

CIRCLE ERA-Net is a Coordination network of research funding and management organisations aiming at the implementation of a European Research Area (ERA) on Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation.

1st International CIRCLE Workshop on Climate Change Adaptation

Hungarian Meteorological Service

Budapest 17-18 June 2009



Current issue...

This special issue of the CIRCLE newsletter presents some of the outcomes delivered by the 1st International Workshop on Climate Change Adaptation convened by CIRCLE ERA-Net during the past month of June, in Budapest.

Two selected country communications (i.e. Denmark and Turkey) are reviewed and serve as example of the current status and development of National Adaptation Strategies across Europe. The workshop discussions as well as its main conclusions and key messages are also presented in this issue.

The calendar of events provides a quick overview of CIRCLE planned activities until the end of 2009 as well as other related meetings.

Editorial

It is reasonable to state that adaptation to climate change is currently at the top of the agenda of many governments across the world and will be regarded as a national necessity over the coming years and decades.

Understanding the driving forces behind the development of these strategies is an exercise that needs to take into account current (and future) political motivations as well as the availability of information on national and regional impacts and vulnerabilities.

This intricate framework creates the right setting to analyse what kind of interactions between science and policy are needed to further strengthen both national and European efforts of adapting to a changing climate.

CIRCLE ERA-Net and its network organisations (research funders and managers) are part of the complex interface between the available scientific knowledge on impacts and vulnerabilities and the need of information to support the policy development of National Adaptation Strategies and Action Plans.

In the future such interface is to be explored by CIRCLE allowing for novel approaches on how to make *science meet policy* in their common quest for climate change adaptation in Europe.

Tiago Capela Lourenço
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You can keep updated with CIRCLE ERA-Net latest news, results and events by subscribing to this [newsletter](#) or checking our website at www.circle-era.net.

Introduction

The CIRCLE ERA-Net project held its **1st International Workshop on Climate Change Adaptation** on the 17-18 June 2009, in Budapest. Representatives from 24 European countries participated and exchanged their views on the development and implementation of *National Adaptation Strategies*.

The workshop's objective was to provide an overview on the current status of these strategic documents across different countries as well as to discuss their relevance in the European context.

During the first day, a presentation from the PEER initiative allowed the workshop participants to have an initial contact with the latest results from the "[Europe Adapts to Climate Change: Comparing National Adaptation Strategies](#)" project.

Following this introductory overview, national representatives provided the plenary with the latest developments and progress of their country's efforts towards adaptation to climate change.

The second day of the workshop started with two spilt-up groups that allowed the participants to interact and debate some of the main questions arising from day one. These groups were focused on the specific needs and difficulties that surround the development of a comprehensive National Adaptation Strategy.

During the workshop participants discussed the challenges of addressing adaptation to climate change at the national, regional and local level, covering a broad range of areas from motivating factors and priorities to knowledge uncertainties, communication, policy integration, monitoring and enforcement.

Full participants list, workshop agenda, and presentations are available for download from the [CIRCLE webpage](#).

Danish Strategy for Adaptation to a Changing Climate

Based on the workshop communication by:

Dr. Svend Binnerup
Coordination Unit for Research in Climate Change Adaptation
National Environmental Research Institute
Aarhus University

Denmark has officially published its **Strategy for Adaptation to a Changing Climate** in March 2008. The 52 page document sets a long-term 10 year perspective and includes a vulnerability description of 11 different sectors where climate change is expected to have significant consequences in Denmark.

The addressed sectors are: *Coastal Management; Buildings and Infrastructure; Water Supply; Energy Supply; Agriculture and Forestry; Fisheries; Nature Management; Land Use Planning; Health; Rescue Preparedness; and Insurance.*

Socio-economic aspects of adaptation are dealt as a cross-cutting theme and highlighted throughout each sector's description.

The Danish strategy states that its focus will be on autonomous adaptation measures already underway and on what is necessary to advance

this process. Cross-sectoral coordination as well as the need for information initiatives and research coordination is also strongly highlighted.

Originally driven by the Ministry of Environment, the development of the Danish strategy has been under the leadership of the newly created Ministry of Climate and Energy since 2008.

Initially motivated by the strategic developments in other European countries, the Danish strategy was prepared by an inter-ministerial group with the involvement of selected experts. It was consolidated by a public consultation of a strategy draft, previously developed from a study on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation options in Denmark.

An independent research advisory board (i.e. *Coordination Unit for Research in Climate Change Adaptation*) was set up to strengthen the research agenda within the Danish National Adaptation Strategy framework.

Some of its competences encompass the interaction with researchers through: (a) *mapping of climate research competences and projects*; (b) *formulation and implementation of research agendas*; (c) *establishing a climate adaptation researcher's network*; and (d)

establishing topic specific working groups and workshops.

Further interactions are in the form of a collation of authoritative climate data/scenarios and the transfer of knowledge from the research community to the Danish web-based “*Adaptation portal*”, recently developed to

enhance communication and information support to the strategy.

For additional information on the Danish Strategy for Adaptation to a Changing Climate, please check: www.klimatilpasning.dk and www.klima.au.dk/kft

Towards a National Adaptation Strategy in Turkey

Based on the workshop communications by:

Dr. Hatice Sengul

*The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey
Environmental, Atmospheric, Earth, and Marine Sciences
Research Programme*

Dr. Atila Uras

*UN Joint Programme on Enhancing the Capacity of Turkey to
Adapt to Climate Change*

Turkey is one of the many European states that do not have an officially adopted formal National Adaptation Strategy. Nevertheless, like in many other countries, efforts are under way towards the development of such a strategy.

Political drivers at the international level (e.g. climate “talks” on adaptation under the [UNFCCC framework](#)) are playing a major role in this development. Also at the national level further momentum has been created by recent activities (e.g. [2nd Global Environment Facility National Dialogue](#) in Ankara).

Until now the focus was set on impact analysis and mitigation but a number of recent national activities (e.g. new legislation, action plans and research projects) with implications on adaptation is expected to pave the way for a *National Climate Change Action Plan* covering both mitigation and adaptation.

This Action Plan is currently being shaped by the *Turkish Coordination Board on Climate Change* with inputs from various stakeholders.

Observed and projected climate change impacts, as well as Turkish international commitments (e.g. Turkey is part of the UNFCCC and has applied to become a party to the Kyoto Protocol) and the EU accession process (e.g. compliance with the EU

environmental legislation) are significant drivers for adaptation planning and implementation in Turkey.

A major programme entitled “**Enhancing the Capacity of Turkey to Adapt to Climate Change**” is ongoing and one of the main expected outcomes is the *Turkish National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy*. Such plan might later form the basis of a *National Adaptation Plan of Action* (NAPA).

This 4-year programme supported by 4 UN Agencies (UNDP, UNEP, FAO and UNIDO) in close collaboration with government and relevant stakeholders will undergo a 5-fold phased strategy development: (a) *stocktaking analysis*; (b) *capacity building*; (c) *synergy building with parallel initiatives*; (d) *participatory adaptation strategy development*; and (e) *dissemination and consultation*.

The wider programme also includes Community Based Adaptation pilot initiatives at the river basin level, development of climate scenarios and the establishment of a management information system and of an Eco-efficiency centre.

With the overarching goal of developing national strategies to manage the impacts of climate change and with the specific objective of integrating adaptation into national, regional and local policies, the programme has already tentatively identified some key themes and vulnerabilities to be addressed.

The identified themes were: *Agriculture; Rural Development; Water, Sea and Fisheries; Industry, Energy; Public Health; Tourism; Transportation; Infrastructures; Ecosystems and Biological Diversity; and Other Natural Resources*.

For additional information please check <http://www.iklim.mdgf-tr.org/>.

The debate in Budapest

The second day discussion on the Budapest workshop was geared by two spilt-up groups where participants had the opportunity to interact and share their views on both current development processes of National Adaptation Strategies (NAS) and on the knowledge base required to develop those strategies.

Working group 1 had as guiding theme the realisation of the NAS development as a continuous learning process and the assessment of options, frameworks and

uncertainties that currently surround such development.

Working group 2 was focused on the knowledge base underlying (and some times driving) the political effort to set up a NAS as well as on what are the most pressing scientific and research needs to help improve that knowledge.

This group has also asked how can the current and future CIRCLE research agenda address those needs and support the development of both European and National adaptation frameworks.

Main conclusions and key messages

Is there a real need for a formal National Adaptation Strategy?

Although with marked differences between countries and regions, the formal adoption of a NAS is seen as a needed to guide the implementation process and to assist in mainstreaming.

Despite the many forms of environmental planning in place across the European states, not all sectors see the need for adaptation planning.

The process of adopting a formal NAS can provide governments and sectoral stakeholders with a necessary catalyst for the development of a long term vision that correctly frames the needed short-term measures.

How to set the priorities and time horizons avoiding artificial deadlines?

It is crucial to recognise that sectoral and planning timelines may differ from climate change horizons and targets. Acknowledging this mismatch enhances the cross-sectoral collaboration and might avoid the hindrance of the strategic planning.

Conflicts within and across sectors are likely to arise and therefore, priorities should be clearly based on preliminary impacts and vulnerability assessments.

Subsequent ranking of priority areas can include: cost effectiveness, potential avoidance of irreversible effects, width of impacts spectrum and availability of no regrets measures.

A discernible cross-sectoral approach can avoid the setting of sometimes artificial, sector-driven timelines.

Is the climate knowledge base currently available to policy makers and developers enough to design a strategy? How to fill in the gaps? What are the most pressing needs?

While some countries and governments feel confident that, despite large uncertainties, the available knowledge is sufficient to promote strategic and implementation actions, many others sense that a lot is still needed.

The difference between knowledge needs (i.e. fast needs coming from the policy side) and science needs (i.e. arising in the research community but not necessary relevant to the NAS) must be acknowledged.

This difference can hinder the correct definition of priorities since in many cases the knowledge and research “production flows” do not follow the same pace (e.g. stakeholders want information as quickly as possible while researchers want time to ensure quality).

Integration of knowledge across sectors is creating the need for novel concepts in terms of research and communication.

Knowledge on adaptation should come from well formulated and focused research programmes, where the collaboration between stakeholders and researchers is set from the very beginning.

“Boundary” organisations and networks (e.g. European Environment Agency, and CIRCLE ERA-Net), able to compile existing knowledge or quickly respond to emerging research questions via funding of tailored projects, may play a central role in supporting the NAS.

Topical and geographical focused approaches are needed to cope with the differences between available information, ongoing development of NAS and future knowledge production.

Specific topics and areas attract specific questions and can help scope both the research and the policy levels of climate change adaptation.

How to address the different scales of adaption? Is there a conflict between National and Regional Strategies?

European countries are still in very different stages of their adaptation strategies.

Regional Adaptation Strategies (RAS) are becoming a common feature of countries with marked regionalised governance (e.g. Spain and Belgium) but no clear view can yet emerge as to the interactions or conflicts between RAS and NAS.

It is suggested that ‘hybrid’ multi-level governance approaches may be useful if, for example, decisions on large-scale infrastructures can be taken at the national level, while locally focused decisions can be taken at the regional one.

A NAS should act as a facilitator for subsequent implementation and, if necessary, provide support to the regional actions.

Calendar

CIRCLE Events

CIRCLE Workshop “Design and Use of Decision Support Systems”

16th July 2009 - Bonn, Germany

Decision Support Systems (DSS) are a commonly used software tool in climate impacts and adaptation research. They are developed in order to provide interdisciplinary scientific knowledge for practitioners. This workshop will discuss solutions for an optimal layout of this dialogue, implementation of results into the systems, and on how to secure operational use.

More information at: <http://www.circle-era.net/events/circle-workshop-decision-support-systems-2009/>

CIRCLE Final and Outlook Conference

9-10th September 2009 - Vienna, Austria

The CIRCLE final and outlook Conference in Vienna aims to highlight the outcomes, achievements and impacts of the ERA-Net activities over the past 4 years. It will also serve

as an outlook into the future perspectives of this network.

Conference participants will have the opportunity to have a first insight into CIRCLE planned initiatives and are expected to contribute towards the ERA-Net’s programmatic agenda for the coming years.

More information at: <http://www.circle-era.net/events/final-and-outlook-conference-vienna-2009/>

Workshop “Europe adapts to Climate Change: science-policy interactions in national adaptation policy”

14-15th September 2009 - Utrecht, the Netherlands

This workshop is organized by the Dutch “Knowledge for Climate” programme in collaboration with the German Aerospace Centre, the Finnish Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture and CIRCLE ERA-Net. The workshop serves to exchange views and experiences on the science-policy interactions supporting the development and implementation of adaptation strategies.

For more information contact Robert Biesbroek: robbert.biesbroek@wur.nl

Other Events

3rd World Climate Conference

31st August to 4th September 2009 - Geneva, Switzerland

The third World Climate Conference theme is "Climate prediction and information for decision-making: focusing on scientific advances in seasonal to inter-annual time-scales, taking into account multi-decadal prediction".

More info at:

http://www.wmo.ch/pages/world_climate_conference/index_en.html

United Nations Climate Change Conference

7th to 18th December 2009 - Copenhagen, Denmark

This is the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

More info at: <http://en.cop15.dk/>

CIRCLE News

CIRCLE-MED Newsletter N°2

The second CIRCLE-MED Newsletter is now available. The CIRCLE-MED is a geographical group within CIRCLE ERA-Net that addresses issues of common interest to the Mediterranean countries.

CIRCLE funded projects AQUIMED and WATERKNOW are presented together with a short report on a recent meeting in France between scientists and water managers about the results of adaptation research.

This newsletter is available at: <http://www.circle-med.net/doc/Newsletter2.pdf>

The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) joins CIRCLE ERA-Net as Observer

Turkey's participation is now official with TÜBİTAK joining the network as an Observer organisation, from June 2009.

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