



**CYPRUS GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE
FOR COORDINATING CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIONS IN THE EASTERN
MEDITERRANEAN & MIDDLE EAST**

Work Programme

2019-2021

Introduction

Recent studies from prominent institutions (e.g. the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the World Meteorological Organization) have classified the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (EMME) region¹ as a global “climate hot-spot” with particularly high vulnerability to climate change impacts. The Cyprus Government Initiative builds upon the work that led to the International Conference held in Cyprus, in May 2018, which focused on “*Climate Change in the Mediterranean and the Middle East*”. The Conference which was organized by the Cyprus Institute and placed under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Cyprus, drew international attention, attended by eminent scientists and policy makers (e.g. L. Fabius, P. Taalas, J. Sachs et al) from thirty countries as well as leaders of global stature. The principal conclusion of the Conference was that regional concerted action is urgently needed. It is noteworthy that all EMME countries have underlined their serious concerns about regional and national climate change impacts and expressed their willingness to comply with the Paris Agreement. The Cyprus Climate Change Initiative aims at the development of a Regional Action Plan to address the specific needs and challenges countries are facing in the EMME region, to address and ameliorate the impact of climate change and advance mitigation actions in accordance with the Paris Agreement. The Initiative was presented by the President Nicos Anastasiades to several of his counterparts in the context of bilateral and trilateral meetings, as well as to all EMME Ambassadors in Nicosia by the Environment Minister Dr. Costas Kadis and the Foreign Minister Nikos Christodoulides earlier this year, and during bilateral meetings of Minister Kadis with several of his counterparts of the EMME region in the margins of the Abu Dhabi meeting. The Cyprus Government Initiative has also been communicated to stakeholders such as the EU and the Food and Agriculture Organization, and is receiving positive reaction from Capitals, both as regards content and value added of the specific focus.

To achieve the objective of developing a Regional Action Plan on Climate Action Coordination, a detailed work programme has been developed, consisting of two distinct components: a **scientific** and an **intergovernmental** component.

¹ The EMME region is comprised of: Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey and UAE. Climate-wise they share distinct similar characteristics.

PHASE 1: The Scientific Component for Scoping of a Regional Action Plan Through Thematic Task Forces

Lead: Prof Costas N. Papanicolas, Special Envoy of the President of the Republic of Cyprus on Climate Change and President of the Cyprus Institute.

The scientific component of the Initiative has been assigned and will be coordinated by the Cyprus Institute (www.cyi.ac.cy), a leading research and education organization with a strong focus on Climate Change in the region. The Cyprus Institute will coordinate the establishment of up to 12 Regional Task Forces, with the following scientific foci (or a combination thereof):

- 1. The Scientific Basis: Temperature and Water Projections, Extreme Weather Events etc.*
- 2. Energy Systems*
- 3. Built Environment*
- 4. Human Health*
- 5. Water resources*
- 6. Agroforestry and Food Chain*
- 7. Marine Environment/Resources*
- 8. Education and Outreach*
- 9. Security-Migration*
- 10. Tourism*
- 11. Enabling Technologies (monitoring, digitization, remote sensing, etc)*
- 12. Development of Green Economy and Innovation in the Region*

Mandate of the Regional Task Forces

The Task Forces will focus on collecting existing knowledge, in order to assess the situation, identify gaps in research and policy needs and provide a “toolkit” of possible actions to address the climate challenges in the region. In this regard, the Task Forces will be mandated to produce Thematic Reports (“White Papers”) in their respective areas of scientific focus. The Thematic Reports of the Task Forces will feed into the Comprehensive Scientific Report that will contain an overarching conclusion, as well as technologically matured and economically affordable solutions for addressing the impacts of climate change in different socioeconomic sectors.

Composition of the Task Forces

It is anticipated that each Task Force will comprise of up to fifteen prominent scientists with expertise in the relevant topic in the EMME region, coordinated by the Cyprus Institute and its International Policy Advisory Board (IPAB). As the success and relevance of the results produced by these Task Forces rely heavily on the expertise of scientists representing the EMME region, all Governments supporting the Initiative are encouraged to nominate prominent members of the scientific community of their country for membership by October 31st , 2019. Each Task Force, following its composition and after agreeing to a refined and targeted work programme, will operate independently. Logistical and coordination support will be provided by the Cyprus Institute.

Nominations for Scientists can be communicated to Ms. Eleni Sophocleous, Assistant to the Vice President, The Cyprus Institute (Email: e.sophocleous@cyi.ac.cy, Tel: +357 22 208684).

Second Climate Change International Conference (to be organized by The Cyprus Institute in October 2019)

The tentative Comprehensive Scientific Report will be produced and disseminated to all stakeholders prior to the 2nd Climate Change International Conference which will be organized by the Cyprus Institute in October 2019, during which it will be presented and discussed. The Comprehensive Scientific Report, which will be finalised in December 2020, will serve as the foundation for the development of the Regional Action Plan, subject to the approval of the participating Governments of the EMME region, following thorough consultations on a multilateral level.

PHASE 2: The Intergovernmental Component for Development of Regional Climate Action Plan

Lead: Dr. Costas Kadis, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment

Governments from the EMME region will be invited to designate a National Contact Point for the Initiative. The contact points will also receive periodic updates on the progress of the Task Forces during phase 1. Upon designation of the contact points, a Coordinating Committee comprised of the National Contact Points will be established, serving as a liaison between the scientists and the Governments.

The National Contact Points will be invited to take an active role at the Second Climate Change International Conference, where they will have an opportunity to discuss with the members of the Task Forces the proposed measures and solutions, and gain an in-depth understanding of the benefits from the implementation of specific measures for their countries.

The National Contact Points will be mandated with the development of a Regional Action Plan for Climate Change, based on the outcomes of Phase 1. A Ministerial Meeting and a Leaders' Summit are planned during this phase, to prepare and launch the implementation of the Initiative and to install the appropriate coordination and monitoring mechanisms.

Ministerial Meeting for advancing policy agenda (to be organized by the Republic of Cyprus, in February 2020)

The Ministerial Meeting which will be organized by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus will provide the forum for discussing and negotiating the development of a Regional Action Plan based on the findings and suggestions of the scientific Task Forces. The Ministerial meeting will serve as a preparatory meeting for the subsequent EMME Leaders Summit which is anticipated to take place in Cyprus.

EMME Leaders Summit on Coordination of Climate Change (to be organized by the Republic of Cyprus in the summer of 2021)

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus will organize the EMME Leaders’ Summit aiming at the adoption of a Regional Action Plan for Coordinating Climate Action. The implementation of the Regional Action Plan will seek the support of international and regional organizations. More information on Phase 2 can be provided by Dr. Theodoulos Mesimeris, Senior Officer at the Department of Environment of Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (tmesimeris@environment.moa.gov.cy, Tel: +357 22408948).

Phase 3: Implementation of the Regional Action Plan

It is anticipated that the adopted Regional Action Plan will require continuous reviewing, monitoring and refocusing of implementation. The participating EMME Governments will have the opportunity to discuss and agree on modalities during Phase 2.

Resourcing Needs

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus has approved the budget for the administrative and budgetary needs for operational costs under Phase 1 and 2. This includes the task of developing the scientific basis for the Regional Action Plan, as well as the preparation and hosting of the Ministerial Meeting and the Leaders’ Summit, for the adoption of the Regional Action Plan.

The subsequent Implementation of the Regional Action Plan will require further financial contribution from the participating EMME Governments, as well as international and private funding from accessible funds (e.g. the European Union).

Tentative Timetable (Meeting Dates & Milestones)

1.	December 2019- August 2020	The first meeting of each Task Force will be organized in Cyprus by December 2019. All meetings will be concluded by August 2020.
2.	September 2020	The tentative Comprehensive Scientific Report will be presented to the Governments of the EMME region by September 2020. It will form the basis of discussion during the 2 nd Climate Change International Conference.
3.	October 2020	The 2 nd Climate Change International Conference (Cyprus) will be organized. Presentation of Task Forces findings and proposed solutions to National Contact Points and other Government representatives of the EMME countries.
4.	December 2020	The Comprehensive Scientific Report will be finalised following the 2 nd Climate Change International Conference.
5.	February 2021	EMME Ministerial Meeting for advancing policy agenda (Cyprus)
6.	Summer 2021	EMME Leaders’ Summit – Adoption of a Regional Action Plan on Coordinating Climate Action