



CALL FOR ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS ON THE THEME OF CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

AS PART OF THE ADAPT ACTION PROGRAM



Co-funded by
the European Union

FOR
THE FRENCH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Madam, Sir,

The French Development Agency is launching, as part of its AdaptAction program, co-funded by the European Union in North Africa and the Middle East, a call for action research projects dedicated to climate change adaptation issues in the countries of this area.

This call is part of axis 1 of the program, entitled "Understanding", whose objective is to support and enhance action-research work to guide the planning, implementation and evaluation of adaptation strategies and projects. It thus aims to strengthen the interface between science, public strategies and operational action.

This call is the first phase of the selection process. At the end of this first phase, shortlisted expressions of interest will be invited to submit a full proposal. The selected projects will be formalized by research agreements signed with AFD.

Projects should focus on one or more of the eight countries of intervention of the program in the region: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan and Syria. The selection process will give priority to projects involving at least two countries.

Projects will need to build on climate and impact data already available. This call will not fund new exercises in climate modelling, downscaling, producing climate scenarios or generating new biophysical impact data.

The humanities and social sciences should be at the heart of the proposals. Interdisciplinary approaches are encouraged, but proposals that are exclusively technical, climate or biophysical will not meet the objectives of this call.

Instructions to bidders, eligibility criteria, selection criteria and deposit procedures are specified in this document. Proposals for research projects should be submitted in either French or English. Any research papers may be written in French, English or Arabic.

Please accept, Madam, Sir, the expression of our highest regards.

Valentine MONNIER

Manager of the AdaptAction program

AFD – Climate and Nature Division

Madame, Monsieur,

L'Agence française de Développement lance, dans le cadre de son programme AdaptAction, co-financé par l'Union européenne en Afrique du Nord et au Moyen-Orient, un appel à projets de recherche-action consacrés aux enjeux d'adaptation au changement climatique dans les pays de cette zone.

Cet appel s'inscrit dans l'axe 1 du programme, intitulé « Comprendre », dont l'objectif est de soutenir et valoriser des travaux de recherche-action permettant de guider la planification, la mise en œuvre et l'évaluation des stratégies et projets d'adaptation. Il vise ainsi à renforcer l'interface entre sciences, stratégies publiques et action opérationnelle.

Le présent appel constitue la première phase du processus de sélection. À l'issue de cette première phase, les manifestations d'intérêt présélectionnées seront invitées à soumettre une proposition complète. Les projets retenus seront formalisés par des conventions de recherche signées avec l'AFD.

Les projets devront porter sur un ou plusieurs des huit pays d'intervention du programme dans la région : Maroc, Algérie, Tunisie, Égypte, Liban, Palestine, Jordanie et Syrie. Le processus de sélection accordera une priorité aux projets impliquant au moins deux pays.

Les projets devront s'appuyer sur les données climatiques et d'impacts déjà disponibles. Le présent appel ne financera pas de nouveaux exercices de modélisation climatique, de descente d'échelle, de production de scénarios climatiques ou de génération de nouvelles données d'impacts biophysiques.

Les sciences humaines et sociales devront être au cœur des propositions. Les approches interdisciplinaires sont encouragées, mais les propositions exclusivement techniques, climatiques ou biophysiques ne répondront pas aux objectifs du présent appel.

Les instructions aux soumissionnaires, les critères d'éligibilité, les critères de sélection et les modalités de dépôt sont précisés dans le présent document. Les propositions de projets de recherche devront être rédigées en français ou en anglais. Les éventuels papiers de recherche pourront être rédigés en français, en anglais ou en arabe.

Veillez agréer, Madame, Monsieur, l'expression de nos salutations distinguées.

Valentine MONNIER

Responsable du programme AdaptAction

AFD – Division Climat et Nature

السيدات والسادة الكرام،

تحية طيبة وبعد،

تطلق الوكالة الفرنسية للتنمية، في إطار برنامجها للمساعدة الفنية التكيف مع تغير المناخ (AdaptAction) الذي يشارك في تمويله الاتحاد الأوروبي في شمال أفريقيا والشرق الأوسط، دعوة لتقديم مشاريع بحثية عملية مكرسة لقضايا التكيف مع تغير المناخ في بلدان هذه المنطقة.

تدرج هذه الدعوة ضمن المحور الأول للبرنامج، المعنون «الفهم»، والذي يهدف إلى دعم وتعزيز أعمال البحث والتطبيق التي تسمح بتوجيه تخطيط وتنفيذ وتقييم استراتيجيات ومشاريع التكيف. ويهدف بذلك إلى تعزيز الترابط بين العلوم والاستراتيجيات العامة والعمل الميداني.

نمثل هذه الدعوة المرحلة الأولى من عملية الاختيار. في نهاية هذه المرحلة الأولى، ستُدعى طلبات إبداء الاهتمام التي تم اختيارها مسبقًا إلى تقديم مقترح كامل. وسيتم إبرام اتفاقيات بحث مع الوكالة الفرنسية للتنمية (AFD) بشأن المشاريع التي سيتم اختيارها.

يجب أن تتناول المشاريع واحدًا أو أكثر من البلدان الثمانية التي يشملها البرنامج في المنطقة: المغرب، والجزائر، وتونس، ومصر، ولبنان، وفلسطين، والأردن، وسوريا. وستعطي عملية الاختيار الأولوية للمشاريع التي تشمل بلدين على الأقل.

يجب أن تستند المشاريع إلى البيانات المناخية وبيانات التأثيرات المتاحة بالفعل. لن يمول هذه الدعوة أي عمليات جديدة لنمذجة المناخ، أو تقليص النطاق، أو إنتاج سيناريوهات مناخية، أو توليد بيانات جديدة عن الآثار البيوفيزيائية.

يجب أن تكون العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية في صميم المقترحات. يتم تشجيع النهج متعددة التخصصات، لكن المقترحات التي تقتصر على الجوانب التقنية أو المناخية أو البيوفيزيائية لن تستوفي أهداف هذه الدعوة.

ترد في هذا المستند تعليمات للمتقدمين ومعايير الأهلية ومعايير الاختيار وشروط التقديم. يجب أن تُكتب مقترحات مشاريع البحث باللغة الفرنسية أو الإنجليزية. أما الأوراق البحثية، فيمكن كتابتها باللغة الفرنسية أو الإنجليزية أو العربية.

مع أطيب التحيات،

فالنتين مونييه

مسؤولة برنامج التكيف مع تغير المناخ

قسم المناخ والطبيعة لدى الوكالة الفرنسية للتنمية

CONTENTS

1. PRESENTATION OF THE ADAPTACTION PROGRAM	6
1.1 THE ADAPTACTION PROGRAM	6
1.2 GOVERNANCE.....	6
1.3 ISSUES.....	7
1.4 OBJECTIVES.....	8
1.5 PRIORITY THEMES AND SECTORS OF THE "UNDERSTANDING" COMPONENT OF THE PROGRAMME.....	8
1.6 APPROACH.....	9
1.7 GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE.....	10
2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST	11
2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL.....	11
2.2 AVAILABLE BUDGET.....	11
2.3 PROJECT DURATION.....	11
2.4 INDICATIVE CALENDAR.....	12
3. TERMS OF REFERENCE	12
3.1 GENERAL CONTEXT	12
3.2 SCIENTIFIC AND OPERATIONAL ISSUES	12
3.3 TYPES OF EXPECTED PRODUCTIONS.....	13
4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	13
4.1 ELIGIBILITY OF BIDDERS.....	13
4.2 ELIGIBILITY OF ACTIVITIES	14
4.3 ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS.....	14
5. SELECTION CRITERIA.....	14
6. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY	16
7. INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS	16
7.1 FOLDER CONTENT.....	16
7.2 DOCUMENT LANGUAGE.....	17
7.3 PRE-SELECTION PROCESS AND EVALUATION GRID.....	17
7.4 PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS.....	17
7.5 REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATIONS.....	17
8. INDICATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES.....	17

1. Presentation of the AdaptAction program

1.1 *The AdaptAction program*

Since 2017, the AdaptAction programme has been supporting partner countries in planning, implementing and monitoring climate change adaptation. It aims to strengthen the capacities of public institutions, territorial actors and operational partners to design adaptation policies, strategies and projects that are robust, inclusive and based on available knowledge.

In its component co-funded by the European Union in North Africa and the Middle East, AdaptAction operates with different levels of involvement in eight countries: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan and Syria¹. These countries face complex climatic, social, economic and political dynamics, including the increasing scarcity of water resources, pressures on agricultural and food systems, and the growing exposure of coastal areas and cities to rising sea levels, as well as aggravated vulnerabilities in areas affected by conflicts.

The program aims to contribute to a better integration of adaptation in public policies, projects and territorial strategies. It is part of a logic of support for public decisions and investments, by mobilizing scientific knowledge, practical knowledge and operational feedback. This call is part of axis 1 of the AdaptAction programme, entitled "Understanding".

Axis 1 aims to support action research and catalytic work to guide adaptation planning, implementation and evaluation. It aims to strengthen the science-strategies-action interface, by supporting research that is not limited to the production of academic knowledge, but also helps to inform public choices, institutional practices and operational projects.

In line with AFD's strategy on knowledge and innovation, this area of activity draws on both French and international expertise and national research organizations to promote local ownership of the expertise and the promotion of results.

1.2 *Governance*

The implementation of the activities of the research component is organized in two different ways: on the one hand, the realization of ad hoc activities managed directly by the AdaptAction team, and on the other hand this call for projects.

With a maximum budget of 310,000 euros, this call for projects will be co-led by the teams from AFD's Climate and Nature (CLN) and Research (ECO) divisions. These two entities will evaluate the applications together.

A scientific committee will be set up to monitor the activities, composed of these two teams who will lead the relevant technical and/or thematic divisions of the AFD, depending on the selected topics (Health and Social Protection (SAN)), Agriculture, Rural Development and Biodiversity (ARB), Water and Sanitation (EAA), Urban Development, Housing Development (VIL), Fragilities, Crises and Conflicts (CCC)), as well as the geographical teams concerned according to the needs and the progress of the study.

It is also envisaged to involve external personalities or institutions.

¹ Algeria is a beneficiary of the programme under its association with regional activities

1.3 Issues

The Mediterranean is a particularly vulnerable area to the effects of climate change, with temperatures rising **on average 20% faster than in the rest of the world**².

The Mediterranean and MENA region **is already experiencing significant consequences of climate change, with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events**, including heat waves, droughts and episodes of intense precipitation responsible for sudden floods. The IPCC identifies the Mediterranean as a climate "hotspot" particularly vulnerable to risks related to water scarcity, droughts, coastal flooding and degradation of terrestrial and marine ecosystems. The years 2024-25, for example, were marked by a multiplication of extreme hydrometeorological events in several countries in North Africa and the Middle East, illustrating the intensification of climate risks in the region. Furthermore, the average level of the Mediterranean Sea is experiencing a continuous increase, estimated at about 2.8 mm/year over the period 1993-2018, or nearly 6 cm over the past two decades, which greatly increases the risk of erosion, marine submersion and saline intrusion in densely populated coastal areas.³⁴

These climate impacts affect access to water and key economic sectors, in particular agricultural production and fisheries. This impedes economic growth and aggravates social and political tensions. In urban areas, climate change has even more severe consequences due to population density.

Climate change impacts will worsen over the next few decades, especially if global warming exceeds 1.5-2°C relative to pre-industrial levels. According to a trend scenario (SSP 4-6.0) and based on the Köppen-Geiger climate classification maps, **the temperate Mediterranean climate ('C' climate) that characterizes most coastal areas in the MENA region will decline, while the arid desert climate ('B' climate) will expand (see the maps below). The continental climate ('D' climate) will have virtually disappeared from the region by the end of the century.** To avoid this scenario, considerable efforts are needed to mitigate the drivers of change while building climate resilience to cope with unavoidable climate changes.

The countries of the Southern and Eastern neighborhood of the Mediterranean face numerous vulnerabilities that severely affect their economy, social context and ability to cope with the effects of climate change.

- Many countries in the region have **high levels of public debt**, including Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia. This limits their ability to access financial markets. Lebanon, for example, first defaulted on debt in 2020 amid one of the most severe financial and economic crises since the mid-nineteenth century, according to the World Bank. Palestine does not have all the attributes of a state and is therefore unable to take out public loans.
- Several countries in the MENA region have **a high level of institutional, social and economic fragility**, particularly in the Middle East (Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Libya), for various reasons, notably the persistence of armed conflicts within the region, such as in Israel,

² MedECC (2020) Climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean basin – current situation and risks for the future. First Mediterranean Assessment Report [Cramer, W., Guiot, J., Marini, K. (eds.)] Union for the Mediterranean, Plan Bleu, UNEP/MAP, Marseille, France, 632pp, ISBN 978-2-9577416-0-1, doi: 10.5281/zenodo.4768833

³ IPCC, 2022. *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability – Cross-Chapter Paper 4: Mediterranean Region*. Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), Working Group II. Cambridge University Press.

⁴ MedECC, 2024: Interlinking climate change with the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus in the Mediterranean Basin. [Drobinski, P., Rivera-Ferre, M.G., Abdel Monem, M., Driouech, F., Cramer, W., Guiot, J., Gøeca, J.C., Marini, K. (eds.)]. MedECC Reports. MedECC Secretariat, Marseille, France, 264 pp., ISBN: 978-2-493662-09-5, doi: [10.5281/zenodo.13365388](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13365388)

Palestine, in Syria and Lebanon, as well as outside the region, such as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine since 2022, which has consequences for food security.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the AdaptAction program regarding its "understand" axis are:

General objective: (i) To better integrate the experience of decision-makers and practitioners into research; (ii) To promote the translation of scientific knowledge on climate into public policies by leading decision-makers towards solutions highlighted by climate research.

Specific objectives: (i) Anticipate the needs of AFD beneficiaries and other partners, as well as AFD operational staff; (ii) Facilitate the exchange and dissemination of knowledge; (iii) Promote themes that contribute to building resilience or have potential for transformation.

1.5 Priority themes and sectors of the "Understanding" component of the programme

From an entry point for adaptation to climate change, projects must fall within one or more of the following themes:

- **Health, social protection and climate:** Climate change is increasingly recognized as a major public health issue across the Mediterranean region. This research component aims to analyze some of the most urgent dimensions of climate change's impact on health. These include the impact of heat waves on the health of the most vulnerable – including children, the elderly, refugees and low-income households and women – ; on health infrastructure and the organization of the care system. The impact of climate change on the determinants of population health, such as water availability, food security and nutrition, could be given greater attention, as well as non-climatic factors – socio-economic situation, governance issues, destruction and displacement related to conflicts. In addition, the research will help to assess how social protection mechanisms in the MENA region are affected by climate change and how they can strengthen people's resilience to this change.
- **Water resources, agricultural systems and food security:** In a context where most Mediterranean countries are under water stress and where climate projections indicate an intensification of drought episodes, and extreme weather events that threaten water availability, agricultural productivity and the habitability of human settlements, this theme will assess solutions to mitigate the impact of climate change on the water-agriculture nexus. Potential issues to be addressed include inefficient use of water in agriculture, fragmented governance structures and political sensitivities related to water pricing. The issues of food security, the transformation of production systems and/or the structuring of agricultural trade on a regional scale could also be analysed. Consider the concept of "transformational adaptation" to develop resilient long-term development pathways.
- **Coastal adaptation:** The aim is to support the production of knowledge on the socioeconomic impacts of climate change on coastal areas, particularly in urban areas. In the context of increasing pressures on ecosystems, infrastructure and communities from rising sea levels, erosion and extreme weather events, it is important to inform political decision-making scientifically through participatory approaches.
- **Climate and conflicts:** This theme aims to examine the link between climate and conflicts. More specifically, it will explore to what extent climate contributes as a threat multiplier to conflict or fragility situations and how the latter exacerbate the climate vulnerability of populations, economies, and ecosystems, especially in countries like Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. Research may also examine the concept of "Build back better" (BBB), a post-crisis or post-disaster reconstruction approach aimed not only at restoring destroyed infrastructure, services and livelihoods, but also at reducing future vulnerabilities and strengthen the

resilience of societies in the face of climate, environmental, health or socio-economic risks. Particular attention may be paid to situations of *compounded risks*, that is to say, to dynamics where climate shocks, socio-economic fragilities, political crises, forced displacement and armed violence interact and reinforce each other, producing systemic vulnerabilities that are difficult to anticipate and govern.

In a cross-cutting way, the issues of discontinuity of scale between the local, national, and regional levels, but also between value chains, communities, or between agro-climatic zones or "hot spot" approaches (hotspots), may be the subject of particular attention, in connection with the problems encountered by practitioners articulating project approaches, programs and systemic approaches.

The concepts of transformational adaptation will also need to be addressed. Issues related to composite risks, cascading effects and habitability may also be the subject of particular attention, depending on their relevance to the topic at hand.

1.6 Approach

Issues related to water scarcity and its impacts on agriculture and food security, the exposure of coastal areas and cities to rising sea levels and erosion, and the specific vulnerabilities of conflict-affected areas call for robust, contextualized, and inclusive adaptation responses. These responses cannot be designed solely on the basis of climate projections or biophysical analyses. They also require an understanding of institutions, power relations, territorial trajectories, capacities for action, economic and political trade-offs, risk perceptions, local knowledge, and the concrete constraints faced by stakeholders.

In this perspective, the humanities and social sciences play a central role. They make it possible to analyze adaptation not only as a technical response to climatic hazards, but also as a process of transformation of institutions, territories, practices, power relations, forms of solidarity, usage conflicts and collective arbitrations. This call therefore expects proposals that place these dimensions at the heart of their problematic and methodology.

In this regard, priority is given to action-oriented research projects that can be used to inform public action and the governance of adaptation. This is a decisive selection criterion.

It is expected that one or more of the following concepts will be mobilized in a credible and robust manner:

1/ Climate change adaptation pathways

Adaptation pathways (in conjunction with planning approaches such as *Dynamic Adaptive Policy Pathways*, or *Robust Decision Making*) refer to evolutionary sequences of decisions, policies and actions implemented over time to address current and future climate change impacts. This approach recognizes that climatic, socio-economic and institutional conditions are evolving in an uncertain way, and that it is therefore necessary to adapt strategies gradually according to knowledge, critical thresholds and future opportunities. It therefore involves a sequencing in time of the different adaptation options, but also trade-offs

2/ Limits of adaptation, including "loss and damage" issues

This concept refers to the negative impacts of climate change that could not be avoided through mitigation or adaptation. They include economic losses (destruction of infrastructure, agricultural losses, loss of income) as well as non-economic losses (damage to health, forced displacement, cultural or biodiversity losses).

3/ Maladaptation

This concept refers to adaptation actions or policies that, intentionally or not, increase vulnerability to climate change, create new inequalities or shift risks to other populations, territories or generations.

A measure is considered maladaptive when it brings short-term benefits but compromises long-term resilience.

4/ Cross-border, cascading or composite climate risks

This concept refers to the impacts of climate change that spread beyond national borders through economic, ecological, social or geopolitical systems. They can manifest through supply-chain disruptions, migration, tensions over natural resources, or fluctuations in food and energy markets.

5/ Habitability

Habitability refers to the ability of a territory to maintain over time living conditions considered safe, dignified and sustainable for human populations, despite the impacts of climate change. It depends on biophysical, social, economic, institutional and political factors as well as on the ability of societies to adapt.

6/ Transformational adaptation

Transformational adaptation refers to profound changes in the fundamental attributes of social, economic, institutional, territorial or ecological systems in order to respond sustainably to climate risks. It goes beyond the incremental adjustment of existing practices and may involve transformations in development models, infrastructure, governance modes, land tenure, productive systems or consumption patterns. It also requires an analysis of power relations, collective trade-offs, distributive effects and risks of maladaptation associated with these transformations.

1.7 Geographical scope

The projects must cover at least one or more of AdaptAction's eight countries of intervention in the Mediterranean:

- Morocco;
- Algeria;⁵
- Tunisia;
- Egypt;
- Lebanon;
- Palestine;
- Jordan;
- Syria.

The proposals will have to justify the choice of selected countries and demonstrate the comparative or analytical relevance of these fields. The selection process will give priority to projects involving at least two countries and/or with high potential for replicability.

Where applicable, bidders must specify the methodological methods used to carry out work in complex security contexts, particularly with regard to access to the fieldwork, data collection, and management of operational and ethical constraints.

In a cross-cutting way, the issues of discontinuity of scale between the local, national, and regional levels, but also between value chains, communities, or between agro-climatic zones or "hot spot" approaches (hotspots), may be the subject of particular attention, in connection with the problems encountered by practitioners articulating project approaches, programs and systemic approaches.

⁵ Algeria can be included, but only in comparison with other countries.

2. Characteristics of the call for expressions of interest

2.1 Objectives of the call

This call aims to support a maximum of three action-research projects dedicated to adaptation issues in the Mediterranean.

The humanities and social sciences should be at the heart of the proposals. Projects may mobilize interdisciplinary approaches (associating, for example, agronomy, hydrology, urban planning, economics, etc.), but these should be linked to a problem centered on social, political, economic dimensions, territorial, institutional or cultural adaptation. Proposals that are exclusively technical or biophysical will not meet the objectives of this call.

Projects should contribute to a better understanding of the human, social, political, territorial and institutional dimensions of adaptation to climate change. They will also need to produce knowledge that is useful for planning, implementing and evaluating adaptation strategies and projects. The expected research should in particular contribute to all or part of the following issues:

- strengthen the dissemination and translation of climate knowledge and impact data into public policies, territorial strategies, and adaptation projects;
- to analyze the social, political and institutional conditions of adaptation in Mediterranean territories in order to promote the inclusion of the most vulnerable;
- better integrate the experience and knowledge of local decision-makers, practitioners, and stakeholders into knowledge production;
- co-build and implement decision-making tools and processes in the face of climate uncertainties;
- to promote the production of operational knowledge, appropriable by public actors, donors, project owners and local organizations, and usable in the design of public policies or adaptation projects;
- contribute to strengthening research and expertise capacities in the countries of intervention.

Comparative approaches between several countries will be encouraged, provided that they are based on a clear set of issues and a robust methodology. Projects must demonstrate the relevance of the selected sites in light of the adaptation issues studied.

The call for expressions of interest (CEI) will make it possible to shortlist particularly promising research projects, whose holders will then be invited to develop, during a second phase, a complete proposal for final selection.

2.2 Available budget

The total budget available for this call is €310,000 excluding taxes. The maximum amount per project is €160,000 excluding taxes.

This budget will make it possible to finance a maximum of three action research projects, depending on the quality of the proposals received, their scientific and operational ambition, their feasibility and their adequacy with the objectives of the programme.

If the financial allocation provided cannot be used in full or in part, owing to a lack of proposals received in sufficient numbers, their insufficient quality or a budget lower or higher than the available allocation, AFD reserves the right to reallocate unused funds to other programme activities.

2.3 Project Duration

The maximum duration of funded projects is 16 months.

The work should begin during the fourth quarter of 2026 and must be completed by 30 April 2028, with the funds financing these activities ending on that date. **Compliance with this deadline will be a**

decisive selection criterion. Projects that do not realistically meet this timeline will not be considered.

2.4 Indicative calendar

The indicative schedule is as follows:

Step	Indicative date
Launch of the Call for Expressions of Interest (Eoi)	May 29, 2026
Closure of the call for Eoi	July 6, 2026 at 12 p.m. C.E.T.
Analysis of expressions of interest; interviews may be organized with shortlisted candidates.	July 6-24, 2026
Invitation of shortlisted candidates to submit a full proposal	July 27, 2026
Drafting the complete proposals	25 September 2026
Final Selection	October 9, 2026
Contracting with the project leaders of the selected projects	November 15, 2026
Starting work	November 15, 2026

3. Terms of reference

3.1 General context

This call is deliberately open to allow research teams from different disciplines to propose original approaches on adaptation issues in the Mediterranean. However, this openness must not lead to general or descriptive proposals. Expressions of interest should formulate a precise, situated and argued issue, clearly explaining the research question, the chosen fields, working hypotheses, the methods used and the expected contribution to scientific debates, policy and operational debates on adaptation. Expressions of interest are expected to demonstrate their realistic ability to complete their work by 30 April 2028.

3.2 Scientific and operational issues

The challenge of this call for research projects is to better understand how climate change impacts, associated vulnerabilities, and adaptation dynamics are concretely manifested—or, in certain contexts such as conflict situations, remain limited or poorly visible—within the societies, economies, and ecosystems of the MENA countries, in order to ultimately formulate useful recommendations for operational stakeholders.

3.3 *Types of expected productions*

Funded projects must produce scientific and operational results. Expected outputs may include:

- research reports;
- scientific articles;
- policy brief/ policy paper notes;
- operational notes for the AFD and its partners;
- decision support tools;
- feedback workshops in the countries concerned or regional depending on the replicability of the conclusions;
- valorisation materials accessible to practitioners and decision-makers;
- recommendations for planning, implementing or evaluating adaptation.

Proposals should explain how the results will be promoted to relevant stakeholders, including national institutions, territorial actors, implementing partners, donors and scientific communities.

These productions will have to rely **on research fields**.

They may, if necessary, be **published in the AFD's collections**.

4. Eligibility Criteria

4.1 *Eligibility of bidders*

Projects must be implemented by a research institute or consortium that meets the following two criteria:

- a university or national research centre from at least one of the eight AdaptAction countries in the region;
- a university, a research centre or a researcher with proven international credentials (first-tier publication, reference in one of the IPCC groups, etc.)

Consortia also comprising one or more local or international NGOs, think tanks, consultancy firms with research and development activities, or individual consultants, are eligible, provided that the scientific and operational governance of the project is clearly defined.

Consortia shall demonstrate:

- their scientific competence on adaptation to climate change;
- their knowledge of the Mediterranean areas concerned;
- their ability to conduct comparative or multi-country research;
- their ability to produce results useful for public policies and operational projects;
- their ability to work with institutional, territorial, and operational actors;
- their ability to put their research at the service of public decision-making.

The usual AFD eligibility criteria will be applied with regard to compliance with current legislative and regulatory measures, combating terrorism and money laundering, etc.

Particular attention will be paid to ensure that funding reaches not only stakeholders in high-income countries but also those in AdaptAction partner countries, which will contribute to (i) building their capacity, (ii) funded projects benefit from their knowledge of local contexts, and (iii) research results are more easily appropriated by decision-makers (governments, administrations, companies, NGOs) partner countries iv) to ensure that knowledge and methods in the partner countries are recognized and valued. Proposals involving and strengthening the capacities of researchers from these countries in the design, implementation and especially the production of research results will be selected as a priority.

A given organisation may join several consortia at the stage of this IMA, but will no longer be part of more than one consortium when submitting full proposals.

4.2 Eligibility of activities

The following activities are eligible: field studies and/or surveys, organization of research workshops and/or multi-stakeholder workshops, bibliographic reviews, experience exchange missions, mobilization of expertise, organization of training to promote results, monitoring–evaluation of research results and impact pathways.

The following are not eligible under this call:

- Activities consisting solely or mainly of financing the participation of individuals in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- Measures consisting solely or mainly of the financing of individual study or training grants.
- the new climate modeling exercises;
- projects exclusively technical, climatic or biophysical, or those in which the humanities and social sciences are marginal, instrumental, or limited to a component of social acceptability without any real scientific issue;
- projects that are not anchored in at least one countries of intervention;
- projects that do not include a national research organisation from at least one country of intervention;
- activities that do not fall under action research or the production of knowledge useful for public and operational action.

4.3 Eligibility of costs

The funds granted to the selected project holders may be used to finance:

- The fees and salaries of permanent staff or not, excluding civil servants' salaries;
- Travel expenses;
- Costs related to field activities (e.g. interpretation);
- Workshop organization costs;
- Communication costs (editing, publication, reproduction, translation, web, etc.);
- The purchase of equipment necessary for research;
- Management fees / Overhead costs, up to 10% of the total budget.

A line of up to 10% of the total budget may be included for miscellaneous and unforeseen expenses.

5. Selection Criteria

Expressions of interest will be analysed according to the following criteria.

A) Relevance to the objectives of the call

Will be appreciated:

- alignment with the objectives of axis 1 "Understanding" and the pre-identified themes;
- the contribution to strengthening the science-strategies-action interface and the research-action aspect of the project;
- the relevance of the research questions (mobilizing in a robust and credible manner the concepts of adaptation specified in 1.4 where relevant);
- the capacity of the project to effectively inform adaptation planning, implementation or assessment in the MENA context;
- the geographical scope of the programme (number of countries involved, shared learning from both sides of the Mediterranean, potential for replicability of results);

- the strategy for disseminating knowledge and/or scientific mediation;
- the realistic ability of the project to produce results before April 30, 2028.

B) Scientific quality

Will be appreciated:

- References (previous publications and projects in the same field or on related issues) of mobilized researchers, whose history of international research publications and projects is expected;
- the clarity of the issue;
- the strength of the state of the art;
- the quality of the methodology;
- the relevance of field sites;
- the ability to articulate empirical analysis, conceptualization, and the production of transferable results;
- interdisciplinarity, when it is relevant.

C) Operational nature and potential for impact

Will be appreciated:

- the capacity of the project to produce useful knowledge for decision-makers and practitioners;
- the clear identification of potential users of the results;
- the relevance of operational deliverables;
- the quality of the valuation strategy;
- the ability to contribute to public policy dialogues;
- the potential usefulness for adaptation projects financed or supported by the AFD and its partners.

D) Local anchoring and capacity building

Will be appreciated:

- the effective involvement of national research organizations from the countries of intervention;
- the quality of the consortium's governance;
- the balance of roles between international and national partners;
- capacity-building mechanisms;
- the mobilization of young researchers, doctoral students or post-doctoral fellows;
- the modalities of restitution and local appropriation of results.

E) Consideration of justice, gender and inclusion issues

Will be appreciated:

- the consideration of differentiated vulnerabilities;
- the analysis of inequalities in exposure, capacity for action and benefits of adaptation;
- the integration of gender issues and social inclusion;
- the ability to document the conditions for just resilience.

F) Feasibility

Will be appreciated:

- consistency between objectives, method, schedule, and budget;

- the feasibility of fieldwork, including the security context;
- access to data;
- the coordination capacity of the consortium;
- control of implementation risks;
- the clarity of the distribution of responsibilities.

G) Budget

Will be appreciated:

- the consistency of the budget with the proposed activities;
- the justification of the costs (including overhead costs);
- the budget balance between partners;
- the adequacy between requested means and expected results.

6. Intellectual property

Research results must be made public and no research result may imply a confidentiality agreement and/or give rise to patenting. Intellectual property rights concerning the results of funded research projects will be systematically **shared**⁶ between the consortia that receive funding and AFD.

Funded projects must provide for methods of exploitation that allow the results to be widely disseminated, while respecting the rights of researchers, partners and individuals or institutions who have contributed to the research.

Particular attention will be paid to the accessibility of results for stakeholders in the countries concerned, particularly in the form of adapted notes, presentation materials, workshops or operational formats.

7. Instructions to bidders

7.1 Folder Content

The file must include the following five documents:

Exhibit I: A letter of commitment from the members of the consortium to submit the expression of interest, and designating the Lead Partner.

Exhibit II: A brief note (maximum 6 pages) presenting the scientific interest of the project (context, objectives, methodology, expected results and possible operationalization of the results) and the indicative timeline for completion.

Exhibit III: A brief presentation of each consortium member.

Exhibit IV: The CVs of the main staff involved (maximum 5 pages).

Exhibit V: The provisional budget indicative of the project in Euros excluding tax.

⁶ We are talking here about research results, not personal data that may be collected during surveys to produce research results.

7.2 Document Language

Proposal files may be written in French or English. Each individual document should be written in only one of the two languages, but a single proposal may include documents in both languages.

Project deliverables may also be produced in either French or English. If necessary, some deliverables may be produced in Arabic and translated into English or French.

7.3 Pre-selection process and evaluation grid

First, the administrative compliance of expressions of interest will be verified. Proposals that are incomplete (i.e. do not include items I to V above) or do not meet the eligibility criteria listed in section 4 will be eliminated.

The administratively compliant expressions of interest will be analysed by a proposal evaluation committee.

The shortlisted consortia will continue the selection process, through the production of a complete project document.

The proposals that are definitively selected will be subject to a contract between the consortium's lead organization and AFD.

7.4 Procedure for submitting proposals

Bidders must submit their expressions of interest on the AFD's dedicated Call for Projects page:

<https://groupe-afd.wiin.io/fr/applications/call-for-research-projects-on-adaptation-in-the-mediterranean-region-water-agriculture-and-food-security-coastal-areas-conflict-zones>

Submission deadline: 6 July 2026 at 12 p.m. C.E.T.

Any files submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed.

The AFD undertakes to acknowledge receipt of application files by automatically sending an email as soon as it receives them on its website. In the absence of an acknowledgment of receipt from the AFD, please consider that the application file has not been received and act accordingly (new submission on the call for projects page).

Proposals will ideally take the form of a single PDF or ZIP file.

Proposals that do not comply with the above guidelines will not be evaluated.

7.5 Request for clarifications

Bidders wishing to have further information on this call for expressions of interest are invited to send their questions to buffetc@afd.fr, wuillezm@afd.fr; monnierv@afd.fr, butinc@afd.fr and jeanjeana@afd.fr. All questions asked and answers provided will be shared on the call for projects page on the AFD website, at most 6 days before the call for projects closes.

8. Indicative bibliographic references

The following references may be included:

- IPCC, assessment reports on impacts, adaptation and vulnerabilities (AR5, AR6);
- UNEP, Adaptation Gap Reports;

- World Adaptation Science Programme, work on adaptation research needs;
- Literature on adaptation trajectories;
- Literature on Dynamic Adaptive Policy Pathways;
- Literature on Robust Decision Making;
- Literature on climate justice, just resilience and maladaptation;
- Work on Mediterranean adaptation (see below).

IPCC (2022). *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report. Pörtner, H.-O. et al. (eds). Cambridge University Press.

Schipper, E.L.F., A. Revi, B.L. Preston, E.R. Carr, S.H. Eriksen, L.R. Fernandez-Carril, B.C. Glavovic, N.J.M. Hilmi, D. Ley, R. Mukerji, M.S. Muylaert de Araujo, R. Perez, S.K. Rose, and P.K. Singh, 2022: Climate Resilient Development Pathways. In: *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. •ke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 2655–2807, doi:10.1017/9781009325844.027.

Ali, E., W. Cramer, J. Carnicer, E. Georgopoulou, N.J.M. Hilmi, G. Le Cozannet, and P. Lionello, 2022: Cross-Chapter Paper 4: Mediterranean Region. In: *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. •ke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 2233–2272, doi:10.1017/9781009325844.021.

United Nations Environment Programme (2025). *Adaptation Gap Report 2025: Running on Empty. The world is gearing up for climate resilience—without the money to get there*. Neufeldt, H., Hammill, A., Leiter, T., Magnan, A., Watkiss, P., Bakhtiari, F., Bueno Rubial, P., Butera, B., Canales, N., Chapagain, D., Christiansen, L., Dale, T., Milford, F., Niles, K., Njuguna, L., Pauw, P., Singh, C. & Yang, G. (eds.). UNEP, Nairobi.

MedECC (2020). *Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future*. First Mediterranean Assessment Report. Cramer, W. et al. (eds.). Union for the Mediterranean, Plan Bleu, UNEP/MAP, Marseille.

Barnett, J., & O'Neill, S. (2010). Maladaptation. *Global Environmental Change*, 20(2), 211–213.

Benzie, M., & Harris, K. (2020). *Transboundary Climate Risk and Adaptation*. Science for Adaptation Policy Brief 2. <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/34436>.

Castán Broto, V., Olazabal, M., & Ziervogel, G. (2024). Disrupting the imaginaries of urban action to deliver just adaptation. *Buildings and Cities*, 5(1), 199–214. <https://doi.org/10.5334/bc.456>.

Dampha, N., Adhiambo, P., Mukherji, A., et al. (2025). *Transformational Adaptation for Africa: Framing, Opportunities, and Recommendations for Negotiators at SB62*. Briefing paper.

Deubelli, T.M., & Mechler, R. (2021). Perspectives on transformational change in climate risk management and adaptation. *Environmental Research Letters*, 16(5), 053002. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/abd42d>.

Engbersen, D., Biesbroek, R., & Termeer, C.J.A.M. (2026). The "magic" of conflict: How participatory governance can enable transformative climate adaptation. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eet.70071>.

Eriksen, S., Schipper, E.L.F., Vincett, M., et al. (2021). Adaptation interventions and their effect on vulnerability in developing countries: Help, hindrance or irrelevance? *World Development*, 141, 105383.

Haasnoot, M., Kwakkel, J.H., Walker, W.E., & ter Maat, J. (2013). Dynamic adaptive policy pathways: A method for crafting robust decisions for a deeply uncertain world.

Haasnoot, M., Di Fant, V., Kwakkel, J., & Lawrence, J. (2024). Lessons from a decade of adaptive pathways studies for climate adaptation. *Global Environmental Change*, 88, 102907. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2024.102907>.

Harris, K., Lager, F., Jansen, M.K., & Benzie, M. (2022). Rising to a new challenge: A protocol for case-study research on transboundary climate risk. *Weather, Climate, and Society*, 14(3), 755–768. <https://doi.org/10.1175/WCAS-D-21-0022.1>.

Kates, R.W., Travis, W.R., & Wilbanks, T.J. (2012). Transformational adaptation when incremental adaptations to climate change are insufficient. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(19), 7156–7161. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1115521109>.

Magnan, A.K., Li, J., Tanguy, A., Hallegatte, S., & Buffet, C. (2025). The value of structured expert judgment to help assess climate adaptation. *Climate Risk Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crm.2025.100663>.

Mechler, R., Bouwer, L.M., Schinko, T., Surminski, S., & Linnerooth-Bayer, J. (eds.) (2019). *Loss and Damage from Climate Change: Concepts, Methods and Policy Options*. Climate Risk Management, Policy and Governance. Springer, Cham. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-72026-5>.

UNFCCC. (2025). *Defining and understanding transformational adaptation at different spatial scales and sectors, and assessing progress in planning and implementing transformational adaptation approaches at the global level*. <https://unfccc.int/documents/646618>.

Ziervogel, G., Perumal, L., & Taylor, A. (2026). Applying design thinking for innovative climate adaptation solutions: Building capacity for locally led adaptation. Prepublication, SSRN. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.6103546>.

References in the MENA area:

Sowers, J., Vengosh, A. & Weinthal, E. (2011). *Climate change, water resources, and the politics of adaptation in the Middle East and North Africa*. **Climatic Change**, 104(3–4), 599–627.

Al-Saidi, M. & Saliba, S. (2019). *Water, energy and food nexus in the Arab region*. **Environmental development**.

Driouech, F. et al. (2020). *Assessing Future Changes of Climate Extreme Events in the CORDEX-MENA Region*.

Tackling transboundary climate risks in the Middle East and North Africa (2024). [Adaptation Research Alliance Brief](#)

Lelieveld, J. et al. (2016). [Heat Extremes in MENA](#)

Sowers, J. (2017). *The High Stakes of Climate Adaptation in the Middle East and North Africa*.

Carnegie Middle East Center (2024). *Assessing Climate Adaptation Plans in MENA*. Qualitative analysis of national adaptation plans in several Arab countries.

[Climate Change Impact on Resources in MENA](#)

Recent systematic review on climate impacts, water, energy and adaptation in the region.

Trottier, Julie, and Jeanne Perrier. 'Challenging the Coproduction of Virtual Water and Palestinian Agriculture'. *Geoforum*87 (2017): 85. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.10.011>.