Why reinvent the wheel? Capitalising on regional policy achievements in tackling climate change
About the authors

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Climate change presents many new challenges but also opportunities for regional policymakers. In this context, the interregional cooperation programme, INTERREG IVC, has recently published the results of an important policy analysis, one in a series of 12, each focusing on a different policy theme. This brochure offers just a brief preview of what you can find in the report on ‘Climate change’, which details a raft of tried-and-tested good practices and offers evidence-based policy recommendations.

**Climate change: a new challenge for policymakers**

Climate change – a change in climate caused by human activity – is a global issue that has far-reaching environmental and socio-economic impacts. Some can already be observed and are predicted to increase in the future (see Fig. 1). Tackling climate change requires action on two fronts. First: mitigation, which means reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from sectors such as energy, transport and agriculture. Second: adaptation, which means understanding future climate change and its environmental, social and economic impacts, and taking action on the basis of this understanding.

**Figure 1: Key observed and projected climate change impacts according to geographic regions in Europe**

- **Arctic**: Temperature rise much larger than global average, Decrease in Arctic sea ice coverage, Decrease in Greenland ice sheet, Decrease in permafrost areas, Increasing risk of biodiversity loss, Increased shipping and exploitation of oil and gas resources.

- **North-western Europe**: Increase in winter precipitation, Increase in river flow, Northward movement of species, Decrease in energy demand for heating, Increasing risk of river and coastal flooding.

- **Coastal zones and regional seas**: Sea-level rise, Increase in sea surface temperatures, Increase in ocean acidity, Northward expansion of fish and plankton species, Changes in phytoplankton communities, Increasing risk for fish stocks.

- **Mediterranean region**: Temperature rise larger than European average, Decrease in annual precipitation, Decrease in annual river flow, Increasing risk of desertification.

- **Northern Europe**: Temperature rise much larger than global average, Decrease in snow, lake and river ice cover, Increase in river flows, Northward movement of species, Increase in energy demand for heating, Increase in hydropower potential, Increasing damage risk from winter storms, Decrease in summer tourism.

- **Mountain areas**: Temperature rise larger than European average, Decrease in glacier extent and volume, Decrease in mountain permafrost areas, Toward shift of plant and animal species, High risk of species extinction in Alpine regions, Increasing risk of soil erosion, Decrease in ski tourism.

- **Central and eastern Europe**: Increase in warm temperature extremes, Decrease in summer precipitation, Increase in water temperatures, Increasing risk of forest fires, Decrease in economic value of forests.

- **Source**: EEA, 2012. Climate change, impacts and vulnerability in Europe 2012.
Climate Change: challenges for regional policymakers

In this new policy area, it is a real challenge to make the case for action. Yet, this can be achieved by identifying the benefits that outweigh the upfront costs. This process requires working with experts in order to understand how climate change translates into socioeconomic impacts, and what opportunities exist for integrating climate change issues into relevant strategies. Figure 2 illustrates the chain of climate change impacts through to their policy consequences.

Figure 2: Climate change: threats and opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climate change trends</th>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>Threats</th>
<th>Policy impact for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Heat waves</td>
<td>- Damage to infrastructure &amp; other assets</td>
<td>- Disruption of economic activity or public services</td>
<td>- Spatial or land-use plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Droughts</td>
<td>- Crops damage, soil erosion</td>
<td>- Increased cost of energy, water, repair</td>
<td>- Regional development plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Forest fires</td>
<td>- Effects on ecosystems</td>
<td>- Health implications</td>
<td>- Sectoral plans: energy, transport, agriculture, housing, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Floods</td>
<td>- Effects on working &amp; living conditions</td>
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<td>- Sea level rise</td>
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<td>- Hotter summers</td>
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<td>- Storms</td>
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Meeting the challenges: good practices from INTERREG IVC

Yet, regional action matters. The EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change recognises that important work needs to be done at local and regional levels, as this is where impacts will occur and will need to be managed.

Interregional cooperation has enabled the partners in the seven projects analysed to gain a better understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities with respect to tackling climate change. Collectively, the projects have shown the benefits of the action taken on both mitigation and adaptation. In most cases, project partners also showed that proactive efforts can bring a wide range of co-benefits, such as economic savings through a more efficient use of energy.

The good practices identified in the INTERREG IVC climate change projects address the five stages of the policy-making cycle:

1. Making the case
2. Stakeholder involvement and policy networks
3. Strategic and action planning
4. Implementation measures
5. Measuring and monitoring progress

Making the case

Making the case and effective policy-making and delivery are both dependent on having accurate information. In this regard, the good practices have included studies on increasing energy efficiency, developing renewables, and greening public transport; pilot and demonstration projects for improving approaches in agriculture, forestry, water management and flood prevention; etc.

The Hammarby model, Stockholm (POWER project), handles energy, waste, sewage, and water for both housing and offices in a single eco-cycle and introduces an integrated and environmentally friendly approach towards urban planning. Combustible waste, for example, is incinerated to produce both electricity and district heating. The project not only focused on design, but also recognised the need to influence how residents use different locations. The Hammarby model achieved this through the creation of an environmental centre that promotes understanding of how residents can help to achieve the city’s environmental goals.

Stakeholder involvement and policy networks

Partnership working across sectors is crucial to achieving climate change objectives. This theme includes practices focusing on achieving a common climate-related goal (e.g. climate-neutral area, climate agreements and partnerships, energy autonomy); tools for the analysis and organisation of stakeholders and multi-stakeholder involvement; encouraging politicians to commit to the achievement of climate change goals; and ensuring specialised institutions are in place in regional/national administrations.

The Norrbotten and Västerbotten Energy and Climate Offensive (ClimactRegions project) aims at improving industrial and commercial activities in the Swedish provinces of Norrbotten and Västerbotten with respect to climate change. It created opportunities for the development of sustainable energy companies that will contribute to a safe and cost-effective energy supply for the region. Activities such as networking, the organisation of seminars and roundtable discussions with politicians and other stakeholders help to develop and implement local energy and climate strategies and projects (such as easy-to-use actions by SMEs). This good practice implies an institutionalised approach to business involvement in climate change mitigation policy, which will be of interest to other regions.
Strategic and action planning

All the INTERREG IVC climate change projects recognise that gaps in knowledge about strategic climate change planning exist at regional and local level. For this reason they have made the strengthening of the policy planning process for climate change action one of their main goals. Good practices in this area have included local and regional climate change strategies; designing and implementing integrated territorial actions; integrating climate change as a cross-cutting issue, including the support of assessment tools; and compiling guidance for strategic climate change planning.

The Guidance for Adaptation Action Plans (AAPs), developed by GRaBS project, sets out an iterative approach to adaptation planning. Beginning with a baseline SWOT analysis, the approach describes how adaptive capacity should be improved, stakeholders engaged and adaptation measures determined. The EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change emphasises the need to develop adaptation strategies and action plans, and the AAP process can be useful for many regions in Europe that lack experience in addressing adaptation issues. The AAP process has been successfully tested by GRaBS partners.

Measuring and monitoring progress

Adequate and regularly updated information is crucial for assessing the existing situation and developing future climate change strategies. Practices related to measuring and monitoring progress include emissions and energy data collection and inventories; tools for assessing or improving the baseline situation with regards to climate change; the use of indicators for measuring implementation results; and tools for assessing the outcomes and cost-effectiveness of low-carbon measures.

ENERGee-Watch, the European Network of Regional GHG Emissions, and Energy Watch (ClimactRegions project) connects GHG emissions observatories throughout Europe. The observatories identified through the ENERGee-Watch network so far have illustrated the need for further standardisation among observatories so as to enable comparisons between territories and establish European methodologies. The creation of a European network of emissions inventories can provide participating regions with an opportunity to achieve this standardisation, to share experiences and to improve together.

Implementation measures

The good practices related to implementation measures focus on how to increase climate awareness and change behaviour and include: public campaigns; educational programmes; measures for enhancing climate knowledge in the private sector and other stakeholder groups; and public and private financial support mechanisms.

The F:ACTS! project has made recommendations to address the barriers involved in designing and introducing Payment for Ecosystem Services schemes (PES). An example of such a scheme is the Monte do Cario pilot project in Spain. A proposal was made to fund wildfire prevention along with other land management activities via payments from electricity companies, who in turn granted the right to install wind turbines. The PES model can be applicable in areas where climate hazards may place people at risk.
Discover more about current climate change policy

With regional policymakers in mind, the full capitalisation report offers a unique and valuable regional perspective to the theme including discussion on the threats and challenges facing regions and analysis of seven climate change projects and their transferability.

The report presents key policy messages and highlights findings relevant to other EU regions. It also makes a number of recommendations relating to each of the five stages of the policy-making cycle. These recommendations are aimed mainly at local and regional authorities, but will also be of interest to the EU and policymakers preparing the next generation of EU Cohesion policy programmes.

The recommendations can be summarised as follows:

- Making the case for climate change action: help scientists communicate effectively and use demonstration projects
- Stakeholder involvement and policy networks: build consensus through multi-stakeholder partnerships and ensure political support
- Strategic and action planning: identify the specific role regions can play in an integrated strategy
- Implementation measures: focus spending on awareness and education & low-carbon economy and mitigation
- Measuring and monitoring progress: metrics and methods

"Regions are a vital part in Europe’s effort to achieve truly low-carbon development."

Brian Shipman, Cornwall County, partner in the RSC project.

Download the full report from: www.interreg4c.eu/capitalisation
Over the last seven years the INTERREG IVC programme has been enabling public institutions all over Europe – over 2000 in total – to ‘learn through cooperation’ across 204 different interregional projects aimed at improving regional policies.

In June 2012, the programme commissioned a team of thematic experts to analyse, benchmark, and capitalise on the wealth of knowledge generated by projects working on similar regional development issues. Altogether, 12 policy themes, ranging from innovation to the environment, have been covered. 12 reports are now available detailing the insights and lessons from this capitalisation process for the benefit of all regions across Europe.

In their presentation of the wide range of innovative good practices and policies improved by the projects, the reports offer a timely inventory of up-to-date evidence and experience to help regional authorities and interested stakeholders introduce or develop their regional policies. Policymakers and practitioners at all levels – regional, national and European – will find theme-specific recommendations tailored to them.

This brochure is a preview of the full-length report in the field of climate change.

The Interregional Cooperation Programme INTERREG IVC, financed by the European Union’s Regional Development Fund, helps Regions of Europe work together to share experience and good practice in the areas of innovation, the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention. EUR 302 million was granted for project funding but, more than that, a wealth of knowledge and potential solutions are also on hand for regional policy makers.