

# Individual and community engagement in dealing with climate change

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## Purpose

Dealing with climate change **demands for human responses to mitigate climate change and adapt to unavoidable impacts**. This often initiates developments in and near homes and communities - in places to which people feel attached to. Hence, a better understanding is needed of how attitudes and behaviours towards such measures are formed. **Individuals can be engaged on three levels: with their minds, hearts and hands.**

### Research questions

- How do individuals perceive climate change in their living environment?
- How do people engage individually and collectively with climate change?
- What motivates individual & collective pro-active environmental behaviour?

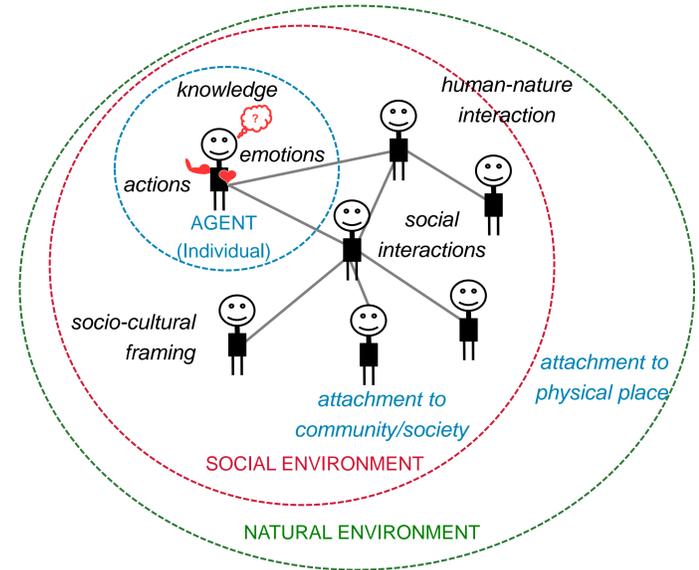


Figure 1: Framework for place-based individual and community engagement. Own figure.



## Methodology: Mixed methods approach

**Qualitative interviews:** Face-to-face Interviews with 15 coastal inhabitants have been conducted in February and March 2014 in Reußenköge North Frisia, Germany.

**Standardised survey:** 47 coastal inhabitants have been surveyed based on a written questionnaire (closed and open questions). The survey has been conducted in August 2014 in Reußenköge, North Frisia, Germany.

**Agent-based modelling:** Spatial and cognitive computer model, which simulates household's adoption behaviour of renewable energy technologies and the societal diffusion over time.

## Case Study: Municipality Reußenköge

Characteristic coastal region with a long history in land reclamation, coastal protection and development of renewable energy technologies.

## Results

### Meanings and perceptions of climate change

Climate change as actor, directly and indirectly

„And for me, it is a driving force to do what I am doing.“

Temporal – Shift of climate change to the future

„I don't believe that I will see a lot about climate change during my life time.“

Social – Mainly a partial perception of threat

„That I do now feel a threat by climate change due to sea level rise [...], I can not say.“

Geographical – From global to regional perception of climatic changes

„But global warming is coming now, that we have milder winter, more precipitation [...]“

Hypothetical – Uncertainty related to climate change, scepticism

„That every time it occurs a flood or frost, we do say climate change is eating us, I don't think nothing of it.“

Importance of education to deal with climate change

„Because education is a crucial point to stop climate change, in my point of view.“

Importance of consistent governance of climate change, which also considers local needs and benefits

„And I hope, [...] on the one hand, that they [politics] will always attribute the right to exist to renewable energies, and on the other hand, to be more aware of the societal benefits.“

### Mitigation & adaptation measures adopted on individual & community level

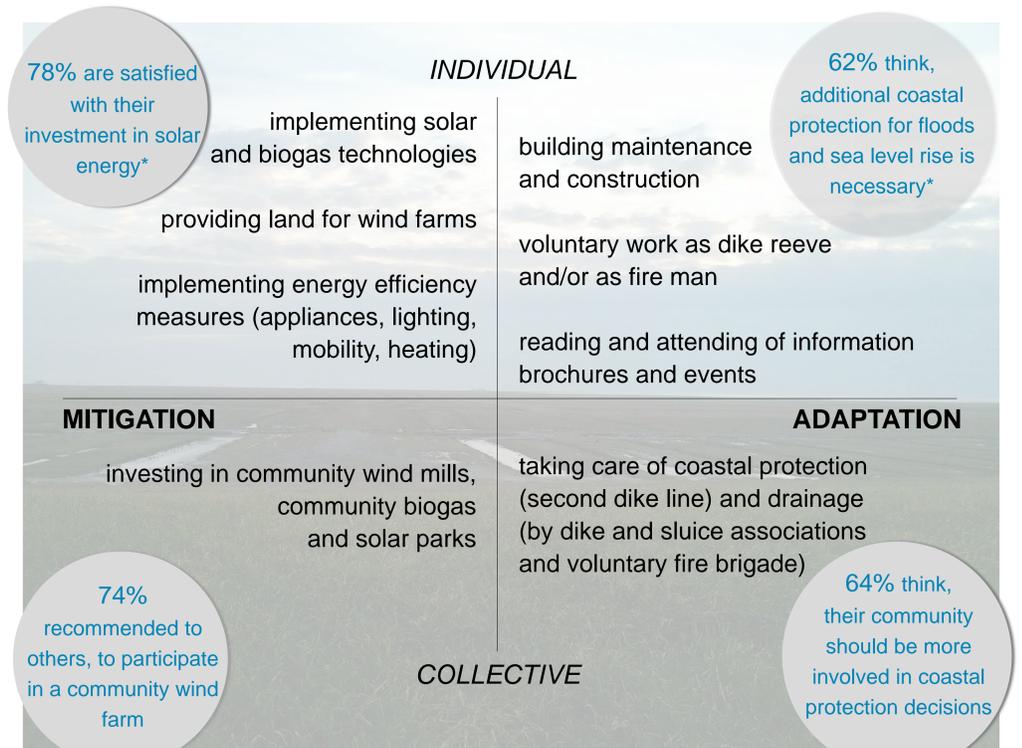


Figure 2: Mitigation vs. adaptation, individual vs. collective measures (Results of the interviews, 2014, N=15; and survey, 2014, N=47, \*percentage of surveyed people, who answered really strong or rather strong).