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Towards custom made seasonal forecasting

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Climate indices offer the possibility to deliver information to the end user that can be easily applied to their field of work. For instance, a 3-monthly mean average temperature does not say much about the potentially necessary heating energy needed for that particular winter, or what the risk will be to grow a frost sensitive crop. Hence, delivering aggregated climate information such as heating degree days or number of frost days can be more useful to the consumer than just meteorological mean values. However, before this can be done appropriately, the specific user-needs have to be identified to insure that the end-users actually get what they need.

In the framework of EUPORIAS, interviews with the end-user were conducted in order to learn more about the types of information of practical relevance. But also to investigate what knowledge exists among the users about seasonal/decadal forecasting and in what way uncertainties are taken into account.

Here we present some findings derived from conducting such interviews. Further, we will show examples of seasonal forecasts and their skill of several climate impact indices with direct relevance for specific economic sectors, such as energy. The results are compared to seasonal forecasts issued in a conventional form, such as 3-monthly average temperature tercile probabilities and the differences in practical relevance are highlighted.