



# Pathways2Resilience glossary

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## How to use this glossary

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The Pathways2Resilience glossary is meant to be a concise reference for frequently used words and concepts you will often hear during your participation in the programme.

The majority of definitions follows the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC), [European Environmental Agency](#) (EEA), and [European Union](#) glossaries and usage, slightly adapted to the Pathways2Resilience programme and context.

Specific Pathways2Resilience terms (such as deliverables and concepts developed expressly for the programme) have been highlighted in **pink**.

You will find additional explanations and technical glossaries related to specific topics such as finance, innovation, monitoring in the Pathways2Resilience guidances you have received as part of the [onboarding kit](#).

Would you like to see a word added?

Please contact [pathways2resilience@climate-kic.org](mailto:pathways2resilience@climate-kic.org).

# A

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## Adaptation Investment Cycle (AIC)

An iterative, six-step process designed to be undertaken in parallel to the development of a regions' Climate Resilience Strategy through Pathways2Resilience's Regional Resilience Journey, or as a separate standalone process for regions which have already developed Adaptation Strategies

## Adaptation limit

*Also: threshold, tipping point*

Situations marking the point at which existing systems or adaptation measures can no longer meet their primary adaptation objectives and are considered to have 'failed.' For example, a flood protection dike may fail once water levels exceed its height, requiring further adaptation (e.g., raising the dike).

## Adaptation options

Different strategies and actions that can help address climate adaptation. These actions can be structural, institutional, ecological, or behavioral.

## Adaptation pathways

A series of choices about how to adapt, balancing short-term and long-term goals. These involve finding practical solutions that make sense in people's daily lives while avoiding negative outcomes (see *maladaptation*).

## Adaptive capacity

The ability of systems, organizations, and living beings to adjust to potential damage, seize opportunities, or deal with consequences.

## Adaptive capacity score

A measure of a region or community's ability to adapt to climate change impacts. It evaluates factors like resources, infrastructure, knowledge, and social structures that influence how well an area can respond to climate challenges.

## B

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### **Bankable (project)**

A project that meets the terms required by the source to provide the finance. In the context of climate change, this should encompass socio-economic metrics, including, for example, improvements in the resilience of communities, and alignment with national priorities.

### **Baseline assessment**

One of the Pathways2Resilience 'deliverables' or outputs. A document that identifies and evaluates climate adaptation options based on criteria like availability, benefits, costs, effectiveness, efficiency, and feasibility. The baseline is the reference point for measuring change.

### **Boundary conditions**

Those elements that will constrain your climate resilience strategies and action plans, such as time, priorities, risks, geography, and other institutional, socio-economic, environmental or financial aspects.

## C

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### **Capacity**

The combination of strengths, attributes, and resources available to an individual, community, or organization to achieve their goals.

### **Capacity building**

The process of enhancing the strengths, attributes, and resources of an individual, community, or organization to better respond to change.

### **Cascading impacts or effects**

A chain reaction of events triggered by an initial disruption, leading to larger social, economic, or environmental impacts.

## Catalogue of transformative options

A list of innovative strategies and measures compiled by Pathways2Resilience experts that can significantly change and improve systems in response to climate change.

## Challenge statement

*Also: problem statement*

A short, clear explanation of an issue or challenge that sums up what you want to change.

## Climate adaptation

The process of adjusting to current or expected climate impacts to reduce harm or take advantage of opportunities.

## Climate finance

Financial resources allocated by public and private actors to address climate change. These resources can be delivered through various instruments like grants, loans, and budget reallocations.

## Climate mitigation

Actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to slow or stop global climate change.

## Climate neutrality

Climate neutrality surpasses carbon neutrality by encompassing all greenhouse gas emissions, not just carbon dioxide, and includes broader climate impacts. It aims for a comprehensive balance, neutralising the total emissions through equivalent reductions or offsets to address the full spectrum of climate change contributors.

## Climate resilience

The ability of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with climate change impacts, maintaining their core functions while adapting, learning, and transforming.

## Climate Resilience Action Plan

One of the Pathways2Resilience 'deliverables' or outputs. This document outlines specific actions a region or community will take to enhance its resilience to climate change. It includes objectives, measurable actions, timelines, and monitoring and evaluation plans.

## Climate Resilience Investment Plan

One of the Pathways2Resilience 'deliverables' or outputs. This document identifies and prioritizes investments needed to strengthen a region or community's climate resilience. It focuses on funding avenues and resources required to implement specific projects.

## Climate Resilience Strategy

One of the Pathways2Resilience 'deliverables' or outputs. This document outlines long-term goals and approaches for improving a region or community's climate resilience. It provides a roadmap for integrating resilience into planning, policy, and decision-making processes.

## Climate risk

The potential for negative consequences due to uncertain outcomes of climate-related hazards, affecting lives, livelihoods, health, ecosystems, and infrastructure. Risk results from the interaction of vulnerability, exposure, and the likelihood of the hazard occurring.

## Climate risk management

Plans and actions designed to reduce the likelihood or impact of climate-related risks, based on assessed or perceived threats.

## Climate vulnerability

The likelihood of being negatively affected by climate change, including sensitivity to harm and limited capacity to cope and adapt.

## Climate-resilient pathways

Ongoing processes for managing change within complex systems to minimize disruptions and maximize opportunities related to climate change.

## Co-benefit

Positive effects that a policy or measure aimed at one goal might have on other objectives, increasing overall benefits for society or the environment.

## Co-creation

A collaborative process where stakeholders, including communities, governments, and experts, work together to design and implement climate resilience strategies, ensuring that diverse perspectives are included in the decision-making process.

## Cohort

The group of regions selected under each Pathways2Resilience call. 40 regions form the first cohort participating in the programme, 60 regions will form the second cohort in 2026.

## Community of practice

Groups of people who share a common concern or passion and learn together through regular interaction.

## Community-based

Approaches that focus on empowering local communities by considering their context, culture, knowledge, and preferences as strengths.

## D

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## Desirable futures

Alternative, qualitative visions of climate resilient futures developed by and for each region, which address the key climate risk and planning goals, but in different ways. They are based on risk-based scenarios, but complement them with aspects such as culture, values, and governance.

## E

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### Enabling conditions

Factors that affect the feasibility of adaptation and mitigation options, accelerating systemic transitions to limit temperature increases and enhance adaptive capacities while achieving sustainable development and reducing inequalities. (See also *Key Enabling Conditions*.)

### EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change

*Also: Mission Adaptation*

EU initiative to support regions, cities, and local authorities in building resilience against climate change impacts. It is one of five EU Missions established by the European Commission to tackle big societal challenges through innovative policymaking.

### European Green Deal

The EU's policy package, launched in 2019, aiming for a green transition and climate neutrality by 2050, covering climate, environment, energy, transport, industry, agriculture, and finance.

## F

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### Finance

Money provided by a lender which must be repaid over a period of time, typically with interest. Examples include an European Investment Bank Framework loan, commercial loans, or Green Bonds.

### Finance Innovation Lab

One of the Pathways2Resilience capability building activities. The lab focuses on fostering innovative financial solutions to support climate solutions, including new funding mechanisms and investment models.



## Funding

Money provided without expectation of being repaid (though it may have conditions attached). Examples include European Commission grants, Technical Assistance from the European Investment Bank, philanthropic grants, or intergovernmental transfers.

## H

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### Handbook

A practical manual introducing the Pathways2Resilience programme and providing guidance and resources for participating regions.

## I

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## Innovation

Putting into practice new ways of doing things across various domains, including technology, governance, social structures, and finance, to generate meaningful change.

## Innovation action

Any set of actions that takes existing and/or new knowledge and transforms it into products, frameworks or services that add value to one or more specific groups. Value, in this case, is understood in the broader sense, not only monetary value but also improvements in quality of life (human and non-human).

## Innovation portfolio

A logical set of innovation actions that are expected to work together, maximizing benefits and addressing strategic risks and uncertainties related to the innovation process. An innovation portfolio is supported by an innovation policy mix and implemented iteratively, through cycles of learning and adaptation.

## Innovation Practice Group (IPG)

One of the Pathways2Resilience capability building activities. These collaborative groups bring together regional representatives, experts, practitioners, and other stakeholders to share knowledge, develop new ideas, and test innovative practices for improving climate resilience.

## Instruments (finance)

Mechanisms which enable the provision of finance from one actor to another, or to a dedicated project which delivers adaptation. Examples include grants, loans, taxes, debt. Instruments may vary in complexity: they can be generic (e.g. grants) or tailored (e.g. the Hamburg Green Roof Subsidy), or somewhere in between.

## J

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### Just resilience

Ensuring that no one is left behind at all stages of climate adaptation planning, implementation, and monitoring, as well as at all governance levels. This approach recognises that the most vulnerable people - due to their age, health, place of residence, or socio-economic status - and systems are most at risk from climate change impacts, have the least capacity to adapt, and are the least likely to be heard.

### Just transition

Principles and practices ensuring no one is left behind in the shift to a low-carbon economy. This includes targeted measures to minimize negative impacts and maximize benefits for affected groups, emphasizing fairness, decent jobs, social protection, and inclusive decision-making.

## K

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## Key Community Systems (KCS)

The key areas of interaction between humans and the environment, that meet essential societal needs but are increasingly impacted by climate change. They are six: local economic systems, 'natural' ecosystems, water management, land use and food systems, health, and critical infrastructures.

## Key Enabling Conditions (KEC)

Key elements of our systems where we can intervene to accelerate and enhance our societies' capacity to adapt to climate change, while achieving sustainable development. The Mission Adaptation identifies four: access to knowledge and data, finance mobilisation, multilevel governance and citizen engagement, and changes in human behaviour and lifestyles.

## Key performance indicator (KPI)

Metric used to evaluate progress towards specific goals. As such, it must be measurable.

## Key Thematic Area

A specific focus area or topic tackled as part of the Pathways2Resilience programme, within the broader field of climate resilience, such as water management, energy systems, or community engagement, that requires targeted actions and strategies.

# L

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## Levers of change

Areas of work or entry points for interventions that have the potential to unlock wide-ranging and positive change in a given place, industry or both. In the context of climate adaptation, some examples of powerful levers of change are policy, finance, technology, and citizen engagement, among others, especially if the interventions are designed following an innovation approach.

# M

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## Maladaptation

Actions that may lead to increased risk of adverse climate-related outcomes, including via increased greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, increased vulnerability to climate change, or diminished welfare, now or in the future. Maladaptation is usually an unintended consequence.

## Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

Mechanisms to track and assess progress, aiming to identify and improve strategies over time based on the insights obtained.

## Multi-annual financial framework (MAFF)

A seven-year EU plan which sets annual ceilings of expenditure that can be spent on various policy areas.

## Multi-level governance

A system where different levels of government—local, regional, national, and sometimes international—work together with non-governmental organisations, businesses, and communities to address complex issues. This approach aims to improve efficiency, inclusiveness, and responsiveness by involving various stakeholders in decision-making processes.

# N

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## Nature-based solutions (NBS)

Strategies that use natural processes to address societal challenges, providing environmental, social, and economic benefits while enhancing resilience. They include actions like restoring wetlands for flood control, urban greening to improve air quality, or conserving forests for carbon sequestration.

## Net Present Value (NPV)

The difference between the present value of cash inflows and the present value of cash outflows over a period of time. All future cash flows are discounted accordingly to ensure time consistency and comparisons. The higher the NPV the more promising the potential investment/project.

## NetZeroCities

A project supporting the EU Mission to achieve climate-neutral cities by 2030, providing cities with expertise and tailored services.

## Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

A group that functions independently of any government with the objective of improving social conditions. NGOs are typically non-profit institutions.

## O

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### Onboarding kit

The initial set of resources and information provided to Pathways2Resilience participants, with detailed guidance, resources, templates and other information.

### Outcome

A change in behaviour, actions, or relationships of individuals, groups, or organisations within the sphere of influence of an intervention. These changes are intermediate results that occur downstream of an initiative's activities but upstream from longer-term, broader impacts.

## P

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### Participatory design

A democratic process where citizens are involved in public decision-making, using methods like online ideation and voting.

### Pathways2Resilience

A programme under the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change, supporting 100 European regions to identify transformative adaptation pathways and develop climate resilience action plans. Pathways2Resilience is running between 2023 and 2027 and is implemented by 14 partners.

### Pathways2Resilience Climate Toolbox

A collection of tools, resources, and methodologies gathered by Pathways2Resilience experts to help regions and communities build their climate resilience. It includes data, models, planning tools, and best practices to support adaptation efforts.

## Peer-led mentoring

A mentoring approach designed by Pathways2Resilience experts, where individuals or groups with experience in climate resilience provide guidance and support to others who are newer to the field, fostering knowledge sharing and capacity building.

## Planning objective (for adaptation or resilience)

Planned accomplishments or results that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-limited. They can be primary if they directly address climate risks or secondary, such as job creation, improving public health, social well-being, and economic development.

## Public Financial Management (PFM)

A material element of public administration, encompassing all the mechanisms through which public resources are collected and allocated. It includes the whole budget cycle, public procurement, audit practices and revenue collection.

## Public Investment Management (PIM)

A comprehensive framework to assess infrastructure governance practices for countries and regions at all levels of economic development. It allows authorities to evaluate planning, and implementation of public investments.

# R

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## Regional Adaptation Support Tool (RAST)

An interactive tool by CLIMATE-ADAPT designed to help local and regional authorities with climate change adaptation strategies and plans – from development and implementation to monitoring, evaluating and updating them. RAST provides practical guidance in 6 steps aligned with the key features of climate adaptation policy processes.

## Regional Resilience Journey (RRJ)

An adaptable, iterative framework developed by Pathways2Resilience experts, providing step-by-step guidance, learning activities, tools and milestones to either develop or enhance climate resilience plans and intervention portfolios.

## Regions and communities

In the context of Pathways2Resilience and the Mission Adaptation, regions are defined according to the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) classification, specifically at the NUTS 2 level, which typically represents larger administrative areas like provinces or regions within a country. Communities, on the other hand, are groupings of people connected by social ties, shared values, or common interests, who work together on joint actions. Unlike regions, communities can vary in size and are not always limited to a specific geographic area.

## Resilience maturity

The level of development and preparedness a region or community has reached in terms of its ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate crises.

## Resilience Maturity Curve (RMC)

The Resilience Maturity Curve is a monitoring and evaluation tool designed to help assess the resilience of European regions to shocks and stresses. The tool is constructed from the aggregated score of a set of indicators to evaluate the extent to which a European region has developed the capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate crises.

## S

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### Scenario

A plausible description of how the future may develop based on the regional climate risk assessment, and a coherent and internally consistent set of assumptions about key driving forces (e.g., rate of technological change, prices) and relationships.

### Sensemaking

The process of interpreting and piecing together complex information to understand how various aspects of a system are interconnected. It entails creating shared narratives that guide collective decision-making and action in the face of uncertainty.

### Shared vision

A collective and agreed-upon understanding of the desired future state and how to achieve it.

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## Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME)

Enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.

## Sources (finance)

The entities able to provide the money to fund adaptation activities within a region. Examples of sources include the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, businesses, commercial banks, SMEs, and universities.

## Stakeholder

Any individual or group that has an interest or is affected by the actions, objectives, policies, or services of an organisation.

## Stakeholder engagement

Systematic identification, analysis, planning and implementation of actions designed to influence stakeholders, taking into account their needs and ensuring they are met.

## Structuring (finance)

Financial structuring refers to the creation and organisation of dedicated financial arrangements between relevant parties for a programme, project or action to achieve the adaptation objectives. This is an iterative process which focuses on maximizing benefits, minimizing costs, and ensuring regulatory compliance, and optimises risks between the parties.

## Systemic change

*Also: transformative change*

A significant shift in the core attributes of natural and human systems, including structural changes. It involves changing parts of a system and how they work together to create a completely new, more effective system.

## Systems map

Analysis of the system you are going to change, including its components, functions, and characteristics as well as interactions and dependencies. The map should help you understand key barriers and challenges, but also opportunities and levers of change.



## T

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### **Theory of Change (ToC)**

A framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs, outlining the expected sequence of events from activities to outcomes and the assumptions involved, aiding in effective programme design.

### **Transformation pathways**

Scenarios describing how greenhouse gas emissions, atmospheric conditions, or global temperatures might evolve based on significant economic, technological, societal, and behavioral changes, including shifts in energy use, resource management, and institutions.

### **Transformative adaptation**

Adaptation measures that fundamentally change the attributes of a socio-ecological system in response to climate change, including changes in values, regulations, financial systems, and technology.

## W

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### **Whole-of-government**

Collaborative approach between the different public bodies that extends beyond their respective fields of competence with a view to providing the public with a combined response from a single body.