

Vulnerability Analysis

THE POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES



How Vulnerable are the Political and Administrative Structures in the Metropolitan Region Bremen-Oldenburg?

Political and administrative structures play an important role in climate adaptation. Political scientific analysis can identify factors and scopes of action, which could increase the adaptive capacity. The Governance Team therefore investigated key sectors in the Metropolitan Region, including spatial planning, water management, coastal and inland flood protection, and civil protection.

“Well-positioned with room for improvement”: Key results regarding the adaptive capacity

Climate adaptation is generally recognized as an issue in all sectors and motivation for adaptation exists. Learning processes can be identified in all areas; comprehensive information is present and accessible to a high degree. Moreover, a well functioning cooperative effort has been established between the two states of Bremen and Lower Saxony, and there is good networking of the various actors.

At the same time however, a comprehensive need for action is apparent, for it is in this area that future strategies will have to be initiated. The coordination between various institutions and sectors needs to be improved. Only in this way can climate adaptation be meaningfully integrated into existing structures and processes. Moreover, the municipalities, which are ultimately responsible for the local implementation of measures, must be involved more effectively. Citizens' participation should be improved, too. In this respect, it is important to involve the poor, the elderly and sick people, etc. thereby taking into account their special needs. In the medium and long term, the resource base for the implementation of climate adaptation needs to be strengthened.



Dimensions of institutional adaptive capacity

In the process of investigating the adaptive capacity, strength and weakness profiles were developed, based on the examination of eight dimensions:

Dimension	Explanation
Diversity	Incorporation of various actors, political/administrative levels, solutions and sectors. The presence of various perspectives on climate change will prevent the establishment of a constricted framework, while the diversity of solutions provides options for a variety of developments - which is important in view of the uncertainty of prognoses and the complexity of climate impacts.
Learning capacity	The ability of participating actors to learn. Are conclusions drawn from past experience and do actors regularly check their own assumptions?
Room for autonomous change	The ability to change and to drive change. An important factor here is whether current activities are being evaluated.
Leadership	Are leadership and incentives present? The question here is whether individual actors can move climate adaptation forward through their own commitment. Does the institutional structure allow the formation of coalitions and networks?
Resources	Presence of funding, sufficient personnel and the possibility of implementing one's objectives.
Fair governance	Upholding basic democratic principles and fairness. Are the rules fair and transparent, and is participation possible?
Adaptation motivation	Expert valuation on the importance of climate change. Only if key actors are amenable to adaptation it will also be possible to activate the other elements of adaptive capacity.
Adaptation belief	Assessment of experts on the practicability of adaptation measures. Only if key actors are convinced of the success of adaptation will it also be possible to activate the other elements of adaptive capacity.

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Different adaptive capacities in the various sectors

High adaptive capacity of water management and coastal and inland flood protection

In the water related sectors water management and coastal and inland flood protection, a high degree of adaptive capacity could be ascertained. The factors diversity, learning capacity and room for autonomous change are particularly strong here. That means that there is a set of various problem definitions and solution proposals, and as a result, a high degree of options for action as well as learning effects based on experience. At the same time, comprehensive activities for the evaluation and monitoring of current activities are being carried out. This can be explained by a high visibility, traceability and measurability of changes, a high adaptation motivation, as well as a high level of adaptation belief.

Medium adaptive capacity of spatial planning and civil protection

In spatial planning and civil protection, a medium level of adaptive capacity was ascertained. In both areas, a new perspective on the problem has not yet spread on any large scale, while at the same time there are weaknesses in the area of resources, some of them very serious. The linkages to societal processes of various types, and the reaction to them, are currently quite weak. This is to some extent due to the fact that neither spatial planning nor civil protection has to date been affected to any significant degree by environmental change. Moreover, both sectors are to a much lesser extent drawn into public debates and are much less the subject of reporting in the mass media. Furthermore, especially spatial planning lacks the ability to push its interests through politically, a factor, which is reflected in the low level of adaptive capacity on the part of the experts surveyed.

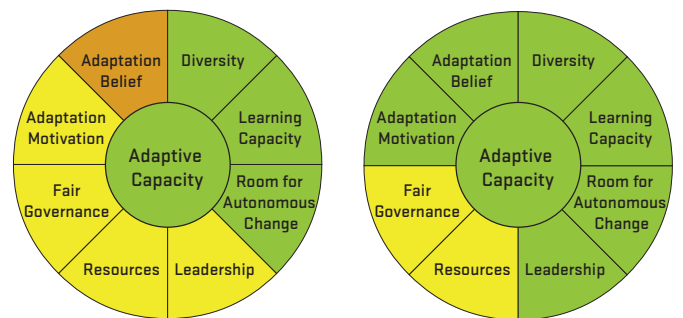


Figure 1: Strength/weakness profile Water Management (left) and Coastal and Inland Flood Protection (right)

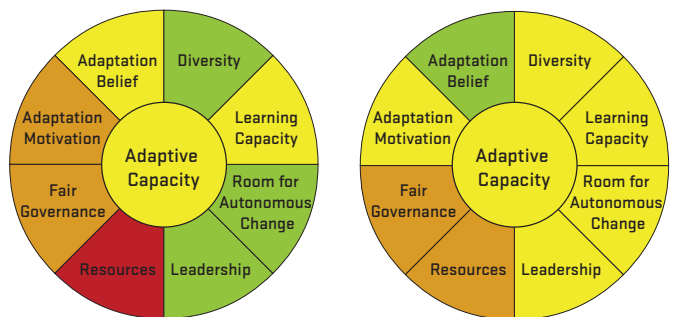


Figure 2: Strength/weakness profile Spatial Planning (left) and Civil Protection (right)

