



CONFERENCE SERIES

The 5 EU Missions H2030

WorkPackage 2 - Milestone 5



unite!

University Network for Innovation,
Technology and Engineering



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Introduction

The Unite!WIDENING project, initiated in January 2024, is a complementary project within the scope of the European University Alliance Unite! The project aims to amplify the visibility of scientific excellence and the valorization of knowledge from universities in Widening countries, and throughout the Alliance, through cooperation aligned with the major societal challenges embedded in the Missions.

The consortium involves nine leading European universities in research and education, also partners of the University Alliance Unite!, two of them in Widening countries, two science and technology parks, a development agency, and an innovation management SME.

One of the specific objectives of the project is to strengthen the global competitiveness and international visibility of the Universities, promoting the European Research areas policy and creating critical mass in key areas such as green transition, digitalization, and the Mission areas of Horizon Europe.

To identify the main areas of R&D&I, the project will analyze relevant EU policies and documents, such as the 5 Missions of the EU Horizon 2030 (in particular Mission Cities, Mission Adaptation, and Mission Ocean) among others. This work will result in identifying the strengths and needs of countries expanding in the green transition, reinforced by the identification of areas of R&D&I of interest for common research projects.

Kick-off Meeting

In the kick-off meeting, the aims and ambitions of the conference addressing the European Missions were introduced. The decision was made to explore different missions and based on the outcomes, identify key areas to further explore in the project. Given the relevance of the topic, it was decided to split the 3-day conference into 3 x 1-day events, each focusing on a different mission.

Lisbon: The first event will start with the Mission “Restore our Oceans and Waters”. The reasons for this choice are due to the importance of the Atlantic to the Portuguese blue economy and the fact that this is a strategic area for the country.

Polito: The second event will address the Mission “Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities”. This choice is due to the context of the region, the growing size of Torino in Italy, the industrial relevance, and the engagement of universities, citizens, and public and private bodies in building sustainable, carbon-neutral, and smart cities.

Wroclaw: The third event will take place in early summer and will possibly address the Mission “Adaptation to Climate Change”.

The partners considered the importance of the theme and agreed upon the split. They acknowledged the opportunity to evidence their strategic areas and how these can strengthen the cooperation with widening countries.

Second Project Meeting

In the second project meeting organized in Graz, the topics were further discussed and the format of the events was agreed upon. Every event will involve a plenary speech from a representative of the EU and having a leading role in the respective mission. It should involve a regional representative of the Mission, someone with high knowledge on it, preferably someone on the board. The event will also involve speakers coordinating different projects in the frame of the mission to show the outcomes and evidence of the importance.

Round tables with invited guests, regional, EU representatives, and stakeholders from different sectors will be organized to debate on the opportunities for widening countries and how to reinforce the cooperation between widening and non-widening. The date for the first event was fixed and the panel of speakers was delineated.

Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters

The conference “Mission Ocean restore our Ocean and Waters” took place at Técnico, Universidade de Lisboa, on March 22nd. The panel of speakers and the agenda can be found in Annex I. In figure 1 is presented the banner for the event.



Figure 1: Banner Event Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters

The EU’s Mission Ocean aims to protect and restore the health of our oceans and waters through research and innovation, citizen participation, and blue investments. The Mission’s new systemic approach addresses the ocean and waters as a whole and plays a key role in achieving climate neutrality and natural recovery. The three objectives of the “Restore our oceans and waters by 2030” Mission are:

- Protect and restore marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity, in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;
- Prevent and eliminate pollution of our oceans, seas, and waters, in line with the EU Zero Pollution Action Plan for Air, Water, and Soil;
- Make the blue economy sustainable, carbon-neutral, and circular, in line with the proposed European Climate Law and the holistic vision enshrined in the Strategy for a Sustainable Blue Economy.

Topics Discussed

The conference opened with a representative of the EU Commission from DG Research and Innovation, European Commission, Claudia Pecoraro. This was followed by a plenary lecture by Helena Vieira, from Universidade de Aveiro, member of the 'Mission Restoring our Ocean and Waters' Board, also an expert in Environmental and Marine Studies.

A presentation was given by a researcher Joaquin del Rio, from Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, who has been involved in projects sponsored by this mission and where an ocean infrastructure dedicated to monitoring marine life is playing a key role.

Then there was a round table focused on the theme: Restore our Ocean and Waters – Opportunities for Portugal. The panel included the following representatives:

- Moderator: Ana Sutcliffe, National Delegate of the Mission Restoring our Ocean and Waters, ANI
- Helena Vieira, from Universidade de Aveiro, member of Mission Restoring our Ocean and Waters' Board Member
- Nuno Lourenço, CEO of Atlantic CoLab
- Manuel Melo, from Fórum Oceano
- Joaquin del Rio, from Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

During the round table the following questions were addressed:

- Due to the long tradition related with the ocean, its location, and its resources, how can Portugal better serve the Mission? And what about Spain?
- What role do you see for the widening countries in this Mission?
- In your opinion, what are the R&I activities necessary to reply to the Missions challenges?
- How can European Universities Alliances, as this project Unite! Or others, be an added value to the Mission?
- In your opinion, what are the main outcomes this Mission has already achieved and what are your expectations for the future?

After a lunch break, the session was reopened with the Mission introduced by the Portuguese national contact point and diverse figures and achievements were demonstrated. The various funding instruments were discussed. A representative from WUST introduced the Odra River case and the problem of pollution affecting it and strategies to deal with it. A Round-Table on High impact research and Innovation initiatives for the ocean and waters was held.

The round-table discussion brought together three complementary profiles, each with a unique perspective on ocean sustainability and technology:

- Moderador: Joaquim Neves, researcher and professor at Universidade de Lisboa
- Frederico Duarte from the Bauhaus of the Sea is focused on bringing together different societal groups from coastal cities to promote ocean sustainability and beauty
- José Moutinho from the Atlantic and Arctic Basin Lighthouse, coordinated by the AIR Centre, aims to bring together relevant stakeholders to set up a governance structure
- Erica Cruz represents an Engineering company that is very much focused on developing a sustainable blue economy and technologies

These projects are focused on European-wide issues, and the company is focused on providing services in the international market. All of them are good examples of how Portugal can get involved in solutions for the ocean. From their experience in the ocean, we may get some inspiration for the “waters”.

- The questions posed to the panel included:
- Please introduce your institution and describe a bit how your project/technology can contribute to the mission of Restoring the Ocean and Waters.
- The scientific community tends to give very negative views of environmental status to raise the need to investigate problematic issues and is less focused on proposing solutions. Do you already see “any light at the end of the tunnel”? Are we already improving somewhere? Where are we still damaging the ocean?
- Some people say that we know more about the moon than about the ocean (at least about the deep ocean) and claim that we need to invest in knowledge. What do you think are the Research and Innovation priorities? Or do you think that the priority is public awareness and ocean literacy and creating business and this will drive research and innovation?
- The increasing need for food is pushing the pressure on irrigated agriculture, increasing evapotranspiration, smoothing (and decreasing) river discharges. Do you think that the modification of river discharges together with production of food in coastal waters will challenge coastal ecosystems? What will be the role of technology in this process? What is the role of the Ocean Digital Twins? And Artificial Intelligence?

The main messages highlight the importance of the Blue Economy for the socio-economic context of Portugal, as well as the importance of strengthening collaborative research in areas such as monitoring marine ecosystems and coastal areas, climate change impacts on the ocean, sea exploration, robotics, and naval economy. Key points are related to pollutants in inland and coastal areas and their impact on water supply and water scarcity. The role of universities and other innovation stakeholders is considered critical, along with joint efforts between all private and public stakeholders in this domain. The ocean and the Blue Economy are strategic areas of PT2030, and undoubtedly, joint research and innovation opportunities will emerge. Additionally, Portugal's role in addressing large European partnerships such as the Ocean Clusters network was emphasized. The importance of flagship projects, such as the one managed by the Air Centre, was also discussed. The role of EU Missions in supporting these projects and future R&I opportunities was considered of major relevance for the widening countries.

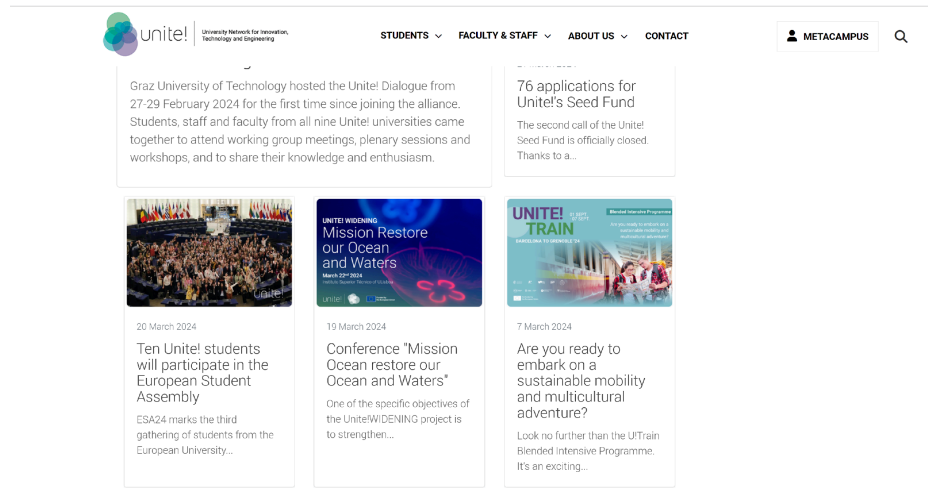
Dissemination

The conference was disseminated in various channels using a [Media Kit](#) developed for the purpose. Before the event posts in the various social media pages of the project were shared, as bellow:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Linkedin](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Threads](#)

The Unite! website and Universidade de Lisboa website were used as dissemination platforms:

- ULisboa website: [Mission page](#) and [Conference page](#);
- Unite! website



After the event posts on social media and news were used to share with communities the event and some outcomes:

- Posts made by participants (figure 2)

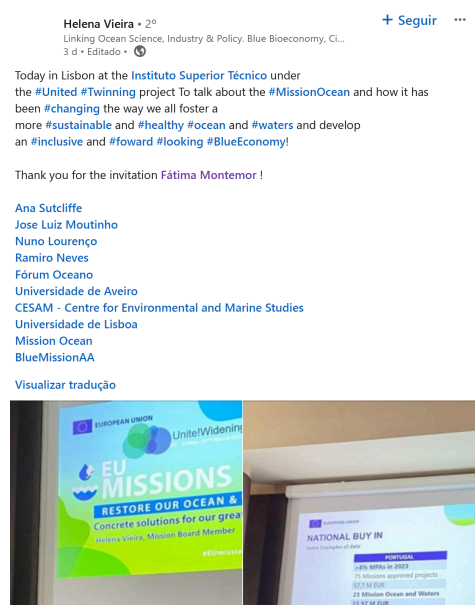


Figure 2: Posts made by conference participants in social media

Conclusion

Finally, there was a summary evidencing the main messages and outcomes of the session. The round-table discussion provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in the field of ocean and water restoration, and highlighted the importance of collaboration and innovation in addressing these issues.

Mission Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities

The conference “Mission Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities” took place at the Castello del Valentino, Politecnico di Torino, on May 17th. The panel of speakers and the agenda can be found in Annex I. In figure 1 the banner for the event is presented.



Figure 3: Banner Event Mission Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities

The EU Mission "Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities" aims to support at least 100 European cities in their transition towards climate neutrality by 2030. This ambitious mission seeks to position these cities as innovation hubs that can lead the way in achieving the broader goal of a climate-neutral Europe by 2050. The objectives are:

- **Accelerate Decarbonization:** The mission focuses on significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, thereby contributing to the EU's climate targets and the Paris Agreement goals.
- **Foster Innovation:** It encourages cities to adopt and develop cutting-edge technologies and sustainable practices, enhancing their capacity for innovation in energy, transport, waste management, and building efficiency.
- **Enhance Quality of Life:** By promoting cleaner air, greener spaces, and improved urban infrastructure, the mission aims to create healthier and more livable urban environments.
- **Economic Growth and Job Creation:** Transitioning to a green economy is expected to stimulate economic growth and generate new job opportunities in various sectors, including renewable energy, digital technologies, and sustainable urban planning.
- **Engage Citizens:** The mission emphasizes the importance of involving citizens in the transition process, ensuring that the changes reflect community needs and values.
- **International Leadership:** By leading in urban climate action, the mission aims to set a global example and foster international cooperation in addressing climate change.

Topics Discussed

The conference opened with a representative of the EU Commission from DG Research and Innovation, European Commission, Laura Hetel. This was followed by a presentation by Chiara Foglietta, deputy Mayor of the City of Torino, included in the 100 EU cities in the mission, and describing the practical implementation of policies towards climate neutrality. Next, a presentation was made by Chrysses Nicolaides, Member of the EU Mission Board of European Commission for the Smart cities Mission, providing an assessment of the results of mission projects until now, and the way forward.

Finally, there was a round table, focusing on the presentation of practical aspects of ongoing projects in the mission, and an overview of the Mission implementation in the widening countries Portugal and Poland. The panel included the following representatives:

- Moderator: Federico Bosia, Politecnico di Torino, Work Package leader of the Unite!Widening project
- Barbara Widera - Member of the Mission Board of EU Mission Adaptation to climate change (Wroclaw University of Science and Technology)
- Paulo Ferrão - Member of Mission Board of EU Mission 100 Climate neutral and smart cities (Instituto Superior Técnico - University of Lisbon)
- Giulia Melis – Coordinator JUST STREETS (Mobility justice for all: framing safer, healthier and happier streets) project (Fondazione Links - Leading Innovation & Knowledge For Society)
- Andrea Lanzini - Principal Investigator TIPS4PED (Turning cities Planning actionS for Positive Energy Districts into success) project (Politecnico di Torino)

During the round table the following questions were addressed:

- What are the main challenges and obstacles in achieving climate neutrality and the objectives of the smart cities mission in Poland and Portugal?
- What measures can be taken to maximize collaboration between universities and local administration in implementing missions projects?
- What is the potential role of the Unite Alliance in contributing to the goals of the mission?
- What are the potential opportunities for participation in future calls in the smart cities mission?

All the speakers emphasized that achieving the Mission goals is possible only through a well-structured, multi-level collaboration involving cities, universities, institutions, networks, research hubs, and projects. They highlighted peer learning processes and user engagement as essential actions, given the goal to create more just, equal, and transformative urban spaces, and to reduce energy consumption by addressing anticipated institutional, socioeconomic, technical, educational, and communication barriers.

"Cities are the engine of the future" was the workshop's common theme, reflecting a strong commitment to engage, collaborate, and integrate research, strategies, and policymaking. The event concluded with a Q&A session, focusing on concrete actions, strategies, and collaborative opportunities.

Dissemination

The conference was disseminated in various channels:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Linkedin](#)
- [Twitter](#)

The Unite! website and Universidade de Lisboa website were used as dissemination platforms:

- PoliTo website: [News](#)
- Unite! Website: [link](#)

Mission Adaptation to Climate Change

The third part of the milestone took place at Wroclaw University of Science and Technology in Wroclaw, Poland on 18th June 2024. The workshop was focused on the Mission “Adaptation to Climate Change”.



Figure 4: Banner Event Mission Adaptation to climate change

The goal and the subject of the workshop

The goal of the workshop was to present the main assumptions and current calls under the Mission Adaptation to Climate Change, which in particular are addressed to the Widening countries. The programme also provided for hybrid workshops which led to identifying strategic research areas aiming to increase participation in research and development projects that drive the green transformation, emphasizing adaptation to climate change.

The speakers invited were the representatives of National Centre for Research and Development who took part onsite. The special guest was Ms. Elina Bardram, Director for “Adaptation & Resilience, Communication, and Civil Society Relations” at the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Climate Action and the Mission Manager for the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change.

The programme of the workshop included:

- Roundtable on Mission Adaptation in Widening countries: calls, projects, support and strategies with the representatives of National Centre for Research and Development, moderated by Barbara Widera (Wrocław University of Science and Technology, member of EU Mission Adaptation to climate change),
- Speech by Elina Bardram (online),
- Workshops designed to identify strategic research areas and presentation of its results, input for the policy recommendations.

[For the detailed Agenda, see Annex no. 1](#)

The form of the workshop was hybrid, enabling people to join the event onsite or online. For both types of participation the facilitators were appointed whose role was to stimulate the activity of the participants and guide their work during workshops. To register, participants were to fill in the electronic form with the basic data (name, surname, name of the home institution) in which they decided about the form of attendance (online/onsite). The form also allowed to indicate the specific topics to be discussed. Participation in the workshop was free of charge.

By the date of the workshop, 18 persons had registered for the onsite participation and 39 persons were registered for the online participation.

Dissemination

The information about the workshops was published on the [Unite.WIDENING](#) website and on the related website (e.g. [Unite! sub-page](#) administered by WUST) It was also distributed among the WUST society via newsletters and published on the WUST [calendar of events](#). Members of Unite! were informed via mailing and by the information published on the [Unite! website](#) and its social media. The invitations for the workshop were also sent to the local authorities, regions, researchers, and all the units which may be interested in the topic. Industrial project partners from Poland (WPT, ARAW) were engaged in the promotion of the event by using its channels (social media, newsletter) to disseminate the information about the workshop.

The course of the workshop

Date: 18/06/2024

Place: Wrocław University of Science and Technology, Wybrzeże Wyspiańskiego 27, Wrocław, Poland +
Online participation via Zoom

Roundtable on Mission Adaptation in Widening countries: calls, projects, support and strategies counted with:

- the speakers Magdalena Głogowska (National Contact Point, Global Challenges Section, National Centre for Research and Development) with “EU Mission Adaptation to Climate Change: how to succeed in implementation”

- How to prepare for the mission (emphasizing the meaning of the team, tools and weapons, strategy, resources),
- Presentation of the calls open in a Mission (including crucial information, scope and budget allocated).
- Karina Barantseva (Chief Operating Specialist at the National Contact Point Department for Horizon Europe at the National Centre for Research and Development) with “Support instruments created by the EC for the Widening countries”
 - Presentation of the Work Programme "Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area",
 - Climate change issues represented in the Widening project (examples of projects with main objectives and the solutions implemented).
- Katarzyna Buszkiewicz-Seferyńska (National Contact Point, expert for Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area at the National Centre for Research and Development) with NCP_WIDERA.NET project”
 - main project assumptions, consortium composition, and objectives,
 - crucial project activities: study visits, matchmaking,
 - the service of pre-screening

The session also counted with a speech by Elina Bardram, Director in Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) at the European Commission and the Mission Manager of the EU Mission on Adaptation to climate change, that included:

- the problem of climate change in Europe,
- policies, plans and solutions being implemented, (at the national/European level),
- role of Widening countries in a climate change policies,
- the aim of the mission: to help regions and citizens in different dimensions.

After this, a Hybrid workshop took place, where the questions approached by the participants were:

1. From your perspective: what are the strategic research areas aimed at increasing participation in research and development projects supporting the green transformation with focus on adaptation to climate change?
2. Based on the answer to the question 1: what are the gaps in research and development calls and funding schemes that might hinder actions more relevant to the identified strategic areas.
3. Based on the answer to question 2: what are the necessary policy recommendations arising from identified research gaps

To conclude the event the main results obtained from the share were presented:

- Actions proposed:
 - Reducing fossil fuels usage in economy,
 - Need to raise society awareness on climate change,
 - Increasing climate adaptations of the buildings,,
 - Engaging companies from specific sectors (e.g Bio-tech), including start-ups.
- Recommendations:
 - Cross-cutting calls for all the Missions are needed,
 - Combining different sources of funding, also from national and regional level,
 - Support for the preparations of applications,

- Possible usage of solution implemented in Spain: vouchers for consulting services – use this idea for vouchers which includes pre-screening,
- Exchange information and good practices for supporting the application with Unite! Partners especially from Widening countries (Portugal),
- Increasing the amount of grant (“grants for grants”) available for the preparation of the project application.

In total, 33 participants attended the workshops, including 12 persons onsite and 21 online. Most of the participants were the representatives of the universities, research agencies, but also large enterprises and public institutes. The majority of the participants were from Polish entities, however there were also representatives of institutions from Italy, Portugal and Spain, who participated online.

Annexes

Annex I a)– Program of the event “Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters”

This annex can also be found [here](#).



- 09:45** **Welcome**
10:45 (CET)
- 10:00** **Opening Speech from EU representative**
11:00 (CET)
Claudia Pecoraro
- 10:30** **Mission overview**
11:30 (CET)
Helena Vieira, Universidade de Aveiro, 'Mission Restoring our Ocean and Waters' Board Member
- 11:00** **Joaquín del Río, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya**
12:00 (CET)
- 11:20** **Coffee break**
12:20 (CET)
- 11:40** **Round table: Restore our Ocean and Waters – Opportunities for Portugal**
12:40 (CET)
Moderator: Ana Sutcliffe, National Delegate of the Mission Restoring our Ocean and Waters, ANI
Helena Vieira, Universidade de Aveiro, 'Mission Restoring our Ocean and Waters' Board Member;
Nuno Lourenço, CEO of Atlantic CoLab; Manuel Melo, Fórum Oceano; Joaquín del Río, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
- 13:00** **Lunch Break**
14:00 (CET)
- 14:30** **Ana Sutcliffe, National Delegate of the Mission Restoring our Ocean and Waters, ANI**
15:30 (CET)
- 15:00** **Katarzyna Chojnacka, The Odra River case**
16:00 (CET)
- 15:30** **Round-Table: High impact research and Innovation initiatives for the ocean and waters**
16:30 (CET)
Moderator: Ramiro Neves, Técnico, Investigador
Frederico Duarte, Bauhaus of the sea; José Moutinho, Air Centre, Coordinator of the BlueMissionAA CSA, which oversees the implementation of the Atlantic & Arctic Lighthouse, Erica Cruz, blueOasis (company)
- 16:30** **Closing**
17:30 (CET)



Annex I b) - Attendance “Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters”

This annex can be found [here](#).

Annex I c) - Conference Minute

This annex can be found [here](#).

Annex II a)– Program of the event “Mission Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities”

This annex can also be found here: [link](#).



- 09:00** **Registration**
(CET)
- 09:30** **Institutional Welcome**
 Stefano Corgnati - Rector (Politecnico di Torino)
 Roberto Zanino - Principal Investigator UNITE Widening project (Politecnico di Torino)
- 09:45** **“Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities” mission funding opportunities and open calls**
 Laura Helal - Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission, European Commission DG Research & Innovation
- 10:15** **Role of Città di Torino in the “Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities” mission**
 Councillor for Environmental Policy and Ecological and Digital Transition - City of Torino
- 10:30** **Coffee break and networking**
- 11:00** **2023 assessment of “Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities” mission and future perspectives**
 Chrysses Nicolaides - Strategy consultant & advisor for cities, Member Mission Board of European Commission for Climate Neutral and Smart Cities
- 11:30** **Round Table - Climate-Neutral Smart Cities: benefits and challenges of the EU missions approach**
 Moderator: Federico Bosia – UNITE Widening project WP 2 Coordinator (Politecnico di Torino)
 Barbara Widera - Member of Mission Board of EU Mission Adaptation to climate change (Wrocław University of Science and Technology)
 Paulo Ferrão - Member of Mission Board of EU Mission 100 Climate neutral and smart cities (Instituto Superior Técnico - University of Lisbon)
 Giulia Melis – Coordinator JUST STREETS (Mobility justice for all: framing safer, healthier and happier streets) project (Fondazione Links - Leading Innovation & Knowledge For Society)
 Andrea Lanzini - Principal Investigator TIPS4PED (Turning cities Planning actions for Positive Energy Districts into success) project (Politecnico di Torino)
- 12:45** **Closing Remarks**
 Roberto Zanino - Principal Investigator UNITE Widening project (Politecnico di Torino)



Annex II b) - Attendance “Mission Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities”

This annex can be found [here](#).

Annex III a) - Program of the event - Mission “Adaptation to Climate Change”

This annex can also be found [here](#).



09.30 – 10.00	Registration of in-person participants
10.00 – 10.45	<p>Roundtable on Mission Adaptation in Widening countries: calls, projects, support and strategies.</p> <p>Participants: Barbara Widera - Member of the Mission Board of the EU Mission Adaptation to climate change (moderator), Magdalena Głogowska - National Contact Point, Global Challenges Section, National Centre for Research and Development], Karina Barantseva - a Chief Operating Specialist at the National Contact Point Department for Horizon Europe at the National Centre for Research and Development, Katarzyna Buszkiewicz-Seferyńska - NCBR, National Contact Point, expert for Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area.</p>
10.45 – 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 – 11.30	<p>Speech by Elina Bardram - Director in Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) at the European Commission and the Mission Manager of the EU Mission on Adaptation to climate change.</p>
11.30 – 12.15	<p>Hybrid workshops designed to identify strategic research areas aiming to increase participation in research and development projects that drive the green transformation, emphasizing adaptation to climate change.</p>
12.15 – 13.00	<p>Presentation of results, input for the policy recommendations.</p>

Annex III b) - Attendance List - Mission “Adaptation to Climate Change”

This annex can be found [here](#).