

**Workshop report:**

**Regional Climate Services Workshop 2011  
Exploring Regional Climate Services:  
Meeting Stakeholder Needs for Practical Climate Information**

Organized by: Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium (PCIC) Victoria,  
Institute of Coastal Research (Helmholtz Zentrum Geesthacht; HZG) / KlimaCampus  
Hamburg  
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The workshop was based on three observations: i) the Earth's climate is warming in substantial part due to elevated atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations and adaptation to continuing change will be unavoidable in diverse world regions in the coming decades; ii) adaptation to both current and projected climate variability and change is best undertaken locally and regionally (IPCC, 2011), and thus requires support from regional climate service organizations that are able to interact effectively with local and regional stakeholders; and iii) in the public debate about climate change scientific knowledge is challenged by various interest-led knowledge claims related to mitigation as well as regional and local adaptation.

The workshop in Victoria was set up to discuss these issues, with a specific emphasis on management needs in regions. Participants included regional and national climate service providers from Canada, the USA, Germany and the Netherlands as well as media- and communications scientists, and mostly B.C. Canada, stakeholders. It turned out that the approaches in Germany and Canada were rather different; nevertheless, there is ongoing discussion in both countries of how national climate services can best contribute to the delivery of regional climate services in support of adaptation activities.

In *Canada* relatively large regional climate service institutions co-operate on specific projects with various regional and local stakeholders, ranging from conglomerates of

municipalities, parks, and aboriginal communities to investors and industrial concerns. Examples included a “Climate Based Seed Transfer System” for forests, impacts on phytoplankton and fish in specific ecosystems, the vulnerability of water resources to climate change in diverse drainage basins, and support for adaptation planning in small interior B.C. communities. In most cases, the regional climate service process is based on specific scientific questions that derive from practical management problems, although ad-hoc dialog that brings stakeholders and scientific institutions together, and facilitates the transfer of scientific knowledge to stakeholders, is also an important component.

In *Germany*, the work is generally focused on ad-hoc dialog between scientific institutions and stakeholders from science, economy and politics. Knowledge transfer between scientific institutions and the regional public is conducted by talks, press releases, interviews, workshops and round table discussions, as well as direct requests and tailored information products. The involvement of social and cultural scientists helps to unravel the competitive co-existence of different knowledge claims. Regional climate service in Germany is provided by small groups, who are “farm shops” of large research laboratories and integrate sectoral issues on regional scales in the context of climate change. These small groups manage the confluence of available scientific knowledge mainly from their “farms” and the public and stakeholder need for enabling adaptable knowledge (e.g., von Storch et al., 2011).

In both countries, the relationship between the weather service-based *national* climate service and the informal network of *regional* service providers remains to be systematically developed. While national services help to develop climatological knowledge about ongoing climate change and scenarios, the regional services are best suited for contextualizing and extending such data in a regional and local context.

### **References:**

IPCC, 2011: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* [Field, C. B., et al (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA

von Storch, H., et al., 2011: Regional Climate Services. *Journal for Environmental Law and Policy*, 1/2011, 1-16.