

SEI contribution to NWP synthesis publication

As the weADAPT platform and the Nairobi Work Programme take shape, it is an opportune time to reflect on the results achieved and lessons learned thus far through work undertaken as part of the Stockholm Environment Institute's action pledge.

The weADAPT platform captures emerging experiences, providing the opportunity to widen the geographical coverage and deepen the level of understanding across the spectrum of adaptation advice. The collective platform brings together a growing number of contributors and partners to shape new, innovative and practical tools, and to build competence through learning by doing.

What has been achieved?

After over two years of developing the weADAPT platform, SEI and its partner organisations have made substantial progress both in developing the technical aspects of a cutting edge web-based platform to deliver adaptation advice, and in building an operational network of groups working on various aspects of climate adaptation. A range of tools have been developed to capture and transfer knowledge on adaptation, leverage available data, and assist users in taking adaptation decisions (see table below). Having supported users in applying these tools we have a much better understanding of the needs of different users, and based on this are further developing various technical aspects of the platform, the supporting guidance and training material, and the way we work with users in applying the tools.

Table 1: overview of tool's currently available through the weADAPT platform

Tools	Description	Users
Climate Change Explorer (CCx)	A software tool for accessing and visualising downscaled climate data from multiple models	Adaptation planners needing to review historical climate trends and scenarios of future climates
wikiADAPT	A collaborative website where multiple users easily create and edit interlinked Web pages on topics pertaining to climate adaptation	Those seeking guidance and information on adaptation and keen to share experiences and lessons
Adaptation Layers in Google Earth	A set of place marks viewable in Google Earth, showing the location and a synopsis of existing adaptation efforts	Those who need to locate existing adaptation projects, studies, organisations, downscaled climate data, etc.
Adaptation Decision Explorer (ADx)	A software tool to screen and support the selection of adaptation options	Those tasked with selecting adaptation measures and balancing different priorities
Water Evaluation And Planning (WEAP)	A software tool that takes an integrated approach to water resources planning	Water planners and managers evaluating various adaptation measures

There are now 700 registered editors for the wiki element of the platform, spanning donors, researchers, NGOs and some private sector representatives.

The knowledge and guidance provided on the site is continuously being expanded and improved.

Connections between leading organisations working in different fields critical to supporting climate adaptation have been strengthened, and these collaborations have generated innovative results, not possible in isolation. These engagements have given rise to new problem framings and laid important ground for enabling knowledge integration. Training efforts have built capacity in all those involved (participants and trainers alike) by bringing together a variety of expertise and taking a learning by doing approach.

As a result of these various activities, weADAPT partners are now in a position to combine the power of new information and communication technologies to develop and share adaptation advice and assistance with a variety of organisations.

What lessons have been learned?

There is a strong desire for 'easy answers' or 'simple solutions' to adaptation. Top down guidelines continue to proliferate. This leads to an over emphasis on individual tools or an over reliance on single information sources, when climate adaptation in most instances requires a much more nuanced and contextual approach, using a medley of tools and information streams in order to deal with the complexity of the issues.

It has become clear that there is a rapidly growing demand for the kind of information and services that weADAPT provides. Many individuals and organisations are showing an interest in participating in weADAPT activities, both to benefit from the data, information, tools and guidance already available through weADAPT, and to share with others their own experiences in developing adaptation strategies and implementing adaptation measures. We have however also learned that while collaboration is a widely held aspiration, in reality growing a partnership is usually a challenging and protracted process that requires long-term engagements to establish common goals, identify shared benefits and overcome many barriers in an effort to establish and maintain an effective working relationship. That said, it is exactly this iterative process of mutually seeking the most appropriate way forward that leads to really effective and productive work on adaptation. An important part of this is time spent on each partner learning what the other can provide and what it is they need, in order to find ways of fitting the new tools and approaches into existing frameworks and protocols as much as possible. We have learned that time spent doing this is time well spent, and goes a long way in figuring out how to get a better match between demand and supply, and that allowing for flexibility is critical.

Our most innovative work in weADAPT has occurred as the result of collaboration between organisations with diverse areas of expertise and ways of approaching problems. The diversity obtained by combining knowledge and experiences from a variety of perspectives and domains is necessary for addressing complex challenges such climate change. Creating space and allowing time for these conversations to occur is vital if we are to reduce the gap between

those developing tools and guidance and those who seek to apply them to address their problems or answer their questions.

What can be replicated?

The approach weADAPT has taken of bringing together people working on different areas of adaptation, for example climatologists and local development project officers, can be replicated in order to enable innovation and aid groups in building an understanding of others and thereby identifying what is needed and what is possible in terms of supporting adaptation.

The application and refining of tools and the sharing of data, experiences and lessons can and should continue to be replicated.

What are the emerging opportunities and challenges to further the work of promoting knowledge sharing and learning?

There is an ever-expanding amount of guidance, advice, methods and tools for adaptation, which represents both an opportunity and a challenge. The quality of this information varies greatly, as does the suitability of the tools to achieving different purposes. It is therefore becoming more of a challenge for people to distil useful lessons and select information most appropriate to their context.

There is still huge global inequity in terms access to information and resources for tackling climate change and so there is a danger of reinforcing existing vulnerability distributions and a challenge to find ways of overcoming this. The potential of delivering information via mobile phones is expanding, and could help to address some of the issues around limited internet access.

Emerging technologies such as Google Earth, semantic searching, user-tagging and social bookmarking provide a big opportunity to help users navigate the web-based content and find relevant and credible information.

The increasing number of groups working on climate adaptation, creating knowledge platforms and networks, provides the potential for much greater collaboration and innovation, as well as some constructive competition and diversity. As discussed above, the realities of creating enduring and meaningful partnerships presents a challenge and will require resources specifically aimed at fostering new linkages and collaboration within the adaptation community, but also with those in related fields that have important experiences and lessons relevant to climate adaptation to share.

Two recent developments underlie the emerging opportunities. weADAPT 3.0 is in development, bringing together a new archive of climate scenarios at the University of Cape Town, a simple interface to collect and present information from across the internet, quality assurance mechanisms and registration of organisations as well as individuals (and cross-registration with other sites). SEI has launched a spin-off, the Global Climate Adaptation Partnership (GCAP), to manage the weADAPT platform and provide value-added services to clients seeking sound advice on climate adaptation. These developments will ensure a professional and sustained contribution to the Nairobi Work Programme.