

Clim-ATIC project

Workshop on outreach and co-operation in climate change adaptation

17 February 2010

European Environment Agency, Copenhagen, Denmark

The morning session was devoted exclusively to presentations from the eight participating countries (all NPP countries, except for the Faeroes). As these presentations will all be available on the Clim-ATIC website, and many of the key issues were re-presented and discussed in the afternoon, this summary is only of the key points from the afternoon discussion sessions.

Session 1: Dissemination

The EU Climate Change Clearinghouse will build on existing structures; the work will be contracted out, and will be done over the next year. A key challenge will be to link Interreg projects, other projects, national portals etc. The EEA SEIS may provide a soft-linked framework for identifying and linking knowledge.

The discussion showed a significant diversity in what is available in different countries. In some countries (Finland, Norway, Sweden, UK/Scotland), a well-developed portal/information system exists; in others (Ireland), it is being developed; in others (Greenland, Iceland, Northern Ireland), it is only being talked about (though always regarded as desirable).

Key words are **transnational** and **common issues**. Similar issues/problems are being confronted in different regions/countries, and often the most relevant information or experience may be available from another country. Also, changes that are currently occurring to the south may occur further north in the future. And it is important to embed climate change adaptation into other ongoing processes (e.g., territorial/spatial planning, River Basin Management Plans required under the EU Water Framework Directive).

The key issue is generally not lack of information, but how to make sure that it is used. People from most countries noted interest among their users in having access to, and being able to share, information and best practices from other countries. However, this information has to be of **direct relevance** to users, and must be in the respective **national language**, and transformed into **usable local knowledge**. Often, it is understanding of processes/methodologies (how to do it) focusing on practical problems, rather than specific issues (what is to be addressed) that is needed. **Case studies** and **best practice** should be the focus. A database of projects might be interesting for lecturers (to be used for courses etc.), but most users at the local level need a different way to access information etc.

A key question is the 'level' down to which information should be translated. While it is possible to provide key headings etc. in many **languages**, the cost of translating significant amounts of text into multiple languages is high; and this is compounded by the challenge (and cost) of

needing to keep the information up-to-date. However, the Finnish Climate Change Response Portal will be available in Finnish, English and Swedish; the Norwegian portal will be in Norwegian and (much of it also in) English. A general principle would be that high-level information would be available in more languages (allowing searching in multiple languages), which more detailed information would be available principally in the language of origin. However, it was suggested that we should not put language before knowledge; if the knowledge appears to be useful, someone can be found to translate from other languages; or a direct contact to the source of the knowledge can be made.

There was some discussion of wiki-type information sharing; but this brings up a quality assurance/credibility issue: concern that the quality of the information needs to be maintained.

There are plans to audit the use of both the Norwegian and Swedish portals later this year; these audits would help further with designing all such portals.

The person responsible for the Finnish Climate Change Response Portal has already expressed interest in presenting Clim-ATIC case studies on this website. A key question would be whether this could be (or needs to be) done in more languages than the planned Finnish, English and Swedish.

It was suggested that the Clim-ATIC project could go beyond compiling case studies and making these available to assessing differences and commonalities in how local and regional authorities – in cooperation with the national governments – approach the task of adapting to climate change. This could feed into the process of developing the EU Clearinghouse: Clim-ATIC needs to get in contact with Jacques Delsalle, the responsible person in the European Commission.

Key organizations to follow up with: Nordic Council of Ministers, ICLEI

Session 2: Training courses

Summary of provision by country:

- Finland:
 - o seminars on adaptation have been delivered at regional environment centres, but these have been sectoral or thematic, rather than on adaptation
 - o other courses (e.g., on urban planning and management) include adaptation
 - o some cities (Helsinki, Lahti) may have their own seminars/courses
- Greenland: academic courses exist, but there is no training for professionals or politicians. It would be essential to tell stories in the right way, linking to the personal/local context (e.g., trout and politicians who go trout fishing)
- Iceland: Many courses, but more on sustainable development/mitigation; not focusing on adaptation, all courses are university academic courses, so no courses for professionals

- Ireland:
 - o Academic courses exist
 - o the Interreg IMCORE project will be developing courses relating to adaptation, with support from the Environmental Protection Agency
- Northern Ireland: NILGA and other organizations (e.g., Royal Town Planning Institute) have offered various courses/workshops [Karen will put the organizations into the grid]
- Norway :
 - o NUSB 3-day courses for municipality staff, on common issues, with a practical focus. Most participants are from planning, environmental services, and a few emergency officers
 - o NUSB has received a high demand for 1-day courses at the County level. Natural hazards are a key issue
 - o The Norwegian Association of Local Authorities & Regions has run courses on climate change for politicians, but adaptation has not been a major focus
- Scotland: currently, planners have the most access to courses, but others also need to know about adaptation (e.g., finance and social services departments, politicians, emergency response services): tailored, in-house workshops are best
 - o SCCIP has run a tailored seminar for Highland Council Staff and has established a user community in relation to climate change projections, and will be developing bespoke training courses
 - o Other existing courses are more on mitigation
 - o University of York and the Met Office have courses on adapting to extreme weather events
 - o A distance course (e-course) might be interesting for certain communities (e.g., Transition Towns)
- Sweden: only academic courses are available

Discussion

It was agreed that 1) the Clim-ATIC case studies could be important as material for courses 2) if a new course is to be developed, it is vital that people who need – and can use and disseminate – the knowledge take the course 3) a key challenge is to decide what would be included.

How to do training is very important: different regions, people respond to training differently and need different approaches to get them interested. There are various ways of teaching (videos, audio, cartoons, ppt, texts, etc.).

It was suggested that one target audience for courses could be the people responsible for developing the next round of River Basin Management Plans, as the current round do not consider adaptation very much.

The Norwegian NUSB course has a strong focus on planning under uncertainty. Some of it considers Norwegian law and area planning. It has a strong emphasis on learning from local examples.

There was a general consensus that:

- although the best way to increase understanding of adaptation at the local level was to deliver specific courses in those places and to involve as many key people as possible (cf. experience in Finland, Norway, Scotland). However, this would not be appropriate in the context of the Clim-ATIC project.
- the best way forward for Clim-ATIC to fulfil its goal of running a pilot course would be to organize a 'train the trainers' course, using Clim-ATIC case studies and other relevant information/experience. The NUSB indicated interest in developing and delivering such a course, building on its existing experience in Norway and widening out the scope of the course to consider other work in the Northern Periphery.

Session 3: Consultancy/advice

The key need is for climate change adaptation measures to be mainstreamed, i.e., included into normal structures/processes (spatial planning, law, financial planning, community planning etc.) rather than being regarded as a separate issue. At present, some aspects of planning take weather into account, but rarely adaptation to climate change. In addition, planning tends to be sectoral; climate change adaptation requires working across sectors and planning for uncertainty.

There was a strong consensus (from participants both from climate change information providers and representing local government) that the most appropriate location for expertise relating to climate change adaptation is in local government associations, and not with independent consultants because a) this is a long-term issue; b) the reliability, continuity, and consistency of consultants is not assured. As is already the case for other issues, this expertise would then be available to all members of these organizations, as well as to other stakeholders, such as the voluntary and community sectors. One model might be a coaching programme between municipalities in Norway, where 'stronger' ones help 'weaker' ones.

It was noted that, as well as science-based information, traditional/historical knowledge based deeply in local experience should also be considered as an input to adaptation strategies.

A further suggestion, with regard to support for the business sector, is that expertise in climate change adaptation should be embedded and available in business NGOs (again, rather than consultants), to provide training about taking action. It was noted that this has already started in some sectors which are climate-sensitive.