

Methodology for Effective Decision-making on Impacts and Adaptation. MEDIATION.

The Challenge/Problem

The EU and its member states, cities and local communities acknowledge the importance of climate change for safety and wellbeing and started to develop strategies to increase their resilience or protect their territory. Development of useable knowledge on how to adapt, however, has been lagging. The emphasis of scientific inquiry has been on deriving potential regional impacts from downscaled global climate projections, not on providing practical tools for designing response actions. The knowledge base supporting adaptation is still fragmented and incomplete. Easily accessible and policy-relevant information, including methods and tools, to support the dynamic adaptation policy development, is largely missing.

The Project Objectives

MEDIATION aims to provide a coherent framework for systematically identifying available methods and tools that can be meaningfully applied to address specific adaptation and vulnerability questions and support adaptation action. This is required to address the currently fragmented knowledge base supporting climate change adaptation decision-making in Europe, in particular in the area of methods and tools. To achieve this, firstly the knowledge requirements associated with the on-going impact assessment and adaptation policy developments in Europe had to be mapped for various decision domains, in consultation with the appropriate decision-makers and stakeholders. Secondly, existing methods, tools and metrics had to be reviewed, linked and - where needed and feasible - improved or developed. A final objective was to make the framework and associated toolbox available and disseminate the project results.

The Methodology

To do justice to the diverse and dynamic nature of adaptation challenges in Europe, the MEDIATION framework was developed mainly on the basis of a varied set of case studies reflecting different regions, climatic risks, and institutional contexts. The case studies were complemented by input from other projects such as CLIMSAVE, and the literature. "Method teams" analysed the policy context and methods used in the case studies at a meta level and, in a number of consecutive steps with the "case study teams", developed the targeted overarching methodology in an iterative manner, called the MEDIATION Diagnostic Adaptation Framework. Stakeholder interactions played an important though variable role in all case studies, attempting to align the scientific work as much as possible with real-world policy processes. The resulting interlinked framework encompasses generic methodologies, natural-science based models, socio-economic evaluation methods, and social and institutional analytical concepts. The framework was tested both within the project team and with external users.

The Results

Rather than suggesting a one-size-fits-all solution, MEDIATION acknowledges that adaptation questions are diverse as they are determined by their regional and sectoral context. A diagnostic framework for problem-oriented adaptation research was developed that organizes adaptation questions into a logical structure, linking them to suitable methods and tools. The framework was used as the conceptual framework for UNEP PROVIA's Guidance for the Assessment of Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation. It is made available via an interactive platform, which includes the *Adaptation Pathfinder* that enables users to find the most appropriate methods and tools for their adaptation questions; the *MEDIATION Toolbox* that provides detailed information about some 40 methods and tools with conditions for their applicability; and the *Case study search tool*. The platform is intended to be used by experts with basic technical or scientific knowledge and skills, who engage in policy advice, policy analysis, or other research aiming at supporting climate change adaptation decision making.