

## DIALOGUE ON FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR NATIONAL/REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION

A number of interested parties have begun a dialogue to explore the possible future directions of national and regional assessments\* of the impacts of climate change and associated adaptations. This dialogue was initiated at a gathering of representatives of national and regional assessment teams and relevant international organizations on October 25-27, 2000 in Sainte-Adèle, Québec, Canada. The purpose of this gathering was to share information on approaches that have been used for national/regional assessments of the impacts of climate change and adaptations, on lessons learned from those assessments, and on how and why these approaches are/should be evolving.

<p>Through series of presentations and panel sessions, and a breakout session participants had the opportunity to identify and begin examining such topics as:</p>	<p>Views expressed and issues identified as requiring further exploration:</p> <p>* Although there was purposely no detailed discussion on what the group included under the term "assessments", it has been suggested as a starting point for future discussions that one could define an assessment as an iterative analytic process that engages both analysts and end-users to evaluate and interpret the interactions of dynamic physical, biological, and social systems to communicate useful insights about the significant causes and likely consequences of climatic change, and about potential responses of affected systems and components thereof.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Substance of future assessments</li> <li>◆ Strategies for implementation (process)</li> <li>◆ Audiences and communications (devices and means)</li> <li>◆ Methodologies/best practices of assessment implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ There is an increasing demand for assessments that are place-based, more integrated and comprehensive, involve stakeholders, and that address vulnerabilities and adaptations thereto. There is a need to link national/regional and international/global assessments.</li> <li>◆ There is a need to rethink the structure and scope of the participation process and mechanisms required for coordination, especially considering the integrated nature of assessments and the need within an assessment process for common understanding of content and structure. Consideration should be given to the timing/frequency of assessments (i.e. should they be undertaken at regular intervals, and/or on an iterative or continuing basis) and to be clear about the nature and timing of the associated review of assessments. Consideration should also be given to moving from addressing research gaps to addressing policy concerns and options.</li> <li>◆ Communications are a critical component of the assessment and need to consider explicit and implicit audiences. There is a need to ensure that the assessment is relevant and is presented in a manner that is accessible and meaningful to the target audiences (may require a range of outputs). Need to consider the possibilities of including communication experts as part of the assessment team. Linking the assessment into the education system may provide some valuable opportunities.</li> <li>◆ No single best method is widely accepted and there may be advantages to incorporating tools from various sources and paradigms. There is an increasing demand/desire to present the advantages and disadvantages of various policy options through the assessment process. Including climate variability and historical climate impacts and adaptations can have considerable advantages. A multidisciplinary approach is needed as impacts and adaptations are not just in the purview of the climate science community - necessity to choose the right scientists/experts who are open to multidisciplinary considerations and have appropriate interpersonal relationships. There is increasing recognition by stakeholders of the value of appropriately including traditional knowledge as an integral part of the assessment including in its conclusions. These trends and challenges suggest the need to involve both scientists and stakeholders working together to achieve the desired results. Sufficient resources are required to maintain an assessment process which is capable of yielding credible results.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Vulnerability focus</li>   <li>◆ Comparability of approaches (linkages among assessments, including national and regional and international scale assessments (e.g., IPCC) and other issue-based assessments)</li>   <li>◆ Uncertainty and levels of confidence within assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ It appears that the real driver for these assessments should be vulnerability. There is a need to consider an adaptation baseline and to determine current and future vulnerabilities and the potential for adaptation options, as well as the use of past information and trends in vulnerability and adaptation. Determining whether and how best to include mitigation as part of the assessment remains a challenge.</li>   <li>◆ Current trends and developments suggest there may be a demand for a different role for the IPCC in regional assessments (e.g., promote, support and facilitate). This should include consideration of the purposes of the IPCC regional assessments and the intended audiences. There is a need for an expert evaluation of the successes and failures of regional/national assessments. The research and policy communities would benefit from an expanded capability for dialogue among those involved in national/regional assessments. Further benefits could be derived from stronger linkages among the different scales and complex set of impacts and adaptation assessments underway (climate change, biodiversity, stratospheric ozone, etc.).</li>   <li>◆ A lexicon is needed that can be used to effectively convey levels of likelihood and levels of confidence (and uncertainty) that is meaningful to the public. Drawing on related work in other assessments would be useful. Need to be more successful in communicating risk. The use of a framework that utilizes multiple scenarios and adopts a vulnerability focus could be helpful in communicating risks.</li> </ul>
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The participants concluded their dialogue by noting that we have only begun to scratch the surface on this subject and that there is a need to involve other interested parties in further exploring the evolution of the assessment process. The participants believe that there is a need for continued dialogue, possibly an ad hoc forum that meets on an annual basis (timing and frequency dependent on the work program) and an Internet site, both which would build on the substance of this meeting and provide opportunities for more detailed discussions and to exchange experiences/lessons learned on subjects of interest.

This prospectus, the reports of the dialogue and the Internet site ([http://www.msc-smc.ec.gc.ca/airg\\_dialogue](http://www.msc-smc.ec.gc.ca/airg_dialogue)) reflect the extent and scope of our initial discussions. It is our belief that by continuing these discussions and broadening the participation through similar dialogues in the future, the evolution of national/regional assessments of the impacts of climate change and adaptation will provide more effective and responsive information to citizens.

## Participants

Penny Bramwell	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, UK	Ian Burton	Environment Canada
Stewart Cohen	Environment Canada	Robert Corell	American Meteorological Society
Paul Egginton	Natural Resources Canada	Indra Fung Fook	Environment Canada
Carlos Gay	Centro de Ciencias de la Atmosfera UNAM, Mexico	BertJan Heij	Dutch NRP on Global Air Pollution and Climate Change
Roger Jones	CSIRO Atmospheric Research, Australia	Pamela Kertland	Natural Resources Canada
Neil Leary	IPCC WGII Technical Support Unit	Bo Lim	National Communications UNDP-GEF
Michael MacCracken	USGCRP, National Assessment Coordination Office	Joan Masterton	Environment Canada
Merylyn McKenzie Hedger	UK Climate Impacts Program	Barry Smit	University of Guelph, Canada
John Stone	Environment Canada	Roger Street	Environment Canada
Eric Taylor	Natural Resources Canada	Ferenc Toth	Potsdam Institute for Climate Impacts Research, Germany
Gerald Vigeant	Environment Canada	Fred Wrona	Environment Canada