

Climate change research and policy in Portugal

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This article offers a review of research and policy on climate change in Portugal and is organized into three main themes: scientific knowledge and assessment of climate change; policy analysis and evaluation; and public engagement. Modern scientific research on meteorology and climatology started in Portugal in the 1950s and a strong community of researchers in climate science, vulnerabilities, impacts, and adaptation has since developed, particularly in the last decade. Nevertheless, there are still many gaps in research, especially regarding the economic costs of climate change in Portugal and costs and benefits of adaptation. Governmental policies with a strong emphasis on mitigation were introduced at the end of the 1990s. As greenhouse gas emissions continued to rise beyond its Kyoto target for 2012, the country had to resort to the Kyoto Flexibility Mechanisms in order to comply. Climate change adaptation policies were introduced in 2010 but are far from being fully implemented. Regarding public engagement with climate change, high levels of concern contrast with limited understanding and rather weak behavioral dispositions to address climate change. Citizens display a heavy reliance on the media as sources of information, which are dominated by a techno-managerial discourse mainly focused on the global level. The final part of the article identifies research gaps and outlines a research agenda. Connections between policy and research are also discussed.