



Climate information for improved adaptation decision-making in the UK water sector

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Does the way that information about climate change is presented alter the decisions that people make? In many sectors, anticipatory adaptation is essential; decisions must be made before the more serious effects of climate change have been observed. Science must provide these decision-makers with appropriate climate change information to support their decisions, but there has been little work that considers how this information should be presented.

In the field of water supply, anticipatory adaptation is necessary; development of new infrastructure may take decades and the infrastructure has a life span of up to a century. This paper explores how the presentation of possible changes affects the way decision-makers consider options for maintaining water supply. The novel approach combines both simulation modelling and workshops aimed at decision-makers.

A reservoir model for Grafham Water, southeast England, allows both conventional steady-state scenario impact assessment as well as transient probabilistic approaches. Participatory workshops explore decision-makers' responses to these approaches, revealing decision-making processes and the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches. The results of this work should improve the provision of climate change information so that appropriate adaptation decisions can be made.