

Adaptation preparedness scoreboard:

Summary for Lithuania

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

Lithuania is progressing in developing and implementing adaptation policies. The climate strategy covering adaptation was adopted in 2012 and the action plans include specific measures until 2020. The adaptation activities have a solid knowledge base and are backed by financial resources provided by the state and municipal budgets and the EU funds.

However, Lithuania needs to further identify and address knowledge gaps, analyse and prioritize adaptation options, update disaster risk management plans in line with climate change projections, mainstream adaptation in insurance, strengthen transboundary cooperation and promote stakeholder involvement in implementing adaptation policies and measures.

Adaptation strategies

Lithuania adopted a 'Strategy for National Climate Management Policy 2013-2050' in November 2012¹. This is an integrated strategy which covers both adaptation and mitigation issues and includes implementation considerations.

The Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania published guidelines on preparing climate change mitigation and adaptation plans for municipalities in 2017, however no municipal adaptation strategies have been adopted yet.

Adaptation action plans

An Action Plan on implementing the Strategy, was first adopted in April 2013 and contained measures for the years 2013-2016. The latest Action Plan with measures for 2018-2020 was adopted by the Lithuanian Government in 2018².

Apart from specific measures of the Action Plan to be implemented by municipalities, no independent local plans have been developed and adopted yet. At the sector level additional adaptation measures are embedded in specific sector development programmes.

¹Lithuanian Ministry of Environment, URL: http://www.am.lt/VI/files/File/Klimato%20kaita/Nacionaline_klimato_kaitos_valdymo_politikos_strategija_EN_galutinis.docx, Date accessed: 07/05/2018

² Registry of Legal Acts, URL: <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/76fe2cf0122111e88456d055fb6f6244>, Date accessed: 14/05/2018

Step A: Preparing the ground for adaptation

The Ministry of Environment is the main coordinating institution responsible for development and implementation of climate change adaptation policy.

The National Climate Change Committee is key coordinating body for the development and implementation of the national climate policy. It includes representatives of relevant ministries, municipalities, non-government organizations and the research community. The Committee coordinates the development of strategies and action plans, legal initiatives, provides recommendations regarding investment priorities, coordinates preparation of climate policy related reports. The Association of Local Authorities coordinates local activities in the framework of the Covenant of Mayors and has developed guidelines on preparing municipal climate change mitigation and adaptation plans.

2 Stakeholders' involvement in policy development

Stakeholders review draft legal proposals and provide their comments in the framework of the regular legislative process. The National Climate Change Committee consists of experts representing multiple stakeholder organizations with an interest in climate policy making. For developing specific sectoral programs, targeted working groups involving relevant stakeholders are created.

Neither the Strategy nor the Action Plan contain actions to promote transboundary cooperation with relevant countries in addressing adaptation challenges.

Step B: Assessing risks and vulnerabilities to climate change

3 Current and projected climate change

The Lithuanian Hydro-meteorological Service is responsible for meteorological and hydrological observations and forecasts. Vilnius University produces climate projections by using outputs from several climate models to provide information at the level of Lithuania.

The latest study identifying the vulnerability to climate change was performed in 2015. The latest national risk assessment was conducted under the coordination of the Fire and Rescue Department in 2015. Transboundary risks are not explicitly included in the Strategy but are considered by some sectors, such as water and flood risk management.

4 Knowledge gaps

The Strategy does not identify specific knowledge gaps, even though the importance of a sound evidence base in the field is well emphasized. The Action Plan includes several measures related to climate research. The recently performed climate risks and vulnerability assessments do not mention specific knowledge gaps to be addressed in the future. However, Lithuania's preparations for a revised strategy for the period from 2021 onwards include the establishment of a number of working groups to address knowledge gaps.

5 Knowledge transfer

Climate-related information such as policy documents, relevant legal acts, guidelines, studies and others are available on the website of the Ministry of Environment and the websites of other sectoral ministries and agencies. A web portal on climate mitigation and adaptation is to be developed in accordance with the Action Plan.

The implementation report of the Action Plan for the year 2017 provides details on the implemented capacity building activities such as training of farmers and forestry sector employees.

Step C: Identifying adaptation options

6 Adaptation options' identification

The 2015 study on the vulnerability mentioned above included risk assessments and adaptation options for sectors such as energy, transport, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, waste management and others. However, the study does not provide any information on whether the options have been ranked and prioritized.

Adaptation to climate change is a part of the National civil protection system. However, it is not clear if the disaster risk reduction and adaptation policies are coordinated through formal institutional frameworks.

7 Funding resources identified and allocated

The implementation of the Strategy is mainly funded from the funds of the state budget, municipal budgets and EU Structural and Investment Funds. For 2014-2020 over EUR 800 million are allocated to the priority "Environment, Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Adaptation to Climate Change" of which almost EUR 150 million have been disbursed³. Action Plan indicates what financial resources are dedicated for the implementation of the specific measures and defines the implementing institutions. The annual implementation reports provide details on measures implemented and funds disbursed.

Step D: Implementing adaptation action

8 Mainstreaming adaptation in planning processes

The Environmental Impact Assessment legislation provides clear guidance for considering climate change impacts. The development of the National risk assessments is coordinated by the Fire and Rescue Department and the latest update was performed in 2015. However, the Ministry of Environment is planning to update the national disaster risk management plan in line with the latest climate change projections.

Work on spatial planning policies encouraging adaptation has started in 2018. The Action Plans include numerous adaptation measures in various sectors. However, specific insurance schemes incentivising adaptation have not been developed.

9 Implementing adaptation

Adaptation policies and measures are being implemented as defined in the Action Plans and sectoral policy documents. The annual reports provide details on the implementation progress. Some of the measures are implemented with delays.

The National Climate Change Committee coordinates the implementation process. However, no details were provided on stakeholder involvement in implementing adaptation policies and measures.

³ 2014-2020 European Union Investment in Lithuania portal: <http://www.esinvesticijos.lt/en/applications>, Date accessed: 30/05/2018

Projects which are subject to the Environmental Impact Assessment are to be assessed from the adaptation perspective, but there are no additional guidelines for major projects. The Strategy calls for considering climate impacts on key infrastructure development.

Step E: Monitoring and evaluation of adaptation activities

10 Monitoring and reporting

The Ministry of Environment reports annually on the implementation of the Action Plan; the latest report covers activities of the year 2017. Sectoral climate change adaptation policies and measures as well as planned measures implemented by municipalities are included in the annual report.

However, no details are available on the adaptation relevant actions implemented by other ministries or municipalities if these actions are not part of the climate Action Plan.

11 Evaluation

Initial work on reviewing the Strategy and setting up legally binding climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives for the period of 2021-2030 started in 2018. The Action Plans are reviewed and updated regularly with the latest update adopted in 2018. The National Climate Change Committee is an advisory body providing comments and proposals for the draft Strategy and its Action Plan.