

# **Synopsis report on the consultation activities for the evaluation of the EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change<sup>1</sup>**

## **1. Objectives of the consultation**

The current EU Adaptation Strategy (the Strategy) was published in April 2013 in response to the climate risks that Europe is and will increasingly face. The Strategy committed the Commission to report to the European Parliament and the Council on the state of its implementation. The evaluation was needed in order to comply with this requirement and assess the progress made since 2013.

As indicated in the Consultation Strategy and in line with the Better Regulation Guidelines, the objective of the Stakeholder Consultation in relation to the EU Adaptation Strategy evaluation is 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 includes identifying specific case studies or further evidence, lessons learned, knowledge, financing and capacity gaps, obstacles and factors of success, and suggestions for improvement.

## **2. Consultation activities and methodology**

### **2.1. *Activities***

As defined in the Consultation Strategy, a combination of in-depth surveys, interviews of interested stakeholders, an open public consultation and stakeholder workshops have been used to gather evidence.

- a) Stakeholder surveys – The targeted stakeholder survey ran from July to August 2017. It was available in English and comprised multiple choice and free text questions. Survey invitations were sent to 370 stakeholders involved, directly or indirectly, in the implementation of the Strategy. In addition, the invitation was sent to all registrants for the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Climate Change Adaptation Conference, held in Glasgow (850 attendees). The structure of the questionnaire allowed the participants to focus on the Actions under the Strategy that were of primary interest to them.
- b) Stakeholder interviews – 43 interviews were held with about 50 stakeholders who had been actively involved in different aspects of the implementation of the Strategy. 35 of the interviews covered the 8 Actions with questions relating to the five 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 8 interviews contributed to the development of four case studies on:
  - Fire preparedness and the impact of climate change
  - Spillover effects from climate change impacts occurring outside the EU
  - The Danube macro-regional strategy (EUSDR) and its contribution to action at Member State level
  - Adaptation of infrastructure in the energy sector.

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<sup>1</sup> This text is the same as the one contained in Annex II to SWD (2018)461 on the Evaluation of the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change

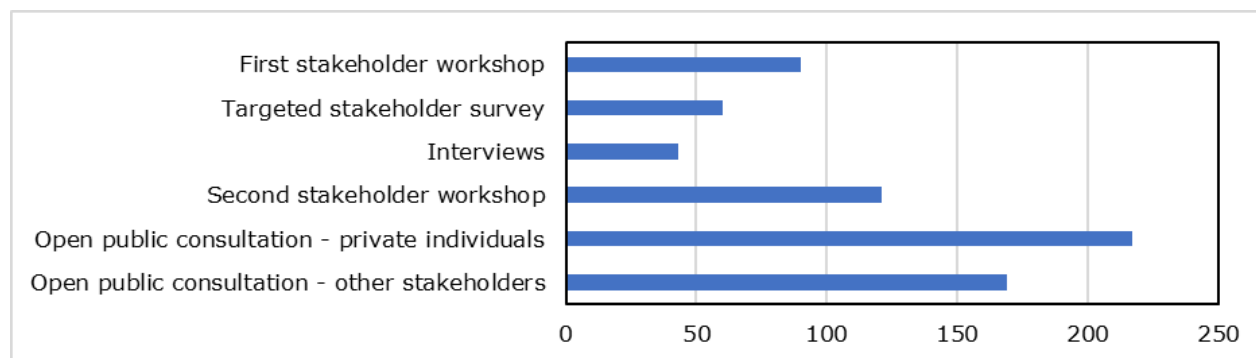
- c) Open Public Consultation – An open public consultation was available from 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017 to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 (12 weeks) on DG CLIMA's website<sup>2</sup>. Initial multiple choice questions were for all respondents including private individuals. Sections with multiple choice questions on interim conclusions from the study in support of the evaluation<sup>3</sup> were available to expert stakeholders. All respondents could add comments in a free text field and upload a document or position paper.
- d) Stakeholder workshop – Two workshops were organised to present the evaluation and gather new evidence to elicit further feedback on draft conclusions.
  - 5 April 2017 – Over 90 stakeholders participated. It served to briefly present the 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. This was previously foreseen for October 2017, but it was postponed in order to discuss the preliminary results of the evaluation. Around 120 stakeholders participated in this second event.

## 2.2. Stakeholder groups participating

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

Six groups of stakeholders were identified in the mapping of the Consultation Strategy, which were used throughout the consultation activities in order to maintain a balance between different stakeholders. The figures below show the number of participants by consultation activity and by stakeholder type.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure II-1. Number of respondents by consultation activity**



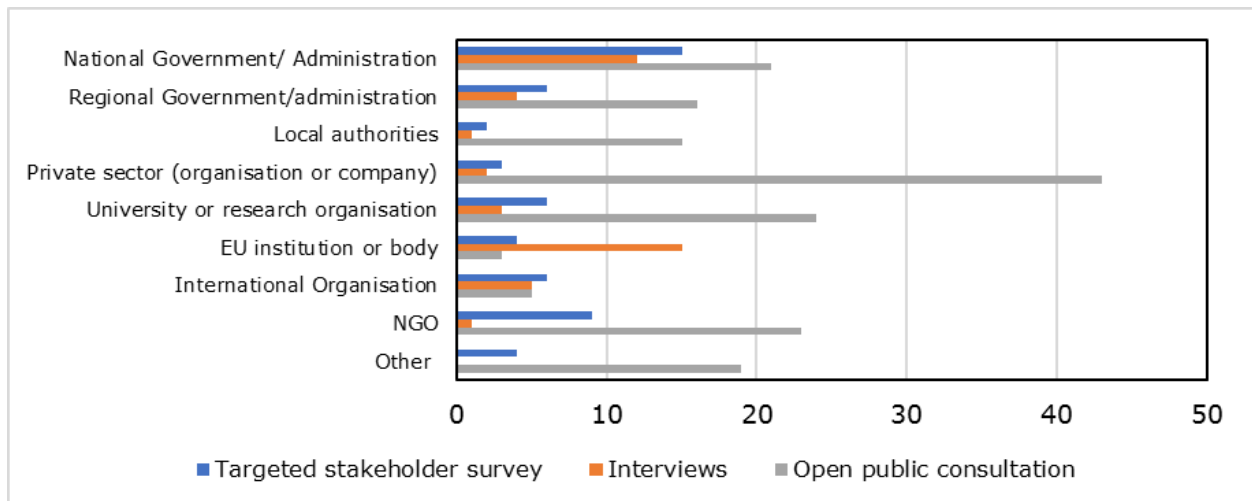
Source: External Support evaluation study

<sup>2</sup> Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/consultations/evaluation-eus-strategy-adaptation-climate-change\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/consultations/evaluation-eus-strategy-adaptation-climate-change_en)

<sup>3</sup> These were published alongside the open public consultation. See: Ricardo, IEEP, Trinomics, and Alterra. Study to support the evaluation of the EU Adaptation Strategy, Summary interim findings, 2017. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/consultations/docs/0035/summary\\_interim\\_findings\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/consultations/docs/0035/summary_interim_findings_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Please notice that in the figure 2 local and regional authorities are separated, nevertheless they are generally considered together in the evaluation, except when differences exist.

**Figure II-2. Participants by stakeholder type for three consultation activities**



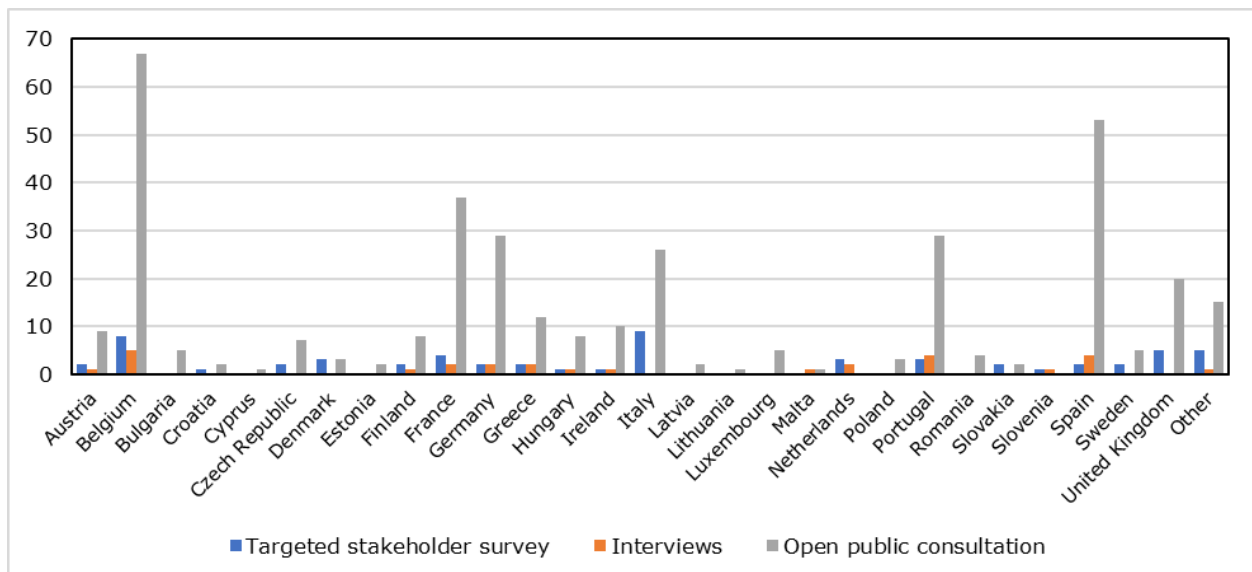
Source: Own analysis of participation by consultation activity. Note that, in addition, 217 private individuals responded to the open public consultation.

Despite the fact that interviews were conducted with all types of stakeholders, the majority of them were from the National government/Administration and EU institutions due to the technical nature of the interviews and the necessity to obtain reliable evidence to proceed with sections related to efficiency and effectiveness.

In the case of the Open Public Consultation, the large majority of stakeholders (56%) were private individuals and the three largest countries by representation of respondents were Belgium (17%), Spain (14%) and France (10%).

Besides the balance between the interests of different stakeholders, the consultation aimed at ensuring a geographical balance by providing opportunities to all stakeholders across Europe to participate in the consultation activities.

**Figure II-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 are in this figure

### 2.3. Methodology

The Open Public Consultation was published in 23 languages in EU Survey, an online survey-management system, during 12 weeks and actively advertised in the DG CLIMA's website and social networks of the Commission.

Quantitative information was collected and analysed using spreadsheets and the results were divided by stakeholder in order to identify coincidences and contradictions between different groups. For the Open Public Consultation, 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 (as foreseen in the Better Regulation Guidelines).

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 the papers uploaded for the targeted stakeholder survey and open public consultation (analysed in the report).

The information collected was analysed according to the five evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value. Moreover, responses were further assessed by Strategy Objective / Action and by stakeholder type.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Targeted Stakeholder Survey

In total, 114 stakeholders responded to the survey questionnaire of which 54 respondents only indicated their organisational type and their country, which left 60 responses to analyse. The questions and responses were organised by Action and focused on the effectiveness, coherence and efficiency criteria.

**Figure II-4. Number of respondents of the Targeted Stakeholder Survey from each organisational type**

Organisational type	Number of respondents
National Government body	15
Sub-national Government	6
Municipal/city Government	2
Private sector	3
University	6
Research organisation	5

EU institution or body	4
Other international organisation	6
NGO	9
Other <sup>5</sup>	4

On effectiveness, 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 obligation to consider climate risk (or very limited) – energy, transport and construction sectors.

The majority of stakeholders considered that the Strategy had a clear added value since they affirmed that in the absence of the Strategy the same level of progress could not have been achieved, mainly for actions 3 to 6. For the rest, only around 20-40 stakeholders responded per action. This gives small numbers for each stakeholder group, and no major difference between their views was discerned.

### 3.2. Stakeholder interviews

Interviews provided evidence on all evaluation criteria. All types of stakeholder are represented in the interviews, nevertheless the majority of stakeholders came from public institutions (EU, Member State or sub-national).

**Figure II-5. Number of respondents of the Targeted Stakeholder Survey from each organisation type**



<sup>5</sup> Those that self-identified as “Other” are: an EU network of regional authorities, a local government association in a Member State region, a regional development agency; and a research institute with a focus outside the EU

Organisation type	Total number of responses	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Coherence	EU added value
National, Sub-national and Municipal Government bodies	16	15	16	11	11	13
EU Institutions or bodies	14	11	11	9	12	11
Other stakeholders	12	11	11	5	6	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>

On relevance, the stakeholder interviews highlighted that there is a need to close new knowledge gaps. Examples of such gaps highlighted by stakeholders included: 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). The latter was also reflected by responses 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).

On effectiveness, the interviews provided evidence that the 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 the use of the adaptation ex ante conditionalities for European Structural and Investment Funds programmes was an effective mechanism for ensuring Member States adopted NASs.

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. 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.

Recommendations included the potential value of enhanced discussion on regional-level adaptation challenges facing neighbouring Member States.

Eight further interviews were conducted to develop the 4 case studies listed in section 2.1.

### **3.3. Open Public Consultation**

The survey was split between part 1 and parts 2-4, with part 1 targeted to all citizens and parts 2-4 targeted to those with professional experience with adaptation. There were in total 386 responses. Parts 2-4 were answered by 159 respondents (41% of the total).

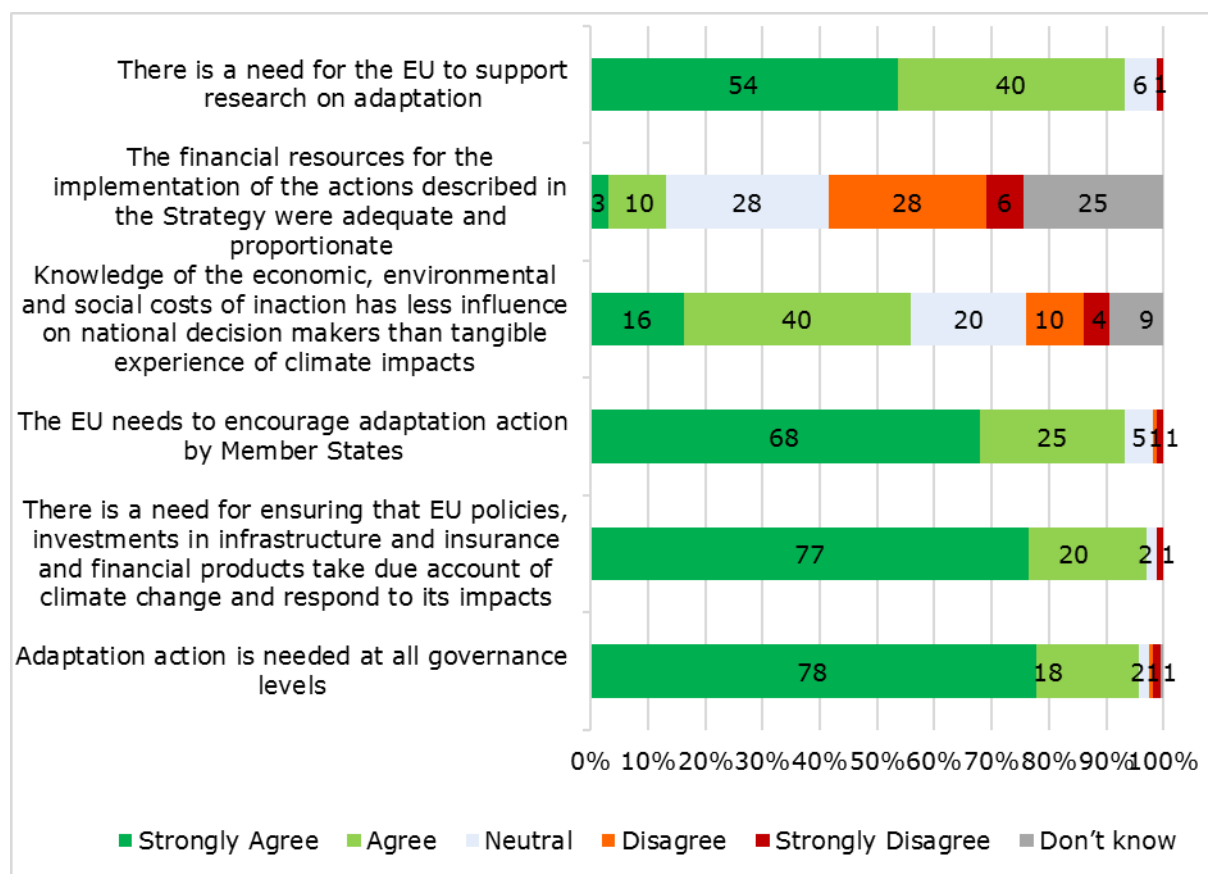
The respondents had the opportunity to explain their experience with events attributed to climate change, and they identified a total of 1 651 events, the majority related to abnormally

warm overall temperatures. Regarding knowledge of the EU’s strategy on adaptation to climate change, most respondents considered they had a good (32%) or limited (30%) knowledge. Only 12% of the stakeholders thought that they had a very good knowledge of the strategy and 10% had never heard of it. The knowledge was significant regarding programmes dealing with adaptation action, where 67% of stakeholders knew about H2020.

The relevance of EU-level action was found significant with 93% of respondents believing that it is necessary to combat climate change. The responses on the generic aspects of Adaptation were generally supportive. The strongest agreement was found for the conclusions “Adaptation action is needed at all governance levels” and “The EU needs to encourage adaptation action by Member States”.

The respondents found the Strategy relevant; since they see the need of further action to address remaining knowledge gaps and to align EU adaptation policy with international developments.

**Figure II-6 Responses in the open public consultation to interim conclusions that relate to relevance of the EU Adaptation Strategy**



Source: Results from open public consultation. 160 respondents

On effectiveness, there was disagreement between stakeholder's results: regional and national authorities were more positive considering aspects as adaptation mainstreaming than the overall average.

Overall, on coherence, respondents replied positively to the conclusions. Nevertheless, stakeholders considered that there was still a need to better integrate adaptation concerns into the climate mitigation policy or the EU external policy areas. NGOs and Private Sector

disagreed more compared to public authorities on the consideration that ‘progress has been made in integrating adaptation concerns into a wide range of EU policy areas’.

The respondents almost exclusively agreed with the conclusions about EU added-value. This highlights that many believe in the importance of the Strategy and EU action for adaptation to climate change. Furthermore, most stakeholders more strongly agreed that the greatest value of EU action is through mainstreaming adaptation into its own policies.

Finally, out of the 386 stakeholders involved in the public consultation, 239 submitted an answer to the open question and 27 position papers were received. An extensive summary can be found in appendix 2E of the external support study.<sup>6</sup> The position papers were analysed and were taken into account during the evaluation as part of the evidence.

### **3.4. Stakeholder Workshops**

The first workshop (5th April 2017) provided significant input on the three priorities identified in the 2013 Strategy. There was agreement on:

- The need for research to be made available in forms that decision-makers could use.
- The need for better understanding of social and cultural barriers to adaptation.

The effectiveness and coherence of the evaluation were the main elements discussed throughout the workshop: it was considered that the Strategy promoted action from some Members States (not all) and contributed to promote coherence in action.

The main findings of the evaluation were presented in the second workshop (23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018). The recommendations of the external support study were supported by the large majority of members who assisted in the workshop, except on the alignment with International obligations under the Paris Agreement and its alignment with the Global Stocktake in 2023 (this recommendation was reconsidered in the final study). This second stakeholder workshop was useful to promote participation in the parallel Open Public Consultation. There were no major contradictions between the results provided by the workshop and the rest of the consultation activities.

## **4. Identified campaigns and ad-hoc contributions**

No campaigns have been identified in the context of the Open Public Consultation.

Several documents and position papers were provided in association with the open public consultation. These were noted in the relevant consultation reports (appendix 2E of the external support study) and included as part of the evidence base for this work. Nevertheless no ad-hoc documents were received outside the consultation activities.

## **5. Feedback from the roadmap**

There was no feedback received on the roadmap of the evaluation. Therefore, there were no significant changes applied to the consultation activities in comparison with the original roadmap.

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<sup>6</sup> Published on the website of the Evaluation of the EU’s Adaptation Strategy [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/events/articles/0119\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/events/articles/0119_en)



In summary, information from the consultation forms a major part of the evidence considered in the evaluation. Evidence is compared with that 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.