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Improving access to data on climate change and its impacts

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Recent research on climate change, possible impacts and adaptation options in the Netherlands has been substantial and promising in the Netherlands. However:

• Results are often not available in a format that can be used directly by stakeholders who need to develop climate adaptation strategies. For example, the information on climate change in the brochure on the KNMI'06 climate scenarios (KNMI, 2006) only indicates the percentage change in the average and extreme rainfall. However, hydrologists, ecologists, agricultural researchers need time series or statistics to simulate the impact of changes in rainfall on groundwater levels, nature and crop production.

• In the Netherlands several organisations work for example on hydrology and ecosystems, all with their own specialisations. A cross-sectoral overview of the available data and information on climate change and its impacts is not available.

• Between various disciplines the results are often inconsistent. Firstly, because different climate scenarios, different spatial and/or temporal scales and different reference periods are used to compile the climate data sets. Furthermore, assumptions and simplifications made in one discipline (f.e. water levels in agricultural models) may not reflect the knowledge from other disciplines (in this case hydrology).

These shortcomings hamper the dissemination and proper use of data and information on climate change and its impacts.

In order to overcome some of the above-mentioned shortcomings, the "Climate Knowledge Facility – Tailoring" project was started. In this project we work on:

• A common web portal (pilot) to access to data and information on climate change and impacts to give more overview. A common structure for all disciplines will be used for background information on, amongst others used models, assumptions and uncertainties;

• Consultation on stakeholder requirements and feedback on the web portal;

• Pre- and post processing of data and information on climate, hydrology, nature/ecology, agriculture and land use scenarios (tailoring to stakeholder needs). In the first instance we will focus on tailoring of existing databases and existing tools/methods and the accompanying guidance for the use of the data.;

• Identifying inconsistencies in approaches between the above mentioned disciplines. For example, the projections for potential evapotranspiration in the future from the meteorological institute do not include the possible effect of increased CO2;

• Where possible, improving consistency between datasets from different disciplines by promoting the use of a limited number of combinations of climate scenarios and land use scenarios.

The project has a broad range of stakeholders: in the first instance we give most attention to researchers (universities, consultants), but in a later stage also to policy makers.

Results of the project and the set up of the web portal will be presented, this will be used for feedback from potential stakeholders in a later stage of the project.