

Resettlement from flood-prone areas

Project

Duration

Feb - Oct 2006

How can societies adapt to increasing flood risk in river basins and coastal areas? While a large range of potential adaptation options exists, in the more severe cases it will be necessary to consider retreating from flood-prone areas and relocating settlements and critical infrastructure. The Hertie School of Governance and Ecologic have recently completed a study project, the outcome of which is a report on policy options to achieve and encourage resettlement in flood-prone areas. The report is now available for download.

The vulnerability of societies in Europe and across the globe to flooding has been illustrated by many recent events. Human livelihoods and many economic activities depend on water, and human settlement is naturally drawn towards rivers, lakes and the coast. However, if augmented by heavy rainfall, snowmelt or storm surges, the water can rapidly turn from blessing to threat, and flooding may endanger lives, cause displacement and suffering, damage assets that have been assembled over long periods of time, and cause major economic losses. Managing flood risk is likely to become an even greater challenge in the future, with climate change impacts expected to increase the frequency and intensity of flooding events.

In this study project, Ecologic took on the role of a policy-maker client asking for a consultancy service on policy instruments for resettlement. Four Hertie School students enrolled in the Master of Public Policy programme responded to the challenge and, with the support of Ecologic staff and under the supervision of their professor Sonja Wälti, undertook a comprehensive and thorough analysis on this subject.

The project thus combined Ecologic's expertise from more than ten years of project and consultancy work in the field of water and flood risk management with the interest of the Hertie School of Governance's Master of Public Policy programme in instructing its students about aspects of environmental governance. The result of the co-operation is a report that provides a discussion of the issue of resettlement, as well as a comprehensive list of potential instruments that policy makers might consider to encourage and achieve resettlement. It is based on research and on a number of case studies as an empirical basis. The report constitutes a valuable resource for any researcher working in the field, and it proves an important contribution to the current debate about adaptation to the climate change driven increase in flood risk.

The report is available for download [pdf, 1 MB, English].

Funding

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Duration

Feb - Oct 2006

Project ID

201-48

Keywords

Water
flood, risk, climate, change, resettlement, policy, instrument
global, Europe

Source URL: <https://www.ecologic.eu/1958>