

Preliminary Results CIRCLE Nordic projects

The three funded Nordic projects within the call *Research on consequences of climate change for policy making in the Nordic countries* will be finalised later this year and in the first half of 2010. The projects shall focus on what are the synergies and trade-offs between adaptation and mitigation to climate change in policy making and how do the Nordic countries compare and differ with respect to adaptation needs and implementation ability. Some preliminary conclusions were presented at the CIRCLE final conference in Vienna this September. Highlights from these poster presentations are found below:

The project *Climate change, community response and multilevel governance* builds on networking and they have held three workshops together with stakeholders in the settings of rural, urban and multilevel governance with the case of the Arctic where links between the international and local climate responses were addressed. Some conclusions from those meetings are that the international focus on mitigation in climate policy has delayed attention to adaptation, but that experiences of vulnerability have opened a policy window for starting the discussion. An important step for placing adaptation on local agendas requires networks that cut across governance levels, including regional capacity and responsibility. In Nordic peripheral regions, local adaptive capacity is often linked to the ability to compete in market-based systems, including economic resources, technology, and infrastructure and last, but not the least - National adaptation policy initiatives are necessary but not sufficient for local adaptation responses.

The project *Climate change adaptation – do research and practice meet* has taken the approach sending out inquiries on how scenarios are used by policy makers, making interviews on adaptation and needs for scenarios and they also evaluate official reports on strategies for adaptation. Their findings so far is that scenario users are in general satisfied with the data that can be provided, but they express a need for more reliable (models comparing better with reality) and more detailed data with a higher spatial resolution. They also hear that stakeholders want to be better included in order to increase relevance in adaptation strategy planning and to have climate scenarios developed in concert with societal scenarios. Further, stakeholders ask for more communication among scenario providers, scientists who apply scenario data in their work and policymakers. They see a need for more guidance and follow-up from scenario providers to users and from research community to end-users, especially on how to deal with the interpretation and communication of uncertainties. The final product of the project will be a map of the present status of national and Nordic adaptation studies and analysis of differences and best practices in the Nordic countries.

The third project, *A regional assessment of vulnerability and adaptive capacity for the Nordic countries* focuses on agriculture and the elderly and builds on experiences of earlier vulnerability studies and it also includes research funding from other ongoing projects. They conclude that previous research indicates that even in relatively wealthy countries, with well-developed social welfare systems, there can be substantial differences in the ability to adapt to climate change between social groups, regions and sectors. For example, risk factors that are common across the Nordic region include living alone, chronic or severe illness, dependency on medications and social exclusion. The CARAVAN project is compiling a set of indices of extreme weather conditions alongside demographic and socio-economic statistics in order to develop vulnerability measures. The final product of this project will be GIS maps of

vulnerability building on composite indices across the whole Nordic region. Some early results of composite index of adaptive capacity in agriculture are based on four normalised indicators for 2007-2008: sectoral employment, proportion of workforce aged 55 or more, in-migration rate and dependency ratio. One of the next steps of the analysis are consulting regional stakeholders on the selection of common indicators considered to be relevant across the Nordic region. Developing an interactive web tool for displaying present-day and future indicators, weighting them (as desired), combining selected indicators into user-defined vulnerability indices and mapping these for municipalities across the Nordic region will be a final product of this project.