



Credit: Willem Overmans

Borghaven, a village along the Common Meuse

together we are stronger

Find out how nearly 100 different partners from seven different countries are combining efforts to tackle the challenge of climate change.

Meet SIC Adapt!

By Anke Möllers, Transnational Programme North West Europe

Climate change is high on the agenda of the North West Europe programme (NWE). The NWE area is densely populated, with 75% of the population living in urban areas. At the same time, there are highly valued sparsely populated rural and coastal areas. All these areas are extremely vulnerable to climate change impacts, such as flooding or peak rainfalls.

Already a large number of projects exist to address these challenges; however, most of them happen separately from each other and lack knowledge about the happenings in other regions. Hence, the INTERREG IVB NWE programme is, for the first time, funding a strategic cluster which aims to "adapt to the spatial impacts of climate change" - the cluster SIC Adapt!

The cluster combines the experience from eight transnational projects that are currently running under the NWE programme. Almost 100 partners from seven different

Member States (Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, France and the Benelux countries) are involved, establishing transferable tools and measures and spreading the knowledge on European level.

SIC Adapt! tackles different topics of climate change ranging from climate-proof cities, flooding, multifunctional land-use, heat and bio-climatic stress in urban areas, vulnerability assessments, as well as social aspects such as raising awareness and changing mindsets. The Lippeverband, a water board from Essen (Germany), has taken on the role of cluster leader.

Building on each other's strengths

Leading a cluster of 100 partners is not easy and requires strong coordination and endurance. This challenge became apparent in the preparation phase, which started at the



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1st Cluster Expert Board Meeting, June 2011

end of 2009 when all the partners had to agree on joint actions and establish a joint vision. Many discussions took place, for example, what could be the main achievements of such a cluster, taking into account that the individual projects already produce a long list of assessment tools and measures? Should there be an extra tool - a "meta"-tool?

SIC Adapt! agreed that it would rather make sense to compare each other's approaches, to provide a broader access to all the approaches and build a joint knowledge platform in North West Europe. The cluster strengthens the impact of each project, for example at higher policy levels, and ensures the transferability of the projects' results to other regions. It reaches additional target groups in the NWE which proves difficult at the individual project level. It is a great possibility to combine forces and avoid duplication.

The first step was an analysis of all the 55 tools and 46 measures which are implemented on the ground by the projects. This analysis was recently discussed at a first "Cluster Expert Board", which was organized in June 2011 in Germany. At this event, more than 60 experts from eight Member States participated, including representatives from national and regional governments, NGOs and academic institutions. This event was a great success and many links have been discovered between the individual projects. For the first time, partners had the chance to have an in-depth discussion of their results with other related projects. This cross-project exchange will be intensified in the coming months.

More to come

The next milestone will be the second "Cluster Expert Board" in May 2012, in Brussels, where key policy messages will be presented to relevant policy makers on

EU and national level. One objective is to contribute to the "IT tool and database on climate-change impact and vulnerability and best practices on adaptation" as envisaged in the White Paper on Climate Change. Furthermore, SIC Adapt! wants to identify gaps in the policies and highlight best practices - in line with the goals of EU 2020.

The project and communication managers of all eight projects are currently meeting internally during the Open Days 2011 to launch the work on the policy recommendations and to identify the next communication steps. If you are there, keep your eyes open and follow the whole story or visit the SIC Adapt! Website.

SIC Adapt! (Strategic Initiatives Cluster - Adaptation to the spatial impacts of climate change)

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Budget: 879.000 EUR (financed 100% by ERDF)

8 NWE projects involved: ALFA, AMICE, C-CHANGE, FloodResilienCity, ForeStClim, Future Cities, IMCORE, WAVE

Duration: March 2010 - December 2013

