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Climate change: Pioneers of adaptation wanted – and found

***Blauer Kompass* contest awards the vanguard of adaptation to climate change**

The cities of Stuttgart, Arnsberg and Wuppertal and the WOGENO housing cooperative in Munich are this year's winners of the Blue Compass contest (*Blauer Kompass 2011*). The prize is awarded for the best ideas in adapting to climate change in Germany. It is being awarded for the first time in 2011 by the German Federal Ministry for Environment (BMU) and the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) and represents one measure to implement the Federal Government's Adaptation to Climate Change action plan. "Heat waves, heavy rains, flooding – such weather extremes are becoming more regular incidents in Germany. The winners of *Blauer Kompass* have recognised the signs of the times and have set an example of how to adapt to climate change. They are trailblazers in this important field. Their activities will hopefully find many followers", said UBA Vice-President Dr. Thomas Holzmann, who conferred the prizes in Bonn. Participants included 59 municipalities, businesses and associations. All contest entries and other examples of adaptation measures are stored in a Federal Environment Agency database which is available to the public at www.tatenbank.anpassung.net.

The events of the past ten years in Germany speak for themselves: the Elbe flooding in 2002, the heat wave summer of 2003, the 2007 winter storm Kyrill- Germany has not been spared from weather extremes which have incurred billions in damage. Besides jeopardising life and limb, infrastructure such as power lines, rail track systems, buildings and the like also suffer damage. Even if these weather extremes cannot be said to be a direct result of long-term climate change, they do show where the risks associated with climate change will increase. Forward-thinking municipalities, associations and businesses are already adapting to this shift of risks. This contest to identify pioneers of adaptation seeks to find out what promising approaches have already been taken to be better prepared for climate change.

The winners of *Blauer Kompass* 2011:

City of Arnsberg

Devastating rains flooded several areas in the city of Arnsberg in the summer of 2007. A flood protection concept was drawn up as a measure against future heavy rainfall and was implemented through concrete measures in short order. A number of creeks in the urban area were restored to their natural condition and widened, which prevented greater damage being done during the heavy rains that fell in 2010. Stakeholders in administration and society cooperated with engineering firms to implement the measures - an act in no small part responsible for the success of the project.

City of Stuttgart

As a city "in a basin", Stuttgart faces special challenges in supplying fresh air to the city. Its citizens rely on the 70 years of experience of their urban climatology department. It is a model for other municipalities which must tackle similar problems. The 2003 "summer of the century" brought extremely high temperatures to the city. The city's response was to green 300,000 m² of roofs, naturalise traffic areas and streetcar rail areas, and to introduce a system of sustainable building management. The objective of the system is to meet most of the demand for construction by building on existing stock and to minimise land take of greenfield areas.

City of Wuppertal

Wuppertal is the largest city in the Bergisches Land - and the name (meaning 'mountainous country') is fitting. Its steep downhill grades and roads are dangerous during heavy rainfall, and this will only increase as the climate changes. Wuppertal developed a three-dimensional surface model with which to better assess the risk of future flooding and which simulates the run-off of heavy rains. The model can identify high-risk areas and basins; protective measures can be developed by affected stakeholders.

WOGENO housing cooperative, Munich

In 2001-2001 the housing cooperative erected two new buildings with a total of 28 dwellings in the district of Riem under the motto of sustainable and climate-friendly property management. Its very own energy concept includes measures to boost energy efficiency and use renewable energy. Residents agreed to collect rainwater for watering the flowering meadow they chose in the garden area instead of a grass. Mowing is adapted to these conditions and amounts to a bonus for the climate: the soil tends to dry out less in hot summers, and the risk of erosion during a downpour is reduced.

More information and links:

Detailed information on the individual winners and press releases is here:

www.tatenbank.anpassung.net/presse

The UBA database known as 'Tatenbank' is here:

www.tatenbank.anpassung.net

Information about climate change is here: www.anpassung.net

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