

Climate change adaptation - Region of Istria perspective



ISTARSKA REGIONE
ŽUPANIJA ISTRIANA

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The Region of Istria - location



Area: 2820 km²

41 territorial units of self-governmen: 10 cities & 31 Municipalities

Many implemented projects concerning climate adaptation and risk management



Policy Recommendation Paper on Cross-border Climate Adaptation

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Region of Istria

General remarks

- This is a policy recommendation paper, where policies are described briefly, and not a detailed elaboration of specific policies
- What does "cross-border" mean in the context of this paper?
 - There is no spatial continuity between the groups of municipalities in a certain country, only within the country (Istria, Marche, etc)
 - The document does not discuss the specific cross-border (international) impacts; eventually, only within a specific region
 - However, proposed policies could be implemented in the project regions, or in the Adriatic-Ionian region, for example
- There is no "one-size-fits-all" type of policy, i.e. not every policy is fit for every urban situation
- Policies are related to joint actions of participating municipalities, and not to issues in a specific municipality

1. Introduction

- Purpose of the document:
 - To inform decision-makers about adaptation policies to be undertaken in the cross-border context
 - To raise the awareness of national and European policy makers, enhancing their support to climate change issues.
 - To provide rationale for choosing a particular policy course of action
 - The policy recommendation paper rests on the assumption that the recommendations are part of the wider adaptation strategy and action planning process
- Target audience:
 - Senior decision makers: some basic issues have to be explained
 - Technical experts: familiar with the basic issues, but not always aware of the political context
 - Other stakeholders

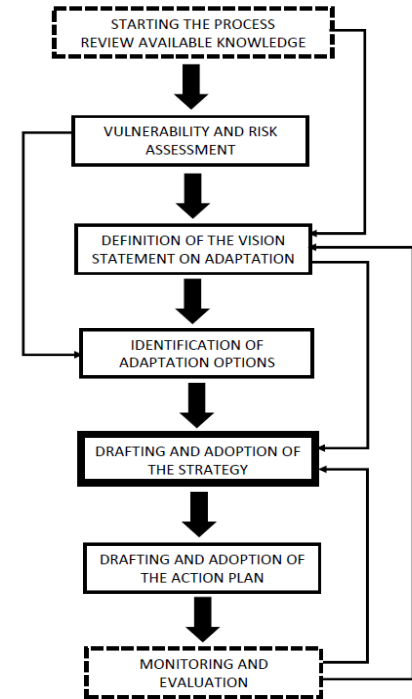
- A **policy** is a course or a principle of action adopted or proposed by an organisation or an individual with the aim of assisting in decision making.
- A **policy recommendation** is a written policy advice prepared for some group or person that has the authority to make or to influence policy decisions.
- Discussion what is being done or should be done to solve a problem or address an issue (**POLICY**) vs Informing people who are faced with policy choices on particular issues about how research and evidence can help in making the best decision (**POLICY RECOMMENDATION**)

2. Context and importance of the issue

- Why cities matter?
 - More than 50% of the world's population lives in cities with an increasing trend (forecast 70% by 2050)
 - cities cover around 1% of Earth's surface, but they produce about 80% GDP, consume 78% of the world's energy and produce more than 60% of all CO2 emissions.
- Most of the adaptation action is in cities and city scale is especially relevant for climate policy
- Urban areas also present unique adaptation opportunities
 - boosting energy efficiency and decarbonisation public transport and power generation could create 14m new jobs and prevent 1.3m premature pollution-related deaths a year by 2030 (The Economist, 2018)
- Challenges (lack of mainstreaming, social inequities, issues of public opinion, conflicting timescales, etc.)
- Barriers (institutional, attitudinal, financial, political)

3. Vulnerabilities and risks

- Vulnerabilities and risks in the the Mediterranean region
 - Temperature rise
 - expected to be associated with more frequent high-temperature events and heatwaves
 - Floods
 - a consequence of short and local heavy rains in small catchments, many of them near the coast in densely populated areas
 - Sea level rise
 - Urban heat islands



4. Principles for policy development

- **Multidimensionality:** climate adaptation is not a separable policy, but it is integrated into other policies
- **Interdependency:** coordination of adaptation across spatial scales (inter-urban; intra-urban), sectors and jurisdictional boundaries
- **Inter-temporality:** dynamics of adaptation, which evolves over time
- **Avoidance of conflicts:** policies should not be conflicting; solving one issue should not create problems elsewhere
- **Flexibility:** dealing with changing risks, and permanently identifying critical vulnerability thresholds

- **Adaptation measures:** no regrets, low regrets, win-win, adaptable measures
- **Policy review:** needs to be done regularly
- **Cross border-aspects:** policies need to have a wider territorial scope
- **Cooperativity:** working in partnership with the community
- **Scientific approach:** based on accumulated knowledge, use of latest scientific findings; but also builds on local knowledge of climate variabilities and likely local impacts

6. Policy recommendations

- Two types of adaptation policies:
 - Physical adaptation or infrastructural adaptation (“hard”)
 - Non-physical adaptation, which is more related to strengthening capacity of stakeholders for adaptation (“soft”)
 - This Policy Recommendation Paper focuses on the non-physical adaptation policies
- Groups of policy recommendations:
 - **Capacity development** for better adaptation to climate change
 - **Awareness raising** among major municipal stakeholders
 - **Communication activities** on major aspects of climate change adaptation in urban areas
 - **Exchange of experience**, best practices and lessons learned among municipalities
 - **Science-to-policy** integration in urban climate change adaptation

Capacity development

- Urban planners and decision-makers need to integrate efforts to mitigate the causes of climate change (mitigation) and adapt to changing climatic conditions (adaptation)
- Strategic urban and land-use planning:
 - Limit urbanization and development in certain flood-prone areas
 - Integration of planning (land use and development planning at urban level)
 - Link adaptation initiatives to urban development goals
- Amend the building code and building standards
- Link with regional planning
- Introduce nature-based solutions to adaptation: restoration and protection of ecosystems and natural buffers
- Smart zoning practices
- Develop measures to reduce Urban Heat Island (UHI) effects
- Review adaptation strategy regularly
- Prepare disaster management plans and integrate them with local development policies

Awareness raising

- Local authorities should make public-high level commitment to tackle climate change; this commitment should recognize the need for concrete action by setting measurable targets
- Build local strategic partnership bringing the public, community, private and civil society sectors to improve adaptation efforts
- Improve early warning systems for climate hazards and develop crisis response management capacity
- Develop information platforms aimed at general population
- Organise thematic campaigns and events, print brochures and other awareness raising materials

Communication

- Develop a system for sharing and communicating projections of climate data
- Enhance public provision of risk information
- Communicate the fact that climate change is an uncertainty-laden concept, which implies flexible adaptation pathways

Exchange of experiences

- Strengthen linkages to networks
- Foster interregional and cross-border transfer of knowledge and technology
- Share best practices and lessons learned in urban adaptation initiatives

Science-to-policy integration

- Improve monitoring of climate trends and build data collection systems
- Promote research into the risks associated with impacts of climate change and other hazards in urban areas (this could be carried out as a joint cross-border initiative)
- Promote preparation of multi-hazard assessments, as part of a more comprehensive local-level climate change vulnerability assessments, on a regular basis
- Mapping of hazards and risks



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Thank you