

BSEC CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

1. The BSEC Platform for a Climate Adaptation Response

The climate change projections for the region suggest that significant changes in the climate during the 21st Century are likely. These projected changes in climate are likely to affect the natural resources of the region, the economic activities of the region and have a myriad of societal and wellbeing-notations. It is likely that sensitive and vulnerable components of ecosystems will be impacted the most.

National governments in the Black Sea region have already moved towards identification of key vulnerabilities and options for building resilience in the future as indicated in the National Communications.

For maximum benefit, national responses need to be supported by regional approaches to adaptation and building resilience in the Black Sea region. Thus, this document outlines a strategy for BSEC to support climate change adaptation in the Black Sea region which builds on existing Declarations.

The Joint Declaration on Combating Climate Change in the wider Black Sea area adopted at the Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in November 2010 (*Thessaloniki Declaration 2010*) recognizes the problems of climate change, the need for common solutions and commits to striving to develop common approaches demonstrating leadership and seeking common policy positions as well as project-based initiatives. In particular the Declaration recognizes:

- ✓ The importance of developing and implementing regional approaches as appropriate for combating the negative impacts of climate change as well as for reversing continuing trends of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation;
- ✓ The need to strengthen collaboration on addressing common challenges by elaborating shared plans and initiatives concerning the implementation of models of environmental risks assessment, especially early warning prediction models, with the aim of taking joint measures and increasing safety precautions against disasters in the wider Black Sea area;
- ✓ The requirement for further increase in public awareness on ecological issues for the long-term safety of the Black Sea environment.

The Joint Declaration adopted at the meeting of the Ministers in charge of Environmental Protection of the BSEC Member States in May 2011 (***Bucharest Declaration 2011***) stresses the need for collaborative work with national, regional and international organisations towards environmental protection and a sustainable future for the Black sea region. In particular the Declaration:

- ✓ Acknowledges the impacts of climate change which require regional concerted actions in the field of environmental protection and environmental risk management;
- ✓ Re-confirms the commitment to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the protection of the environment in the Black Sea region.

The Joint Declaration adopted on Climate Change and Green Economy at the meeting of the Ministers in Charge of Environmental Protection and Heads of Delegations of the BSEC Member States in April 2012 (***Belgrade Declaration 2012***) shapes a climate change response through adaptation and green economy, supported by financial resources for climate related activities, to ensure security and sustainable development to the Black Sea region. In particular the Declaration:

- ✓ Acknowledges the global challenges in the 21st century, particularly the impacts of climate change which requires urgent global solutions as well as regional cooperation in the spirit of international agreements and instruments, in particular Rio Declaration and Agenda 21;
- ✓ Recognizes that the wider Black Sea area is vulnerable to climate change which has local and regional impacts on the environment and socio-economic development, and the need for the BSEC Member States to work towards promotion of environmentally sound mechanisms and proactive solutions for facing and overcoming challenges and problems;
- ✓ Recognizes that the enhancement of cooperation among the BSEC Member States shall contribute to giving higher priority of climate change issues in national and regional agendas and promoting the investments in green economy which will bring positive changes in socio-economic development;
- ✓ Strives to identify applicable common approaches on combating climate change and promoting a green economy, benefiting from results and achievements at the national levels and regional and sub-regional initiatives and projects;
- ✓ Develops regional approaches on climate change measures with respect to the capabilities of the countries ensuring energy security and sustainable development;

- ✓ Calls for development of portfolio of common adaptation-related actions, using existing infrastructure and institutional framework of the wider Black Sea area;
- ✓ Encourages greater involvement of BSEC in securing access and diversification of financial resources for development and implementation of green economy and climate related programs, projects and activities.

2. Climate Vulnerability and Priorities in the Black Sea Region

The climate change projections for the region suggest notable changes in the climate of the region during the 21st century such as an increase in air temperature, decrease in precipitation especially in the summer as well as more frequent and severe droughts and floods (IPCC 4th Assessment).

BSEC Member States have responded to climate change at a national level including production of *National Communications*. These NCCC's contain much background information on national climate change projections and also identify nationally vulnerable sectors.

The *CLIMBIZ project* ("Introducing Climate Change in the Environmental Strategy of the Protection for the Black Sea") aims to support BSEC to operationalize the Action Plan and Declarations previously identified.

To this end CLIMBIZ has carried out a "*climate change vulnerability and assessment review*" which showed that climate change effects are likely across most of the economic, social and natural resource sectors. A number of highly vulnerable sectors were identified (economic sector - water resources, agriculture and forestry; social sector – poverty; nature resources sector – terrestrial and coastal ecosystems).

The CLIMBIZ vulnerability assessment also identified various cross-cutting themes to help formulate a response to climate change in the Black Sea region.

From the analysis CLIMBIZ identified a number of key strategic elements for building climate adaptation and resilience in the Black Sea region:

- I. Promoting of regional cooperation;
- II. Catalysing of additional funding;
- III. Galvanizing and raising awareness in stakeholders;
- IV. Championing the development of individual and institutional capabilities;
- V. Targeting of research to key priorities.

Projects targeted at regional priorities should be formulated include one or more of these strategic elements (e.g. promoting regional cooperation) and operate in one or more of the highly vulnerable sectors which have been identified (e.g. agriculture or coastal ecosystems).

Three example projects are identified in **Supporting Document A** and three potential funding instruments for adaptation projects in the region are described in **Supporting Document B**. Many international climate change finance opportunities (e.g. Adaptation Fund, Global Environmental Facility) are implemented on a country basis. **The role of BSEC should be primarily serving as a platform for exchange of best practice and information in combating climate change and providing value added regional dimension to climate change responses in the Member States.**

3. The BSEC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

Acknowledging the need for close cooperation among the Member States for the protection of their environment,

Considering that the aim of BSEC is to achieve a greater unity between its Members for the purpose of promoting economic, technological and social progress,

Confirming their commitment to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment in the BSEC Region,

Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the main instrument to address change of the Earth's climate and elaborate appropriate international response to that change,

Appreciating the Thessaloniki Climate Change Declaration (2010) the Bucharest Declaration on Climate Change (2011) and the Belgrade Declaration on Climate Change and Green Economy (2012),

The BSEC Climate Change Strategy involves:

- I. Promoting regional cooperation in combating climate change across the BSEC area.** This can be achieved through the collation of knowledge and information to provide a common documented perspective of climate change at regional scale. In addition, BSEC should facilitate the development of a centralized regional data and information hub on

climate change in the region; this should include climate change projections, climate impacts and vulnerabilities as well as demonstrative adaptation interventions.

- II. Catalysing additional funding though working towards effective fiduciary standards and mobilising partners to formulate climate response projects.** BSEC should act as a regional node for mobilizing a wide-range of partners to formulate and submit climate response projects to appropriate funding instruments.
- III. Galvanising regional partnerships which can work to help build climate resilience in society and further strengthen the green economy. BSEC should support efforts by the national governments to combat climate change and help facilitate regional dialogue on climate change issues.** This should involve communication and raising of awareness on climate change and dissemination of demonstrative examples of best practice in response to climate change. BSEC should also act as a **platform** to help facilitate partnerships which lead to information and capacity exchange up-skilling in climate resilience (it was the last sentence from p.4).
- IV. Championing the development of institutional capabilities in climate change across the region.** There is a need to mainstream climate change and its impact in all of the BSEC Subsidiary Organs and building in climate change elements to new and revised Action Plans and other BSEC planning documents.

The actions and targets of a BSEC climate change adaptation strategy for the next 5 years are shown below:

- a) **Promotion of regional cooperation** in all aspects of climate changes across the BSEC Member States.
 - BSEC WG collates information on climate change adaptation initiatives from Member States to provide a knowledge-base for the region by end of year 1 of implementation.
 - BSEC WG provides a regional perspective on climate change through an analysis and interpretation of initiatives in Members States and identifies key information gaps by end of year 3 of implementation.
 - **Interested Member States** are brought together and plan to establish a regional clearing house mechanism on Climate Change Adaptation by end of year 5 of implementation.

- b) **Catalyzing additional funding** though working towards effective fiduciary standards and mobilizing partners to formulate climate response projects.
- Member States access possible routes to gain access to climate finance at a country-level and BSEC assesses possibilities for regional-level project financing opportunities by end of year 1 of implementation.
 - At least 5 regional / national climate change project fiches are formulated by interested Member States which include identified regional collaboration elements and they move towards full submission by end of year 3 of implementation.
 - At least two funded climate change projects have commenced and at least two further climate change projects are in the funding pipeline by end of year 5 of implementation.
- c) **Promoting regional partnerships** and multi-stakeholder networks which can work to help build climate resilience in society and further strengthen the green economy.
- At least 3 networks involved in climate change adaptation have interacted with BSEC and opened dialogues on the role and value of regional adaptation approaches to building climate change resilience within the region.
 - The actions and modes required for building climate change resilience and the green economy have been identified through stakeholder dialogue by BSEC and key messages are agreed in BSEC organs by end of year 3 of implementation.
 - BSEC have through presentations, documentation or documented discussions promoted cases of best practice and modes of implementation of adaptation / building resilience / green economy on at least 8 occasions by end of year 5 of implementation.
- d) **Championing the development** of institutional and individual capabilities in climate change across the region:
- BSEC WG on Environmental Protection mainstreams climate change adaptation and the green economy through BSEC PERMIS and at least 8 other BSEC subsidiary organs by end of year 1 of implementation.
 - BSEC PERMIS and at least 5 BSEC Subsidiary Organs (including at least 3 from Science & Technology, Energy, Trade and Economic Development, Education and Tourism) have climate change identified in plans and Declarations by end of year 3 of implementation.
 - BSEC organs have sought and mediated partnerships which lead to demonstrable increased awareness and up-skilling of climate change capacity in at least 6 Members States by end of year 5 of implementation.

Funding for the BSEC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy is entrusted to the Member Countries of BSEC and **relevant international organizations**.

4. Establishment of Climate Adaptation Strategy Implementation and Observe & Report Function for BSEC

The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy should be entrusted to the Environmental Protection Working Group of BSEC, which shall work with BSEC-PERMIS and other permanent subsidiary organs of BSEC, to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan and submit regular progress reports to the BSEC Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and to relevant Ministers of the BSEC Member States.

In order to guarantee operationalization of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, BSEC shall aim to task the Executive Manager of the WG on Environmental Protection with a more operational function, as well as to entrust Country Coordinators or other executives from other WGs to support implementation of the strategy as required.

A progress report shall be produced by the designated executive on an annual basis and shall deliver information on:

- I. Progress which has been made in the region on each of the four strategic elements of the BSEC Climate Adaptation Strategy.
- II. Progress which has been facilitated by BSEC in each of the four strategic elements of the BSEC Climate Adaptation Strategy.
- III. Degree of completeness of delivery or achievement of each of the items of the priority action plan.
- IV. Proposals for modifying the strategic elements or the priority Action Plan items to match progress in climate response in the region.

A full review of progress to date should be made after 5 years and the strategic elements and Action Plan considered for revisions / replacement / amendments by the WG on Environmental Protection and updated climate adaptation strategy produced.

5. Climate Response Status Reporting

A summary of progress in climate change adaptation in the region should be produced on an annual basis by Executive Manager supported by the WG on Environmental Protection to help (i) communicate progress which has been made, (ii) highlight demonstrative or pilot projects which have regional value and (iii) identify key gaps in the regional response.

The summary report will be structured around the progress in delivery of the four main strategic elements of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

The summary report shall be written in a non-technical way which is understandable by policy makers and governmental officers.

Reporting has to be aligned with the UNFCCC process to avoid additional burden of the parties.

The summary report shall be placed on the BSEC website positioned in relation to the WG on Environmental Protection.

The WG on Environmental Protection shall work in collaboration with BSEC PERMIS and support the public communication strategy in relation to climate change.