



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 Slovenia

Deliverable of WP4 in the C3-Alps project

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## 1 Executive summary

The topic of this report is climate change adaptation policy and governance in Slovenia. The report was compiled based on a common methodology proposed by the WP 4 team of the C3-Alps project. Its main aim is to contribute information about Slovenia for the analysis of climate change adaptation policy making and governance in the Alpine Space.

Gathering of data for the analysis consisted of policy document analysis, web questionnaire, interviews with experts and desktop research. Two policy documents were considered, namely the *Strategy for adaptation of the Slovenian agriculture and forestry to climate change* and the *Strategy for the transition of Slovenia to a low carbon society by 2060*. Only a policy document analysis could be performed for the first strategy, whereas all steps could be done for the second one.

The *Strategy for adaptation of the Slovenian agriculture and forestry to climate change* is a sectoral document, which was adopted in the year 2008. An action plan was prepared for the years 2010 and 2011 and its implementation assessed in 2012.

The *Strategy for the transition of Slovenia to a low carbon society by 2060* unites adaptation and mitigation and covers 13 thematic areas. The preparatory process started in 2010, the document is in its second draft, but it is at the moment not clear what the next stages will be.

The policy field of climate change adaptation in Slovenia is characterised by inconstancy: whereas in 2009 the Slovenian National Assembly adopted a declaration on the active role of Slovenia in the creation of a new global policy on climate change and established climate change policy as a priority, by the year 2012 the situation changed to almost total neglect of the topic. This can partly be explained by the sharpening of the economic and financial crisis, but is also due to the political changes during this period and the accompanying institutional reforms.

The policy development process, by which in this report is meant preparation of the *Strategy for the transition of Slovenia to a low carbon society by 2060*, was in most cases very positively evaluated by the respondents to the web questionnaire and the interviewed experts. Highlighted were especially its participatory character, consensus orientation, openness and transparency and the intersectoral coordination which had taken place. The strengths of the policy process furthermore included a clear political mandate, setting up of a new government office to deal with climate change issues and a dedicated team in charge of preparing the strategy.

Some concerns and proposals for improvement of the policy development process were also voiced: the communication to political decision makers could not be established, experts from additional fields should be included into the team leading the preparation of the strategy, even

wider public participation should be sought, there should be another round of discussing the strategy to check its completeness and validity.

A recurring issue when it comes to weaknesses of the climate change adaptation policy field/process and barriers to its successful formulation and implementation seems to be the political sphere in Slovenia: climate change has apparently not been internalised by the politicians and political parties and is considered rather marginal by them.

The science-policy interface in the field of climate change adaptation in Slovenia is believed to be strongly determined by the small number of persons working on climate change topics. The choice of experts is very limited and one of the consequences is an insufficient knowledge base. The policy developers, on the other hand, do not seem to always be able to formulate and communicate their knowledge needs timely. Besides, the funding available for commissioning of studies is considered insufficient.

Climate change adaptation policy in Slovenia has, in the past years, been challenged by the political instability in the country, as well as by the progressing economic and financial crisis. Therefore its further trajectory is, at the time of writing this report (January 2013), rather uncertain. In this situation it seems appropriate to highlight some suggestions expressed by the Slovenian experts during interviews. As most relevant we wish to point out the idea that there is a need for continuity in the institutional framework and for more mainstreaming of climate change adaptation, as well as the idea that the low-carbon society and adaptation to climate change bear potential to contribute to the economic recovery of the country.



## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Goals and methods

This report deals with climate change adaptation policy and governance in Slovenia. Its main intention is to contribute to the objectives followed by WP 4 of the C3-Alps project pertaining to adaptation policy and governance. The overarching goal of WP 4 is to improve knowledge about what kind of policies lead to good performance.

The data gathering step consisted of several elements: policy document analysis, web questionnaire and interviews with experts. Some further desktop research and data gathering was performed by the team of the Slovenian C3-Alps project partner.

At the outset the decision was taken to analyse two documents dealing with climate change adaptation in Slovenia, namely the *Strategy for adaptation of the Slovenian agriculture and forestry to climate change* and the *Strategy for the transition of Slovenia to a low carbon society by 2060*.

The first document is a sectoral climate change adaptation strategy, which was adopted in 2008 already, its implementation is running and we assumed that this could provide useful insights for our analysis. Since there was no response from experts and public administration staff involved in preparation and implementation of the strategy to our repeated invitations to fill in the web questionnaire or agree to an interview, we deal with the document to a very limited extent in this report – some facts about the preparation process and the content of the document are briefly highlighted.

For the second document, the *Strategy for the transition of Slovenia to a low carbon society by 2060*, we managed to perform all envisaged data gathering steps: in August and September 2012 three experts filled in the web questionnaire and gave consent to an interview, and an additional expert could be won for the interview as well. Interviews were performed in the course of September and October 2012. The analysis of the document was performed and additional data gathered from various publicly accessible sources.

The analysis of the gathered data followed the structure proposed by the WP 4 team. An attempt was made to extract relevant information from the available data and to present a possibly comprehensive picture of the situation and processes referring to the climate change adaptation policy process in Slovenia.



### 3 Results of policy analysis

#### 3.1 Description of the situation (status quo)

In 2008, a sectoral strategy for adaptation of agriculture and forestry to climate change – the *Strategy for adaptation of the Slovenian agriculture and forestry to climate change* – was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. This was followed by preparation of an action plan for the years 2010 and 2011<sup>1</sup>. In 2012, a detailed report on implementation of measures of the action plan in the years 2010 and 2012 was prepared and presented to the Slovenian Government. Implementation of the action plan in 2012 was limited to the tasks performed by the administrative bodies of the state, such as ministries, different agencies and other institutions providing public services. The main responsibility for the strategy and action plan preparation as well as for implementation and monitoring lay with the ministry responsible for agriculture and forestry. As regards the sectoral adaptation strategy for agriculture and forestry we can state that the policy process is in an advanced phase already: implementation and monitoring or phase IV and beyond according to the conceptualization of stages of climate change adaptation policy process proposed by the WP4 team of the C3-Alps project (see Figure 1).

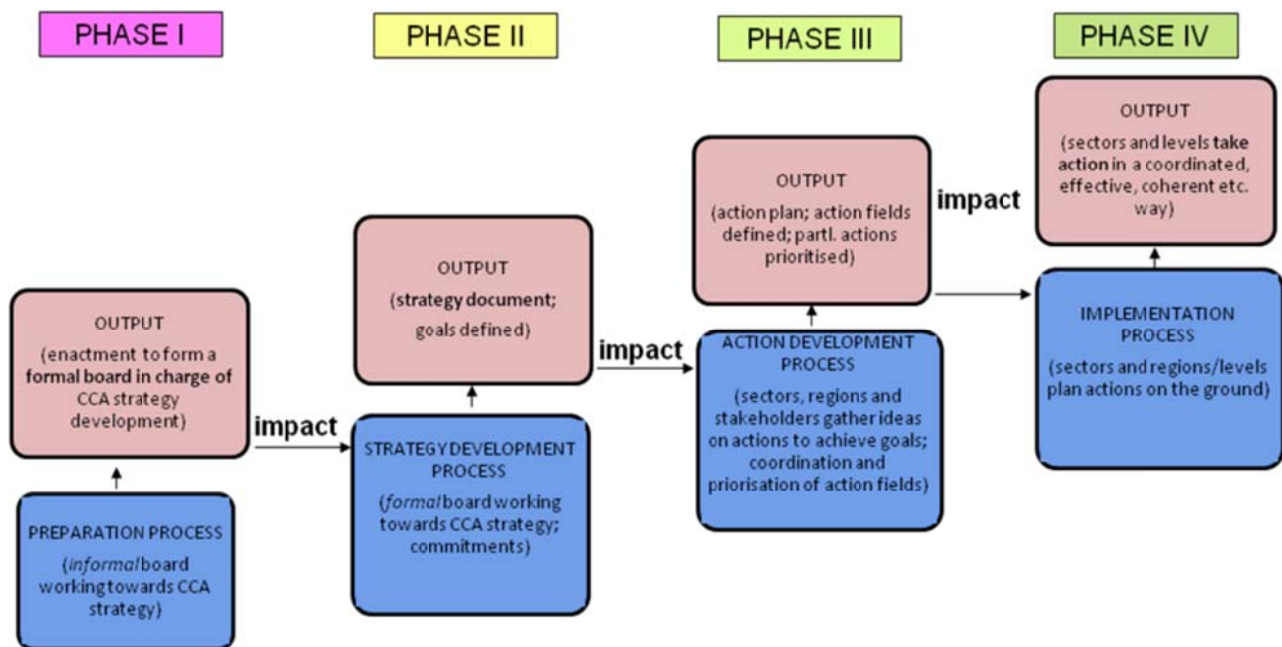


Figure 1: Stages of CCA policy processes (Menzel, S. et al, 2013: 12)

<sup>1</sup> Action plan of the Strategy for adaptation of the Slovenian agriculture and forestry to climate change for the years 2010 and 2011, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Republic of Slovenia.

A more comprehensive approach to climate change adaptation was adopted in the *Strategy for the transition of Slovenia to a low carbon society by 2060*. The document entails both climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation aspects. Preparation of the document was led by the Government Office of Climate Change. The process started in 2010, and in March 2012 a second draft was published. It was expected that the strategy would be adopted by the end of the year 2012. After the change of government in Slovenia in early 2012, a reform of the national administration was launched. As part of the reform the Office of Climate Change was abolished and all responsibility for climate change transferred to the reorganised Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment. Due to changed priorities the process of the strategy preparation and adoption came to a standstill.

With reference to the stage the climate change adaptation policy field in Slovenia is at we had quite disparate answers during the interviews, namely: I-II, II, II-III and III (see Figure 1). It is beyond doubt that adaptation actions are being implemented by the national administration (ministries, agencies and other public bodies) and various societal actors. This is, however, not based on one document with defined goals, action fields and priorities. The low-carbon strategy and an operational programme for climate change adaptation envisaged in the strategy should provide this framework, but it is currently not clear when the former will be adopted and the latter prepared.

It is interesting to note how the most important actors in the climate change adaptation policy field are perceived. Mentioned during the interviews were: (1) Slovenian government (twice), Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment, farmers' associations, (2) Slovenian parliament, government sectors and institutions at all levels, Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning, political parties, (3) ministries, regional development agencies and municipalities. Most often named were the governing and administrative structures: government, ministries/sectors and institutions, parliament. Municipalities are local self-government units, whereas regional development agencies perform certain development (planning) functions for groups of municipalities. Outside these categories are farmers' associations as representatives of a specific interest group and political parties.

## 3.2 Characteristics of policy documents

### 3.2.1 Climate change adaptation strategy for agriculture and forestry

Elaboration of the *Strategy for adaptation of the Slovenian agriculture and forestry to climate change* started in the year 2004 and the document was adopted by the Slovenian government in 2008. Climate change impacts mentioned in the document as causing concern are recurrent severe droughts strongly affecting agriculture and the increasing necessity to intervene with forest





sanitation management measures due to damages from severe weather events, biotic factors and forest fires.

The aim of adaptation is defined to be “to decrease the risk and damage to the environment and human health caused by the current and future harming effects of climate change in a cost-efficient way and by exploiting potential benefits” (Strategy for adaptation..., 2008: 5).

The document contains several guiding principles (in the document termed “basic premises”), some of them being:

- Adaptation is a dynamic and highly interdisciplinary process into which all decision-makers and stakeholders at all levels must be included.
- Climate change adaptation in agriculture must be based on solutions enabling sustainable and competitive farming, which will ensure an optimum degree of self-sufficiency in food for the population.
- Adaptation in forestry is based on a sustainable, multifunctional and especially close to nature forest management. The state is responsible for implementation of the necessary forest protection measures and for a timely damage remediation.
- Adaptation of agriculture and forestry must be coordinated with other sectors as well as harmonised across levels, from the local and national to the supranational.
- Priority should be given to adaptation measures simultaneously contributing to climate change mitigation and to measures which can prevent irreparable damage.

The strategy consists of five »basic building blocks, pillars or guidelines« (ibid.: 7): (1) strengthening the capacity to manage adaptation in agriculture and forestry; (2) education, awareness raising and counselling; (3) new knowledge generation in the field of climate change and adaptation; (4) agriculture and forestry policy measures and change of the existing regulations; (5) strengthening international cooperation and partnership in climate change adaptation of agriculture and forestry, especially within the EU.

The »pillars« are then elaborated in more detail: a short presentation of the state of the art followed by subtopics with description of measures. These seem often to be of a rather indicative character, although some are described in a quite detailed way.

The document includes a large number of measures, but little indication on how the implementation should proceed. This circumstance was later (in 2010) amended by the production of an action plan which followed the structure (»pillars«) of the strategy and had two parts: on measures which were already being implemented, and on measures to be implemented in the years 2010 and 2011.



### 3.2.2 Low carbon strategy

The *Strategy for the transition of Slovenia to a low carbon society by 2060* is currently in its second draft. It is of a predominantly strategic character, though some responses to the web questionnaire indicate a partial action plan orientation. An important characteristic from the point of view of the current analysis is that the document unites the aspects of mitigation and adaptation, with mitigation being given much more weight and having been elaborated in much more detail than adaptation.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of the strategy is stated to be to “provide long-term guidelines for a consistent and harmonized climate and energy policy as well as a framework for combating climate change while respecting the principles of sustainable development” (Strategy..., 2012: 7). This includes, among other, providing for adaptation to the inevitable consequences of climate change.

The document contains a rather complex vision, which is summarised as follows: “Slovenia is in 2060 an integrated and inclusive low carbon society with an excellent economy and quality of life, territory and natural environment” (ibid., p. 14). The aspects such as economic, social and spatial development characteristics and quality of life are elaborated in more detail.

Three long-term objectives have been defined: one general, namely that the country contributes to efforts to halt global warming below 2°C compared with the pre-industrial period; one concerning mitigation: to reduce the national GHG emissions below 4 million tons (t) CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year (2 t per inhabitant); and one concerning adaptation: to ensure that the vulnerability of the country to climate change impacts does not rise over the current levels.

The strategic approach has three components as well: reducing GHG emissions by way of green growth, adaptation to the changed climate and supporting horizontal strategies. Horizontal strategies have the following titles: innovation and education; local and regional initiatives; awareness raising, communication and public participation; and taking an active role in the international community. The horizontal strategies should support efforts toward climate change mitigation and adaptation. Adapting to climate change should be oriented towards improved resilience and coping capacity of the society, economy and natural systems. It is expected to achieve this by means of activities aimed at improved knowledge, forecasting and adaptation methods; by integration of adaptation goals into sector policies; and clear responsibility for planning, implementation and financing of adaptation. Owners, operators (managers) and policy sectors will have to assume these responsibilities.

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<sup>2</sup> The current analysis is predominantly oriented on the part of the document dealing with adaptation. It is nevertheless necessary to point out that it is difficult to „split“ the observations in this way. This, for sure, is true also of the responses to the web questionnaire and during the interviews.

The strategy encompasses also goals and policy guidelines for 13 thematic areas. Both mitigation and adaptation aspects are considered, but the emphasis given to each of them differs between areas. Adaptation is more prominent in the thematic areas agriculture; spatial development; forest, biodiversity, landscape; water management; health; and civil protection.

As to implementation of the strategy, it is stated that several activities and programmes are already running. Additionally, a mid-term operational programme should be prepared for climate change adaptation. The implementation of the programme will be monitored on a yearly basis: a report should be prepared for the Slovenian Government each year, and necessary changes or amendments of the programme proposed. An intermediate evaluation of the strategy should be performed every six years by the Slovenian Government, the requisite changes will be presented to the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia (parliament).

With reference to the knowledge base, one general finding is that the existing documents and knowledge were mostly used during preparation of the low carbon strategy. This was due to the lack of funds that could be spent for studies. The knowledge base was especially limited in the field of adaptation – this is finally reflected in the fact that improving the knowledge base, predictions and adaptation methods features as part of the strategic approach to climate change adaptation.

### 3.3 Characteristics of the external factors/setting influencing the policy field of climate change adaptation

#### 3.3.1 Facilitating factors

Several factors were named during the interviews and in the online-questionnaire responses as having facilitated climate change adaptation policy making in Slovenia:

- international guidance (e.g. UNFCC, IPCC),
- strategic orientations of the EU, such as the climate-energy package, played the role of an external push factor,
- Slovenian presidency of the EU in the year 2008 helped to promote climate change adaptation in Slovenia also outside the professional and government circles,
- adoption of the document *Declaration on the active role of Slovenia in the creation of a new global policy on climate change* by the Slovenian National Assembly in the year 2009; the declaration was a sign of the political consensus and established climate change policy as a priority,

- the *Slovenian exit strategy 2010-2013* explicitly names and envisages preparation of a low carbon strategy and climate change act as instruments for an efficient climate policy.

All these factors are believed to have led to establishing of the Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Climate Change and to preparation of the low carbon/climate change response strategy.

A wide range of options that could beneficially influence implementation of the next steps in the climate change adaptation policy making was indicated:

- potential recognition within the government structures that the low carbon society and climate change adaptation may be an opportunity for economic recovery,
- emergence of new key political actors with affirmative relationship towards climate change issues,
- activities of enterprises,
- availability of EU funding for climate change adaptation activities, such as for water management,
- pressure from outside of the country, e. g. from the EU.

The mentioned factors could help to re-establish climate change policy as a priority and assist in breaking the deadlock caused by the current political, economic and financial crisis.

### 3.3.2 Barriers

There exist several barriers to climate change adaptation policy making, the most prominent mentioned by the interviewees being a shift of priority to themes related to the troubled economic and financial situation. Urgent preoccupations are for example how to cut public expenditures, how to reform the pension scheme, how to restructure and revive the labour market etc. Related to this is a lack of financial means and lacking permanent funding for the implementation of climate change related activities as well as decreasing funding of adaptation related research activities. The emphasis on solving the most urgent problems and the »crisis view« preclude the identification of development opportunities and search for potentials related with climate change adaptation.

### 3.3.3 The role of the public and the media

The role of the public in climate change adaptation policy making is seen by the interviewees as somewhat ambivalent. One interviewee mentioned that the results of a public opinion poll, which was conducted in Slovenia a few years ago about the knowledge of climate change, showed a very

high degree of awareness and of recognition of the relevance of the topic. Individuals and households have by far “overtaken” the decision-makers as regards awareness and taking measures in response to climate change. This situation is believed to indicate a high potential for the influence of public opinion on decision-makers, but the factual influence is rather negligible and insufficient. Another observation is that, in the public, there is support for single measures in the fields where climate change impacts are visible already, such as in the case of droughts in agriculture, but not for acting on climate change in general.

The results of the interviews conducted in the course of the study show a rather unfavourable picture of the conduct and role of media when it comes to climate change adaptation. On the one hand the interviewees expressed the belief that the media create an artificial impression that there are split opinions about climate change in the scientific community by giving an equal attention to climate change sceptics – not being climate change scientists - and climate change experts, thus supporting the “climate change conspiracy theory”. The media in Slovenia also pay more attention to mitigation than to adaptation, just like the political sphere. The media, furthermore, tend to seek sensationalist aspects of adaptation: if people were against a water reservoir then this would be news.

Some critical remarks were directed also at the communication strategy – or lack of it – in the process of the low carbon strategy preparation. The first draft of the Climate Change Act had a good media coverage, but afterwards the attention dissipated. During preparation of the low carbon strategy the communication with/for the general public was rather limited and there was no real public debate about the strategy.

Another aspect is a perceived lack of financial means to create and lead a public debate on climate change. This is believed to also be due to the fact that the state has shares in enterprises in certain economic sectors and to the existence of strong lobbies that do not desire public debate.

### 3.4 Characteristics of the policy development process

Preparation of the *Strategy for the transition of Slovenia to a low carbon society by 2060* started in 2010 and was led by the Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Climate Change. In March 2012 a second draft was finished and it was intended that the document should be adopted by the end of the year. In April 2012 the Office ceased to exist and all responsibilities were transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment.

Numerous stakeholders participated in preparation of the document. For each of the 13 thematic fields partners who could be consulted were sought and sectoral workshops were organized. More than 250 experts from various types of organizations participated in 11 workshops. During preparation of the document, consultations were held also with actors at the local and regional

level (municipalities, regional level institutions) (Strategy..., 2012: 2). There was a limited number of contracts with organizations and individuals from the research and consultancy field in order to compile the necessary background studies.

All listed characteristics of the document preparation process, namely effectiveness, transparency, science-base and professionalism, were evaluated very positively in the responses to the web questionnaire. The decision-making process was denoted as consensus-oriented. Also the openness of the process – communication about uncertainties, lacks in the knowledge, trust in the process owners, openness towards issues brought into the process by representatives of other sectors and other governance levels – was rather positively evaluated. Financial and human resources provided by the sectors were denoted as very scarce.

The overall level of participation by the stakeholders was evaluated as appropriate for the purpose, participation of the local level was assessed as appropriate to too low, whereas that of NGOs as appropriate to too high. Apparently, the NGOs regularly pushed for continuation of the document preparation process. Practically all relevant sectors participated in the drafting process, exceptions being public administrations of the environment and water sectors. Already active in the field of climate change adaptation at the time of the low carbon strategy preparation were the agriculture, forestry, civil protection, spatial planning, public health and to some degree the energy sector.

Additional information which was collected during the interviews with experts gives a deeper insight into characteristics of the policy development process. According to this information the process was:

- participatory – a lot of effort was put into inclusion of stakeholders and a wide array participated,
- consensus oriented – a key orientation was to produce a document that has a high degree of stakeholder consensus and is widely accepted,
- transparent and open – all documents were published on the website of the Government Office for Climate Change and e-news were provided to interested persons,
- intersectoral coordination took place; the effect of the process will nevertheless probably be weak, since simultaneous policy development was missing.

The majority of interviewees stated that the process was, in the sense of their own definition, professionally led. Additional comments were:

- The process encountered a crisis due to a change of the political situation. In April 2011, when the first parties started to leave the then governing coalition, the administration stopped working. This situation of administrative standstill lasted about a year. Due to the uncertain further course of events no project could be started.

- As regards the low carbon strategy it is, at the moment, very difficult to predict what will happen next.
- It would be necessary to motivate decision-makers – find “levers” so that decision-makers would recognise the climate change topic as politically relevant. With reference to public relations, the process should be running before the eyes of the widest possible public.
- The team, which was leading the process of strategy preparation, should include experts from some additional fields such as climate change adaptation. A “nucleus” should be created that would cooperate with, and connect, all ministries. The administration should be integrated as regards information flows and real mainstreaming of climate change issues should be effected.
- A good process is one that offers an opportunity to question or review the established ideas. During the low carbon strategy preparation process different actors were included from the beginning. Stakeholders were extremely varied: administration, NGOs, experts, economic sector etc. In this sense, the process was professionally well organised. The concern is that the document was prepared in a very short time and this raises questions about its completeness. It might be better to have a longer process that would make it possible to learn from each other and to generate new ideas. Practically, this could be achieved by organising additional workshops, so that the problems could first be raised and discussed; in a second step solutions could be searched for. It was too demanding to have both steps in one and the same workshop: participants could generally just contribute ideas they already had before or talk nonsense. There should be another round of discussing the strategy, so that it could be checked whether all that has been put into the document is valid.

The interviews revealed little evidence of conflicts in the policy drafting process. The majority of the observed conflicts was between the „new“ climate change sector and sectors that traditionally deal with climate change relevant issues, such as civil protection or the environment. One sector, namely the one concerned with water, avoided cooperation. Another observed disagreement was between the non-government sector and government officials. This tension existed already before the policy development process had commenced. Only in one case the conflict was evaluated as severe and in one case as rather severe. One interviewee noted that the workshops were sectoral, which diminished the possibility that intersectoral conflicts could surface.

### 3.5 Characteristics of the science-policy interface

The interviewees stated that the science-policy interface in the field of climate change adaptation in Slovenia was strongly determined by the fact that the country is very small and that, consequently, there is a narrow circle of persons working on climate change issues. The potential of such situation lies in easier and more open communication, greater inclusion and a high degree of rationality. On the other hand, a need for more transparency, more competition and a larger choice of experts in the field of climate change has been voiced. There appear to be also some established connections, which our interviewees saw as problematic.

Views about the quality of cooperation between scientists and policy makers range from very positive – both sides share the feeling that something should be done and there is willingness to cooperate – to rather negative ones – that scientists were just another hindrance to the process.

Due to a lack of funds, only one climate change adaptation related study was commissioned during the strategy preparation process. Otherwise the existing European and Slovenian documents, studies and data were used. A general remark was that the knowledge base in the field of adaptation is very limited and insufficient. As a consequence, in the low carbon strategy the improvement of the knowledge base, forecasting and adaptation methods is stated as first priority until the year 2020. Funding should to some extent be secured through the so called Climate Fund, which is one of the implementation instruments envisaged in the strategy. There are no concrete proposals for new institutions in the document and, given the fact that currently a debate about how to shrink the public sector is going on in Slovenia, it is unlikely that some new public institution would be established in the field of climate change adaptation in the short to medium term.

### 3.6 Impacts of climate change adaptation related activities

From the responses to the web questionnaire and those given during the interviews we (the authors) identified some degree of optimism regarding the impacts of climate change adaptation related activities. The respondents and interviewees expect that within the next five years concrete effects of adaptation policy will become visible and that other sectors will be transformed by this policy as well.

The respondents to the online questionnaire stated that the awareness of climate change adaptation issues in the public administration has increased to some extent in the past three years, most notably in the agriculture, water, civil protection and health sectors. Most responsive to adaptation issues raised by the low carbon strategy were apparently the agriculture, civil protection and disaster relief, spatial planning and health sectors.



As to changes in policies and practices of the target groups addressed by the strategy, a need for strict implementation mechanisms was expressed, which would in a way “force” the policy sectors to react. Other opinions on the topic were:

- The top level politicians have not recognised the significance of the topic and the necessity to implement measures.
- There was no impact on politicians (as a result of the drafting of the low carbon society strategy), the Government Office of Climate Change was abolished; and no money is available.
- In the field of adaptation the impacts are currently very scarce. Due to lacking funds measures will not be implemented even where the people would want to have them. One example is water management in agriculture – the problems have been recognised, but the funding is limited and there is a mismatch between the need for implementation of measures and available finances.

### 3.7 Strengths and weaknesses

Elaboration of the *Strategy for the transition of Slovenia to a low carbon society by 2060* was based on a clear political mandate from the then Slovenian parliament and government. An institutional body, i.e. the Government Office of Climate Change was established with the task to prepare a climate change strategy and law. There was a small but dedicated team at the Office which prepared the draft climate change strategy and act in a very short time – about two years. The Slovenian NGOs praised the process of strategy preparation for its participatory and consensus oriented approach.

However, the interviews and questionnaire responses revealed that the process was accompanied by several problems as well:

- there was strong opposition and lobbying against the climate change policy process within the public administration and from the outside;
- some important sectors were non-responsive;
- the knowledge base was insufficient and the science and experts did not manage to provide the requisite background studies in the short time;
- with the political crisis in 2011 and the subsequent change of government the process came to a standstill.

Interviewees also claimed that there exist further serious obstacles to successful climate change adaptation policy making in Slovenia, such as:

- The topic of climate change has not been internalised by the politicians/political parties, it is always coming from the outside. Moreover, from the point of view of decision-makers the issue is marginal.
- Each government has its own view on the climate change adaptation policy making and implementation. Besides, governments so far have taken an institutional approach to dealing with the issue even though the institutional setup is not essential. There is a lack of continuity – each succeeding government burns down all the bridges the earlier one has constructed.
- The policy in Slovenia is lacking simultaneousness. There is no real-time influence of climate change policy on other sectors. Issues are identified, but then sectors need to take further steps and this does not work.

With reference to the science-policy chain, interviewees noted that in Slovenia there is a small community of persons dealing with climate change and that practically “everybody knows everybody”. This makes communication easier and bears the potential for an efficient organization and strong cooperation. The interviewees observed, however, that this situation leads to limited choice of experts and too little competition. Also transparency is lacking, for example, with reference to decisions about the themes funded by the public agency responsible for research.

On a more general level, interviewees pointed out an inadequate management of knowledge needs by policy developers. A plan of policy development is prepared for each year, whereas the need for research should be known at least three years in advance. If policy developers do not communicate their needs, scientists do not know which (basic) research results will be useful for policy development.



## 4 Conclusions, recommendations, policy options

As indicated several times during the analysis, the process of the low-carbon strategy preparation practically stopped after the change of government in early 2012 and the subsequent reorganisation of the national administration. Above that, climate change issues were further marginalised in the face of the financial and economic crisis and efforts to cope with it. This is reflected also in the fact that no funding was available for implementation of the adaptation strategy for agriculture and forestry beyond the activities of public bodies in 2012.

At this moment – that is in January 2013 – we are facing yet another serious political crisis with an uncertain outcome. In this situation it is quite impossible to give any reliable outlook on the further development of adaptation policy and governance. It is reasonable to believe that activities already running within sectors or those connected with international obligations will go on.

As regards the possibility for a “breakthrough” we would like to draw on information and ideas provided by the persons who kindly shared their knowledge and experience with us during the interviews. Suggestions they expressed included the following:

- Continuity in the institutional framework would bring positive effects.
- More mainstreaming of climate change adaptation is needed – the politicians should support the efforts, implementing institutions should recognise what their interests are.
- In the reform programme which is being prepared by the Slovenian government, the low carbon society and adaptation to climate change should be seen as an opportunity. The strategy would gain importance if it was recognised [by decision-makers] that it indicates activities/measures that could contribute to economic recovery.
- The government should recognize adaptation as a “red thread” which connects all policies in the sense of content and financing.

## 5 References

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