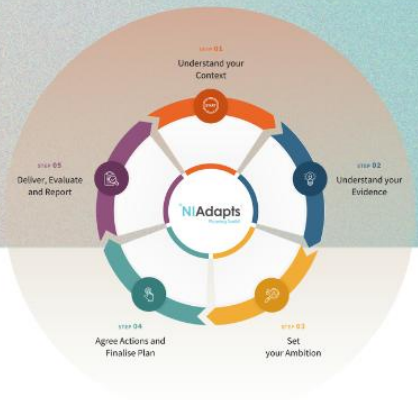


What is Climate Change Adaptation Reporting?

Introduction

Climate change adaptation reporting will look different depending on your organisation and the requirements of the reporting system. With this in mind, we have developed this document to highlight some of key sections you could be asked whether you are required to report or choose to report voluntarily, including topics such as what should leaders consider when developing an action plan? What can they do ensure that adaptation actions are fit for your organisational needs?

What is Climate Change Adaptation Reporting?

Adaptation reporting focuses on assessing climate vulnerabilities and resilience efforts, enabling organisations to develop strategies and adapt to the impacts of climate change and strengthen their ability to cope with future climate-related risks.

Generally, adaptation reporting asks organisations to:

- **Conduct a climate change impact/risk assessment** – which identifies the potential impacts of climate change on the organisation's operations, assets, and staff. This assessment evaluates exposure to climate risks such as extreme weather events, sea level rise, and changes in temperatures.

- **Develop an Adaptation Plan** – which outlines the actions the organisation will take to enhance its resilience against identified climate risks. This plan should include measures to protect infrastructure and staff and ensure the continuity of operations under changing climate conditions.

- **Provide progress updates** – To track the effectiveness of adaptation measures and adjustments made in response to changing climate conditions.

Establish strong governance structures

It is important that climate change is considered at all levels when decisions are being made for an organisation. This can be achieved in several ways, for example:

- Senior level engagement on the working group who attends regular meetings and reviews the plans and progress towards adapting to climate change,
- Include climate change action as a standing agenda item at decision making meetings, minuting how the impacts of climate change have been considered,
- Appoint a person or team with responsibility for ensuring climate change and adaptation are being considered across departments in the organisation,
- A communication and engagement plan to ensure employees at all levels of the organisation can contribute and take ownership of actions to reach the organisational adaptation target.

What should be included in the Adaptation Element of your Climate Action Plan?

Many organisations will choose to develop an overarching Climate Action Plan covering both climate mitigation and adaptation. The Adaptation content of your Climate Action Plan will depend on the specific context and needs of your organisation, as it must be tailored to address the unique vulnerabilities and risks your organisation faces due to climate change.

Below are some of the main points typically covered in the Adaptation elements of a Climate Action Plan:

Boundary of your report
The scope of adaptation is defined by the boundaries of your organisation's operations and assets, because, in the initial stages, it's often more effective to focus on getting internal operations in order before tackling more complex decisions and shared partnerships. In the initial steps, you will define these boundaries based on the extent of the estate, goods and services over which your organisation has control, and the availability of high-quality data. This phased approach aligns with PBR principles, ensuring that early adaptation efforts are manageable and set a strong foundation for future, broader actions.

Reporting Timescale
Identify the timescale your plan covers, this may be set by the reporting mechanism or could be more flexible. For example, The Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (NI) 2024 have a 5-yearly reporting period.

Climate Risk Assessment
This is the comprehensive analysis of the data gathered that represents the potential impacts of climate change on your organisation. Climate risks—such as flooding, heatwaves, sea-level rise, etc.—are identified and evaluated in terms of their potential to disrupt operations or cause harm. This assessment can be used to improve the resilience of an organisation by making a database of its climate related risks. These risks provide the basis upon which you can identify actions required to adapt operational capability.

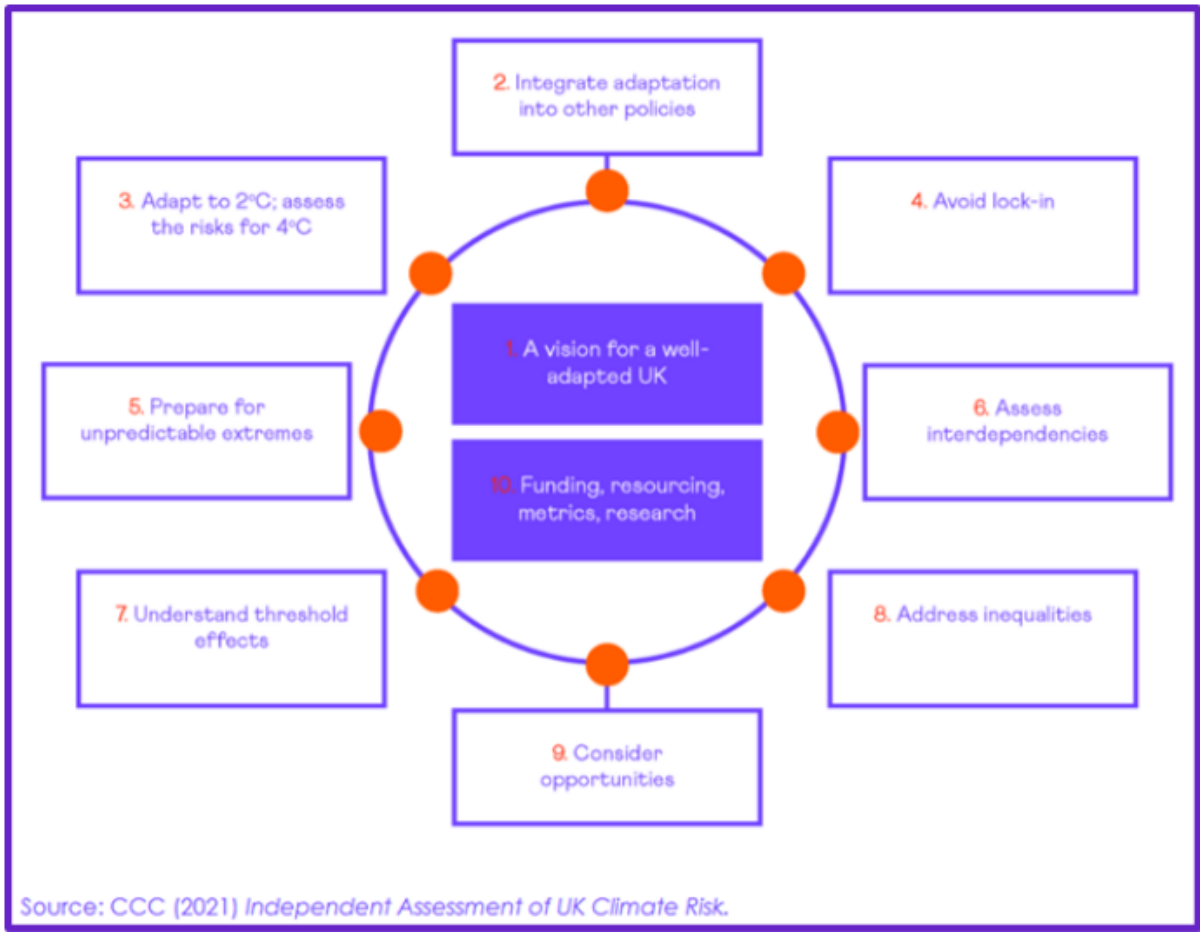
Adaptation Action Plan and Monitoring Framework

Organisations need to consider how, and in what order, to enhance their resilience and what specific actions they can take to adapt to climate change. The **Adaptation Action Plan** (which could be part of your organisational Climate Action Plan) is a set of actions, proposals, and policies aimed at reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience within your organisation. This action plan should include a timeline for implementing these actions, prioritising those that address the most critical risks. Additionally, the plan should outline the monitoring and evaluation processes to track progress and effectiveness over time.

What does good adaptation planning look like?

The Climate Change Committee (CCC) has developed 'Ten Principles for Good Adaptation' to define the process for good quality decision-making to realise a vision for a well-adapted UK. Integrating the CCC's Ten Principles for Good Adaptation will significantly strengthen your adaptation action planning and therefore your public body reporting:[1]

Figure 1: Ten Principles for Good Adaptation[1]



The following provides additional information on the 'Ten Principles for Good Adaptation':[1]

- **Vision** - The CCC monitoring framework[2] provides an indicative vision for what good adaptation looks like across thirteen themes.

- **Integration** - Adaptation should be integrated into other policies to ensure that assets, infrastructure, financial incentives, and essential services are both resilient, and increasing resilience to, the changing climate.

- **Scenario planning** - Decision-making in uncertainty is not easy, and especially for major capital spend, it can be a challenge to understand changes to a wide range of variables both in the climate system and across society. However, planning for a range of futures, adapting for 2°C and understanding the additional stresses and shocks of a 4°C world, must become a standard practice in decision-making. This can be qualitative, quantitative, or blended analysis depending on the resources, sensitivity and scale of the project or plan; but it must be considered.

- **Avoiding lock-in** - One of the most important methods for making decisions in uncertainty, is to design flexibility into the system. This can be done in a variety of ways, including designing an asset or service so it can be easily adapted, altering financial strategies, enhanced skills and training, ensuring more flexible and responsive planning and monitoring processes, and scenario planning to understand a range of potential interventions and the thresholds for action.

- **Preparing for unpredictable extremes** - Precautionary planning is one of the criteria which the Climate Change Committee uses in defining the quality of policies and plans. This is linked to thresholds and scenario planning, and where unpredictable extremes may occur, considering what contingencies and additional capacity may be available to draw upon.

- **Interdependencies** - Consider the linkages and cross-cutting effects of your work. How might it have an impact on other areas? For example, could your work on nature interventions in cities also have a positive benefit for human health? Or if you build a new energy efficient housing development, is it in an area of flood risk? How does your land use or agricultural policy help or hinder food and energy security? Thinking through the 13 CCC themes can provide some useful food for thought.

- **Thresholds and Metrics** - The monitoring maps provide a suite of consistent, although not exhaustive, metrics which should apply across UK jurisdictions. In addition, the assessment of progress on delivery within this report offers some insight into thresholds for further research or action. It is important that thresholds are considered in decision-making at a variety of levels, as these can be location specific.

- **Inequalities -** Principles for good adaptation link with principles for a fair transition. Reduction of inequality is embedded within many outcomes and indicators throughout the monitoring maps, including lists of contextual factors which should be considered in the chapters. Fairness should always be integrated at a detailed policy level and during implementation; considering inequalities arising from different experiences of climate risks across society and seeking to address the inequalities that it may create. This extends to the need for genuine engagement and co-development with communities on actions and interventions which affect them, ensuring they understand and buy-in to the vision for their area.

- **Opportunities** - Climate adaptation is often focused on risk reduction, but policies and plans will fail to prepare society for climate impacts if they do not adequately grasp the benefits which come from good quality adaptation. These can be financial benefits, but in many cases communities and institutions could see improvements to a range of issues through more holistic, co-developed and locally empowered decision-making.

- **Funding, resourcing, metrics, research -** Consider some of the capabilities you will need to undertake adaptation action, to empower and upskill members of your organisation. How can you build action into existing processes, and share responsibility across senior leaders? Read on through the NI Adapts cycle for more information on some of these ideas.

References

1. Climate Change Committee (2023) 'Adapting to Climate Change Progress in Northern Ireland', pg. 34-35. Available online: https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/adapting-to-climate-change-progress-in-northern-ireland/ Accessed September 2024.
2. Climate Change Committee (2023) 'CCC Adaptation Monitoring Framework'. Available online: https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/ccc-adaptation-monitoring-framework/ Accessed September 2024.