

Adaptation Reporting Power

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

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Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on the Adaptation Reporting Power

This 'FAQ' pack aims to answer frequently asked questions on:

- The Adaptation Reporting Power;
- The reporting process;
- What the reports should include;
- Support, sources of information and guidance; and
- Information for invitees.

Unlike the Statutory Guidance which has been published on our [website](#), these answers carry no statutory weight. They are aimed to be helpful to organisations when producing their reports.

As this is the first use of the Adaptation Reporting Power it is likely to be a learning process for all involved. We would encourage reporting authorities and organisations to share their questions and findings as the reports develop, so that we can keep this FAQ pack updated as a valuable information source.

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A) The Adaptation Reporting Power under the Climate Change Act 2008

1. What is the Adaptation Reporting Power?

The Climate Change Act 2008 gives the Secretary of State the power to direct reporting authorities (bodies with 'functions of a public nature' and 'statutory undertakers') to produce reports on what they are doing to adapt to climate change. The power is referred to as the 'Adaptation Reporting Power'.

2. What is a 'reporting authority'?

'Reporting authorities' are those bodies that are issued with Directions to report from the Secretary of State. Reporting authorities have to prepare reports by the deadline set in their Direction and must have regard to the Statutory Guidance. Reporting authorities must prepare and send to the Secretary of State reports containing:

- (a) an assessment of the current and predicted impact of climate change in relation to the reporting authority's functions;
- (b) a statement of the reporting authority's proposals and policies for adapting to climate change in the exercise of its functions and the time-scales for introducing those proposals and policies.

The first strategy for exercising the Adaptation Reporting Power and list of priority reporting authorities was laid before Parliament on 26th November 2009 and is available to download from our website.

The list of priority reporting authorities for this round of reporting (2009-2011) can be found on the reporting power [webpage](#). Other sectors and organisations have been invited report voluntarily, for information on invitees please refer to Section E of this pack.

3. Why is it necessary?

It is essential that organisations that are responsible for important services and infrastructure are assessing the risks and impacts of climate change and making the necessary plans to respond, as part of their risk management processes. The power is the primary legislative lever available to the Government to ensure that climate change impacts are being considered by key sectors.

4. What are the benefits of reporting to the reporting authorities themselves?

This exercise isn't being run solely for the benefit of Government, it is expected that the reporting authorities themselves will benefit from the process, and the feedback we have received from early reporters indicates that this is the case.

Potential benefits to reporting authorities include:

- Going through an established process and using the Statutory Guidance to report may result in a more planned and cost-effective response to climate change.
- Taking action now may save in the future; for example, it can be 10-20% more expensive to retrofit buildings than design them appropriately from the outset.
- The Stern Review on the economics of climate change recognised the need to act now to minimise costs and maximise future benefits arising from climate change.
- Climate change is likely to affect nearly every part of an organisation's functions, and beyond that have repercussions on other stakeholders. Through reporting, organisations will be able to engage with other sectors upon which their functions may indirectly depend, and ensure that there are no gaps in or barriers to their adaptation.
- Risk assessment is a valuable mechanism to capture business opportunities that might arise from climate change and to identify those which can be secured with relative ease.
- To some extent, adaptation will occur autonomously. However, some barriers might prevent individuals and the environment from adapting in the appropriate way. This is why it is important that the Government gathers information, so that it can assess the extent to which it has a role to work alongside others to break down these barriers.
- The reports will be published on Defra's website to ensure that the good work organisations are doing is recognised by the public, key stakeholders and investors.

5. How does this fit in with other Government work?

The Government is co-ordinating its adaptation work through the Adapting to Climate Change Programme, which works with all sectors to enable society to adapt successfully to the changes in climate which we are facing. For further detail please see our [website](#).

The Government's approach to climate change adaptation is set out in its [response](#) to the conclusions and recommendations of the Environmental Audit Committee report on Adapting to Climate Change which includes a reference

to the Adaptation Reporting Power and says, “The Government agrees with the Committee’s emphasis on ensuring that nationally significant infrastructure is adapting to the impacts of climate change. The statutory Reporting Power introduced by the Climate Change Act is a powerful lever to drive adaptation in regulated industries such as water and energy – and these are key sectors with responsibility for national infrastructure.”

The Reporting Power is also particularly relevant to:

- **[The UK’s first Climate Change Risk Assessment](#)**: The Government, using the reporting authorities’ reports and other evidence, will assess the risks posed by the impacts of climate change for the UK as a whole, through the UK’s first Climate Change Risk Assessment.
- **National Adaptation Programme**: the Government’s first national adaptation programme will be put before Parliament in 2012. The reports from reporting authorities as well as the first Climate Change Risk Assessment and wider work under the Adapting to Climate Change Programme will be used to influence the programme’s development and priorities.

6. Is there not overlap between this work and what organisations are being asked to do in relation to natural hazards and civil contingencies?

We are aware that some sectors covered by the Adaptation Reporting Power are working with Government on resilience to natural hazards and wider issues of civil contingencies, led by the Cabinet Office.

However, the information required under the Adaptation Reporting Power is a much broader assessment of how the future climate will impact on an organisation’s functions and how organisations will need to adapt to these impacts. Information on resilience is therefore only a small part of the information needed under the Directions issued to reporting authorities.

If an organisation has already submitted information related to resilience, they are encouraged to re-use this information as part of their report where it is relevant, noting that resilience focuses on vulnerability from current risks, while adaptation is about reducing vulnerabilities to future climate impacts (both gradual change as well as likely increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events).

7. Why not wait for the UK’s first Climate Change Risk Assessment?

The first round of the Adaptation Reporting Power has focused on those organisations and sectors that are vital to the country providing essential services and managing our infrastructure. We are keen therefore that these organisations start now to assess and address climate risks and opportunities

and embed adaptation into their individual risk management processes, rather than wait until 2012 once the UK's first Climate Change Risk Assessment has been completed.

This will also help minimise the chance that funding may be allocated and spent on long-term projects that do not take into account the impacts of climate change. In addition, the reports will provide information to the UK's first Climate Change Risk Assessment and influence the development of the National Adaptation Programme.

8. Will there be future rounds of the Adaptation Reporting Power?

This is the first 'round' of the Adaptation Reporting Power, and is due to end in November 2011. The second strategy for the use of the power will be laid before Parliament in 2012, and every 5 years after that, to enable its use to better aligned with the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment cycle and the five-yearly National Adaptation Programme.

B) The Process

9. Who is on the priority list?

The strategy for use of the Adaptation Reporting Power was laid before Parliament on 26 November 2009 and identified 91 'reporting authorities'. Each priority reporting authority was identified because:

- a) It is responsible for national infrastructure and therefore the continued functioning of daily life in the UK;
- b) Vulnerable to the projected impacts of climate change; and
- c) Climate change adaptation is not considered to be sufficiently covered under its existing regulatory framework.

10. Will those on this priority list be asked to report again?

Not necessarily, as it depends on many factors, including the outcomes of this round of reporting, the UK's first Climate Change Risk Assessment and the development of the 2012 National Adaptation Programme.

As adapting to climate change is not a single, one-off exercise, it is important that adaptation becomes part of the way organisations carry out their functions and is embedded into the core of each authority's business, rather than be a one-off standalone activity, (e.g. just producing this report).

If there is sufficient evidence that adaptation has been embedded into an organisation's existing business structures and/or regulatory frameworks it is possible that an organisation will not be asked to report again or will just be asked to give an update on their activities.

The UK's first Climate Change Risk Assessment may also point to some areas that need more attention by Government.

11. Can organisations submit draft reports before the deadline?

Due to the number of reporting authorities, it will not be feasible for Defra to provide detailed feedback on reports in their various stages of drafting. However, we are happy to work with working groups in each sector to develop templates for the reports or to answer specific queries.

12. How will the reports be assessed?

Following submission, the Adaptation Reports will be analysed by Cranfield University, Defra's Adapting to Climate Change Programme, and lead Government Departments.

Cranfield University: Risk experts from the Risk Centre at Cranfield University will independently analyse the risk assessment methodology and results in each Adaptation Report. Their findings will be reported to Defra and lead Government Departments. They will also produce sector summaries of the risks.

Lead Policy Government Department: Policy leads in relevant departments (e.g. Department for Transport for the aviation sector) and devolved administrations, where appropriate, will evaluate the Adaptation Report from a policy perspective (i.e. lessons to inform future work) and identify information gaps and barriers to action.

Defra: The Adapting to Climate Change Programme team will examine the Adaptation Reports and identify any barriers to action and interdependencies between risks. The Adapting to Climate Change Programme team are the final arbiters of the reports. They will incorporate feedback from Cranfield and the lead policy Government Departments into the response to the Reporting Authorities via a letter from the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. They will also publish the sector summaries and a final report in 2012

13. Can organisations see the evaluation framework that Cranfield will be using?

Yes, the evaluation framework used by Cranfield, based on the requirements in the Statutory Guidance, to assess each risk assessment is available to all reporting authorities and the public in general through the Defra website.

14. How will Defra feedback the assessment of the reports?

The analysis provided by the relevant Government Departments, Devolved Administrations (where appropriate), and Cranfield, will then be drawn together to form constructive feedback from the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in the form of a letter to each Reporting Authority on their Adaptation Report. This will be completed within 3 months of receiving the original report.

Once a sector has reported, the ACC team will hold a workshop with all the Reporting Authorities and other interested parties to assess the overall response of that sector and identify where work might be needed in the future. The sector summaries provided by Cranfield will play an important role in these workshops, and they will also be an opportunity to agree the sector summaries which will be published in one final report in 2012.

15. What will you do if you don't think the reports are good enough?

Within 3 months of receipt of the reports the Secretary of State will notify (via a letter) reporting authorities of commercial and confidentiality objections (see Q19) and confirm whether the report meets the Direction or not.

If the reporting authority has been assessed as not meeting the Direction, then it will be asked to do additional work and resubmit the report. The reporting authority will have an additional 3 months to do this.

16. Will the reports be published?

Yes, we are keen for the process to be as transparent as possible and consequently reports from each reporting authority will be published on Defra's website once they have been agreed and signed-off by the Secretary of State. It is up to each reporting authority whether and when they publish the report on their own website.

By taking this approach, it allows for wider scrutiny of the Adaptation Reporting Power, highlights areas of good practice and sets out how a range of important organisations are assessing and responding to the impacts of climate change.

17. When will Defra publish the reports?

Defra will publish the reports on the Defra website once they have been evaluated and feedback has been provided to the Reporting Authority (i.e. 3 months after they have been submitted to Defra if they have met the requirements of the Direction and had regard to the Statutory Guidance). Sector summaries of the reports will be included in a final report on the findings of the first round of the Adaptation Reporting Power will be published in early 2012 to coincide with the UK's first Climate Change Risk Assessment.

18. What about the reputational risks to the reporting authorities of publishing the reports?

The reports should be used to draw attention to the good work already being undertaken to address the threats of climate change as well as demonstrating that the authority understands and is actively addressing the challenges climate change is likely to pose in the future.

If the report follows the statutory guidance it should enhance the reporting authority's reputation as an organisation that is preparing for climate change. When reporting authorities find risks they are yet to address the report will demonstrate that they are aware of them and should set out how they can be addressed in the future.

19. How will the information feed into the UK's first Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) and National Adaptation Programme?

The Government is assessing the risks posed by the impacts of climate change for the UK as a whole, through the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment. While the Reporting Power is focused on organisational level risks, the CCRA takes a much wider overview and assesses the risks posed to the UK as a whole across a range of sectors such as Health, Agriculture, and Energy etc. In an ideal world the CCRA would occur after your adaptation reports have been received but the Climate Change Act requires it to be laid before Parliament in January 2012, with the technical analysis being completed by April 2011, which means that the timetables don't quite align this time.

The CCRA is based largely on existing evidence. To inform the analysis of your own sector, we would appreciate your input both on an ongoing basis and through your risk reports. We have recently made available the CCRA initial analysis from earlier this year and would appreciate your comments on the report(s) that corresponds best to your own sector. These initial reports and feedback forms can be accessed via the UKCCRA [website](#) (you will need to register first to access the reports).

20. What are the links between the Statutory Guidance for reporting authorities and the methodology for the CCRA?

Both are based on current best practice in risk assessment, and so are fundamentally similar. The adaptation reporting power guidance is tailored for organisations assessing risk and creating adaptation plans. The CCRA method is more tailored for understanding the level of risks across a broad range of sectors nationally and regionally, drawing on international best practice and previous national assessments.

21. What about confidential / commercially sensitive information in the reports?

We understand that some information in your report may be sensitive for commercial or security reasons. However, the Government is committed to putting as much information as possible into the public domain, and is legally obliged to publish the full report except for information which can be withheld in accordance with the exceptions in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (and related regulations) including the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, or for which disclosure is prohibited by another piece of legislation. **We would therefore ask you to mark any information that you think should not be published, and submit a second, redacted version alongside the complete report.** The Secretary of State will confirm that your redacted report complies with these regulations within 3 months of being submitted. If not, you may be required to re-submit your report.

If organisations have specific questions or concerns over confidential / commercially sensitive information in their reports we'd encourage them to get in touch by emailing us at: acc_reportingpower@defra.gsi.gov.uk. Regarding the presentation of the report, it would be best if information you intend to withhold in accordance with these exceptions be included in a separate annex, rather than in the main body of the report.

22. Why have I been given an earlier deadline than some other reporting authorities?

This round of the Adaptation Reporting Power ends in November 2011. All reports must be submitted by this date. We have staggered submission deadlines so that we are able to analyse the reports by sector. Where possible we have tried to take into account the size of organisations, current state of climate change adaptation work and the responses to our consultation.

23. What is the role of regulators in the process?

We will also be asking regulators to report in this round. Regulators will be asked to report on how they consider climate change will affect their ability to fulfil their functions. The Statutory Guidance makes it clear that we expect regulatory reporting authorities to outline how their framework could provide incentives for efficient and effective adaptation. This might be through addressing market failures and/or by amending existing, or creating new, instruments to account for climate risk and adaptation.

Regulators will be reporting after those organisations that they regulate so that they can take into account their sector's risks and plans for adapting in their reports as well as the emerging headline messages/findings. We will therefore be sharing with the regulator all the reports for the organisations that regulator regulates (e.g. all water utility companies reports will be shared with Ofwat). Regulators will not have a formal role in assessing the quality of these reports. Regulators should also work with the relevant department to consider the wider actions that may need to be taken as a result of the information gathered from the sector. Regulators' reports may also help identify and address areas where Government may need to break down regulatory or policy barriers to adaptation.

24. What is the role of the Adaptation Sub-Committee?

The Adaptation Sub-Committee (ASC) is a sub-committee of the independent Committee on Climate Change. Although the ASC has no formal role in the Adaptation Reporting Power process, it will have access to the full reports, and in

its role of scrutinising the Government performance on adapting to climate change may wish to look more closely at each sector or individual reports.

The ASC will have a role to assess whether the UK's first Climate Change Risk Assessment highlights any specific sectors/areas that should be required to report in future rounds of using the Adaptation Reporting Power.

25. What about devolution and overseas issues?

The Secretary of State has the power to issue Guidance and Directions to reporting authorities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, in relation to their reserved functions in Scotland, non-devolved functions in Wales and reserved and excepted functions in the case of Northern Ireland.

The Directions do not apply in respect of any devolved functions of reporting authorities. The Directions do not apply in respect of any activities of the reporting authority which are outside of the United Kingdom.

We have worked closely with devolved administrations throughout the development of the strategy and issuing of Directions. Devolved administrations will also have an interest in looking at some of the reports.

Wales

The Climate Change Act confers the power to issue Directions in relation to reporting authorities' devolved functions, similar to the Secretary of State's power. Welsh Ministers may also produce Guidance equivalent to the Statutory Guidance.

Scotland

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a responsibility on public bodies in Scotland to discharge their duties in a way that will help the implementation of an Adaptation Programme. Scottish Ministers have a power to require some or all public bodies to report on their adaptation work although there are no current plans to use this power. If the power is used in the future and some bodies which carry out both devolved and non-devolved functions have to report on adaptation, they will be able to produce a single report provided it satisfies both UK and Scottish guidance.

Northern Ireland

The Climate Change Act 2008 does not give any powers to the Northern Ireland Executive or Scottish Ministers which mirror the powers available to the Secretary of State.

Whether or not a reporting authority's functions are devolved or reserved will differ for each reporting authority. We would encourage reporting authorities to seek their own legal advice on these matters. For specific queries about devolution please [contact the Adaptation Reporting Power team.](#)

C)What should the reports include?

26.How should organisations use the [Statutory Guidance](#)?

All reporting authorities must have regard to the Statutory Guidance in producing their reports.

The Statutory Guidance does not prescribe a particular methodology of assessing risks or developing a programme of measures. It does though outline the process all reporting authorities should go through when producing a report.

The expected process

The Statutory Guidance outlines the process reporting authorities should go through when producing reports, this process as outlined in Box 1 (pages 11-12) can be viewed as having 3 stages:

1. An assessment of risks, threats and opportunities posed by climate change impacts.
2. Developing a programme of adaptation measures on prioritised risks.
3. Embedding and monitoring climate change adaptation into existing organisational structures.

More detailed guidance on how to approach these 3 stages can be found in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of the Statutory Guidance.

The 'prompt questions'

The prompt questions in Annex C (pages 37-38) give an idea as to the sort of questions reporting authorities should be considering when producing their reports.

The cover sheet

Annex B (pages 30-35) is a cover sheet to provide a structure for the executive summary of the reports. Each organisation is required to fill out this coversheet so that key messages from the report can be easily highlighted to Government and others (i.e. once published).

There is no set way for the report to be produced, recognising that each organisation will approach it differently to fit with their own corporate structures. The evaluation framework for the risk assessments used by Cranfield University has been designed to take this flexibility into account.

27. How long should the reports be?

There is no defined rule on how long a report should be – it is up to the individual authority.

It is though important that each report has sufficient detail in it to demonstrate that it has met the Direction and had regard to the Statutory Guidance.

28. Can reporting authorities signpost to existing work?

Yes, organisations are able to, and are encouraged to, signpost/build on existing adaptation work (or related work where appropriate, e.g. on resilience).

If there are several frameworks through which an authority can meet the requirements of the Statutory Guidance then the authority need only bring together elements of these reports to respond to the Secretary of State. Any 'signposting' must be explained in context and the Statutory Guidance will help to act as a 'check' on any existing work, and ensure adaptation is considered in a more focused and targeted way.

If any signposting is unclear then a reporting authority may be asked to provide further details of the work for the purpose of evaluating the reports.

29. Why can't organisations have a template?

We are happy to work with organisations and their trade associations to develop a sector template if they feel this would be useful. One trade association, the Energy Networks Association, has already set up a task group and its members are working to establish a common approach to producing their reports which will then allow organisations to complete the report individually setting out their own risks and actions, but in a consistent way across that sector.

However, it should be noted that a report compiled by the trade association on behalf of the sector will not be adequate and that reporting authorities are still required to submit individual reports.

30. Given that there is no standard template for the reports, how can they be compared?

The reports will not be directly compared with each other, simply measured against the statutory guidance, recognising the fact that there are different approaches to the task that are equally valid.

The Cranfield framework will inform our response to the reports by showing how well they have fulfilled the statutory guidance, and teams in Defra and the lead Government departments will give more nuanced feedback on the subject matter of the report.

31. Should reporting authorities report at an organisational or licence level?

If organisations hold multiple licences for the same category of operation (e.g. two electricity distribution licences) then it is acceptable to report together on the functions specified in those licences, i.e. accepting a report that provides a summary overview of the work of the group as a whole, so long as it presented the separate work of each licensee as well.

For example, the group might have made a centralised assessment of the risks across all of its licensees, but some of the risks will be specific to certain areas, and in many cases the adaptation actions will be undertaken by individual licensees, and considered under their individual price controls.

32. What happens if an organisation expands during the course of this round of reporting becoming eligible as a priority reporting authority as defined in the 2009 strategy?

(E.g. a water company passes the 50 000 billed premises threshold between 2010-11).

If an organisation does not fulfil the criteria at the time Directions are issued (February-March 2010) then they will not be included in this round of reporting (ending 2011). If they reach our threshold for reporting during the course of the first round, they may be asked to report in the second round of reporting (2012 onwards).

It is therefore advisable that these organisations begin to start thinking about adaptation so that they can be well positioned to respond to the Secretary of State if they are required to do so in future rounds.

33. Organisations have many functions, how do you expect them to report on them all?

Each reporting authority is best placed to determine which of its functions might be affected by the impacts of climate change. As far as is practical, reports should cover all aspects of organisations' functions. This may involve reporting on things that organisations don't have full control over; but it will be beneficial for both reporting authorities and Government to be made aware of these issues.

34. What are the consultation requirements with key stakeholders?

We would expect to see evidence that an organisation's key stakeholders (e.g. suppliers) have been included in the development of the report. This does not necessarily mean organisations should have a full consultation on the final report but they should be able to provide evidence that the report has not been developed in isolation and has been discussed and approved internally and preferably with key stakeholders as well.

If reporting Authorities are using/signposting existing work which has already been discussed and approved internally and/or with key stakeholders it should not be necessary to consult on it again unless it has changed significantly.

35. How should I deal with interdependencies?

Organisations should try to explore interdependencies in the report. For example, an organisation may depend on the road network being open to get supplies into a particular site. It would therefore be advisable to engage with the Highways Agency or local authority responsible for the road to ensure that it is also resilient and well prepared for the impacts of a changing climate.

Alternatively, an action you take to address a risk may have a knock on impact on other organisations or communities within the area e.g. building a large wall around an asset to reduce the risk of flooding. It is in these cases where consultation with key stakeholders is important before implementing an adaptation plan.

One way in which organisations could explore interdependencies is by talking to other reporting authorities to find out what they are doing. This could be via UKCIP's discussion forum which can be accessed via <http://moodle.ukcip.org.uk> in the Adaptation Reporting Power section, with the Enrolment key '285717'.

36. What if it is not possible to identify climate thresholds above which climate change poses a threat to the organisation or infrastructure asset?

Organisations only really need to identify the thresholds above which climate change poses a threat, to the extent that such thresholds are reasonably plausible scenarios. For example, some assets will still be resilient even under the High Emissions Scenario. For other risks such as flooding, which may get progressively worse with climate change, there is no single physical threshold of impact and no intervention threshold. This will all be taken into account when we are assessing the reports.

37. What evidence should an organisation use to analyse how the impacts of climate change might affect them?

Every organisation should use the best currently available evidence on climate change and its impacts to inform its risk assessment. The approach and depth of analysis should be proportionate to the size and nature of the organisation and the type of risks it faces. For example, an organisation that faces the same risk from a mean temperature rise of 2 degrees and 4 degrees can plan a strategy without doing the analysis associated with each; while some authorities may want

to consider the more extreme potential changes in climate such as those outlined under the Environment Agency's High++ scenario of extreme sea level rise and storm surge.

Each organisation is best placed to consider its own particular circumstances. i.e. nature of climate impacts on its work, whether it is dealing, for example, with low risk, but high impact events or medium risk, but low impact events.

38. Do organisations need to use UKCP09? What if they have already carried out analysis using UKCIP02?

The broad messages in the latest set of UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) are the same as those in UKCIP02 – warmer wetter winters and hotter drier summers – but with additional information on the changes and greatly increased spatial resolution. As UKCP09 is more comprehensive and robust than UKCIP02, it is recommended that organisations use UKCP09 even where an analysis using UKCIP02 has been carried out to help further increase the organisation's knowledge of the range of impacts they might need to adapt to.

UKCP09 gives probabilistic projections of climate change to the end of this century over land and sea for 3 global greenhouse gas emission scenarios (low, medium and high). One advantage in using UKCP09 is that if an organisation has critical infrastructure and understands its thresholds, it may want to look at the 90th percentile of probability in the high emissions scenario to understand how temperature increase might affect the infrastructure and any known threshold to temperature.

In November 2010 UKCP09 Extras was launched. This includes information on projected changes in wind-speed, fog, lightning and snow. If this information was not available when a reporting authority started compiling their report they will not be criticised for not using it, although if any of these climate variables is of particular importance to their activities it would be worth them examining the additional data now available.

For more detailed guidance on how to use the projections please refer to the [UKCP09 website](#).

39. What timescales should organisations be using in their analysis?

There is no prescribed timeframe that reporting authorities should be using in their analysis recognising the differences between organisations in timing of investments and life spans of infrastructure.

The timescales involved in looking at the short, medium and long-term will depend on the context of the policy, programme or project and each authority should take its own view on what timescales should be assessed, e.g. where infrastructure has a long life asset then longer timescales should be considered.

Climate describes the long-term trend in the temperature, precipitation and other atmospheric conditions. It is sometimes conveniently defined as the *average* weather conditions but over long periods, the trend dominates over short-term fluctuations in weather and “average” becomes an ambiguous term. Which timescale matters to your organisation will influence how you frame your analysis. One approach might be to use a near-term 30 year horizon for detailed assessments and a more high level consideration of longer term impacts (i.e. up until the end of the century).

40. How should organisations deal with uncertainty?

While there are still uncertainties about the exact nature of some climate impacts, reporting authorities will be expected to deal with this uncertainty, and reporting authorities are encouraged to quantify the likelihood and consequences from climate change impacts and any opportunities where possible.

It is important to note that while tools such as the UK Climate Projections begin to quantify uncertainty for each global emissions scenario, the results are based on the latest science and are subject to change as our understanding on the impacts of climate change and climate science continue to advance and actual global emissions become apparent.

Reports should include flexibility to respond as knowledge improves and projections change in the future.

41. What about gaps in the evidence available?

We have asked organisations to let us know about the gaps in the information available to them (e.g. lack of robust wind projections) and will share this information with the Evidence Team within the Adapting to Climate Change Programme to ensure that where possible the gaps are addressed.

To minimise the burden on reporting authorities, if new evidence is made available during the reporting period, reporting authorities will not be penalised for not including this evidence.

If this new information is fundamental to the risk assessment, and options for dealing with the risks, then we would encourage the reporting authority to make the Adapting to Climate Change Programme aware of this issue as soon as possible.

It is important to remember that following submission of the report, this should not be seen as the end of the organisation's adaptation work; adaptation plans should be continually evaluated and reassessed. This will enable new evidence to be taken into account in organisations' future adaptation work.

D)Support, sources of information and guidance

42. What support will the ACC team provide?

Since the Directions were issued between February and March 2010, the team within Defra have been trying to meet as many organisations as possible and support them throughout the reporting process. To date, we have been engaging with organisations at a sector level, often via trade associations, and see this as an effective and efficient way of maintaining an ongoing dialogue, ensuring clarity and managing expectations, throughout the reporting process. If your organisation is not covered through this route, and you would like to arrange a 1-2-1 meeting with the team in Defra to discuss your report, please [email](#) us and we'd be more than happy to arrange something.

We'll also be continuing to send out newsletters updating organisations on any policy developments or useful information – if you're not receiving these newsletters and would like to, please e-mail us.

We'd welcome any suggestions on how we can improve our engagement and support.

43. What can UKCIP offer?

The UK Climate Impacts Programme UKCIP has launched an online resource solely for use by reporting authorities with materials that will help explain and explore issues including:

- The role of UKCIP
- An approach to adaptation
- Stage 1: Assessing risks, identifying threats and opportunities
- Stage 2 - Developing adaptation plans
- Stage 3 - Implementing the adaptation plan, embedding adaptation into existing structures and monitoring the effects

There is also a discussion forum, where reporting authorities are encourage to share best practice and explore solutions to issues that they are facing. This resource can be accessed via <http://moodle.ukcip.org.uk> in the Adaptation Reporting Power section, with the Enrolment key '285717'. Access is free, but if you are not already registered, you will need to complete a brief registration process in order to view the site.

UKCIP will be contacting organisations over the summer to explore the possibility of holding one day sector events on UKCIP tools (e.g. Adaptation Wizard, UKCP09, BACLIAT) which may be relevant to the reports, or to cover issues that organisations are finding difficult.

They are also looking into holding a cross-sector workshop in November so that reporting authorities can explore and address interdependencies in the reports. If you would like any further information on the role of UKCIP, or would like to suggest alternative support that you would like to see, if the above is not what you would regard as helpful, please contact acc_reportingpower@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

44. What guidance and information is out there?

Reporting authorities are only required to have regard to the [Statutory Guidance](#) which was published in November 2009. The Evaluation Framework that has been created by Cranfield and is based on the Statutory Guidance will also help Reporting Authorities understand what information is required of them and how the reports will be assessed. In addition, there are a number of other sources of information and guidance which we expect will be useful to organisations as they prepare their reports.

- **The UK Climate Impact Programme's (UKCIP) website is likely to be a valuable source of information when producing a report.**

Although they can be very helpful, the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) should not be thought of as the only, or necessarily the best, source of information to explore future impacts; it depends on the problem being addressed. The UKCIP Adaptation wizard tool gives a summary of the applicability of different UKCIP tools to solving adaptation issues.

You can find more information and additional tools and guidance by [visiting the UKCIP website](#).

- **The Environment Agency's Supplementary Guidance**

The Environment Agency has published on its website 'supplementary guidance' intended to complement the Government's Statutory Guidance.

The Environment Agency has significant expertise in planning for climate change and is a potential source of useful information for reporting authorities. The supplementary guidance makes it easier to find out what the Environment Agency can and cannot provide. It signposts data, advice and tools for assessing climate risks in core Environment Agency areas, such as flood risk,

coastal erosion and water resources. It also explains where the Environment Agency may be able to offer further support. However, the supplementary guidance does not tell you what your risks are, how to do a climate change risk assessment or which climate scenarios to use.

We expect that this guidance will be useful, but unlike the Statutory Guidance, reporting authorities are not required to have regard to it.

You can access the Environment Agency's supplementary guidance [here](#).

- **Infrastructure in the energy, transport, and water sectors**

Under the Adapting to Climate Change Programme, a two-year (to March 2011) cross-departmental Infrastructure and Adaptation project has been set-up to identify and examine strategic solutions to improve the long-term resilience of new and existing infrastructure in the energy, telecommunications, transport and water sectors to future climate change impacts. The project's first output, a study on the technical and operational risks from climate change on infrastructure in the energy, transport and water sectors is available on the Defra website [website](#).

45. Will you be providing case studies of good practice adaptation action?

UKCIP already have a range of case studies available on their website and are currently working with the Adapting to Climate Change Programme to develop a searchable portal to make this information more accessible.

6 organisations are submitting their reports early, in September 2010, and we hope to make these publically available in January 2011 so that other organisations can see examples of reports and we will use them to share examples of good practice adaptation action.

E) Information for Invitees

We recognise that there are organisations not covered by the Climate Change Act and the Adaptation Reporting Power that may also wish to report to Government on how they are responding to the impacts of climate change.

They may want to go through the Reporting Power's established process to help adapt their organisation as well as publicly demonstrate their commitment and leadership to adapting to climate change and minimising the risks to their organisation.

If you would like to report voluntarily, please e-mail us:

acc_reportingpower@defra.gso.gov.uk

46. What are the advantages of reporting?

This is not just a bureaucratic exercise for Government. There are many benefits to organisations in reporting:

- Going through an established process and using the Statutory Guidance to report may result in a more planned and cost-effective response to climate change.
- Taking action now may save in the future; for example, it can be 10-20% more expensive to retrofit buildings than design them appropriately from the outset.
- The Stern Review on the economics of climate change recognised the need to act now to minimise costs and maximise future benefits arising from climate change.
- Climate change is likely to affect nearly every part of an organisation's functions, and beyond that have repercussions on other stakeholders. Through reporting, organisations will be able to engage with other sectors upon which their functions may indirectly depend, and ensure that there are no gaps in or barriers to their adaptation.
- Risk assessment is a valuable mechanism to capture business opportunities that might arise from climate change and to identify those which can be secured with relative ease.
- To some extent, adaptation will occur autonomously. However, some barriers might prevent individuals and the environment from adapting in the appropriate way. This is why it is important that the Government gathers information, so that it can assess the extent to which it has a role to work alongside others to break down these barriers.

- The reports will be published on Defra's website to ensure that the good work organisations are doing is recognised by the public, key stakeholders and investors.

47. Why are some organisations being invited rather than directed?

Organisations are being invited rather than directed either;

- Because they do not sit within the legal definition of a reporting authority but their adaptation is considered crucial to the ongoing functioning of daily life in the UK;

Or

- They have expressed their willingness to be involved in the process and to be seen as exemplars in adaptation.

48. If an organisation decides to report will it have to keep to a deadline?

This round of reporting ends in November 2011. In order for the reports to be able to inform the National Adaptation Programme, we would need information from invitees in advance of this date. It is important for invitees to stick to the dates agreed for the delivery of their reports so that teams in Government and Cranfield can plan for their analysis and evaluation.

49. What would invitees need to include in their reports?

As a minimum we would like to see evidence of an appreciation of the risks presented by climate change, and organisations' plans for addressing these risks. Ideally we would like to see published complete risk assessments and adaptation plans as outlined in the Statutory Guidance to reporting authorities. However, we are flexible about how this might be delivered and are happy to discuss this with organisations.

50. Is this just another bureaucratic, costly exercise that will have little/no benefit?

There are many benefits, to Government, to organisations, and to the public in reporting:

- the Government will gain knowledge as to the preparedness of key sectors and whether further action will be required by Government;
- for organisations there will be an element of quality control of their risk assessments and ensuring that they weigh up the costs and benefits of measures to ensure that they are investing in infrastructure that is prepared for climate change impacts; and
- for the public there is re-assurance that key sectors are required to consider the risks, and that this will prompt cost effective action.

F) List of websites

You should be able to 'click through' to all of the websites referenced in this pack. If however, you have printed out this, the full list of website addresses is below:

Defra

The overall 'Adapting to Climate Change Programme' website:

www.defra.gov.uk/adaptation

The Adaptation Reporting Power webpage:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climate/legislation/reporting

The Statutory Guidance webpage:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climate/legislation/guidance

The consultation on the Adaptation Reporting Power webpage:

www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/climate-change-adapting/index

The UK's first Climate Change Risk Assessment webpage:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climate/adaptation/assess-risk

Government's Departmental Adaptation Plans webpage:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climate/programme/across-government

UKCIP

The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) website:

www.ukcip.org.uk

See www.ukcip.org.uk/connections/ for some useful links on a sector basis.

UK Climate Projections (UKCP09)

www.ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk

The Adaptation Sub-Committee

www.theccc.org.uk/asc-home

The Environment Agency's supplementary guidance

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/reportingpower.

Government work on natural hazards and civil contingencies

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/about

Sources of local information

Climate change partnerships from around the UK:

<http://www.climateuk.net/>

Some local climate impacts profiles (LCLIPs):

<http://www.ukcip.org.uk/lclip/lclip-case-studies/> . Check with your local council(s) to see if there is an LCLIP relevant to you.

Sources of international information

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change:

<http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Foresight (report due spring 2011):

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/foresight/our-work/projects/current-projects/international-dimensions-of-climate-change>

Contact us: for any enquiries please email: acc_reportingpower@defra.gsi.gov.uk