

SOUTH EAST EUROPE TRANSNATIONAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME

3rd Call for Proposals

Terms of reference

Climate Change Adaptation: assessing vulnerabilities
and risks and translating them to implementation
actions at the regional and local levels

March 2011

1. Background

The reality of climate change and the need to take action has permeated European policy agendas at all levels in recent years. Climate change is an issue for which transnational cooperation has a special relevance; efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change cannot be taken by countries in isolation if they are to be effective. Climate change is also a cross-sectoral issue, which requires the cooperation of different institutions and actors at all levels of administration and governance, including the general public. While many solutions and technologies to mitigate and adapt to climate change are already available, the techniques for their application, particularly at local and regional levels, are lacking in the SEE Programme region. Due to its specific geographic and economic factors, the changing climate poses particularly serious threats to most parts of the SEE Programme region. There is therefore considerable strategic potential for countries of the SEE region to take an integrated and coordinated approach to tackling the challenge of climate change.¹

Throughout Europe, temperatures have increased by 0.8°C over the last hundred years, more rapidly than the global average; the 1990s were the warmest decade on record.² Sea level has risen by 17 cm during the 20th century.³ The warmer atmosphere is changing precipitation patterns; much of the territory in the region covered by the SEE Programme will experience more frequent droughts. Coastal and mountain areas as well as flood plains will be particularly vulnerable. Climate change is expected to affect food supply, health, transport, other infrastructure, agriculture, and ecosystem integrity. Projections show that if all emissions stopped now, a further 0.5-1°C increase in the global annual mean surface temperature would be experienced in the coming decades.⁴ “Climate adaptation” is the term used to describe all activities aimed at preparing for or dealing with these and other inevitable impacts of climate change.

A White Paper published by the European Commission in 2009⁵ points out that adaptation is already taking place across Europe, but in a piecemeal, reactive manner based on immediate needs. Crisis control must be dealt with in the short term, but the ultimate challenge is the long-term need for adaptive capacity.

The Stern Review⁶ defines vulnerability to climate change as “*exposure* to changes in the climate, *sensitivity* – the degree to which a system is affected by or responsive to climate stimuli, and *adaptive capacity* – the ability to prepare for, respond to and tackle the effects of climate change.” It is clear that many parts of the SEE Programme are particularly exposed to the effects of changes in the climate, and that the socio-economic systems are very sensitive to this.

¹ A detailed background paper on the Climate Change theme for the SEE Programme is available on the SEE Programme website (www.southeast-europe.net).

² IPCC (2007) *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. IPCC Working Group II, Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Ed. Martin Parry, M., Canziani, O., Palutikof, J., van der Linden, P. Hanson, C. Cambridge.

³ IPCC (2007)

⁴ DG Regional Policy (2009) *Regions 2020: The Climate Change Challenge For European Regions* Brussels, March 2009 Background Document To Commission Staff Working Document Sec (2008) 2868 *Final Regions 2020, An Assessment Of Future Challenges for EU Regions*.

⁵ European Commission (2009) *Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action*, COM(2009) 147 final

⁶ Stern, N. (ed) (2006) *The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

The SEE Programme region faces obstacles related to each of these factors, due to technical, economic and institutional limitations. The SEE/CCFAP-A⁷ cites the lack of an institutional and legal framework to facilitate the process of preparation of national communications and other impact, vulnerability and adaptation studies. Another persistent problem is data availability, consistency and transparency, which leads to uncertainties linked with the climate change scenarios, and a lack of finer resolution regional climate models.⁸

Different effects in different local and regional areas will require that specific adaptation vulnerabilities are assessed at the these sub-national levels, and that adaptation planning and implementation are mainly handled by regional and in some cases local authorities. However, these authorities often lack climate expertise, and typically rely upon outside specialized institutions for data and information.

Especially the candidate countries lack the analytical and policy capacity to develop national climate policies and strategies tailored to the specific circumstances of each country.

Strategic projects to be funded by this 3rd Call for Proposals shall address the capacity, technical, information and other challenges and needs that local and regional authorities face in planning for adaptation to climate change.

2. Objectives

2.1 Overall objective

The ultimate goal for a strategic project under this theme is to raise adaptive capacity, develop and plan concrete set of adaptive measures and lower the vulnerability of SEE Programme partner states to climate change through coordinated, transnational work. To do so, the project will facilitate the capacity of regional and local authorities to better understand their specific climate vulnerabilities, based on the “exposure-sensitivity-adaptive capacity” model, through methodological work, networking, learning from best practice, and addressing institutional weaknesses.

2.2 Specific objectives

- To promote the integration of climate change adaptation objectives and issues into regional-level planning and programming
- To develop the capacity of selected regional and local authorities and stakeholders to understand climate vulnerabilities and plan for the longer-term needs of adaptation to climate change
- To introduce and disseminate to regional and local authorities, as well as associated stakeholders methodologies for the assessment of regional (and in some cases local) level exposure and sensitivity to climate change, based on available national and European-level studies, data and information to support the

⁷SEE/VCCC, REC, RHMS (2008), *South East European Climate Change Framework Action Plan for Adaptation*. The South East European Virtual Climate Change Center, the Regional Environmental Center, the Republic Hydrometeorological Service of Serbia.

⁸SEE/VCCC, REC, RHMS (2008)

knowledge and capacity of authorities and other stakeholders

- To increase dialogue and awareness between the producers and users of the data and information, and improve the quality, transparency, and usability of data and information related to climate vulnerabilities and impacts
- To improve the capacity of and cooperation between the institutions supporting climate change adaptation, including national, regional and local authorities, sectoral authorities, academic and research organizations, and scientific institutions responsible for the collection and presentation of relevant data and information
- To facilitate a network across countries of the SEE Programme region dedicated to the assessment of climate vulnerability at the regional level and the formulation of corresponding adaptation strategies

3. Activities

The project activities must build on a careful assessment of the previous achievements in the field, including SEE projects approved under the 1st and 2nd call for proposals and other actions implemented through different regional development programmes. Capitalisation of previous results is of outmost importance in order not to duplicate activities and to bring added value to the project.

The activities listed under 3.1 “Compulsory activities” must be included into all proposed strategic projects for consideration.

The activities listed under 3.2 “Additional indicative activities” are optional (and intends to offer a non exhaustive list of possible complementary activities). Additional activities can be added to the minimum set of compulsory activities, however their presence does not automatically ensure higher scores in the quality check of the assessment. Additional activities to the minimum set of compulsory ones are assessed according to the contribution they bring in to the achievements of the objectives of the project, their concreteness, feasibility and adequacy, also in relation to the budget, the partnership and the timeframe foreseen

3.1 Compulsory activities

- Exchange of experience seminars, targeted at specific sectors of common interest, to discuss different approaches to assessing climate vulnerability, collection and processing of information and integration of this information into local and regional planning
- Joint development (by partners and possible cooperating external experts) of a methodology or other guidance materials to assist local and regional authorities to integrate the data, information and other results of vulnerability studies into their spatial, economic and sectoral plans and programmes
- Seminars, workshops and other discussion platforms (e.g. online) specifically between data/information institutions and local/regional authorities and planners

- Development of 3 – 5 pilot vulnerability studies for local or regional areas within the partnership, to develop and demonstrate techniques for anticipating the impacts of climate change on local and regional communities, including their spatial planning and land use strategies. Pilot studies should have an emphasis on transferability of the results through seminars and written outputs

3.2 Additional indicative activities

- Establishment of a formal platform or mechanism (virtual or within a partner institution) for the sharing and common interpretation of data, information and studies on climate impacts and how to integrate them to local and regional planning

4. **Outputs**

- A set of pilot vulnerability studies for selected regions, based on sectoral threats and/or priorities, data availability and other factors
- A flexible methodology and/or guidance documents for regional-level climate vulnerability assessment and the use of assessments in planning adaptation strategies, based on techniques for downscaling, and their integration to local and regional planning
- Pilot strategies, based on issues identified during the seminars and other project activities, for integration of vulnerability assessment results into regional and local development, spatial and sectoral plans and policies
- A platform for exchange between the producers and users of climate change studies, data and information – i.e. technical experts and policy-makers/planners – such as a series of seminars, online tools,
- A formal network of specialists, trained to use modern tools for vulnerability assessment downscaled to the regional level (knowledge platform, clearing house) either virtual (online) or housed within one of the partners
- Training and capacity-building workshops, seminars and other events for local and regional authorities on these issues

5. **Beneficiaries**

5.1 Eligible Partnership

Maximum 3 (three) financing partners per country and per project concept can be involved (due to the high number of countries involved in the Programme, developing too large partnerships might hamper a smooth management, leading to strong deficiencies of the implementation).

At least 8 (eight) Partner States shall be included (in terms of location of Partners – both financing and ASP).

In addition, proposed partnerships must meet the following criteria, specific to this theme:

- At least three of the project partners (financing partners) should be institutions that are responsible for the collection and processing of data and information related to climate change.
- At least four of the project partners (financing partners) should be regional and/or local authorities with some demonstrated experience or good practice in addressing climate impacts through studies and planning efforts.

5.2 Further Recommendations

The ideal partnership will consist of between 12 – 16 partners. Furthermore a strong partnership consisting of a variety of stakeholders with different perspectives, capacities, and roles to play in the strategic project and includes partners with the specific competences to carry on the foreseen tasks per each region involved, towards the best transnational impact. A good partnership is balanced with regard to participation per country, distribution of the budget and responsibility and does include neither silent partners, nor all-purposes partners. A good partnership includes only partners which ensure a clear benefit for the country/region they represent, not only a financial benefit for the partner itself. Each proposed partnership must contain a lead partner, who will manage and coordinate the activities. The lead partner must have some demonstrated capacity (previous projects, etc.) to lead and manage large, international projects of this character. Ideally, the lead partner should have contacts and experience working in multiple countries of the region. Finally, there should be a good, demonstrated balance between partners that have experience and expertise to share and partners that are primarily looking to gain capacity in this field.

Project partners should consist of the following types of institutions and authorities:

- Institutions responsible for monitoring and assessing the impacts of climate change: National-level hydro-meteorological institutions or other environmental institutions at national/regional level
- Institutions responsible for the development and functioning of regions within a country: ministries of regional development (if not applicable other national institutions), local government, etc.
- Selected regional authorities (these should be limited to those with demonstrated experience and/or capacity or motivation to work in the field of climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning)
- Other public institutions of a national or international character with the capacity to address climate change adaptation