



EUROPEAN UNION



# EU MISSIONS

ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE



November 2023

## EU Mission Adaptation Community

### Summary of the event: Preparing the Ground for Adaptation

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November

#### 1. Introduction

This report provides a summary of the discussion that took place on Thursday 30th November 2023 as part of the EU Mission Adaptation Community event – *Preparing the Ground for Adaptation*. The recording of the event is available within the following [link](#).

The online event received a total of 69 registrations and a total of 36 participants, including:

- 16 Charter Signatories
- 4 Friends of the Mission
- 16 others (incl. 1 European Commission member, 2 European Environmental Agency's representatives, 1 Mission Project representative, 1 Member State Facilitator representative, 1 Member State representative, 10 MIP4Adapt team members)

The event aimed to provide the opportunity for members of the Community of Practice to link and share experiences on how they have prepared the ground for starting the adaptation process. The full agenda can be found in the Annex. Box 1 summarises the main findings from the event.

*Box 1. Main findings from the Preparing the Ground for Adaptation event.*

- Stakeholder engagement with a win-win approach as the basis to give benefits to everyone involved in preparing the ground for adaptation process.
- It is crucial for the success of strategic planning and implementation to be as inclusive as possible from the start to ensure active engagement and shared responsibilities.
- The importance of understanding and integrating the vision, knowledge and other existing plans from all different sectors involved in the adaptation cycle.
- Vulnerable groups must be considered as part of the process so that proposed actions effectively address their needs.
- Breaking silos is a major challenge and can be addressed by sharing knowledge and responsibilities rather than working vertically.
- A dialogue of empowerment with key actors is essential to create a comfortable environment for them to share ideas and collaborate, all while acknowledging their contribution
- Thinking outside the box to select tools for engagement; for instance, arts, sports, and cultural activities can give an opportunity for a more extended dialogue and creative engagement.

## **2. Summary of the event**

In this interactive event, members of the Community of Practice had the opportunity to link and share experiences on how they prepared the ground for starting the adaptation process. The event gave participants the opportunity to learn about the experience from Cascais, Portugal, on how their climate adaptation strategies started and how they are going right now.

Cascais is a coastal town that is facing an increasing number of extreme weather events (fires, floods, storms, etc.) because of climate change. Due to this situation, they developed their Climate Change Strategic plan in 2009, in which they worked on downscaling the scenarios and providing a long-term impact assessment (100 years). This strategy served as a starting point to take actions, to integrate actions and to detect the gaps/empty slots. In 2017, the first Portuguese climate change adaptation plan was presented, and the scenarios were updated. Stakeholder engagement activities were carried out, the participants were organised in work groups by sectors (water, green space, health, civil protection, communication, etc.) to ask their opinion and ideas on the strategy. There were 80 measures identified, in which 30 were priority measures with different actions to be implemented, most of them non-structural solutions. The firsts actions were started in 2017, so until now they did art communications, photo exhibits, school programs, the development of own adaptive funds, implementation of Nature Based Solutions (NBS) on green corridors, communication for vulnerable people regarding heat, installing meteorological sensors and free data, among others. Nowadays, they are still working on projects at national and international level, and they have 64% plan completion (implemented and continuous implementation).

Furthermore, participants were able to interact among each other on a breakout session. The workshop session of the event consisted of breakout groups where participants used Slido polls to discuss how they prepared the ground for starting the adaptation process.

### 3. Lessons learnt and outputs

The presentation from Cascais (Portugal) and the Q&A section provided valuable insights for participants. During the discussion, the importance of involving stakeholders right from the beginning was highlighted. This allows to co-design a strategy and incentivise shared responsibilities and ownership by action driven partners (individuals, organisations, or entities that are actively engaged and committed to taking concrete steps or initiatives in climate change adaptation). This can be achieved by ensuring information transparency and potential “quick-wins” (opportunities that, when pursued, could deliver positive quick outcomes and visible benefits, for example, the implementation of green infrastructure projects) to show the benefits of a new, horizontal and multi-sectorial approach. During this process it is vital that vulnerable groups are consulted so that the proposed actions effectively address their needs.

Breaking silos is a major challenge when preparing the ground for adaptation, which can be overcome by sharing knowledge and responsibilities rather than working vertically, and by empowering key actors to feel comfortable sharing knowledge and experiences. A common language will be needed when engaging with different organisations, as we all have the most appropriate approach to conduct regular meetings, workshops and communication.

Regarding tools for engagement, workshops can be helpful should they be engaging and targeted to the relevant audience. Sometimes it is recommended to “think outside the box” to create new ideas through creative engagement, for instance using arts, sports, and cultural activities, which can give an opportunity for a more extended dialogue amongst stakeholders.

Examples of the private sector role in implementing adaptation were also given, including sponsorship during an art exhibition engagement project or training workshops to inform their staff of climate adaptation's benefits and opportunities, e.g., saving money and being a more active community member. If you leave a seed of knowledge in the companies, they can spread out new ideas and develop more sustainable business models.

From the breakout rooms, the main barrier noted by participants was that stakeholders are not aware of the need for adaptation; hence the importance of raising awareness among civil servants and representatives of local governments. Moreover, there seems to be a lack of information related to adaptation, both at public administration level and citizenship level, and less available resources and financing for adaptation in comparison to mitigation.

The Figures below present a summary of the combined responses received through Slido.

Figure 1. Strategies for gathering and organising information on climate impacts, adaptation actions, and best practices.

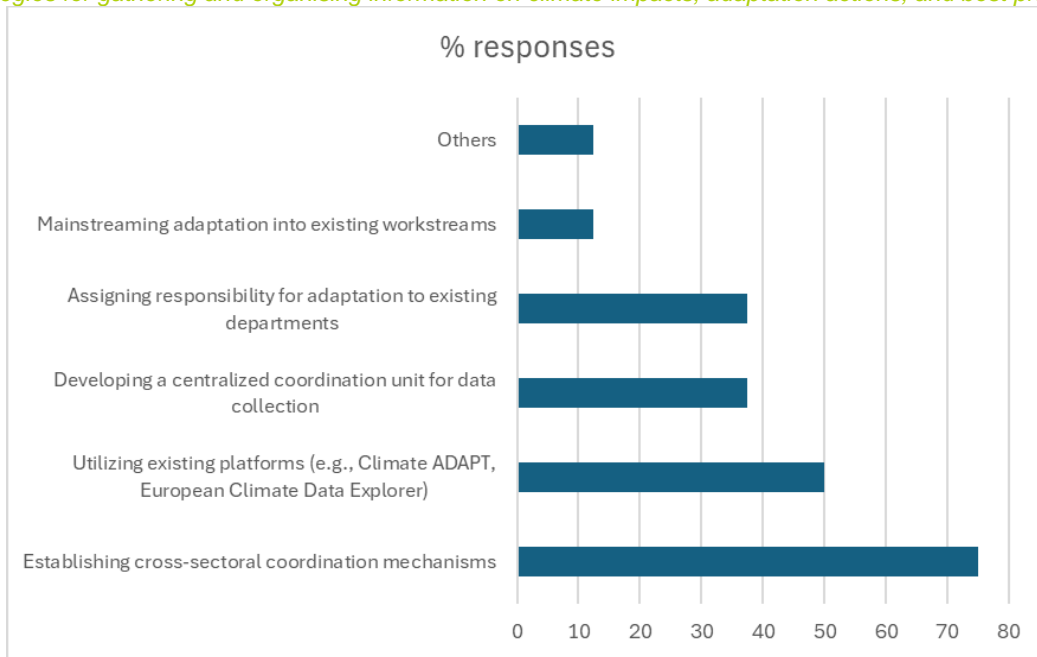
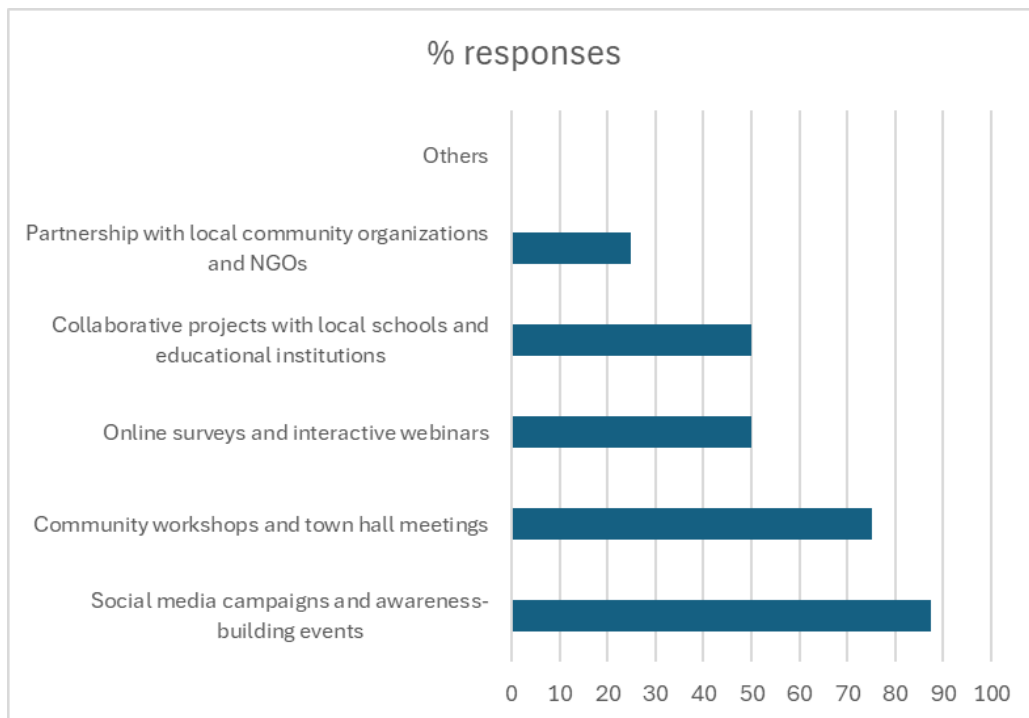


Figure 2. Strategies/tools/mechanisms for citizens engagement during the first step of preparing the ground for adaptation.



As lessons learnt for future events, it is worth mentioning that, despite the challenge of a low turnout attributed to the workshop's proximity to the holiday break period, the enthusiasm and active engagement of the participants who did attend underscored the importance of quality over quantity. Their eagerness to discuss, share, and learn from one another ultimately transformed the event into a smooth and successful experience.

#### 4. Feedback on the event

A satisfaction survey was issued after the event, receiving only one reply but gaining very valuable insights. The participant responded that several opportunities were given during this session to build a sense of Community they were very satisfied with the information exchange and content, the balance between presentations and discussions, the time available in the breakout sessions for participants to link and exchange experiences, and the facilitation of the breakout and Q&A sessions. Regarding improvements, the participant suggested presenters to mute sound on their Microsoft Teams, to avoid the sound of distracting incoming messages throughout the session.

Further feedback was also gathered during the event, while participants were still engaged. The audience was asked to answer two questions related to their main takeaways and usefulness of the session in order to discuss key adaptation topics with other Community of Practice members (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). We will continue to carry out this type of Slido to gather opinions and perceptions of key aspects of the Community of Practice in the upcoming events to feed into the feedback via the surveys.

Figure 3. Takeaways from the discussion of the session

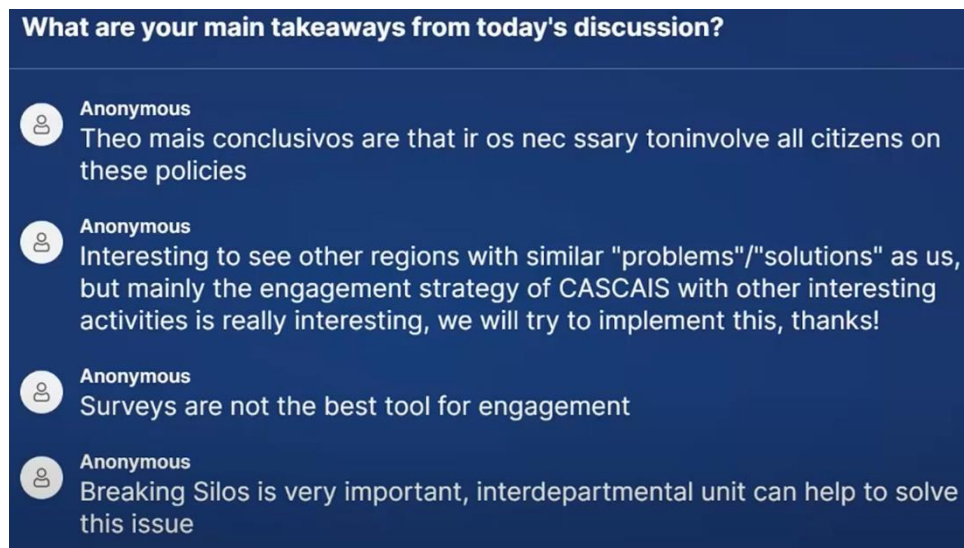
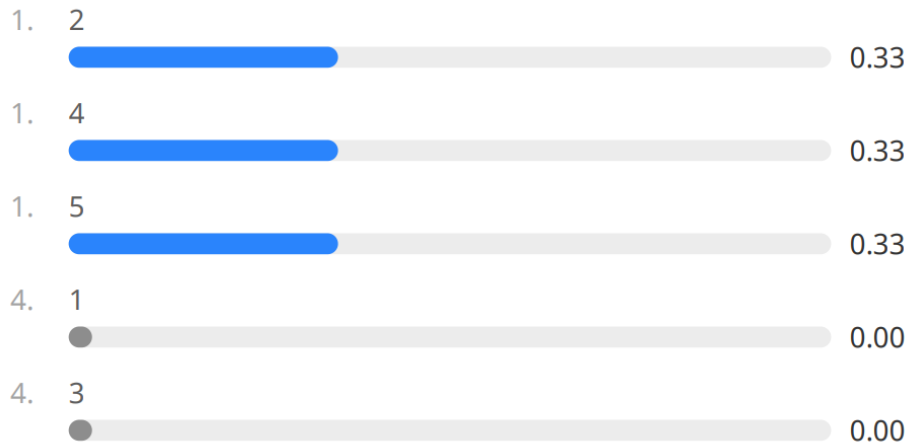


Figure 4. Feedback on the usefulness of this session in creating opportunities for discussion on adaptation

**To what extent does this event give you the opportunity to discuss key adaptation topics with other members of the Community of Practice?**

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## 5. Next steps

The recording, presentations, and a compilation of the questions received during the event with their specific answers were shared after the event via the online EU Mission Adaptation Community site by using the forum discussion: [Preparing the Ground for Adaptation](#). Furthermore, [six forum discussions](#) are open within the EU Mission Adaptation Community site, one for each step of the RAST. Charter Signatories and Friends of the Mission are invited to continue engaging via those forms to exchange experiences and practice within each step of the adaptation process.

Upcoming events include:

- 7 December 2023 – Spotting the risk of maladaptation together.
- 12 December 2023 – How to access private funds for Adaptation projects
- 13 December 2023 – Learning from each other: Identifying, assessing and selecting options

More information on the upcoming events can be found on the [EU Mission Adaptation Community site](#). For any queries from members of the Community of Practice on associated activities and events, specific concerns about your climate adaptation planning process, communications and press releases, and IT technical issues with the website, contact us via the [Helpdesk form](#).

# Annex

## 1. Agenda

Event Agenda
Welcome & opening remarks (10 min)
Sharing experience: Preparing the Ground for Adaptation (15 min)
Q&A (15 min)
Breakout session for sharing experiences (45 min)
Closing remarks (5 min)

## 2. Compilation of Q&A asked during the workshop

The answers to the questions compiled below come directly from Joao Dinis - Cascais, Portugal region - who delivered a presentation on his regional experience on Preparing the Ground for Adaptation.

### **How exactly have you ensured the involvement of key stakeholders?**

We made sure everyone was well informed of the plan that was being shared and the things that were being done.

In our plan, we made sure to organise sector-themed workshops to invite stakeholder representatives who are experienced and knowledgeable about the climate-impact sector (communication, civil protection, health, biodiversity, spatial and urban planning, water resources, etc.).

This approach allowed us to codesign our strategy alongside action-driven partners. This also ensured that the planning process was inclusive without unreasonable processes for our partners, thus accelerating the implementation stages.

### **Were there any vulnerable groups consulted in this process?**

The elderly and coastal communities were considered through their representation groups. These refer to social entities (non-profit organisations) that support social security policies at the local level. They are better connected with vulnerable communities through an extensive contact network.

In practice, we asked elderly centres and service providers for these groups to share their opinions about whether the proposed actions would effectively address the needs of the elderly population. Vulnerable groups must be considered as part of the Preparing the Ground for Adaptation process.

### **Do you have any tips on how to break silos to have cross-cutting approaches with stakeholders from different sectors?**

We would recommend sharing knowledge and responsibilities rather than working vertically. This was successful for us as the key actors were empowered – they felt comfortable sharing and working collaboratively.

You must meet with all stakeholders to ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in the plan's design, so everyone knows their part during the implementation. This ensures that the overall

engagement approach is feasible and pragmatic. Without this, you simply create lots of dialogues with little to no action.

Consider which language and approach is best to engage the different organisations in your plan and conduct regular meetings, workshops and a dialogue.

### **Has this engagement of a broad number of actors facilitated the political support of the plan throughout the last 15 years?**

We learned the importance of considering political engagement right from the start of the process. This is achieved by ensuring transparent information and potential “quick wins” to show the benefits of a new, horizontal, multi-sectorial approach, as it is an organisational change which needs support and patience. The initial version of the action plan was made by researchers 15 years ago, and it did not identify the actions or assign responsibility for them. The adaptation plan from 2017 is a whole different story. We had meetings every year to share the status of the plan, listen to the challenges our teams face when implementing actions and offer solutions or opportunities that could benefit them.

### **Besides citizens, how did you coordinate with other areas and entities from the local government?**

Primarily, we engaged with stakeholders in different sectors. For example, for security and civil protection, we spoke with the fire department, the police, and civil protection agencies. We identified the key stakeholders who share responsibility in action or information, and they were brought into the discussion. We asked them: ‘What do you have that is better than what we have?’ This helped ensure that their vision and knowledge were well integrated. This approach was shared across the different sectors.

By having this approach, we made sure they were aware of their value for climate resilience. Their ideas, projects, and responsibilities are to be taken seriously, and they add more benefits than were initially considered. This means their planned activities and ideas are more relevant due to their cross benefits than they could consider by working in silos.

### **Did you use any method/tools for engagement (e.g., surveys, workshops, etc.)?**

Workshops can be helpful if they are engaging and relevant to the audience. Other options include public engagement in the street. You can use arts, sports, and cultural activities to allow for a more extended dialogue. Sometimes, you need to think outside the box about your target audience.

One example is our “Cascais Smart Pole” project. This decarbonisation living lab encourages citizens to adopt new lifestyle choices to reduce their carbon footprint and understand our climate-resilient urban design (resilient green parks with less water and energy needs, more native species used, “sponge” areas for rainfall control, etc.).

These new ideas are better shared through creative engagement, such as art exhibitions in public spaces, sports and health group meetings in the park, and all those opportunities for productive, inspiring free time in the residential area.

In Cascais, we had poems, art exhibitions, yoga sessions, and themed discussions about resilient public space design. Using these methods, they were informed and engaged.

### **Were there any challenges related to citizen awareness of adaptation? If so, how have you overcome it?**

Overall, the citizen engagement process was fairly positive. We found that nature-based solutions or environmental activities were preferred by citizens.



One area of concern is 'misdirected activism' from people who are not well informed about climate action and are creating barriers to an effective dialogue. As climate change experts, we must create allies, empower people, and inform them of factual adaptation rhetoric.

We have a regular and extensive communication strategy where we organise workshops, public events, publications, art exhibitions, school activities, etc., just to ensure that we have a constant and informative voice out to the public. We empower teachers, professionals and citizens alike to replicate the knowledge within their daily activities or family/friend groups.

### **Can you give examples of involving the private sector in implementing the plan?**

We contacted the private sector for sponsorship during an art exhibition engagement project. Companies provided their opinion on how climate change events affect their business activity. These were interpreted as art and included in the exhibition with explanations.

We also engaged companies in awareness and training workshops to inform their staff of climate adaptation's benefits and opportunities, e.g., saving money and being a more active community member. You can leave a seed of knowledge in the companies so they can sprout new ideas and novel and more sustainable business models.