

Communication challenges at the science-policy interface: Lessons from the ‘Portuguese Sorcerer’

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UKCIP have learnt many lessons around the importance of communicating climate information particularly in making the convincing argument of the need to plan for the future. One of the biggest lessons is the differing understanding of the terminology used.

The tools and resources of the UKCIP Adaptation Wizard have been used by many businesses and organisations in communicating relevant climate information to support the planning and implementing involved with adaptation to climate change.

Through the experiences with the Wizard, there are a range of communication challenges that emerge when delivering scientific information to decision makers. The diversity of communication needs is huge, and a common approach in delivering scientific information is not always a guarantee of an appropriate response under all situations.

This presentation will explore the communication lessons uncovered through the process of adapting the UKCIP Adaptation Wizard in 2015 by the Portuguese. In particular, we will outline how specific issues of ‘translation’ were addressed. A particular ‘translation’ issue is to ensure the consistency with the Portuguese culture and norms. For example, does the title ‘Portuguese Sorcerer’ really describe an online climate change adaptation tool in the same way as the internationally regarded UKCIP Adaptation Wizard?

There are also many lessons learnt in how the Wizard was made ‘fit for purpose’ in communicating climate change information to 26 municipalities in Portugal, with participants of varying levels of exposure and understanding of the issues.

We will put the case for addressing the range communication challenges that occur across a diverse audience by in fact increasing the communication efforts of a project team.

Specifically relating to the communication of climate change information, we will describe the need to deliver the unwanted messages to the community in order to help them deal with not only the future climate predictions, but the challenges they are experiencing associated with the current climate and its variabilities.