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CLIMAAX
climate ready regions

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS (GfA)

CLIMAAX 1st Open Call

OPEN CALL FOR REGIONS and COMMUNITIES

Submission of applications starts on the

8th of December, 2023 at 09:00 Brussels Time

Submission deadline:

8th of March, 2024 at 17:00 Brussels Time

PUBLIC

HORIZON-MISS-2021-CLIMA-02-01 - Development of climate change risk assessments in European regions and communities based on a transparent and harmonised Climate Risk Assessment approach.

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HISTORY OF CHANGES

11.12.2023	The link to the CLIMAAX supporting Toolbox was changed.	Pages: 4, 8, 28
13.12.2023	The information about the applicants was rectified.	Pages: 7, 9

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MUST READ BRIEF

Applicants to the 1st Open Call of CLIMAAX are required to go through all the call documentation in order to get a full understanding of the call and the application process.

This is a call for applications from **regional and local public bodies, as well as communities**[1] (please review more details in section 5.1. below).

The call is open between the **8th of December 2023,** at 09:00 Brussels Time and **the 8th of March 2024,** at 17:00 Brussels time. The call is launched by the project **CLIMAAX**, supported by **Horizon Europe**.

The 1st Open Call, described in this document, provides access to financial and practical support to carry out regional Climate Risk Assessments. The Guide for Applicants includes **applicant guidelines, eligibility and evaluation criteria, and details regarding the methodological framework and toolbox** provided by CLIMAAX to support the selected beneficiaries.

The call is open to applicants from **regions and communities interested in assessing multiple climate risks using the CLIMAAX methodological framework and toolbox**. Selected projects are expected to involve specialized technical knowledge, where necessary from external services contracted by public authorities. Characteristics of the CLIMAAX 1st Open Call are in particular:

- Maximum funding per project: **up to EUR 300 000**
- Duration of the project implementation: **22 months**
- Total budget for this call: **EUR 5 400 000**
- Single stage submission: deadline **8th of March 2024,** at 17:00 Brussels Time.
- Online submission through: https://climaax-call4regions.fundingbox.com/
- Proposals only in **English** language
- Budget in **EURO**

Please go through the following resources to get the complete overview:

- Guide for Applicants, which includes all the requirements that must be met to be considered as eligible to participate in the 1st CLIMAAX Open Call.
- Project website: https://www.climaax.eu/fstp-open-call/.
- Frequently Asked Questions Document
- Application Form Template
- CLIMAAX supporting Toolbox available at https://handbook.climaax.eu/intro.html

In case of doubts or questions after going through the available resources, feel free to reach out by email at helpdesk.climaax@fundingbox.com or write to us through the **CLIMAAX** Open Call Helpdesk.

[1] **Communities** are groupings of people with social ties, shared values or interests, engaged in joint action. They can be of different sizes and are not always geographically confined. They should apply through a legal entity and meet all the requirements of the CLIMAAX 1st Open Call.

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1. ABOUT CLIMAAX

The **CLIMAte risk and vulnerability Assessment Framework and Toolbox** (**CLIMAAX**, https://www.climaax.eu) is a Horizon Europe project that provides financial and practical support to carry out regional climate risk analyses to improve climate and emergency risk management plans.

CLIMAAX is oriented to significantly contribute to the European Commission Climate Change Adaptation **Mission's first objective (MO1),** which foresees general support to European regions and communities to help them better understand, prepare for and manage climate risks by following the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) strategy for **risk management planning** and support the **design of Climate Adaptation Strategies**. The **CLIMAAX** project provides conceptual and practical support for assessing the climate change impacts at regional and local scales as a comprehensive basis for climate risk management plans and climate change adaptation action.

It is designed to contribute to the harmonization and consolidation of the practice of climate-change risk assessments, providing practical guidance to planning, implementation and evaluation of climate adaptation strategies following the logic of the 6-step Regional Adaptation Support Tool (RAST[2]) proposed by Climate Adapt, leaving a legacy for upcoming European initiatives to support the thousands of European regions. The project started in January 2023 and will run until December 2026.

CLIMAAX builds its activities upon existing state-of-the-art risk assessment frameworks, methods and tools, and promotes the use of datasets and service platforms for local and regional scale deployment. It fosters an inclusive, harmonized and robust approach to undertaking, or pursuing, the assessment of climate risk through a **Framework for climate risk assessment** (see Figure 1.) and a supporting **climate change multi-risk assessment Toolbox** (see Annex 1)**.** Both the Framework and the Toolbox are designed to support regions and communities **to assess climate-related risks** to inform the design of and improve local Risk Management Plans and Climate Adaptation Strategies to increase regional resilience.

[2] see https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/knowledge/tools/adaptation-support-tool

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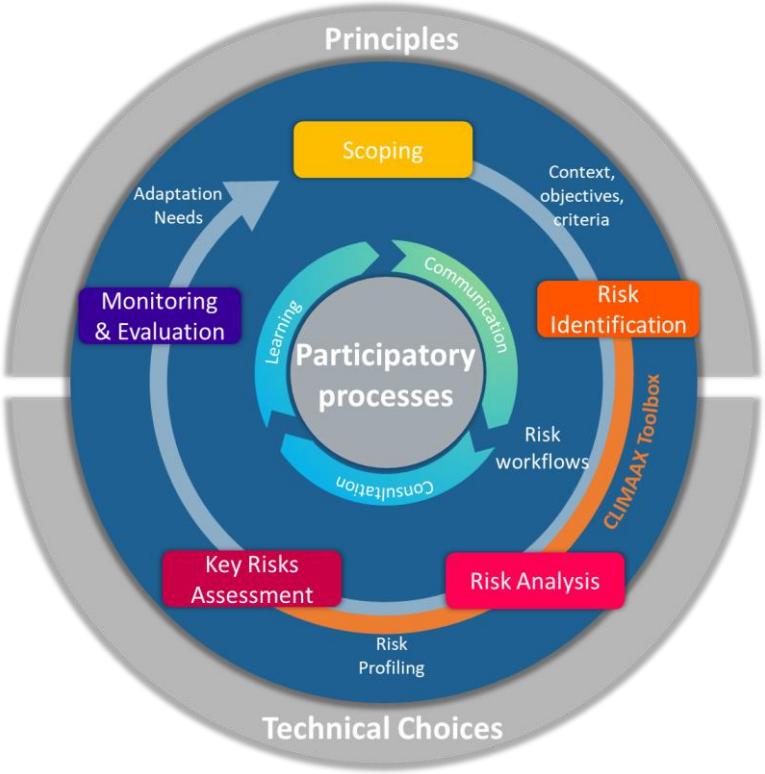


Figure 1. The CLIMAAX framework for Climate Risk Assessment. The framework connects strategic CRA components, based on established and widely assessed principles (e.g., related to governance, equity, social justice), technical choices (e.g., for parameters, climate scenarios etc.), and participatory processes (learning, communication, consultation). These three conceptual dimensions frame the climate risk assessment steps which leads to information on climate risk that can support adaptation and risk management planning.

CLIMAAX will launch **two Open Calls** to fund selected beneficiaries to:

- implement the climate risk assessment framework and toolbox at **regional and local scales** to conduct **climate change multi-risk assessments**,
- improve their **regional and community risk assessment strategies**, and
- demonstrate their uptake into **improved emergency and Risk Management Plans (RMPs)** and/or **community-based climate adaptation strategies** to cope with the increase of the frequency and intensity of climate and weather events affecting key community systems due to climate change.

The CLIMAAX project Consortium is led by STICHTING DELTARES and is composed of 19 partners (see https://www.climaax.eu/partners/).

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2. CLIMAAX OPEN CALLS

The two open calls provide **substantial financial support and guidance to more than 60 regions/local authorities or communities.** As such it supports the integration of regional/local data about hazards, exposure and vulnerability incorporated in the Risk Data Hub of the Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (DRMKC) of the Joint Research Centre, leaving a legacy for upcoming European initiatives.

This document describes the details of the **1st CLIMAAX Open Call that runs from 8 December 2023, 09:00 (Brussels time) to March 2024, 17:00 (Brussels time)** to fund selected beneficiaries. The document includes the **criteria for eligibility and selection of the applicants**, the guidelines for the preparation of the applications, and the details of the methodological framework and the toolbox provided by the **CLIMAAX** project to support their work.

The 2nd Open Call (planned to open in June 2024) will also follow this structure but will include some additional provisions to ensure its capacity to fill the gaps identified in the analysis of the results of the CLIMAAX 1st Open Call (e.g., prioritising regions, sectors or climate regimes not well covered by the selected projects in the 1st Open Call).

These **Open Calls** are addressed to single applicants from **regional/local authorities and communities** executing their activities in areas with high vulnerability to climate change impacts and interested in implementing the **CLIMAAX** methodological framework and the supporting Toolbox to carry out regional and local climate change multi-risk assessments.

Given the nature of the works required for this implementation, the selected projects will demand the participation of technical experts in risk assessment, with climate knowledge and data processing skills. This may require the support of external services to implement the regional/local multi-risk climate assessments contracted by the public authorities/institutions selected as beneficiaries, following their national procedures for public procurements (only external services strictly connected to the execution of multi-risk climate assessments will be eligible as subcontracting costs).

If necessary, **CLIMAAX** will provide support to the selected beneficiaries in the procurement process to implement their multi-risk climate assessments.

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3. WHAT DO WE OFFER?

Through the 1st Open Call, **CLIMAAX** will support **regional/local authorities and communities** in regions/areas with **high vulnerability to climate change impacts** requiring the implementation of Climate Change Adaptation strategies and/or updated Risk Management Plans.

The selected beneficiaries of the CLIMAAX 1st Open Call will participate as sub-projects in the **CLIMAAX** project and will have up to **22 months to carry out their projects.**

The selected beneficiaries will receive:

- **Up to EUR 300 000 lump sum funding** through the **CLIMAAX** 1st Open Call to implement the methodological framework and use the supporting Toolbox to conduct multi-risk climate assessments. For more details about the limits for the grant amount, see section 6.
- Access and support to use the **multi-risk assessment Toolbox (https://handbook.climaax.eu/intro.html)**, including data and risk assessment procedures, enabling regions and communities to assess the effects of climate change on a diversity of risks and impacts at the regional scale across Europe (see more details in Annex 1). This support will include:
    - **Methodological guidance** on the tools and on the technical details of the multi-risk assessment methodologies, and their implementation at the location of interest;
    - **Technical advice and support** through the **CLIMAAX helpdesk** to resolve issues related to the use of the Toolbox, including how to use local data and approaches.
- Access to the outreach and engagement events organized by **CLIMAAX** intended to promote the shared learning and mutual exchange through the project Community of Practice.

Applicants have to submit a proposal through the following website: https://climaax-call4regions.fundingbox.com/.

The applicants who are not selected in the CLIMAAX 1st Open Call are eligible to submit an (improved) application for the CLIMAAX 2nd Open Call.

The **maximum total budget** available for the **CLIMAAX 1st Open Call for Regions and Communities is EUR 5 400 000.**

4. PREPARING THE APPLICATION

To support the preparation of applications, **CLIMAAX** will host two Webinars on 'How to apply' (one for each Open Call). They will be announced on the **CLIMAAX** website and the Open Call application websites. The details of the call will be included in the Call Announcement which will be shared through the Participant Portal of the European Commission, the Implementation Platform of the Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change (MIP4ADAPT) and disseminated at relevant events, both online and in person.

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5. ADMISSIBILITY AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

We will evaluate the admissibility and eligibility of all proposals. These should be submitted before the deadline via our online application form available at https://climaax-call4regions.fundingbox.com/. All the admissibility and eligibility criteria are listed in this section of the Guide for Applicants. Applications not complying with these criteria will be excluded and marked as ineligible.

5.1. Who are we looking for?

In the CLIMAAX 1st Open Call, we are looking for single applicants:

- **Public bodies** (including regional and local authorities, municipalities, as well as public agencies) with a mandate to develop climate related multi-risk assessments and risk management plans in a given region or community.
  Their mandate has to be demonstrated via an official document (bill or regulation, Service Charter, Decree, Statutes or the like) either publicly available or attached to the application.;
- **Non-profit legal entities representing a local/regional community**[3] of people with social ties, shared values or interests, engaged in joint action developing their activities in areas with vulnerability to climate change impacts and challenged by climate change adaptation. The mandate of the applicant has to be demonstrated via an official document (Service Charter, Statutes or the like) either publicly available or attached to the application.

The entities have to be established in any:

- EU Member States and its Overseas Countries and Territories or
- Horizon Europe Associated Countries[4], and
- are not affected by any EU restrictive measures[5]

CLIMAAX partners, their affiliates or employees cannot submit an application to the CLIMAAX 1st Open Call and are not eligible to act as subcontracted external service providers.

Following the implementation plan of the Mission (section 2), the priority will be to **support less developed regions that are most vulnerable**[6] **to climate change impacts and often have low adaptive capacity**[7].

[3] **Communities** are groupings of people with social ties, shared values or interests, engaged in joint action. They can be of different sizes and are not always geographically confined. They should apply through a legal entity and meet all the requirements as explained above.
[4] **Horizon Europe Associated Countries** as of 24.10.2023: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye, Tunisia and Ukraine. For the most up-to-date list please go to the first part of this document. For the avoidance of doubt, New Zealand is not eligible in this open call.
[5] The applicants who are subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU - Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the EU Sanctions Map) are not eligible to participate in 1stOpen Call.
Following the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16th December 2022, no legal commitments can be signed with Hungarian public interest trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain. Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, in case the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to participate in the CLIMAAX 1stOpen Call
[6] Vulnerability is the propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt (IPCC, 2018 – SR Global Warming of 1.5 ºC).
[7] Adaptive capacity is the ability of systems, institutions, humans and other organisms to adjust to potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities, or to respond to consequences (IPCC, 2018 – SR Global Warming of 1.5 ºC).

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5.2. What must the Application contain? What are the activities that qualify for financial support?

The proposals should be aimed at generating regional/local multi-risk climate assessment, including activities to complete the three phases described below.

The application must contain the following elements:

- An executive description of the institution applying to the call.
- A short description of why the region/municipality/community can be considered as highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and why the expected implementation of the proposed multi-risk climate assessments will lead to a significant contribution to better adapt the activities/key community systems of the applicant to climate change.
- A plan of actions to complete the 3 phases of the project, including a timeline of the planned tasks (Gantt chart).
- A budget including the identification and justification of the expected internal costs, the proposed costs for subcontracting (duly justified) and expected other costs.
- The information required to evaluate the application criteria (see section 5 and section 7).

The approach described in the proposal **must cover the following 3 phases** (see figure 2., more details in the next sections):

Phase 1: Application of the **CLIMAAX** common methodology Framework for climate change related multi-risk assessment applicable at regional/local scale in Europe using the Toolbox made available by the project (see Annex 1).

Phase 2: Refinement and improvement of the multi-risk assessment carried out in Phase 1 using local data of higher resolution and detail than the (European scale) data available for the common approach. In this march phase, the **CLIMAAX** partners will offer guidance to the beneficiaries in performing regional/local high-resolution analysis and multi-risk assessments.

Phase 3: Exploration of potential adaptation options and relevant actions at local scale to address the risk and vulnerabilities identified from the multi-risk analysis carried out in Phases 1 and 2, including improvement of current regional/local risk management plans and adaptation strategies.

For a complete application, it is **mandatory** that the applicant proposes activities that address the three Phases, as described below.

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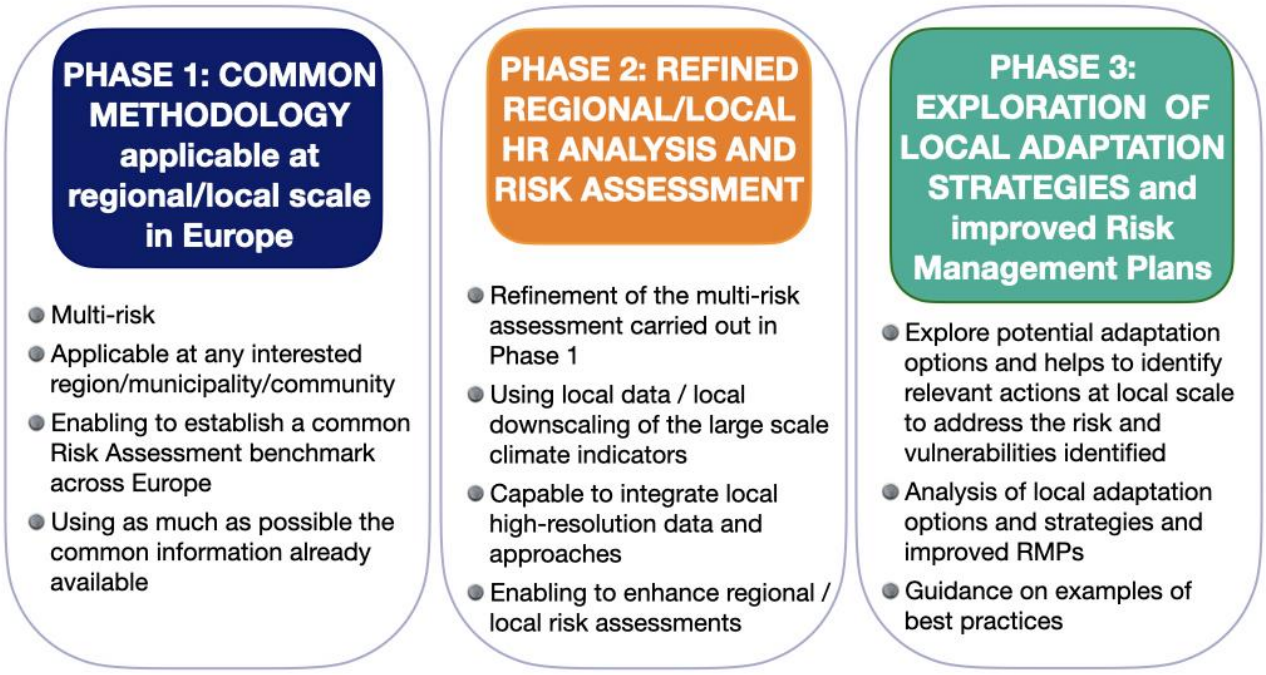


Figure 2. Summary of the 3-phase work to be included in the applicant's proposal.

The evaluation will consider the consistency between the quality of the proposed activities and the funds requested for performing it.

5.2.1 PHASE 1: application of the CLIMAAX common methodology

The first phase of the work to be done is the application of the **CLIMAAX** methodological approach using the **CLIMAAX** supporting Toolbox, containing data and guidelines for regional applications, to the applicant's region or community.

The purpose is that all regional assessments funded within the **CLIMAAX** project **have a common set-up** for calculating the expected change of impacts and risk using the same common methodological approach. This allows an inter-comparison of the assessment results at regional/local European scale. It also provides a benchmark for the regional climate risk assessments from the second phase, which will be enriched by utilization of local data and concepts.

This first phase will be performed using common European databases for past climate and climate projections. Also, common methodologies for calculating changes in frequencies of relevant climate indicators characterising the multiple hazards and their impacts are used, including multi-risk estimates based on reference exposure and vulnerability characteristics which have been implemented in the **CLIMAAX** Toolbox (see Annex 1).

5.2.2. PHASE 2: refined regional/local high-resolution analysis and risk assessment

The second phase of the work is the improvement/refinement of the risk assessment carried out in Phase 1. The proposal needs to be oriented to conduct the best possible climate change multi-risk assessment at regional/local scale for the location/community of the applicant, with the aim of assessing the change in risks due to climate change, and to provide support to design adaptation strategies and to improve local Risk Management Plans to increase regional resilience.

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To that end, the applicants will include in their analysis local data (higher resolution, complementary data, representative detail, alternative methodologies) improving the local representativity of the results obtained by the common approach in Phase 1.

The degree of detail will depend on the location and on the availability of previous studies and data. Therefore, the results of this second phase will probably not be comparable among the participating regions but will provide a much more textured and tailored assessment.

The local data may include information from downscaled regional climate scenarios or historical records, high resolution maps of the variables needed for the estimation of the impacts, locally developed methodologies, and better adapted definitions and estimates of exposure and vulnerability terms in the risk equation.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the best available data or produce downscaled products in the multi-risk assessment project. CLIMAAX will support implementations offering guidelines and helpdesk assistance to choose the most appropriate implementation techniques adapted to the local conditions of the applicants.

Also, the use of local and refined methodologies, better tailored to the applicant's regional risk assessment, are strongly recommended. The comparison of the results obtained in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 will be considered a strong added value of the applicant's proposal.

Finally, in order to enrich the databases and knowledge about climate change effects in Europe, the applicants will be invited to make regional/local data used in their work available. A specific CLIMAAX "user corner" will be created in the DRMKC Risk Data Hub of the Joint Research Centre8 to that end. This obviously only applies to data not restricted by privacy or other considerations.

5.2.3 PHASE 3: Exploration of local adaptation strategies and improved risk management plans

The third phase of the work to be done is to explore and discuss the use of the multi-risk analysis carried out in Phases 1 and 2 to potential adaptation options and relevant actions at local scale to address the risk and vulnerabilities. This can be seen as a first step to move from the locally adapted risk and vulnerabilities assessments done in Phase 2 towards the identification of suited adaptation options and strategies following the logic of the 6 steps of the adaptation support tool proposed by the Mission Climate Change Adaptation9.

It should include a description of the risk governance and present risk assessment procedures and risk management strategies in the location/region/community of the applicant, and the identification of needs for adapting present risk management plans.

Using the results obtained in Phases 1 and 2, the applicant will propose an analysis of how to support the identification of actions for climate adaptation, to build adaptive capacity, and improve the present regional/local risk management plans and strategies in the location/region of the applicant.

The CLIMAAX Toolbox will include links to a series of examples of adaptation measures, resulting from CLIMAAX pilot projects and connections to the European Communities of Practice.

[8] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC129773
[9] See https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/knowledge/tools/adaptation-support-tool

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5.3. Ideal application

The ideal application proposes a detailed plan of activities to conduct the **three phases detailed here**, allowing a comparison of the results obtained through the proposed common methodology (results of Phase 1) with those obtained using detailed local data and locally adapted methodologies (results of Phase 2).

The illustration of how the climate multi-risk assessment can be the base to support the identification of actions for climate adaptation, improve existing risk management plans, and support proposals for funding programs aimed at the development of such strategies[10], or serve as leverage for the bankability of planned adaptation measures, will be highly appreciated.

5.4. How to apply? Ground rules.

If you want to apply to the **CLIMAAX 1st Open Call**, please note that:

- We will only evaluate proposals submitted through the Open Call management tool (https://climaax-call4regions.fundingbox.com/) before the deadline **(8th of March 2024 at 17:00 Brussels time)** (admissibility criterion). Upon receipt of each proposal, the system will send a confirmation of submission. The time recorded by the FundingBox Platform, as the submission time of the proposal, will be the official one. We will not admit any proposal sent after the deadline or/and submitted outside the dedicated tool.
- The completeness of the form is very important, as it won't be possible to add any further information after the deadline. After the proposal is submitted, the form can still be modified until the deadline.
- **Only one proposal per applicant** can be submitted in CLIMAAX 1st Open Call. If more than one proposal from the same applicant is identified, only **the last proposal** which has been submitted in order of time will be evaluated.
- Proposals must be written in **English** in order to be admitted (admissibility criterion). Only information provided in English will be admitted.
- All **mandatory sections** of the application form must be completed (admissibility criterion). The data provided should be actual, true, complete and should allow for the assessment of the proposal. Additional material, not specifically requested in the online application form, will not be considered for the evaluation.
- Despite the regional focus, the submitted project should have a **clear European Dimension**, meaning that it will support EU strategies to fight Climate Change (such as the EU Adaptation Strategy), and in particular, the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change.
- **Gender Equality Plan**: public bodies, higher education institutions, and research organisations from EU countries and associated countries must have a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) to become beneficiaries in the projects[11].
- We will take into consideration the existence of a potential **conflict of interest** among the applicant and one or more **CLIMAAX** Consortium partners. Consortium partners, their affiliated entities, employees and permanent collaborators cannot take part in the open call. All situations of potential conflict of interest will be assessed case by case.

[10] For instance, via the Horizon Europe Mission project Pathways to Resilience.
[11] This formal requirement comes directly from general annexes to Horizon Europe work programmes. For more details and guidance, please check here.

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- **Healthy finances and a clean sheet are a must.** We don't accept entities that are under liquidation or are an enterprise under difficulty according to the Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.18, or that are excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national and EU authority. We also don't accept entities that are meeting national regulations regarding bankruptcy. The entire provision applies only to non-profit legal entities representing a local/regional community
- **Acceptance of the open call rules:** to apply for this open call, the applicant has to accept its rules and regulations detailed in this Guide for Applicants.

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6. BUDGET OF THE PROPOSAL

All applications should include an estimated budget of the costs related to the work to be done to achieve the objectives of the proposal. The budget should specify the portion of the internal costs executed by the beneficiary (strictly related to carrying out the activities in the sub-project and necessary for the sub-project implementation), and of the external costs (if any) covering services, purchases and subcontracting when required. It should also cover the travel costs of a representative presenting the results of the sub-project in at least one **CLIMAAX** workshop.

The cost/effectiveness of the proposed budget will be evaluated under the selection criterion IMPLEMENTATION (see section 7.3.3).

Only external services strictly connected to the execution of multi-risk climate assessments will be eligible as subcontracting costs. If required they must follow the national legislation on the procedures to select the subcontractor and apply the basis of the best value for money (or if appropriate the lowest price). Subcontracting should follow the rules avoiding potential conflict of interests.

The EU contribution that each third-party sub-project may receive shall cover the estimated budget included in the proposal following a lump sum scheme. It will include internal costs and external services and subcontracting when required, and cannot exceed the maximum amount allowed for the country of the applicant (see section 5.1).

As a reference, the **average implementation cost** has been estimated in an interval between 115.000 to 240.000 € for each selected project, depending on the country of the applicant.

6.1. Criteria for calculating the maximum amount of the financial supp ort

The **maximum amount** of financial support per selected project is up to **300.000 EUR (funding limit). However,** taking into account the cost of living in the country in which the applicant is located, the **actual maximum amount** of financial support for each separate applicant is calculated using the Country Correction Coefficient (CCC) of each applicant's country. The calculations follow those foreseen in the Horizon Europe - Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) Programme[12] following the equation:

maximum amount = 300.000 EUR (CCC=1,32)

actual maximum amount granted = 300.000 EUR x CCC/1.32 (but cannot exceed 300.000 EUR).

The maximum amount of financial support will then range in between 115.227 EUR (CCC=0,507) and 300.000 EUR (CCC=1,32) per third-party sub-project depending on the CCC of the applicant's country. See section 8 for the payment arrangements. Table 1 provides examples of the maximum amount of funding to be granted to a beneficiary depending on their home country. In the Frequently Asked Questions Document you will find the exact maximum amount per each country (please check question number 17: 'How to calculate the maximum amount of financial support?' in the Frequently Asked Questions Document).

[12] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-2-msca-actions_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf

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	LOWER-RATE SCENARIO (NORTH MACEDONIA)	MEDIUM-RATE SCENARIO (BELGIUM)	HIGHER-RATE SCENARIO (DENMARK)
Maximum grant amount	300.000 €		
MSCA 2021-22 Country Correction Coefficient (CCC)	0,507	1	1,32
Maximum total grant amount (Phase 1+2+3)	115.227 €	227.270 €	300.000 €

Table 1. *Examples of maximum amounts to be granted to the applicant depending on the Country Correction Coefficient.*

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7. HOW WILL WE EVALUATE YOUR PROPOSAL?

Our evaluation process is intended to be transparent, fair and equal to all applicants. We will evaluate the applications in 5 steps. As we expect a high number of applications for this call than can be granted, we are seeking suitable proposals for the project by prioritising quality over quantity. To ensure that your application meets this standard, we suggest providing all mandatory information, identifying the key points and how the proposal aligns with **CLIMAAX**'s overall scope.

7.1. Admissibility and Eligibility Check

Once the call is closed, we will check whether the proposals meet the admissibility and eligibility criteria set up in section 5. We will do it on the basis of the statements included in your proposal.

At this stage, the eligibility criteria are checked against a Declaration of Honour or self-declarations included in the application form. During the subsequent evaluation process, the eligibility criteria will be further verified (including the final formal check).

The proposals that do not comply with these criteria will be excluded.

As a result of the checking, a **List of Eligible Applications** will be produced.

7.2. In/Out Scope Screening

In order to make sure that our support helps in achieving optimal impact in the framework of the **CLIMAAX project**, it is important that all proposals match and clearly demonstrate the scope of the types of activities described in section 5.2.

For this reason, the following aspects of your proposal will be checked to be considered as evaluable:

- The objectives of the proposal and the proposed activities included in the list of activities that can be funded must fit within the scope of the CLIMAAX 1st Open Call.
- The implementation of **a climate multi-risk assessment** on its region or community is relevant to the applicant's activities.
- The proposal includes a **detailed description of the proposed work** covering the 3 phases **required** (see section 5.2).
- It includes an estimated budget where the grant requested doesn't exceed the country-specific maximum allowed (see section 6).

Each proposal will be reviewed by one expert from the **CLIMAAX** project consortium. The experts will assess if the proposal complies with the aspects above on a YES/NO basis and will provide reasoning in the cases where compliance is found to be too limited. The experts will meet to review the assessments, generate an 'In Scope List 'and confirm the rejected proposals.

Proposals that do not comply with any of the aspects described above will be rejected. The ones complying with all of them will move on to the independent individual evaluation stage.

We will inform applicants by email about the results of the admissibility and eligibility check, and the in/out scope screening.

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7.3. Independent Individual Evaluation

At this stage, each proposal that passed the admissibility and eligibility and also in-scope screening will be evaluated by **two independent experts** from a **Pool of experts** from partners **CIMA**, **UPC**, **EURADA**, **DELTARES, MoIFI** and **INTC**. In case of need, additional experts from other partners, and external experts from national Civil Protection Authorities (CPAs), may be added to the pool provided absence of conflicts of interest.

As the purpose of the CLIMAAX 1st Open Call is to **improve the climate resilience in European regions and communities, particularly promoting the regions with high vulnerability, limited resources and/or low adaptation capacity**, the applications will be evaluated according to the following awarding criteria:

- **Relevance**;
- **Impact;**
- **Implementation.**

7.3.1 Relevance

The relevance will be evaluated considering the following points:

- **Ambition:** Alignment with the objectives and activities as described in the call for proposals.
- **Dimension:** Contribution to local/regional long-term policy objectives, relevant policies and strategies, and synergies with activities at European and national level aimed at increasing the resilience and the adaptive capacity of the regions and local communities in facing present and future climate aggravated risks.
- **Community engagement in climate change adaptation:** Relevance of the adaptation engagement of the community represented by the applicant entity (e.g., previous activities in multi-risk climate assessment, climate change adaptation strategies, or risk management plans addressing high-impact weather-induced events, …).
- **European dimension**: Extent to which the sub-project will support EU strategies to fight Climate Change (such as EU Adaptation Strategy), and in particular, EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change objectives.

7.3.2 Impact

The impact will be evaluated considering the following points:

- **Vulnerability to Climate Change Impacts:** Priority should be given to regions or communities with activities in locations considered as highly vulnerable to climate change. The proposals should include evidence that the proposed region/municipality/community activities can be considered as highly vulnerable to climate change.
- **Limited resources:** Priority should be given to regions or communities with limited resources to increase climate or disaster resilience.
- **Expected impact of the project implementation**: Priority should be given to regions or communities in which the implementation of the proposed multi-risk climate assessments will lead to a significant contribution to the capacity to adapt to climate change by the activities/key community systems of the applicant. The proposals should include evidence that the proposed work to identify adaptation strategies or risk management plans can substantially help in reducing their vulnerability to climate change.

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7.3.3. Implementation

The implementation will be evaluated considering the following points:

- **Team:** The applicants have to demonstrate their capacity to manage and lead local climate change multi-risk assessment and risk management plans, as well as their capacity to lead the implementation works. In case of need of external services, the description of the profile of the experts that will be included in the subcontracting procurement would be evaluated as part of this point.
- **Resources:** Demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of the resources assigned and of the cost/effectiveness of the budget proposed in order to achieve the objectives/deliverables of the subproject.
- **Implementation Plan:** Quality and soundness of the implementation plan included in the application. Quality criteria may include the expected robustness of the resulting climate multi-risk assessment, use of multiple sources of information, the ability to increase understanding of local risk drivers, and the planned activities to include local data, models and analysis techniques.

7.3.4. Scores

The evaluators will score each criterion on a scale from 0 to 5:

0 = The proposal fails to address the criterion, or it cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
1 = Poor – The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2 = Fair – The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
3 = Good – The proposal addresses the criterion well but there are a certain number of shortcomings.
4 = Very good – There are some shortcomings but overall, the proposal addresses the criterion very well.
5 = Excellent – The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion with none or minor shortcomings.

Each evaluator will produce an Individual Evaluation Report. The final score for each of the 3 criteria Relevance, Impact and Implementation will be calculated as the average of the normalized scores provided by each evaluator, taking into account the mean and standard deviation of the evaluator, to avoid potential personal systematic bias.

The final score per application will be calculated as the sum of the score for each individual criterion. The minimum threshold for individual criteria will be 3. The overall minimum threshold, applying to the sum of the three criteria scores, is 10 points.

After carrying out the Independent Individual Evaluation, the experts who have evaluated the proposals will join in a Consensus Group, to agree on a common position, including comments and scores for all evaluated proposals.

The Consensus Group will specially discuss the cases where there is a significant divergence between the evaluators' scoring. In case no consensus is reached between the evaluators, an additional evaluator will be included to provide an extra evaluation.

Once the initial ranking is set, ties (if any) will be solved by following the highest score in the impact section.

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All proposals obtaining a score above the threshold will move on to the next stage. Please note that this evaluation phase takes time as it implies a more personal, qualitative, and thus non-automated approach, which will lead to some expected delays in communication to the applicant.

7.3.5 Extra points - low adaptive capacity (max 5 points)

Applications that are scored above the threshold will receive additional points to the overall score to give priority to regions or communities with high vulnerability and low adaptive capacity to climate change impacts.

This aspect will be objectively evaluated following the regional composed Vulnerability Index produced by the JRC Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (DRMKC) at NUTS2 and NUTS3[13], that is considered a proxy of the vulnerability and adaptive capacity at regional/local scale. It is available through the Risk Data Hub (see https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/risk-data-hub#/dashboardvulnerability). The index is expressed at a scale from 0 to 10 (with higher score indicating higher vulnerability), and 4.4 is the mean index value at NUTS3 level.

Applicants located in a region with an associated vulnerability index lower than 4 will not receive extra points in this sub-criterium. The extra points will be calculated following a linear scaling equation dependent on index of the applicant region VI:

- If VI > ThrVI: Extra Points= 5*(VI – ThrVI)/ (MaxVI – ThrVI);
- If VI ≤ ThrVI: Extra Points= 0

With:

- VI the index of the applicant region
- MaxVI = 6,59
- ThrVI = 4

Examples of computed extra points are:

1. Calabria (IT), VI=6,59 -> Extra points = 5* (6,59-4)/(6,59-4) = 5
2. Podlanskie (PL), VI=4,79 -> Extra points = 5* (4,79-4)/(6,59-4) = 1,59
3. Stockholm (SE), VI=3,20 -> Extra points = 5* (3,2-4)/(6,59-4) = 0

7.4 Consensus Meeting

Following the independent individual evaluation, the **Selection Committee** (formed by one representative of the following consortium partners: **MoIFI, CIMA, UPC, INTC, EURADA, DELTARES, and FBA** (plus, one representative from the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (**DG-ECHO)**, one from the Joint Research Centre of Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (**JRC-DRMKC)** and one from the **Mission Secretariat/CINEA, as observers**) will decide the 'Provisional List of Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) Recipients´ and the ´Reserve List´.

The discussion will be based on the ranking obtained as a result of the independent individual evaluation. However, the **Selection Committee** may apply corrective criteria to guarantee a balanced regional portfolio of supported projects to guarantee the pan-European impact of **CLIMAAX**, as well as prioritise regions and communities located in less favoured areas, with higher or lower adaptive capacity, by the extent that this is not already effectuated by the application of the extra points based on the low adaptive capacity criterium as described in section 7.3.5 of this Guide (Extra points - adaptive capacity).

[13] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/background

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To maximize regional balance, in this **CLIMAAX 1st Open Call,** the following limitations will apply:

- **A maximum of 6 selected projects per Country will be approved:** In case of a larger number of applicants over the threshold, only the first 6 in the ranking will be selected in CLIMAAX 1st Open Call.
- **A maximum of 3 selected projects per NUTS2 will be approved:** In case of a larger number only the first 3 in the ranking will be selected in CLIMAAX 1st Open Call.

Applications scoring over the threshold, but not selected in the Consensus Meeting, thus not funded, will be allowed to re-submit for the CLIMAAX 2nd Open Call.

The **Selection Committee** will publish the ´Provisional list of FSTP recipients´ and ´Reserve List´.

7.5. SubGrant Agreement preparation and signature

Before you get started with the programme, you will need to sign a SubGrant Agreement with the **CLIMAAX** Consortium.

Prior to signing the Agreement, you should provide documents regarding your formal status. The **CLIMAAX** Consortium will proceed to **verify these documents** to prove your eligibility. (For more details, please check our Frequently Asked Questions Document available at Open Call Microsite. Please submit the required documentation within the deadlines that will be communicated to you. If you fail to deliver the requested documents on time, without clear and reasonable justification, we will exclude you from further formal assessment and you will be replaced with the following entity from the reserve list.

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8. PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Once your eligibility has been confirmed following the formal check and the sub-grant agreement has been signed, you will be an official beneficiary of the **CLIMAAX** programme.

As a selected beneficiary, you will receive fixed financing to cover the estimated expenses included in the proposal following a lump sum scheme. The lump sum is a simplified method of settling expenses in projects financed from the Horizon Europe funds. It means that you are **not** required to present strictly defined accounting documents to prove the costs incurred (e.g., invoices). However, you are obliged to demonstrate that the implementation of your project is in line with the plan set for it through the presentation of the project Deliverables and the achievement of project milestones. Simply speaking it means that we will carefully assess your progress and the quality of your work during Deliverable Reviews, not your accountancy.

The Deliverables and milestones will be detailed and calendarized in the 'Individual Follow-Up Plan' annexed to the SubGrant Agreement. The Financial Support will be paid against these Deliverables and milestones, namely:

- **1st Deliverable:** Implementation of the **CLIMAAX** common methodology for multi-risk assessment and analysis of the results (Phase 1- Multi-risk climate assessment, due at Month 6 (M6) of the project execution)
- **2nd Deliverable:** Refined regional/local high-resolution analysis and risk assessment and comparison of results (Phase 2- Refined regional/local multi-risk assessment, M18)
- **3rd Deliverable:** Contribution to local adaptation strategies and improved risk management plans (Phase 3- Adaptation strategies and improved Risk Management Plans**,** M22).

Please, note that the lump sum arrangement does not release the beneficiary from the obligation to collect documentation to confirm the costs under fiscal regulation.

The project progress and the quality of work will be assessed during Deliverable Reviews. Three **Deliverable Review** will be performed by the **CLIMAAX** Implementation Committee (IC) in each payment milestone established. The evaluation will be done based on the following criteria included in the sub-grant agreement Individual Follow-Up Plan:

- Deliverable quality (Weight 40%)
- Performance indicators (Weight 50%)
- Deadline Compliance (Weight 10%).

Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 10. Based on the weight of each criterion, the final score will be calculated.
The threshold to continue in the programme with the next phase is 7 points. The IC will review and validate the evaluations, putting special attention to the 'under threshold' cases, if any, by taking into consideration all possible objective reasons for underperformance (i.e., external factors which might have influenced the beneficiaries' performance).

The beneficiary whose project has not reached the threshold will be required to present a **Recovery Plan** to the **Management Team** of the **CLIMAAX** project. In case the Recovery Plan is not realistic or not sufficient to recuperate the detected underperformance, the selected project will be considered in default. In case the Recovery Plan is accepted, they will be given a period to apply it (no longer than 3 months), and a second Delivery Review meeting will be held to take the final decision. The **CLIMAAX Management Team** will take the final decision and approve the payments or invite selected projects which have not reached the threshold after the Recovery Plan to leave the programme.

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Payments will be done in the form of lump-sum grant as follows:

- **Phase 1 Multi-risk climate assessment**: Deliverable 1 presented and approved - 30%
- **Phase 2 Refined regional/local multi-risk assessment**: Deliverable 2 presented and approved- 40%
- **Phase 3 Uptake into Climate Adaptation or Risk Management Plan**: Deliverable 3 presented and approved - 15%
- **Final payment (the retention payment)** - 15%

Following the rules of the Horizon Europe program, a delayed payment mechanism will be applied to the 15% of the financial support amount awarded to each sub-project, which will be paid to the beneficiaries once the whole **CLIMAAX** project is completed. This should happen within 9 months after the end of the **CLIMAAX** project, expected on 31 December 2026.

Lastly, for a more detailed payment schedule, you can read our Frequently Asked Questions Document.

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9. CONTACT US

9.1 How can we help you?

If you still have any doubts regarding CLIMAAX 1st Open Call process, feel free to get in touch with us:

- Ask your question at the **Helpdesk email** at the following address: helpdesk.climaax@fundingbox.com or write directly in the **Helpdesk space** at https://spaces.fundingbox.com/spaces/smart-manufacturing-climaax/category/questions.
- If you face any technical issues or problems, make sure you include the following information in your message:
  - Your username, telephone number and your email address.
  - The details of the specific problem (error messages that appeared, bug descriptions such as a dropdown list that isn't working, etc.).
  - Screenshots of the problem.

9.2 Complaints

If, after receiving the results of the eligibility criteria evaluation you consider that a mistake has been made, a complaint can be submitted. Complaint emails have to be sent in English to helpdesk.climaax@fundingbox.com including the following information:

- Your contact details (including email address).
- The subject of the complaint.
- Information and evidence regarding the alleged mistake.

Important note regarding the timeline.

The complaint has to be submitted within **3 working days** starting from the day after the communication of the evaluation results was sent. On our side, we will review them within no more than **7 calendar days** from its reception. If we need more time to assess the complaint, we will inform the applicant by email about the extension.

We will not be reviewing the complaint **if**:

- It is anonymous.
- The information is incomplete.
- It is not related to the results of the evaluation of the eligibility criteria.

Please take into account that the evaluation is run by experts, and we do not interfere with their assessment, therefore we will not evaluate complaints related to the results of the evaluation other than related to the mistakes in the evaluation of the eligibility criteria.

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10. LAST BUT NOT LEAST - FINAL PROVISIONS

Any matters not covered by this 'Guide for Applicants' will be governed by the Spanish law[14] and the rules related to the Horizon Europe programme and European Union grants regulations.

We do our best to keep all the applicant data confidential. However, to avoid any doubts, the applicant is entirely responsible for indicating what information is confidential.

Your IPR will remain your property, but the deliverables will be public documents.

For the selected beneficiaries, the SubGrant Agreement will include a set of obligations towards the European Commission (for example: promoting the project and giving visibility to the EU funding, maintaining confidentiality, understanding potential controls by the EC/ECA, EPPO and OLAF), as well as uploading the used local data and the results into the DRMKC Risk Data Hub through the **CLIMAAX** 'user corner'[15] and making the Deliverables reports and results public and subject to open access.

The **CLIMAAX** Consortium might cancel the Open Call at any time, change its provisions or extend it. In such a case we will inform all applicants about such a change and provide the reasoning behind the decision. The signature of the SubGrant Agreement is an initial condition to establish any obligations among applicants and any Consortium partners (with respect to the obligation of confidentiality of the application).

Didn't find what you were looking for? You may want to check our Frequently Asked Questions Document.

[14] Since the responsibility of the FSTP implementation is the Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya (Spain).
[15] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC129773

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ANNEX 1: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND TOOLBOX DESCRIPTION

This annex describes the CLIMAAX methodological framework and toolbox. The software implementation of the combined framework and toolbox, known as the **CLIMAAX handbook**, and a technical description of this implementation can be found at the CLIMAAX website with background information for applicants (https://www.climaax.eu/fstp-open-call/).

THE CLIMAAX METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The CLIMAAX Framework is designed to encompass and support inclusive and harmonised regional climate risk assessments (CRAs). The framework is designed to translate the ambitions of the EU Mission on Adaptation into practice. This EU mission unites European regions in their pathway to resilience and ability to cope with climate extremes by implementation of transformational adaptation and emergency management strategies. This is supported by the European Environment Agency, who has developed the Regional Adaptation Support Tool (RAST[16]) that provides practical guidance to planning, implementation and evaluation of climate adaptation strategies. This tool is based on the Adaptation Support Tool logic displayed in Figure A1.



Figure A1: Adaptation Support Tool outline. The CLIMAAX CRA Framework covers steps 1-3 in this scheme. (see for detailed description https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/knowledge/tools/adaptation-support-tool)

The **CLIMAAX CRA Framework** covers steps 1-3 from the Adaptation Support Tool (Figure A1). It includes an inventory of the scope and institutional background of the CRA (Step 1), ensuring embedding in a shared strategic and institutional framework across actors/stakeholders for adaptation planning and risk management. It provides guidance on the selection of sound technical choices for conducting climate risk assessments (Step 2). And it outlines the contribution of a regional CRA to transformational adaptation and emergency management strategies that build resilience (Step 3). Support for assessment and implementation of regional adaptation strategies is provided by a.o. the **Pathways2Resilience** project[17] funded by the European Mission on Adaptation.

[16] https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/mission/knowledge-and-data/regional-adaptation-support-tool
[17] https://www.pathways2resilience.eu/

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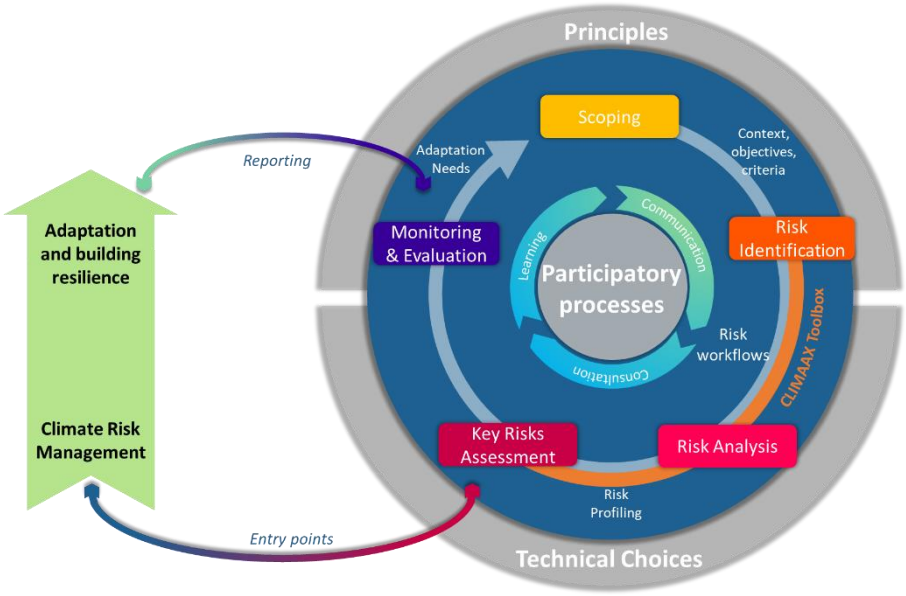


Figure A1. The Climate Risk Assessment Framework shown in relation to its relationship with Climate Risk Management and adaptation and building resilience (see also Figure 1 in this Guidance for Applicants).

Figure A2 displays how the **CLIMAAX** CRA Framework (shown in Figure 1 of the Guide for applicants) links to and supports climate risk management, adaptation and building resilience. The main steps in the framework are as follows:

Scoping: The first step of the risk assessment cycle is to determine context, objectives and criteria, which are embedded in a pre-defined set of principles.

Risk Identification: A systematic inventory of relevant risks for the region of interest, guided by a survey of past experiences, records of data for multiple climate hazards (floods, drought, heatwave, fire, snow, wind), and exposure and vulnerability information derived from geographical and socio-economic characteristics of the region.

Risk Analysis: The analysis of climate risks is conducted by risk assessment methods implemented in the CLIMAAX Toolbox in so-called “workflows”. Quantitative risk assessments are explored, for example, by using future scenarios and probabilistic or event-based approaches. Guidance is provided on the choice of data and scenarios for hazard, exposure and vulnerability.

Key Risks Assessment: Key risks that are particularly important in the local context are identified, to guide prioritization of upcoming climate risk management strategies. Special attention is paid to the combination of hazards that may amplify all or some of these risks.

Monitoring and Evaluation: By systematic monitoring and evaluation of key risks and the effectiveness of adaptation and risk management actions an iterative repetition of the risk assessment cycle is fuelled with new insights for updated the scoping and implementation of CRAs and adaptation strategies.

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The Framework is designed to provide a reference for defining climate risk assessment (CRA) workflows and their implementation that are consistent with the highest standards, best practices and state-of the art scientific findings. In particular, the Framework gives guidance on:

1. **Stakeholder engagement processes** that ensure development of appropriate CRA's and uptake into strategic planning;
2. **Selection of hazards** that have shown or are known to have a substantial societal impact and will be affected by climate change;
3. Use of available **data and concepts** containing meaningful information for the region or community of interest;
4. **Selection of indicators** for meteorological or hydrological hazards and societal or ecological impacts that can be used for designing and monitoring adaptation and risk management strategies;
5. Use of climate and socio-economic **scenarios** that are relevant for impacts and risks that needs to be accounted for regions and communities for adaptation/risk management strategies.

TOOLBOX TO SUPPORT THE ASSESSMENT OF MULTIPLE CLIMATE RISKS

The Toolbox contains data, projections and risk assessment algorithms (contained in so-called "risk workflows") designed to support the compilation of regional climate multi-risk assessments. It is structured to accommodate the needs of **users at varying expert levels**:

1) General information and visualization of hazards, exposure, and vulnerability is accessible via a **dashboard**, usable also for non-expert users;
2) Advanced users can explore and download **pre-existing risk workflows** for selected natural hazard profiles, and adjust these workflows to a specific European region;
3) Expert users can create a **fully customized regional risk assessment package** allowing the inclusion of own local data on hazard, exposure, and/or vulnerability, and adjusted risk assessment methods.

The risk workflows in the toolbox are **stratified by hazard profile**. For a range of hazard types, a number of methods for risk assessment are included in the toolbox based on the type of hazard. Currently[18], we included methods for riverine flood, agricultural drought, heatwave, wildfire, windstorm, snow, and blizzards. The different assessment methods follow a stepwise data processing scheme to calculate risk as a combination of hazard, exposure and vulnerability. In particular, we identified the following **risk assessment methods**:

- Expected **damage** calculated as a combination between hazard and damage curves, which are a function of exposure and vulnerability;
- **Risk** as a product of hazard, exposure, and vulnerability;
- Risk matrix, in which **qualitative risk** classes are defined based on hazard probability and impact;
- **Assets or population exposed** to a specific hazard.

The CLIMAAX toolbox comes with a **dataset of pan-European hazard, exposure, and vulnerability data** for the implementation of the different risk assessment methods. These European datasets include reference hazard climatologies and basic climate change scenarios, and data on exposure and vulnerability such as land use, building types, age, education, income, healthcare access, settlements, and infrastructure. In general, similar exposure and vulnerability data are used in each of the hazard workflows. In some workflows multiple customized datasets and future scenarios of exposure and vulnerability are already made available.

[18] A pilot version of the CLIMAAX climate multi-risk assessment Toolbox is available for applicants at https://handbook.climaax.eu/intro.html and will be further developed over the course of the CLIMAAX project duration.

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The toolbox allows the users to **customize their risk assessment and to upload own data**. In the expert level version of the toolbox customized risk assessment procedures can be implemented.

In its current form, the toolbox has **limited capability to perform online calculations**. Options to offer facilities for online calculations are explored. In any case, a full download of the technical guidelines and workflow code, jointly with the hazard, exposure, and vulnerability data, enable **offline customization and execution of the climate risk assessment**.

The toolbox is written in **English**. Detailed descriptions of the technical implementation and example user journeys are provided at the https://www.climaax.eu/fstp-open-call/.

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