UIA third Call for Proposals:

Policy trends from the proposals under the topic of adaptation to climate change

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Urban Innovative Actions and Adaptation to Climate Change

The Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) Initiative offers urban authorities with the possibility to take a risk and experiment the most innovative and creative solutions. The main objective of UIA is to provide urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test innovative solutions to the main urban challenges, and see how these work in practice and respond to the complexity of real life.

The third call for proposals included for the first time the Adaptation to Climate Change topic providing consortia led by urban authorities with funding for experimental projects focused on strengthening local authorities' capacity to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

This paper aims to summarize the major policy trends identified in the **42 proposals evaluated** under this topic, highlighting the motivations, strengths and weaknesses, the proposed solutions, and some policy trends. This paper also aims to present relevant tips for future applicants.

Overview of the proposals

In general, the proposals presented are relevant to the urban challenge and based on innovative solutions and approaches addressing climate adaptation at district or in some cases at urban scale.

The majority of proposals tackle the most common climate change urban impacts related with water and temperature increase, namely flooding, water scarcity, droughts and heat waves, however in some cases the applicants presented solutions designed to tackle in an integrated way different urban impacts (e.g. urban heat island and floods) and other risks such as forest fires, coastal flooding and erosion, sea basin environmental problems or the increase of soil salinity. Some solutions combined adaptation with mitigation measures such as renewables, energy efficiency and circular economy measures in order to reduce the impact of the action and maximise the results.

In most cases the applicants were able to demonstrate evidence of research on existing best practice and provide details on the potential obstacles and methods to overcome them. However, in some cases they were not able to present a clear baseline, identify strong climate indicators and propose a sound methodology for data collection and monitoring of outputs and results although many proposals based their methodology collect data in ICT tools.

A relevant set of projects leveraged from local, regional or national adaptation plans and from the results of other projects developed within the region or by relevant partners in other regions.

Most projects had strong partnerships, including urban authority, academic, businesses, business support organizations and NGOs and involving a wide range of stakeholders and target groups.

In general the presented solutions can be scaled up and replicated by other urban authorities outside the partnership.

The solutions in a nutshell

Although the majority of the proposals addressed risks related with **water** and **temperature increase**, they included a wide range of solutions such as **nature-based solutions** (e.g. flood management, water retention or sustainable urban drainage systems), **grey, green and blue infrastructures** (e.g. wetlands, green walls, green and blue roofs or treated wastewater networks), **construction solutions** (e.g. bioclimatic approaches or high albedo materials) and **smart cities approaches** (e.g. APPs, smart metering, platforms, emergency or multi-hazard warning systems).

Some proposals presented **good governance structures and bottom-up approaches**, namely through citizen engagement process and collaborative decisions promoting stronger social awareness of climate-related hazards.

There have been only a few proposals aiming the development or implementation of **financing mechanisms to leverage adaptation projects**, however it is clear that the lack of financing schemes is a major barrier for investments in climate adaptation projects.

The solutions mainly involved **public owned infrastructure** nevertheless some proposals were designed to be implemented in private owned infrastructures such as residential buildings. Several proposals aimed at the reconversion of existing infrastructures in order to provide new services (e.g. schools reconversion, adapting them to be used during summer break as climate shelters for vulnerable population) or to reduce risks (e.g. permeable roads reducing flood risk).

Overall policy trends

Considering that Europe is warming faster than many other parts of the world, there was a clear focus on **water** (e.g. flooding, water scarcity and droughts) and **heat related risks** (e.g. heat waves, urban heat island effect).

Most of the proposals **addressed multiple climate impacts** and risks within the same action or in separated actions.

There was some emphasis on **data management and the use of ICT** in adaptation in order to prevent impacts and hazards (e.g. floods, fires), even though, in general the proposals that do refer to this would have benefited from more clarity on the way the systems are set up and the data would be used.

Although the **lack of specific financial instruments** is a major barrier, there has been less than expected focus on **financial schemes and business models**.

Only a **few proposals were technological based** and in most cases they included a set of several technologies.

Projects often choose solutions and activities that have pronounced positive impacts on **job creation and social cohesion**.

Urban authorities demonstrated their willingness and capacity to play a **leadership role** in the creation of policies that respond to citizens' needs and to attract investments for economic development under climate change.

Tips for applicants

Propose solutions that can be considered **innovative at European level** demonstrating the innovation based on a **strong and well documented state of the art and best practice research and benchmarking**.

Clearly **define the challenge(s) to be addressed and then define the solution** (not the other way around). Do not forget to link them in a clear way.

Make sure that the project is focus in **a specific challenge(s)** instead of general approaches.

Remember that significant and well-described **baseline, indicators and innovative methodologies** for collecting outputs/results are relevant to confirm the scale and impacts of the proposal.

For the indicators focus in a **specific challenge(s) impact indicator(s)** instead of effort indicators.

When using **open innovation** based on bottom-up approaches make sure that the proposal has clearly defined **innovative approaches and goals** based on a novel preparatory work involving in the process partners, stakeholders and target groups.

Provide links for **scientific research, EU project and best practice cases** to demonstrate the benchmarking and **how your project can build upon this ones**.

Innovate in the partnership ensuring that **all partners were involved in the design phase** and have a **relevant role** in the implementation phase based on their expertise and experience relevant to the project. Also explain the **role of the different departments** inside the partner.

Make sure to understand the **difference between stakeholders and target groups**. The stakeholders are those who can influence or have a role in the process and the target groups are those who will benefit from the results and outputs of the project.

Make sure to understand the **difference between scaling up and transferability**. Scaling up is the process of going from a pilot scale to a district or urban scale, i.e. rolling out a solution in the same urban authority. Transferability is the process of replicating the solution in a different urban authority. When possible provide business cases identifying entities, budgets and other relevant data for it.

Use the attachments to show in a **very visual way** the **scale, technical details** of the solution and implementation timeline.

Justify in detail all the **investments** making sure that they are **relevant for the solution** and will be able to **produce results within the project lifetime**.