

ONLINE PORTAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



GERMANY A PILOT SCHEME FOR A SMOOTH SETUP IN OTHER COUNTRIES

The consequences of climate change are not yet widely known. How can these impacts be presented to the general public? How can one simultaneously make available key information to specialist users in the private and public sector? And how can such information be successfully disseminated to a wide audience?

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLIMATE IMPACTS PRESENTED COHERENTLY

Numerous individual studies on climate impacts in Germany have been prepared by various institutions. These studies differ in terms of their aim, region and time period of interest. The goal of ClimateImpactsOnline is to present the regional impacts of global climate change on hydrology, agriculture, forest, energy, tourism and health sectors. The results as prepared by the Potsdam-Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) are available at multiple scales in space and time. By using a standardized foundation, this approach will facilitate a new level of synthesis describing the interactions between sectors. In the meantime, climate change is widely known but there is often uncertainty about the specific effects. One of the key tasks, therefore, consists of not only discussing the impact of climate change in specialist groups, but also presenting these to a wider audience. In that respect, decision-makers in the public sector in particular but also directly affected professional groups should be able to simply obtain information. These groups are not made up of specialist scientists. This gives rise to two challenges:

- The information must be presented such that it is commonly understood.
- Access to the information must be easy. Interested parties do not have time to familiarize them-selves over a lengthy period, but rather want to immediately work with the information.

In particular, potential users do not want to have to put together long-winded information from various sources, and even possibly have to go to great lengths to link them.

TWO STRONG PROJECT PARTNERS

To satisfy this requirement, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) and WetterOnline have jointly developed an internet portal that is easy to use, groups together interesting information about climate impact and offers it in a directly usable form. The two project partners complement each other perfectly. The PIK has expertise in climate change and climate impacts, while WetterOnline has a wealth of experience in providing weather data to the general public.

A STRONG PORTAL

The ClimateImpactsOnline portal for Germany will be available from 1 December 2012 at

www.KlimafolgenOnline.com

The sole precondition for using the internet portal is an up-to-date internet browser. Anyone can use the portal. Administrative or technical hurdles have been dispensed with (registration or plugins for the browser are not required). The information is available to users free of charge. The stated aim is to win over the largest possible number of users – it is envisaged that all members of the general public who are interested can access it.



CLIMATE IMPACT AS CONTENT

ClimateImpactsOnline provides information about climatic changes such as changes in temperature, precipitation or solar radiation. However, the key element is the fact that information about the consequences of climate change is available at the click of a mouse. A farmer can consider local information about temperature and precipitation changes regarding his field and accordingly directly consider the effects on income for the various crops or the harvest risk. Data no longer needs to be collected from various sources and matched with the local territory – a click of the mouse is now all that is required. Specific information is made available about the climate, agriculture, forestry, hydrology and other (tourism, energy) sectors.

In that respect, detailed information can be viewed in various formats depending on which illustration is best suited for the specific question:

- Colour maps to consider the variations, for example of sunlight, in Germany,
- Tables to consider various parameters which, for example, are relevant to tourism, for a certain decade for a German federal state,
- Series graphs to consider development over time, for example of the yields of crops at a certain location.

