

## How the problem was approached

The subject of this project is to deal with the effects of climate change at local level.

We started with background research, where we investigated the projected impacts of climate change on Hungary, current climate variability, projected future climate changes both nationally and regionally, and how climate change may change the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as floods and storms. During this phase we became aware of the existence of Ecovillages in Hungary. These are small communities whose goal is to become more socially, economically and ecologically sustainable and at the same time to use the climate changes on their own benefit.

We visited Bukkaranyos, an ecovillage in Northern Hungary, and studied the councils' social and legal obligations to take climate change effects into account in their planning and decision-making. We specifically asked about the key principles that they took into consideration when they started to develop and ecovillage in their community and the actions they took to respond against climate changes.

Later on, we found Energiaklub, a local NGO, who has just launched a project having the aim to support the local authorities to be prepared for the new duties. We decided to associate with Energiaklub and provide them a guidebook based on our professional expertise.

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## Low carbon relevance

Preparing for Climate Change is a guide to help local government in Hungary assess the likely effects of projected climate change during the 21st century and plan appropriate responses where necessary.

Climate change is happening now. While greenhouse gas emission reductions can help, climate change cannot be prevented entirely.

Local government is responsible for a range of functions that may be affected by climate, and have both social and legal obligations to take climate change effects into account in their decision-making.

A key message in the guide is that dealing with climate change effects can be broken down into manageable parts and can easily form part of existing council planning and operational processes. The guide suggests how councils can carry out simple checks to assess whether climate change effects are likely to be significant for a plan, project or activity.

## Conclusions

Local authorities are responsible for a range of functions, services and assets that may be affected by climate change. Each community will have its own climate-related vulnerabilities and priorities.

This guide has emphasised the need to assess the potential effects of climate change on council activities and has provided a framework for doing so. A key recommendation is that councils consider climate change effects – and the additional risks and opportunities they may bring – as part of existing planning, risk assessment and operational processes. Generally speaking, councils can also respond to climate change effects via existing processes.

In all cases, it is recommended that councils monitor and record local climate variables in order to better inform risk assessment and associated decision-making in their area.

By responding now to climate change impacts, councils can improve the resilience of their communities to existing natural hazards; in so doing, they can enhance the prosperity and sustainability of present and future generations.



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