

Hans von Storch:

# Climate Services under Post-Normal Conditions

---

After climate science has left the ivory tower for good, knowledge about climate, climate change and climate impact has become an important staple for the decision and planning process among stakeholders. Such knowledge is asked for for determining and preparing response options for both adaptations to climate risks and for mitigation of global and local climate change. Providing such knowledge to stakeholders and the public is one of the tasks of **Climate Services**. Another task is the determination of questions among stakeholders and the public about climate issues as input for the scientific agenda. In general, this may be a relatively simple effort of a straight forward exchange of technical details, and it is often seen in scientific quarters as such, which may be confronted with some minor mainly pedagogical obstacles. When facts and interrelations are properly explained, an uneducated audience will eventually understand the issues, the significance and draw the "right conclusions". This "linear model" has been found inadequate, in particular in **post-normal situations**. Post-normal conditions prevail, when *knowledge is uncertain, decisions are urgent, values are affected and stakes are high*. Obviously, such conditions are present in case of the debate about climate policy and climate science. In such a situation, various knowledge claims are in competition in guiding public opinion and decision processes. Thus, climate service under post-normal conditions must guard itself against the intrusion of scientifically contested but culturally favored knowledge claims – which will be unavoidable to some extent. In its communication practice climate service must deal with alternative knowledge claims, which are present among stakeholders and the public. Key elements of regional climate service are sketched in the talk, with experiences from the practice at the Institute of Coastal Research of the Helmholtz Zentrum Geesthacht and the KlimaCampus in Hamburg.

***Prof. von Storch** is director of Institute of Coastal Research of the Helmholtz Zentrum Geesthacht and professor at the Meteorological Institute of the University of Hamburg. From 1987 - 1995, he was Senior Scientist and leader of the "Statistical Analysis and Modelling" group at the Max Planck-Institute for Meteorology. His research interests are climate diagnostics and statistical climatology, regional climate change and its transdisciplinary context. He has published seventeen books, and numerous articles. He is member of the advisory boards of, among others, Journal of Climate, Environmental Science and Policy, and Meteorologische Zeitschrift, and organizer of the GKSS School on Environmental Research. He is involved in the Fifth Assessment of the IPCC as a lead author in Working Group II, and as a contributing author in Working Group I. He chairs efforts for a climate change assessment for the Baltic Sea Catchment (BACC) and the metropolitan region of Hamburg. In 2008 he was awarded a honorary doctorate by the University of Göteborg, and in 2010 he received the award of the International Meeting of Statistical Climatology.*

Hans von Storch, [hvonstorch@web.de](mailto:hvonstorch@web.de), <http://coast.hzq.de/staff/storch>