

Use.AT

Report WP3 „User Needs and Usage Contexts for Climate Scenarios in Austria“

Executive Summary English

Version 1.0 – 13.10.2025

Contributors: Peter Müller¹, Laura Mainetti¹, Benedikt Becsi², Romana Berg³, Michael Brenner-Fließer⁴, Marianne Bügelmayer-Blaschek³, Matthias Themessl¹, Simon Tschannett⁵, Tanja Tötzer³

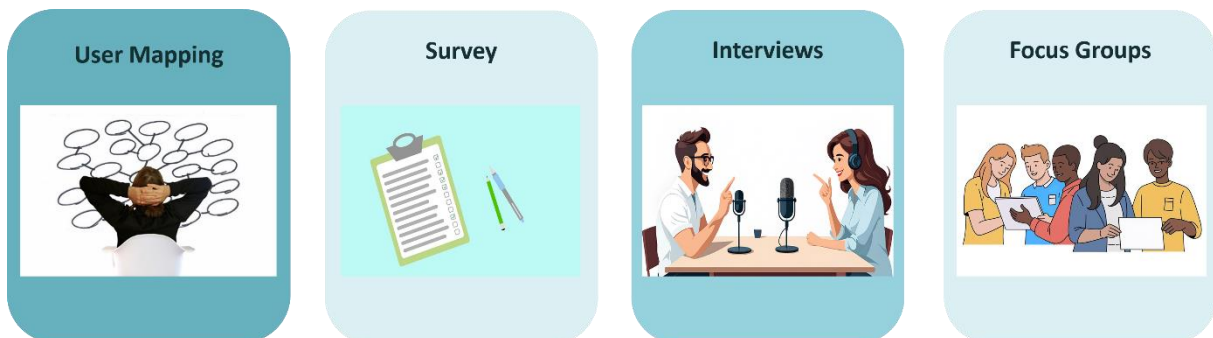
- 1: GeoSphere Austria
- 2: BOKU University
- 3: AIT Austrian Institute of Technology GmbH
- 4: JOANNEUM RESEARCH Forschungsgesellschaft mbH
- 5: Weatherpark GmbH



Work package WP3 of the Use.AT project focused on a systematic assessment of user needs, usage contexts, and application requirements related to climate scenarios in Austria. The aim was to support the development of user-oriented climate services – in particular, the national initiative Klimaszenarien.AT – on a sound evidence base.

WP3 was structured into three interconnected subcomponents:

- **WP3.1: User-Mapping** – structured stakeholder mapping based on relevance and usage potential
- **WP3.2: Online Survey & Interviews** – qualitative and quantitative assessment of current user experiences
- **WP3.3: Focus Groups** – in-depth discussions with potential users on emerging topics



WP3.1 – User Mapping

In a graphic-based stakeholder mapping, relevant institutions were categorized according to their interest and intensity of use. The different types of organizations, such as research, public administration, non-profit organizations, politics, and the private sector, were evaluated as to whether they already use climate services (users), do not use them (non-users), develop them (developers), or should be using them but are not yet doing so (potential users).

The mapping clearly shows that research organizations and universities, along with a few non-profit organizations and selected private-sector companies (consulting, planning offices), are among the users, while public authorities and administrations were identified as potential users. New applications can be found in areas such as consulting, risk assessment, urban development, or communication.

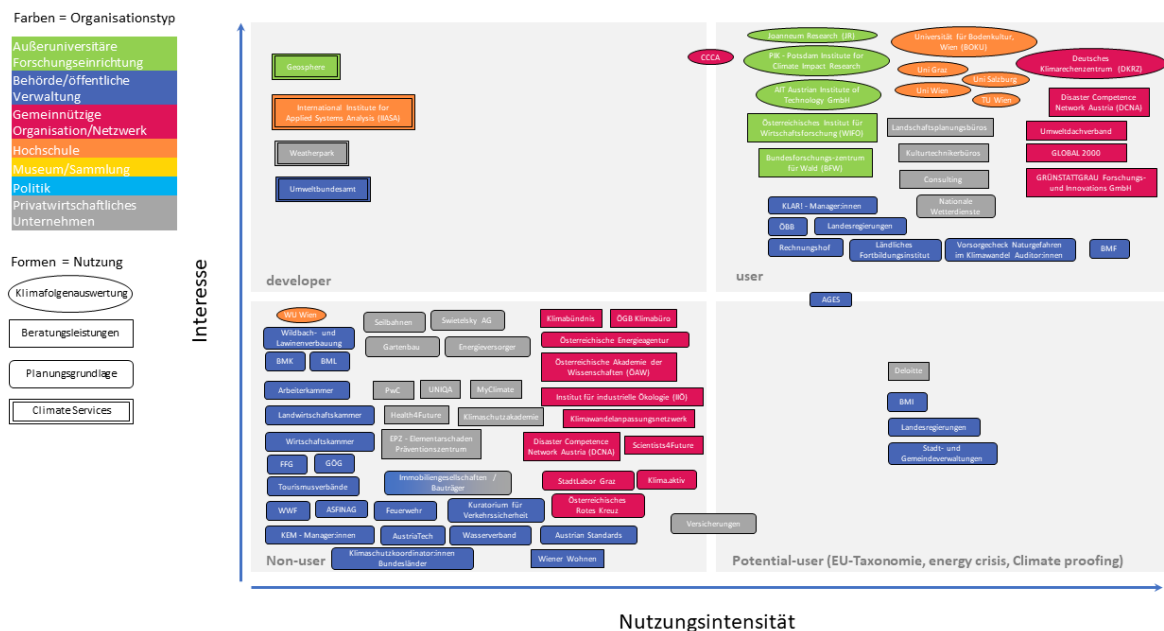


Figure 1: User mapping of different organization types in combination with the use of ÖKS15.

WP3.2 – Online Survey and Interviews

Within WP3.2, more than 300 individuals participated in an online survey, complemented by 23 in-depth expert interviews. The results reveal a strong overall interest in climate information across different sector, but also highlight existing barriers in its practical application.

- **Usage experience:** ÖKS15 is primarily used in research, public administration, and planning, for example in climate risk assessments, adaption strategies, and spatial planning. While the data are widely perceived as scientifically robust, they are still rarely integrated systematically into decision-making processes.
- **Needs:** Participants expressed a clear demand for more regionalized, visually processed, and easily accessible information that can be embedded into existing workflows (e.g. GIS platforms, planning tools, reporting obligations). There is also a strong interest in application examples, sector-specific guidance, and transparent communication of uncertainties. Users called for better interfaces between climate data and decision-making processes, particularly for risk assessment, funding mechanisms, and climate impact evaluation.
- **Barriers:** Major challenges include limited documentation, insufficient integration with existing systems, and a lack of support for interpreting the data. For many non-experts, access to ÖKS data remains technically and conceptually demanding. Unclear communication regarding uncertainties and assumptions was also cited as a key obstacle to trust and usability.
- **Findings from the interviews:** The interviews emphasized the need to “translate” climate scenarios more effectively into practical contexts – through narrative formats, relevant indicators, and examples that reflect real decision-making processes in fields such as urban planning, forestry, and energy. Users see ÖKS15 as a valuable foundation but call for stronger professional support and clearer responsibilities in data provision and interpretation.

Overall, WP3.2 shows that while ÖKS products are widely trusted, their real-world effectiveness depends on their alignment with existing workflows and communication formats. A user-oriented further development – focusing on integration, visualization, and practical applicability – is therefore seen as essential for the next generation of Austrian Climate Scenarios.

WP3.3 – Focus Groups with Potential Users

Five focus groups explored emerging fields where climate services are expected to play an increasingly important role:

- **EU-Taxonomy**
- **Climate Proofing (planning & permitting)**
- **Energy sector**
- **Künstliche Intelligenz & Klimainformation**
- **Klimakommunikation & Medien**

Key Learnings from the discussions:

1. **Practical relevance is essential:** Users need data that is visually accessible, spatially detailed, and integrable into existing systems.
2. **Clarification of roles is necessary:** The ÖKS data enable reliable quantitative analyses and should serve as a scientifically sound basis for decision-making. However, further assessments, such as qualitative evaluations, risk analyses, or recommendations for action require additional expertise from specialists, consulting services, or dedicated institutions. It is also important to clarify which tasks and topics should be left to the private market and which should be provided by public institutions. At the same time, the question arises as to who has the ability and who has the authority to carry out certain statements and tasks.
3. **Reflecting political relevance:** The initiative must decide whether it wants to actively communicate or position itself as a neutral data provider.
4. **Actively explaining uncertainties:** Users need support in understanding and dealing with the uncertainties within the scenarios.
5. **Economic potential:** New services (consulting, tools, planning) are emerging around climate information, offering opportunities for value creation.

In addition, the discussion showed that climate information is seen as a driver for new processes across several sectors – for example, for climate-related disclosure requirements in the financial sectors, for climate-resilient planning in construction and spatial planning, for decision-making logics in the energy sector, or for narrative formats in journalism. At the same time, it also became clear that many of these developments can only be successful with professional guidance, standardization, and trust in data quality.

What we learn for the next generation of Austrian climate scenarios

WP3 clearly shows: The demand for reliable, comprehensible, and application-oriented climate scenarios is high – not only among existing users, but also among new target groups with growing interest.

The analysis highlights that climate data are increasingly being perceived as a strategic basis for decision-making, for example in planning, investment, or approval processes. At the same time, access barriers remain, particularly for individuals or institutions without a direct scientific background.

A central conclusion is therefore that the next generation of ÖKS products must provide more than just data: they require clear communication, practical examples, narrative approaches, and ideally professional guidance in order to become truly effective. Defining responsibilities is equally important: Klimaszenarien.AT can and should play a central role as a data provider – but interpretation, application, and integration into sector-specific processes demand additional actors, standards, and quality assurance mechanisms.

At the same time, all of this holds great potential: the combination of a robust scientific foundation, practice-oriented preparation, and strategic communication can not only increase the impact of climate scenarios but also contribute to the creation of new value-added sectors – for example in planning, consulting, data processing, and communication.