

REACH OUT

shaping climate resilient cities



Final City toolkit forum

Report from the EURESFO conference in
Valencia June 2024

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1 Introduction

The 11th European Urban Resilience Forum took place on 26-28 June in Valencia, Spain. For REACHOUT, this offered a unique opportunity to demonstrate the Triple-A Toolkit to an audience consisting primarily of cities and consultants/researchers supporting cities. Since 2013, EURESFO has been a unique exchange platform for city representatives, experts and stakeholders from local and regional institutions to discuss strategies, initiatives and actions for adapting to climate change, managing disasters and building urban resilience. The event is a European initiative driven by ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability and the European Environment Agency (EEA), and was co-organized with the City of Valencia for the 2024 edition.

The 2024 edition of the European Urban Resilience Forum took place in the framework of the Valencia Cities Climate Week (including the Cities Mission Conference, EURESFO and the Energy Cities Annual Forum), hosted by the city as part of the Valencia EU Green Capital 2024 celebrations. It was a unique opportunity to bring together representatives of cities and regions from across Europe to discuss challenges and opportunities for strengthening resilience in the wider context of sustainable urban development.

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User oriented climate services to support adaptation in cities

Lessons learnt from 7 European countries
Ad Jansen (Deltareis), Hanne Goosen (CAIS), Sade McInry (Deltareis), Felix van Veldhoven (CAIS), Eva Boon (CAIS), Gaby S. Langendijk (Deltareis)

KEY LESSONS:

- Adaptation solutions are urgently needed and cannot be taken in isolation.
- Climate adaptation needs to be comprehensively integrated into municipal planning to leverage multiple benefits, combining adaptation, mitigation & development: so-called climate resilient urban development.
- Climate services shall support the "new" narrative of climate resilient development, through inclusive ambition and action setting. This will enhance uptake of climate services.
- For successful operating of climate services, **barriers** (e.g. finance, technical capacity, siloed approaches) need to be addressed.
- Evaluation of climate services indicates tools need to be able to identify hot spots of vulnerability and provide more information on successful solutions.

Co-creation journey in 7 city hubs:

1. Define the problem statement.
2. Co-develop tools to support urban development and adaptation planning.
3. Apply methods following the Triple-A Approach: Ambition, Action and Access.
4. Address barriers for uptake and ensure sustainable implementation.

User oriented climate services under development:

- CLIMATE STORIES
- TRIPLE-A Toolkit
- POLICY NARRATIVES

The REACHOUT project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101016538

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EURESFO offered a unique opportunity for the REACHOUT project to present and discuss its climate service tools and toolkit development, and to explore other cutting-edge tools and decision-support platforms that facilitate climate adaptation efforts.

Therefore, REACHOUT took the initiative to organize a toolkit session and a demonstration at the expo at EURESFO 2024, dedicated to [climate resilience tools](#), together serving as the the final City Toolkit forum for the project.

REACHOUT is a research and innovation project financed under the European Green Deal. It aims to further develop city-oriented climate services across Europe, i.e. services that provide cities with tailored climate information in order to help them make climate smart decisions. The project aims to improve the uptake and success of certain climate services. It works with a diverse group of European cities to create “Hubs for co-creation of climate service innovations”. These hubs involve city representatives working with tool developers to co-create climate information services that provide added value to cities and are easy to understand and use. With four small size cities (Lillestrom, Cork, Gdynia and Logrono) and three large cities (Milan, Athens, Amsterdam), both heat and flood related hazards, as well as advanced and less advanced adaptation capacities are covered. In a series of 4 Policy briefs REACHOUT communicates its main findings to a wider audience of stakeholders that include city urban planning and adaptation professionals, the climate service community, and the EU adaptation policy makers.

2 Toolkit forum break-out session

The toolkit session was moderated by Leon Kapetas (RCN) and focused on the practical aspects of utilizing tools and approaches for urban climate resilience. The session addressed the question whether the Triple-A toolkit fits the demand from cities? A panel discussion with the cities of Athens, Cork, and Milan was followed by a break-out discussion in four groups discussing how cities set their ambitions and how climate services can be supportive.

The REACHOUT team presented the toolkit and demonstrated some of the tools and how these have been implemented by the city hubs. A panel discussion followed which gave insightful reflections on how the different cities have been interacting with the tools in the Triple-A toolkit. The session brought together experts and practitioners from the cities of Athens, Milan and Cork to discuss innovative ways of strengthening climate resilience at regional and global scales, and how the Triple A Toolkit can offer support. The session took place on Tuesday, June 27, in a fully booked room with ~ 60 participants.

11.15 - 13.00	PARALLEL WORKSHOPS		
	<p>CO-CREATING INCLUSIVE CLIMATE ADAPTATION SOLUTIONS: AN INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP ON CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Location Sala Lucrecia Bori</p> <p>Speakers Eulalia Baulenas (BSC) Samuel Pickard (BSC) Alain Denis (Yellow Window)</p> <p>Local Experts facilitating the case studies Ludwig Sonesson (City of Malmö) Marit Gronwald (City of Dresden) Edoardo Zanchini (City of Rome) Elena Tzamouranou (Messinia region) Albin Hunia (City of Utrecht) Emanuel Toft (City of Malmö)</p> <p>Moderators Jannis Niethammer (ICLEI Europe)</p>	<p>CLIMATE SERVICES TOWARDS BETTER INFORMED POLICIES AND DECISIONS FOR CLIMATE-RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Location Sala Martín y Soler</p> <p>Speakers Emmy Papazoglou (City of Athens) Simone Nardicchia (City of Milan) Denise McCullagh (University College Cork) Hasse Goosen (CAS)</p> <p>Moderators Leon Kapetas (R-Cities) Hasse Goosen (CAS) Saioa Zorita (TECNALIA) Efren Feliu (TECNALIA)</p>	<p>BRIDGING THE GAP: MOBILIZING LOCAL RESOURCES FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS</p> <p>Location Sala Multiusos</p> <p>Moderators Felicity Spors (Gold Standard Foundation) Konstantina Karydi (Resilient Cities Catalyst) Caitlin Drake (The Gold Standard Foundation) Allison Ahern (Resilient Cities Network) Federico Aili (Resilient Cities Network)</p>

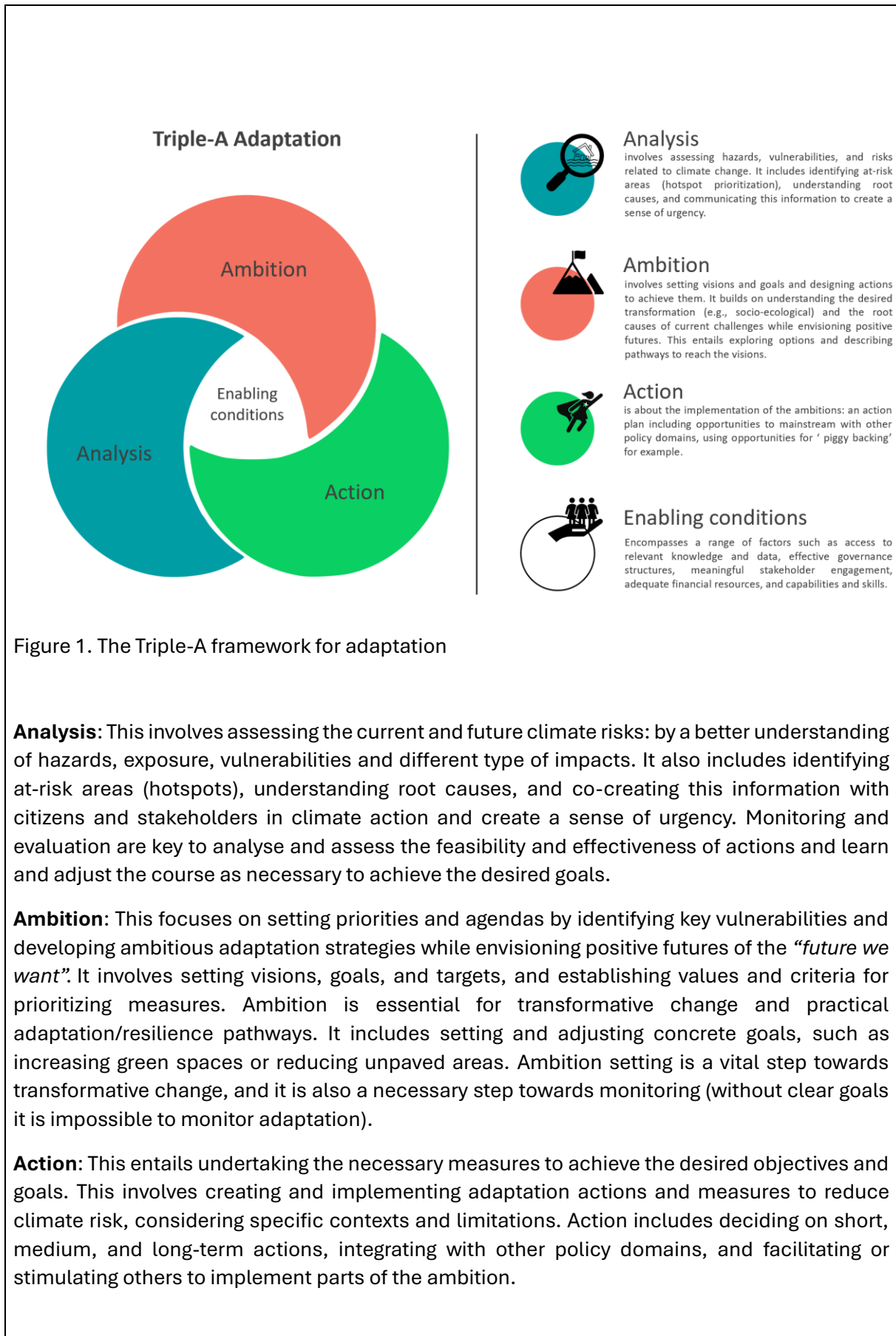
After the presentation and the panel discussion, the participants were divided into four break-out groups, facilitated by REACHOUT partners. The session centered on tools supporting climate services and the dialogue around setting ambition (see textbox) in climate adaptation planning.

Box 1: The Triple-A framework

The Triple A framework introduced by REACHOUT, effectively links and organizes urban adaptation and resilience activities with a focus on simplicity: analysis, ambition, and action. These steps are flexible (do not have a pre-defined order) and can be adapted to the local context and needs to address specific challenges and achieve particular goals. Whatever the combination of the steps results in a learning process, leading to various outcomes and insights and thus advancing in urban adaptation and resilience. A key feature is its emphasis on ambition, encouraging cities to envision different futures and find ways to achieve them, moving from risk-based planning to climate-resilient societies. Ambition can be applied at different levels and with a different focus depending on city needs and context: strategic (vision, targets, motivation), technical (safety levels, risk prioritization, measure selection criteria), and evaluation/adjustment (benefits, trade-offs, KPIs).

Unlike fixed step-by-step guidelines, the Triple A framework offers flexible views on the activities that cities need for urban adaptation, supported by climate services and tools. These activities include understanding climate change impacts, setting goals, implementing actions, and learning from them.

The Triple A framework clusters activities in learning loops that help advancing in urban adaptation, making it flexible and modular, allowing multiple activities to happen simultaneously.



One common theme throughout the discussion was a significant interest in the toolkit and the broader outcomes of the REACHOUT project, with various questions raised about how other cities could adopt these tools.

Participants were keen on learning how cities beyond those directly involved in REACHOUT could apply the tools. A recurring concern was the need for hands-on capacity building and training on the tools. Potential users asked about the time and resources required to operate these tools effectively.

The session's discussion on ambition setting in climate adaptation highlighted several critical insights:

- Lack of ambition in Adaptation Planning: in some cases, cities face issues with a lack of ambition in their adaptation plans or planning cycles. Discussions touched upon the tendency to provide solutions before adequately defining the problem, underscoring the importance of thorough analysis. Ambition and vision are vital for persuading other policy domains and the general public. Ambition setting allows for integrating adaptation with other policy domains, and this helps to avoid a merely risk-based, technocratic approach. The session emphasized that adaptation planning is not merely a technical task but requires societal transformation.
- Top-down initiatives: ambition often arises from top-down initiatives, such as the EU Adaptation Strategy or the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) framework. However, in urban adaptation it is vital to connect to the very local level. Analysis plays a key role in fostering ambition by helping to define the underlying problem and challenges, thus shaping action. However it is crucial to reach the community level, understanding vulnerability as the susceptibility of individuals, groups, and communities to the adverse effects of climate change, encompassing the exposure to hazards, sensitivity to impacts, and the capacity to adapt.
- Political Constraints: One of the major constraints on setting ambitious adaptation goals is political agendas or conflicts. These limitations often hinder the formulation of more robust climate adaptation strategies.
- Citizen-driven Ambition: In rare cases, ambition at the neighborhood level is driven by citizens backed by scientific evidence. This highlights the potential for grassroots movements to influence adaptation planning.

The conversation then shifted towards frameworks like the Urban Adaptation Support Tool (<https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/metadata/tools/urban-adaptation-support-tool>) and Pathways2resilience (<https://www.pathways2resilience.eu/>), with a focus on how they influence climate adaptation at both local and project levels.

- EU and National Frameworks: Adaptation frameworks often stem from EU regulations or recognized international standards. Some participants expressed a desire to adopt such frameworks, while others raised concerns about the abundance of frameworks, suggesting that this provides room for customization. Although these frameworks offer structure and guidance, the general feeling is that there is no 'one-size-fit-all' and that frameworks should leave room for co-production and tailoring within the local contexts.
- Standardization Across Regions: It was suggested that national-level governments should play a more active role in setting standards, as cities would benefit from a level playing field across countries or regions.

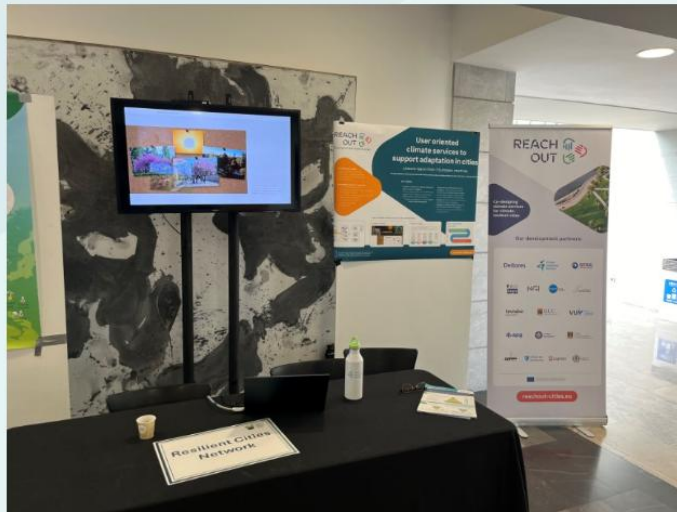
There is interest in using the Triple-A toolkit (or at least some of its components) from various cities. The group discussions focused on what would be required to apply the tools:

- One of the most vital points raised during the session was how to improve the adoption and use of climate tools and services. Tools should be made "sexy, easy, and funny" to encourage wider adoption. Participants also emphasized the importance of tools being visually appealing, intuitive, and scientifically credible.
- A significant barrier to the use of climate services and tools is the limited capacity of users, particularly within cities. Many cities lack the technical ability to utilize the tools effectively—comparable to giving them "a car without the keys." Lack of capacity and capacity building opportunities is observed, particularly in departments not directly tasked with Adaptation but whose work links to Adaptation (e.g. mobility, urban planning).
- Peer-to-peer learning was identified as a key enabler for enhancing capacity and helping cities absorb and apply new knowledge.
- AI's potential to transform the use of climate services was also discussed, with participants expressing curiosity about its future applications in climate planning.
- The main target audience for these tools is consultants working with cities rather than the cities themselves, which suggests a shift in the intended users of climate services.
- The session also highlighted the importance of aligning climate tools with renovation and retrofitting programs and working in partnership with real estate and housing corporations in cities.

3 Toolkit forum demonstration session

The tools forum demonstration session took place during the three days of EURESFO. A running demo of the Climate Stories was projected on the screen and a poster was displayed, presenting the key elements of the toolkit. The demonstration of Triple-A toolkit facilitated discussions towards a sustainable toolkit development built on existing services and frameworks. By showcasing the tools we triggered discussion on the status and challenges of climate service development in support of urban and regional adaptation.

Visit us and let's discuss



4 Take-away messages

The EURESFO session and expo provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities around using the Triple-A toolkit and tools. While the toolkit and REACHOUT project outcomes were well-received, the need for greater capacity building, political alignment, and an enhanced focus on making tools more user-friendly was clear. There is an interest in using the REACHOUT Triple-A toolkit expressed by many cities outside of the project. There is a clear need for capacity development and training, to help users to apply the tools that are available. Users would like to learn more about what it takes to work with the tools in the toolkit. An idea that emerged was to open up the last round of the learning program of REACHOUT to other cities outside of the project, to foster hands-on learning on how to implement the tools in other cities across Europe.

