ENEFIRST Plus project - Italian Pilot Case

The EE1st principle embedded in SECAPs: the Italian pilot case - 2nd Phase

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Dublin | 18th March 2026

CONCERTED ACTION ENERGY EFFICIENCY DIRECTIVE

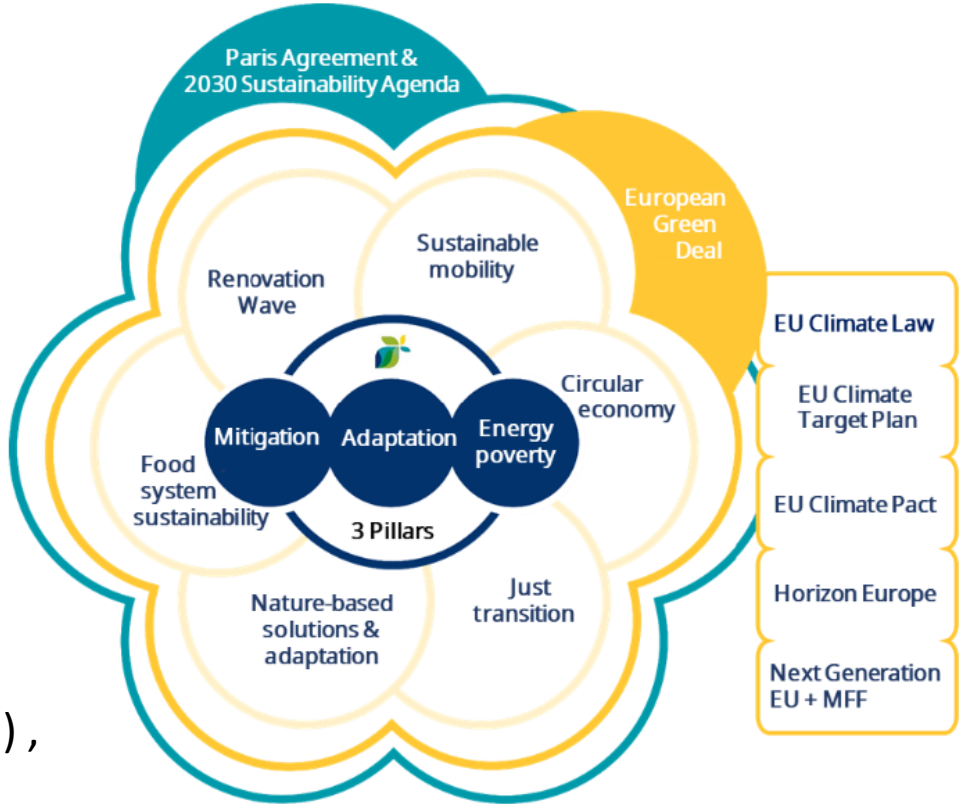
Co-funded by the European Union under project n°101120880. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission or CINEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Agenda

- Governance and implementation of the Covenant of Mayors in Italy
- EE1st in the JRC Guidelines for SECAPs
- The Italian Pilot Case
- Lessons learnt

Covenant of Mayors

As a keystone voluntary initiative of the European Commission,
the Covenant of Mayors empowers cities and towns of all sizes to act on energy and climate in line with the EU's vision for a climate-neutral, resilient and fair future for all.



The Covenant commits local authorities to 3 pillars (**PILLAR**):

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 (**Mitigation**) ,
- Strengthening resilience (**Adaptation**),
- Reducing energy poverty (**Energy Poverty**).

“The EU CoM at the heart of multilevel governance in Italy” by the Covenant National Coordination Board

Community Explorer

The EU Covenant of Mayors Community – also known as the CoM-munity – is made up of thousands of signatory municipalities and hundreds of supporting entities at national levels across 27 EU countries.

EU Europe

10 745	260	179	220 M	27
Signatories	Supporters	Coordinators	Population	Countries

INDICATOR: Signatories

COMMITMENT: CoM 2050 | CoM 2030 | CoM 2020

GEOGRAPHICAL SCALE: Countries | EU Regions

Total: 10 745 signatories

Country

25.4 million citizens
living in cities and towns that signed the 2030/2050 Covenant commitments

42%
of the overall population living in Italy

Signatories

1500 Signatories

19%

Percentage of municipalities that signed the 2030/2050 commitments out of the total number of municipalities in the country.

956 Action Plans

64%

Percentage of signatories with a 2030/2050 Action Plan

411 Monitoring Reports

43%

Percentage of Action Plans with at least one Monitoring Report

Coordinators and Supporters

Territorial Coordinators

64%

Percentage of signatories supported by higher levels of sub-national government, e.g. regions, provinces.

Supporters

13%

Percentage of signatories supported by local and regional agencies, city networks or NGOs.

CoM web site – consultancy on 3 March 2026

The Italian CoM-munity

CoM-munity Stories – March 2026

ENEA | AGENZIA NAZIONALE PER LE NUOVE TECNOLOGIE, L'ENERGIA E LO SVILUPPO ECONOMICO SOSTENIBILE

ISPRA | RENAEL

ENEA, National Coordinator since 2013

ISPRA, Partner since 2011

RENAEL, Supporter since 2021

Area covered: National

Key figures

- Climate and energy ambition and objectives (2030 and 2050): **1500 Signatories signed the 2030/2050 Covenant commitments**, representing 19% of all Italian municipalities and covering 42% of Italy’s population (25.4 million citizens)
- **955 Action Plans submitted** with 2030/2050 commitments
- 64% signatories supported by CTCs
- 13% signatories supported by Supporters
- Several regions/provinces (Piemonte, Veneto, Sicily, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Marche, Abruzzo and Sardinia, Apulia, Emilia Romagna) have established technical support and financing schemes to support municipalities to develop their Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAP)

A new EU framework for local climate planning

The 2025 JRC Guidelines mark a significant evolution in SECAP development, offering a modular structure and integrate the EE1st principle across all planning phases.

Key innovations include:

- Mandatory assessment of **energy poverty**.
- Updated **GHG emission factors** and inclusion of new ETS2-related sectors.
- Stronger emphasis on **cost-benefit analysis** and **strategic long-term alignment to** EU climate-neutrality goals.

These changes support the **scientific basis of local climate plannings r**equiring municipalities to adopt **more data-driven and participatory processes**.

2025 New JRC Guidelines: How to develop a SECAP – Covenant of Mayors guidebook: 1 main document and 5 complementary documents

From 1st to 2nd phase of the Italian Pilot case

Main conclusions by 1st phase

The first phase of the Italian pilot scheme confirms that many municipalities already implicitly apply the EE1st approach, but lack the **methodological clarity, indicators, and operational tools** required by the new EU framework.

Next step: 2nd Phase

- **Refine** the SCORE*1st methodology.
- **Provide** targeted national **resources** for EE1st implementation.
- **Strengthen monitoring** systems and the pillar of **energy poverty**.
- Support systematic identification of replicable **good practices.**

This **integrated approach** will help local authorities fully embed the EE1st principle in their planning, improve SECAP quality, and accelerate progress toward climate neutrality by 2050.

*Sustainable Compliance and Overall Rating for Energy Efficiency first in SECAP

Italian Pilot Case –2° Phase
Good practices for an EE1st-aligned SECAP

Goal: Provide public authorities and other stakeholders **practical resources** for implementing the **EE1st principle** in SECAPs

Result: Good practices for applying the EE1st principle in local planning.

Identifying **Good Practices** is central to enabling replication. An action is only qualified as Good Practice when:

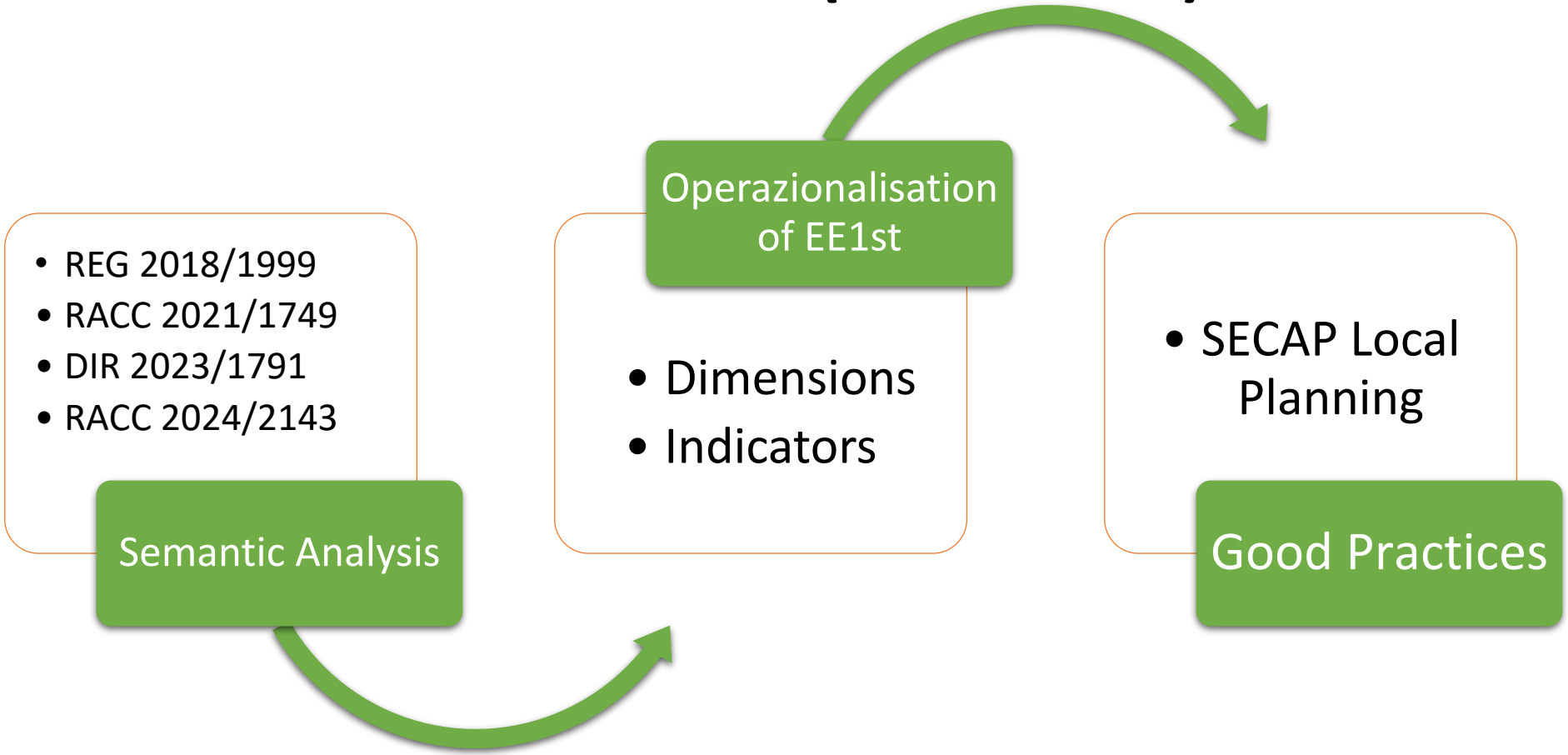
- Descriptive: it clearly describes **its implementation**;
- Quantitative: it provides **measurable impacts** (energy savings, CO_2 reductions).

Monitoring and good-practice identification are interlinked: measurable actions feed a replicable repository of solutions for other municipalities, enhancing consistency and knowledge transfer.

Procedure:

- Semantic analysis of European legislation related to the EE1st principle
- Operationalization of the EE1st principle to make it measurable

How it works (Procedure)



Operazionalisaton of the EE1st principle

IDENTIFICATION OF DIMENSIONS: The semantic analysis allowed the EE1st principle to be described through the following dimensions:

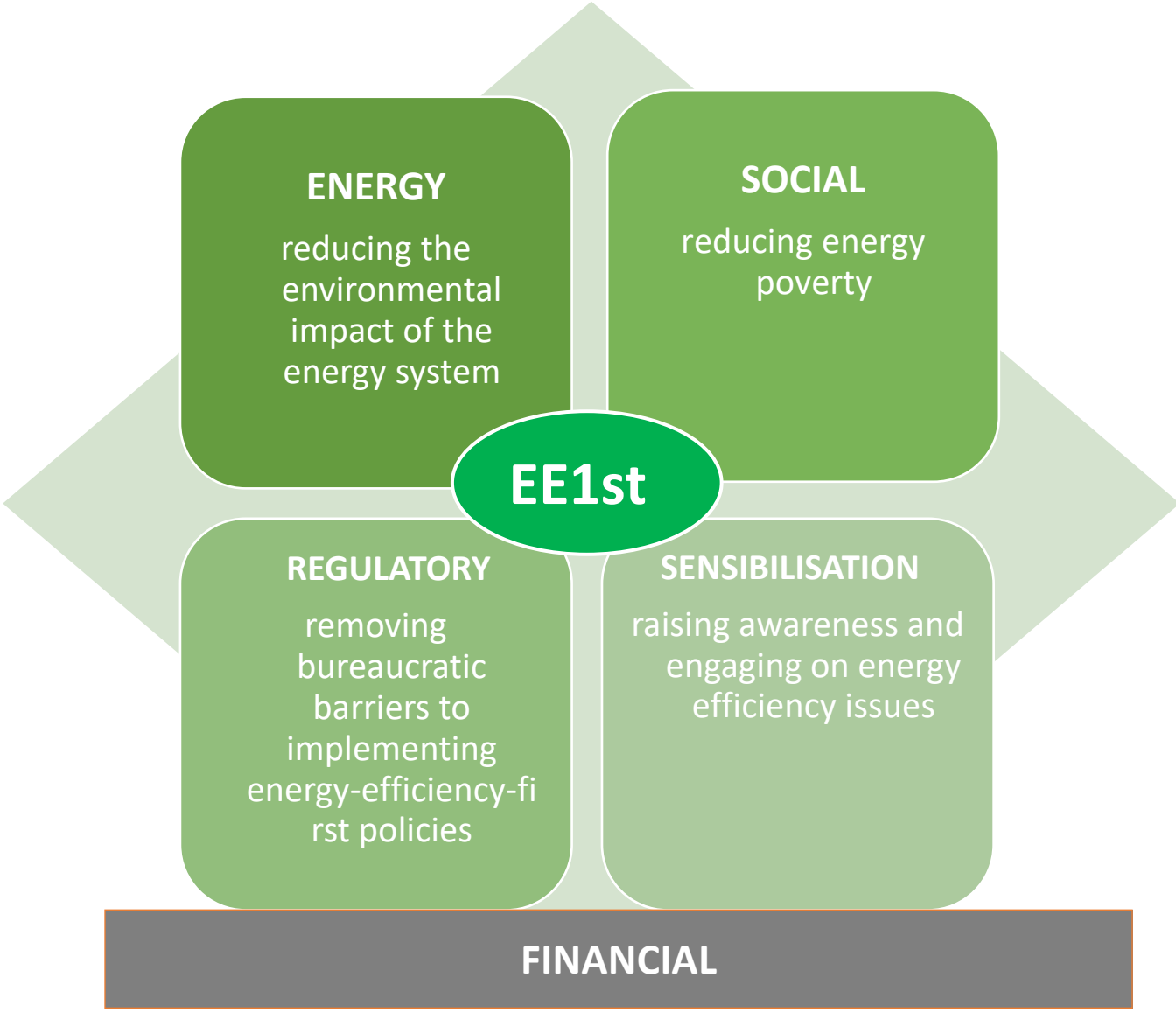
- Energy
- Social
- Regulatory
- Awareness-raising
- Financial

A multi-dimensionale concept

Art. 3 The EE1st principle requires that energy demand be managed efficiently and that every energy-related decision assess whether efficiency is a more cost-effective, secure, and sustainable solution compared to building new energy plants or networks.

SELECTION OF THE INDICATORS:
Indicators are semantically significant expressions referring to **strategic actions** aimed primarily at increasing **energy efficiency on the demand side**, compared to **supply-side investment options** (energy provision).

EE1st Principle: a multi-dimensional concept



Some good practices for an EE1st-compliant SECAP

1. **Each SECAP action should explicitly indicate:**
   - The **financial component** (relevant for CBA analysis)
   - And **at least one** objective related to: energy / social / regulatory / awareness-raising dimensions.

2. **SECAP action objectives should be measurable through indicators such as**:
   - **Impact indicators** (measure final direct benefit)
   - Action implementation
   - Co-benefits
   - Trade-offs (indirect positive or negative effects)

Source of mentioned indicators: *"How to plan mitigation, adaptation and energy poverty – Covenant of Mayors Guidebook – Complementary document 4"*

Energy dimension and indicators

The **energy dimension** assesses the impact of a SEAP in terms of *mitigation actions*

Indicators: key terms relating to the reduction of the energy system's environmental impact and the improvement of resource efficiency on the demand side:

- *CO_2 reduction (tonnes)*
- *Energy savings (kWh)*
- *Upgrading, renovation, etc.*
- *Production from Renewable Energy Sources (RES) (kWh)*

Action	Indicators	Main Dimension
Rationalisation of lighting systems in a public building	«energy saving»	energy
Taxi for all	«riduzione CO_2»	energetica

Social dimension and indicators

The **social dimension** assesses the impact of a SECAP in terms of reducing energy poverty. (*Article 24 'Empowerment and protection of vulnerable customers and alleviation of energy poverty' – Directive (EU) 2023/1791*)

Indicators: keywords relating to the reduction of energy poverty through initiatives supporting vulnerable groups

Action	Indicators	Main Dimension
Income-based enery tariffs	«reduced rate»	social

Sensibilisation dimension and indicators

The **awareness-raising** dimension assesses the impact of a SEAP on 'promoting and facilitating the efficient use of energy by final customers and final users' (*Article 22 'Information and Awareness-raising' – Directive (EU) 2023/1791)*

Indicators: keywords relating to the promotion of energy efficiency through initiatives of:

- *Information*
- *Communication*
- *Training*

Action	Indicators	Main Dimension
An educational activity for students on energy saving	«information campaign»	sensibilisation

Regulatory dimension and indicators

The **regulatory dimension** assesses the impact of a SEAP in terms of measures aimed at 'removing (…) any unnecessary regulatory or non-regulatory barriers to the implementation of the "energy efficiency first" principle' (*Article 3 – 'Energy efficiency first principle' – Directive (EU) 2023/1791***)**

Indicators: keywords relating to the promotion of energy efficiency through initiatives of:

- *Initiatives to remove bureaucratic barriers*
- *Regulatory incentive schemes (e.g. GPP)*

Action	Indicators	Main Dimension
Streamlining bureaucratic procedures to promote energy efficiency in buildings	«bureaucratic procedures»	regulatory

Draft agenda |Workshop in Palermo (Sicily) – 13 May 2026

New resources

- JRC Guidelines and local regional guidelines
- Good Practice | not good practice
- ENEA SECAP platform
- ENERFIRST+ updated resources / Pilot Cases
- Results of the survey EEFP

Sister projects

- EU PEERS
- Seed MICAT
- Regio 1

Key Speaker

- Municipality of Naples
- Municipality of Palermo
- Municipality of Enna
- Municipality of Messina
- Energy Manager of Sicily Region
- *ANCI Sicily*

ENEFIRSTPlus learning cycle, **a continuous learning process** that promotes experience exchange and sharing of best practices among public authorities, researchers, and professionals.

It supports the **identification of challenges and barriers, enabling the co-creation of solutions** to make the Energy Efficiency First (EE1st) principle operational in local energy governance.

The workshop represents a **key step in a collective learning pathway**, aimed at **strengthening capacities and fostering constructive dialogue among local energy stakeholders.**

it contributes to a more effective integration of the EE1st principle **into local policies and planning instruments.**

LESSONS LEARNT

- **SECAP as a natural context**

Energy efficiency is already a core priority.

- **Multilevel governance and Stakeholders involvement** are a key issues
- **Need for transparent decision-making**

The process used to select SECAP actions must be clarified.

- **Data limitations**

Some actions cannot be fairly considered or evaluated due to incomplete data.

- **Different municipal capacities**

Staff availability and internal resources vary; tailored technical support may be needed.

- **Need for simple tools**

Tools should be easy to use and accessible to all municipalities.

Thank you for your attention!

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How useful do you consider the integration of the Energy Efficiency First principle in local energy planning – such as within SEACAPs?

- Very useful: it could greatly enhance the quality of local decisions-making
- Useful, but the availability of practical tools and clear guidelines is necessary
- Potentially useful, though it is not a top priority for local policy agenda.
- Not very useful/challenging to implement at municipal level
- I don't know / I am not sure

What are the key conditions required to ensure the effective application of the Energy Efficiency First principle in SEAPs and local energy policies? (select two):

- Improved access to detailed local energy data
- Practical methodological tools to support applying the principle in public decision-making
- Clear National or EU-level guidelines
- Enhanced technical skills within local administrations
- Availability of dedicated financial support mechanisms
- Stronger coordination across different levels of government