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

We are attempting to discover how communication between decision makers and scientists can be improved. From the perspectives of regional decision makers, we wish to explore

1. the perceptions of regional decision makers concerning climate change,

2. perceptions of the level of satisfaction with the interaction between science and policy in the issue of adaptation to climate change in the Baltic region,

3. the perceptions of adaptation measures to other environmental issues (e.g. sea level rise in the Baltic region), and

4. the perceptions of environmental threats to the Baltic region.

Furthermore, using the results of 'SurBACC 2010: A Survey of the perceptions of climate scientists concerning climate change and climate science in the Baltic Sea basin' (Bray 2010), a completed BALTEX project, it will be possible to discern levels of disparity between knowledge production and knowledge utilization.

The results of the survey have the potential to provide a service to both the policy communities and the science community by

1. identifying the differences between the knowledge needs of policy makers and the knowledge provided by science,

2. suggesting new patterns of communication between science and policy, and

3. identifying knowledge gaps that hinder political decisions.

The first stage of the research is well underway. A sample of approximately 1600 political decision makers at local levels has been compiled for the German Baltic region. The survey questionnaire has been developed. It is hoped that the survey will be distributed by the end of February 2011 and preliminary results compiled by the end of April 2011.

The second stage of the project will enlarge the sample to include the full international Baltic community as defined in the 'BACC Report'.

The survey is being conducted by Dennis Bray of the Helmholtz Zentrum Geesthacht and Grit Martinez of the Ecologic Institute Berlin.