



Communicate climate information



On behalf of
Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development





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On behalf of

Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

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Overview

Communicate climate information

- Address uncertainty
- Make climate change tangible



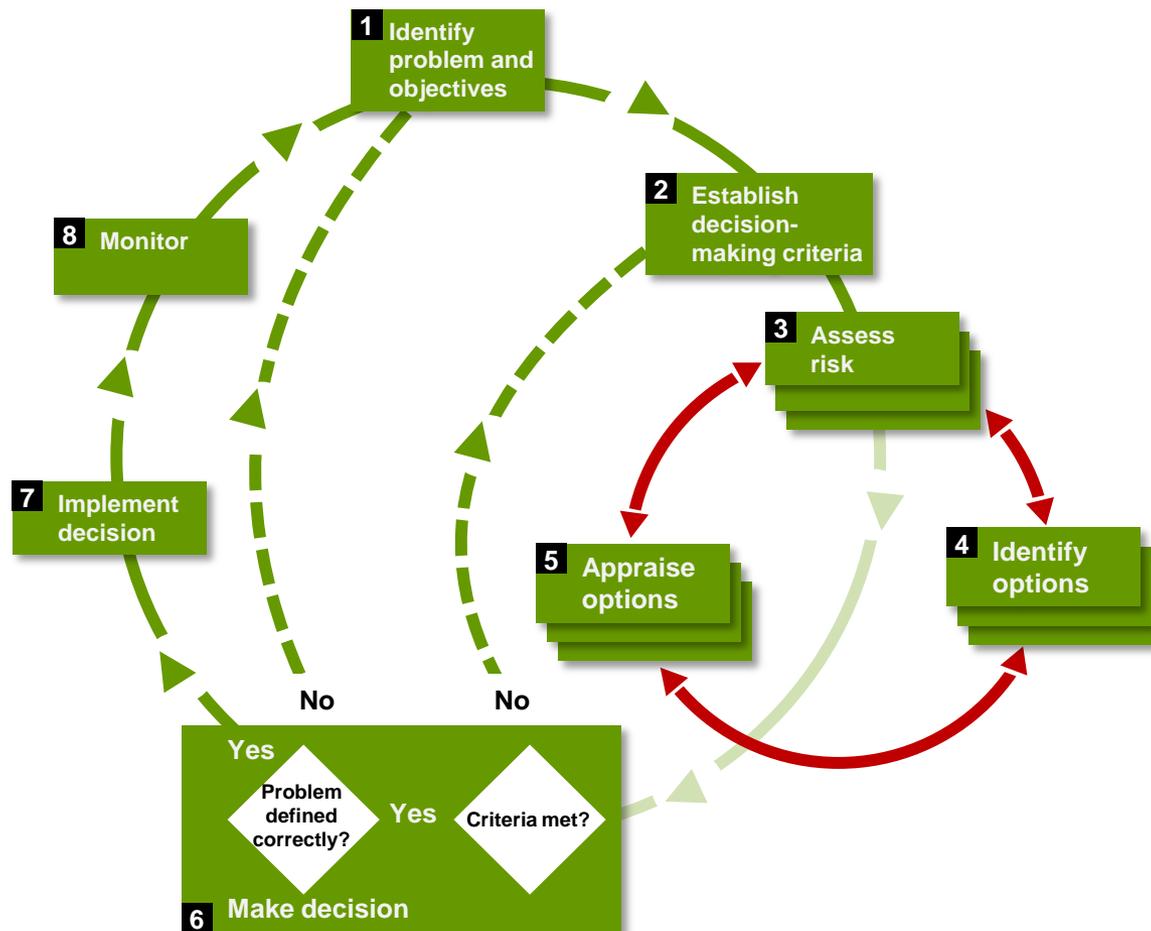


The big issue: dealing with uncertainty





UKCIP framework to support decision-making in the face of climate change risk





Deal with uncertainty: be precise and transparent

- **Find the right balance though you sense a conflict:**
 - > on the one hand you might be aware of your own uncertainty and possess inadequate knowledge;
 - > on the other hand you want to convince people
- **Try to use neutral language and avoid alarmism**
- **Base your statements on sound scientific findings, be exact about figures and timescales**
 - > e.g. a sea level rise of one meter by 2100 or by 2030 makes a big difference
- **Name uncertainties and dilemmas**
 - > major sources of uncertainty are the emission scenarios not the models!
- **Get support from local experts**
 - > they can answer more critical questions and thereby increase credibility



Make climate change tangible: use easy language

- Avoid using jargon, complicated scientific terms and acronyms when talking to the general public.
 - **Instead use words that will make sense to the audience**
- If only a scientific term is sufficient for getting a point across:
 - **Define the term for the audience**





OBSCURE WORD BETTER UNDERSTOOD WORD

Anthropogenic

Mid-Pleistocene

CH₄

Methane

IPCC

Forcing

Incoming and outgoing (radiation) energy

385 ppm

2008 level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere

Bifurcation

To divide into two parts

Perturbation

Disturbance

Aerosol



Make climate change tangible: support people's understanding of the complex topic

- **discuss scientific information in groups**
(rather than fish out information to individuals who have to try to understand it alone)
- **link to people's experience; build on the signals of climate change, people have already noticed**
- **use the voice of peers and other people trusted by the target audience**





Make climate change tangible: use activating communication

- Invoke the ‘precautionary principle’
- Use different frames to incite need for action
- Use examples of dealing successfully with uncertainty





Conclusions

- There is room and need for action:
 - **Today's actions (early adaptation as well as mitigation) influence the future need for adaptation**
- We know enough to get started:
 - **Uncertainty is no argument to wait for 'better times' in decision making**

**My interest is in the future,
because that is where I'm going
to spend the rest of my life.**

***C.F. Kettering,
American engineer 1876–1958***