

Adaptation preparedness scoreboard:

Summary for Austria

Disclaimer

Based on the scoreboard in Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2018)460 accompanying the evaluation of the EU's strategy for adaptation to climate change. For referencing this Commission analysis from June 2018, please use the full version in the SWD.

SUMMARY

Overall progress

Austria was among the first countries in the EU to draft a national adaptation strategy (NAS) and a national adaptation plan (NAP) with specific actions to operationalize the strategy. The country has since moved to the implementation phase, having also updated the NAS/NAP in 2017 according to recommendations made in the 2015 progress report. The thorough assessment of Austria's adaptation policies show that vertical coordination mechanisms can be improved. Further integration of DRM and adaptation policies would also be beneficial. In general, a lack of mainstreaming of adaptation into national policies has delayed progress.

Adaptation strategies

The Austrian national adaptation strategy (NAS) was adopted in 2012. In 2017, the strategy was updated and developed further. The revised national adaptation strategy¹ aims to reduce the negative impacts of climate change (CC) on democracy, health, security or equality, and to build general resilience and adaptation capacity to climate change. All Austrian Bundesländer (NUTSII), except Kärnten, have climate change adaptation strategies in place. Some Bundesländer have developed separate adaptation strategies, while others have integrated them into their CC mitigation strategies or into sectoral plans/strategies.

Adaptation action plans

A national adaptation plan (NAP) was adopted in 2012 as part of the NAS, containing 136 adaptation actions covering 14 areas of action, being: agriculture, forestry, water resources & management, tourism, energy, protection from natural hazards, construction & housing, disaster risk management, health, ecosystems & biodiversity, mobility & transportation infrastructure, spatial planning, business/ industry/ trade, and cities. Two *Bundesländer* (Tirol² and Vorarlberg) have adopted regional climate

¹ BMNT, formerly BMLFUW (2017). The Austrian Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change. Part 1 – Context, Available (in German) at:

https://www.bmnt.gv.at/umwelt/klimaschutz/klimapolitik_national/anpassungsstrategie/strategie-kontext.html

² Government of Tirol (2015). Klimaschutz und Anpassung an den Klimawandel in Tiroler Gemeinden. Available at: <http://www.klimaschutz-tirol.at/images/doku/gemeindemappe.pdf>

adaptation action plans, and in other regions and cities measures for climate adaptation are still being researched/are under development.

Step A: Preparing the ground for adaptation

1 Coordination structure

The Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism (BMNT) is responsible for adaptation policymaking. BMNT keeps the NAS and NAP updated and oversees implementation of the NAP through a collaboration with other ministries, regional government officials and other stakeholders. For implementation of cross-sectoral climate adaptation measures, roundtables with sector representatives are organised to ensure horizontal coordination. All Bundesländer have a climate coordination officer, who is the main agent for vertical cooperation with BMNT.

2 Stakeholders' involvement in policy development

For the development of the strategy, stakeholders were consulted via online-surveys, written feedback on policy drafts, and advisory committees. National and sub-national government officials were actively involved; and the private sector, interest groups, researchers and the general public were also consulted. Austria participates in international partnerships that work on climate adaptation issues, (e.g. Alpine Convention) but it is unclear how these partnerships affect the Austrian adaptation strategy and associated measures.

Step B: Assessing risks and vulnerabilities to climate change

3 Current and projected climate change

The central institute for meteorology and geodynamics (ZAMS) collects data on extreme weather events and associated damage. The possibility of a country-wide database on climate related-damage is being explored. Several research projects have investigated the potential costs and social impacts of climate change impacts derived from the regional climate scenarios. Qualitative assessments of the vulnerabilities of nine out of the 14 sectors covered in the NAS have been conducted by the Austrian Environment agency in cooperation with other institutions. The vulnerability assessments did not assess transboundary risks.

4 Knowledge gaps

During the development of the NAS a workshop with scientists was organised to determine the research needs for implementation of measures identified in the NAS. Additionally, the Climate Adaptation Strategy progress report 2015³ and Science Plan 2017⁴ (Climate Change Centre Austria) identified remaining knowledge gaps. These gaps are addressed and prioritised in research programmes like the Austrian Climate Research Program and StartClim.

5 Knowledge transfer

³ BMNT, formerly BMLFUW (2015). Anpassung an den Klimawandel in Österreich: Fortschrittsbericht. Available at: https://www.bmlfuw.gv.at/dam/jcr:affd5225-8d2b-4772-9977-da229f5b5690/Fortschrittsbericht-Final_v17_2015-12-02_klein.pdf

⁴ Science Plan 2017. Available at: https://www.ccca.ac.at/fileadmin/00_DokumenteHauptmenue/03_Aktivitaeten/Science_Plan/CCCA_Science_Plan.pdf_20170502.pdf

Information, guidelines and support for municipalities on adaptation measures are provided by the BMNT website and the national platform for climate adaptation. The latter also provides guidance to Bundesländer and sectors. Clarification is provided e.g. on national climate policies. Two handbooks^{5,6} have been published to support politicians and experts in regional and local administrations, in developing adaptation strategies and implementation measures. Additionally, the Ministry financed several workshops to inform and train local and regional government officials.

Step C: Identifying adaptation options

6 Adaptation options' identification

For all 14 priority sectors (see above) vulnerability assessments have been conducted (9 in the NAS and 5 in the NAP). No specific adaptation options were prioritised, but in general the NAS suggests prioritising no-regret options, and measures that are flexible and/or provide non-climate co-benefits. In order to align climate adaptation and disaster risk management policies there is regular exchange between BMNT and the Ministry of the Interior on adaptation action and its implications for DRM policies such as the SKKM Strategy 2020⁷.

7 Funding resources identified and allocated

There is no dedicated budget for adaptation. The NAS states that 'the implementation of the recommendations must be achieved with public resources from existing jurisdictions of all governmental authorities'. Although the NAS explicitly requires the availability of funding for adaptation measures, particularly in vulnerable sectors, it is unclear whether sufficient money is currently available to finance the required adaptation measures.

Step D: Implementing adaptation action

8 Mainstreaming adaptation in planning processes

Currently, climate adaptation has not been mainstreamed into EIAs, national DRM plans and insurance policies. An amendment of the EIA law expected in 2018 will incorporate climate adaptation considerations. The NAS aims to adapt the crisis and disaster protection management strategy 2020, to incorporate climate change impacts. Management of natural hazards (e.g. floods) are frequently mentioned in spatial planning policies, but other issues (e.g. green infrastructure) are not. Cities are more advanced with integrating climate adaptation into spatial planning than regions. Several of the 14 priority sectors have already integrated climate adaptation considerations in their policies.

BMNT facilitates the implementation of adaptation measures by providing information, funding and capacity-building to municipalities and Bundesländer. A guideline⁸ has been

⁵ Umweltbundesamt (2014). Methods and Tools for Adaptation to Climate Change. Available at: http://www.klimawandelanpassung.at/fileadmin/inhalte/kwa/pdfs/HANDBUCH_EN.pdf

⁶

CCact (2016). Klimawandelanpassung umsetzen – Lebensqualität erhöhen; Ein Handbuch für MultiplikatorInnen zur Beratung österreichischer Gemeinden und Regionen. Available at: <http://www.anpassung.at/ccact/downloads/CC-Act-Handbuch.pdf>

⁷ Personal communication with a MS representative.

⁸ SKKM (2009). Strategie 2020. Available at: http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BMI_Zivilschutz/skkm/files/002_SKKM_Strategie_2020.pdf

⁸ Pütz, M., Kruse, S., Butterling, M. (2011). Bewertung der Klimawandel-Fitness der Raumplanung: Ein Leitfaden für PlanerInnen. Projekt CLISP, ETC Alpine Space Programm. Available at: http://www.klimawandelanpassung.at/fileadmin/inhalte/kwa/pdfs/Clisp_Leitfaden_Klimawandelfitness.pdf

developed to support the implementation of adaptation measures in spatial planning generally, rather than specifically for major projects. Furthermore, the NAP regularly mentions handbooks and guidelines from the EU. Until now, non-public stakeholders have been little involved in the implementation of adaptation measures, but plans are being made to increase their involvement. The monitoring report⁹ provides an update on implementation progress and indicates that the majority of actions in the NAP are either in the execution or planning phase.

Step E: Monitoring and evaluation of adaptation activities

10 Monitoring and reporting

Although there are no separate sectoral, regional or local monitoring reports, the national reports on the progress of the NAS/NAP do evaluate the progress regarding the implementation of climate adaptation measures within the 14 action areas, starting with a stakeholder survey followed by an indicator-based assessment. The evaluation of the level of mainstreaming of climate adaptation into sectoral policies in these areas relies heavily on the provision of information by sectors, regional and local stakeholders.

11 Evaluation

The evaluation of the progress of the implementation of the NAS/NAP is done in the progress reports mentioned above. Where necessary, these progress reports result in amendments being made to the NAS/NAP. Stakeholders were asked to provide comments, and engaged in workshops on the NAS/NAP evaluation process.

⁹ BMNT, formerly BMLFUW (2015). Anpassung an den Klimawandel in Österreich: Fortschrittsbericht. Available at: https://www.bmlfuw.gv.at/dam/jcr:affd5225-8d2b-4772-9977-da229f5b5690/Fortschrittsbericht-Final_v17_2015-12-02_klein.pdf