



The German Adaptation Strategy: lessons learnt at the science policy interface during the implementation process

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The further development and implementation of the German adaptation strategy (DAS), adopted in 2008, is constructed as a step-wise process. The strategy is explicit for the inclusion of all concerned stakeholders and decision levels in the adaptation process as well as the improvement of awareness building and knowledge transfer. The main next step of the Federal Government is the development of an Adaptation Action Plan (APA), which will be presented in summer 2011. This document will be a self-commitment for the Federal Government and will focus on: adaptation measures, funding opportunities, international cooperation, and knowledge transfer for adaptation measures of the Federal Government including cooperation with the Federal States, and examples for measures implemented by other actors. The following step will be the revision of the DAS and the APA in 2014.

KomPass - Climate Impacts and Adaptation in Germany at the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) supports the Federal Environment Ministry by summarising and assessing the results of research projects and developing concepts for the national adaptation process. Additionally, KomPass makes the available impact and adaptation knowledge readily accessible to the public by developing its internet platform into a national clearinghouse mechanism. The site www.anpassung.net gets continuously extended with more features to support municipalities, companies, and organisations. The most current tools are a database for already implemented adaptation measures and the decision support system "Klimalotse".

Throughout the policy process still knowledge gaps exist, which KomPass helps to fill with the results of research projects. For example, basis of the adaptation strategy are climate projections, estimations of potential climate impacts and vulnerabilities assessments. KomPass has published a first national wide vulnerability assessment in 2005 and has assigned currently the development of a new cross-sectoral vulnerability assessment methodology. A vulnerability assessment on a federal level has the objective to enable the comparison of vulnerabilities and identifying spatial and thematic hot-spots for the prioritization of adaptation needs. It has to meet the challenge that most information is only available at local level coming from different sectoral perspectives and needs to be aggregated and combined. Cross-sectoral effects of climate impacts are important aspects of a vulnerability assessment which are difficult to encounter and assess.

Much information is still not available and thus, decisions have to be taken under conditions of uncertainty. However, the German government has agreed on accepting probability statements as a basis for planning taking account of existing uncertainties, to be able to carry on with the adaptation process.

In our contribution we give a description of (1) lessons learnt in implementing an adaptation strategy including the relevant governance structures in Germany, (2) the existing knowledge gaps and activities to fill them up, and (3) the major results of current activities of KomPass to support the adaptation process in Germany.