



Communicating climate information to end-users: an experience driven by the understanding and anticipation of user needs.

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Planning and adapting to a changing climate requires credible information about the magnitude and rate of projected changes. Ouranos, a consortium on regional climatology and adaptation to climate change was launched in the Province of Québec, Canada, ten years ago, with the objective of developing and providing climate information and expertise in support to adaptation. Ouranos differs from most other climate service centers by integrating climate modeling activities, impacts and adaptation expertise and climate analysis services under one roof. The Climate Scenarios Group operates at the interface between climate modellers and users and is responsible for developing, producing and communicating climate scenarios to end-users in a consistent manner. This process requires close collaboration with users to define, understand and eventually anticipate their needs. The varied scientific expertise of climate scenarios specialists –who also act as communicators– has proven to be a key element for successful communication.

A large amount of effort is spent on the characterization and communication of the uncertainties involved in scenario construction. Two main activities have been put in place by the experts in climate modeling to address this: (1) a training course on climate models and (2) a fact-sheet summarizing the uncertainty and robustness of the climate change scenario provided for each I&A application. The latter tool ensures the transparency, traceability, and accountability of our products, and at the same time, encourages a sense of shared responsibility for the final choice of climate scenarios. In addition to uncertainty, two other main issues have been identified as essential in communication with users: 1) observed natural variability at relevant scales and 2) reconciliation of the projected trend with the recent observed trend. Our group has devoted substantial resources for the advancement of communication with end-users in these particular areas.

This presentation will provide an overview of progress in communicating climate information at the Ouranos Consortium. We will discuss success and failures and future plans, in particular the extent to which Ouranos needs to work with users in decision-making activities.