

The Need to Address Climate Change Challenges Already Affecting Ukraine

Position Paper

This position paper is addressed to representatives of the European Commission, investors, stakeholders, lawmakers, the Ukrainian government, and civil society organizations. The position emphasizes the urgent need to integrate climate challenges in Ukraine's post-war recovery, particularly through the implementation of climate vulnerability assessments at the community level. The document stresses the importance of integrating climate adaptation policies into the reconstruction process in alignment with EU requirements and Ukraine's international commitments on climate change. This approach will attract investment and ensure the resilience of infrastructure.

As a result of climate change, Ukraine is already facing numerous challenges impacting its economic, social, and environmental sectors. These changes manifest through extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and heat-waves, all of which threaten the country's sustainable development. Ukraine's existing infrastructure and economy, which have been damaged by the war, are even more vulnerable to these phenomena. Therefore, it is crucial to consider climate challenges during the reconstruction phase.

Currently, only three regions in Ukraine have conducted climate vulnerability assessments, while most communities are struggling to carry out these assessments due to a lack of specialists, financial resources, and limited access to data. Without these assessments, communities are unable to implement effective adaptation measures.

Given the goal of post-war recovery, it is necessary to ensure that adaptation policies meet EU standards. This will facilitate the attraction of European investments and international donor support, while enhancing the resilience of infrastructure, the economy, and society to inevitable climate changes.

In the context of European integration, Ukraine is obligated to implement EU climate and energy policy provisions, including climate change adaptation. This is stipulated in the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU, as well as Ukraine's commitments under the Paris Agreement. Additionally, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has already passed the Law on the Fundamentals of State Climate Policy, which aims to ensure low-carbon development and achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

Recommendations

Integrating Climate Adaptation into Recovery Plans

Ukraine's recovery plans should incorporate climate adaptation as an integral part of development strategies at all levels, from national to local. These plans should align with EU standards, considering potential impacts on society, the economy, infrastructure, and the environment. Adaptation measures, including greenhouse gas emission reduction and nature-based solutions, will promote synergy and act as a linking element between various sectors.

Supporting Local Communities in Conducting Climate Vulnerability Assessments

Communities need access to financial and technical support to conduct climate vulnerability assessments. A platform for sharing climate data and long-term forecasts should be established, offering consultations from experts in ecology, architecture, infrastructure, and nature-based solutions. Such access will promote the development of more effective and resilient adaptation measures at the local level. The development of vulnerability assessments and the implementation of adaptation measures will improve access to funding, as investors and donors prioritize projects with detailed risk and vulnerability analyses, as well as solutions to address identified issues.

Creating a National Knowledge and Experience Sharing Network

It is recommended to create a network for exchanging best practices and experiences between communities that have already implemented adaptation measures and those planning to do so. This will help communities avoid common mistakes and accelerate the implementation of adaptation actions. The network could serve as a valuable tool for exchanging information on new climate data, adaptation developments, forecasting models, and more.

Improving Coordination Among Municipal Institutions

Municipal institutions often fail to coordinate their actions properly, hindering the implementation of environmental measures. This lack of communication and collaboration between various entities limits the effectiveness of climate

actions. It is recommended to establish communication and cooperation mechanisms between different municipal institutions, which will prevent the duplication of efforts and support more efficient implementation of environmental measures.

Financial Support for Climate Adaptation Measures

Mechanisms for financing climate adaptation measures should be established, particularly for those associated with the minimal investment growth when integrated into reconstruction plans. To implement effective climate adaptation measures, direct funding mechanisms for local communities must be created, allowing them to address their specific needs and promptly implement necessary projects. Direct collaboration with communities and access to funding will increase transparency in the use of funds and target specific objectives. Investors and international donors may prioritize projects that meet European climate adaptation standards, thereby attracting additional funding for sustainable recovery, including joint projects accessible to small communities.

Implementation of Nature-Based Solutions in Infrastructure

It is recommended to actively implement nature-based solutions that enhance the resilience of infrastructure to climate change without significant cost increases. One of the most effective nature-based approaches is the preservation of existing natural ecosystems in urban areas and the creation of new green spaces. This includes the use of natural barriers, the preservation and restoration of wetlands, green areas, and water bodies, which can protect communities from floods, droughts, and other climate change impacts.

Necessary Measures:

1. **Adaptation of State Building Codes :** Changes should be made to existing building codes to integrate requirements for implementing nature-based solutions in design and construction. This will provide the regulatory framework for using environmentally friendly technologies and materials.
2. **Reform of Permitting Procedures for Construction Documentation:** It is necessary to update the permitting procedures for construction projects, incorporating criteria for evaluating projects based on the use of nature-based solutions. Current building codes set requirements for greening and landscaping of areas, which may include elements of nature-based solutions. However, greening is only a partial measure in combating climate change. To achieve greater effectiveness, comprehensive nature-based solutions should be implemented, such as the creation of green roofs and walls, as well as the integration of rainwater management systems. This will encourage developers to adopt sustainable practices and promote the development of resilient urban environments.
3. **Developer Commitments:** Mandatory requirements should be established for developers to integrate nature-based solutions into their projects. This can be achieved through legislative acts or local regulations that impose responsibility for non-compliance with environmental standards.
4. **Urban Planning Professional Training:** Educational programs and training for urban planners should be implemented to raise their awareness and competence in nature-based solutions. This will support more effective implementation of environmental practices at the local level.

These changes will foster the creation of sustainable infrastructure capable of better adapting to climate challenges, positively impacting the safety and well-being of communities.

Conclusion

For successful post-war recovery, Ukraine must integrate climate adaptation into all stages of planning, development, and project implementation. This approach will contribute to the creation of communities, infrastructure, and economies that are more resilient to climate change, as well as increase the likelihood of securing investment from international donors and the European Union. The implementation of the proposed measures will reduce the impact of climate risks on communities, promote synergistic development across various sectors, and strengthen the country's socio-economic stability.

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