

Preface from the MICE project co-ordinator

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This special issue of *Climate Research* presents results from the MICE (Modelling the Impact of Climate Extremes) project, which was funded by the European Union under Framework Programme V.

The project grew from 2 strands of thought. First, it seemed that the balance of our efforts, as impact scientists, was wrong: too much time was spent on the evaluation and manipulation of the input climate data, and too little on the formulation and implementation of methods to analyse possible impacts. Any scenario of future climate change is just one of many possible, and equally plausible, futures. Much effort is devoted to downscaling global climate model results to create regional scenarios of future climate change as a basis for impact studies. That effort might be better put into thinking about the range of plausible futures, and hence our confidence in any statements we make about the future impacts of climate change. Second, since it is widely accepted that the most severe impacts of climate change arise from changes in extremes, why not have a project which de-emphasises the impact of the mean climate and concentrates on the impact of such extremes?

My original thinking was that MICE would be a project to explore the impacts of future changes in climate extremes in Europe. It would take as its scenarios of future climate change the output data from climate models, both global and regional. There would be no downscaling within the project, although we would use high-resolution model data where available. The goal would be to look at the output from different climate models, and different simulations by the same climate model, in order to explore impacts under a range of plausible futures.

In bringing together the partners, quality of research was of paramount concern. I also wanted to reflect the full geographical diversity of Europe, from the Mediterranean to the northern forests of Scandinavia, and from high Alpine regions to the plains of central Europe. There were 8 partners, based in countries from Greece to Sweden, and from Switzerland to Poland.

Inevitably, the project was modified during both the proposal and the implementation phases. More research was done on the characteristics of the input climate data than I had originally anticipated. Some statistical downscaling did creep in. However, for the most part, we were able to hold onto the original guiding principles. I trust that this is reflected in the collection of papers in this Climate Special, which ranges from studies of climate extremes in model outputs to analyses of impacts on, for example, energy, forestry and outdoor fires. We also report on efforts to disseminate MICE information through workshops that explored the techniques used in the project, and their performance.

Because I moved from the University of East Anglia in 2004, I was unable to see the MICE project through to its conclusion. My sincerest thanks go to Clair Hanson, who took over the management of the project for the final months, and who is the principal editor of this Climate Special. On behalf of the MICE team, I thank Dr. Georgios Amanatidis (EU Project Officer in Brussels) for all his efforts towards the project and Dr Allen Perry, who was instrumental in making this special issue of *Climate Research* a reality.