

EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change

Mission Board's reflections on progress, achievements and way forward

April 2026

333

Regions & authorities
signed the Charter

600+

RLACs engaged in
Mission activities

€596M

EU investment in 64
Horizon Europe projects

185

On-the-ground
demonstration sites

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1. EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change

Advancing climate resilience in European regions and communities

Climate change is reshaping our lives. Heatwaves, water scarcity, wildfires, floods and coastal erosion are disrupting communities, damaging economies, and straining public services across the continent. Building climate resilience is necessary to better cope with these challenges

The [EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change](#), a flagship initiative under Horizon Europe, was launched to **support at least 150 European regions, local authorities and communities (RLACs) towards climate resilience, between 2021 and 2030**. It pioneers a genuinely new way of working — one that brings together research and innovation, political commitment, and local action under a shared, time-bound purpose.

In Guimarães, we want to achieve our climate neutrality by 2030. Being part of the EU Mission and having support from MIP4Adapt is helping us to build a step-by-step approach. (...) We are having support to develop some specific projects related with our challenges in the territory. We created our retention basins to protect our urban area. (...) MIP4Adapt is helping us to develop new projects and to protect our territory for the future.

*Guimarães Municipality, Portugal
Francisco Carvalho, Climate Transition Team, Laboratório da Paisagem –
General, Research & Innovation Coordinator*

Mission's objectives

To realise its overarching goal, the Mission advances three interlinking objectives that span a continuum from awareness to action:

- **Prepare Europe for climate disruptions:** providing broad-based support to RLACs to better understand, prepare for, and manage climate risks.
- **Accelerate transition to a resilient future:** supporting at least 150 RLACs to strengthen their institutional capacity and accelerate adaptation efforts.
- **Build and demonstrate resilience:** demonstrating on-the-ground resilience solutions in at least 75 RLACs and preparing those solutions for replication across Europe.

The Mission Board

The [Mission Board](#) brings together renowned experts appointed in their personal capacity to advise on the Mission's implementation. In this role, the Board closely follows Mission activities and provides independent feedback from their respective territories. The members act as a 'sounding Board' of the Mission and contribute to Mission implementation through

advocacy and outreach, engagement with stakeholders at multiple governance levels and raising public awareness.

The group combines multidisciplinary expertise covering a range of fields from climate science, meteorology, risk management, early warning systems, financing, to heat resilience and infrastructure adaptation among others. In addition, members bring hands-on experience in regional, European and international policy making, as well as citizen engagement.

2. From ambition to delivery

Launched as a time-bound initiative (2021–2030), the Mission has now reached its midpoint and is delivering tangible results. This document provides a short summary of Mission's progress and achievements until March 2026, as well as Board's reflections and recommendations on the way forward.

Political commitment

At the foundation of the Mission is the **Mission Charter** — a public pledge through which regional and local authorities formally commit to climate resilience. The response has been overwhelming. So far **333 RLACs from 30 countries had signed it** - covering over **280 million inhabitants** - more than double the original target of 150. It reflects the genuine resonance of the Mission's purpose at local and regional level, demonstrating that the need for climate adaptation is universal, even if its form varies by territory.

The Charter has created something rare in EU policymaking - **a growing political constituency for climate resilience**, publicly committed to a shared European agenda.

*As Emilia-Romagna, we want to move from the Adaptation Strategy to the Adaptation Plan for our region. We signed the Mission Charter in 2021 and we are working with MIP4Adapt. They support us in **defining the indicators** for monitoring the adaptation action measures in our plan and programme. They also assist us in **defining an action plan** for our region.*

Emilia Romagna Region, Italy

Patrizia Bianconi, Climate Change and Sustainability Expert/ Net-zero policy Adviser

Technical Assistance

Ambition and knowledge are necessary but not sufficient. For many of Europe's regions — particularly smaller municipalities and less affluent areas — the barrier to adaptation is not awareness but institutional capacity. The Mission has tackled this directly through a major programme of **tailored technical and financial assistance**, delivered at scale. By December 2025, **292 RLACs** had received or were actively receiving tailored technical

assistance - nearly double the original target of 150, with 131 having already completed their programmes and a further **120 RLAs set to begin in 2026**.

The support was delivered by **MIP4Adapt** - the Mission Implementation Platform - and two major Cascade Support Projects acting as accessible entry points for regions seeking structured EU support: Pathways2Resilience and CLIMAAX.

***Pathways2Resilience** is supporting around 100 RLACs over an 18-month period to co-design climate resilience strategies, action plans, and investment plans.*

***CLIMAAX** is enabling 68 RLACs to conduct or update climate risk assessments, strengthening their analytical capacity and supporting evidence-based decision-making.*

*We are grateful to be part of the **MIP4Adapt** initiative, which has helped us enhance our region's climate resilience. Through the initiative, we established a working group that **organised a regional event**, raised awareness, and **engaged stakeholders** in ways that wouldn't have been possible otherwise.*

*Goriška region, Slovenia
Ivana Kacafura, Project Manager – Energy Technical Expert*

In addition, the Mission helped RLAs strengthen engagement with their stakeholders and citizens, fostering their involvement in climate adaptation.

On the ground, **the effects are tangible:**

- **Andalucía** co-developed a practical financing guide helping municipalities unlock climate funds.
- **Göteborg** embedded adaptation into mainstream city governance through a systematic strategy review.
- **Île-de-France** moved from fragmented investment to a fully coordinated regional system - with a data observatory, formalised partnerships, and shared data accessible to all territorial actors.

Portfolio of projects

The Mission is implemented through **64 Horizon Europe projects** covering all key adaptation challenges, representing an EU investment of **EUR 596 million** (between 2021 and 2025). They are coordinated by MIP4Adapt which provides tailored technical assistance, facilitates knowledge exchange, and ensures a maximum collective impact. Progress is tracked and shows that Mission exceeds its original targets.

SpongeWorks aims to address floods, droughts and biodiversity decline by advancing new approaches for enhancing the water retention capacity of landscapes in Europe.

Christian Albert, SpongeWorks Coordinator, Leibniz University Hannover

Demonstration programme

Across Europe, numerous regions are actively testing and implementing innovative climate resilience measures. **Demonstrator and replicator territories** function as living laboratories where cutting-edge research meets local governance, and where solutions are co-created, tested, refined, validated in real-world conditions, and prepared for replication.

NATURE-DEMO creates, validates and scales up nature-based solutions (NbS) for protecting infrastructure against climate threats, with real-world demonstrations of optimised NbS at 5 sites in the Alpine biogeographic region. The successful NbS will then be expanded as replicators to 4 other sites in the other European biogeographical regions.

Nature-Demo project

The stories emerging from these territories are powerful:

- In **Portugal's Centro Region**, small landowners collaborate to manage forest fire risk, simultaneously delivering ecological gains and new rural livelihoods.
- In **Fryslân in the Netherlands**, river meanders are being restored and dikes reinforced with nature-based solutions that generate recreational and ecological co-benefits alongside flood protection.
- In **the Greek Aegean Islands**, ancient practices - rainwater harvesting, dry-stone terraces, aquifer recharge - have been revived as thoroughly modern climate resilience strategies.
- In **Transylvania**, Romania, communities use drones and native seed mixes to restore degraded mountain grasslands, improving soil health and water retention.
- In **Sardinia**, Italy, a pioneering 'Coastal Contract' brings municipalities, regional authorities, and civil society together to jointly plan coastal adaptation across an entire stretch of coastline.

Community of Practice

Knowledge is the Mission's most transferable asset. Across Europe, thousands of urban planners, climate officers, and regional administrators face similar challenges in isolation. The Mission's Community of Practice (CoP) was built to change this. With over **600 active participants**, it has become a vibrant arena where solutions developed in one city become the inspiration for action in another.

The Mission Community is very helpful for us and our region because it gives us a chance to learn from other local authorities, share experiences, and find project partners from across Europe. It's a great way to move forward better and faster.

Technical Assistance is really useful because it is flexible and tailored to what we need and when we need it. It also gives us a better idea of what other regional and local authorities are doing, which is inspiring for us. The Peer Learning Programme is a great space to build connections, find and access useful tools, and also to showcase what we have done so far.

*Region Centre Val de Loire, France
Jérémy Godet, Vice-President, Climate and Energy Transition*

Mission Forums

Mission Annual and Regional Forums bring together Mission community and stakeholders providing an opportunity for an in-person exchanges, learning and showcasing practical examples of how participating regions are adapting to climate challenges. Organised in close collaboration with the rotating Presidency of the Council and local actors, they attract regional policy makers and stimulate political commitment.

3. Achievements

Since its launch in 2021, the Mission has generated a set of cross-cutting achievements that reflect its maturation into a genuine driver of systemic change in European climate governance.

Up to date, the Mission largely exceeded its initial target and engaged over 600 RLACs through the Charter, Technical Assistance or Mission projects. By bringing them together, it created one of the largest **voluntary resilience coalitions** ever assembled at EU level. Authorities have voluntarily joined the initiative, actively seeking engagement—a strong indication of the Mission's effectiveness

The Mission was designed as a **catalyst for mobilising national and local investment**. Early evidence confirms this is working. Some 81% of adaptation actions reported by Signatories are financed from their own budgets, suggesting that Mission engagement translates into genuine spending commitments at local level. Synergies with LIFE projects represent almost **€162 million in complementary investment**, and the 2026–2027 Horizon Europe work programme dedicates nearly **€160 million to joint calls** with the Cities Mission, Soil Mission, New European Bauhaus, and Circular Cities and Regions Initiative. The Mission also helps to address the insurance gap.

*PIISA aims to develop and deploy a range of **insurance innovations** to cover at least **50% of losses attributable to climate change effects** in Europe. The project hopes to support households, firms, and public authorities to set up adaptation and*

create adaptation promoting conditions.

PIISA project

This practical momentum will accelerate further in 2026.

The **launch of [National Adaptation Hubs](#)** across all EU Member States last year is a promising development toward systemic, multi-level climate governance. These hubs will connect national authorities, regions, cities and research organisations, strengthen coordination, and foster peer learning and cross border cooperation. Complementing this effort, the **[Regilience+ project](#)** will transform 150 proven solutions into hands on tools, trainings and operational materials tailored to real territorial needs. Together with the upgraded Mission Implementation Platform, **[MIP4Adapt 2.0](#)**, these instruments will make knowledge actionable and speed up smarter, more systemic resilience across Europe.

City of Bremen joined the Mission because it is very helpful for us to learn from other regions and see what they do in terms of climate adaptation. We received technical and financial assistance from the Mission, and this was also a very good exercise to understand how we could ultimately finance the significant measures defined in our Adaptation Strategy (...).

We are involved in several projects now due to the Mission, where we have had a lot of exchange and the possibility to mingle with other cities, talk to them, and discuss the possibilities of collaborating in projects, as well as reflecting on our own activities.

Bremen, Germany

Christof Voßeler, Head of the Climate Adaptation Unit

4. Lessons Learnt

As the Mission approaches its midpoint, four clear lessons are emerging from the experience of implementation — lessons that are shaping its ongoing development and that offer broader insights for climate governance at EU level.

First, **cross-border peer learning** delivers clear European added value - reducing duplication, accelerating adaptation, and enabling cost-efficient scaling.

Second, **institutional capacity**, not awareness, is the binding constraint, and targeted technical assistance is indispensable for unlocking it.

Third, **co-creation processes** - genuinely bringing together researchers, policymakers, and communities - drive both better solutions and deeper ownership of them.

Fourth, and perhaps most fundamentally, **adaptation is irreducibly local**: climate impacts, governance systems, and cultures vary too greatly across Europe for a one-size-fits-all approach. The Mission's flexibility is not a compromise - it is a design principle.

*In Galicia, with the support of the Technical Assistance, we have initiated the update of our **stakeholder map** with the aim of contributing to strengthening our **multi-level governance**. We have started collaborating with municipal entities, promoting the creation of **green infrastructures** to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.*

*We strongly encourage other regional and local authorities to join the Mission Community, as it offers significant added value (...). The knowledge and learning we are acquiring within the framework of the Mission are (...) helping us a lot to identify areas for improvement in our **planning process** and also enhance our **engagement** with key stakeholders.*

Galicia, Spain

María del Carmen Cañedo Padiñ, Climate Change

5. Moving forward: reflections from the Board

The evidence gathered confirms that the Mission is delivering **tangible progress** while laying the foundations for longer-term systemic resilience. The objectives set in 2021 were ambitious. By now, the Climate Adaptation Mission **already exceeded its target** by supporting 327 regions in their climate adaptation efforts, well above its 150 goal. This achievement was made possible through a new way of working, a coordinated approach that brings together political mobilisation, knowledge sharing, technical support, and practical implementation on the ground.

As the Mission matures and its first cohort of projects concludes, **its impact becomes increasingly visible** on the ground: better-prepared municipalities, stronger regional governance frameworks, and more communities capable of anticipating and withstanding climate shocks. This makes it vital to **sustain adequate financing and support** so that the work can be carried through to completion.

The support from the EU Mission through MIP4Adapt has been highly valuable for our region. Expert input helped refine our climate adaptation plan, particularly on risk mitigation. The Zoom consultations provided practical guidance, relevant methodologies and deeper insight into climate planning. MIP4Adapt also supported us in identifying funding sources and developing monitoring indicators, significantly strengthening our strategy and building our confidence for implementation.

Vidzeme Planning Region, Latvia

Maija Rieksta, Project Manager

The experience generated through the Mission will directly inform the forthcoming **European Integrated Framework for Climate Resilience**, grounding it in the realities, priorities, and solutions emerging from Europe's regions and communities. In doing so, it will help ensure that **climate preparedness becomes a defining strength of the European Union** — a cornerstone of its competitiveness, security, and social cohesion in the decades ahead.

We have learned so much from the region twinning as part of the RESIST project and the wider EU Mission. Without this knowledge sharing and community, Blekinge risked having climate resilience remain low on policymakers' priorities. We hope that as our adaptation efforts accelerate, we too can be a leader in this topic and inspire other regions to strive towards climate resilience.

*Blekinge Region, Sweden
Erika Augustinsson, Innovation Manager*

The EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change was launched as a pilot. Four years in, the pilot has become proof of concept. Recent experience in Europe in relation to the Adaptation Mission shows that we are not speaking only about research, but about **protecting essential community systems**: health, housing, mobility, local economy and social cohesion.

Although many challenges and systemic barriers to effective climate adaptation remain, the Mission offers an **integrated, flexible and place-based approach** that can hardly be achieved through isolated programmes. There are numerous examples across Europe where regions have emerged as European [success stories](#).

To fully realize and scale these success stories, the Board advocates that the EU Missions framework is explicitly recognized and embedded in the upcoming **EU budgetary and policy instruments**, enabling Mission activities to continue beyond 2030.

*The city [of Leuven] has been developing sustainable solutions for decades and has a high level of support from different stakeholders, including its citizens. Joining the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change has acted like a springboard for implementing such initiatives. We have been **able to scale up our adaptation efforts** to ensure the prioritisation and implementation of solutions have the greatest impact in tackling the effects of climate change.*

*City of Leuven, Belgium
Geert Vanhorebeek, Sustainability Advisor*

Climate resilience is not a cost. It is an investment in security, economic stability, competitiveness and social cohesion. Every euro spent on prevention reduces future losses, protects public budgets and strengthens trust in public institutions. In a world of growing climate uncertainty, resilience is becoming a strategic asset.

The EU Mission on Adaptation demonstrates that Europe already has the capacity, talent and commitment to lead this transformation. It is essential to continue and reinforce the EU Missions framework in order to avoid a strategic and reputational risk for the Union, precisely at a time when the EU Mission is maturing and consolidating itself as a key instrument linking research and innovation with preparedness, security and competitiveness of regions.

Mission at a Glance

Political Commitment: 333 RLACs from 30 countries have signed the Mission Charter — covering 280+ million inhabitants

Community of Practice: 600+ participants actively engaged in knowledge exchange and peer learning across the EU

Technical Assistance: 292 RLACs supported (131 completed), with 120 more commencing in 2026

Projects: portfolio of 64 Horizon Europe projects

Demonstrations: 185 demonstrators and 112 replicators in every part of Europe

Investment: EUR 596M via Horizon Europe, with EUR 162M in complementary LIFE project investment

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