



IS-ENES3 Milestone M3.2

Evaluation of the first short trainings and webinars

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Abstract:

This report gives an overview and evaluation of the events and webinars organized in the first 2 years of the project and the impact of COVID-19. Besides, the experiences with face-to-face and online events are described. Due to COVID-19 and based on these experiences a slightly adjusted set-up for the rest of the short events/webinars is suggested.



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1. Objectives

WP3/NA2 aims at further engaging with the community of users of IS-ENES services. This will be done through widening the user base through training, engaging the community in co-constructing standards and expressing needs, and engaging the younger generation in interdisciplinary approaches. Target users will be the climate researchers and the vulnerability, impacts and adaptation (VIA) researchers. WP3/NA2 also targets societal innovation through the emerging climate service providers.

In order to work on the objectives of the work package WP3-NA2 (widening user base, nurturing existing users/stakeholder community, improve mutual understanding between users and developers and expand community standards) short events and webinars are organized on different subjects related to the activities in the IS-ENES3 project. These events and webinars are organized to reach new user groups especially within the VIA community, Climate Services, all over Europe. The project plan mentions a total of 10 short events/introductions and 5 webinars, in which the webinars are meant as a follow-up to answer questions.

This report gives an overview of the events and webinars organized in the first 2 years of the project and the impact of COVID-19. Besides, the experiences with face-to-face and online events are described. Based on these experiences a slightly adjusted set-up for the rest of the short events/webinars is suggested.

2. Organized events and webinars

The following events and webinars were organized in 2019-2020:

- **EGU¹, 9th April 2019, Vienna, Austria:** 2 splinter meetings with demonstration of the Climate4Impact portal, about 10 participants (6 potential new users)
- **EMS², 12th September 2019, Lyngby, Denmark:** 2 side meetings with demonstration of the Climate4Impact portal, 8 participants total
- **Webinar, 16th September 2019³:** follow up on side meetings at EMS, about 6-7 participants
- **Webinar, 15th June 2020⁴** (replaced the splinter meetings at the EGU in 2020), Access to CORDEX and CMIP6 climate data, 58 subscribers total, of which half joined the webinar, but all received the recordings. 39 subscribers from Eastern Europe

Preparations were made for the following events, but finally they did not take place due to COVID-19:

- EGU, 7th May 2020: 2 splinter meetings on access to climate data from CMIP6 and CORDEX: Did not take place, since EGU was converted to a virtual conference due to COVID-19

¹ <https://is.enes.org/events/trainings-and-education/egu-2019-first-demonstration-session-climate4impact-portal-for-the-is-enes3-project>

² <https://is.enes.org/events/trainings-and-education/ems-2019-second-demonstration-session-of-the-climate4impact-portal>

³ <https://is.enes.org/events/trainings-and-education/webinar-demonstration-of-the-climate4impact-portal>

⁴ <https://is.enes.org/events/workshops/is-enes3-webinar-on-the-access-on-cordex-and-cmip6-climate-data>. From this webinar YouTube videos were made. By April 15, 2021 the 4 videos of this webinar had 516 views in total.

- Workshop, 19th June 2020, side-event on access of climate data for impact assessments, together with people from ISIpedia, after the Climateurope Festival in Riga: did not take place due to cancelation of festival due to COVID-19

The original idea was to organize short events during larger workshops or conferences (as side events during those, or short events directly before or after) and to organize such short events, trainings or lectures at the locations of our partner institutes in the IS-ENES3 project. In general, people will not travel to another country for a short event, but they may stay longer or come earlier when it is organized side-by-side to another workshop or conference, or they may join when it is organized at their own institute or at a nearby location. The webinars were meant as follow-up meetings to answer questions from participants to the earlier short events or to provide some additional information.

Originally, it was the plan to have 5 short events and 2-3 webinars organized in the first 2 years. Due to COVID-19 and the uncertainty about when physical workshops and conferences could be organized again, fewer were organized.

2.1. Advertising the events

Side-meetings at conferences or workshops:

- The side-meetings or splinter sessions at the EMS and EGU cannot that easily be found in the programmes for these conferences. Therefore, flyers were made to distribute at the conferences and the sessions were promoted through the IS-ENES3 website, newsletter and twitter account, the partners of IS-ENES3, the CLIMLIST and PRIMAVERA mailing lists, the partners of IS-ENES3 and through twitter accounts of projects such as Climateurope and PRIMAVERA and the ENES portal.

Webinars:

- For the webinar in 2020 we used a contact in Eastern Europe (PANNEX community) to distribute the announcement. This worked really well, and of the subscribers more than half was from Eastern Europe. The announcement was distributed also again through the IS-ENES3 website, newsletter and twitter account, the partners of IS-ENES3, the CLIMLIST and PRIMAVERA mailing lists as well as twitter accounts of projects such as Climateurope and PRIMAVERA and the ENES portal, the CLIMLIST mailing list and the partners of IS-ENES3.

2.2. Participation of partners in the events

The events were organized by KNMI, but partners from other WPs and institutes contributed to them.

- EGU 2019: presentations and help for participants from Wim Som de Cerff (KNMI) and Maarten Plieger (KNMI)
- EMS 2019: presentation based on and material from Wim Som de Cerff (KNMI) and Maarten Plieger (KNMI)

- Webinar 2019: contributions from Maarten Plieger (KNMI)
- Webinar 2020: presentations from Christian Pagé (CERFACS) and Paola Nassisi (CMCC)

3. Impact of COVID-19

The organization of events and webinars was affected greatly by COVID-19. The first events were organized as side-meetings/events during large scientific conferences. The physical meetings were all canceled in 2020, and although the main programme was generally converted to virtual meetings, no alternative was supplied by the conferences for the side-meetings. Due to COVID-19 it was also not possible to organize face-to-face meetings ourselves. The splinter meetings that would have been organized at the EGU in 2020 were therefore converted to a webinar. However, no alternative was organized for the workshop that was planned as a side event to the Climateurope festival in June 2020.

The organization of a virtual autumn school in November-December 2020 took much more time than organizing a face-to-face autumn school. Therefore, little time was left to organize other webinars. However, this autumn school provided a lot of experience with online meetings, which can be used for the future (e.g. how to organize parallel sessions, interactions during virtual meetings). An advantage was also that good recordings could be made of the lectures during the autumn school, which were made available for a broader public than the participants of the autumn school. The videos are available on the IS-ENES3 official YouTube channel⁵.

COVID-19 still poses many restrictions on travelling and the size of the groups that can come together. We expect that this will continue to be the case for a considerable part of 2021. This means that alternatives to face-to-face events have to be organized in 2021.

4. Evaluation of organized events and webinars

4.1. Side-events at large conferences

As indicated in chapter 2, the original idea was to organize short events during larger workshops or conferences (as side events during, or short events directly before or after). Besides the advantage that many people go to the large conferences and could potentially be reached, these conferences also have some disadvantages:

- Conferences such as the EGU, AGU, EMS attract many climate scientists. At these conferences only a limited number of impact researchers, (commercial) climate services providers or other people are present. Commercial companies do not often come to these conferences to participate in

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC24YCoRVhWXqzBm9tkL2g/playlists>

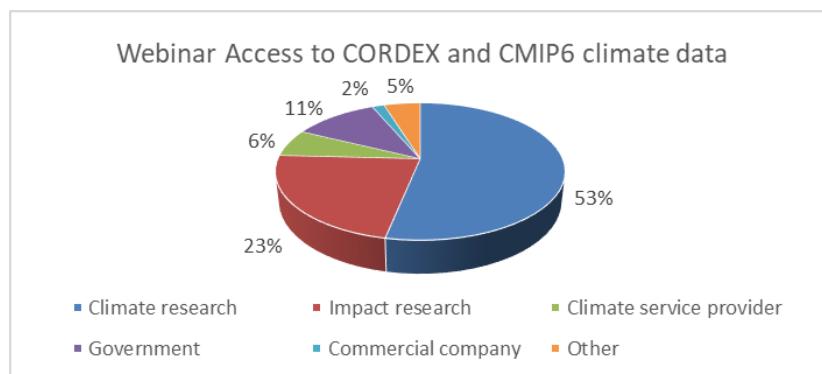
sessions (some do present themselves in stands). Therefore, it is not that easy to broaden the community beyond young climate scientists.

- Another disadvantage of these conferences is the conference fee and the travel costs. These may be a barrier for people from certain countries and they may be a barrier for e.g. impact researchers if they do not expect them to be a lot of strong interest to them (in this case side events to conferences of impact researchers are needed, e.g. ECCA).
- These side-events during conferences are, in general, not included in the official programme, so the organizers have to take care of the advertisements themselves. Since many participants first look at the official programme, there is often no time left for the side events or people do not even take a look at the side events.

Based on this, it is good to organize also events, lectures at smaller workshops without fees. Another option could be to organize a side event at e.g. the ECCA⁶ conference (European Conference on Climate Adaptation), where many climate impact researchers can be reached. As in the original plan, organizing events and lectures at the partner institutions or in the same cities would also overcome some of the disadvantages.

4.2. Face-to-face meetings versus virtual meetings

- Face-to-face meetings offer much more options to talk to participants personally, and therefore are probably better for networking. Networking is more difficult with virtual events; people do not start a chat that easily with someone virtually. This can be overcome a little by organizing “come-back” events (done after the June event) or using break-out sessions with small groups (not used until now)
- Virtual meetings do not have the first two disadvantages mentioned above (travel costs and fee, and mainly scientists at conferences). Therefore, in principle it is possible to reach a broader audience (also people from other disciplines, other countries or even other continents). During the webinar that we organized in June 2020 we had participants from many different countries (especially many from Eastern Europe). Besides many climate scientists, we had 11 impact researchers, 4 climate service providers, 1 person from a commercial company and 6 persons from governments.



⁶ <http://www.jpi-climate.eu/ecca2021>

- It is easier to make good recordings with virtual events. These recordings can be made available through the IS-ENES3 YouTube channel for participants to look back or for newly interested persons.
- Reaching people for these virtual events also depends a lot on the networks that we have already or that we can reach through our colleagues. This may need some more effort. We do have a good channel to reach people in Eastern Europe through PANNEK, but we should try to reach more impacts researchers and climate service providers (although e.g. Climate KIC, ISIMIP and ECCA are good starting points, but many partners also have some personal contacts that could help in the various countries).

5. Proposed adjustment organization of events and webinars

As indicated in chapter 3 we expect that due to COVID-19 there will still be many restrictions on travelling and the size of the groups that can come together during a considerable part of 2021.

Therefore, we propose a considerable number of the short events to be converted to virtual meetings or webinars (especially in 2021). Besides some disadvantages (less personal contact, less possibilities for networking), this also has some advantages (no travel expenses or conference fees, potentially we can reach a larger group of interested people, good recordings which can be made available for an even broader community). Also some virtual meetings will be organized as follow-up, to give participants the possibility to ask additional questions after e.g. using some of the tools provided by IS-ENES3 and to give feedback.

When restrictions due to COVID-19 will be relieved, we can start thinking of organizing face-to-face meetings again (hopefully at least in 2022).

6. Ideas for webinars/events in the coming years

Ideas for new webinars/virtual events were collected from different sources:

- the participants from the autumn school on “Climate data for impact assessments” were asked on what subjects they would like to have follow-up webinars
- from other activities of the IS-ENES3 project
- based on inventories of user requirements
- also partners from IS-ENES3 can give suggestions for webinars in case they want to promote certain tools developed by the project

Available ideas for webinars and (virtual) events at the moment:

- Bias adjustments of climate model data: methods and their advantages and disadvantages. Many impact researchers need bias-adjusted data for their models. For EURO-CORDEX bias-adjusted

data are available, but for many climate models they are not. A very short introduction on bias-adjustment was given during the Autumn school, but it would be good to give more elaborated information on various methods for bias-adjustment, their advantages and disadvantages, etc. We had contact with two persons (suggestions from project partners), who are willing to help with this webinar/workshop. Early May we organize a meeting to determine the date and form of this webinar/workshop with the experts that indicated that they wanted to contribute

- Selection of climate models for impact assessments (e.g. with speakers from KLIWAS, ISIMIP that can explain how they made a selection)
- ESMValTool (discussed with Klaus Zimmermann): how to use this tool, available recipes for analysis, available guidance material, how to interpret the results, etc. During the Autumn school a short introduction was given to climate model analysis and the ESMValTool, but more detailed information on how to use this tool will be interesting for certain stakeholders. A lot of guidance material is available on the website for this tool, but it could be interesting to bring this more under the attention of a broader group.
- Demonstration of the new Climate4Impact portal, when it is operational (Alessandro Spinuso, Wim Som de Cerff, Christian Pagé). A first introduction and demonstration were given during the Autumn school, however, at the moment it is not operational yet. It would be good to show all the available features when it is operational.