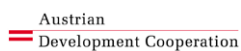


Climate Forum East

Case study



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Austrian
Development Cooperation



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Name: Climate Forum East (CfE)

Duration: 24 months (January 2013 – December 2014)

Project countries and leading partners:

- Armenia: Armenian Red Cross Society
- Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society
- Belarus: Belarus Red Cross Society
- Georgia: Georgia Red Cross Society
- Moldova: ECOSPECTRU
- Ukraine: National Ecological Centre of Ukraine (NECU)

Objective:

- To strengthen the capacity of civil society organisation networks to participate effectively in policy dialogue with local authorities, EU institutions and international organisations

Funding:

- European Union
- Austrian Development Agency
- Austrian Red Cross
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Danube-Carpathian Programme

Advisors and technical experts:

- Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- Environment Agency Austria

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RATIONALE

The countries of the **EU Eastern Partnership** (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine) are all vulnerable to natural hazards and extreme weather. Over the next century, the effects of climate change are likely to exacerbate this vulnerability; consequently, strong environmental legislation, robust adaptation measures and an active civil society are crucial to future prosperity.

Climate Forum East builds the capacities of the civil society sector in the Eastern Partnership countries to engage with the policy-making process and to contribute to the political priorities in these countries in the area of environmental governance and climate change.

At the same time, the project contributes to global policy-making processes related to climate change by encouraging civil society organisation (CSO) input into the development of National Communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and providing examples of good practice of CSO capacity-building and engagement with policy making.

The main goals of this project are to engage in awareness raising about climate change adaptation, to implement community and youth actions, to foster cross-sectoral cooperation and to create innovative partnerships.

The Climate Forum East (CfE) project builds on the 2010-2012 project **South East European Forum on Climate Change Adaptation project (SEEFCCA)**, active in Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia from 2011 to 2012. By incorporating best practices and lessons learned from this project, CfE drew and built upon a rich source of experience that improved the effectiveness and sustainability of CfE activities.

SETUP

National

Each country involved in Climate Forum East has developed or strengthened its own national network on climate change. This way, interested organisation can come together to share their expertise, develop new ideas and work with the government in order to adapt to climate change more effectively. Network members and supporters include CSOs, academic institutions and government ministries, all dedicated to working together to confront the challenges that climate change brings. The strength of each network comes from the cooperation of organisations in different sectors – humanitarian, environmental, educational, youth or health focused.



Working Group on Climate Change, Ukraine

Regional

At the same time, all participating national networks joined forces in the regional Climate Forum East. The purpose of the regional forum on climate change is to tackle regional and cross-border issues affecting the countries of the Eastern Partnership. This forum provides a space for international experience and knowledge exchange and for CSOs, governments and technical specialists to come together to discuss plans of action. One of the ways in which the regional Climate Forum East platform enabled knowledge sharing was through different trainings on the Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) methodology, advocacy and EU acquis.



Georgia Red Cross Society

/ Climate Vulnerability Assessment Methodology Workshop



8-9 July 2013, Georgia

Attendance: 45 participants from the European Union and all six Eastern Partnership countries, from government institutions, CSOs, the academic sector, Red Cross and Red Crescent, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Environment Agency Austria (EAA)

Facilitation: Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre, WWF and EAA

Aims:

- Define the best approach towards developing the national Climate Vulnerability Assessment reports
- Share experiences and best practices in writing Climate Vulnerability Assessments
- Discuss potential challenges and ways to further involve network members in the Climate Vulnerability Assessment process.

/ Effective Advocacy and Communication Strategies Workshop



7-8 October 2013, Ukraine

Attendance: all six project teams in Eastern Partnership countries and communication experts from all six national networks

Facilitation: Andreas Beckmann, Managing Director at WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme

Aims:

- Develop advocacy strategies for the key national priorities, chosen by each local network
- Push for potential national advocacy campaigns on key climate change related priorities.

/ EU Policy Training



4-8 November 2013, Moldova

Attendance: representatives of national CSO networks from Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine (partners from all other countries involved in the project implemented this training on the national level)

Facilitation: WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme, Clima East

Aims:

- Build capacities on the objectives of the EU climate policy until 2020, the 2030 Framework, the 2050 Roadmap, the 2007 Green Paper on Adaptation and the 2009 White Paper "Adapting to Climate Change: Towards a European Framework for Action"
- Learn and discuss how adaptation priorities can be translated into national level policy
- Share examples of successful adaptation strategies in the European Union
- Present and discuss adaptation of cities to heat stress and social aspects for preparedness and dealing with heat waves.

NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The following initiatives represent the highlights of each network's activities. For more detailed information, we suggest visiting the [Climate Forum East website](#) and our other communication tools.



ARMENIA

CVA focus and findings

The key aspect of the Armenian network's Climate Vulnerability Assessment is the ecosystem-based approach to climate change adaptation with a focus on agriculture, water, human health and biodiversity/ecosystems.

The main results indicate a high degree of vulnerability in all the sectors, with a need for urgent adaptation action. There is only a small degree of positive effects in the agricultural sector, where an increase in temperature allows an extension of the growing season and the growth of heat-loving crops in areas where it was previously impossible. The report also proposes approaches for financing adaptation actions at the community level.

Advocacy focus and actions

The overall advocacy objective was to make the Armenian Climate Forum East network the main CSO actor in the field climate change by the end of the project. Advocacy efforts were implemented by addressing top state authorities, CSOs and experts in the field through TV, online news, parliamentary debates and public events.

Activities with youth

In order to raise the awareness of teachers, pupils and their family members on climate change adaptation, a local drawing competition was organised for 12 schools. A one-day training of trainers for 24 teachers on climate change preceded the drawing competition. Overall, 100 pupils from each school, in total 1200, participated in the event. The 36 best drawings were included in a 2014 calendar, thus ensuring visibility of the Armenian network and the Climate Forum East project.



Armenian Red Cross Society



AZERBAIJAN

CVA focus and findings

Vulnerability of water resources, public health, agriculture and coastal areas are covered by the Climate Vulnerability Assessment produced in Azerbaijan.

The main results of the evaluation indicate that Azerbaijan is vulnerable to climate change and that the sectors of water and agriculture are most susceptible to climate change; there is an urgent need to take actions on the local and national level to prepare for and adapt to the effects of climate change. In some cases, positive results are achieved.

Advocacy focus and actions

Azerbaijan's team focused its advocacy efforts on discussions with governmental officials with the aim of providing funds for finding new water resources. For that purpose, members of Parliament were addressed through the main governmental TV channel, newspapers, public events and web resources.

Activities with communities and youth

A tree planting action was organised in order to raise awareness about climate change and the necessity to cope with climate related impacts on local levels. The village of Talistan in Ismayilli, a disaster prone region was chosen to implement this action, which was also covered by the media.

More than 55 people were involved in the tree planting: staff and volunteers of Azerbaijan Red Cross Society, Azerbaijan Climate Forum network members, government representatives and representatives from Talistan.



Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society



BELARUS

CVA focus and findings

A strong focus on public health, heat waves, agriculture and forestry are the priorities of the Belarus Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

The report describes the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable sectors, as well as giving recommendations for adaptation, roles of public authorities and non-governmental organisations. An analysis of the legislation is also presented and the existing shortcomings in the area of climate change are discussed.

Advocacy focus and actions

Belarus' overall objective in terms of policy dialogue was adoption of a national heat waves plan. This required that state officials be addressed through key TV programs, newspaper and thematic public events.

Activities with youth

To respond to the increased activity of ticks and tick-borne encephalitis, the Belarus Red Cross Society organised a first aid and information initiative to raise awareness regarding heat waves and to create safer conditions during the holiday season.

Together with Grodno regional Executive Committee, Grodno State Agricultural University and the Humane Society, ten Belarus Red Cross volunteers between the ages of 18 and 40 distributed leaflets on how to behave during heat waves.



Belarus Red Cross Society



GEORGIA

CVA focus and findings

The Georgian CSO network's Climate Vulnerability Assessment focused on public health and water resources, with a specific investigation into the impact of changing heat wave risk in Tbilisi. In Georgia, a climate change adaptation strategy and measures are included into National Environmental Action Plan for 2012-2016. Climate change issues should be considered in the elaboration of regional development strategies, in particular for priority regions and adaptation and mitigation measures, which should be included in action plans. An important highlight of the assessment are the recommendations for the development of a heat health action plan in Tbilisi.

Advocacy focus and actions

When it comes to advocacy, Georgia focused on the adoption of legislation on protection of green areas in Tbilisi by December 2015. For that students from two Tbilisi universities were addressed through University information resources (printed, online) and through a meeting with the deans.

Activities with youth

A "Day Against Climate Change" was held by the Georgia Red Cross Society in cooperation with Tbilisi Zoo. The aim was to raise awareness about the importance of combating climate change and protecting the environment, flora and fauna. Volunteers of Georgia Red Cross Society and Tbilisi Zoo as well as visitors had an opportunity to take part in the debates on what measures should be taken to combat climate change, how we can adapt to a changing climate and what the solutions to climate change are for vulnerable people.



Georgia Red Cross Society

NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS



MOLDOVA

CVA focus and findings

Rural development, public health and biodiversity are the key areas of focus of the Moldovan network's Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

The main findings of the assessment are the need for commitment of local communities and governments to develop actions aimed at adaptation to climate change and the need for increased awareness of different target groups, including young people, of climate change.

Advocacy focus and actions

In Moldova, the advocacy priority was capacity development of the CSOs in the field of communication in climate change issues for the period until 2020. That required internet campaigns, a newsletter, and presentations for the local mass media, radio and TV station, as well as exchange of experiences and case studies.

Activities with youth

The Republican Center for Youth and Children - Gutta-Club organised a national summer ecological school in the village Raculesti, Criuleni district for volunteers and future climate ambassadors. During the ten days of the eco-school participants were able to learn, exchange experiences and opinions on climate change. They took an introductory course on climate, climate change and climate change adaptation, while they also explored different case studies, role plays and had a fun time together.



Summer camp, Moldova



UKRAINE

CVA focus and findings

Methods for assessing urban vulnerability to climate change and recommendations for urban adaptation are central to the Ukrainian Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

The changing climate and rising risk of extreme weather events has led to high urban vulnerability to climate change in the country. Major adverse effects of climate change in cities were defined and seven groups of indicators were proposed to help determine those effects to which a given city is the most vulnerable. This methodology was first tested in three cities and then used by local CSOs for assessing vulnerability in four other cities across Ukraine.

Advocacy focus and actions

The overall advocacy objective for the Ukrainian team was to ensure that building norms in Ukraine are updated to the new conditions of changing climate. For that, one central scientific building Institute and regional scientific building Institutes were addressed through TV channels which cover scientific issues, business newspapers and journals, and specialised websites.

Activities with youth

11 young activists from Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Lviv organised a series of awareness-raising events across Ukraine. An online campaign through social networks and more than 28 climate-related art and educational events took place in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Lviv during one week in October, "Climate Week". Activities included street art with climate dynamics diagrams, upcycle workshops, charity concerts, thematic films, lectures, street flash mobs, theater performances and photo art exhibitions; all focused on the causes and consequences of climate change, and were widely recognised throughout the country.



National Environmental Centre of Ukraine event

REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

1

First Regional Conference: Responding to Climate Change in Eastern Partnership Countries

26-27 March 2014, Georgia

Attendance:

More than 60 representatives of CSOs, national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, scientific institutions, governments, regional and international organisations from all six Eastern Partnership project countries

Aims:

- Bring together representatives of six civil society networks on climate change adaptation and representatives from other regional and international networks
- Present and discuss the recommendations and outcomes of six civil society-led Climate Vulnerability Assessment reports
- Cross-country best practice exchange
- Present activities in climate change adaptation, ranging from awareness raising initiatives, policy dialogue with decision-makers to youth actions
- Interactive skills development trainings in EU fundraising, resilience for cities and mobilisation of youth for climate change activities.
- The First Regional Conference concluded in the adoption of a Resolution, which further reaffirmed and strengthened the mission and activities of Climate Forum East.

2

Second Regional Conference: Towards Joint Action on Climate Change in Eastern Partnership Countries

8-9 October 2014, Belarus

Attendance:

More than 70 representatives from CSOs, Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, scientific institutions, governments, regional and international organisations from all six Eastern Partnership project countries

Aims:

- Discuss responses to climate change at global and regional levels with a special focus on adaptation
- Present an overview of civil society efforts on adaptation to climate change in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine
- Present, discuss and exchange project results, experiences in promotion of adaptation measures, with advocacy actions developed in the course of the project
- Find ways and to establish future regional cooperation.

The conference contained a mini-advocacy campaign from each national network:

Armenia highlighted the choices individuals could make to reduce their contribution to climate change and adapt to its effects;

Azerbaijan drew attention to the impact of climate change on agriculture in their country;

Belarus used a stealth sticker campaign to raise awareness of tick-borne diseases;

Georgia focused on heat waves and behaviour change to reduce personal risk in high temperatures;

Moldova performed a "pantomime" of fruit and vegetables affected by changing summer temperatures;

Ukraine highlighted the reduced costs of taking early adaptation action.



Second Regional Conference

3

Regular Project Partner Meetings

Project partners from all six countries of the Eastern Partnership region met on a regular basis throughout the project duration. These meetings served as an opportunity to present progress reports and plan forthcoming regional and sub-regional events with the project manager. Partners also benefitted from a detailed mid-term evaluation which helped them assess the current state of affairs and structure future activities, based on recommended network development strategies.

4

EU Study Visit

12-14 May 2014, Belgium

Attendance:

Climate Forum East project partners and selected representatives from national climate change adaptation networks

Aims:

- Improve the knowledge and understanding of EU structures, institutions and mechanisms in order to work better in climate change adaptation on the national level
- Learn about effective policy dialogue with governmental institutions
- Strengthen CSO knowledge and motivation
- Plan the Climate Forum East II project

5

Lima Climate Change Conference, December 2014

1-12 December 2014, Peru

The 20th yearly session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 20) to the UNFCCC brought together delegates from across the world to continue the negotiations towards a global climate agreement. Climate Forum East was actively represented as a part of the Red Cross delegation to introduce and promote the Climate Vulnerability Assessment reports and the entire project to UNFCCC conference participants.

6

Cooperation with Clima East¹

Climate Forum East cooperated on many occasions at a regional and national level with the EU-funded Clima East project package, designed to support the Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation in their approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Since Clima East and Climate Forum East shared similar goals and a similar geographical scope, an active liaison was established with the Climate Forum East team. Joint events were implemented on national and sub-regional levels, and Clima East experts were invited to facilitate trainings and attend Climate Forum East events. In the future the cooperation and coordination between these two projects is envisaged to continue on a more formal basis.

¹ www.climaeast.eu

7

European Development Days

26-27 November 2013, Belgium

Organised by the European Commission, the European Development Days are Europe's leading forum on development and international cooperation. They foster knowledge sharing, creative thinking and innovation through meetings, networking and brainstorming for key players in development, while being an opportunity to benchmark best practices and learn from latest innovations that improve the impact and effectiveness of international aid. The 2013 European Development Days focused on the push for a common European position to address global poverty after 2015, and how to reconcile environmental protection and poverty eradication. Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Center representatives presented the outcomes of South East European Forum on Climate Change Adaptation and lessons applied in Climate Forum East related to upscaling climate risk assessments.

LESSONS LEARNED

The following points describe lessons learned from the implementation of the regional Climate Forum East project based on various evaluations and reflections conducted during the two project years. These key learning points have been integrated into the project continuation, Climate Forum East II.

Regional aspect

The regional network is an additional stimulus for local and national CSOs and other stakeholders to get involved in Climate Forum East. The regional and international cooperation provide more opportunities for sharing experiences and knowledge. Also, climate change related issues do not know geographical borders and thus need to be addressed on a regional level. Climate Forum East reaffirmed that climate change now constitutes one of the most serious threats to nature and humans, not only in the near future but already nowadays and expressed concern at the low prioritisation of climate change adaptation efforts in Eastern Partnership Countries. In its Resolution, it recognised the need to further strengthen joint efforts for a robust response to climate change.

Sub-regional cooperation

For the ease of organising certain activities and improved finance coordination, it is better to do some implementation on the sub-regional level. The sole combination of countries in Climate Forum East could seem slightly artificial, since there are no common political structures to target.

Focus on youth and community actions

Young people today are among those who will be most affected by climate change, and their involvement must be central in any climate change adaptation strategy. Climate Forum East worked with young people, schools and communities, giving workshops to teachers and young people, and helping educate people about climate change and encourage youth and community action.

Local level engagement

For climate change adaptation, local actions are key. In the Climate Forum East II project, more emphasis is given to strengthening local CSOs and locally driven climate change actions. These best practices should be shared with decision-makers to take findings from these local climate change adaptation projects into consideration when adopting climate relevant policies for local and national levels.

Specific role of CSOs

For communication and policy dialogue, the specific role of CSOs must be clearly defined to contribute with specific expertise from the grassroots levels to local, national and regional policy efforts. This unique point of CSOs will be further developed in the Climate Forum East II by strengthening CSO capacities and highlighting CSO power to foster change on local levels.

Sustainability

The general project design is broad and open and therefore provides the opportunity for enough flexibility for the different speeds of growth of the six national networks, which is likely to turn out as a valuable investment in their long-term sustainability. Each CSO network and its members should define what their expected gains from and contributions to the joint network are and build their future work on that basis.

2015 AND BEYOND: CLIMATE FORUM EAST II

While the work of Climate Forum East has had significant achievements during the two project years, more can be done in the coming years. That is why the existing partners are continuing the EU funded project activities for **another 30 months**, starting on 1 January 2015, until 30 June 2017.

The project will benefit local and national decision-makers, national disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation platforms, media, local communities, youth leaders and young volunteers, as well as the general public.

The forthcoming project will be managed by the Austrian Red Cross. **Partners** in this project from the Eastern Partnership region are Armenian Red Cross Society, Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society, Georgia Red Cross Society, Belarus Red Cross Society, National Ecological Centre of Ukraine and EcoContact in Moldova. International project partners include WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme, WWF Caucasus and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The specific objective of this project is to increase the capacity of six existing national CSO climate change adaptation networks and individual CSO network members to contribute to national and local policy making processes, public awareness raising, and education on climate change and environmental governance in the Eastern Partnership countries.

Estimated results:

Capacities of six CSO networks and CSO network members strengthened in the areas of leadership, resource mobilisation and communication.

CSOs capacity in developing local climate change adaptation action plans through multi-stakeholder dialogue increased; community-led projects for evidence-based local and national advocacy implemented.

CSO networks increased their impact in influencing national policy dialogue in climate change and environmental governance, mobilising youth and raising public awareness on climate related topics.

Capacities of six CSO networks and individual CSO network members increased by sharing practical climate change and environmental governance knowledge and experiences regionally.

