

Session DP RE 5.5: Deltas in Europe opportunities for research and policy collaboration

Date and Time of Session: Thursday, 30 September 2010, 9.30 – 11.15

Short description of the session topic and the objective of the session

Topic: There are many deltas in Europe that are already or will be affected by climate change. In this session presentations have been given about vulnerabilities and adaptation in the Scheldt area, the Danube, the Rhone Delta and Portuguese Deltas. During the session comparisons and differences have been discussed.

Objective: Increase awareness of both policy-makers and scientists of the opportunities and limits for ecologically sustainable development under demographic, land use and climatic change at local, national and transboundary level + Support identification of “climate adaptation research and policy gaps in delta regions, estuaries and coastal wetlands” and explore common research priorities, setting the scene for the evaluation of possible joint activities in these areas.

Session Agenda and Main Speakers

Session chair: Dr. Rob Swart – Wageningen UR - the Netherlands.

Main speakers:

- CIRCLE 2 and Portuguese research and policy examples - Tiago Capela Lourenço – Foundation Faculty of Sciences – University of Lisbon – Portugal.
- Urbanized estuaries and deltas - Joao Pedro Costa – University of Lisbon – Portugal.
- The global and local anthropogenic impacts on Danube Delta in the sustainable development perspective - Roxana Bojariu – National Meteorological Administration of Romania – Romania.
- Large scale coastal behavior of the Rhone delta - François Sabatier - Centre Européen de Recherche et d’Enseignement des Géosciences de l’Environnement (CEREGE), France.
- Towards a joint estuarine response to the threats of climate change - Patrick Meire, Ecosystem Management Research Group - University of Antwerp – Belgium.

Most exciting insight, moment or outcome

The CIRCLE-program (Climate Impact Research & Response Coordination for a Larger Europe) is a European Network committed to fund research and share knowledge on climate adaptation. The program opened a call on deltas, estuaries and coastal wetlands, which means that funding is available for joint research on these topics.

Main conclusions, themes, insights or messages

The session consisted of a short description of the CIRCLE program and reviews of various estuaries in Europe. Conclusions that can be drawn are that all estuaries are different. Each area has its own problems which means climate change manifests in various ways. However comparing different estuaries can lead to additional and mutual understanding of the behavior and effects of those ecosystems. It is important to obtain reliable information about the estuary system (by monitoring) to be able to develop a good adaptation strategy for climate change. Also, an integral approach is needed

to develop consistent plans to adapt to climate change. Examples are to relate research and planning and link climate change sciences to territorial sciences.

Key phrases or quotes

Ecosystems services have important impact on human wellbeing. Their be able to quantify the effects, these services must be analyses.

Estuaries are influenced by many factors. Climate change is only an addition to these existing factors.

Main recommendations, commitments, proposals, new initiatives or key follow-up actions agreed in the session

This session was followed by a related session (DP C 6.2) where the people present in this session were asked to brainstorm to identify new research opportunities. Therefore there was no discussion nor a follow up in this session.