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Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy: adaptation to climate change

*Evaluation procedure
and assessment criteria*

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Abstract

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre checks the eligibility of the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAP) and carries out an analysis of the information submitted by the EU Covenant of Mayors signatories. This quality control is carried out by means of a set of assessment criteria that contributes to guaranteeing the credibility and reliability of the whole Covenant of Mayors initiative. The evaluation criteria are divided in five sub-components: compliance with the time frame, completeness, coherence, quantification, and progress. Only the mandatory criteria can be used to decide on the eligibility of the SECAP. The remaining evaluation criteria are only analysed to formulate recommendations to the signatories.

1 Introduction

1.1 Objectives of the evaluation

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre checks the eligibility of the **Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan** (SECAP) and carries out an analysis of the information submitted by the EU Covenant of Mayors signatories. This quality control contributes to **guaranteeing the credibility and reliability of the whole Covenant of Mayors initiative**.

The final objectives are many-fold:

— Guide signatories through the adaptation process

- A Feedback Report is issued, providing recommendations to signatories on the way forward. The report suggests next steps according to the stage they are (following the proposed 6-step process of the Urban Adaptation Support Tool) - thus guide signatories through the development, prioritisation and implementation of their adaptation measures.

— Support them in demonstrating their local achievements to policy-makers

- The evaluation shall ensure that the data reported are reliable enough to feed the climate debate. Collective progress report will be generated providing essential feedback on local actions to national, European and international policy-makers, as well as international fora, such as Global Climate Action Agenda.

— Evaluate and monitor the overall progress of the adaptation action within the Covenant of Mayors initiative

- The analysis of the overall progress will feed the European policy debate - thus helping to shape the EU policy initiatives, programmes and instruments to further prioritise, recognise and support the city level action on adaptation.

— Help the Covenant team to tailor the support activities to better match signatories' needs

- The evaluation shall help to identify the main barriers signatories face, the needs that they experience which are preventing them from moving to the next step - thus helping to shape the direction and content of the support services provided by the Covenant team (helpdesk, capacity building activities, guidance material).

1.2 Requirements and timeframe

By joining the Covenant of Mayors, local authorities have formally committed to (see also Table 1):

- Providing an Adaptation Scoreboard at the Registration stage;
- Submitting a SECAP that includes the updated Adaptation Scoreboard, the Adaptation Strategy, and the Vulnerability & Risk Assessment (VRA), within two years following the formal signing;
- Reporting **progress** every two years following the submission of the SECAP for evaluation, monitoring and verification purposes – [Note: at least 3 adaptation actions must be submitted as 'Key Actions' (previously referred to as 'Benchmarks of Excellence')].

Table 1. Minimum Reporting Requirements (Adaptation)

	Registration stage	Within 2 years	Within 4 years	Every 2 years
Adaptation Scoreboard	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategy	Optional	✓	Not applicable	✓ *
Vulnerability and Risk Assessment	Optional	✓	Not applicable	✓ *
Adaptation Actions	Optional	Optional	✓	✓ *
Monitoring	Not applicable	Optional	✓ *	✓

Source: own elaboration. * The signatories must report their implementation level or achievements; it does not mean that they must update the assessment of the action plan.

Once the signatory cities submit their SECAP it will be analysed and a feed-back report will be issued divided in three parts: 1) Foreword - background information, 2) Overall evaluation and 3) Detailed comments on the SECAP template and provided documents. The feed-back will be based in a number of evaluation criteria that are detailed in the following section.

Regarding Mayors Adapt signatories, the term SECAP is understood as climate adaptation strategy or plan developed within the framework of the Mayors Adapt initiative.

2 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria are divided in 5 sub-components, A to E (see also Table 2). Only the mandatory criteria can be used to decide on the eligibility of the SECAP; the remaining evaluation criteria are only analysed to formulate recommendations to the signatories. The first criteria (A) refers to **Compliance** with the timeframe; the second (B) refers to **Completeness**; the third (C) refers to **Coherence**; the fourth (D) refers to **Quantification**; and the fifth (E) refers to **Progress**.

2.1 Compliance with the Reporting Timeframe

The signatory must, at least, provide:

- A.1. A comprehensive overview of its adaptation status via the Adaptation Scoreboard at the registration stage.
- A.2. The local VRA within 2 years of the registration.
- A.3. An adaptation strategy that is either part of the SECAP and/or developed and mainstreamed in a separate document(s) within 2 years following the formal signing.
- A.4. Three adaptation actions, considered as 'Key Actions' (previously referred to as 'Benchmarks of Excellence'), within 4 years following the formal signing.
- A.5. A monitoring of the implementation of its plan and report on the progress every 2 years following the SECAP submission.

2.2 Criteria of Completeness

- B.1. The signatory must fill in all mandatory fields (green cells) of the reporting template.
- B.2. The direction of goals should be indicated, e.g. if heatwaves have been considered a hazard that may negatively impact on elderly inhabitants, then the goal should be "minimise the number of elderly exposure to heatwaves" or "reduce the number of hospital admissions". Therefore a goal would be required for every hazard implying a risk (hazard x exposure x vulnerability = risk).
- B.3. The signatory is strongly encourage to complete, apart from the mandatory template fields, the optional fields (white cells). Special importance should be paid to the so-called "extra mandatory fields for Key Actions" (stakeholders involved, risk and/or vulnerability tackled, outcome(s) reached, and investment and non-investment costs) for non-key actions, even though this is not mandatory.

2.3 Criteria of Internal Coherence

- C.1. The information entered in the 'strategy', 'risks & vulnerabilities' and 'adaptation actions' tabs should be coherent with the status reported for every step of the adaptation cycle in the 'adaptation scoreboard' tab.
- C.2. The adaptation goals should be coherent, i.e. aligned with the identified risks. Once the risks have been identified in the VRA (either "not known", "moderate", "high", etc.), a certain number of goals should be indicated and should also be coherent with the identified risks and hazards.
- C.3. In the 'adaptation actions' tab of the template, the signatory must provide a set of actions that tackle adaptation-related issues, whereas mitigation actions must be listed in the dedicated 'mitigation actions' tab. In addition, the signatory can optionally identify which of its listed mitigation actions also have positive impacts for climate adaptation in its territory (and vice-versa) through the dedicated tick box in the tables ('Action also affecting mitigation' field).

- C.4. The key actions should tackle the main identified 'climate risks' and expected impacts in the different 'policy sectors'. This is an important step of the adaptation cycle. For climate hazards that are not addressed by specific adaptation actions, the signatory should explain why the issue is not addressed in the current version of the action plan, who would be in charge of it, how and when the issue could be solved.

2.4 Criteria of Quantification

- D.1. The signatory should provide – whenever possible – quantitative adaptation goals (i.e. targets) in the template, in the "Strategy" sheet, under "Adaptation goals"; for example, if one of the goals is "minimise the number of heat-related mortality", then the target should be "reduce the number of heat-related mortality by 25%".

2.5 Criteria related to Progress

- E.1. The signatory must specify progress achieved in the **overall process** overtime (process-based indicators) by updating on a regular basis (at least every 2 years) its status in the 'adaptation scoreboard'.
- E.2. The signatory must report progress achieved in the **implementation of its adaptation actions** by updating on a regular basis (at least every 2 years) the 'implementation status' of its reported actions in the dedicated tab of the template.

Table 2. Matrix summarising the assessment criteria for CoM adaptation to climate change (mandatory criteria in green)																				
Assessment Criteria	Compliance				Completeness				Coherence				Quantification				Technical robustness			
	RS	2Y	4Y	MS (+2)	RS	2Y	4Y	MS (+2)	RS	2Y	4Y	MS (+2)	RS	2Y	4Y	MS (+2)	RS	2Y	4Y	MS (+2)
A.1. Adaptation Scoreboard	✓	✓	✓	✓																
A.2. Risk and vulnerability assessment		✓	✓	✓																
A.3. Adaptation Strategy		✓	✓	✓																
A.4. Adaptation Actions, including 3 Key Actions			✓	✓																
A.5. Monitoring of Action Plans		✓	✓	✓																
B.1. Fill all Green cells					✓	✓	✓	✓												
B.2. Adaptation goals						✓	✓	✓												
B.3. Optional fields						✓	✓	✓												
C.1. The information entered										✓	✓	✓								

C.2. Coherent goals										✓	✓	✓								
C.3. Adaptation actions (not mitigation)											✓	✓								
C.4. Key actions tackling key risks											✓	✓								
D.1. Quantitative targets													✓	✓	✓					
E.1. Progress achieved																✓	✓	✓		
E.2. Report progress																			✓	
Legend: RS → Registration Stage, 2Y → within 2 Years, 4Y → within 4 Years, and MS (+2) → Monitoring Stage (every 2 years). Green cells refer to mandatory fields. White cells indicate recommendations.																				

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