

New European Topic Centre will help improve information on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation across Europe

Vulnerability of natural and human systems is increasing across Europe due to climate change combined with many other factors such as intensified land use, urban expansion and infrastructure development. Adaptation actions are emerging focusing on the most vulnerable areas, sectors and people. National adaptation strategies have been adopted in a number of countries and a Commission White paper on Adaptation to Climate change has been published, followed by further policy development and implementation activities.

The European Topic Centre on Climate Change impacts, vulnerability and Adaptation (ETC/CCA) is addressing information needs in this area. It started its work in Jan 2011 under contract to the European Environment Agency (EEA). The ETC/CCA will ensure high quality and science based support to the EEA and its European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) in the area of climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation. The EEA aims to help achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment by providing timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information to policymakers and the public.

In recent years, the EEA has contracted European Topic Centres as consortia of the best European institutions that combine their skills and expertise to carry out specific tasks, to deal with specific environmental topics and perform specific activities as defined in the EEA strategy. The "Call for Proposal" for this European Topic Centre was published in the spring of 2010 and in the summer of 2010 the contract was awarded to the ETC/CCA consortium which is headed by the Italian Euro-Mediterranean Center for Climate Change (CMCC). A framework partnership agreement has been established between EEA and the ETC CCA consortium.

The main aim of ETC/CCA is to improve information among European countries on 1) data and indicators on climate change and its impacts across sectors and regions, 2) assessment of climate change vulnerabilities and natural hazard risks to society and ecosystems and 3) current or planned adaptation strategies and actions. The ETC/CCA will make use of GMES services and will also support development of user requirements. The ETC/CCA will also contribute to the EU Shared Environmental Information System in the area of climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation by helping to make the relevant information more easily available for European policy-makers and citizens. Moreover, the work program of the ETC/CCA also includes contributions to the EEA's thematic assessment reports e.g. on freshwater and coastal systems and to the next pan-European State-of-the-Environment report. The ETC/CCA will, in cooperation with the European Commission and EEA member countries, contribute to the Adaptation Clearinghouse for Europe currently being developed.

The ETC/CCA consortium will work under the technical and scientific supervision of Dr. Sergio Castellari of CMCC. The consortium consists, in addition to the coordinating Italian institution, of nine other partners from various European countries: Alterra (The Netherlands), National Environmental Research Institute at Aarhus University (Denmark), Charles University Environment Center (Czech Republic), Fundação da Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal), Met Office Hadley Centre (United Kingdom), Finnish Environment Institute (Finland), Thetis S.p.A. (Italy), Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ (Germany) and Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (Spain). The framework agreement between EEA and the ETC/CCA consortium is valid from 2011 to 2013. CMCC, and its consortium partners, will use their internationally well recognized expertise on climate science within the EIONET.

The ETC/CCA's kick-off meeting took place in Copenhagen at European Environment Agency, on 19/20 January 2011.

ECC/CCA web site: <http://etc-cca.eionet.europa.eu/>

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If you'd like more information on this topic, or to schedule an interview with Dr. Sergio Castellari, please e-mail Mauro Buonocore at mauro.buonocore@cmcc.it