

ProVision, the new strategy of Austrian Climate Change Research Policy demonstrated by the project “A tale of Two Valleys”

I. Auer(1), R. Böhm(1), C. Habsburg-Lothringen(2), A. Kirchengast(2), E. Korus(1), F. Pretenthaler(2), H. Proske(2), W. Schöner(1), N. Vetter(2), T. Wostal(1)

(1)Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics, Austria

(2)Joanneum Research, Austria

Mankind is currently experiencing a significant change of one of the most important factors controlling general living conditions on our planet – climate. However, due to the uncertainties in the climate change knowledge itself and the insufficient knowledge transfer, the public debate is steered more by vague speculations instead of well established cognition. The research project “A tale of Two Valleys” studies climate change and climate impacts in two Alpine valleys, adjacent but contrasting in respect to weather and climate, as well as to the socio-economic, land-use, and political development. These widespread objectives of the project require a research team consisting of natural and human scientists, but also the collaboration with the population, educational bodies and stakeholders. To gain a common knowledge, the direct dialogue between scientists and the public is encouraged by a number of local information and discussion events. Questionnaires developed by the project team are focusing on the existential orientation of female and male population, their specific awareness of global and regional environmental changes, their thresholds in accepting specific landscape planning and restricting actions.

Media play an important role in “A tale of two Valleys”. Media care for the necessary publicity of the project, they announce public project events in an adequate way, and in close cooperation with the research team they report on project activities and results. Local questions turn to questions of regional importance, enhancing the public awareness of climate change. Concretely, “A tale of two Valleys” collaborates with the Austrian Broadcasting Company ORF, but also with information magazines of regional stakeholders. A project website with public access and the possibility for public input attracts further user groups (<http://www.zamg.ac.at/a-tale-of-two-valleys>).

The collaboration of researches and three partner schools within the scope of “Cognition =Research + Education” offers a number of so far disregarded chances for the researchers, teachers and the students. Students of BRG Zell am See (<http://www.gymzell.at/>), BORG Spittal an der Drau (<http://www.borg-spittal.at/>), and Stiftsgymnasium Melk (<http://www.gymmelk.ac.at>) will demonstrate their “A tale of Two Valleys” activities in the Poster Session.