

# EU MISSIONS

ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

## **Briefing Note – Improving collaboration and experience sharing of citizen & stakeholder engagement approaches for Climate Adaptation**

Use of knowledge exchange and sharing platforms for citizen and stakeholder engagement, and lessons learned from European projects to support the Mission Community of Practice

May 2025

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## CONTENTS

<b>1. BACKGROUND</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE PLATFORMS FOR CITIZEN AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN CLIMATE ADAPTATION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. LESSONS LEARNED, TOOLS, AND EXAMPLES FOR CITIZEN AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.1. CASE STUDY 1: “Transformation Labs” - Empowering communities, improving resilience, and facilitating the co-creation of sustainable and locally tailored solutions across Europe</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.2. CASE STUDY 2: Mainstreaming NbS into engineering and urban planning</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.3. CASE STUDY 3: Basic governance schemes - Creating spaces to work transversally across community systems.</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.4. CASE STUDY 4: Engaging citizens in collecting and measuring data</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.5. CASE STUDY 5: Citizen engagement tools for working towards social &amp; climate resilience</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.6. CASE STUDY 6: Artificial Intelligence for Citizen Engagement</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>3.7. CASE STUDY 7: Integrating stakeholders into strategic decision-making - Adaptation AGORA Pilots</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4. SUMMARY/CONCLUSION</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Annex 1. How to use the Agora Community Hub</b>	<b>1</b>

## 1. BACKGROUND

### Background

Created by the participants of the Citizens and Stakeholder Thematic Working Group (TWG) this briefing note summarises the participants' experiences from diverse European projects working to engage citizens and stakeholders in Climate Adaptation.

This briefing note aims to:

- Share experiences on citizen and stakeholder engagement in Climate Adaptation from the TWG Projects.
- Share lessons learned from citizen and stakeholder engagement activities relevant to Regional and Local Authorities across Europe.
- Support and encourage the use of online platforms to share knowledge, improve efficiency in learning from others, and reduce duplication of efforts.
- Introduce the Agora Community Hub as a platform for discussions around sharing knowledge and experiences across the mission's network (<https://agoracommunity.org/knowledge-base/cities-and-climate-change/>), helping Projects, Regional and Local Authorities, and citizen groups to contribute to a European-wide “Catalogue of tools and platforms” (<https://agoracommunity.org/agora-explorer/>).

## 2. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE PLATFORMS FOR CITIZEN AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN CLIMATE ADAPTATION

### 2.1. Introduction to knowledge exchange platforms and their use to improve citizen and stakeholder engagement in Climate Adaptation in Europe

Here, we describe specifically three important resources, online platforms which will serve any RLA and citizen network learning about and engaging in Climate Adaptation.

Citizen and stakeholder engagement in projects has exponentially increased since the been developing since the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1993, the Rio Declaration included explicit goals of citizen participation and engagement in climate actions (Principle 10), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) came into force in 1994. Citizen and stakeholder engagement within projects is understood to

foster greater community resilience and responsiveness to climate change challenges and solutions, which in turn can lead to more efficient, effective, and equitable outcomes.

One key method that has been used to engage citizens and stakeholders in projects is through climate adaptation platforms (CAPs), or online knowledge platforms. Depending on the aim of the platform, CAPs can support citizens and stakeholders through various different methods including knowledge and capacity development, locating resources, and knowledge exchange.

## **2.2. Agora Community Hub**

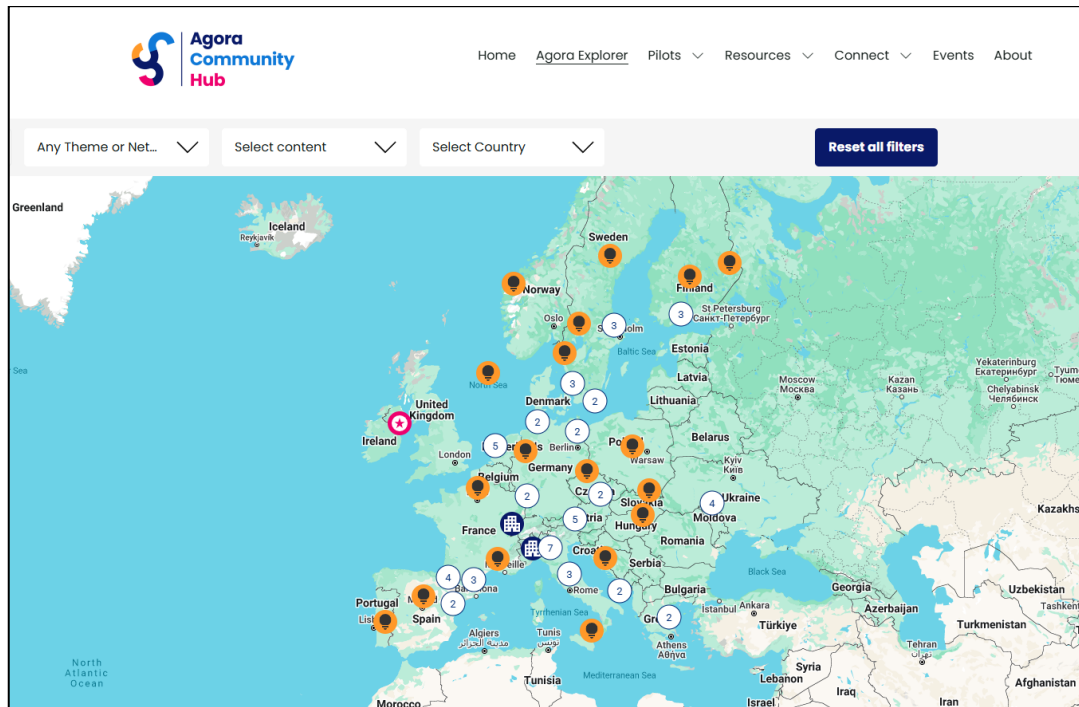
The Adaptation Agora project overall aims to support communities and regions participating in the Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change by leveraging and advancing best practices to effectively engage citizens and stakeholders in adaptation decision-making and action. The Agora Community Hub, created through the Adaptation Agora project, is a meeting point to empower local communities to share needs, knowledge and experiences on climate adaptation issues and solutions.

The co-design process for the Agora Community Hub started in 2023 and took place through workshops, including at ECCA 2023 and Adaptation Futures 2023, as well as collecting information through other avenues of the Agora project such as the four pilot case studies being conducted in Italy, Spain, Germany and Sweden and desk research. Feedback and inputs were incorporated into the design of the platform, which was then shared online in early 2024. For further in-detail information about the co-design process please see here: [Deliverable-D3.1-Guidance-on-design-and-implementation-of-the-in-person-Agora.pdf](#).

The Agora Community Hub is being updated iteratively throughout the timeline of the Adaptation AGORA Project (until December 2025) with features being updated and added. Key features of the Agora Community Hub include:

- [Agora Explorer Map](#) - find climate change adaptation activities and learn from them!

The Agora Explorer is an interactive map that allows users to discover climate change adaptation projects and activities by location. The map includes project information through articles, solutions, and case studies, as well as information on organizations and user profiles. Information can be produced and added in a synthesized format to allow for ease of use and understanding. Information can be added to the Agora Community Hub and the Agora Explorer map through a simple upload process. More information about this process can be found online and in the Annex below.



- [Discussion Forums](#) - connect with communities!

In order to connect with communities, practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders, the discussion forums are an open space to share information, thoughts, and ask questions. Feedback collected during the co-design of the Agora Community Hub, indicated that having an easy-to-use space to share information and have discussions was of interest to citizens and stakeholder, therefore the discussion forums were created to encourage users to ask questions, connect with others, and start conversations.

- [Events](#) - find out about upcoming events!

The Agora Community Hub includes a page on upcoming, and past, events. Users of the platform can share their event information and provide a summary of the event afterwards, to capitalize on increasing awareness of the event and the event highlights.

- [Platforms Page](#) - connect and find online climate change adaptation platforms!

The number of online platforms is increasing, and feedback from citizens and stakeholders through the co-design process indicated there was a lack of clarity on what platforms were available, where users could find information, and what platforms were still active. Consequently, the Agora Community Hub includes the “Platforms Page” to clearly connect users to online platforms focusing on climate change adaptation at local, national, and regional scales.

- Climate Adaptation Platform Network

To support knowledge exchange and sharing between platforms, the **Climate Adaptation Platform (CAP) webinar series** builds on the discussions and potential collaborations initiated in the KE4CAP network and during the [February 2024 webinar](#), which brought together EC-funded projects and CAPs. The first webinar identified key challenges and opportunities for fostering synergies and collaborations between EC projects and CAPs, the second webinar focused on how CAPs influence policy implementation, and the third webinar discussed the measurable impacts of CAPs. These discussions and webinars have highlighted the importance of continuing these dialogues within the right types of forums and engaging a broader community explores how CAPs can learn from each other and exchange information. The target audience for this webinar series includes platform owners and knowledge managers specifically.

### 2.3. Other key Climate Adaptation platforms

Other platforms often mentioned by consulted stakeholders include the [European Climate-ADAPT platform](#). Climate-ADAPT is an online platform, which provides access to information on Climate Adaptation, EU sector policies, and a database on Climate Adaptation which includes publications, research projects, guidance documents, tools, indicators, maps, graphs, datasets, organizations, information sources, measures and case studies, which support countries, cities and regions in their adaptation planning. The Agora Community Hub is different in that it focuses specifically on engaging citizens and supporting citizen and RLA networks in Climate Adaptation work. While the Agora Hub is currently linked to the Adaptation Agora Project, it is important to note that, following the end of the project, it will be transferred to [weADAPT](#) (also included in Climate-ADAPT) to ensure its legacy and continued use. weADAPT is a pioneering, user-led platform and network for climate change adaptation, working for over 15 years, it brings together a dynamic, global community of people and organizations involved with adaptation research, policy and practice. Beyond these platforms focused specifically on climate adaptation, there are also several networking and stakeholder associations worth mentioning, which can be useful for different purposes. For example, [ENRICH GLOBAL](#) is a not-for-profit, free-membership international association established in 2020 by 12 public and private organizations from around the world spanning over 40 countries. **The ENRICH GLOBAL Collaboration Platform (EGCP)** is a customizable one-stop shop for any **community of stakeholders**, whether project-related or not. This Community of Practice serves for exchanging knowledge and best practices, which strengthens collaboration among its diverse membership and fosters strategic alliances. The network includes Thematic Groups on Climate

Change and Sustainability, Health Innovation, Digital Innovation, and Thriving cities and community resilience, which bring together members of the association, experts and world-class actors, contributing to international research, innovation, and business collaboration, who share the vision to provide a unique collaborative platform based on best internationalisation practices.

### 3. LESSONS LEARNED, TOOLS, AND EXAMPLES FOR CITIZEN AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

#### 3.1. CASE STUDY 1: “Transformation Labs” - Empowering communities, improving resilience, and facilitating the co-creation of sustainable and locally tailored solutions across Europe

Addressing climate resilience necessitates a transformative shift towards a just transition in our societies. **The Natalie project establishes Transformation Labs (TLs) as a mechanism to integrate local knowledge from stakeholders and facilitate the co-creation of solutions across eight diverse Demonstration Sites.** Through this approach, the framework for implementing Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) is co-created to effectively mitigate climate change hazards. The TLs have been established in Greece, Romania, Latvia, Spain (Gran Canaria), Belgium (Flanders), France, Iceland, and Italy to empower communities, improve resilience, and facilitate the co-creation of sustainable and locally tailored solutions. Here we share lessons learned from the project, across these eight European countries.

The co-creation process has been structured within a comprehensive framework consisting of five phases. This structured approach ensures an integrated transformation within local communities, facilitating scalability and contributing to a more climate-resilient society.

- Currently, the project has completed **Phase 1: The Diagnosis, as part of the co-creation journey.** Phase 1 focuses on initiating stakeholder engagement, validating the vision of climate-related hazards at each site, exploring potential NBS options, and defining the primary objectives of the co-creation. The overarching goal is to establish a shared understanding of local priorities for implementing NBS to effectively tackle climate challenges. During the initial phase (Diagnosis), the eight sites hosted the Diagnosis Workshop (WS1), along with other tailored actions adapted to each case study.
- The co-creation ideas generated in Phase 1 serve as the foundation for next **Phase 2: Design & Visioning.** This next phase focuses on developing a collective vision for the

demonstration sites and formulating an action plan to implement the identified co-creation actions within the framework of the project.

- **Phase 3 is the Developing** stage, which allows co-implementation of the actions previously identified on the context of the NBS pilots.
- **Phase 4: Sustainability** ensures the assessment and long-term sustainability of the process and discussing the readiness level for NBS further replication.
- The last and transversal stage is **Phase 5: Social Assessment Framework**, which integrates co-creation and creates a framework for assessing stakeholder inclusion and representation of different views.

The direct outcomes of the first phase entail the identification of joint co-creation actions that vary from case to case (e.g. creation of cross-sectoral governance groups, creation of educational plans in relation to NBs in schools and institutes, etc.). These actions will be implemented in the following phases.

In addition to the direct outcomes in phase 1, these workshops have also fostered unexpected yet valuable synergies, such as the development of new relationships that may support long-term cooperation among stakeholders. This demonstrates the far-reaching impact of co-creation, which extends beyond the formal framework of the project itself. The process has highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing as a catalyst for sustained collaboration and innovation. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that this process is inherently complex. Each phase, particularly those involving stakeholder workshops, required higher doses of flexibility and adaptability, meticulous planning, and coordination—both internally and externally. Selecting the most suitable timing for workshops is essential to ensure high attendance and active participation. This first phase has underscored the need to carefully balance project timelines with stakeholders' availability, a key factor for the success of future activities.

You can read more about the Natalie methodology [here](#).

### **3.2. CASE STUDY 2: Mainstreaming NbS into engineering and urban planning**

The NATURE-DEMO project ([www.nature-demo.eu](http://www.nature-demo.eu)) aims to mainstream NbS as alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to **protect European critical infrastructure from intensifying climate-driven hazards**. These solutions harness natural systems and processes to provide effective hazard protection while **delivering multiple co-benefits for biodiversity and**

**communities.** NATURE-DEMO acknowledges that effective climate NbS adaptation requires deep stakeholder engagement, especially with those who manage and depend on critical infrastructure. Hence, **the project directly engaged over 20 stakeholders across its 14 European participating countries in multiple sectors (highways, railways, power, municipal government) to ensure that proposed solutions address real-world challenges and fit within existing institutional frameworks.** This stakeholder-centered approach creates pathways for implementation that might otherwise be blocked by financial, technical, or regulatory barriers.

NATURE-DEMO has **developed a structured four-theme interview methodology specifically designed to bridge the gap between ecological science and infrastructure management practice.** This approach systematically maps climate risks, identifies decision factors, gauges current NbS awareness, and uncovers implementation barriers. The **primary audience includes infrastructure managers, municipal authorities, and policymakers who make critical decisions about hazard protection investments.** For regional and local authorities, the **NATURE-DEMO findings highlight several critical insights,** such as:

1. Infrastructure resilience requires understanding complex impact pathways that affect both physical systems and users – NbS can address multiple vulnerabilities simultaneously.
2. Decision-makers need specific information about costs, effectiveness, and co-benefits of NbS to make informed comparisons with traditional engineering approaches.
3. Knowledge gaps and risk perceptions around NbS remain significant barriers – authorities should invest in capacity building and technical expertise development.
4. Regulatory frameworks and financing mechanisms often unintentionally favor traditional solutions – policy adjustments may be needed to create a level playing field for NbS.
5. Cross-departmental collaboration is essential, as NbS often deliver benefits beyond infrastructure protection that align with broader sustainability goals in environment, health, and social well-being.

A key emphasis of the NATURE-DEMO project is its practical demonstration of NbS implementation across diverse European sites. **These demonstrators serve as living laboratories where stakeholders can witness firsthand how NbS perform under real-world conditions and varying climate hazards.** Also, the project offers a comprehensive Catalogue of NbS for Climate Resilient Infrastructures and incorporates lessons from these demonstrations alongside stakeholder input. This will provide infrastructure managers with detailed technical

specifications, implementation guidance, cost-benefit analyses, and financing models tailored to different geographical and institutional contexts. Through these insights, NATURE-DEMO helps stakeholders by creating a robust framework for scaling NbS adoption across Europe's critical infrastructure networks, ultimately contributing to the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change's goal of making Europe climate-resilient by 2030.

### **3.3. CASE STUDY 3: Basic governance schemes - Creating spaces to work transversally across community systems.**

The TransformAr project ([transformar.eu](http://transformar.eu)) began working in 2021 in the development of six adaptive region-specific portfolios alongside stakeholders. Starting from the Horizon 2020 Green Deal call but already looking towards the EU Mission on Climate Adaptation, the challenge was twofold: to bridge research and practice, and to validate a Multi-Actor Approach for 21 key community systems. TransformAr succeeded in keeping stakeholders engaged using a bottom-up governance structure for co-creation that empowered local partners while remaining flexible to leverage the project diversity.

To create adequate conditions for the joint development of solutions, TransformAr divided its partners into a technical and a geographical **dimension**, establishing **procedures** to further level the playing field in favour of the local actors. This measure solidified the mindset required for co-creation and prevented exhaustion. Crucially, a **broker** figure was introduced to find a consensus on this methodology and foster its adoption in the six lighthouse demonstrators in Finland, the United Kingdom, France, Greece, Italy and Spain.

As the partners incorporated the Multi-Actor Approach and focused on delivering the solutions, the initial framework was gradually relaxed. This was done to make room for new measures supporting **best practices**, more reliable tracking of all the activities involving stakeholders, and shifting towards the long-term sustainability of the climate adaptation. The governance structure proved effective, but additional dimensions needed to be incorporated as TransformAr received feedback from local actors, sister projects Arsinoe, Impetus and Regilience, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), or the Mission Implementation Platform (MIP4Adapt).

Remaining flexible came at the cost of more time dedicated to individually track, harmonise and assess the performance of the demonstrators, and should not be taken lightly. In that regard, reflective mechanisms needed to be introduced, and **consultations** to stakeholders refined and directed towards actual demands. At the end of the process, demonstrators need to be able to self-assess their outcomes, allocate resources efficiently, and make informed decisions; plus, any

kind of **index** must offer comparable evidence of their progress so that the local actors can partner to advance quicker or to compensate for what they lack.

However, what was lost in terms of quantifying outcomes allowed for a richer perspective on the capacities and needs of all six demonstrators. It was no longer a balancing act; co-creation of solutions was tied to the access to facilitators, the knowledge pool and the existence, or absence, of a common agenda at the local or regional level. These dimensions could not simply be ignored, for the implementation of the solutions depends on the **continuity** of the demonstrator beyond TransformAr and the artificial conditions it set. The stakeholders must receive signals on where climate adaptation is leading to, and which **coalitions** exist to iterate or expand the portfolio of solutions even if lacking external inputs.

All these elements -dimensions, figures, procedures and tools- conform the legacy of TransformAr: the first of a series of **Transformational Adaptation Blocks** that contain not only the region-specific portfolio, but the methodologies that led to them. Specifically, the Multi-Actor Approach was developed into an Interactive Innovation Index, an in-depth companion to the DIY Manual crafted by MIP4Adapt.

Finally, the TransformAr project has also launched a **Citizen Engagement App to Enhance Climate Awareness**. The **Citizen Engagement App (CAP)** is a cutting-edge digital tool designed to increase climate awareness and encourage public participation and is being trialed in **Egaleo, Greece, developed in collaboration with the Municipality of Egaleo** and NCSR “DEMOKRITOS”. If you want to know more about this app, please find the link [here](#).

### **3.4. CASE STUDY 4: Engaging citizens in collecting and measuring data**

OCEANIDS aims to enhance awareness and promote sustainable practices for a resilient and inclusive blue economy in coastal regions. Central to the project is **collecting and managing climate change knowledge** from diverse sources, made accessible through the **OCEANIDS Platform**. **This platform supports regional authorities and stakeholders in developing local adaptation strategies and empowers citizens** by fostering engagement through deliberation platforms, recommendations, filtering, and operational practices. By integrating inclusive governance tools such as local citizens’ assemblies and social networks, OCEANIDS ensures bottom-up participation and a culture of civic engagement. The project’s emphasis on knowledge sharing and scalable solutions positions it to have a lasting impact on coastal resilience and

adaptation efforts well beyond 2030. You can learn more about the project here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yN4r\\_JOLYxA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yN4r_JOLYxA).

### **3.5. CASE STUDY 5: Citizen engagement tools for working towards social & climate resilience**

Regional and local authorities play a crucial role in building social and climate resilience. Citizen Engagement Toolboxes can play a key role in supporting decision-makers, by providing a set of strategies, digital platforms, and participatory methods designed to involve communities in decision-making and action towards climate resilience and adaptation. They can be used to support the organization of participatory events such as town halls, social events (e.g. Climate Festivals) and citizen science projects. Here we describe methodologies taken from leading Citizen and Stakeholder Engagement Toolboxes and methodologies.

#### **In focus: Climate Assemblies**

Climate change is one of the most urgent challenges today, with significant social, environmental, and economic consequences expected in the near future. Recent climate-related events demonstrate that the efforts of policymakers, experts, and stakeholders alone are insufficient, making broad citizen participation essential. Climate assemblies and living labs are emerging as effective and sustainable approaches to strengthening deliberative democracy in climate policymaking.

Climate Assemblies provide a structured, inclusive space for citizens to engage directly in climate adaptation discussions. By involving diverse voices, they increase public trust in decision-making, ensuring that policies are not just expert-driven but reflect societal concerns and priorities and help design **more acceptable and actionable policies**, reducing resistance and enhancing long-term implementation. Effective climate adaptation also requires cooperation between governments, businesses, scientists, and local communities. Climate Assemblies facilitate dialogue among these groups, breaking silos and fostering co-created solutions that integrate scientific expertise with community needs.

The ambition of the CLIMAS project is to support a transformation to climate resilience by offering an innovative problem-oriented climate adoption Toolbox, co-designed together with stakeholders by applying a values-based approach, design thinking methods and citizen science mechanisms. All that will be carried out with a gender and diversity approach. It is expected that the use of the Toolbox will anticipate possible tensions, points of controversy and dilemmas vis-a-vis the adaptation to resilience. The process begins with understanding diverse needs in Living Labs, followed by co-creating and testing the CLIMAS tools with Climate Assembly organizers and stakeholders. CLIMAS has already supported and tested these

tools in Climate Assemblies in Catalunya, Riga, and Edermünde, where participants shared valuable insights.

The toolbox includes practical tools for every step of the process of implementing a Climate Assembly, such as:

- a. Citizen Scenario Building Tool** which helps citizens imagine future scenarios, plan actions, and decide who should be involved to make the vision a reality.
- b. Guidelines & Manual with practical tips for organizing Climate Assemblies**, including planning, budgeting, choosing venues, and training facilitators.
- c. Citizen Science Tool** which explains how to use citizen input to identify issues, improve knowledge sharing, and monitor outcomes.
- d. Scenario Prioritization Tool** which supports weighing the pros and cons of different future scenarios by considering both citizen and expert input.
- e. Follow-Up Tool** which tracks outcomes and ensures adaptation plans stay updated.
- f. Knowledge Support Tool** which helps set Climate Assembly agendas by selecting relevant topics.
- g. Multilingual Portal** which provides access to resources, platforms, and information to guide Climate Assembly efforts.

With these tools, the CLIMAS Toolbox aims to empower professionals and public authorities to take steps towards creating a well-designed and meaningful dialogue with citizens.

Every stage of the research done within CLIMAS concluded with the fact that interest in engagement stakeholders and citizens is very high in Europe. Public authorities acknowledge the fact that stakeholders and citizens need to be involved in designing and implementing solutions that will address the climate goals. Climate Assemblies is already a tool that some of the cities across Europe already use and many consider using. However, the actual value of a Climate Assembly may transcend the political acceptance; their value could be measured in the way the community contributed to the changes required to meet the climate goals. Organizing Climate Assemblies involves a comprehensive and inclusive approach to engaging citizens. The public authorities' role as facilitators of the dialogue between all stakeholders, including citizens and decision/policymakers is crucial and the CLIMAS project is working to build on this understanding in the development of future tools and wider recommendations.

All progress of the CLIMAS project is updated and can be followed on the website:

<https://www.climas-project.eu/>. You can find some examples of Climate Assemblies in action here:

1. Catalan Climate Assembly (Spain); <https://www.climas-project.eu/the-catalan-climate-assembly-appraisals-and-learnings/>

2. Riga Climate Assembly (Latvia); <https://www.climas-project.eu/riga-citizens-climate-assembly-just-kicked-off/>
3. Climate Assembly Edermünde (Germany): <https://www.climas-project.eu/a-climate-assembly-in-edermunde/>

### **In focus: GREENGAGE Observatories**

GREENGAGE Observatories serve as collaborative spaces for learning, narrative change-making, and decision-making. Through multi-stakeholder collaboration—including citizens, researchers, technology providers, and planning agents—these observatories address social, economic, and environmental challenges using technology-driven participatory scientific observation. **The observatories function as community-based environmental monitoring and information systems, focusing on data collection and validation through Citizen Science (CS) campaigns.** By engaging local communities as active participants in data gathering and analysis, GREENGAGE ensures that evidence-based policymaking integrates citizen perspectives. The initiative mobilizes diverse societal groups, from marginalized rural communities in Italy facing depopulation to young urban citizens in the UK and professional expatriates in the Netherlands, ensuring a broad and inclusive approach to climate adaptation governance. The [GREENGAGE Project](#) currently has Five Innovation Pilots around Europe, in Bristol (UK), Copenhagen (Denmark), Gerace (Italy), Turano (Italy) and North Brabant (The Netherlands). It's important that each training programme is tailored to the local socio-ecological context.



Findings from GREENGAGE pilots demonstrate that citizen-generated data can strengthen public policy engagement by providing tangible, evidence-based contributions to climate adaptation strategies. These insights highlight the need for flexible governance models, ensuring that citizen science initiatives contribute to long-term planning. The project showcases how technology and storytelling methodologies can be leveraged to foster citizen involvement in climate adaptation, supporting participatory governance frameworks that enhance policy impact at the local, regional, and national levels.

### **In focus: DIY Manual**

The Do it yourself (DIY) manual on is a key tool for mobilising and engaging stakeholders and citizens in climate change adaptation planning and implementation. It summarizes many of the approaches mentioned in this Briefing Note, and provides a step-by-step guide for Regional and Local Authorities to seek guidance on engaging citizen and stakeholder in climate action. This practical guide offering tools, activities, and examples to inspire inclusive strategies and guide users through relevant participatory activities involving stakeholders and citizens in all climate adaptation planning cycle steps, as outlined in the Regional Adaptation Support Tool (RAST). You can find the latest version of the DIY Manual here: <https://climate->

[adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/mission/news/news/new-diy-manual-empowers-local-authorities-to-boost-citizen-engagement-in-climate-adaptation](https://adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/mission/news/news/new-diy-manual-empowers-local-authorities-to-boost-citizen-engagement-in-climate-adaptation)

### 3.6. CASE STUDY 6: Artificial Intelligence for Citizen Engagement

The use of 'big data' and Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a tool to support citizen engagement in climate action is growing (UNFCCC 2024<sup>1</sup>, World Economic Forum<sup>2</sup>). In Climate Adaptation specifically, it's important that frameworks and agreed processes are established and tested to support decision-makers and authorities use these tools safely and effectively. NEUROCLIMA, a European project (2024-2026) funded by Horizon Europe, is working towards establishing processes, frameworks, services & interfaces for the support and establishment of systemic transformations and citizen engagement towards climate resilience, based on innovative truly mixed Human-AI decision support. The project is designed to enhance citizen engagement in climate adaptation and resilience using open-source, explainable, and accountable AI. The project prioritizes participatory design, leveraging creative writing, storytelling, and interactive toolkits to make climate knowledge more accessible, actionable, and engaging for diverse audiences. Through interdisciplinary research teams, the project applies rigorous data selection methods, verifying sources to guarantee accuracy and trustworthiness. This approach ensures that citizens, policymakers, and stakeholders have access to fact-based climate knowledge, preventing the spread of misleading or manipulative narratives. One of the outputs of NEUROCLIMA will be an AI-powered e-participation platform composed of a participatory deliberation platform (NEUROCLIMA Dialogues) where citizens, experts, and policymakers can discuss and co-create policies and solutions in climate adaptation.

The AI driven tools to support citizen engagement in climate adaptation will be tested in two pilot areas throughout 2026. Look out for results and learn more about the project here:

<https://neuroclima.eu/>

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<sup>1</sup>

[https://unfccc.int/tclear/misc\\_/StaticFiles/gnwoerk\\_static/AI4climateaction/ea0f2596d93640349b9b65f4a7c7dd24/b47ef0e99cb24e57aa9ea69f0f5d6a71.pdf](https://unfccc.int/tclear/misc_/StaticFiles/gnwoerk_static/AI4climateaction/ea0f2596d93640349b9b65f4a7c7dd24/b47ef0e99cb24e57aa9ea69f0f5d6a71.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2022/11/how-artificial-intelligence-can-prepare-us-for-climate-adaptation/>

### 3.7. CASE STUDY 7: Integrating stakeholders into strategic decision-making - Adaptation AGORA Pilots

As the impacts of climate change intensify across Europe, the need to understand and strengthen local adaptive capacity has become increasingly urgent. Climate-related risks are affecting communities across environmental, social, and economic dimensions, often in complex and region-specific ways. Particularly, it was evidenced that there was a lack of interaction between stakeholders, which constitutes a limitation to the approaches that can be undertaken. The “silos” approach may limit the possibility to share knowledge and insights between sectors, stakeholder groups and target audiences, and it does not allow data and information to flow directly into the decision-makers sphere. These limitations, together with potential methodologies that can help overcome them, are currently a key element for decision-makers around the world in order to create integrated solutions for climate change adaptation (Leiren and Kacobsen, 2018<sup>3</sup>; Di Marino *et al.*, 2023<sup>4</sup>; Global Agricultural Innovation Network - CGIAR, 2024).

To address these challenges, the Adaptation AGORA project aims to develop participatory tools and approaches that support local authorities, stakeholders, and citizens in co-designing equitable, effective, and context-sensitive adaptation strategies. This was carried out in a multidimensional framework where 4 distinct geographical areas were selected based on the unique characteristics and cultural aspects of the stakeholders, to ensure the citizen engagement methodologies could be tested and validated. The four Pilots then integrate medium-size cities in northern and southern European countries (Dresden, DE; Malmö, SE; Zaragoza city and the Matarraña rural region, ES) and one country-capital and metropolitan area (Rome, Italy). In these four living laboratories, representatives from local communities, decision-makers, investors, academia, civil society associations and media were involved, as well as members from the partner institutions of the Adaptation AGORA consortium.

In this framework, the different target audiences were integrated into an initial workshop that served as critical entry points for engaging with local actors, diagnosing context-specific climate impacts, and identifying key adaptive challenges and opportunities. The participatory approach employed in each pilot allowed for the co-production of knowledge and highlighted both systemic gaps and existing community strengths that can be leveraged in adaptation planning. The

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<sup>3</sup> Leiren, M. D., & Jacobsen, J. Kr. S. (2018). Silos as barriers to public sector climate adaptation and preparedness: insights from road closures in Norway. *Local Government Studies*, 44(4), 492–511. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2018.1465933>

<sup>4</sup> Di Marino, M., Cucca, R., Thaler, T., & Bügelmayer-Blaschek, M. (2023). Interlinking the silos: How to stimulate a new debate on more greenery in cities. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 87, 128065. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2023.128065>

workshops tried to provide tailored solutions to local communities, through a bottom-up approach, in contrast to previous literature approaches, where a top-down approach is considered generally.

Local communities reached and established during the activities of the four Pilots were the starting point of co-creation activities to jointly evaluate a database of innovative mechanisms and approaches for involving citizens in climate change adaptation identified in a previous task within the Adaptation AGORA project and that are available in the [Zenodo Community](#). These helped to initiate a discussion with relevant stakeholders, to better understand how the cities can adapt to the climate change, to better identify the target groups and to understand at local level the priorities and the topics to be discussed further in Focus Group activities and a Final Workshop. In all these stages, local decision-makers of the four cities and regions were also involved, being able to directly listen and understand the concerns and receive proposals directly from citizens.

As these experiences can be valuable for other decision-makers and regions wishing to further engage their citizens, the Adaptation AGORA gathered interest from other stakeholders who have signed letters of endorsement and act as “followers” of the four Pilots. By testing citizen engagement methodologies with integrated multidisciplinary stakeholders, the followers have been able to obtain direct information regarding the results from each of the workshops and focus group activities. Furthermore, some followers requested direct consultation with the Adaptation AGORA country-specific team to understand how they could replicate the citizen engagement activities in their own geographical frameworks.

The discussion that took place in these living labs revolved around four core themes: climate change impacts, vulnerability assessments, gaps in adaptive capacity, and potential solutions. In spite of the regional differences, a general lack of knowledge and awareness about climate risks was identified, together with limited social support mechanisms, and a shared need for clear leadership, improved communication, and more inclusive governance frameworks. This has contributed to expand the applicability of the results and frameworks where the identified tools can create a positive outcome in involving citizens in climate change adaptation strategies and plans.

Although there are geographical and climatic differences between the four pilot regions, it was evidenced that there are several common key climate change challenges. Firstly, all Pilots are exposed to increasing average temperatures with more intense and frequent heat waves. This is a growing concern in all the regions studied within the Adaptation AGORA project. Other common elements included increasing water scarcity, and extreme weather events are the most pressing

concerns across the pilot areas. In cities less accustomed to extreme heat, such as Malmö and Dresden, heatwaves are already causing reduced labour productivity and exacerbating health risks. In Rome, Zaragoza, and Dresden, water dependency and stress were identified as significant vulnerabilities. These climate pressures are compounded by structural and social issues, such as ageing populations, rural depopulation, urban overcrowding, growing social and economic inequalities, and building stock poorly suited to a changing climate.

Additionally, stakeholders identified as adaptive capacity gaps a generalized knowledge deficit on climate-related risks, socioeconomic inequalities, infrastructure limitations, insufficient stakeholder engagement, and fragmented governance. These gaps are combined with a general perception that climate adaptation is approached reactively, addressing risks when they materialize instead of long-term prevention plans. Lastly, stakeholders perceive there is a weak coordination across governance levels, which from their feedback results in inconsistent policy implementation and unclear responsibilities.

## **Similarities and Differences Between the regions**

### Similarities:

- Climate risks such as heatwaves, flooding, and drought were widespread across all sites.
- Social vulnerability and inequality emerged as cross-cutting concerns, particularly affecting older people, low-income households, and marginalised communities.
- Adaptation gaps—including lack of funding, fragmented governance, and limited community engagement—were frequently cited.
- A shared recognition of the value of nature-based solutions and the need to scale them up was evident.

### Differences:

- Malmö and Dresden prioritised urban adaptation challenges, particularly related to UHI effects and infrastructure stress, whereas Valderrobres focused on rural forest management and community resilience.
- Rome highlighted the interplay between climate impacts and cultural heritage, as well as hydrogeological and coastal risks.
- Aragón region underscored the impacts of desertification and agricultural vulnerability, revealing stark contrasts between urban and rural adaptation capacities.
- Engagement levels varied, with rural pilots encountering greater difficulties in participation due to demographic and geographic barriers.

In all cities, urban infrastructure is struggling to adapt to changing climate conditions with flooding and heat stress damaging roads, bridges, and buildings. Zaragoza and Dresden emphasize the need for sustainable urban planning and green infrastructure to mitigate heat and flooding risks. These results were integrated and discussed throughout 2024 with three focus group activities being developed in each of the Pilots, focusing on obtaining input from specific target groups: workers who live and commute within the studied geographical areas, multiethnic communities living in these regions and young adults (living, studying and/or working in each Pilot). By discussing the results from the inception workshop with each target audience it was possible to identify better ways to engage each type of stakeholder, together with integrating their valuable knowledge and generating networking opportunities. Throughout the experiences of the Adaptation AGORA project, a set of protocols to carry out focus group activities were created, which are also available in the project's Zenodo Community and were shared with the Pilot's decision-makers as well as follower regions and stakeholders.

During the first quarter of 2025, final workshops were held in each of the Pilot regions, once again addressing climate change impacts, vulnerability assessments, gaps in adaptive capacity, and potential solutions, in this case focusing on this last element. Stakeholders were integrated, mixing the valuable knowledge that each target group could provide to the mix, co-creating and co-evaluating the potential solutions. Participants were also encouraged to consider the degree of success of each of them in the short, medium and long term, as well as providing additional input they considered valuable for decision-makers to have. The participating authorities were highly satisfied with having the opportunity to directly engage with stakeholders, as well as these individuals feeling a greater sense of integration into the future reality of the cities in which they live. This increased the trust level and raised awareness on the risks that each Pilot region is facing.

The Adaptation AGORA project has in parallel addressed two key elements that can contribute to increased citizen engagement: the dissemination of knowledge and the analysis of the policies and legal framework. Because of this, the project created digital tools including the previously mentioned Agora Community Hub, the [Climate Data Risks and Tools Academy](#), the [Climate Change Disinformation Academy](#) and the Adaptation AGORA Quiz Mobile Phone App as a set of elements that can help disseminate

knowledge, best practices, raise awareness and engage citizens in participating actively in finding solutions to the climate related challenges. The Academies and the App are currently going through iteration processes receiving feedback from users in order to enrich and fine-tune the content.

## 4. SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

We have presented here an overview of key knowledge sharing platforms RLAs can use to be better informed and share ideas around engaging citizens and stakeholder in climate adaptation strategies. We also present key advances and case studies from European projects working within the EU Mission on Climate Adaptation, which can serve as examples for other RLAs to design and implement their engagement strategies. We conclude with three recommendations:

- **Continue to Enhance Citizen and Stakeholder Engagement in Climate Adaptation:** EU, regional, and local authorities should actively support and promote citizen and stakeholder engagement in climate adaptation in order to successfully implement climate adaptation which is sustainable and include of all community groups. We see evidence of clear advances and innovative engagement methodologies being designed and championed across European projects.
- **Strengthen, Utilize and Sustain Knowledge Exchange Platforms:** RLAs should utilize existing long-term climate adaptation platforms, specifically those aimed at collecting and sharing knowledge related to citizen and community engagement, like the Agora community Hub. These platforms facilitate knowledge exchange, increase awareness, and encourage community-driven solutions, leading to more effective and inclusive climate adaptation policies. These knowledge platforms can also be used to analyse how project and research work are integrating into existing policy frameworks and funding mechanisms. They should also be promoted as a way of supporting community-driven climate adaptation strategies.
- **Encourage Cross-Sectoral Collaboration and Effectively Share Resources:** Regional and local authorities should actively participate in knowledge-sharing networks, such as the Climate Adaptation Platform (CAP) webinar series and the [EU Mission Adaptation to Climate Change Community of Practice](#), to foster cross-sectoral and transnational collaborations. Engaging in these discussions can help authorities learn

from best practices, align local adaptation strategies with European-level initiatives, and enhance the effectiveness of climate resilience efforts across regions. We also highlight the importance of removing duplication of effort and facilitating the use of knowledge platforms by RLAs. Scientists, practitioners, academics and community groups should continue to communicate, and platform leaders should strive for coordination and collaborations between platforms like Climate-ADAPT, weADAPT, and the Agora Community Hub to enhance synergies, prevent duplication of efforts, and maximize the impact of shared resources.

## Annex 1. How to use the Agora Community Hub

### Agora Explorer Map

The Agora Explorer is a map showing different projects that have been shared on the Agora Community.

The Agora Explorer provides clear information by location, allowing users to see and identify projects that have been shared online, based on their location.

To navigate the Project Explorer you can:

- Zoom in on different locations and click the icons on the map to bring up networks, solutions, or projects that have been shared. You can zoom using your mouse or the + and – buttons on the left hand side of the map.
- Filter by different categories highlighted above the Project Explorer map, including by theme and network, content available, or country.
- Search for keywords to highlight/filter the information on the map that is relevant.
- If you do not want to view this as a map, you can view the content as a list by clicking the 'View as list' button above the map.

### Contributing to the Agora Explorer

Once you are familiar with the Agora Explorer you may want to include your project!

To add a project, organisation or event, you will need to complete an article, case study, organisation or event form. To do this, please follow the steps below:

1. Log in to the website (you will need to register first via the sign in button in the top right hand corner – see steps below);
2. Click on 'Share' or 'New' in the top bar of the website, and then click on the piece of content you would like to add (e.g. Article, Case Study, Blog or Event)
3. Fill out the forms available under the different sections.
4. Once completed please click 'Submit' and the project will go through a review process before being uploaded.

For further information on contributing to the Agora Explorer, please see the Agora Community Hub guidance: [Agora Guidance - Agora](#)