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Periphery for a sustainable
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Climate Change - Adapting to The Impacts, by Communities in Northern Peripheral Regions

Adaptation Challenges for communities

- 1) There are **different concerns** within a community, a sector or a stakeholder group. The experience of Clim-ATIC has found that it is easier to bring together a community group with a specific defined shared interest to develop an adaptation strategy eg the winter tourism sector.
- 2) There are **indirect consequences** of climate change on a local community. The experience of Clim-ATIC has found that it is very difficult to identify what all the indirect consequences of climate change will be on a community's activities. A comprehensive series of facilitated workshops is the most successful method found so far.
- 3) It is a challenge for communities, politicians and policy makers to plan locally when faced with **uncertainty**. Clim-ATIC has found that uncertainty associated with impacts as well as implementing effective adaptation strategies is still a fundamental issue hindering adaptation decision making. Uncertainty however provides two strong messages: 1) local communities should try to reduce vulnerability by spreading the risk, and (2) local communities have to accept that adaptation has to be a policy area with a high level of uncertainty . This applies to most situations – farmers relying on one crop, a tourism business relying on one customer base or specific activity etc. What we do know is that due to the 'back log' of greenhouse gases in the earths system the world will continue to see climate change for at least 30 years even if all emissions stopped today. This level of warming will require adaptation by most communities.
- 4) It is a challenge for communities, politicians and policy makers to plan locally when faced with **cross border issues**. Many community stakeholders work for organisations that operate at different scales and geographical areas. Climate change adaptation needs to be incorporated into the spatial planning framework within a region ensuring that adaptation issues and objectives are integrated into all strategic plans from a national to a local level. Clim-ATIC has found that in many examples of development of a community adaptation strategy due to the small geographical nature of the community or their lack of capacity to implement an action plan associated the strategy than it is a preferred solution that a communities adaptation objectives are integrated into existing relevant strategies rather than creating a new local strategy, Eg the community of Glen Urquhart in Scotland will integrate their adaptation objectives in the Highland Council Adaptation Strategy, the tourism sector in Aviemore, Scotland will integrate their adaptation objectives into the Cairngorm National Park Sustainable Tourism Strategy, both which are linked to other regional and national strategies.
- 5) Adaptation is something that primarily takes place at the **local level**, therefore it is important that local people themselves define the risks related to change
- 6) There is potential for **conflict** between development objectives and adaptation needs. Adaptation is fundamentally about sustainability – ensuring communities in the future have the opportunities to carry out activities that will provide them with sufficient income and access to resources to have a good quality of life despite changes in climate. Therefore adaptation needs to be a key objective of sustainable development, and it needs to be understood and recognised within the whole matrix of drivers that affect communities and their planning for the future.

Authors; Carlo Aall, Clive Bowman and Annika Nordstrom, March 2010