



Study to support the Evaluation of the EU Adaptation Strategy

Final report

Appendix 2A Consultation synopsis





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1 Outline of the consultation strategy

The current EU Adaptation Strategy¹ was published in April 2013. The Strategy commits to delivering three objectives, through the implementation of eight actions. The Strategy also has a strong focus on sector aspects as well as actions taken at different levels (e.g. international, EU, national and sub-national action).

As indicated in the Strategy, in 2017 *“the European Commission will report to the European Parliament and the Council on the state of implementation of the EU Adaptation Strategy, and propose its review, if needed”*. Hence, to assess and measure the progress made since 2013 and to prepare the ground for the possible review of the Strategy, an evaluation is needed. This study provides support to the evaluation of the Strategy, examining its implementation and performance.

The aim of the stakeholder consultation in relation to the EU Adaptation Strategy evaluation was to draw upon existing evidence to deliver a high quality and credible evaluation study by allowing interested parties to provide their feedback and experiences of implementing the Strategy thus far. This included identifying specific case studies or further evidence, lessons learned, knowledge, financing and capacity gaps, obstacles and factors of success, and suggestions for improvement.

In the context of the EU Adaptation Strategy evaluation, a broad scope for the stakeholder consultation was necessary to ensure that all relevant and interested stakeholders were given an opportunity to express their opinions and to contribute to the evaluation.

The consultation strategy was published in 2017². The consultation methods and tools outlined in the strategy have been followed, as described in more detail in the following sections.

2 Consultation activities

A targeted stakeholder survey was run from July to August 2017. This aimed to gather data not available from published literature. This was available in English and comprised multiple choice and free text questions. The questionnaire was structured so that respondents could focus on the action or actions under the Strategy that were of primary interest to them.

Interviews were held through 43 interviews with about 50 stakeholders who had been actively involved in different aspects of implementation of the Strategy. A total of 35 of the interviews were based round scripts for each of the eight actions, which included questions relating to the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value. Respondents could choose to respond on one or on more actions and could choose the questions on which they wished to focus. A further eight interviews contributed to development of four case studies. These are on:

- Fire preparedness and the impact of climate change
- Spill-over effects from climate change impacts occurring outside the EU
- The Danube macro-regional strategy and its contribution to action at Member State level
- Adaptation of infrastructure in the energy sector.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what/documentation_en.htm

² https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/policies/adaptation/what/consultation_strategy-evaluation_adaptation_strategy_en.pdf

An open public consultation was available from December 2017 to March 2018 on the DG CLIMA website³. Initial multiple-choice questions were for all respondents including private individuals. Sections with multiple choice questions on interim conclusions from the study in support of the evaluation⁴ were available to expert stakeholders. All respondents could add comments in a free text field and upload a document or position paper.

Two workshops were held in Brussels:

- 5 April 2017 - To briefly present the EU adaptation strategy and obtain feedback on its implementation and to guide the further development of the evaluation
- 23 January 2018 – To present and discuss interim conclusions and recommendations from the study

3 Stakeholder groups participating

As in the consultation strategy, mapping of stakeholders identified the following groups and assessed their level of interest:

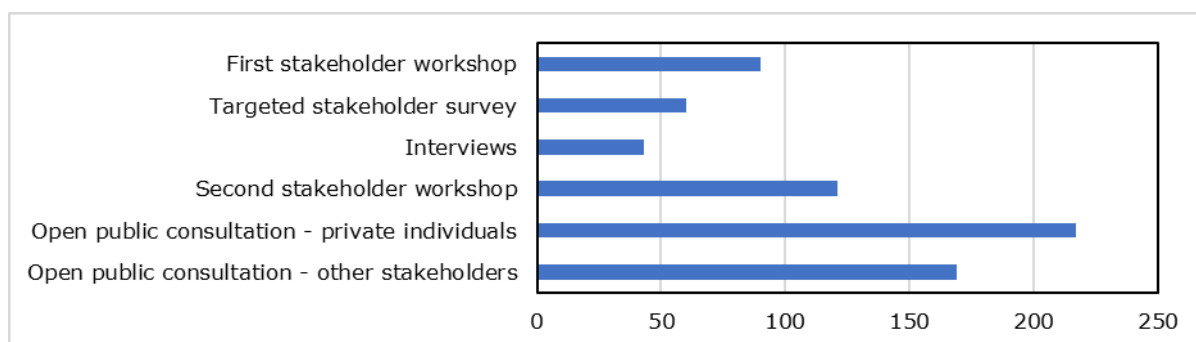
- a) EU-level: European Parliament, European Commission, Committee of the Regions, Economic and Social Committee, European Environment Agency (High interest)
- b) National competent authorities involved in the implementation of EU or national adaptation strategies in Member States (e.g. ministries of environment and other competent authorities for sectors vulnerable to climate change such as agriculture, forestry or water, including experts dealing with the Water Framework Directive's Common Implementation Strategy) (High interest)
- c) Regional and local public bodies involved in the implementation of EU or subnational adaptation strategies in Member States, including those bodies dealing with natural resource management and spatial/land use planning (High interest)
- d) International organisations dealing with adaptation to climate change, e.g. various United Nations bodies, World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, International Energy Agency, International Organisation for Migration (High interest)
- e) Interest groups who professionally deal with adaptation to climate change, e.g. insurance companies, academia, think tanks, green NGOs (High interest)
- f) Wider interest groups who may have an interest in implementation of the EU Adaptation Strategy including civil society, private sector, small and medium enterprises, trade associations (Moderate interest)

The number of stakeholders participating in each consultation activity, and a breakdown by stakeholder type and by Member State, are provided in the figures below.

³ Available at https://ec.europa.eu/clima/consultations/evaluation-eus-strategy-adaptation-climate-change_en

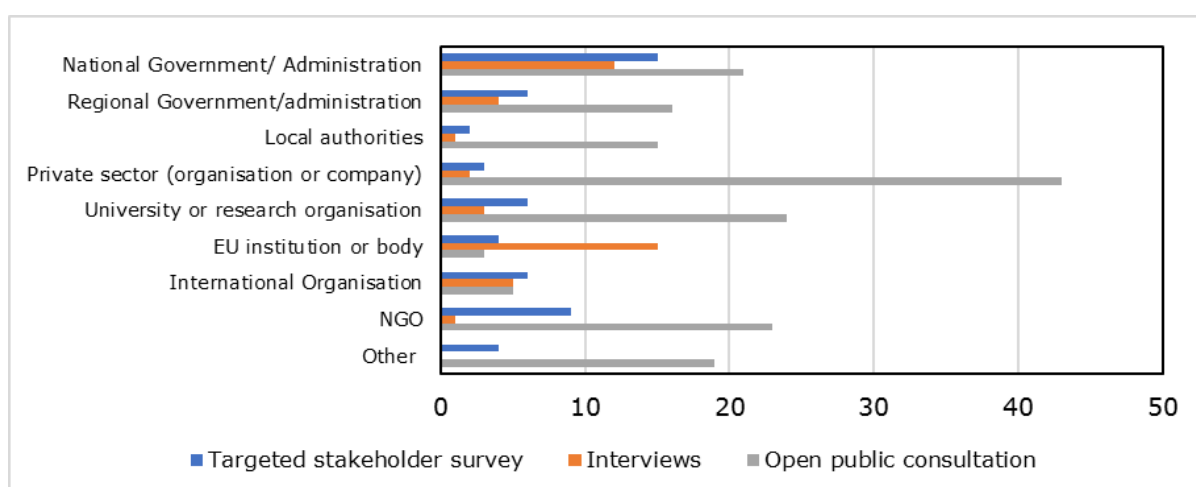
⁴ These were published alongside the open public consultation. See https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/consultations/docs/0035/summary_interim_findings_en.pdf

Figure 3-1 Number of respondents by consultation activity



Source: Own analysis of participation by consultation activity

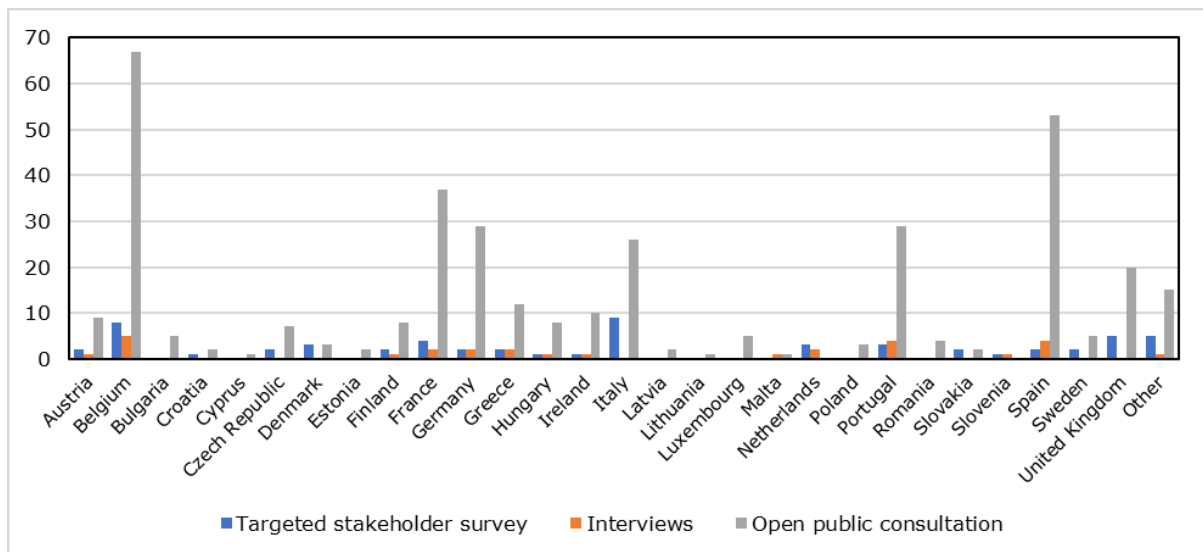
Figure 3-2 Participants by stakeholder type for three consultation activities



Source: Own analysis of participation by consultation activity. Note that, in addition, 217 private individuals responded to the open public consultation, as in Figure 3-1.

It was noted in the consultation strategy that the emphasis of the targeted stakeholder survey would be on stakeholder groups a), b), and c). In the event the number of responses from EU level stakeholders to the targeted stakeholder survey was low. The interviews were used, in particular, to seek inputs from EU institutions. Interviews also focused on National Governments/Administrations as another key stakeholder group.

Figure 3-3 Participants by Member State for three consultation activities



Source: Own analysis of participation by consultation activity. Note that the 15 EU interviews are not ascribed to a Member State – the remaining 28 interviewees are included in this figure.

4 Methodology and tools used to process data

Quantitative information was analysed using spreadsheets. For the open public consultation, this included analysis of results by stakeholder type. In this case comparisons were made between groups with 20 or more responses – National Governments/Administrations, private sector, university or research organisations, and NGOs. One further group combined the response from regional governments/administrations and from local authorities to give a sub-national group.

Qualitative information was received from: the stakeholder workshops; interviews; the many free text responses to the targeted stakeholder survey; the open text response to the open public consultation; and papers uploaded for the targeted stakeholder survey and open public consultation. This information was analysed by the five evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value. Responses were further assessed by the Strategy's objectives and actions and by stakeholder type.

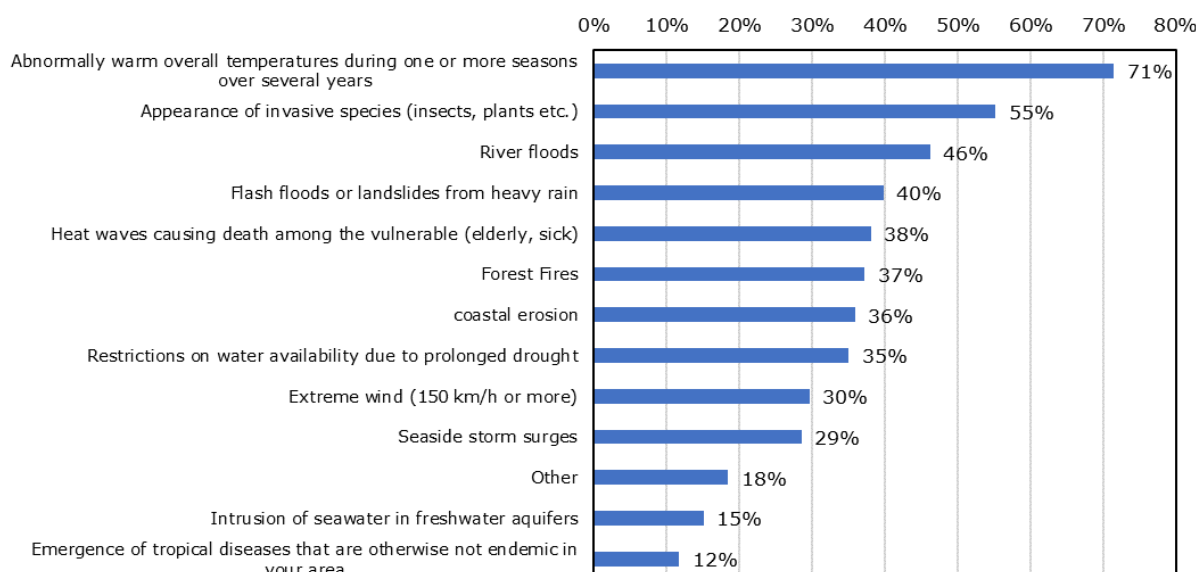
5 Results of consultation activities

5.1 Relevance

The open public consultation included initial questions, open to all respondents, on climate change and adaptation.

Considering unusually frequent or severe events in their place of living that could be attributed to climate change, respondents most frequently cited unusually warm temperatures (Figure 5-1). The next most frequent responses were on appearance of invasive species and on river floods.

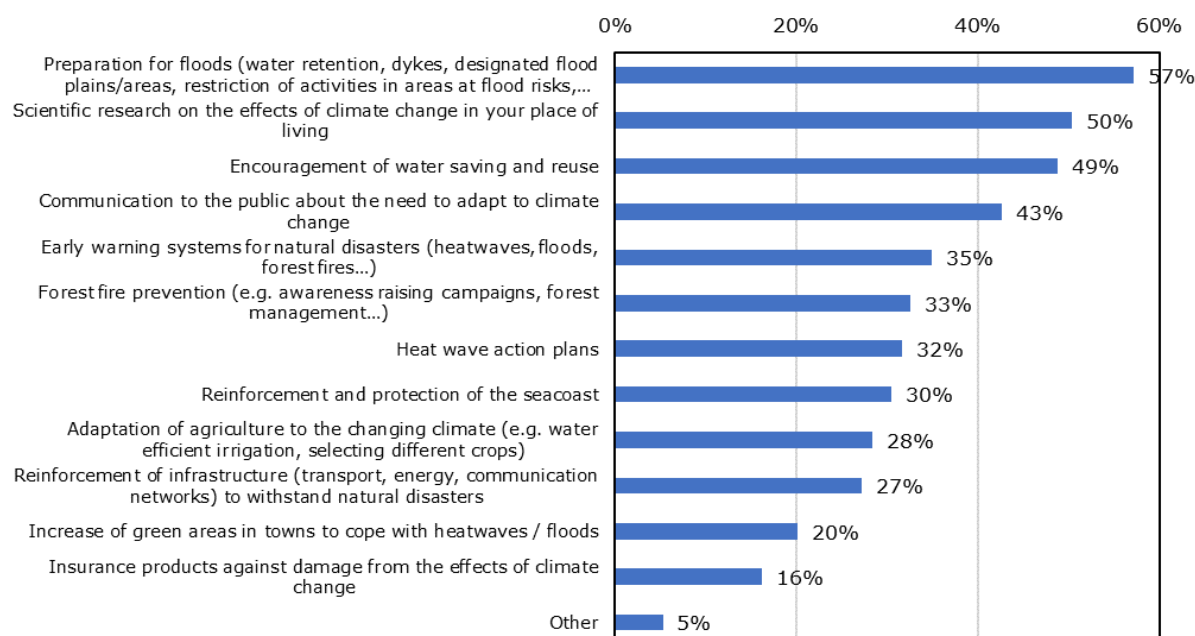
Figure 5-1 Open consultation survey responses to “In your place of living, have you experienced unusually frequent or severe events that could be attributed to climate change?”



Source: Analysis of open public consultation. 357 respondents.

When asked about awareness, in their place of living, of recent actions with the intention of preparation for the likely effects of climate change, only three actions were identified by about 50% or more of the respondents (See Figure 5-2). These were preparations for floods, scientific research, and encouragement of water saving and reuse.

Figure 5-2 Open public consultation responses to “In your place of living, are you aware of any of the following actions which have been implemented recently with the intention to prepare for the likely effects of climate change?”



Source: Analysis of open public consultation. 338 respondents.

Knowledge among respondents of the EU Adaptation Strategy was limited with only 44% of (380) respondents reporting good or very good knowledge. Knowledge of some adaptation action programmes was stronger with 67% of (338) respondents reporting

knowledge of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Horizon 2020 research programme of the EU. There was a similar level of knowledge of an adaptation strategy or plan at national level (84% of 280 respondents), but much less at regional (44% of 280 respondents) or municipal levels (33% of 280 respondents).

A total of 93% of 376 respondents agreed that action on adaptation to climate change is necessary at EU level.

Evidence used to evaluate the relevance of the EU Adaptation Strategy includes inputs from the targeted stakeholder survey, interviews, workshops and the open public consultation.

Evidence on whether Action 5 on knowledge gaps (still) responds to the needs within the EU and at international level, included inputs from stakeholder interviews, the open public consultation and the second stakeholder workshop.

The stakeholder interviews, highlighted that there is a need to close new knowledge gaps. Examples of such gaps highlighted by stakeholders include: adaptation in mountainous areas, climate impacts outside the EU that have implications for the EU, long-term lack of water resources and coastal issues, biodiversity, and high-end climate change (i.e. greater than 2°C). One interviewee from DG RTD said that as the Strategy and adaptation-related information must be fit for purpose, it is important for it to consider the serious possibility of high-end climate change. This was reflected by very strong support from respondents to the public consultation (90% of 158 respondents agreed or strongly agreed) that there is a need to address the impact of high-end climate change.

An interviewee from the EU indicated that research on how to overcome barriers to implementation is also needed, such as on: a switch in the framing from costs of climate change adaptation (negative) to (co-)benefits (positive). An interviewee from a university suggested several areas of knowledge gap including how to engage stakeholders and the broader public. Public attitudes were also mentioned in the second stakeholder workshop where the following ideas were offered regarding the knowledge base:

- Green infrastructure and ecosystem-based adaptation
- Eurobarometer data on attitudes to climate change can be used to support further development of the EU Adaptation Strategy.

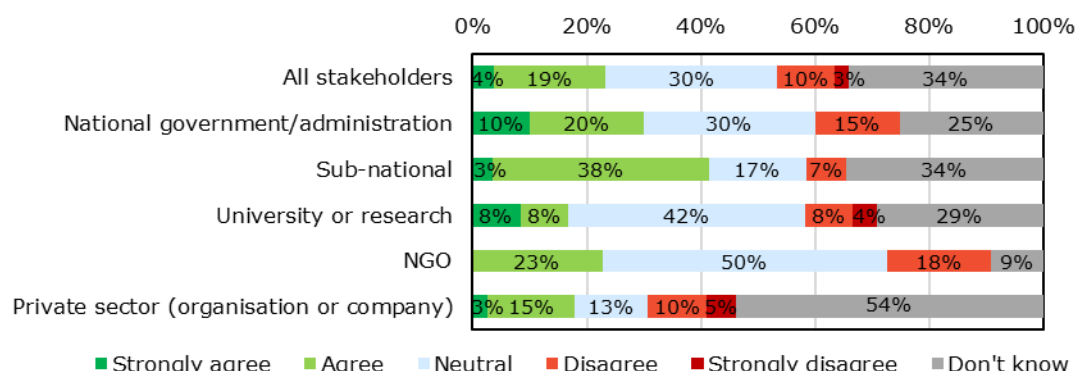
5.2 Effectiveness

Evidence from the consultations is used extensively in considering the effectiveness of the Strategy. This is illustrated below with some specific examples.

To what extent have the objectives been achieved during the period 2013-2016. Objective 1 Promoting action by Member States.

Interviews with eight governmental stakeholders from Member States suggest that the EU Adaptation Strategy played a role in ensuring increased political salience of the need for Member States to adopt strategies and plans where they were not already in place. The interviewees also suggested that use of the adaptation ex ante conditionalities for European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) programmes was an effective mechanism for ensuring Member States adopted national adaptation strategies. The open public consultation (see figure below) suggests that it is national and sub-national government stakeholders who are most aware of the role played by the adaptation ex ante conditionalities.

Figure 5-3 The ex-ante conditionalities on adaptation for accessing EU funding (ESIF programmes) have been an effective mechanism for ensuring the adoption of national adaptation strategies



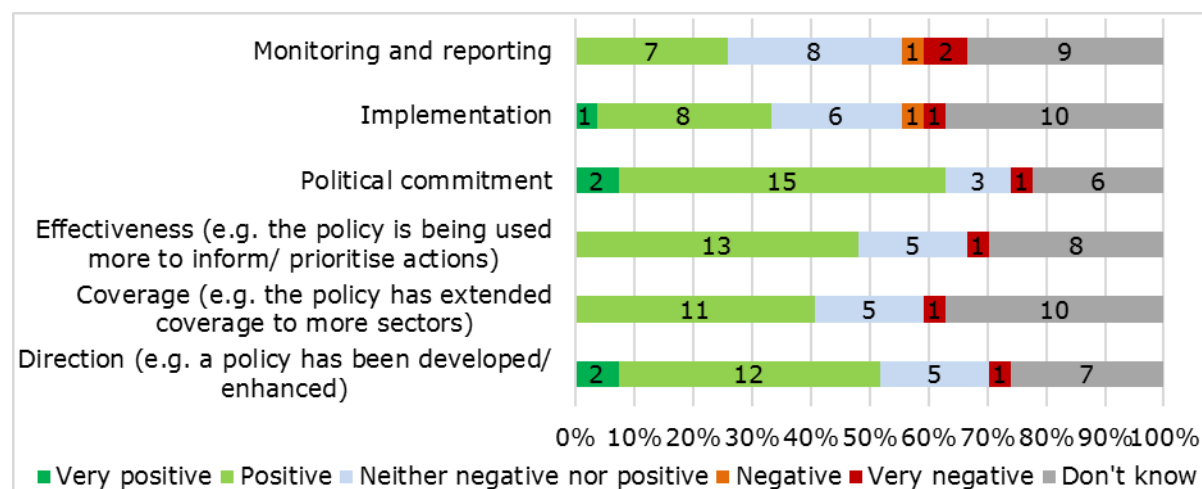
Source: Results of the open public consultation survey. 159 respondents in All stakeholders, 20-39 respondents in stakeholder groups.

To what extent has each of the eight actions of the Strategy contributed to these achievements? Action 3: Introduce adaptation in the Covenant of Mayors framework (2013/2014).

An interviewee from Climate Alliance, part of the Covenant of Mayors Office, said the framework had given a real boost to raising awareness of the need for adaptation among a significant number of municipalities in Europe. They explained that becoming a signatory to the Covenant of Mayors is accompanied by clear actions, timeframes, steps and a roadmap, which help structure cities commitments, planning and implementation. They noted that it is the cities that commit to act but regional, provincial and sub-national authorities also seek to assist them and that the Covenant of Mayors is also working on providing greater support to these actors. A government official from the Provincial Council of Barcelona emphasised the importance of municipalities engaging with the Covenant of Mayors, as a means of clarifying processes for decision makers by providing objectives, options and a methodological framework. However, someone working as a national focal point on adaptation and on coordination of their national strategy felt unable to comment on whether the Covenant of Mayors has fostered adaptation action. They noted that although many municipalities are signatories to the Covenant of Mayors most commitments relate to mitigation and no information is provided on action.

Asked whether the Covenant of Mayors has had a positive or negative influence on cities' adaptation strategies in relation to a list of factors (Figure 5-4), almost half or more of targeted survey respondents chose to 'neither agree nor disagree' or gave 'don't know' responses, including in relation to effectiveness.

Figure 5-4 Responses to the statement “The Covenant of Mayors has had the following influence on cities’ adaptation strategies in relation to”



Source: Results of the targeted stakeholder survey. 27 respondents.

The interviewee from Climate Alliance noted that without financial support from the Commission for managing the office, no concrete support would have been provided to the committed cities. They highlighted that in their view this institutional support brings credibility and allows the Covenant of Mayors to be embedded in the EU policy framework. Furthermore, they perceived that the Commission has played a key role in shaping and continuously fine-tuning the initiative, providing support at a strategic level, and helping to build direct bridges between the local and sub-national authorities. An interviewee from the Provincial Council of Barcelona similarly noted the importance of the Commission’s support for the Covenant of Mayors office in boosting cities credentials, for example, in relation to securing finance.

What drivers and barriers (expected or unexpected) contributed to or stood in the way of implementation of the EU Adaptation Strategy and how did they affect it? Objective 3 Promoting adaptation in key vulnerable sectors.

With regards to barriers, it is challenging to define and measure adaptation actions, and as such establish adequate output indicators. Adaptation measures need to be applied at the local and regional level, which makes it more difficult to establish high-level political targets for adaptation than for mitigation. The lack of focus on adaptation and the establishment of relevant targets within the Europe 2020 Strategy has made it difficult to drive adaptation actions at the same level as for mitigation. A total of 14 respondents to the targeted stakeholder survey provided specific examples of barriers to EU activities promoting adaptation in key vulnerable sectors (Agriculture, Forestry, Energy, Transport, Construction, Fisheries). Overarching barriers that some respondents identified as applying to several sectors include:

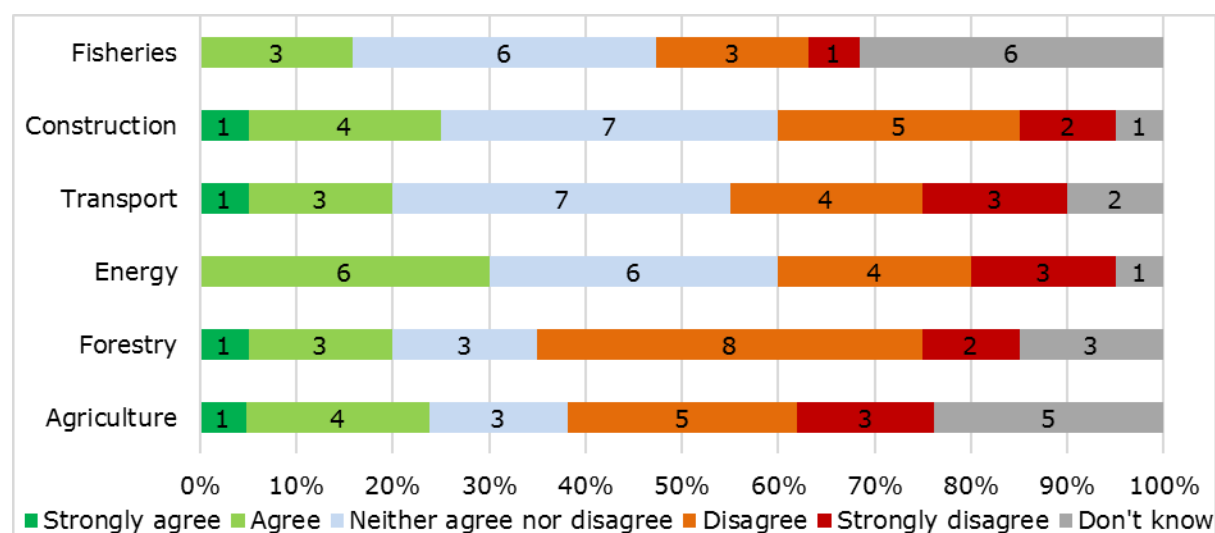
- Level and scale of available information on climate impacts and uncertainties of extreme events (frequency and magnitude) – energy, transport and construction sectors
- Need for climate proofing standards – energy, transport and construction sectors
- Attitudes towards climate change, lack of collaboration between sectors – all six sectors
- Insufficient EU initiatives to promote adaptation – energy and transport sectors
- Funding – all six sectors
- No duties to consider climate risk (or very limited) – energy, transport and construction sectors.

Participants in the first stakeholder workshop also noted that the EU Habitats Directive may be an impediment to adaptation, as it restricts scope for making changes to the

landscape, as do the requirements of Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) under the CAP.

When asked whether the Strategy has helped to overcome barriers to EU activities promoting adaptation in key vulnerable sectors, respondents gave a mixed response (Figure 5-5). The level of disagreement was greatest in the forestry sector.

Figure 5-5 Responses to the statement “Thinking of barriers in response to the previous question, the EU Adaptation Strategy helps to overcome these barriers”



Source: Results of the targeted stakeholder survey. 19-21 respondents.

What drivers and barriers (expected or unexpected) contributed to or stood in the way of implementation of the EU Adaptation Strategy and how did they affect it? Action 7: Ensuring more resilient infrastructure.

One output from the consultation that illustrates the effect of the EU Adaptation Strategy on barriers to ensuring more resilient infrastructure is a case study on adaptation in the energy sector, summarised below.

Case study on adaptation of infrastructure in the energy sector: underground electricity cables

This case study was developed to examine the actions being taken in the energy sector to adapt to climate change. It focuses on examples of adapting power networks to climate change. This is important as energy infrastructure is critical to modern society. The long lifespan and large investments associated with infrastructure mean that adaptation measures are best taken as early as possible. Energy infrastructure, particularly transmission and distribution lines, is particularly vulnerable to a number of climate impacts.

Increased wind and storm damage, increased temperatures (decreases conductivity) and other impacts (e.g. flooding, sagging, thawing permafrost) all pose an important risk for overhead transmission and distribution cables. Operators are, therefore, starting to adopt underground cables as a solution. For example, in Finland, the distribution system operator (DSO) Elenia, one of more than 70 DSOs in the country, has committed to all new cables being put underground with the climate proofing benefits a major driver of this move. Similar moves towards underground cabling can be found in Denmark and Germany.

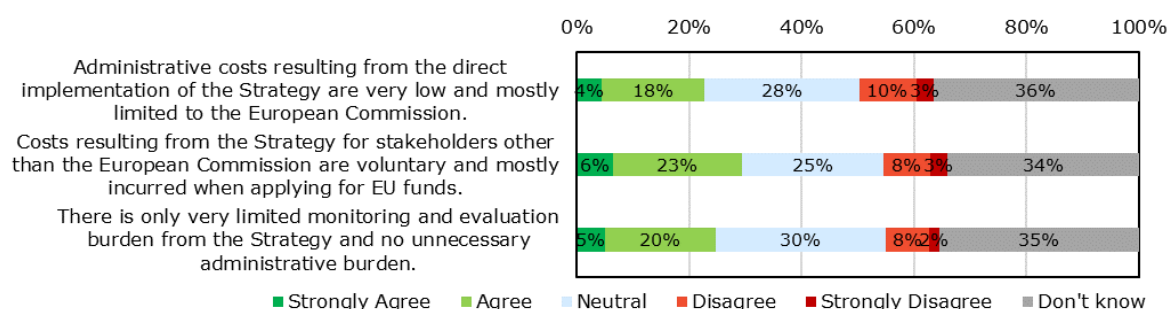
Private stakeholders are expected to take the lead in climate proofing in the energy sector to protect their assets and respond to the financial and regulatory incentives in place. The EU and national governments can play a role in creating stronger incentives and removing barriers to such action. The EU Adaptation Strategy is already playing a

role in addressing barriers through the guidelines for project developers and standards for infrastructure development (Action 7), and promotion of climate resilient investments (Action 8). Knowledge development and improving the requirements for climate-proofing, as a condition for structural funding (Action 6 - climate proofing EU policies), can also play a role.

5.3 Efficiency

The open public consultation directly posed questions related to efficiency, the results are shown in the figure below. For the first question, on the adequacy and proportionality of resources, more than half of respondents were ambivalent and the remaining respondents tended to disagree. The strongest disagreement came from NGO stakeholders, whilst public authority stakeholders were more likely to agree with the statement. Around 60% of respondents were ambivalent to the remaining statements, highlighting the difficulty of giving opinions on these issues. Of those that did give an opinion there was much greater agreement that costs are very low, limited to the Commission and incurred by other stakeholders mostly when voluntarily accessing EU funds.

Figure 5-6 Responses to the open public consultation on interim conclusions on efficiency

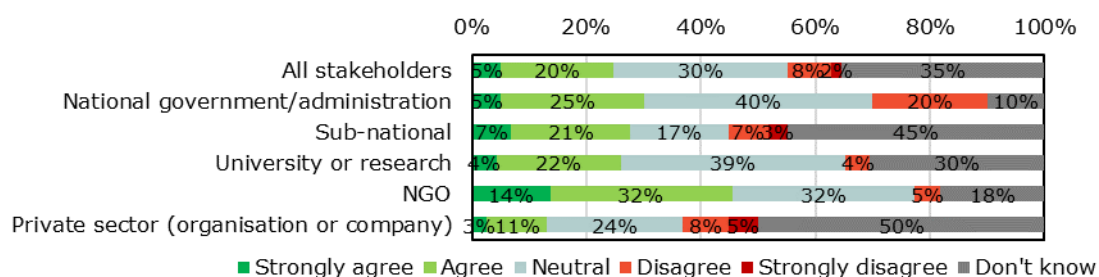


Source: Analysis of open public consultation. 156-159 respondents

Responses to interviews and the targeted stakeholder survey provided additional evidence on the adequacy of resources and how proportionate they were for each of the eight actions.

When considering the views of different stakeholders on the monitoring of the implementation of the EU Adaptation Strategy, evidence was included from the targeted stakeholder survey and from the open public consultation. The figure below, for instance, gives a breakdown by major stakeholder group of responses to the statement on monitoring and evaluation burden.

Figure 5-7 Responses by stakeholder group to the open public consultation interim conclusion: There is only very limited monitoring and evaluation burden from the Strategy and no unnecessary administrative burden.



Source: Analysis of open public consultation. 158 respondents. Groups of 20 to 38 respondents.

5.4 Coherence

Most evidence on coherence of the EU Adaptation Strategy comes from the literature survey. The consultation provides additional evidence in the following areas.

Coherence with other EU policies and initiatives

The interviews, in particular those with European Commission and Member State officials, shed light on policy areas where the mainstreaming of adaptation has already taken place as well as on areas where further work is considered to be still required. Overall, numerous stakeholders highlighted the cross-cutting nature of adaptation and, thus, agreed that mainstreaming of adaptation objectives into sectoral policies is a necessity. A recurring policy area where coherence with adaptation was seen as essential is disaster risk reduction. The Floods Directive was mentioned as a positive example by two separate national stakeholders who highlighted that the links between the national flood risk management plans and the national adaptation strategies are established and very useful.

One comment emerging from the second stakeholder workshop was that it was important to ensure greater coherence between Commission action to encourage Member State strategies, on the one hand, and deployment of EU funding, on the other. The open public consultation suggested a high level of agreement with the statement that “progress has been made in integrating adaptation concerns into a wide range of EU policy areas”; 56% agreed, although a significant minority (19%) disagreed, with particularly high levels of disagreement among NGOs (31%) and private sector respondents (29%).

Limited evidence on coherence with other policy areas has also emerged from the responses to the targeted stakeholder survey. Most evidence relates to Action 6 In the case of the CAP, 7 out of 23 respondents agreed and 5 out of 23 strongly agreed with the statement that there is complementarity between climate-proofing of the CAP, as required by the Strategy, and other EU legislation and policies. There was less agreement in relation to Cohesion Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy.

Coherence with international policies and initiatives

Strong evidence on the coherence of the Strategy with international policies and initiatives does not emerge from the literature review and the stakeholder survey. Nevertheless, interviews with Commission officials working in the external field gave further insights, including on the UNFCCC’s Cancun Adaptation Framework, and the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

The EU Adaptation Strategy does not refer to any international policies or initiatives, nor does it emphasise the role of the EU’s external policies in supporting adaptation actions in non-EU countries. While the focus on domestic adaptation is a valid choice, it

potentially risks failing to identify and address areas where there is potential for cooperation between the EU and other economies. This has particular relevance now, as since the adoption of the Strategy significant developments took place in the international sphere (i.e. the Paris Agreement, the SDGs and the Sendai Framework). This was also recognised by an interviewee for this study who indicated that it would be timely to update the Strategy and reflect these developments. While recognising the legitimacy of the Strategy's exclusive focus on domestic issues and acknowledging that it fits well with the UNFCCC Framework, another interviewee stated that the Strategy could be better contextualized as the domestic facet of the EU's overall focus on adaptation. They noted that, otherwise, it may give a false sense that the EU will be protected from the impacts of climate change, so long as it addresses them in the EU.

Coherence with national and regional policies and initiatives

Evidence from the first stakeholder workshop suggests that the Strategy has had a helpful impact on improving coherence at national level. In particular, it was suggested that the Strategy had helped to emphasise the importance of cooperation, and of exchanging best practices. It was noted that coherence had in part been facilitated by the mainstreaming of adaptation in EU policy in a range of sectors and that sectoral coherence benefited from an EU-wide approach.

Interviewees noted the potential value of enhanced discussion on regional-level adaptation challenges facing neighbouring Member States. A case study looks at the impact of macro-regional strategies on adaptation coordination, using the Danube strategy as an example.

5.5 EU added value

In the targeted stakeholder survey, stakeholders were asked for their level of agreement with statements of the type: "In the absence of action by the Commission to encourage the development of national adaptation strategies, equivalent encouragement would have been applied by other institutions e.g. at national level" (relating to Action 1); and "In the absence of the EU adaptation strategy, an equivalent amount of progress would have been made in climate proofing EU policies" (relating to Action 6). Overall, a greater number of stakeholders disagreed than agreed that equivalent progress would have been taken in the absence of the EU Adaptation Strategy, for Actions 3 to 6, i.e. on Covenant of Mayors, bridging the knowledge gap, Climate-ADAPT, and climate proofing of the CAP, Cohesion Policy and CFP. The majority view on these actions was, therefore, that the Strategy had an added value.

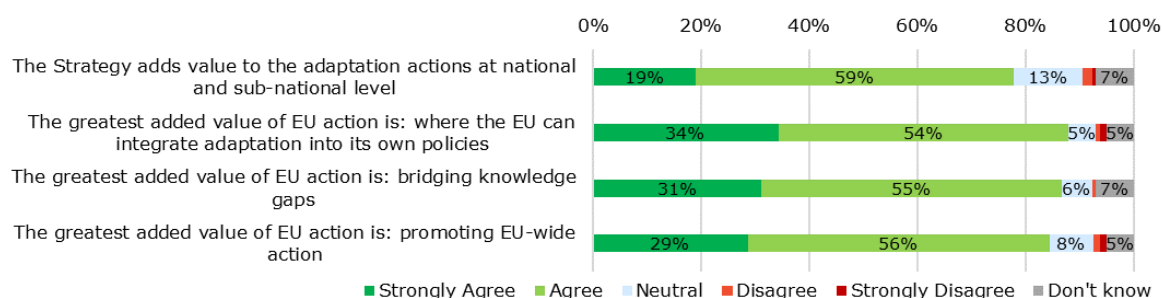
In relation to the actions on encouraging all Member States to adopt comprehensive adaptation strategies (Action 1), ensuring more resilient infrastructure (Action 7) and promoting insurance and other financial products for resilient investment and business decisions (Action 8), the views of stakeholders were more evenly balanced. Therefore, the EU added value was clear for some stakeholders but not for others. Around 20-40 stakeholders responded for each action to the targeted stakeholder survey. This gives small numbers for each stakeholder group and no major difference between the views of the stakeholder groups was discerned.

The stakeholder interviews, open public consultation and feedback at the stakeholder workshops provide some further evidence on the added value arising from the Strategy.

Panellists at the second stakeholder workshop spoke of the value added by the Strategy, including that it had been helpful in: putting adaptation on people's agendas; highlighting the need to focus on adaptation as well as mitigation; building momentum and raising ambition; and providing some inspiration.

Interim conclusions, one general and three more specific, broadly associated with the three objectives of the Strategy all received agreement or strong agreement from at least 75% of all respondents as in the figure below.

Figure 5-8 Level of agreement by stakeholders with interim conclusions on EU added value



Source: Analysis of open public consultation. 157-160 respondents

5.6 Conclusions

Interim conclusions from the study were tested in the open public consultation. Of the 18 statements tested, five received agreement or strong agreement from 80% or more of the 160 respondents. These are:

- Adaptation action is needed at all governance levels
- There is a need for ensuring that EU policies, investments in infrastructure and insurance and financial products take due account of climate change and respond to its impacts
- The EU needs to encourage adaptation action by Member States
- There is a need for the EU to support research on adaptation
- Infrastructures and economic systems are not sufficiently resilient to the impacts of climate change

11 received agreement or strong agreement from 47% to 78% of respondents and disagreement or strong disagreement from 16% or less of the respondents.

In two cases, over 30% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. For the statement that the financial resources for the implementation of the actions described in the Strategy were adequate and proportionate, 13% of the 157 respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 34% disagreed or strong disagreement. Agreement was strongest from universities or research organisations (25% of 24 respondents) and disagreement strongest from NGOs (52% of 21 respondents). For the statement that EU adaptation action is not aligned with international obligations under the Paris agreement, there was an approximately even split of the 156 respondents between those agreeing/ strongly agreeing (30%), those giving a neutral response (30%) and those disagreeing/ strongly disagreeing (31%). The level of disagreement is approximately the same across stakeholder groups. There is some trade-off between the number of neutral responses and those agreeing. Agreement is strongest from NGOs (52% of 21 respondents) and weakest from national governments/ administrations (11% of 19 respondents).

6 Identified campaigns for consultations

No campaigns have been identified for the open public consultation.

7 Ad-hoc contributions

Several documents and position papers were provided in association with the targeted stakeholder survey and the open public consultation. These have been noted in the relevant consultation reports and included as part of the evidence base for this work.

8 How information from consultation is used in the evaluation

Information from the consultation forms a major part of the evidence considered in the evaluation. The evidence is compared with evidence from other strands of the consultation and also with results of the literature review to identify the overall level of agreement or divergence of the evidence. The results of the open public consultation, in particular, provide sufficient responses from key groups of stakeholders to consider whether there is agreement or divergence by stakeholder type.

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