Advancing monitoring and evaluation of national adaptation policies in Europe
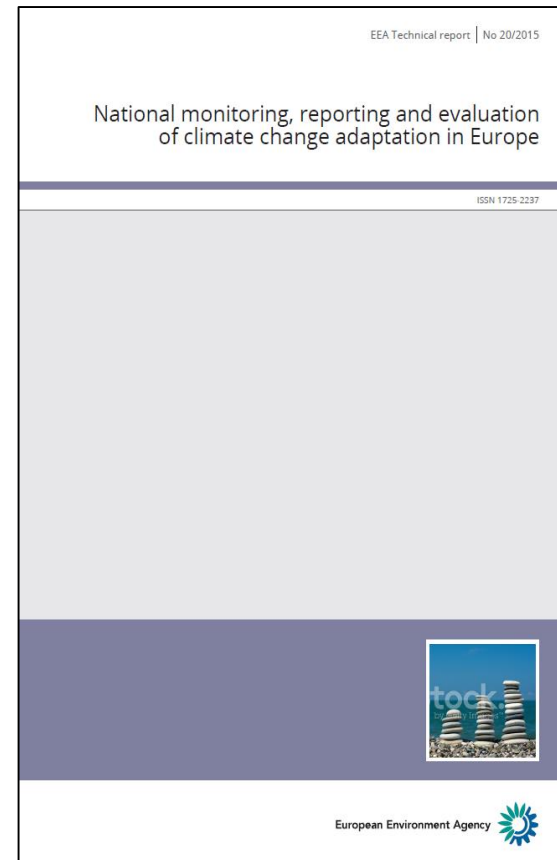## Current state and key challenges

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5th EEEN Forum

Copenhagen, 15-16 September 2016

SYKE

European Environment Agency

European Topic Centre on Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation

EEA focus on national adaptation policies in Europe

Overview of national level monitoring, reporting and evaluation of adaptation

- **14 countries have systems** for monitoring, reporting and/or evaluation of adaptation **in place or under development.**

- Most countries have **focused on monitoring and reporting** activities. The **evaluation** of adaptation policies is **at an early stage** because the implementation of adaptation has only just begun.

14 European countries have or are currently developing a system for MRE of adaptation at national level

- European countries having or currently developing a system for MRE of adaptation at national level

- European countries not having a system for MRE of adaptation at national level

- Outside EEA33 coverage *)

*) The 33 EEA member countries include the 28 European Union Member States together with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

(situation as of mid-2015)

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Current state and key challenges
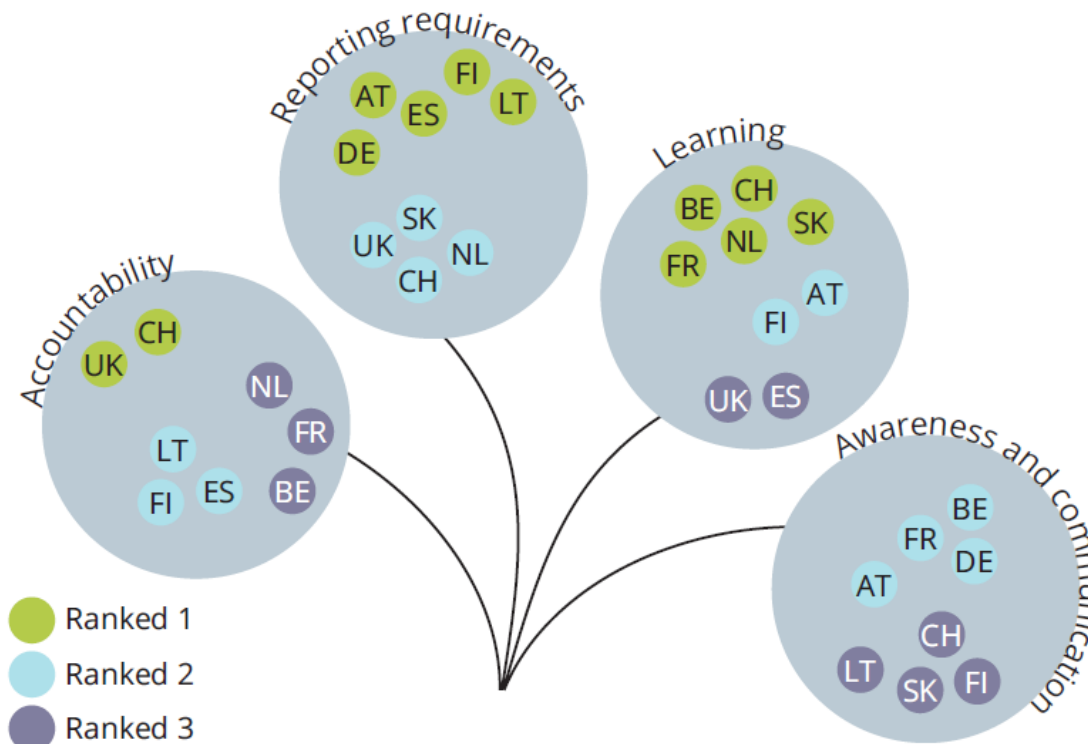
Key messages around:

- Drivers and purposes of MRE

- Governance and participation

- Methodological approaches

- Informing adaptation policy and practice

Drivers and purposes (1/2)

- **Drivers**: National legal and administrative requirements, European and international reporting requirements, and urgency generated by extreme weather events

- **Main purposes** include *tracking and reporting progress and effectiveness* of adaptation policy implementation, *enhancing the knowledge base, accountability* and *learning* to improve policies and practices.

- **Challenges**: confusion around overarching aims and specific objectives, lack of clearly defined objectives and targets in policies

Drivers and purposes (2/2)

Figure 2.1   Ranking of purposes by MRE experts participating in the Expert Workshop

Note: Participants were asked to select the main purposes underpinning national MRE systems and rank them in order of importance, with 1 being the most important ([13]).

Country codes: AT (Austria), BE (Belgium), CH (Switzerland), DE (Germany), ES (Spain), FI (Finland), FR (France), LT (Lithuania), NL (the Netherlands), SK (Slovakia), UK (the United Kingdom).

(EEA, 2015)

Governance and participation

- Overall responsibility often with ministry/agency responsible for coordination of adaptation policy
- Mechanisms for horizontal and vertical coordination across sectors and governance levels e.g. committees and working groups
- Voluntary vs. formalised requirements for MRE
- Dependent vs. independent evaluation

- **Challenges**: broad participation of actors, in particular local governments, resource issues linked to participation, representativeness of voices

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Methodological approaches (1/2)

- Benefits of flexible and pragmatic approaches, with methods appropriate to national context (needs, priorities, resources and data availability)
- Applying mixed methods with multiple sources of information provides a strong basis for assessing progress
- Narrative behind the numbers – critical importance of contextual information!
- Key role of indicators in many national MRE systems, importance of stakeholder engagement in development
- Robust and coherent sets of indicators over the value of individual indicators

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Example from UK (from EEA, 2015)

Figure 2.3   Overview of adaptation progress for agriculture and forestry

Note: The criteria for Red, Amber, Green or Grey status for each of the three questions are as follows:

Is there a plan? Green — where needed, plans or policies are in place that fully address the adaptation priority in the context of climate change. Amber — plans or policies are in place that partially address the adaptation priority. Red — no specific policies or plans are in place.

Are actions taking place? Green — all relevant NAP actions are complete or on-track, other relevant actions or commitments are being implemented. Amber — not all relevant NAP actions are on-track, partial delivery of other actions or commitments. Red — NAP actions mostly delayed or dropped, other relevant actions being behind schedule.

Is progress being made in managing vulnerability? Green — trends in vulnerability are reducing or not increasing; there is high uptake of low-regret adaptation measures; long-term decisions are accounting for the future climate. Amber — some trends in vulnerability are increasing; scope to increase low-regret adaptation, decision partially or inconsistently account for the future climate. Red — most trends in vulnerability increasing; minimal or zero uptake of low-regret adaptation; long-term decisions not taking the future climate into account. Grey — insufficient evidence available to make a judgement.

Methodological approaches (2/2)

Challenges

- Opportunities and limitations of proxy indicators
- Stand-alone vs. integrated indicator systems
- Limits of quantification and data availability
- Process > output > outcome indicators

- Difficulties in establishing attribution (long timeframes, uncertainty, range of factors influencing outcomes)
  - Possible remedies: good mix of methods and information sources, mapping expectations and assumptions ("Theory of Change")…

Closing the policy cycle – Informing adaptation policy and practice

- Ways of using results closely aligned to identified purposes, but limited experience and evidence of using MRE results in Europe
  - Adjustment and revision of national adaptation policies main area of application
  - Influence on adaptation practice particularly scarce

Challenges

- Methods of communicating results largely limited to published reports
- Limited independence of evaluation processes from policymaking (transparency vs. access)

Next steps and needs for developing effective evaluation practices for national level adaptation

- **Broadening the scope** beyond measuring policy implementation to understanding changing risks, vulnerabilities and resilience
- **Connecting multiple levels of action** (different levels governance and multiple sectors)
- **Enhancing the use of** monitoring and evaluation **results**
- Cultivating a **culture of learning** and improvement whilst balancing with reporting requirements
- **Methodological development**

Thank you for your attention!