

RIFS-Blogpost

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Bringing Climate Research and Public Administration Together – How Local Government and Science Are Cooperating to Protect the Climate]



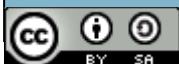
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Brandenburg Climate Guide offers an overview of research relevant to climate protection.

! Zum Aktualisieren der Textelemente, Zitation markieren und dann F9 drücken !

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1.1 By Mia Lehn (Wandelwerk e.V.), Lea Becker, Sophia Becker and Matthias Tang (alle RIFS)

Ambitious climate protection is not a question of "if", but of "how" and "how fast". Nevertheless, a lack of political resolve continues to stall efforts. In 2024, the Federal Climate Action Act was watered down in the wake of heated debates: sectoral targets were relaxed and accountability mechanisms were weakened, resulting in a patchwork of measures that is barely sufficient to achieve the climate targets set by government.

However, effective climate protection depends not only on the federal government's ambitions, but also on the contributions of the federal states and local authorities. Some federal states are actively moving forward with this: Brandenburg, for example, has enacted the "Brandenburg Climate Plan " - a strategy to reduce emissions by 2045. However, putting the plan into practice poses challenges for local authorities. To support these efforts, RIFS has developed a guide to climate research across the state: the Brandenburg Climate Guide, or Klima-Wegweiser (available in German only). It presents research relevant to climate protection in Brandenburg based on the thematic areas of the Climate Plan. The guide aims to bring together actors from politics, public administration, business, science and society to enable cooperation and support the implementation of measures to protect the climate. This blog post highlights how the Climate Guide can contribute to successful cooperation, especially between administration and science.

1.2 Barriers to climate action in administrative practice

Administrative actors face numerous challenges in the implementation of climate protection measures. Among the most pressing of these is the **lack of financial resources**. Many local authorities depend on funding programmes, which are often



bureaucratic, short-term and unreliable. In addition, **municipalities often lack sufficient staff** to effectively manage climate measures. Complex administrative processes and unclear responsibilities also slow down implementation. **Legal barriers** represent a further obstacle. Climate protection laws are frequently non-binding or lack enforcement mechanisms and contradictory regulations (for example in regulations governing construction and heritage conservation) hinder implementation. **Technical issues also pose challenges**, as some climate-friendly technologies have not yet been trialled at scale, are not yet competitive, or are difficult to integrate into existing infrastructure. **Political decision-makers** play a crucial role here: by actively promoting climate protection, they can facilitate progress as "policy entrepreneurs" who drive change for sustainability.

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1.3 How the Climate Guide contributes to the implementation of Brandenburg's Climate Plan

The Climate Guide first and foremost serves the purpose of providing administrative staff with **relevant information** and connecting local government with researchers who are involved in the implementation of measures to protect the climate. In doing so, the guide enables administrative actors to tap into scientific expertise – an essential resource for overcoming technical and procedural challenges as they put the Climate Plan into action.

Climate protection is, after all, a shared responsibility that requires **collaboration across sectors**. The Climate Guide's potential to support this was already evident at its launch, where many participants from politics, local government, business, and civil society expressed a clear desire for **more dialogue**.



In addition, the Climate Guide will **heighten the visibility of Brandenburg's Climate Plan** and underscore its importance as an overarching framework. This function is particularly important in a time that is marked by climate denialism, polarisation and overlapping crises. At the beginning of the new legislative period in Brandenburg in particular, it also offers policy- and decision-makers an opportunity to commit to the Climate Plan and its values – as many did at the publication's launch.

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1.4 Looking ahead

The Climate Guide can only unfold its full potential to foster cooperation if it receives sufficient **visibility**. The well-attended launch event and distribution of printed copies to stakeholders in public administration and science were promising first steps. Ensuring easy access to the Climate Guide – such as prominently featuring the guide on the **state government's website** – would strengthen its reach. Regular updates will also be crucial, as research processes continue to change. While the digital version of the Climate Guide makes it easy to update, funding is needed for its maintenance. Ultimately, an evaluation will be needed to determine its actual impact.

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1.5 Conclusion

The Brandenburg Climate Guide supports efforts to protect the climate by pooling knowledge, connecting stakeholders and strengthening communication between science and practice. But without sufficient resources and the necessary political will, its potential remains limited. Tools and strategies are important, but it takes determined people who stand behind them and demonstrate



their value. The Climate Guide can help to forge ties between scientific institutions in Brandenburg and build up pressure – for example through platforms such as Brandenburg’s Scientific Climate Council (WKB).

