



Ten pillars for a climate-resilient Europe

Climate KIC's recommendations for the
EU Climate Resilience and Risk Management Framework

September 2024

www.climate-kic.org



Initiated by the EIT

Summary

The European Union stands at a critical juncture. The urgent imperatives of climate resilience and risk management are converging with the ambitions for economic competitiveness and security amidst geopolitically turbulent times, demanding transformative, joined-up action, bold leadership, and a long-term vision.

True prosperity depends on **aligning economic activity with social needs and planetary boundaries**. Without the capacity to adapt, bounce back from shocks, and regenerate in the face of uncertainty, Europe's economic prosperity and social cohesion will remain fragile and at risk. **A cohesive and integrated European approach to resilience, preparedness and adaptation** to climate change is therefore urgently needed.

The European Commission's proposed **Climate Resilience and Risk Management Framework** has the potential to respond to escalating climate risks and safeguard long-term prosperity. This framework is a unique opportunity to embed resilience as a strategic priority across all levels of governance, sectors, and regions.

Climate KIC, Europe's leading climate innovation agency and a key partner in the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change, welcomes this initiative. Drawing on on-the-ground experience from working with a network of 200 regions and communities across Europe, and leading flagship programmes such as Pathways2Resilience, Climate KIC advocates for a framework that empowers local actors, integrates innovation, and ensures just and measurable climate resilience outcomes.

We offer ten evidence-based recommendations to help shape a bold, systemic, and inclusive European resilience agenda:

Ten recommendations for a climate-resilient Europe

1. Pursue an integrated, systemic, coherent, multi-level governance approach to resilience
2. Embed innovation as a catalyst for 'resilience by design'
3. Ensure just resilience is at the core
4. Formulate ambitious, measurable targets and provide the enabling conditions to achieve them
5. Harmonise monitoring, reporting, and verification obligations
6. Empower local implementation through capacity building, skills building, and tailored support
7. Ensure long-term financing and enable resource mobilisation
8. Co-design nature-based solutions to generate co-benefits
9. Build on existing tools and frameworks
10. Leverage the power of EU Missions to deliver resilience at scale

1. Pursue an integrated, systemic, coherent, multi-level governance approach to resilience

Climate KIC advocates for the EU to move decisively from fragmented adaptation efforts towards an integrated and systemic EU resilience agenda. The new framework must connect climate adaptation with disaster risk reduction, health, biodiversity, nature restoration, civil protection, sectoral strategies for infrastructure, energy, water and agriculture, while aligning with the European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA) and ensuring policy coherence across all relevant EU initiatives.

Given that most adaptation actions are implemented locally, functional multi-level governance arrangements with clearly defined roles and responsibilities are essential to empowering local and regional authorities to lead effective, context-specific resilience efforts while ensuring smooth coordination and adequate support from national and EU levels. Embedding resilience as a strategic priority at all governance levels will ensure that lessons learned from regional implementation form the foundation for coherent and impactful EU policy.

2. Embed innovation as a catalyst for ‘resilience by design’

Climate KIC advocates for the new framework to embed innovation as a key enabler of ‘resilience by design’. Innovation must be present at every stage of the adaptation policy and implementation cycle – from participatory policy co-creation, financing, and regulation to the deployment of innovative solutions on the ground – in order to transform analysis and experience into applied learning and effective solutions. Innovation is the best possible means of building adaptive capability. Such a framework will then in turn position resilience as a powerful source and driver of European prosperity, entrepreneurship and competitiveness, mainstreaming resilience standards and climate resilient approaches into policies, procurement, and project delivery to set clear benchmarks for impact.

3. Ensure just resilience is at the core

From Climate KIC’s perspective, ensuring just resilience is fundamental to building a climate-resilient Europe that leaves no one behind. The EU Integrated Framework must embed principles of equity, inclusion, and social justice at its core, recognising that climate risks and impacts vary significantly across regions and vulnerable groups.

By aligning with just transition principles, the Framework can leverage EU Cohesion Funds and other financing tools to drive fair access to resources, capacity-building, and green job creation, especially in regions facing heightened risk or economic transition.

Ultimately, just resilience means designing adaptation solutions that distribute benefits equitably, preventing maladaptation, avoiding the reinforcement of inequalities, and fostering social cohesion, thereby transforming climate risk into opportunities for inclusive prosperity and long-term sustainability.

4. Formulate ambitious, measurable targets and provide the enabling conditions to achieve them

Climate KIC calls for a binding EU climate resilience goal by 2050, underpinned by a clear and harmonised definition of resilience and ambitious, measurable targets and indicators. The targets and indicators must be co-designed with key sectors, regions, citizens, and local actors for a tailored approach that addresses Europe's varied climate vulnerabilities and risk landscapes.

It is crucial that the following six key enabling conditions are addressed:

- effective multi-level governance, engagement and collaboration;
- adequate financing and resources;
- validated and usable knowledge and data;
- behavioural change;
- capabilities and skills;
- experimentation and learning.

Embedding these conditions at local and regional levels ensures tailored, effective resilience actions that drive lasting transformations. Climate KIC's work through the EU Missions and flagship projects demonstrates how these conditions accelerate impact and shape resilient futures in practice.

5. Harmonise monitoring, reporting, and verification obligations

Robust, harmonised monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) mechanisms are essential to enhance, scale and track climate resilience. The Framework should simplify and align MRV obligations across governance levels, ensuring that reporting under National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), national risk assessments, and local initiatives and plans is harmonised. Streamlined MRV will reduce administrative burdens, improve data consistency, and enable clearer tracking of EU-wide and national resilience progress.

Leveraging digital tools, evidence-based learning, and open data for real-time tracking and adaptive management is key. Innovations from AI-driven foresight to regional scenario planning, pathway formulation and citizen engagement should be integrated to ensure local knowledge, citizen science, observation and action, and local solutions flow seamlessly from the ground to policy, empowering communities with actionable insights.

6. Empower local implementation through capacity building, skills building, and tailored support

The new framework must prioritise the empowering of local implementation through targeted capacity and skills building, as well as tailored support. The Adaptation Mission

flagship programme that Climate KIC leads, Pathways2Resilience, is providing multiple learnings to inform a capacity- and capability-building approach by guiding over 100 European regions through adaptive, systemic climate planning with hands-on training, direct funding, and peer learning. By strengthening governance, innovation, finance, and behavioural capabilities at the local level, interventions ensure that adaptation strategies are actionable, context-specific, and equitable. This tailored empowerment is essential because it is local and regional authorities who deliver the majority of climate adaptation measures and require dedicated support to navigate systemic complexity.

7. Ensure long-term financing and enable resource mobilisation

A climate-resilient Europe requires coordinated, predictable and long-term financing at all governance levels. As such, a climate resilience lens should be embedded across EU budgeting and financing to safeguard Europe's social, economic, and ecological health. The upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) must explicitly prioritise climate resilience by embedding a clear EU definition of resilience into its performance framework.

At broader EU level, dedicated funding streams for resilience and adaptation are essential to ensure equitable access for all regions and municipalities; to help unlock these, the framework should support and leverage innovative public-private partnerships and risk-sharing mechanisms. Addressing the insurance protection gap is especially urgent, as only 25% of climate-related losses in Europe are currently insured, exposing communities and economies to major financial risks and losses. Insurers will need harmonised reporting, monitoring, verification requirements and standardisation of definitions across to EU in order to anticipate, pool and manage intensifying risks effectively.

8. Co-design nature-based solutions to generate co-benefits

The new initiative should explicitly address the need for co-designing and implementing nature-based solutions (NbS). NbS harness and restore natural ecosystems to reduce climate risks while delivering broad co-benefits, including improved biodiversity and enhanced public health. Scaling NbS and embedding nature-positive approaches in governance and finance enables cities and regions to fulfil national and EU climate ambitions, generating long-term environmental, social and economic benefits. By emphasising the role of NbS and investing in nature-positive approaches, Europe will enable the window of 'insurability' to manage risks to remain open and the economy this viable and competitive.

9. Build on what already exists

The new initiative should build on existing frameworks and tools, enabling regions and local actors to select and apply the most suitable approaches for their specific contexts. By recognising the diversity of climate risks, governance structures, and capacities across Europe, the initiative can avoid duplication and complexity while fostering synergy and coherence. Leveraging existing approaches, tools and frameworks such as the European Climate Risk Assessment and the Pathways2Resilience Regional Resilience Journey ensures that lessons learned, data, and successful practices are accessible, adaptable, and replicable. This flexible, supportive approach empowers regions to innovate effectively, accelerate implementation, and contribute meaningfully to overarching EU resilience goals.

10. Leverage the power of the EU Missions to deliver resilience at scale

To accelerate impact on the ground, the new initiative should leverage the readily available findings, knowledge, know-how and proven impact of the HE Mission on Climate Adaptation, which supports over 150 regions and communities in advancing climate resilience through strong multi-level governance, tailored local support, and collaboration.

Building upon the Mission Adaptation's learnings and successes means, among others, prioritising real-world results in Horizon Europe Mission projects; considering the commercialisation and scaling of innovative solutions from the outset; strengthening and expanding peer learning networks and innovation hubs established under the Mission, while enhancing coordination between EU, national, and local actors. Leveraging the Mission's collaborative model and support platforms will accelerate the implementation of truly transformative and scalable resilience solutions.

Conclusions and further resources

By embedding the ten above mentioned pillars in the upcoming integrated European Climate Resilience and Risk Management Framework, the EU can unleash a new wave of transformative climate innovation – one that mobilises regional and local actors as co-creators, accelerates systemic and equitable resilience, nurtures prosperity, and ensures that climate action is deeply rooted in the realities and potential of European places and people.

Only such an approach will position the EU as a global leader in delivering climate-resilient, inclusive, and regenerative futures at scale. This is the pathway towards strengthening Europe's competitiveness, safeguarding social and territorial cohesion, and securing Europe's long-term strategic autonomy and prosperity.

Climate KIC is Europe's leading climate innovation agency and community, creating climate-resilient communities and fighting climate breakdown by mobilising systems change in countries, regions, cities, and businesses. Together with partners across the globe, Climate KIC orchestrates solutions and facilitates learning to bridge the gap between climate commitments and current reality, driving faster and more ambitious action.

Contact

Lena C. Grobusch, Policy Specialist, Climate Resilient Regions
lena.grobusch@climate-kic.org

www.climate-kic.org

Keep up with Climate KIC's latest on:
[LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Spotify](#)

© Climate KIC

Climate KIC either owns or has the right to use or licence all intellectual property rights in this publication, and the material published on it. These works are protected by copyright laws and treaties around the world. All rights are reserved. You may print off one copy, and may use extracts, of any page(s) from this publication to which you have access, for your personal use. However, you must not use any illustrations, photographs, video or audio sequences or any graphics separately from any accompanying text. You must not use any part of the materials in this publication for commercial purposes without obtaining a licence to do so from Climate KIC or its licensors. The status of Climate KIC (and that of any identified contributors) as the authors of material in this publication must always be acknowledged.