

## Press release

# New IN-PLAN Practice to Empower Local and Regional Authorities to Revolutionize their Sustainable Energy, Climate, and Spatial Planning

For immediate release

**Brussels, 4/11/2024** - The IN-PLAN project team is proud to announce the launch of the IN-PLAN Practice, an **innovative and long-lasting support structure designed to assist local and regional authorities across Europe in effectively implementing their sustainable energy, climate, and spatial plans**. Developed as part of a collaborative effort co-funded by the LIFE programme of the European Union, the IN-PLAN Practice aims to integrate energy and climate planning with spatial planning to accelerate the achievement of climate neutrality targets.

As climate change continues to pose unprecedented challenges, it is essential for local governments to have tools that not only align with national and EU-level policies but also address the specific needs of their territories. Despite their ambitious climate neutrality goals, many local and regional authorities face persistent challenges in translating these targets into concrete actions.

The IN-PLAN Practice is designed to do just that: **it equips municipalities, regions, and other public authorities with a comprehensive approach that bridges the gap between policy and action**. The Practice is designed to help local governments overcome key challenges by providing a more integrated and collaborative approach to planning. It facilitates the merging of various sectoral plans—such as climate adaptation, renewable energy, and sustainable mobility—into a unified spatial planning framework. By bridging the often fragmented, siloed planning processes, IN-PLAN enables a more holistic strategy that ensures all sectors are working together toward common sustainability goals.

In addition, **the Practice strengthens both vertical and horizontal integration, promoting collaboration between local, regional, and national governments**. This multi-level approach ensures that policies are implemented coherently and consistently across different governance levels. Another significant advantage of IN-PLAN is its focus on aligning planning processes with local and regional budget lines, addressing one of the most critical obstacles for local authorities: securing long-term financing for sustainable climate actions. This alignment ensures that plans are not only well-designed but also financially supported for successful implementation.

The IN-PLAN Practice **is fully in line with key European Union initiatives such as the European Green Deal**, which aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, and the EU Climate Law, which legally commits the EU to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, IN-PLAN supports the goals of **the Fit for 55 legislative packages**, which seeks to cut emissions by 55% by 2030, requiring local authorities to play a significant role in reducing emissions from urban areas.

Katharina Höftberger from UIV, one of the lead authors of the IN-PLAN Practice, emphasizes: *“To overcome the climate crisis, we need to pull out all the stops. The IN-PLAN Practice is a practical document that aims to draw attention to the many synergies and practical benefits of integrating elements of energy, mobility and climate adaptation into spatial planning. It also provides step-by-step guidance and many practical tools and examples on*

*how to create such an integrated plan. It is a starting point for learning and further discussion - because we believe in an ongoing process of co-creation and learning to build sustainable, high-quality cities for the future.”*

As the European Union aims for climate neutrality by 2050, tools like the IN-PLAN Practice will be indispensable. It equips cities and regions to take proactive steps toward a sustainable future, ensuring that climate targets are not just set but achieved through concrete, integrated actions. The Practice is already **being tested with 15 local and regional authorities**, referred to as “Lighthouses”, and **a further 30 municipalities** will be involved as “Pilots,” allowing the Practice to be adapted and replicated across Europe.

The IN-PLAN Practice is available at this link: <https://fedarene.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/IN-PLAN-Practice.pdf>

For more information about the IN-PLAN project and how you can support your region, visit <https://fedarene.org/project/in-plan/>.

## **PRESS CONTACT**

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## **NOTES TO THE EDITOR**

### **About spatial planning**

Local and regional governments use **spatial planning** to outline their development pathways, defining and setting restrictions for land use and development. Spatial planning is defined as follows: *spatial planning gives geographical expression to the economic, social, cultural and ecological policies of society. It is at the same time a scientific discipline, an administrative technique and a policy developed as an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach directed towards a balanced regional development and the physical organisation of space according to an overall strategy.* The IN-PLAN team developed, after an analysis of the existing plans in its six focus countries, an infographic that serves as a visual guide to reveal the complex relationships between various planning documents. By mapping out the intersections and overlaps between sectoral plans, the tool empowers policymakers and planners to identify potential synergies, conflicts, and areas for harmonization.





# The Integrated Planning Process



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

#LifeINPLAN



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Figure 2 – The integrated planning process introduced by the IN-PLAN Practice

## About the project



Partners of IN-PLAN: REGEA – North-West Croatia Regional Energy Agency (Croatia), IEECP - Institute For European Energy And Climate Policy (the Netherlands), UIV Urban Innovation Vienna (Austria) TUS - Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (Ireland), EKV Innovatum Progress (Sweden), AREA - Area Di Ricerca Scientifica E Tecnologica Di Trieste (Italy), ALEA Agentia Locala a Energiei Alba (Romania), TEA - Tipperary Energy Agency (Ireland), FEDARENE - Federation Europeenne Des Agences Et Des Regions Pour L'energie Et L'environnement (Belgium)

IN-PLAN stands for *Implementing the Energy Efficiency First Principle in Regional Planning*

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