

The BalticClimate toolkit: Bringing data and resources to key actors in the public and private sectors

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| Project name: | Baltic Challenges and Chances for Local and Regional Development Generated by Climate Change |
| Partners: | 23 partners from Germany, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden, plus 16 associated organisations in those countries and Russia. Managing partners are the Academy for Spatial Research and Planning, Germany; Environmental Projects Ltd., Latvia; the Centre for Climate Science and Policy Research, Sweden; the Regional Council of Central Finland; and Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre, in Estonia. |
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An unmet need: resources for local- and regional-level stakeholders

Climate change, a complex and cross-sectoral issue, is one of the most significant challenges faced by humankind. National and international efforts are crucial in responding to this challenge, but it is increasingly recognised that local and regional-level involvement is also vital – especially when it comes to actual implementation and results. These are the levels where choices regarding consumption and production are made and where mitigation can take place. Many adaptation measures are also implemented locally, such as in spatial or land-use planning. Furthermore, at the local level, the elements are of graspable size, stakeholders are familiar with one another, and decision-making and action are often faster than at higher levels of government. Often, the results are also most tangible at this level.

However, although awareness of climate change challenges is growing, local and regional level authorities often lack the support, resources, and experience they need to grapple with these issues.

Tools for the public and private sectors

The BalticClimate toolkit is designed to empower actors at the local and regional levels who play an important role in preparing, financing and making decisions about climate change measures. It is also meant to help actors identify opportunities for positive economic, environmental, and social development they can capitalise on as they respond to the climate challenge.

As a key cross-sectoral issue closely linked with sustainable development, climate change requires an integrated approach involving a range of local and regional decision-makers, stakeholders and supporters. Cooperation should also stretch across municipality and county borders and include both urban and the rural areas.

The toolkit focuses on supporting the development of small and medium-sized cities, rural areas and their surrounding regions within the Baltic Sea Region. It is specifically tailored to **policy-makers, spatial planners and the business community** – groups which have been identified as climate related leverage points.

The BalticClimate toolkit, which is available, free of charge, at toolkit.balticclimate.org, provides an overview of climate change issues in the region as well as customised information and tools for each of the three target audiences – all in 11 Baltic Sea Region languages plus English.

Understanding climate change: scenarios and impacts

For all users, the toolkit provides an overview of climate science, with answers to frequently asked questions, as well as a closer look at climate change in the Baltic Sea Region under two different scenarios – one with continued rapid growth and intensive energy use, another with slower growth and lower energy use. The scenarios, which span a 100-year period, are available for the region as a whole as well as for selected sub-regions.

The toolkit also offers projections, under those scenarios, for impacts on three key sectors – agriculture, energy, and housing, including water – as well as on the overall economy, on forestry, on health, and on the natural environment. Regional and country-specific information is provided, all based on scientific studies. In each sector, the toolkit identifies trends and possible challenges and/or opportunities.

The toolkit leads users through information and processes appropriate for their roles, allowing them to assess their vulnerability and their options in a way that is tailored to their needs.



Photo: wood pellets for fuel

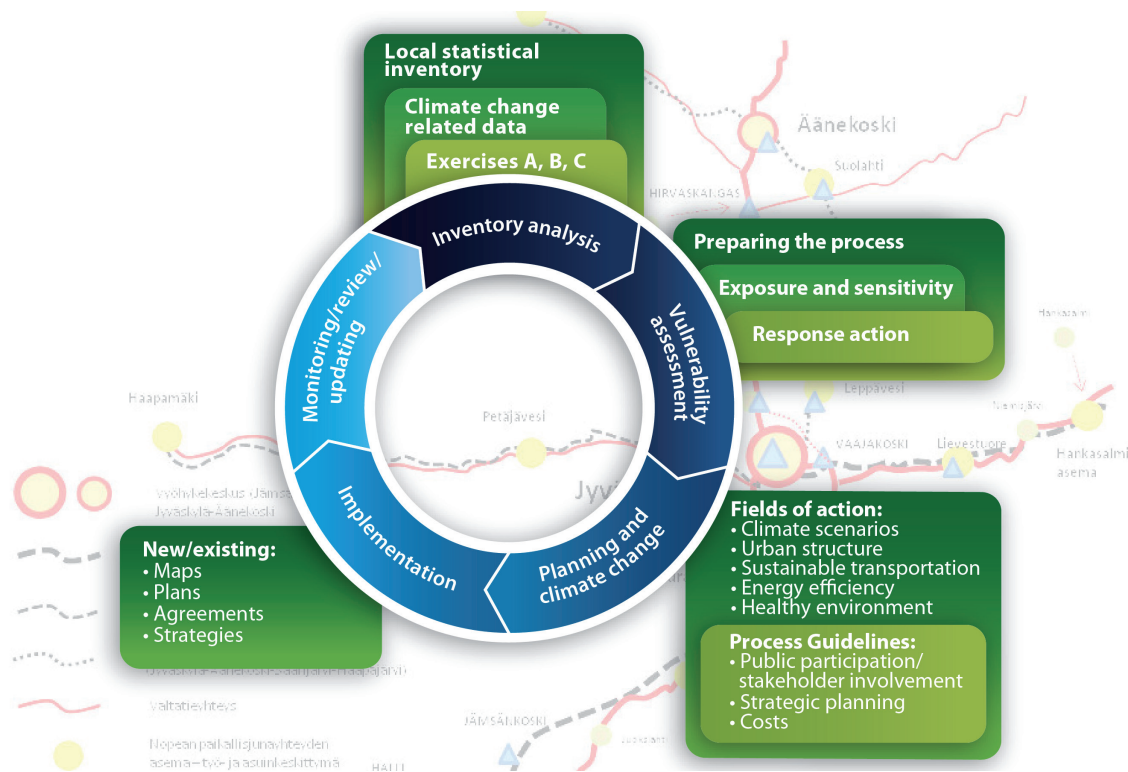


Figure 1: Toolkit guidance for spatial planners

The toolkit also provides concrete examples from within the Baltic Sea Region to support users in identifying their own ‘win-win-win’ solutions supporting adaptation, mitigation, and economic development. The examples present good planning practices at different levels, as well as outputs of exercises done by the project partners with the toolkit. In total, there are over 120 examples covering 15 topics.

Tailored tools for policy-makers, planners and businesses

The tools for **policy-makers** focus on the most crucial challenges they face: recognising the problem, understanding their options, laying the groundwork, and actually implementing policies. One tool provided for them is a set of checklists summarising the most important planning aspects of climate change mitigation and adaptation on the regional, general and detailed levels.

Spatial planners, in turn, are addressed with more detailed scientific information, which is linked to more basic or illustrative information. The tools consist of a bundle of exercises and planning guidelines to prepare for the first steps of decision-making and responding to climate change in terms of the relevant spatial entity (see Figure 1). For example, the Vulnerability Assessment framework, developed in the BalticClimate project, allows planners at the local level to assess challenges and opportunities related to climate change.

The section for the **business community** focuses on small- and medium-size enterprises’ main concerns: the potential impacts of climate change (and climate policies) on product or service-oriented businesses and the opportunities and threats that can arise under new circumstances. Here, the tools, such as a Climate SWOT analysis, consist of a series of steps to support the business community in strategic planning. A new twist to the traditional SWOT is that it emphasises the life-cycle perspective. Based on their results from the Climate SWOT, businesses are guided to formulate a climate strategy for the company.



toolkit.balticclimate.org



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