POLICY BRIEF

OCTOBER 2026



Seamless, credible climate information for trustworthy climate services

Scaling up science-based adaptation across Europe

A joint policy brief from **Impetus4Change**, **ASPECT**, and **Climateurope2**

Draft for discussion — Science2Policy Event, Brussels, 15–16 October 2026

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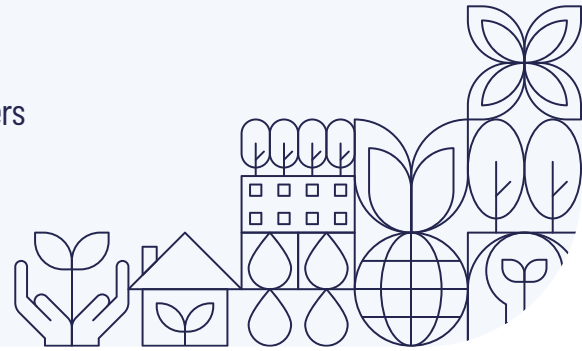
Summer 2026's compound and cascading climate impacts have stressed every part of European society. The demand for robust, actionable climate services — and the guidance needed to use them well — has never been greater for our adaptation, security, and competitiveness.

This brief offers agency experts, policymakers, and other key stakeholders a shared assessment of the gaps between ambition and practice, and recommendations for closing them.



1. Background

Europe has moved from setting adaptation goals to implementing them — increasingly at city and regional level, where governments, businesses, and practitioners face complex, time-pressured decisions. Supporting these requires climate information coordinated across levels of governance, delivered through climate services that are usable, equitable, and trusted — where and when decisions are actually made.

This brief draws on three Horizon Europe projects. **Impetus4Change (I4C)** co-designs user-driven climate services with cities. **ASPECT** advances seamless climate information — continuous projections from seasonal to multi-decadal timescales — across five sectors. **Climateurope2** builds the European community and standards needed for climate services to scale. Together, they offer a shared diagnosis of challenges facing the climate services and adaptation implementation communities and make recommendations for closing gaps between our ambitions and practice.

2. The challenges

- **Fragmented climate information:**
  Users face multiple, often inconsistent climate products that are hard to interpret and compare and rarely match the spatial and temporal resolution local decisions require.

- **Fragmented governance:**
  Responsibility for implementing adaptation is divided among many actors, including departments and agencies at local, national, and EU levels of government, with uneven capacity and often no established routines for coordinating between them.

- **Incomplete standardisation and quality assurance:**
  Standardisation of climate services is still in its early stages. 'Quality' is often reduced to technical precision, but decision-makers also need trustworthy services with operational robustness and societal legitimacy. With no agreed benchmark for what makes climate information fit for use, this gap undermines trust between producers and users, and the value of climate services remains poorly understood.

- **Capacity and legitimacy gaps:**
  Sustaining climate services requires long-term investment in people and institutions that are tasked with increasing societal awareness of the value of climate services and embedding them into adaptation decision-making. Even well-designed services often fail to take root without support that outlasts initial project funding.



3. Key messages

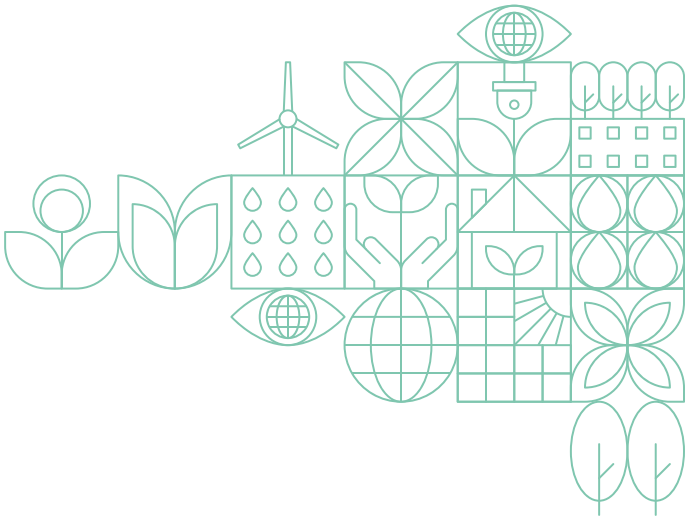
1. ***Adaptation needs seamless climate information*** *— across space, time, and disciplines — that is rooted in real decision contexts. Without it, adaptation measures risk being implemented in isolation, overlooking trade-offs across sectors and scales.*

2. ***Co-production is resource-intensive, but it pays-off.*** *Sustained, equitable engagement — shaping not just knowledge integration and delivery but the underlying science — is what makes climate information a core element of climate services, trusted and actually used. Its value also depends on how risk and uncertainty are communicated: transparently, understandably, and connected to real decisions.*

3. ***Scaling requires standards, governance, and a plan.*** *Successful local services do not scale up automatically. Realising their EU-wide value requires shared standards and quality assurance, adequate governance, and a deliberate scaling strategy — distinguishing between and tailoring for scaling efforts that reach new users (horizontal), embed climate services in new institutions (vertical), and extend their functionality (functional).*

4. ***Coordinated science requires coordinated governance.*** *Bringing scientific approaches together across disciplines only pays off if matched by equivalent coordination on the governance side – both horizontally and vertically.*

5. ***Private sector providers already go far beyond just providing data.*** *Private providers operate across the climate services value chain to integrate their offers in broad packages focused on climate or environmental risks, supporting applications such as adaptation planning, investment decision-making, and regulatory reporting. Regulatory compliance is a major driver of demand; many providers act as 'compliance translators' connecting climate information to evolving disclosure and reporting requirements.*



4. Recommendations

TO THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AGENDA:

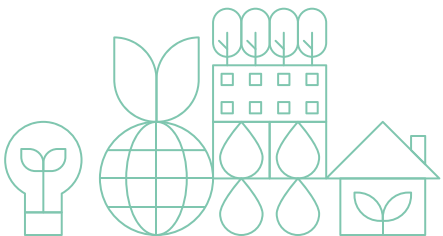
- **Reduce fragmentation in climate science methods.** Invest in merging scales and modelling approaches — and the cross-disciplinary coordination to apply them — to close the sub-seasonal-to-decadal gap.

- **Make (and enable) co-production standard practice, not an add-on.** This should be built into project design from the outset and enabled through adequate allocation of resources, including early stakeholder mapping and sustained engagement to explore, design, and develop climate services with them.

- **Continue to develop evidence needed for consensus-driven standards and quality assurance.** These should cover the full value chain of climate services, acting as a common basis for credibility, usability, and equity.

- **Design for upscaling from the outset.** Explicit planning is needed for realising horizontal, vertical, and functional upscaling pathways, rather than leaving it to chance.





TO THE POLICY AGENDA:

- **Invest in a world-leading European climate services ecosystem.** The EU could consider setting policy that establishes conditions for market build-out: a market-development opportunity with real socioeconomic, competitiveness, and security benefits.
- **Promote standardisation of the full climate-services value chain.** Establish standards and embed quality-assured services directly into decision processes such as financial planning, infrastructure, and adaptation solutions. *(CEN-CENELEC's Technical Committee TC 467 has already begun developing two climate-service standards based on Climateurope2 findings.)*
- **Fund co-production processes and capacity-building as long-term infrastructure.** Recognise that development of social infrastructure through co-production and capacity building is hindered by the stop-start of project cycles. Strategically fund these aspects as continuous, long-term endeavours with clear KPIs.
- **Fund the transition from pilot to institutionalised, multi-level service** — through instruments like Pre-Commercial Procurement and Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions, and by ensuring climate information and services can be integrated horizontally and vertically across departments, agencies, and levels of government.



Contact

- **Climateurope2**: Francisco Doblas-Reyes (francisco.doblas-reyes@bsc.es)
- **ASPECT**: Marta Terrado (marta.terrado@bsc.es)
- **Impetus4Change**: Stefan Sobolowski (stefan.p.sobolowski@uib.no)

This brief is presented in draft form at the **Science2Policy event** to gather input from MEPs, DG CLIMA and DG Research representatives, and Mission Adaptation administrators.

Feedback received will be incorporated into the final version.

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