was selected from the wealth of information that was provided.

The report provides an overview of the STEP UP approach, followed by a brief explanation of where city approaches have differed and why. Key tools and approaches used by the cities for each deliverable are briefly summarised, with a focus on where different approaches have been taken. Further information is provided in Annex A (the STEP UP guide for cities) and Annex B (detailed city-specific reflections in the completed templates).

City approaches

The guidebook, *Developing enhanced Sustainable Energy Action Plans: A STEP UP guide*, and this accompanying report, have been developed using information provided by partners in the four STEP

¹ See www.stepupsmartcities.eu (navigate to 'Tools and Inspiration' → 'STEP UP Enhanced SEAP Guide')

² The STEP UP cities' enhanced SEAPs are now available on the STEP UP website, at www.stepupsmartcities.eu (navigate to 'Tools and Inspiration' → 'The Enhanced SEAPs')

UP cities, reflecting on all steps in the process followed through STEP UP to develop their enhanced SEAPs. To provide this information, each city has responded to a number of questions in an Excel template, covering: methods and approaches, experiences, visual materials, expertise, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for other cities.

Due to the number of stages in the STEP UP approach, and the variety of approaches, stories, visual material, expertise and recommendations from the STEP UP cities, it is not possible to include all information provided in the guidebook and the report. Therefore, the information to be included has been selected by identifying the common approaches and findings for each step, as well as any different approaches and findings that are particularly interesting or unique and why these different approaches have been taken. The cities' completed templates, which provide all information in full, are available in Annex B accompanying this report.

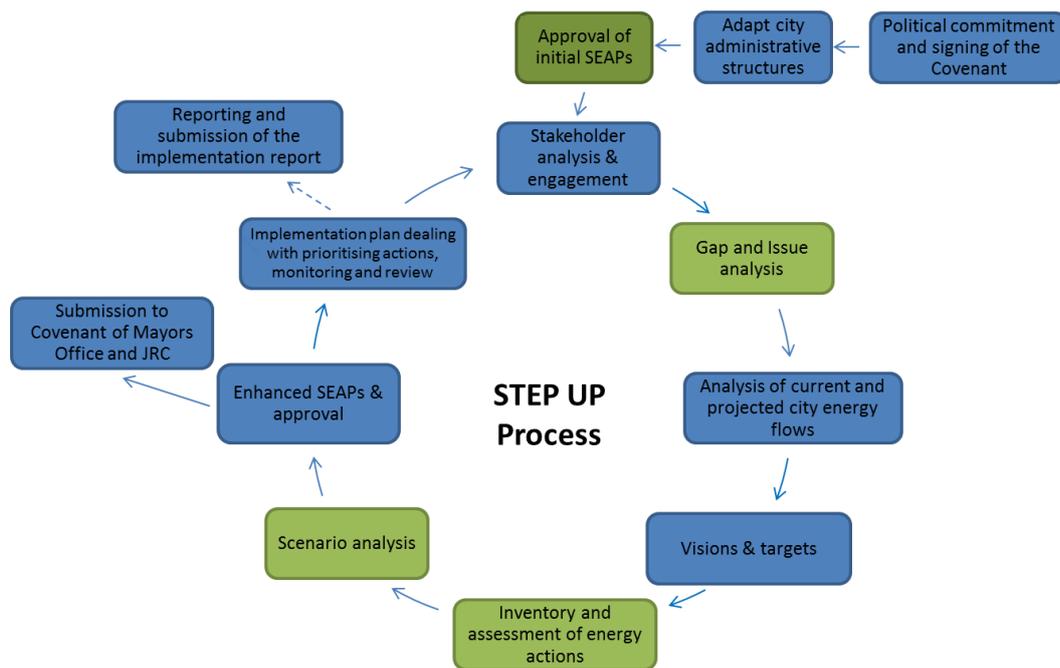
Key findings

STEP UP takes an integrated approach to energy planning, project design and implementation, addressing together: energy and technology; economics, and; organisation and stakeholders.

The broad process followed by the STEP UP cities to develop their enhanced SEAPs is based on a framework which was defined at the start of the project and consists of the following broad steps:

- Understanding the city (through engagement with stakeholders, reviewing existing climate and energy strategies and analysing current and projected energy flows);
- Building a shared vision and setting targets; and
- Analysing energy actions (through which inventories of stand-alone actions and cross-sector opportunities have been created, various city scenarios and their potential impacts have been analysed, and SEAP actions have been selected).

The STEP UP approach can be summarised using the following flow diagram:



The STEP UP cities have all completed every stage in the STEP UP process. However, different approaches have been taken in each stage, to suit the local context, background and timeframes for SEAP development. This report sets out where cities have taken similar approaches, where approaches have differed, and any reasons for divergence from the broad STEP UP approach.

Learning points

Developing enhanced Sustainable Energy Action Plans: A STEP UP guide (available in Annex A) draws on a number of learning points which have been taken from the cities' completed templates provided in Annex B.

In addition, some general learnings and reflections from cities, relating to the overall STEP UP approach to developing enhanced SEAPs, are also compiled below:

- **There is no 'one size fits all' approach to enhanced SEAP development.** In many respects, the steps in the STEP UP approach could serve as a broad model to be followed by many cities across Europe. But at the same time, each step in the process could be tackled in a number of different ways, using different methods and tools and with different resource requirements. This demonstrates the value in the STEP UP approach being a broad, flexible approach that can be adapted to suit cities' local contexts, backgrounds, ambitions and timeframes for SEAP development.

- **Building on the Covenant of Mayors approach can help strengthen the process and tailor it to local city contexts.** The Covenant of Mayors SEAP process is useful to follow, but can be strengthened by the additional steps in the process which STEP UP has identified and tested for enhanced SEAP development.
- **Effective stakeholder engagement is essential.** Having a good understanding of stakeholders in the city and close engagement and collaboration with them has been critical throughout the process of enhanced SEAP development. Over the long term, this should ensure support for the effective delivery of the SEAP and its actions, and offer mutual benefits to multiple stakeholders.
- **Strong political leadership is a vital ingredient for any SEAP,** demonstrating the city's commitment to delivering on SEAP visions and targets. Political support is also strongly linked to staff capacity and resource; if the SEAP is a political priority, it will help to ensure that a team is in place to develop, implement and monitor the SEAP actions effectively.
- **Tackling wider policy objectives is key.** The STEP UP cities have all benefitted from linking with various city departments to integrate the enhanced SEAPs with other key city plans and strategies. This offers benefits of a holistic perspective of sustainability in the city, a more established set of actions and also helps the city to tackle wider policy objectives, raising the status of, and support for, the enhanced SEAP.
- **Planning for SEAP development, resources and timeframes should start early.** Starting planning the process of SEAP development as early as possible is valuable in order to make proper use of all available tools, find sufficient data and take advantage of opportunities that may arise during the process. Timeframes in particular are greatly influenced by political commitments and necessary approval processes, meaning there will always be great variation between different cities' SEAP development timeframes.
- **Data is required from multiple sources.** Obtaining a good picture of energy within the city before starting to identify actions for a city's SEAP is important. Using various types of data is beneficial, especially planning data, providing a more complete picture of the different layers of the city. However, data availability and quality in some areas can be very challenging, and constant improvements in available datasets are likely to be needed.

- **Securing finance and funding streams is essential for implementation.** Actions should not only be ambitious but also implementable; however, securing the necessary finance for successful implementation can be a challenge and requires considerable resource.

Key recommendations

A number of recommendations and practical advice for cities interested in developing their own enhanced SEAPs have been detailed as part of the guidebook (see Annex A), relevant to each stage of the STEP UP process used to develop enhanced SEAPs.

Some key overall recommendations are set out below:

- **Understand the city** – develop the SEAP based on a good understanding of the current state of play and future projections in the city, in terms of energy production and use, plans for infrastructure development, economic growth and other key factors.
- **Learn from other cities** – talk to other cities and share experiences in SEAP development, including what works well and what works less well. This is likely to offer different perspectives which could help tackle challenges in new ways or identify new opportunities.
- **Work in partnership with stakeholders** – understand and build relationships with other stakeholders, including other city departments, research and commercial partners, and citizens, and work together to agree city visions and targets and develop the SEAP and its key actions. This is likely to be of mutual benefit to all involved stakeholders, and will help to ensure that the SEAP is both developed and implemented effectively.
- **Secure political support** – this is key to successful SEAP implementation, and will help to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated, the SEAP is given high profile, and is seen to be a priority area for the city.
- **Integrate the SEAP with other city plans, strategies and wider policy objectives** – not only is this likely to help secure better support for the SEAP, it will also ensure that the SEAP is a holistic plan that delivers on all three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economic, offering significant benefits for the city and its citizens over the long-term.
- **Build on the Covenant of Mayors process** – following the Covenant of Mayors SEAP process is important, but considering whether any steps need to be added or modified to suit the local context and deliver additional benefits can offer added value for the city.
- **Plan for effective communication** – the SEAP will need to be communicated with different audiences in different ways, which may affect the format and communication channels used.

Having a stakeholder engagement plan specifically related to SEAP dissemination may help to ensure this is as effective as possible, securing support from a variety of stakeholders.

- **Plan for SEAP implementation and monitoring** – SEAP actions need to be clearly detailed, with a clear plan of action for how the targets will be met and how data will be acquired and analysed, and responsibilities and timeframes for implementation and monitoring agreed. Actions need to have sufficient finance allocated or funding streams secured, as well as a plan in place for how any risks to their successful implementation will be mitigated.

Next steps

The findings from this deliverable will be used going forward over the remainder of the project and beyond, with the guidebook being disseminated widely at the All-Energy conference in Glasgow in early May and at the final STEP UP event as part of EU Sustainable Energy Week in Brussels in June. It will also be disseminated through other Work Package 5 dissemination activities, any remaining training activities with learning network and companion cities, and through the new Masters courses at the University of Strathclyde and Riga Technical University. STEP UP cities will also share the guidebook amongst their own networks, and will continue to do so after the end of the STEP UP project in order to support the project's legacy.