



Climate change and the European water dimension – Enhancing resilience

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Draft policy recommendations

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Water-related adaptation matters

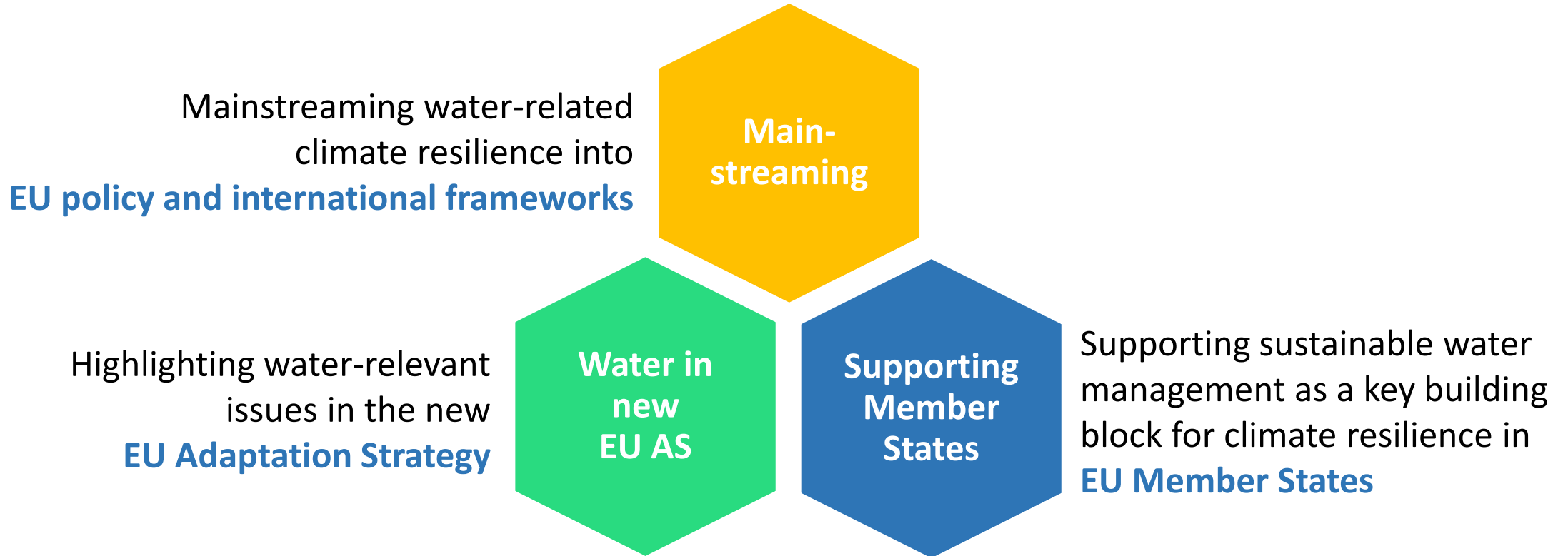
- Climate change impacts primarily manifest in changes to **the water cycle**
- Climate-resilient water management is critical for **overall climate-resilience**
- Resilience of water systems largely depends on sustainable **practices in other sectors.**
- The EU and its Member States will be affected by climate change **impacts outside Europe**
- Limits of current incremental adaptation practices - call for more systemic change and **transformational approaches.**
- Increasing water-related resilience also offers **opportunities/synergies**

Climate change impacts in Europe's regions

Climate change is projected to impact the availability of water in Europe, putting additional pressure on southern regions already facing water stress. Other parts of Europe are expected to face more frequent flooding events, while low-lying regions are at risk from storm surges and sea level rise.



EU framework conditions - key for enabling relevant actors to accelerate adaptation efforts



Mainstreaming water-related climate resilience into EU policy and international frameworks

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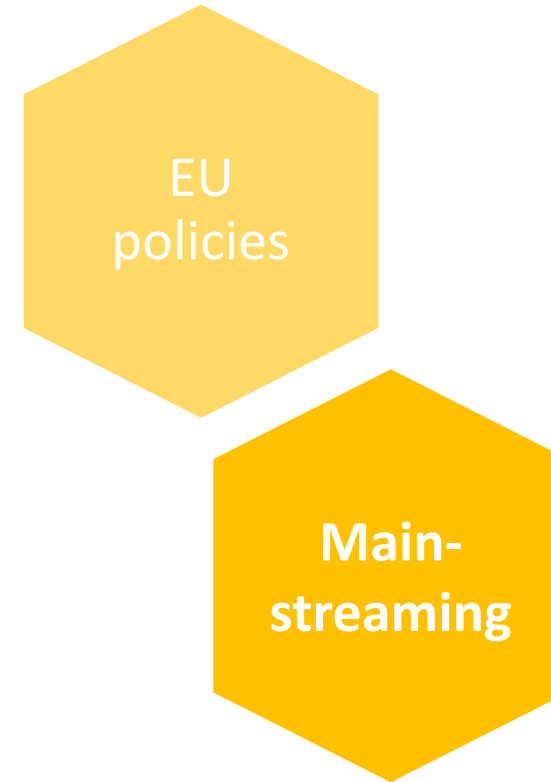
**Main-
streaming**

- **policies and frameworks that deal directly with adaptation - but also the various sectoral policies that impact the sustainability of water resources.**
- **crucial to reduce negative impacts, leverage synergies, and support systemic change required to ensure resilient water systems.**

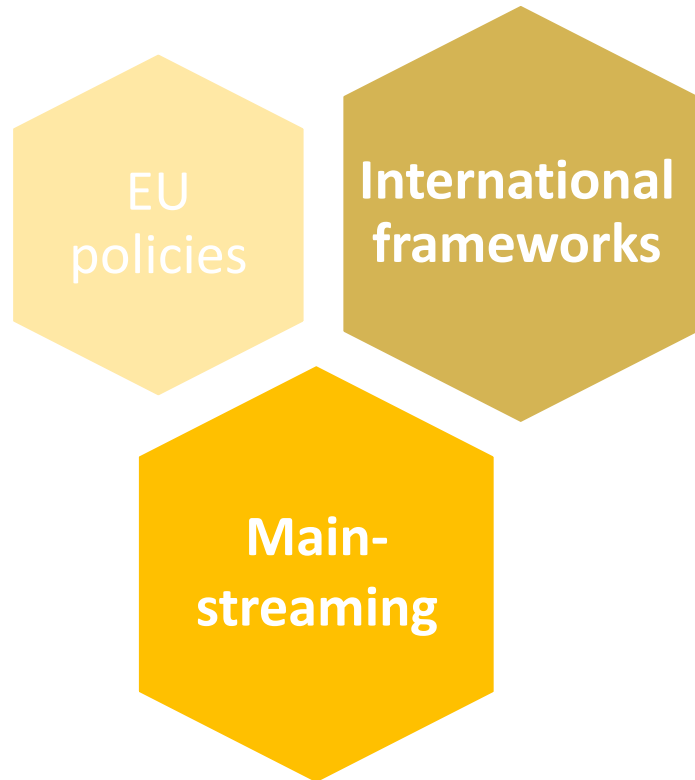
Mainstreaming water-related climate resilience into EU policy and international frameworks

Increase coherence and ambition across relevant EU policies, strategies, and initiatives

- Make water resilience a priority in the CAP strategic plans!
- Integrate water sustainability issues into National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs)!
- Exploit synergies with objectives of the Urban Agenda for the EU, EU Forest Strategy, EU Biodiversity Strategy, Farm to Fork Strategy!
- Provide guidance and good practice examples!



Mainstreaming water-related climate resilience into EU policy and international frameworks



Mainstreaming water resilience into implementation of international policy frameworks
(UNFCCC – Sendai Framework – 2030 Agenda)

- Minimise trade-offs due to conflicting objectives!
- Promote synergetic effects and co-benefits of climate resilient water management!
- Strengthen exchange and collaboration accross stakeholder communities!

Highlighting water-relevant issues in the new EU Adaptation Strategy



Water in new EU AS

The new EU Adaptation Strategy needs to recognise more explicitly the fundamental role that sustainable water management and healthy water-related ecosystems play in overall climate resilience.

- require the mainstreaming of water resilience in sectoral strategies
- promote transformational change where necessary, especially for sectors that disproportionately affect water sustainability or face water-related climate risks (e.g. urban water management, agriculture, energy and inland waterway transportation)

Highlighting water-relevant issues in the new EU Adaptation Strategy



Adaptation
financing

Water in
new
EU AS

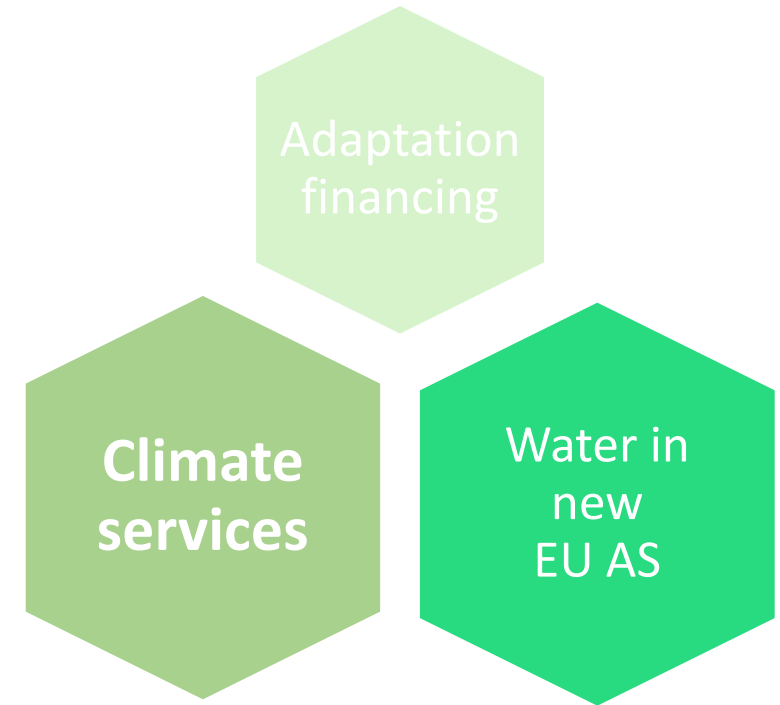
Provide appropriate **adaptation financing for water-related climate resilience**

- Allocate funds for adaptation
- Make adaptation finance available and accessible to sub-national authorities and water actors
- Develop an uniform definition of adaptation finance
- Promote standardised funding procedures and criteria, incl. requirement for risk assessments

Highlighting water-relevant issues in the new EU Adaptation Strategy

Improve availability of water-relevant data and **climate services** (CS)

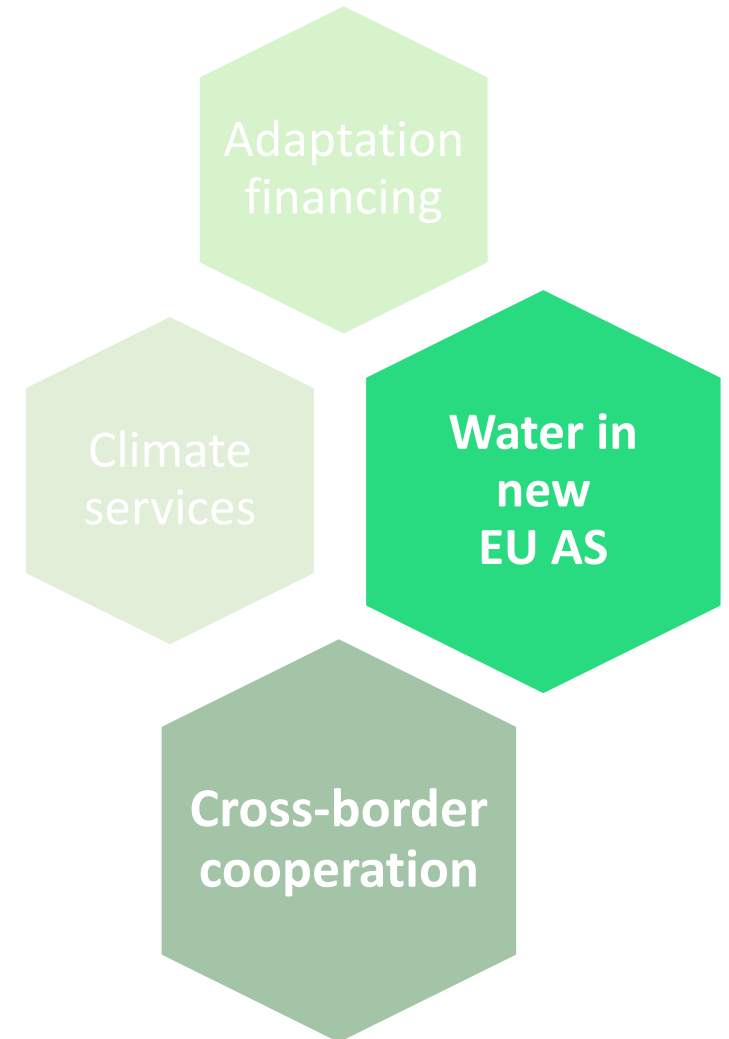
- Promote an EU-wide data assessment framework for key water-related parameters
- Support user-friendly CS for water-related adaptation action
- Improve the navigability of the CS market and centralise existing sources such as EDO (Droughts) and EFAS (Floods)



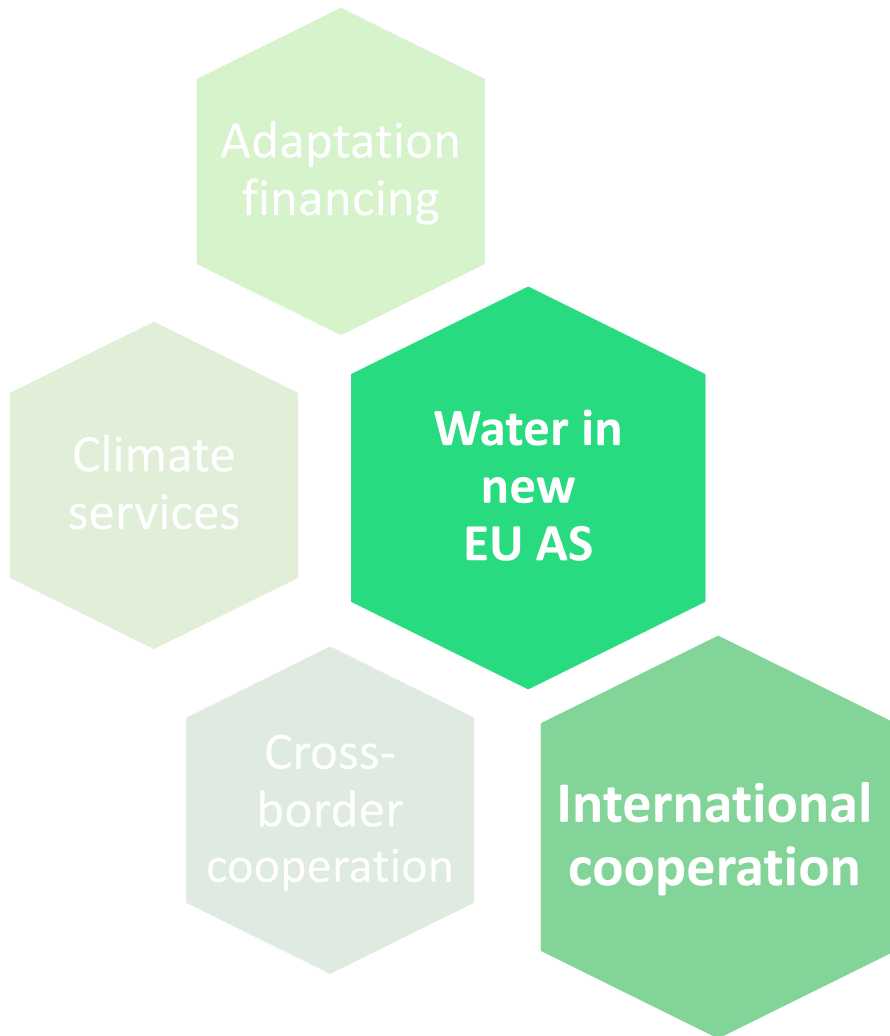
Highlighting water-relevant issues in the new EU Adaptation Strategy

Promote **cross-border cooperation** in climate adaptation in transnational regions and transboundary river and marine basins

- Promote increased cooperation between Member States and neighbouring countries
- Strengthen planning capacities, support joint investment and on-the-ground implementation
- Integrate transboundary aspects into national adaptation plans and ensure consistency



Highlighting water-relevant issues in the new EU Adaptation Strategy



Continue and strengthen **international cooperation to increase climate resilience in vulnerable countries and major trade partners**

- Strengthen knowledge transfer on climate resilience
- Increase awareness and understanding of Europe's vulnerability to water-related climate change impacts outside Europe
- Support European businesses to understand and address water-related vulnerabilities in global supply chains.

Supporting sustainable water management as a key building block for climate resilience in EU Member States



Supporting
Member
States

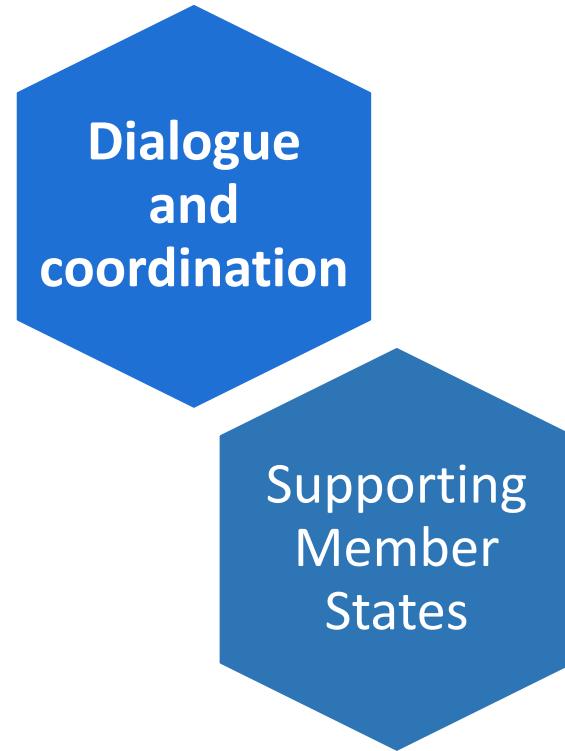
Baseline premises

- Ensuring sustainable water systems in the future will require a fundamental change in **how water is used by various sectors and valued by society**.
- More transformational change needs to be promoted through **cross-sectoral coordination, stakeholder participation and awareness-raising**.
- **Financial and regulatory instruments** should be applied to incentivise and steer change towards more resilience.
- Climate-resilient water management needs to be further strengthened through **research and innovation, data and knowledge generation as well as guidance and capacity development**.

Supporting sustainable water management as a key building block for climate resilience in EU Member States

Dialogue and coordination

- Promote **increased mainstreaming of water-related climate adaptation measures** into national and sectoral adaptation plans and prevent maladaptation.
- **Support cross-sectoral dialogue at various levels** to increase the coordination of water-related adaptation measures with other (sectorial) adaptation plans and prevent maladaptation.
- **Encourage involvement of business stakeholders, local authorities, and citizens** in order to increase their risk awareness and readiness to accept and act.
- **Raise awareness and educate stakeholders and the general public, including youth**, of the intrinsic value of water and water-related ecosystems and their role in maintaining resilient water systems.



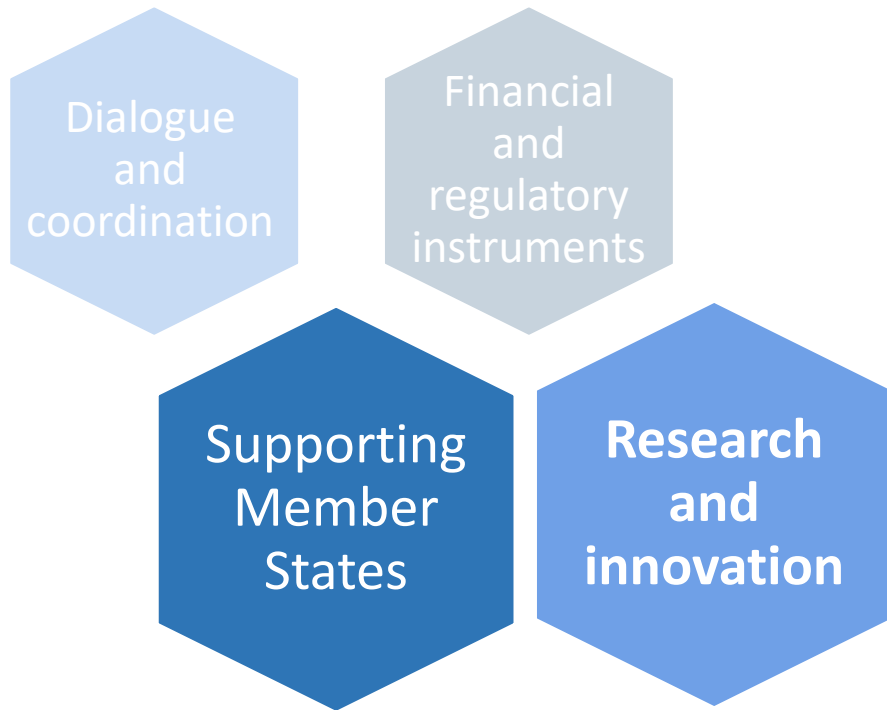
Supporting sustainable water management as a key building block for climate resilience in EU Member States



Financial and regulatory instruments

- Make climate-resilient water management measures **an eligibility criterion for accessing funding**.
- Foster the development of preventive, up-to-date **drought management provisions and plans**.
- Promote **adaptive solutions with multiple benefits**, especially nature-based solutions, through attractive funding opportunities.
- Establish a methodology to implement **cost recovery – including the polluter pays principle** – consistently across the EU and address regulatory options for reducing freshwater use.

Supporting sustainable water management as a key building block for climate resilience in EU Member States



Research and innovation

- Expand research on approaches to deal **with uncertainties and responses to high-end scenarios of climate change, including adaptation pathways and transformational adaptation.**
- Continue research on **nature-based solutions** and **infrastructures that integrate 'grey' and 'green' elements.**
- Continue developing innovative ways of **sharing water resources, water saving technologies and management options.**

Supporting sustainable water management as a key building block for climate resilience in EU Member States



Data and knowledge

- Steer the development of **a Europe-wide register for damages caused by hydrological extreme events.**
- Provide information on the **costs of adaptation and the cost of inaction for all sectors.**
- Further **develop and upgrade availability of water-relevant data** from the EU's Earth Observation Programme Copernicus.
- Promote **monitoring and reporting on water use efficiency or water productivity, disaggregated by sector.**

Guidance and capacity development

- Develop guidance and capacity on **heavy rain events, dealing with uncertainties, water abstraction control, water allocation and achieving good status.**

