



Providing User-Informed Guidance to Support Adaptation Assessments and Policy

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Risk based approaches to climate adaptation are now widely embraced in the UK and abroad, making UKCIP's Risk Framework more relevant than ever. In order to realise its full potential as a decision support tool there is a need to reflect on, and to incorporate, UKCIP's experience in applying the framework since 2003. In particular, we recognise a need to provide organisations with better guidance on how to initiate their assessments in a way that will enable them to go beyond raising awareness, to undertaking assessments that will lead to the implementation of practical adaptation actions and decisions.

This presentation provides us with an opportunity to share how we addressed that need through the provision of a supplementary set of guidance. This guidance presents key issues that our experience with working with users suggest should be considered when making the transition from awareness to action. It is aimed specifically at those undertaking a systematic climate change risk based assessment as part of an adaptation assessment within a planning process and emphasises, in particular, the importance of this initial phase of the assessment. We have found that some of the most important and difficult decisions and judgements in adaptation planning are made during this initiation phase, and that these can profoundly influence the depth and breadth of an assessment and the mechanisms and players involved in subsequent work. Furthermore, our experience has shown that, if this process is not actively and explicitly engaged with, tacit assumptions can be inadvertently made which strongly influence the outcomes, or create path dependency which limits the flexibility of adaptive planning.

This guidance is continuing to develop as our work with practitioners and other stakeholders grows. This presentation offers us an opportunity to highlight the utility of emphasising this initial phase and discuss recent developments and experiences.