

WENGEN-2006 WORKSHOP

Adaptation to the Impacts of Climatic Change in the European Alps

Background Information

Impacts of climate change are now being felt across the European Alps and future scenarios predict even greater changes. Direct consequences of climate change for the alpine regions include a reduction in snow cover at lower altitudes, receding glaciers and melting permafrost, and changes in temperature and precipitation extremes. These changes have potential implications for critical aspects of Alpine economies, including winter tourism; exposure of human settlements and infrastructure to natural hazards; mountain agriculture; and natural resources and ecosystems. **Adaptation** to these observed and projected impacts is therefore becoming increasingly important – both to limit near and medium term damages and also to avoid decisions that might exacerbate vulnerability to climate changes over the longer term.

Call for Papers

The “Wengen Workshops on Global Change Research” series will host a workshop on Adaptation to the Impacts of Climate Change in the European Alps from **October 4-6, 2006**.

This workshop will bring together experts from the climate science, policy, and economics communities together with decision-makers from countries within the Alpine Arc to examine the vulnerability of particular sectors and systems to climate change impacts, and more importantly to assess progress on the formulation and implementation of adaptation responses at local, regional, and national levels. A particular focus will be on: the role of government and private actors; comparative experiences between the Alpine countries; synergies and conflicts between adaptation responses and sectoral or other priorities.

Contributions related to the proposed agenda below are solicited

1. Overview Session (*Invited talk – no papers*)

Overview of Alpine regions sensitivity to climate change.

2. Sectoral/Thematic Sessions

2.1) Winter Tourism

2.2) Agriculture

2.3) Forestry

2.4) Water Resource Management and Hydropower Industry

2.5) Natural Hazards and Infrastructure

2.6) Natural Ecosystems and Biodiversity

Potential topics to be addressed under each theme:

- **Economic and social impacts** of climate change on the industry/sector within different countries.
- Assessment of **cost/benefits** and **distributional impacts** of adaptation or mal-adaptation.
- **Observed adaptations** in different Alpine countries.
- Interactions between governance/regulations and the adaptation behaviour.
- **Synergies and conflicts** between adaptation strategies and other social and environmental goals.
- Adaptation measures in the **private sector** versus the public sector
- **Barriers and limits to adaptation**

3. Cross-Cutting Sessions

3.1) Economic Tools to Assess the Costs and Benefits of Adaptation

Quantitative/Qualitative methods to assess adaptation costs and benefits

Criteria selection to assess the value of adaptation strategies

Applicability and limitations of different methods

3.2) Adaptation Across Scales and Sectors in Alpine Countries

Role of governments, private sector, and civil society in adaptation.

Macro-level versus project based adaptation.

4. Concluding Session (*moderated discussion - no papers*)

Key messages from the workshop

Priorities for research and policy action on Adaptation in the Alps

Deadlines for paper submissions via on-line registration is May 15, 2006

Instructions for authors

- Keynote speakers should generally plan for 45 minutes of presentation, including 10-15 minutes of discussion. Other speakers should plan for 30 minutes, including 10 minutes of discussion.
- Abstract should highlight key points and should not exceed 1 A-4 page.
- Analyses that compare experiences across countries/regions within the Alpine arc are particularly welcome
- Work to be presented may look at private or public responses to climate change and may range from micro analysis and case studies to sectoral or macro level studies.

- Preference will be given to abstracts containing elements of research results and results implications.
- The paper and presentation should offer a pragmatic application of results (i.e. policy implications, priority responses...etc.)

Optional Excursion

An optional excursion will be held on Thursday, October 7, 2006, to the Jungfrauoch High Alpine Research Station, (NOTE: this URL is different from the one under the "General Information" Section) Europe's highest scientific observatory at close to 3,600 m above sea-level (11,800 ft). It is located in the spectacular world of the high Alpine glaciers of the Eiger, Moench and Jungfrau Massif, with views as far as the Black Forest and the Vosges Mountains to the North, and the Valais Alps to the South. The Jungfrauoch is the source of the Aletsch Glacier, which is the longest valley glacier in the Alps.

The High Alpine Research Station is funded by a consortium of countries; Switzerland contributes annually to 50% of its budget. Numerous scientific experiments take place here, from astrophysics and climate research to health and technology-oriented studies. Participants to the excursion will be able to visit some of the experiments taking place at the Jungfrauoch. Weather-permitting, there will also be the possibility of walking on the upper reaches of the Aletsch glacier. Weather-proof clothing and good shoes are essential; persons who are sensitive to low oxygen levels associated with high elevations should seek medical advice prior to the excursion.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course and to meeting you at what will undoubtedly prove to be an exciting meeting.

Further information

More information can be obtained on the scientific aspects of the Wengen-2006 Workshop from:

- **Shardul Agrawala, OECD, Paris, France (ENV.CC@oecd.org)**
- **Martin Beniston, Department of Geosciences, University of Fribourg, Switzerland (Martin.Beniston@unifr.ch), Meeting coordinator**