



Identifying Key Challenges to Developing Climate Adaptation Strategies in Europe

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ABSTRACT

There is broad consensus that climate change impacts can lead to serious ecological, economic and social impacts across Europe. Appropriate adaptation can reduce these impacts and, in some cases, yield benefits and opportunities, but this often involves a multi-scalar and multi-sectoral exercise in complex decision-making across different levels of government. Decision makers at all levels in Europe currently face a number of significant challenges when devising appropriate and sustainable adaptation strategies. Broadly speaking, these challenges can be divided into: Uncertainty and insufficient knowledge on the spatial and temporal patterns of the physical impacts of climate change; Uncertainty as relates to current and future socioeconomic trends and processes (and their interactions with climate change); the need to increase coherence between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' assessments of adaptation strategies, measures and other activities; and the need to ensure synergies and trade-offs with existing policies are identified and exploited, including through enhanced use of participatory processes. Based on literature review and expert opinion, this paper summarises these key challenges, highlighting their implications for adaptation strategies and measures and pointing to avenues of research that could facilitate enhanced decision making for climate change adaptation. This paper builds on the work of the EU funded research project 'Bottom-up Climate Adaptation Strategies Towards a Sustainable Europe' (BASE).

REFERENCES

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