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# GOAL - Governance of local climate adaptation: agenda-setting pathways and implementation modes in municipalities

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## Overview

- **Project GOAL**
- **WP2: International case studies**
- **WP3: Austrian case studies**
- **Preliminary conclusions**

## Key data

**Funding programme:** ACRP (KLIEN), 05 / 2016 – 04 / 2018

**Partnership:**

- Lead Partner: Umweltbundesamt  
Environment Agency Austria (UBA/EAA)
- Institute of Forest, Environmental and Natural Resource Policy,  
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (BOKU-  
InFER)
- Centre of Social Innovation (ZSI)
- Climate Alliance Austria (KBÖ)

**Duration:** 01.05.2016 – 30.04.2018 (2 years)

**Total budget:** € 297.995

## Problem and starting situation

- **Municipalities:** the crucial level for successfully managing the consequences of climate change
- **Convergence** of climate change-related **problems** and **opportunities to take action** on the local level:
  - Vulnerabilities to climate change, damage potentials and climate risks
  - Immediate and tangible adaptation needs
  - (Austrian) Municipalities are responsible for a range of adaptation-relevant competencies, tasks and fields of activities:
    - statutory municipal responsibilities
    - optional specific activity fields (e.g. tourism)
    - role of municipalities as provider of community services; construction, maintenance and operation of infrastructure (water, energy, transport, etc.)
    - Important cooperation partner of higher-level authorities in a range of sectors
  - Local knowledge (problems, experiences, actions)
  - Direct local benefit of adaptation measures

## Thematic focus und general objective

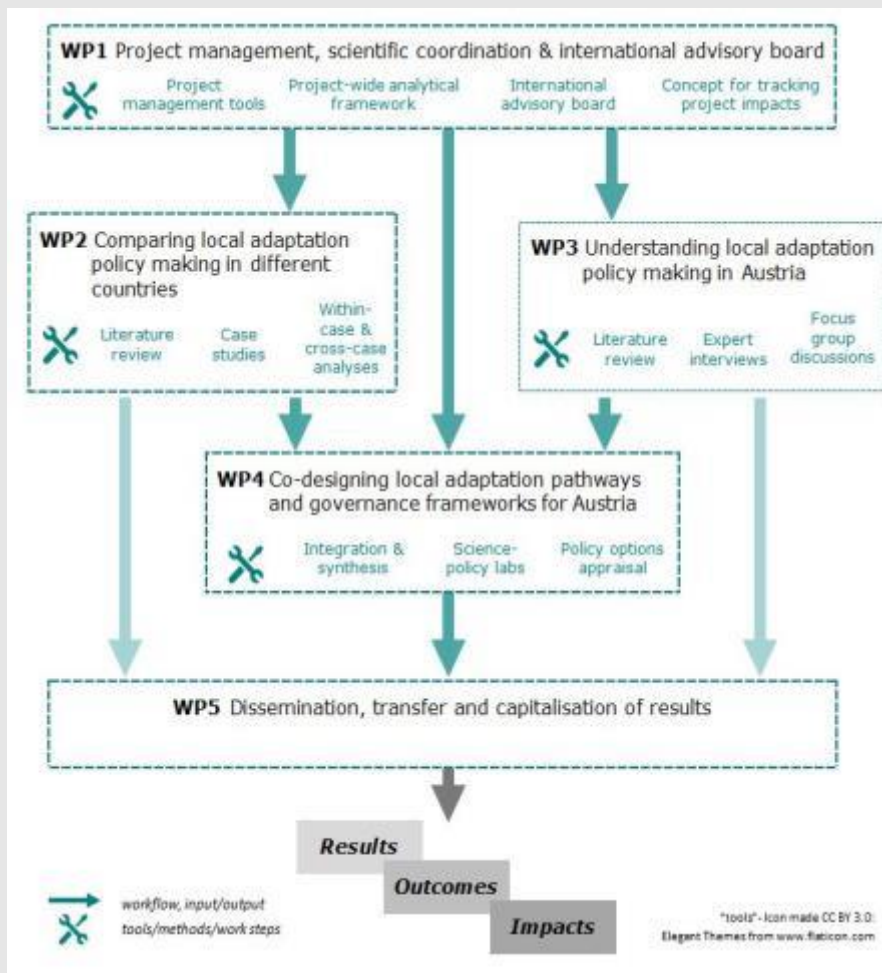
**Analyzing, identifying und co-designing** feasible **municipal adaptation pathways** for Austrian municipalities within a **multi-level governance setting** in order to support implementation of the Austrian adaptation strategy and action plan and bottom/up action.

### Research foci:

- **Agenda-setting pathways:** entry points, policy diffusion, mainstreaming of adaptation as a field of action on the local level
- **Implementation modes:** ways of integrating, institutionalizing and implementing adaptation in a durable way in the organization, structures and processes of municipalities
- Embedding of municipal climate adaptation into an enabling and facilitating **multi-level policy and governance framework**

**Scope: Municipalities with less than 30.000 inhabitants** (99% of all Austrian municipalities with 66% of the population)

# Project structure



## WP Leads:

- WP1: UBA (W. Lexer)
- WP2: BOKU (R. Steurer)
- WP3: ZSI (J. Feichtinger)
- WP4: UBA (W. Lexer)
- WP5: KBÖ (P. Schön)



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## WP2: Comparing local adaptation policy making in different countries (*WP-L: BOKU-InFER*)

**Goals:** Learning from climate-active municipalities in other countries (Europe, OECD) and drawing lessons on how to improve local adaptation policy making in Austria

- **Review** of international literature → 11 case studies, more than a dozen articles
- Developing analytical framework → 3-stages policy cycle analysis
- **Empirical case studies** in other countries
  - Determining case study design → 11 small municipalities in Bavaria, Germany
  - Conducting interviews → 21 semi-structured expert interviews
  - Within-case analysis → 11 single-case analyses
  - Cross-case analysis → 1 cross case analysis
- **Synthesis** of findings of literature review and international case studies
- **Drawing policy conclusions** and summarizing lessons that Austrian municipalities can learn from international experiences



## WP2: Findings on agenda-setting

**Question:** How and why did adaptation policies enter the local agenda?

- **Extreme weather** events in all 11 municipalities
  - Torrential rain (10x), floods (7x), drought (6x), summer heat (5x), storms (2x)
- **Uncertainties** in climate change projections did not play a role → reactive
- Little to **no distinction** between adaptation and mitigation
- **Key actors:** mayors and municipal officials
- Little to **no controversies** due to a non-political character of adaptation, lacking public interest, broad pro-environmental consensuses → reactive

## WP2: Findings on implementation

**Question:** Which measures were implemented and how?

- Adaptation is an **issue of water** (16 measures) and heat (8 measures)
  - Drainage (6x), flood protection (5x), retention (5x), forest / trees (4x), heat (4x)
- **No clear responsibilities** for adaptation
  - Young, well-educated climate change managers foster process
- **NAS not known** / not relevant on local level
- Municipalities highly appreciate **autonomy** in implementation
  - Little to no support used, mainly local cooperation, no information or data needed
- **Missing:** local capacities, expertise on practical alternatives and funding opportunities

## WP2: Findings on evaluation

**Question:** How was policy change possible?

- Little to **no conflicts**: mainly local, related to property or finance
- **Success factors**:
  - local administration, non-party consensus, pragmatism, committed agenda-setters, mayor, wealth, local cooperation
- **Recommendations**:
  - Avoid top-down approaches, awareness, be patient but stubborn, do small steps, involve external experts, integrative concept, act, show financial benefits, dialogue
- **Expected support**:
  - Better financing for local adaptation projects without excessive steering, funding of permanent local capacities, prioritize topic in national politics

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## WP3: Understanding local adaptation policy making in Austria (WP-L: ZSI)

**Goal:** Learning from previous experiences of Austrian municipalities with local policy integration in other environmental policy fields and identifying suitable agenda-setting and mainstreaming pathways for environmental policy in Austrian municipalities

- **Policy diffusion on local level** (municipal/regional) in Austria
  - Climate mitigation (CM)
  - Sustainable development (SD)
- **Literature review** of existing research findings about local policy integration in Austria
- **In-depth interviews** (n=10-14, CM: n=7, SD: n=6)
- **Regional focus group discussions** (n=3)



### **Instruments/ Networks and Processes :**

Local or Regional Agenda 21, Dorferneuerung, LEADER, KEM (Climate and Energy Model Regions), e5, E-GEM (Upper Austria), Climate Alliance

## WP3: Findings on diffusion and the policy agenda-setting

**Question:** How and why did CM and SD policies enter the local agenda?

- **Initiated/started with single project** (solar collectors, biomass heating power plant)
- **Support structures** mainly from federal state level (expertise, funding, process support)
- **Reactive to** regional or local problems (i.e. outward migration (SD), decline of farming, high oil prices)
- **Imitation of neighbor communities**
- **Political prestige / forerunner** as motivation
- **Key actors:** mayors and municipal officers, a caretaker (“Kümmerer”)
- **Controversies in municipal council**, persuasive efforts & lobbying, depending more on individual priorities, awareness and knowledge than on political affiliation



## WP3: Findings on implementation

**Question:** Findings on the dynamics? Which measures were implemented and how?

- **Implementation dynamics differ** a lot between instruments and municipalities/regions, continuity is not ensured (dependent on key actors, support structures, regulatory framework)
  - LA21: many processes end after 3 years
  - CM: topic energy became more important , activities intensified
- **So far “easy” measures:** direct benefit for citizens visible (gain of energy self-sufficiency, local food supply, etc.), rather inexpensive, hardly tackling system change, measures complementary to existing structure (inconsistencies in policies/laws are criticized, i.e. funding of thermal energy and fossils)

## WP3: Findings on evaluation

**Question:** How was policy change possible?

### ■ **Success factors:**

- Caretakers and engaged agenda-setters
- Political commitment (continuity)
- regulatory framework and funding schemes (continuous revision and adaptation)

### ■ **Expected support:**

- Clear information system (low-threshold , focused, easily assessable)
- clear support structures (process support & financial support, access to pool of external experts, trust in permanence and continuity)

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## Preliminary conclusions

### WP2: International case studies

- **Municipal adaptation (research)** is still nascent
- **Size matters**
- **Decentral governance approaches** (e.g. CCM) may suit best for countries with many small municipalities

### WP3: Austrian case studies

- **Awareness raising:** focused informing on options to be active
- **Framing:** stress positive effects for the municipality, show financial benefits (“true-cost pricing”)
- **Integrate CCA in SD/CM work**
- **Use existing SD/CM structures and networks:** no further parallel structure

***Many thanks for your attention!***

## Contact

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## Outlook on expected key results

- **Journal paper manuscripts**
- **Policy briefs with lessons learned and conclusions**
- **Recommendations / policy options for local adaptation pathways and related multi-level governance designs for Austrian municipalities**
- **Local adaptation governance booklet** (incl. inspiring examples, success stories, take-off points, key messages)
- **Module for training program for municipal climate officers**
- **Dissemination activities** (science & practitioners communities)