

Adaptation to climate change - Preparing today for the challenges of the future



Akis Kikas
Senior Principal Auditor
Audit Office of the Republic

Our Office and the Environment



- Recognizing the importance of environmental issues, the International and European Organisations of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) – INTOSAI and EUROSAI, have established working groups dealing with environmental auditing.
- The Audit Office of the Republic of Cyprus is an active member in both working groups.
- Both the INTOSAI and EUROSAI WGEAs have included the topic of climate change as a central theme in their work plans.

EUROSAI WGEA audit on adaptation to climate change



- The Secretariat of the EUROSAI WGEA has proposed the initiation of a cooperative audit in the area of adaptation to climate change.
- Our Office, acknowledging the importance of the subject for Cyprus, which is already affected severely by climate change, accepted the invitation.



Participating SAIs in the cooperative audit



- Austria
- Bulgaria
- Cyprus
- European Court of Auditors
- Malta
- The Netherlands
- Norway
- Russian Federation
- Ukraine

Hungary participated as an observer to the project.

Progress of cooperative audit



- Audit was launched in Oslo in January 2011.
- A common audit framework was agreed among participating SAIs.
- Progress of the audit monitored through teleconferencing in May 2011 and a meeting during the annual EUROSAI WGEA assembly in October 2011.
- Partners' meeting held in Cyprus in December 2011.
- Final partners' meeting held in Malta in June 2012.
- Final report launched on 29.11.2012, during the COP 18 in Qatar.

Findings of cooperative audit



- Supreme Audit Institutions have an important role to play in contributing to an efficient and cost effective adaptation policy implementation.
- Adaptation to climate change does not seem to be a priority area among national governments. Although risk and vulnerability assessments have been prepared in most cases, only three countries out of the eight audited have developed a policy framework for adaptation and developed a comprehensive national strategy.

Findings of cooperative audit



- Most countries have started to implement actions, which, however, are to a large extent a response to current climatic issues, not adaptation actions seeking to meet future climate change challenges
- The financial crisis in Europe and the long term nature of climate change might be contributing factors to that countries are not giving priority to this area.

Findings of cooperative audit



- Weaknesses in coordination of adaptation actions
- Lack of cost estimates of impacts of climate change or adaptation measures in policy documents
- There is scientific consensus that postponing the implementation of adaptation actions will be more costly in the long term.

The national audit



- Cyprus is already experiencing the adverse effects of climate change in the Mediterranean region ie increased temperatures, lower precipitation, extreme weather conditions.
- **Audit objective:** To assess whether measures for adapting to climate change have been designed and implemented successfully.
- **Areas covered:** Water, Forestry, Agriculture.

General findings and recommendations



- No formal risk and vulnerability assessment had been carried out at the time of the audit.
- National strategy for adaptation not in place yet.
- Both above issues will be addressed through the “CYPADAPT’ project.
- Offered recommendations regarding the content and qualitative characteristics of the assessments and the strategy.
- Proposed that, in view of the current financial crisis and need for even wiser public spending, measures should be prioritised in accordance to a cost benefit analysis.

General findings and recommendations (ctd...)



- Most measures taken are aimed towards solving already existing problems rather than adapting to future climate conditions.
- There is no coordination or overall monitoring, supervision and evaluation.
- Experiences of the past and various studies indicate that delay in taking action increases the costs.

Water



- Reliance on weather conditions for meeting demand for drinking water has been successfully addressed through the construction of desalination plants.
- No feasibility study and cost benefit analysis have been carried out prior to their construction.
- Environmental consequences evaluated ex post.
- Due to contractual obligations, the government continues to pay a significant portion of the cost of desalinated water, even when that is not produced.



Water (ctd...)



- Our Office recommended that needs for drinking water be met by combining the production of lower quantities of desalinated water with better management of water stored in dams.
- There is potential for better utilisation of recycled water.
- Current pricing policy does not reflect the real cost of water. This is expected to be resolved with the adoption of the new Regulation for water pricing, which is in compliance with the Water Framework Directive.



Forests



- Death of trees (especially Cyprus cedars) attributed to droughts experienced in recent years.
- Short term measures have been taken to deal with the problem and a 10 year action plan is currently under development.
- Generic material preserved both locally and abroad.
- Infrastructure developed in previous years (anti-fire zones, forest fire stations) will facilitate the adaptation effort.



Agriculture



- Some Measures of the Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013 address environmental issues and contribute towards adaptation to climate change.
- The subsidisation of improved irrigation systems have led to annual savings of 60mln cm³ of water.
- Recommended the immediate promotion of the actions described in the working paper accompanying the White Paper.



WE MUST REMEMBER.....



**WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CLIMATE
CHANGE AND ITS ADVERSE EFFECTS ON
THE PLANET**

**THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS TO ENSURE THAT
MEASURES ARE TAKEN TO ADAPT TO THE
CONDITIONS WE HAVE CREATED SO AS TO
MAKE THE EARTH A LIVABLE PLACE FOR
THE FUTURE GENERATIONS**

