



capitalising climate change knowledge for adaptation in the alpine space



Climate Adaptation Policies, Governance and the Science-Policy Interface in Alpine Countries and Regions

Country Report Liechtenstein.

Deliverable of WP4 in the C3-Alps project

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1 Executive Summary

Actually, an official adaptation policy or policy document does not exist in Liechtenstein. The issue is partly treated in different sectors, but there is no integrated approach. The main reasons: the actors do not feel the real need to deal with CCA, there is no explicitly responsible institution, the government is mainly acting with a short term perspective, Liechtenstein is a rich country and waiving in general is a taboo.

On the other hand, a major part of the interviewees thinks a CCA policy document is important or at least helpful. It could support a proactive attitude, the chance to produce political pressure, as well as serve the detection and management of possible conflicts. Several interviewees see a CCA policy document as a big chance to prepare the country for the future.

In 2013 an update of the climate policy is foreseen. This is a great opportunity to bring in the CCA topic on the agenda and to combine it with mitigation aspects.

2 Goals and methods

We conducted semi-structured interviews with 18 interlocutors from Liechtenstein that represented different areas. Backgrounds of the interviewees were mainly different state departments, municipal administration, educational institutions as well as non-governmental organisations and private actors. Our interview partners thus represented the topics of construction, tourism, environment, natural risk management, forest, agriculture, water, spatial planning, nature protection, air quality, economy, climate policy, mobility, health and energy.

3 Description of the situation (status quo)

The interviewees were aware that there is no CCA strategy in Liechtenstein. A major part of them also said that there was no CCA policy under preparation. Five interviewees did not support the idea to elaborate a CCA strategy for Liechtenstein, but in their opinion the general sensitivity for the topic of adaptation is evolving step by step.

There are activities going on in the fields of water and forestry, but there are almost no activities with a cross-sectional or integrated perspective. In general, the topic of mitigation and climate protection is much more developed than the issue of climate change adaptation.

The key actors mentioned as potentially responsible for a CCA strategy development were the departments for civil protection, the department for environment and the department for forest, nature & landscape. Actually, the state administration is undergoing a re-organisation process. This will lead to a change of responsibilities and roles also in the CCA field.

The interviewees assessed the national administration, the tourism organisations, the chamber of economy, the government, as well as the NGOs Liechtensteinische Gesellschaft für Umweltschutz (LGU) and the International Commission for the protection of the Alps CIPRA to play an important role in the emerging field of CCA.

The only projects and activities mentioned by name were IBKO 2011, the Interreg-CLISP project and the CIPRA project cc.alps with its state of the art reports – the so called “compacts” – in the field of climate change.

3.1 Rationales for not having a policy document

In the interviews, the following reasons were provided for the fact that no policy document has been developed so far: there is no general pressure or immediate need to act and many topics which are relevant for CCA are already touched in the respective sectors without referring explicitly to CCA. There is no overall instance coordinating and demanding a policy document, which means that there is no pressure to do so. Especially since the financial crisis resources such as money and staff are missing. Another reason is that due to the small size of Liechtenstein many people think that risks connected with climate change cannot be that high. In addition, there is not sufficient awareness of the topic of adaptation and not sufficient will for change (“We are well off in Liechtenstein – and it should stay like this”). Another reason why there is no explicit CCA policy in Liechtenstein is that the topic is not really important for the Prince.



A major part of the interviewees thinks a policy document is important or at least helpful. The reasons why a policy document of CCA is seen as helpful are that it:

- would represent a proactive approach,
- would provide a chance to produce political pressure,
- would make a early preparation possible (also for the economy) and
- would support the detection and management of possibly conflicting areas.

Several interviewees estimate the development of a CCA strategy as a big chance, that can help to mobilize synergies (also within departments) and to reduce risks. A policy document would help to give the topic of CCA continuity and would be a good opportunity to tackle it in an integrated way.

Arguments against a policy document were that it would be enough to take the CCA policy document of Switzerland and adapt it to the Liechtenstein case. Furthermore, many interviewees sensed that a strategy-policy document as such does not change a lot, it has to be integrated and supported from the highest political level. It also needs enough financial support and also legally binding measures. Otherwise it be lacking of implementation and just remain paperwork. In some sectors (like water and forestry) there are some documents that support the goals of an adaptation policy without explicitly mentioning CCA.

3.2 Characteristics of external factors influencing the potential policy field of CCA

Encouraging external factors could be laws in the field of forestry, water, hunting, nature and environmental protection, construction, spatial planning, international contracts and the constitution itself. Moreover the wording should be different: CCA sounds very technical and does not evoke positive associations. A more positive semantic focus would be helpful – for example: “Let’s prepare for the challenges of the 21st century”!

Relevant barriers mentioned by the interviewees are: a missing pro-active land policy, a lacking regional development planning, as well as the land use competition and conflicts in the Rhine valley. These aspects are closely connected to the high status of land property.

Additionally no department feels really responsible for the topic of CCA and the governmental key players do not act with a long-term view. Another barrier is that each department is just trying to optimise its own field and nobody is taking care of the overall picture.

In general climate change is not an important topic in the media. The exchange of information among key actors could be improved as well. At the moment information exchange has various intensities at the different levels and it is often informal – also due to the small size of the country.

Extending information exchange is not really appreciated by the interviewees, as it requires additional time and leads to additional workload.

4 Activities towards a policy document or policy commitment

The challenges to overcome in order to develop a policy document are the lacking willingness of likely responsible actors for this task to cooperate. Also, the likely measures required are not seen and considered as utterly necessary. Additionally, the willingness to implement measures is limited. There are also mental barriers related to the possible consequences of climate change. As the issue awakes negatively associations ... potentially responsible actors do not act with regard to CCA.

Other barriers on the way to an adaptation policy document are that policy makers do not want to impose unpopular measures to the population; additionally, the administration is sceptical regarding cross-departmental actions. Conflicts are likely in the following fields:

- energy-water-agriculture-nature protection
- anything that is leading to higher costs
- the increasing demands of citizens (voters), waiving in general is a taboo
- those related to restrictions in land use

In case a process to work out a CCA strategy document is launched, most of the interviewees would prefer a broad process including a broad variety set of actors. In order to make such a process effective, a small core group could be created. In addition it would be very important to integrate the overall climate issue and not just the topic of adaptation. It could be also helpful to look at Austria and Switzerland for examples.

4.1 Characteristics of the science-policy interface

The interaction between policy makers and scientists is weak in Liechtenstein. Nevertheless, the interviewees estimate the interaction as necessary especially for the topic of CCA: Science should explain the complex issues and problems related to CCA and show which limits have to be considered. Based on the knowledge provided by scientists, policy makers should find ways to shape the future.

A bit less than half of the interviewees said that knowledge is transported to political decision makers, at least through international media and debates or informal talks. Politicians do not know how to tackle the topic of CCA because it is characterised by uncertainties.

Several interviewees stated that the communication of science has to be improved. In the opinion of some interviewees, the common way of communication of scientists is too complicated.



Scientists have the general problem that they do not know how to sell their products (knowledge) to policy makers and the general public.

Five of the interviewees think there is enough scientific material concerning CCA, especially for neighbouring regions (Bodensee, CH). The transferability of this information for Liechtenstein should be assessed. Liechtenstein's orientation and contacts are very much towards Swiss universities, partly also to Austria (University of Innsbruck and BOKU in Vienna). A pool of knowledge and information just for Liechtenstein does not exist. A lot of information is available indirectly through IPCC and Swiss institutions. Other information pools are the Climate Strategy 2007 and the project CLISP (with information on water and agriculture in the Rhine).

The role of the University of Liechtenstein could be to support the topic of spatial development. Especially the Institute for Architecture and Spatial Development could play an important role by linking the issue of CCA with spatial development. Besides that, the University of Liechtenstein is no key player in the CCA field.

4.2 Impacts of CCA related activities

As already mentioned, there is no adaptation policy process going on in the moment. There are measures in the field of climate protection, but not in adaptation. Some interviewees say that many measures are just alibi/excuse measures and not very effective. The political priority in Liechtenstein is actually on financial measures like emission trade.

Several interviewees expressed their wish not just to talk, but to do something in the field of CCA. They assumed that the economy will adapt faster to CC than the agricultural sector.

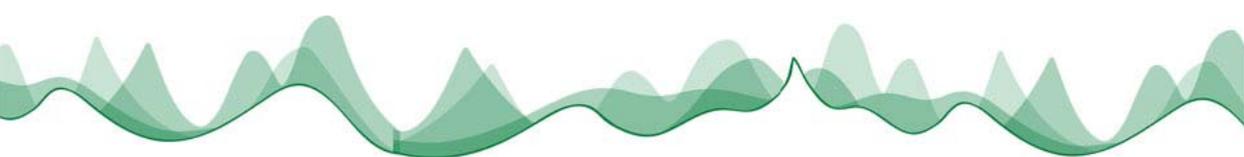
4.3 Strengths and weaknesses of adaptation policy making and governance

The weakness of adaptation policy in Liechtenstein is that the topic is covered only sector-wise and there is no coordinating platform. The adaptation topic is hard to grasp, this makes it difficult for politicians to put it on their agenda. Several interviewees think that Liechtenstein is already doing enough for climate protection. In addition there are some legal hurdles such as the lacking of spatial planning and land policy. Also the influence of some individuals in such a small country can have negative impacts on a process. Overall, the topic is not considered as important, and resources and the willingness to act are limited.

However, some interviewees also identified strengths in Liechtenstein with regard to CCA policy: The small size of the country can make it easier to coordinate measures and this could be a great chance for Liechtenstein to become a real model region – especially if it cooperates with



Switzerland and Austria. Finally, Liechtenstein is a rich country, thus, there are resources available that could be invested in CCA.



5 Conclusions, recommendations, policy options

The main policy option is that in 2013 an update of the climate policy is foreseen. This is a great opportunity to bring in the CCA topic and to combine it with already better established mitigation aspects. Our recommendation is to consequently implement the already existing strategies in neighbouring sectors (e.g., the energy strategy). By doing so, at least some sectoral aspects of CCA will be considered.

The small size of the country should be seen as a real chance for creating a model region with innovative visions and their implementations. Legal hurdles, for example, those relating to traffic and tax regulations should be removed. Cross border cooperation with Switzerland and Austria should be intensified in order to learn from the experiences made in these countries that are more advanced in the topic of CCA policy making.

Important actors are the government, the department for civil protection and the department for environment. Different state departments, economy, municipalities, as well as NGOs like LGU and CIPRA and science should be involved into the process of elaborating an adaptation strategy.

Our concrete proposal for the next steps is that that key actors from the above mentioned departments bring the CCA topic to the top level of policy makers (ministers). Then the Government of Liechtenstein should take a decision and initiate a CCA process as a part of the new national climate strategy (and seriously stand behind it). It should be the government itself to give the order to set up the process to elaborate a CCA strategy. The leading administrative departments (e.g. departments of environment and civil protection) should form a core group in order to work out first a CCA strategy and based on that a CCA action plan and concrete projects. In addition, a “CCA Forum” could be created in order to discuss the interim results of the strategy process. This form should not only focus on CCA issues, it should also consider mitigation in order to develop an integrated perspective. The role of NGOs and science could be to give thematic inputs and impulses, e.g., provide good practice examples from other countries. Further cooperation with Austria and Switzerland (both have CCA strategies) would be helpful as well.

