

Atlas Report



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Meet the Atlas Advisory Board

Ray Kopp

Ray Kopp is a Senior Fellow and Director of the Climate Policy Program at Resources for the Future. Kopp specializes in economic analysis techniques to assign value to environmental and natural resources that do not have market prices. These methods are central to cost-benefit analyses and assessments of damages to natural resources.

Kopp's current research focuses on the design of both domestic and international climate change mitigation and adaptation policy. He has authored numerous [articles](#), provided Congressional testimony, and he serves as a member of Working Group III of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Each month we will introduce a new Advisory Board member.

ESRI – July 13-17, 2009

The Annual Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) [International User Conference](#) brings together diverse users of the ArcGIS suite of mapping software. This year the conference attracted over 11,000 participants and provided the core team with important technical training and input on the development of the Atlas. The team was invited to present the Atlas in both the Climate Change track and a Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Affairs session.

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Adaptation Needs: Linking Impacts and Activities

Welcome to the second issue of the *Atlas Report*. Our team at Resources for the Future is creating a dynamic new online tool: The *Global Adaptation Atlas*. The effort aims to help diverse communities of users visualize and download spatial data on projected climate impacts and adaptation activities on the ground in different regions around the world.

ATLAS PROTOTYPE: CLIMATE IMPACT MAPPING

The Atlas aims to enable users to access and visualize the best-available science on the human impacts of climate change. But what constitutes a *human* impact? Human impacts are the myriad potential effects of climate change on societies and their activities. Examples include changing crop yields, malaria and dengue fever rates, and land loss under future climate scenarios.

The Atlas categorizes impact science into five broad themes based on the systems and services they affect: Food, Water, Land, Health, and Livelihood. These themes serve as organizing principles for searching, displaying and downloading data. In addition to viewing impacts individually, users will be able to overlay different types of impacts in order to identify areas of confluence: 'hotspots' likely to face the most (and least) intense effects of climate change.

The explicit focus on human impacts sets the Atlas apart from other tools. Purely climatic impacts (e.g. projected changes in mean annual temperature) and related large-scale ecosystem changes (e.g. shifting land cover patterns) that are used to derive multiple human system impacts are not included in the Atlas. Instead, our aim is to link on-the-ground adaptation activities to the new frontier of climate science: human impact studies.

ATLAS PROTOTYPE: ADAPTATION ACTIVITIES

Adaptation to climate change is a process involving multiple linked activities over time. Nations often pledge adaptation funds to agencies, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF). These bodies can facilitate coordination of funds.

In some instances, funds are directed to existing adaptation plans, such as [National Adaptation Programmes of Action](#). In other cases, funds flow directly to adaptation projects on food security, health, or land degradation.

Funds are increasingly directed to "community based adaptation" projects, which aim to better understanding local needs and reduce vulnerabilities. The Atlas seeks to link activities at different scales—from funds, to plans and projects—allowing stakeholders, scientists, and policymakers to trace adaptation efforts from impacts to implementation.

ADAPTATION FUNDING IN THE NEWS

On June 26th, the U.S. House of Representatives passed "[The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009](#)." The bill takes significant steps towards recognizing the importance of human adaptation in wider climate change policy. The bill explicitly establishes adaptation assistance based on need. Identifying clear adaptation needs will require a thorough understanding of emerging climate impacts. The *Atlas* aims to support exactly this type of policy priority-setting and evaluation by linking impacts and adaptation activities over time.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the next issue of the *Atlas Report*, learn more about the UNFCCC Nairobi Work Programme and our other institutional, research, and data partners.

For more information on the Atlas, please visit our website at www.adaptationatlas.org. To learn more about RFF's research, visit www.rff.org.

Have data? We want to hear from you! Send us an email at data@adaptationatlas.org, and we'll be in touch on how to feature your study or project(s) in the Atlas for its launch in December.

Questions? Email us at info@adaptationatlas.org.