

Evaluation of municipal climate change efforts

In the period February to August 2016, a working group with representatives from the Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark, the Ministry of Energy, Utilities and Climate and the Ministry of Business and Growth carried out an evaluation of municipal climate change adaptation efforts.

Every municipality in Denmark has prepared a climate change adaptation plan, which mapped the risk of flooding, specified priorities and gave an overview of the efforts. 22 municipalities also had to prepare a risk management plan pursuant to the Danish Flood Risk Act, that relates to the EU Floods Directive.

Outcome of the evaluation of the municipal climate change adaptation efforts

The evaluation reveals that incorporation of climate change adaptation in municipal development planning has served as a basis for coordination of climate change adaptation efforts with other spatial planning efforts, and that it has provided a picture of local flood risks throughout Denmark.

The tool will therefore be useful for municipalities in their future planning and prevention of the consequences of cloudbursts and other sources of flooding.

The evaluation reveals discrepancies in the level of detail in the municipalities' climate change adaptation plans, as well as differences in the scope of the topics included in mapping. For example, many municipalities have not included flooding from watercourses and groundwater flooding in their risk mapping.

The evaluation analysed the financial aspects of, and experience from, co-financed projects. This analysis assessed that the co-financed projects budgeted and applied for during the period examined were, on average, almost four times cheaper to implement than traditional projects delivering the same level of service.

This shows that water utility companies can potentially reap substantial costs savings by choosing co-financed solutions.

Through agreements or through their ownership in the company, the municipalities can decide to raise the level of service without this burdening the financial framework of the wastewater companies, as they will receive a supplement to their financial framework, which will be approved by the Water Division.

Without municipal co-financing, increased investment in climate change adaptation will also not burden the municipalities finances.

This presents an incentive problem, which may lead to over-investment and, thus, failure to secure a socio-economically optimal level of investment.