Challenges for adaptation platforms

Climate Adaptation Platforms in Action and Networks
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Why an adaptation platform?

Important to have access to relevant and high quality information

- Increasing demand associated with developing and implementing adaptation plans, including vulnerability, risk and adaptation assessments, and monitoring and evaluation
    - Policy and practice driven
    - A broad range of users – local, sub-national regions, national and transnational
    - Interested in sharing and learning from others – also reflects interdependencies
- Increasing supply of knowledge, data, resources and other information – multiple sources
    - Need for credible and trusted source – more than just a one-stop shop
    - Need to have access to relevant, salient and useable information

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What it offers and implication

A broad range of those needing access consider web-based platforms and effective means – collecting, assimilating and mobilising relevant evidence, experience and knowledge

- Reach and accessibility – supporting connectivity with users;
- Flexibility – potential for innovation and tailoring
- Ability to link to supportive sources – supporting credibility and different users' needs (hierarchical)
- Ability to add and update as new evidence, experiences and knowledge becomes available
- Interactive – potential to interact with users and providers

These advantages are also behind many of the challenges facing those developing and operating web-based adaptation platforms

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Adaptation Platforms in Europe

National – Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK

Transnational – Alpine region and the Pyrenees

European – Climate-ADAPT

There is also information available on the Climate-ADAPT for 12 transnational regions, including the Baltic Sea, Danube, Alpine and Adriatic and Ionian regions

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Engaging the adaptation platform community

Series of networking events beginning with CIRCLE 2 and working with the EEA

- EEA Technical report – Overview of climate change adaptation platforms in Europe
- Identifies and explores challenges, reflections and lessons learnt grouped around seven issues:
    - Funding and sustaining a platform
    - Understanding, communicating and engaging with users;
    - Identifying relevant knowledge and information;
    - Presenting relevant knowledge and information;
    - Design, technical and structural elements of a platform;
    - Linking across sectors, scales and platforms; and
    - Monitoring, evaluating and improving a platform

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Funding and sustaining a platform

A particular challenge due to the nature of the funding used to develop, deliver and maintain

- Research or project funded; funding based on policy support; or policy-mandated funded
- Implications for maintaining and updating, as well as further development

Challenges

- Determining and defining an appropriate funding model – varies with time
- Sustaining and developing the platform when the funding is project based – also links to the strength of the policy buy-in and ability to engage
- Separate budget sources to support different elements of the platform and its operations – regular maintenance, improvements and updating

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Understanding, communicating and engaging with users

Challenges - supporting relevance and utility, and demonstrating value

- Identifying those using the platform – targeted audience?
- Dealing with and managing stakeholder and users' expectations
- Increasing the uptake and demand – balance providing information and working with intended users consistent with the expectation and capabilities (including resources)
- Enhancing the utility
- Understanding the varying needs and capabilities (content and functionalities)
- Defining users' cost profiles – registration and willingness to pay
- Sustaining users' support and interest (uncertain future of platform)
- Establishing and maintaining user's feedback mechanisms

Identifying relevant knowledge and information

Challenge – changing supply and demand – what is relevant

- Balance between relevance and user-friendly and scientific quality and completeness
- That provided and structure fit-for purpose versus available budget
- In line with users needs and capabilities – type of information and level of complexity
- Consistency and comparability of information and resources – coping with potential mismatches
- Quality assurance and control of content
- Dynamic and regularly updating – continued validity of existing items
- Resources (skills, time and funding) – including where multi-lingual

Presenting relevant knowledge and information

Requirement is for relevant, credible, accessible and understandable

- Appropriate considering balance between generic and bespoke
- Trade-off when dealing with broad spectrum of users and scales
- Exploring and assessing innovative approaches – matching technical requirements with users' needs, capabilities and capacities
- User-friendliness – understandable reflecting new and experienced users; translating research results
- How much information is necessary – linked to updating
- Multiple language
- Presenting tools and resources – also the need for supportive guidance.

Design, technical and structural elements

Linked to user-friendliness, ease of developing, maintaining and updating (content management system, structure, design and search)

- Consideration of the intended users' capability, backgrounds on adaptation – provision of help functions for different types of users
- Features that maintain users' trust – timeliness, credibility and relevance of the information available
- Interactive feature – exchange experiences and discussion fora
- Limitation imposed by mandatory web standards of host organisation
- Efficient workflows for submissions by different types of providers

Linking across sectors, scales and platforms

Coordinating across platforms operating in related areas and across governance levels – includes competition for 'space'

- Mechanisms for addressing conflicts, including conflicts in the information available
- Clear understanding on the relative remits and articulating these to users
- Effective relationships amongst the different platform – mutually beneficial and sustainable delivery models – that includes consideration of the users

Monitoring, evaluating and improving

- Evaluating whether a platform is achieving the specified goals and identifying the needs for improvement
- Means of monitoring the use of the platform, indicators for success or failure
- Interpreting user feedback – who accessing and for what purpose
- Processes for communicating these – user confidence
- Involving users and other stakeholders in the evaluation
- Using the evaluation to support learning and continuous improvement
- Evaluation that reflects the political, economic and social context in which the platform is operating

Addressing these Challenges

- Adaptation platform landscape is dynamic
- There are differences in scope, aims and means of delivery of the platforms
- Content and breadth may differ based on the aims, political and socio-economic context, and adaptation experiences determine the challenges and opportunities addressed by each platform
    - Most often includes policy action, scientific research output, guidance, decision-support tools, and experiences from practices and implemented adaptation measures

There remains a keen interest in working together as a community to address challenges and share experiences and lessons learnt.

Moving forward as a Community

Need to enhance the relevance and use of climate adaptation information within a community of platform operators to capture, share and **further develop learning and expertise** in implementing effective web-based adaptation platforms

- Need to engage those with national adaptation platforms, those developing such platforms, those looking to use transnational platforms, and those at an early stage of considering options.
- Facilitating learning across the community providing adaptation services within Europe (e.g., transnational platforms); and **providing opportunities to learn and collaborate on addressing challenges** about the effectiveness of various knowledge exchange methods and means (e.g., visualizations, decision-support tools, and web-interfaces)
- **Identify and develop research and innovation gaps** – bring together those developing, operating and contributing to web-based adaptation platforms, researchers and end-users at events targeted at addressing research, innovation, knowledge exchange and coordination issues and challenges

Moving forward as a Community

Addressing the challenges and exploring solutions:

Create a learning and action-oriented network of expertise and excellence on web-based platforms to more effectively generate and exchange adaptation knowledge and evidence that is user-focused and science-informed.

- Explore, generate and exchange knowledge and experience on effectively engaging users, the science community and stakeholders:
  - Developing and evaluating knowledge and evidence, and their presentation via web-based adaptation platforms;
  - Identifying and evaluating good practices; and
  - Identifying, evaluating and demonstrating the effectiveness and value provided by the provision of such knowledge and evidence via web-based adaptation platforms.

Capture and synthesise knowledge and learning from existing platforms and affiliated initiatives, with regard to design, development and management, and to demonstrate how this process of learning can best be organized and shared.

- Explore and exchange experiences, lessons learnt and challenges towards enabling learning, including the identification of good practices

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Moving forward as a Community

Investigate and enhance the role of web-based platforms and affiliated networks in the development of new knowledge, concepts and innovative products and services.

- Enhance within countries collaboration on, and the capacity to produce, operationalize and use, climate adaptation knowledge, data, evidence and supportive resources;
- Explore means for and enhance the engagement of the research community, including early career researchers, and the private sector in identifying and developing relevant knowledge and innovations.

Enhance the value of platforms in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national adaptation strategies, regional and local adaptation efforts, sectoral adaptation ambitions and awareness raising and capacity building initiatives.

- Assess, and explore means of enhancing, the contributions of the knowledge, evidence and other tools and resources in the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation processes

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