

# Policy Recommendations

## Adaptation to the Spatial Impacts of Climate Change

### Executive Summary

Flexibility · Understanding · Galvanise · Integrate · Tools



2100

2050

2030

2012

Investing in Opportunities



This project has received  
European Regional  
Development Funding  
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INTERREG IVB

# Policy Recommendations

## tempus fugit ('tɛmpəs 'fju:dʒɪt, -ɡɪt)

time flies / time runs away

Collins English Dictionary - 2009 © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd.

**'Fugit':** The amount of time that an investor believes is left until it would no longer be beneficial to exercise an option. (Investopedia)

## Context

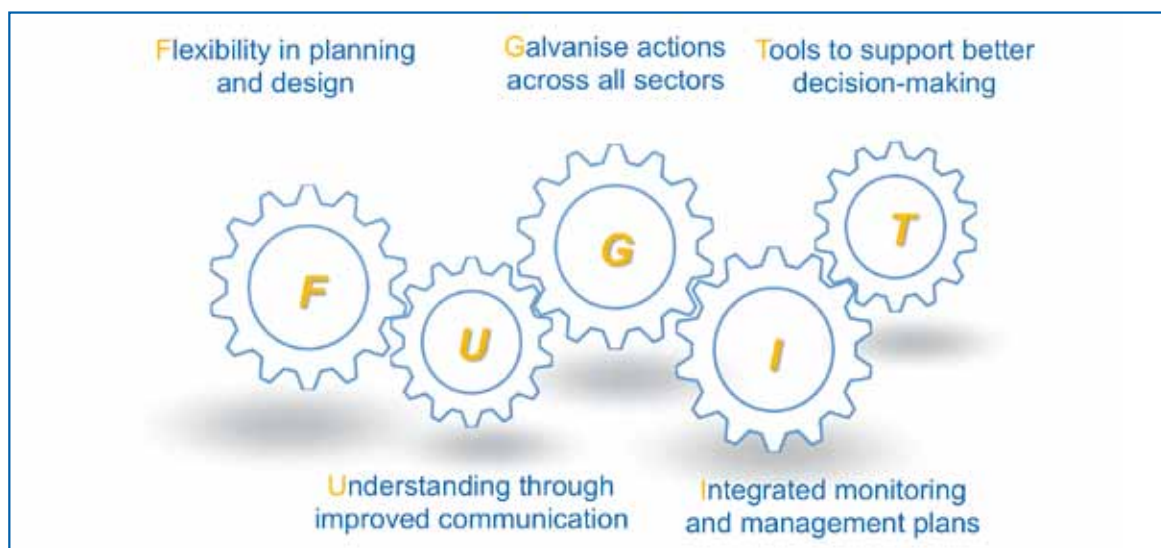
An increase of at least 2 degrees Celsius in the world's temperature by the end of this century is extremely likely, according to the UN International Panel on Climate Change. The European Environment Agency's 2012 Climate Change Report says that in Europe, "Observed climate change has already led to a wide range of

impacts ... Global warming could be well above 2 degrees by 2100." It foresees many more extreme weather events in the future, but says "future impacts can be substantially reduced by an ambitious global mitigation policy and by targeted adaptation actions".

## The FUGIT approach

Clearly there is little time to lose. The time for preparing for the effects of climate change is now. That is why *SIC adapt!*, the Strategic Initiative Cluster pooling the adaptation expertise of 100 organisations in North-West Europe, has adopted the tempus

fugit (time flies) slogan, and the "FUGIT" acronym – used in the financial world to mean cut-off time for investment – to summarise its Recommendations for specific actions:



Source: Lippeverband, DE

These Recommendations, with relevance at regional, national and European levels, are based on the practical experiences of eight participating transnational projects across North-West Europe. These harnessed expertise from governments, local authorities, industry, NGOs and scientific research bodies to promote sustainable, cost-efficient adaptation solutions in four fields:

- Built environment: urban and regional
- Water environment: rivers, urban water management, coastal/marine
- Natural environment: forest/nature/agriculture
- Social environment: society trends and behaviour change.

# Recommendations in brief

## Flexibility in planning and design of infrastructure

Climate modelling will always contain uncertainties. Too often decision-makers wait for more reliable forecasts. But these may well be elusive. Investment and planning decisions must be made in uncertain conditions, and there must be flexibility in infrastructure planning which must remain fit for at least 50 years.

## Understanding through improved communication

The economic crisis is focusing attention on the need for jobs and growth. But this must not be allowed to eclipse the profoundly serious threats and financial risks arising from climate change. These issues have to be made more tangible for the general public, as well as for planners and decision-makers. Much more “visualisation” should be used to attract media attention, for use on the web and in educational materials. Climate change should be integrated into all aspects of education. One very important spatial area demonstrating tangible dangers to citizens, and requiring communication and coordination across borders is international river basin management.

## Galvanise actions across all sectors

The impacts of climate change are complex and require interconnected responses involving many sectors of society. To date, sector-specific responses prevail. Effective adaptation requires extensive coordination, so this could be an opportunity to trigger better coordination across all sectors. A key area we have identified as requiring stronger coordination to adapt to flood risk is the relationship between the water sector and spatial planning. EU directives often focus on a specific sector. Coordination between relevant programmes or between regions in different countries can be difficult, particularly if EU programmes have different time-scales. And public procurement regulations at all levels should facilitate innovative and coordinated solutions.

## Integrated monitoring and management plans

European and national monitoring and management systems are needed to provide essential information for good adaptation strategies embracing a range of sectors, notably in rural areas. Our forests have to be helped to cope with climate change. Policies and regulations for water management and for agriculture have to be linked more closely. The EU Floods Directive and national anti-flood policies make clear that “non-structural measures”, such as spatial planning, building standards and upstream land-use management, are an important part of flood-risk management. But this principle lacks implementation.

## Tools to support better decision-making

There is a wealth of experience about effective adaptation methods within the EU, in the Member States, and in the regions of Europe. The challenge is to facilitate the sharing of this knowledge. This can include providing better knowledge platforms, such as [www.climate-adapt.eu](http://www.climate-adapt.eu) which compiles European projects and methodologies, strengthening the links between information portals and considering local differences, for example when up-scaling pilot studies.

## Recommendations

- Support and encourage decision-making under uncertain conditions
- Review design standards

## Recommendations

- Improve communication tools through visualisation
- Increase attention in education and lifelong learning
- Improve cooperation in international river basins

## Recommendations

- Use adaptation to trigger coordination across all sectors
- Strengthen coordination between the water sector and spatial planning
- Improve coordination between EU directives to facilitate effective adaptation
- Check procurement rules and help users to integrate sustainability

## Recommendations

- Install long-term monitoring systems and management plans for adapted forests
- Strengthen agriculture aspects of river basin management and flood risk management
- Foster non-structural measures in flood risk management

## Recommendations

- Facilitate better knowledge transfer

# Policy Recommendations

## Next steps

The Recommendations are handed over to Connie Hedegaard, EU Commissioner of DG CLIMATE ACTION and other panel participants, at the Cluster's Final Conference in Lille on 29th January 2013 to support the translation of scientific and transnational advice into concrete political actions. The Recommendations will also be disseminated to the European, national, regional and local level organisations involved in adaptation to climate change.

## Quotes from selected external experts during the 2nd Cluster Expert Board meeting on 25th June 2012, Brussels

"It is impressive the work that has been done by the Cluster and its eight constituent projects, and is very important in the preparation of the European Adaptation Strategy to be adopted in spring 2013".

Rosario Bento Pais, Head of Unit Adaptation to Climate Change, DG Climate Action

"Policy recommendations might really help the Member States and us being their advisers to steer in a certain direction. So, please also address your recommendations to the transnational programme level."

"The Cluster is expected to find the right niche and some nice hints for the next programme period in order to generally introduce adaptation in it and to identify the right type of measures. The critical mass with the eight participating projects is there, make the difference!"

Ruut Louwers, Director, Joint Technical Secretariat, NWE Programme

"I want to congratulate the Cluster for the work done so far, and for being a finalist in the RegioStars Awards 2012. We have been waiting for the network of networks... It really makes sense and we are looking forward to your recommendations."

Mathieu Fichter, Team Leader Sustainable Growth, DG Regio



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The full Recommendations document is available, with details of all the projects and the results achieved to date: [www.sic-adapt.eu](http://www.sic-adapt.eu)

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