



Press Release (Long)

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Climate organizations call for renewed efforts to communicate climate change knowledge and spur action

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This year marked the 10-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, which swept through America's Gulf coast, wreaking a staggering USD 108 billion in damage and killing more than 1,800 people. In May of 2015, a heatwave in India cost the lives of over 2,200 people. With the number of extreme weather- and climate-related events rising worldwide, it has never been more important for policy makers, urban planners, investors, and others facing climate-related challenges to have the right information at the right time. Today a group of leading players in the climate and development fields issued a clear call for improved knowledge coordination to support action on climate change.

The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), together with UN's Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) and dozens more, are backing the launch of the 'Climate Knowledge Brokers Manifesto', which sets out the key principles for exchanging and communicating information related to the climate effectively, enabling a step change in society's response to a changing climate.

The Manifesto is the brainchild of the Climate Knowledge Brokers' Group (CKB), founded in 2011 and now counting more than 100 international agencies and programmes among its community (www.climateknowledgebrokers.net).

CKB was created in recognition that climate change has growing impacts on people's daily lives, and will transform local environments the world over for the foreseeable future. "Knowledge and research is critical to creating a new low carbon future, but for busy decision makers this is not enough to bring about real change," said Jane Clark, Head of Learning on climate change issues at the UK Department for International Development. "Knowledge needs to be translated, brokered and tailored to ensure we can all make better-informed choices as we plan for and manage the risks, trade-offs and opportunities of climate change. Enabling active learning is critical to changing the way we do things."

"Only now are we really grasping the full extent to which our lives, our jobs and our environment are being affected by a changing climate", added Florian Bauer, COO and Open Knowledge Director at the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership in Vienna, and one of the editors of the Manifesto. "But while our knowledge is technically growing, our ability to process and make use of it is not."

The arena of “climate information” was once a niche of modelling and projections used by those working specifically in climate and environmental science. As understanding of the global climate and its influence has improved, the domain of climate-related and climate-relevant information and knowledge has grown tremendously. For instance, the number of records on ‘climate change’ on google scholar increased from 76,000 in 1992 to 1.7 million articles in 2014. CKB says it’s the job of its 100+ members and other organisations like them – many funded by taxpayer monies or donor subscriptions – to make sense of this ocean of information so that people are well informed to act on climate-related risks.

The group defines the knowledge broker’s role as interpreting, sorting, translating, and integrating this wealth of information and tailoring it for the needs of different audiences – from government decision-makers and business leaders, urban planners and farmers, to everyday consumers and voters.

The Manifesto sets out seven key principles for how climate knowledge brokers can have greater impact through collaboration and the use of open data. In the Manifesto, the Climate Knowledge Brokers Group also issues an open invitation for more organisations to join them: “Climate knowledge brokers need to work together to avoid overlap and make sure they are identifying and meeting people’s information needs effectively,” said Geoff Barnard, Senior Advisor on Knowledge Management at CDKN and a founder of the Group. “Only then will climate knowledge brokers meet their full potential for turning knowledge into action.”

A short pamphlet version of the Manifesto together with a longer book version in pdf can be downloaded from <http://manifesto.climateknowledgebrokers.net>.

Contact:

Florian Bauer, Head of CKB Coordination Hub, REEEP - florian.bauer@reeep.org

Sigmund Kluckner, Project Lead, CKB Coordination Hub, REEEP - sigmund.kluckner@reeep.org

Editor’s notes

The Climate Knowledge Brokers Manifesto was developed in a collaborative process by the CKB Group (CKB), involving interviews with 80 climate knowledge brokers and users of climate-related knowledge*, and an editorial conference among the 17-strong author team.

The full version of the Manifesto includes an analysis of user needs, characteristics of the climate knowledge broker role in responding to those user needs, and how the CKB Group improves the effectiveness of climate knowledge brokering through collaboration. It concludes with an invitation for users of climate knowledge, funders of climate information services and climate knowledge brokers to engage with us.

The website also provides access to transcripts of some of the interviews conducted by the Group and examples of successful climate knowledge brokering initiatives.

** in the Manifesto we use ‘climate information’ and ‘climate knowledge’ to refer to a much wider area of climate-related and climate-relevant information. For instance, information relating to an adaptation project is climate-related.*