



## Method Brief

# A new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change: Fostering mainstreaming at the EU level

### The Approach

The European Union (EU) is developing an EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change to be adopted in spring 2013. One of its three objectives is to mainstream adaptation into policies, strategies and programmes at the EU level.

### Scope and entry points

The development process builds on the White Paper 'Adapting to climate change: Towards a European Framework for Action' (COM(2009) 147 final) adopted on 1 April 2009. This Paper already places a strong focus on mainstreaming adaptation and foresees the development of a comprehensive EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change by 2013.

### How it works

The general objective of mainstreaming adaptation into policies at the EU level, including revision of legislation to include climate adaptation, will be operationalised through several **mainstreaming strategies**. Points of discussion have included:

- Earmarking of 20 % of the 2014 bis 2020 budget (Multi-annual Financial Framework) for climate-related expenditures.
- Mainstreaming of climate action in the future Cohesion Policy, Common Agriculture Policy, Research & Innovation (Horizon 2020), Common Fisheries Policy and other sector policies.
- Having a dedicated programme for climate action (1/3 of budget) and a funding line for adaptation within the Environment Funding Programme LIFE+.

One approach to support mainstreaming is the **online platform Climate-ADAPT** (see Figure), which is already operational and aims to facilitate exchange and knowledge dissemination. For each sector with relevance to adaptation, the platform provides:

- A database comprised of publications, projects, guidance documents and case studies.

- Tools, indicators and maps for adaptation planning.
- Information on sectoral policies and spatial entities (countries, regions, cities, etc).

The screenshot shows the 'European Climate Adaptation Platform' website. The main navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Adaptation information', 'EU sector policies', 'Countries and other areas', 'Tools', and 'Links'. Below this, there are sub-sections for 'General', 'Agriculture and forestry', 'Biodiversity', 'Coastal areas', 'Disaster risk reduction', 'Financial', 'Health', and 'Infrastructure'. The 'Agriculture & Forestry' section is highlighted, featuring a photo of a field and text about agricultural and forestry impacts. Below the main content, there are three columns: 'Indicators' (listing items like 'Agriculture and forestry (yield)', 'Soil organic carbon', etc.), 'Resources' (listing 'Impacts of Climate Change on European Forests...', 'Land use - EEA SOER 2010...', etc.), and 'Multimedia' (listing 'A day in my forest: Environmental Atlas of Europe - Poland', etc.).

Figure: Example from Climate-ADAPT for sector Agriculture & Forestry

### Specifics of application

#### Stakeholders and institutional set-up

The European Commission is the lead agency for developing the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, and an Adaptation Steering Group (ASG) was created in September 2010 to assist the Commission. The ASG brings together member states, research institutions, business associations, NGOs and other organisations, and contributes to the preparatory work for the adaptation strategy.

In addition, an inter-service group on adaptation has been set up and meets on a regular basis. It discusses progress towards mainstreaming adaptation into the EU policies and how to ensure effective synergies between the EU Strategy

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Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

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on Adaptation to Climate Change and other relevant work being undertaken by the Commission. The Working Group on the Knowledge Base (WGKB), which consists of researchers, scientists, academics and other stakeholders, also feeds into the ASG. The WGKB shares knowledge, experiences, information and research on climate impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, and provides advice on research needs. In 2012, a formal stakeholder consultation was undertaken.

### Input

All of the institutions and networks mentioned above provide expertise to guide the development process of an EU Adaptation Strategy. By the end of 2011, a contract for technical support had also been launched. In addition, a study on climate proofing for Cohesion and Agricultural policies was launched simultaneously with a project on adaptation strategies for European cities.

### Output

The main product will be an EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change to be adopted by 2013. Other supportive outputs are (i) the online platform Climate-ADAPT, launched in 2012, with its strong focus on dissemination of knowledge, and (ii) the provision of adaptation funds through several financing instruments of the EU, in particular LIFE+ and the 20% of the EU budget earmarked for all types of climate action (mitigation and adaptation).

### Capacity required and ease of use

A high level of expertise, capacity, knowledge and political will is required, along with effective coordination among various actors.

## Conclusions for future application

### Outcome and added value

If the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change is adopted with a strong mainstreaming approach, it can be expected to have a significant influence on all relevant EU sector policies.

### Cost-benefit ratio

The relatively ambitious development process seems appropriate considering the potentially large benefit at the EU level for many different policy fields.

### Potential for replication

The complex development process and amount of input needed present challenges for replication in similar bodies of government. However, different elements of the mainstreaming approach can be of great interest for replication, such as the online platform Climate-ADAPT including sector-wise specifications for mainstreaming as well as the approach to earmark defined amounts for adaptation in relevant financing frameworks.

## References

European Commission Website on Adaptation to Climate Change

<http://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/change>

EU White Paper: Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action (COM(2009) 147)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0147:FIN:EN:PDF>

EU knowledge platform Climate-ADAPT

[www.climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu](http://www.climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu)

Roadmap to the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change

[http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned\\_ia/docs/2013\\_clima\\_002\\_communication\\_adaptation\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned_ia/docs/2013_clima_002_communication_adaptation_strategy_en.pdf)

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## Imprint

Edited by:  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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March 2013

