

Regional Climate Services Workshop 2011

THE PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICAL DECISION MAKERS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE BALTIC SEA

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This presentation is divided into six parts:

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Sample**
- 3. Presentation of Data**
- 4. Results: knowledge consumption**
- 5. Conclusions**
- 6. Future Research**

Introduction

Knowledge Consumption

PolPer: Baltic 2011: A survey of political stakeholders' perceptions of climate change and adaptation in the Baltic Sea region

Dennis Bray and Grit Martinez

The purpose of this survey was to assess communications between scientists and regional political stakeholders, and to assess perspectives of adaptation strategies as perceived by regional decision makers.

The Samples

The survey was conducted using email invitations containing a url to a web based survey.

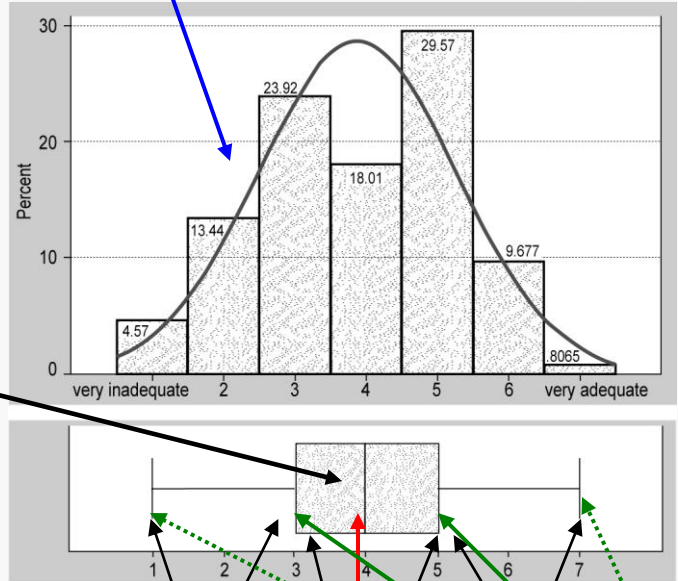
The sample consisted of a compiled list of regional political decision makers located in the German Baltic coastal region.

The effective mailout consisted of 1110 email invitations (German Baltic Sea Region). The response rate was 103, approximately 9%.

The response for the surveys of regional political decision makers does not appear distinct from other such undertakings (See Euro Barometer Special Report on Citizens Perspectives of Climate Change (October 2011)).

Presentation of data

The *histogram* shows the percentage of persons answering that response option



The location of the box represents the perception of the middle 50% of respondents.

The shorter the box in length the greater the level of consensus among the middle 50% of the scientists

Spread of responses

25% 50% 25% of responses

Displays both **central tendency** and **spread**

Boxplots

illustrate the median, spread and data values, providing a visual assessment of the degree of consensus.

Lowest and highest values are indicated by ‘whiskers’ extending from the boxes.

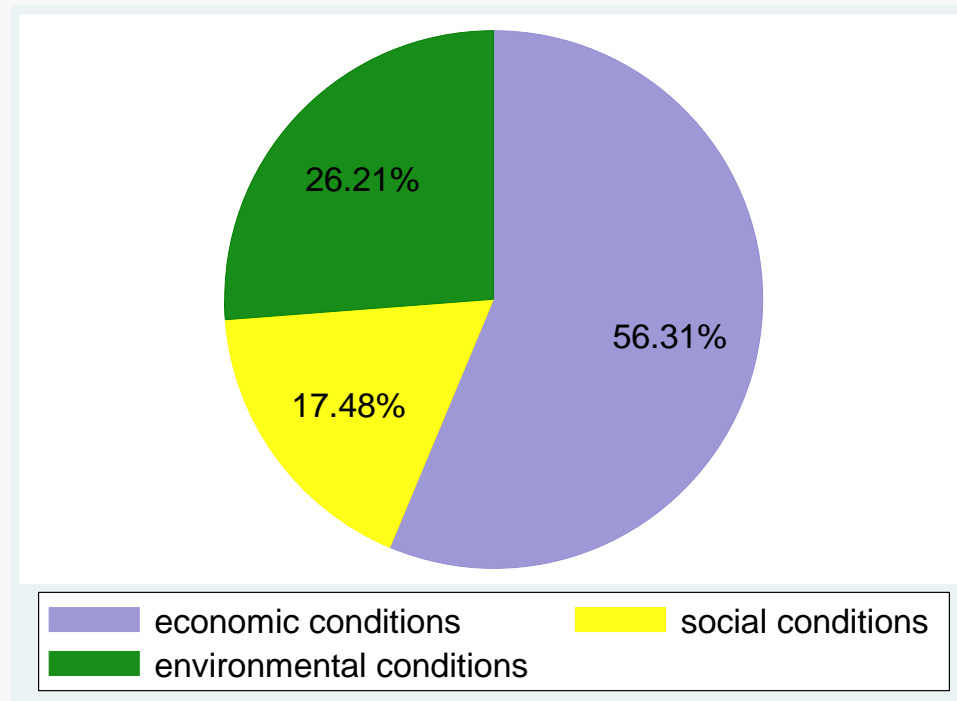
The boxes contain the 50% of total values falling between the 25th and 75th percentile, meaning that 50% of the cases have values within the box, 25% have values larger than the upper boundary and 25% have values less than the lower boundary.

The length of the box indicates how much spread there is in the data values within the middle 50 percentile. If, for example, one box is much longer than another then the data values in the longer box have more variability. The length of the box is considered to suggest scientific consensus and the location of the box to represent scientific assessment.

The 'box' then represents where consensus lies and what the consensus concerns, without including any extreme positions.

**And now what political decision
makers at the Baltic Sea region think ...**

Rating the regional political importance of environmental issues by decision makers



In Germany, most concern is directed towards economic conditions

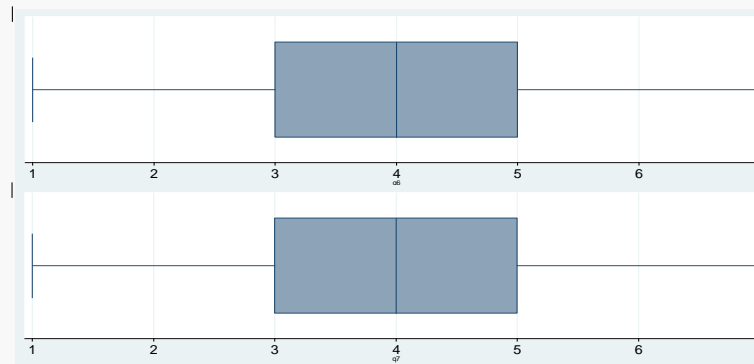
Communication and usability of scientific climate knowledge for practical use in community politics

Utility of scientific knowledge for regional political decision makers

The results of science that you refer to in order to make decisions are often

Not understandable

Very understandable



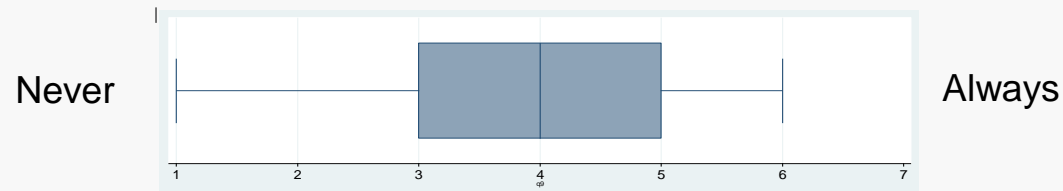
Of little use

Of great use

The regional political decision makers do not find scientific information or overly understandable or of significant use in its current format

Scientific understanding of decision makers' needs

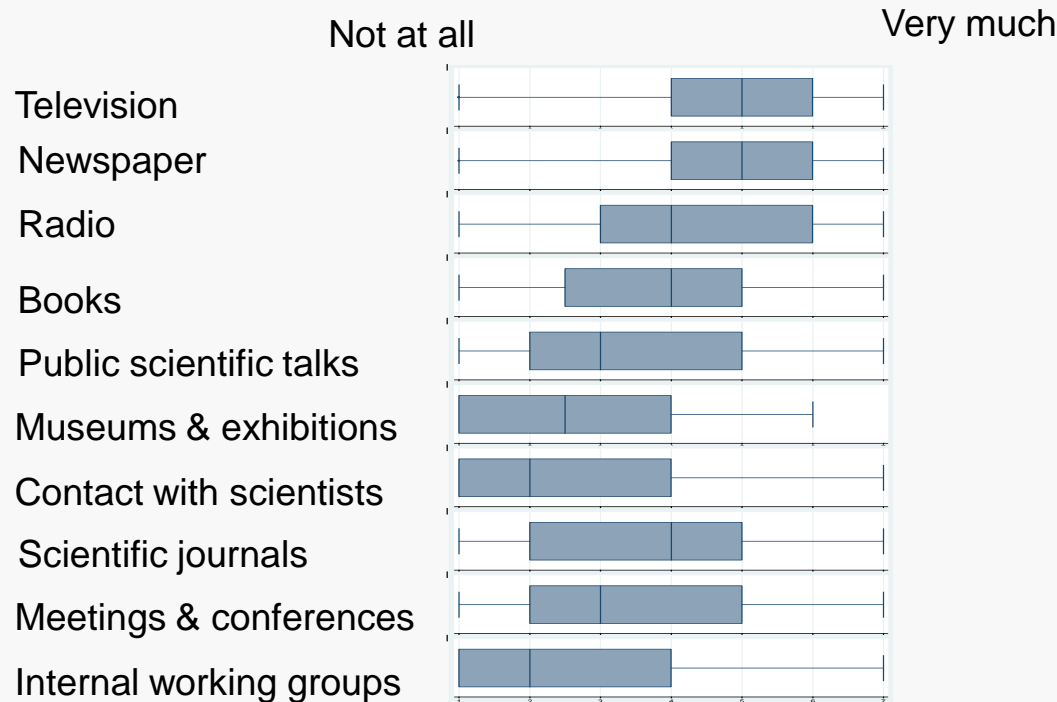
Scientists know what information you need to design effective policy and take appropriate action



Regional decision makers are not even confident that science is aware of their knowledge needs.

Decision makers information sources?

How much do you use the following sources of information?

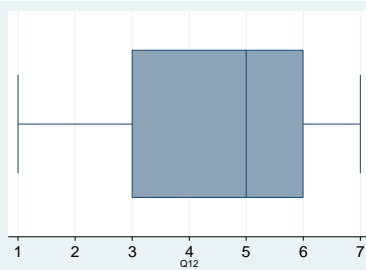


Public media takes precedents over science as a source of information

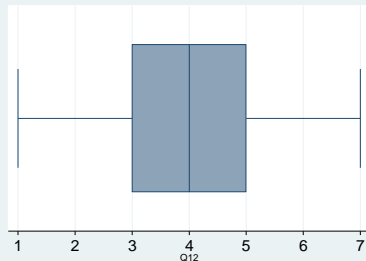
Adaptation and Adaptation Strategies

Worry about climate change

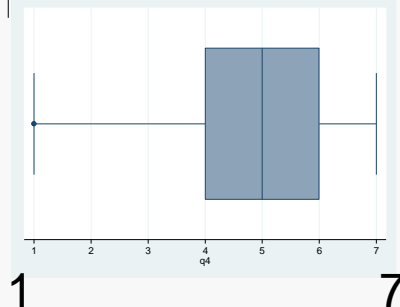
BALTEX
scientists



German sub-set
scientists



Decision makers



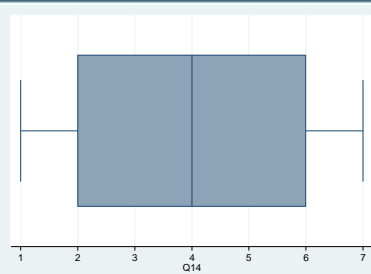
How convinced are you that *climate change* poses a very serious threat to the Baltic Sea region in which you live?
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very much

In your opinion and for the area in which you live, *climate change* is something a person should be
not be worried about at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 be very worried about

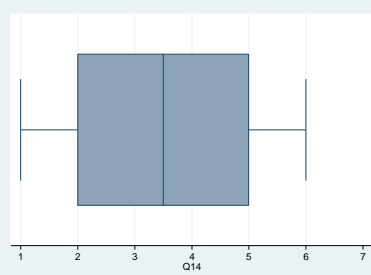
Decision makers are slightly more concerned about the threat of *climate change* than German scientists working in the Baltic region

Worry about sea level rise

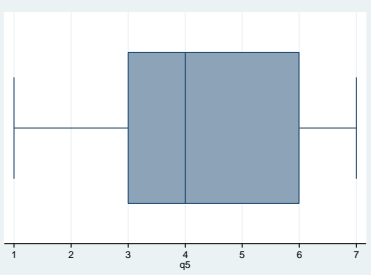
BALTEX
scientists



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Decision makers

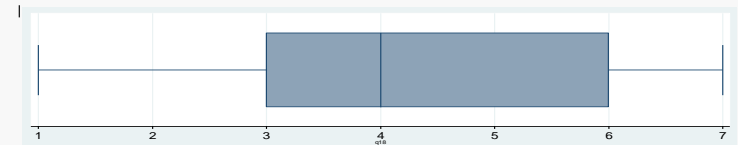
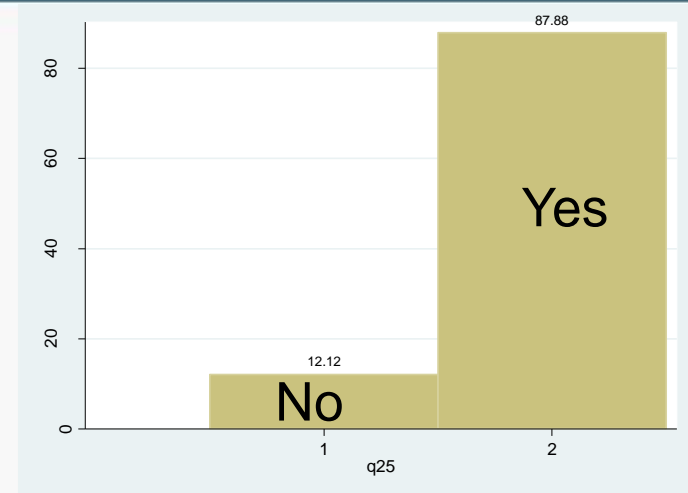


How convinced are you that *sea level rise* poses a very serious threat to the Baltic Sea region in which you live?
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very much

In your opinion and for the area in which you live, *sea level rise* is something a person should be *not worried about at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very worried about*

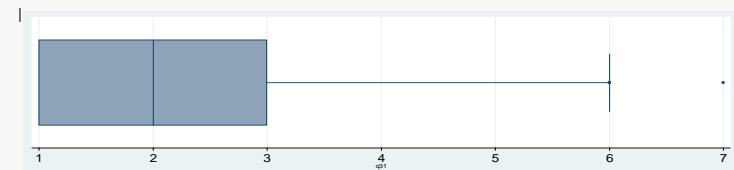
Decision makers are slightly more concerned about the threat of *sea level rise* than German scientists working in the Baltic region

- Are adaptation measures required?
- Concerning climate change and sea level rise, policy and action should focus on
- In your opinion, adaptive strategies, should they be necessary, should be



Mitigation

Adaptation



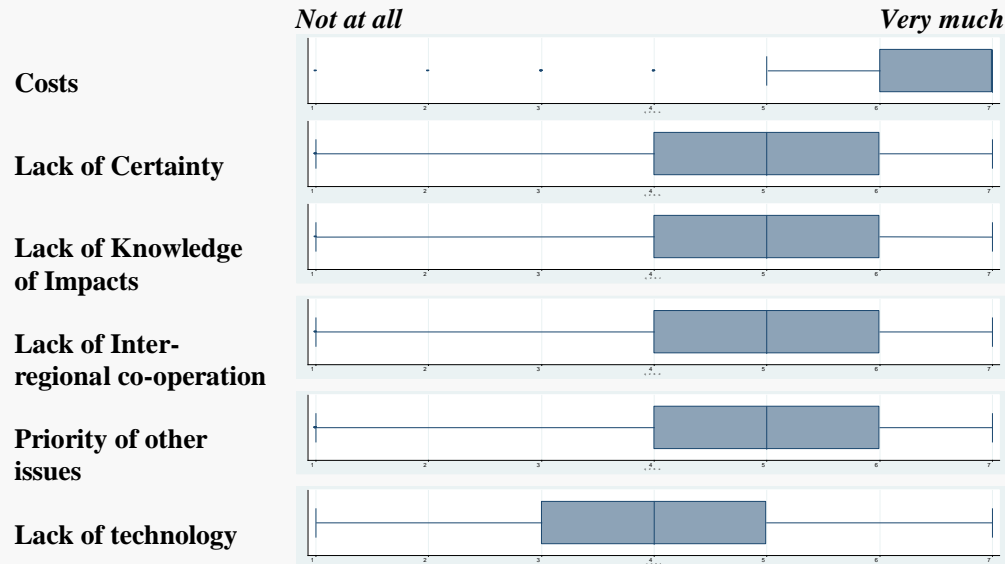
Proactive

reactive

What hinders the implementation of adaptation measures?

Hinderance to the Implentation of Regional Adaptation Strategies.

In your opinion, if adaptation measures are necessary, how much do the following concerns prevent adequate adaptation measures from being put into place?



Economic concerns are definitely at the forefront of implementing adaptation measures.

Conclusion

According to regional political decision makers in the German Baltic region, climate change and sea level rise are perceived of as problems and there is a need for proactive and immediate action in adaptation.

Financial resources are a constraint to motivation to adaptation. Further barriers are lack of pragmatism from local authorities/ interregional co-operation.

Which concrete adaptation activities can be undertaken are unclear.

In order to have a clear understanding of climate change, stakeholders need understandable information tailored to their needs.

Proposed Future Research

Under this blanket of co-operation plans are underway to extend the sample of regional political decision makers to include the full international Baltic community and other international regions with similar conditions (e.g. Chesapeake Bay/ East Coast of the US)

It is our hypotheses that recent history/ cultural features will have a significant impact on:

1. Knowledge production

- what types of knowledge it is deemed necessary to produce (useable knowledge)

2. Knowledge consumption

- what are considered as valid sources (already it has been suggested in the eastern Baltic that news sources are treated with suspicion and science is afforded high credibility, somewhat opposite to the western Baltic)

3. Knowledge in action

- what resistance to change exists under differing historical and political circumstance and what might be a means of reaching a common consensus

Whole set of activities:

Autumn 2011:

Workshops with political decision makers in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia (Ecologic/HZG)

Winter 2011/12:

Continue with (online) survey in Baltic Sea Region, Chesapeake Bay & Eastcoast of the US/)/stakeholder focus groups (Ecologic/HZG)

Summer 2010:

Analysis of perceptions of main stakeholders at the German Baltic Sea (ministries/policy makers/communities) (Ecologic)

Autumn 2011:

Qualitative telephon-interviews with stakeholders at the German Baltic Sea Coast (Ecologic/ Bay of Kiel Alliance)

Summer 2011:

Workshops with stakeholders from the Baltic Sea in Berlin (Ecologic/HZG/SMHI)

Spring 2011:

Quantitative (online) survey amongst political decision-makers at the German Baltic Sea (HZG/Ecologic)



BALTEX

Baltic Sea Experiment

World Climate Research Programme / Global Energy and Water Cycle Experiment
WCRP GEWEX

A survey of the perceptions
of regional political decision makers
concerning climate change and adaptation
in the German Baltic Sea region

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Thank you!

Full report online available!

<http://ecologic.eu/4290>