

Adaptation preparedness scoreboard:

Summary for Estonia

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

The national adaptation strategy, "Development Plan for Climate Change Adaptation until 2030", was adopted by the Government on 2nd March 2017. The adoption of the NAS was originally planned for November 2016. Due to the delay, the implementation of adaptation measures was expected only to begin in 2018, and therefore the annual reporting obligations would apply from March 1, 2019 instead of March 1, 2018. Issues for Estonia to address include coordination with disaster risk management, overall mainstreaming of adaptation in other policy areas.

Adaptation strategies

The national adaptation strategy, "Development Plan for Climate Change Adaptation until 2030"¹, was adopted by the Government on 2nd March 2017. On a regional level, the capital of Estonia, Tallinn, and the cities of Rakvere, Jõgeva, Tartu, Viimsi and Rõuge municipalities intend to develop strategies and action plans for climate change adaptation. This process has only started in Tallinn (approximately 34% of the population).

Adaptation action plans

The Estonian NAP was adopted by the government in March 2017². However, no regional plans have yet been developed. The adaptation plan for the city of Tallinn is expected to be adopted by the end of 2018, but implementation will not be completed before 2019.

Step A: Preparing the ground for adaptation

1 Coordination structure

The Estonian Ministry of Environment (MoE) and within it the Climate and Radiation Department is the institution responsible for all climate change mitigation and adaptation related activities in Estonia. As far as sectoral involvement is concerned, a steering committee has been formed as a coordination mechanism, including different ministries and NGOs. The steering group also includes regional representatives. Vertical coordination relies on action by the Association of Estonian Cities and Rural Municipalities (the voluntary union that coordinates Covenant of Mayors activity among local municipalities).

¹ Climate Change Adaptation, URL: <http://www.envir.ee/en/news-goals-activities/climate/climate-change-adaptation>, Date accessed: 04/05/2018

² Kliimamuutustega kohanemise arengukava rakendusplaan 2017-2020, URL: http://www.envir.ee/sites/default/files/kliimamuutustega_kohanemise_arengukava_aastani_2030_rakendusplaan_aastateks_2017-2020.xlsx, Access date: 14/05/2018

2 Stakeholders' involvement in policy development

Stakeholders were consulted in the development of the NAS. There was a 3-week period of public review of the NAS draft with a public hearing at the end of the period. The NAS draft was published online for public consultation, and several public information seminars were held. The need for transboundary cooperation is acknowledged in the NAS, especially regarding the fishing sector. However, no specific measures have been implemented yet.

Step B: Assessing risks and vulnerabilities to climate change

3 Current and projected climate change

The Estonian Environment Agency weather service is responsible for monitoring climate whereas the Estonian Rescue Board publishes practical emergency instructions, including in extreme weather conditions. The IPCC AR5 scenarios are used in climate change projections. The vulnerability assessments considered in the NAS considered climate impacts in different sectors and the adaptation measures that could be taken in response. Climate risk/vulnerability assessments consider transboundary risk in the fishing sector, but it is not clear whether transboundary risks are also addressed in other sectors.

4 Knowledge gaps

The MoE has conducted four in-depth sectorial adaptation studies that set out the approach for addressing knowledge gaps and dealing with uncertainties. The adaptation measures put forward in the NAS and NAP are designed to increase awareness and resilience, and to comply with the principle of precaution.

5 Knowledge transfer

Comprehensive information about adaptation-relevant policy developments and underlying studies has been published on the MoE website. The capacity-building activities were implemented in the framework of the development of the NAS a priority objective within the "society, awareness and co-operation" frame. The EEA Financial Mechanism project on Elaboration of Estonia's Draft NAS and NAP organised several public awareness and knowledge transfer events.

Step C: Identifying adaptation options

6 Adaptation options' identification

The priority sectors listed in the NAS include: health, land use and planning, natural environment, economy, bioeconomy, infrastructure, energy and society, awareness and cooperation. Adaptation actions for each of these sectors are listed in the NAP. The prioritisation of measures followed multi-criteria analyses, stakeholder consultations, the opinion of the inter-ministerial committee, and opinions of experts. There is currently no coordination mechanism between climate adaptation and disaster risk management in place. However, the development of a mechanism for such coordination is planned and will begin in 2019.

7 Funding resources identified and allocated

The funding of the NAS and NAP have been planned in detail. It will entail a combination between state funding, EU funding under different EU policies and funds and funding from Environmental Investment Centre. Given that implementation is at an early stage, it is too soon to say whether the funding has been made available in practice.

Step D: Implementing adaptation action

8 Mainstreaming adaptation in planning processes

Adaptation has been mainstreamed in Estonian policy decisions on implementation of Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment. While adaptation is considered in disaster risk management plans, it is not clear how climate projections are featured in them. The NAS does not include specific mainstreaming measures regarding spatial planning and land use, rather it calls for further research and the development of guidance materials. No adaptation mainstreaming has been planned regarding maritime planning. Adaptation is not yet mainstreamed in the priority sectors, partly as a result of the delay in approving the NAS. Although economic issues, including insurance markets, are prioritised in the NAS, adaptation has not yet been mainstreamed, on the grounds that further research is needed in this area.

9 Implementing adaptation

The implementation of adaptation policies and measures has started, but is not expected to be completed before the end of 2019. MoE has initiated the development of an implementation monitoring working group to support adaptation at subnational level, but it has not yet been established. Guidelines published by the European Commission in relation to large projects are used, but there are no national guidelines on adaptation issues for such projects. However, spatial planning guidelines are due to be developed. Stakeholders are involved in the NAS development and implementation through participation in a working group established by MoE.

Step E: Monitoring and evaluation of adaptation activities

10 Monitoring and reporting

The sectoral and overall monitoring of the NAS and NAP implementation is expected to be carried out by a working group organised by MoE that would present the Government with an overview on the execution of the development plan and the achievement of its objectives once a year. No monitoring mechanism has been developed to address regional/local adaptation progress.

11 Evaluation

The intention is that the NAS and NAP will be reviewed and evaluated annually following the presentation of a report on implementation by the working group within the Ministry of Environment to the Government. This process will begin on March 1, 2019. Stakeholders are also involved in the working group.