



Step 01 - Understand Your Context

What are the Benefits of Reporting?

Introduction

Climate change reporting has many benefits for the organisations undertaking this activity. In Northern Ireland, large-sized public body organisations are required to complete climate mitigation and adaptation reporting as part of the Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024. However, there are also many organisations who are not legally required to report who are already taking the initiative to do so (see the UNFCCC's Global Action Tracker¹). Producing public reports and media that present your findings in an open forum will secure buy-in and confidence from key stakeholders. Furthermore, reporting to third party verifiers such as the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), will add further credibility to your findings, and will strengthen the evidence base for your plan in the long term.

This document has been developed to help you think through some of the benefits and opportunities that might emerge from undertaking climate reporting and doing it well.

Maximising Impact

Research shows that – at least in terms of mitigation – measuring your emissions alone will not have the same impact as if you take that extra step and report on them in external and/or internal channels². Doing so allows the relevant information to get to the right people, whether they be relevant sections of your organisation, or interested third parties. Reporting can be a ‘catalyst for emissions management’³, and as any external reporting will likely require sign-off from your board, reporting is a good way to bring your findings to their attention and drive improvements in emissions management.

Setting and Meeting Targets

Reporting on both your greenhouse gas emissions and climate change risks and impacts will help enable and inform an organisation in setting its own climate targets that are better aligned with organisational, regional, and national commitments. Publicising these targets adds an extra layer of incentive to meet your targets and will be important for benchmarking these against other similar organisations on their climate journey. A helpful suggested resource is the

CDP, which offers Benchmarking Reports, comparing your organisation against the best practices of 10 organisations on pre-defined indicators⁴.

Planning and Risk

Comprehensive reporting on the impacts of climate change (both current and future) will raise awareness of climate impacts that may otherwise go under the radar. These risks can then be accounted for in any long-term strategy, and early adaptation action can be taken to ensure the organisation's resilience. Lack of adaptation action has been proven to be more costly in the long-term, so reporting and raising awareness of risks and opportunities will be a wise investment in your future – often accompanied by significant co-benefits.

Reputation and Stakeholder Engagement

Reporting your climate information early and transparently will allow you to position yourself as a leader on climate action. This can have multiple benefits including potential access to funding, buy-in and support from key stakeholders, and boosted morale across the organisation. Your reports could even be used to inform government policy and interventions. Strong engagement and communication practices will maintain confidence in your ability to lead on the plan; you can celebrate your achievements and maintain clarity and accountability for any targets not met or action not taken.

For those bodies who work directly with local communities (e.g. councils), climate reporting offers an opportunity to build relationships, particularly around climate risks. Often the most vulnerable communities are those most at risk of climate impacts and least able to prepare and respond⁵, so outreach in these areas will have the greatest impact. Many communities in NI already have Community Resilience Groups aimed at ensuring emergency preparedness, and co-ordinated by the Regional Community Resilience Group – these will be key contacts for council organisations particularly⁶.

Financial Savings

The overlap between climate reporting and financial reporting offers the potential co-benefit of understanding areas of excessive cost and potential solutions. Operationally aligning your sustainability/climate teams with your finance department is an excellent way to embed climate reporting and disclosure into your annual accounts and reviews.

Partnership Working

Working collaboratively is encouraged to obtain relevant climate data as appropriate, share ideas and lessons learned and to share best practice approaches. Working in collaboration with

similar organisations may also help ease challenges around capacity as well as potentially strengthening the reporting process. If you choose to work in partnership with other organisations it can improve working relationships and engagement on climate action across organisations. This may also highlight areas of overlap where you may be able to pool resources or share skills and information – for example, providing training for staff in both organisations, joint actions where risks are shared, etc.

Data on Climate Progress in NI

Reported data may help contribute to the wider picture of evidence for climate change mitigation and adaptation in Northern Ireland through helping to inform future Northern Ireland climate change risk assessments, for example. It can be used to demonstrate the urgency required around proposed actions, and to encourage buy-in from stakeholders.

As assessed by the Climate Change Committee, at present evidence for both aspects of climate action (mitigation and adaptation) is poor, with no accessible data in many areas^{7,8}. Increased engagement with reporting mitigation and adaptation data by large organisations in Northern Ireland could help government address existing gaps and generate more accurate data and findings.

Further information on the wide range of benefits of reporting can be viewed in DAERA's recent publication on [The Benefits of Climate Change Reporting by Public Bodies](#)⁹

References

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