



The CLIMSAVE Project

Climate Change Integrated Assessment Methodology for Cross-Sectoral Adaptation and Vulnerability in Europe

Summary of the adaptation policy analysis

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Adaptation to the changing climate is an urgent policy issue of a high stake for current and future societies. The *Report on the Policy and Governance Context for Adaptation* (Deliverable 1.1) attempts to shed more light on the key policy and governance issues associated with climate adaptation as understood and practiced by key actors in the European Union and Scotland. The main findings of the policy analysis which was undertaken are the following.

Although adaptation to climate change is gaining importance, mitigating the effects of the changing climate still rules the day in the EU, while in Scotland adaptation policy enjoys a race-to-the-top approach by all political actors having interest to show willing. A strategic approach, establishing national/regional/local adaptation strategies with clear timetables, financing knowledge creation and the building of knowledge hubs, is being advocated against piecemeal and spontaneous approaches.

Adaptation to the changing climate is characterised as a positive gain for all sectors and social groups both with regard to environmental as well as economic gains. The toolbox for adaptation contains a wealth of market-based instruments that are considered more efficient and in line with political preferences and economic realities than so-called soft tools, such as changing the attitudes, values, and norms of economic actors, including producers and consumers.

Climate change is a concern for all policy sectors and needs a routine practice of evaluating policies against adaptation requirements, called climate-proofing. How to achieve climate-proofing is an unresolved practical issue. Currently, much faith is put in the creation of guidelines for carrying out climate-proofing.

Nature conservation and agriculture are particularly relevant and debated policy sectors to be considered with regard to climate change adaptation. Nature conservationists believe that the best insurance against a changing climate are healthy ecosystems that are able to adapt without compromising their services to human societies, including safe water, flood control, food provision, etc. Preserving and investing in healthy ecosystems leads us to a so-called ecosystem-based adaptation policy that is cost-effective, environmentally friendly, and socially just.

Agricultural experts warn us that adaptation has always been part of farmers' repertoire in adapting to changing circumstances, including the climate. Adaptation policy-making, therefore, should take this into consideration and avoid crowding-out private motivations by using public resources carelessly. The negotiations for the next period of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU, however, provide a key opportunity for incorporating adaptation requirements and incentives for land use management practices that are more climate-friendly.

Adaptation to the changing climate is primarily seen as a local issue: local and regional levels of governance therefore should be better equipped and enabled for carrying out specific planning and operational activities. The national level has a significant role to play in establishing and enabling a favourable legal and political context. The EU sees its potential added value in coordinating Member States' actions, building up a knowledge base to share experience and best practices, and developing financial mechanisms for motivating effective actions and ensuring solidarity among European regions differentially affected by climate change.