



SPATIAL PLANNING: THE CRUCIAL ELEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

June 2023

Policy brief #1

Climate action at regional and local levels is crucial to keep the EU on track towards carbon-neutrality. At local scale, spatial planning plays a key role in territorial development, as it is both a planning and an executive system and the decisions within it are legally binding. Nevertheless, spatial planning still lacks integration with energy, climate and mobility, among others, which are crucial for sustainable and resilient local development. Furthermore, lack of communication and lack of convergence across sectoral policies weakens the effectiveness of public spatial planning investments.

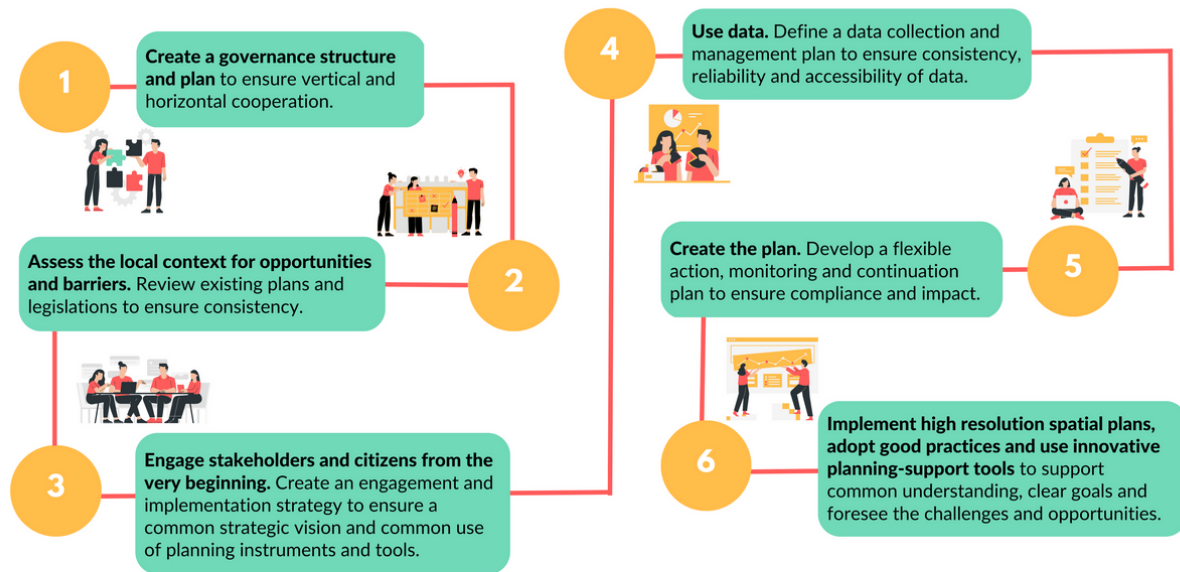
Yet, cities and regions increasingly express their ambition to take a more integrated spatial planning approach, therefore they seek support and How-To guidance in managing the process, solving technical challenges, better integrating existing strategies and dealing with differing stakeholder interests.

This policy brief presents **six practical steps** for regional and local authorities (referred to as “authorities” in this brief) proposed by the IN-PLAN project, which core objective is to support authorities in integrating energy, climate, and mobility into their spatial plans. To that end, **five integrated planning phases** were developed in the **IN-PLAN Practice**, which aims to facilitate the effective implementation of these integrated spatial plans. The IN-PLAN Practice is a newly developed framework and authorities are invited to test it with our collaboration.

Six steps to successfully integrate energy and climate planning

Based on a literature and good practices review[1], we identified key learnings from integrated planning approaches and practices. We recommend **6 key steps** to success for regional/local authorities and urban planners to implement a successful integrated planning approach:

[1] <https://fedarene.org/publication/stocktake-on-available-good-planning-practices/>



Assessing Authorities' capacities and needs – key takeaways

While developing the IN-PLAN Practice, we consulted authorities in the **five participating countries** (Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Romania and Sweden) through a survey and several workshops. While they mentioned their goals that could possibly be addressed through better spatial planning (see table), the authorities declared needing support in better integration of existing strategies into spatial plans, while taking a more critical look at current planning processes and dealing with differing stakeholder interests; the Practice and the support from agencies trained through our capacity-building programme will support them in better addressing these challenges.

The complete results of the survey are available in our Capacity Gap Assessment[2].

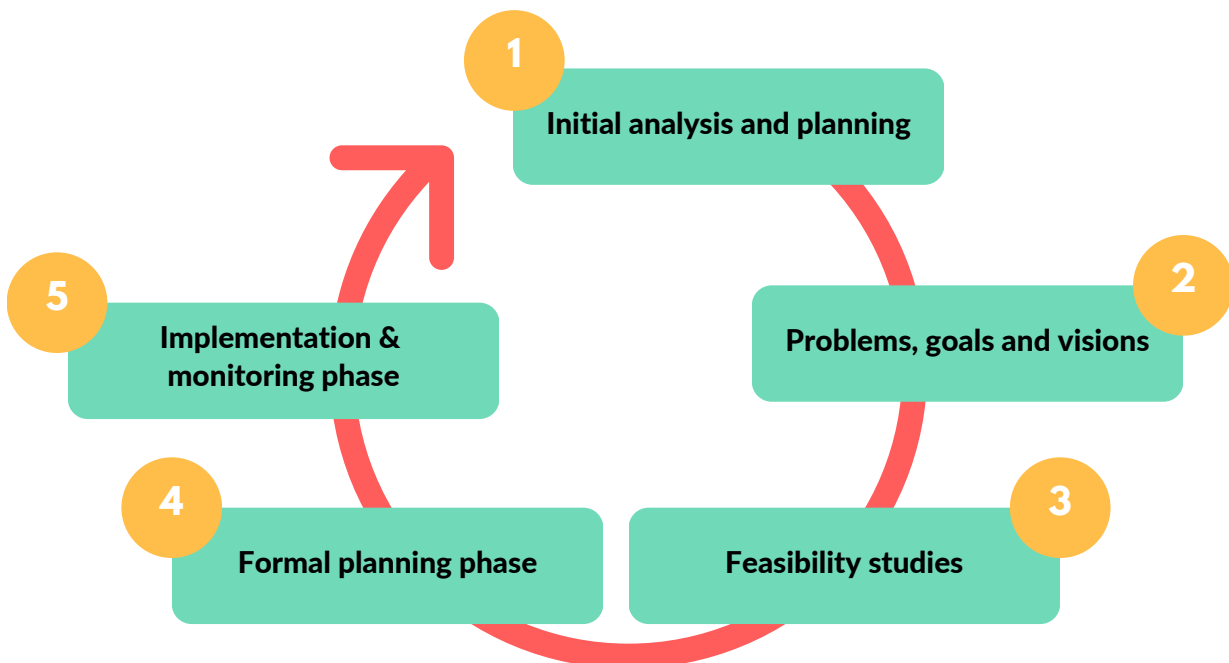
Sector	Goals mentioned by authorities
Buildings	Decarbonising heating and cooling
	Heightening energy efficiency in current building stock
Mobility	Increasing air quality (e.g. low emission zones)
	Limiting urban traffic
	Increasing sustainable mobility
RES development	Supporting local production, distribution and storage
Resilience	Reducing heat island effect
	Reducing impact of natural hazard
	Risk mitigation

[2] <https://fedarene.org/publication/stocktake-on-available-good-planning-practices/>

IN-PLAN Practice: How-To Guidance for integrated spatial planning

The IN-PLAN Practice is a document structured in five successive phases intended for the participating authorities to step up their long-term energy and climate planning by integrating it into their spatial plans.

The IN-PLAN Practice provides authorities and spatial planners with a checklist of what to do and bear in mind, concrete “How-To” guidelines, examples of good practices, explanations and links to existing tools, techniques and methods, and intended outcome after each step. The IN-PLAN Practice is adaptable to the scope of the spatial plans under consideration; some parts will be directly related to authorities’ goals while other might simply give them hints on aspects that they are already dealing with or that are not necessarily in their scope. It is important to have in mind that planning is an iterative process and thus **feedback loops exist between the different phases.**



When is the right moment to use the IN-PLAN Practice?

Excellent windows of opportunity for authorities to start using the IN-PLAN Practice may either be when a **complete or partial overhaul of a spatial plan**, general urban plan, strategies or other planning documents is pending.

How to join the IN-PLAN community of practice

In the context of the IN-PLAN project, we call for regional/local authorities and energy/climate development agencies to join our IN-PLAN community of practice, to be trained on and apply the Practice in their local context.

The IN-PLAN Practice will empower and provide them with a unique opportunity to receive support for their integrated planning processes, both from EU-level actors and from other authorities and agencies, exchanging and learning from their peers around Europe.

If, at any time in your spatial planning process, you want to join the IN-PLAN community, please get in touch with us through our contact mailbox info@lifeinplan.eu.

Next steps

In the upcoming months, there will be several options to engage with the IN-PLAN project:



October 2023: A webinar presenting in further detail the project's first findings summarised in this brief

By the end of 2023: Beginning of Capacity Building sessions - the list of upcoming sessions will be advertised in the newsletter and displayed on the [dedicated webpage](#)

September 2024: Final IN-PLAN Practice

To stay informed, you can select Spatial Planning as a topic of interest when [registering for the Newsletter](#) or follow #LifeINPLAN on every social media channel!

About IN-PLAN

The overarching objective of IN-PLAN (Integrated Energy, Climate and Spatial planning) is to develop, test and roll out the IN-PLAN practice - a long-lasting support structure enabling local and regional authorities to effectively implement their sustainable energy, climate, and spatial plans. On top of delivering this innovative and effective approach, IN-PLAN intends to empower local and regional governments and their agencies through a two-step capacity-building programme. IN-PLAN's ultimate goal is to empower local and regional authorities in developing and implementing integrated energy, climate, and spatial planning in their territories.



<https://fedarene.org/project/in-plan/>



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