



National Assessment of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in Canada

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Background

- National science assessments published in 1998 and 2008
- Based on peer-reviewed and grey literature, practitioner and local knowledge
- Impacts and adaptation only – do not assess climate science or attribution, although do provide an overview of developments in both areas
- Outputs- traditional reports in hard copy, PDF and HTML
- Update to 2008 report in development (2013) – organized by sectors rather than regions (back to regions in 2018?)
- Ongoing sector-specific assessments – health (2008), coasts (2014), transportation (2015), mining (2016)

Key players



Goals and Audience

Goals

1. Inform adaptation decision-making
2. Raise awareness
3. Contribute to capacity building

Users

- Policy and science advisors – *feed into decision-making processes*
- Practitioners (engineers / planners)
- Industry
- University level instructors and students
- General public
- Media

Recognize need for distinct products to be developed for specific user groups



Drivers – Science / Policy

- Assessments must be policy-relevant at multiple scales
- “Balance” will depend on scope and purpose of assessment, as well as state of awareness / understanding of target audience
- With emphasis on adaptation decision-making, policy needs tend to be dominant driver of Canadian assessments
- As policy / economic / other context can change while assessment is being developed, assessment should be structured to inform these drivers but not be dependent on them
- Assessments need to highlight new knowledge in a manner that illustrates policy relevance – hence science also remains an important driver.

Key lessons learned

- Need to develop clear definitions of target audience(s) and scope early in assessment process
- Each stage of the assessment process offers opportunities for engagement – building of awareness and capacity
- Planning and coordination of communication and product release is critically important – and can be challenging
- Gradual dissemination – percolate through peer networks - can be effective but takes time

Remaining challenges

- Measuring the impact of assessments
- Understanding how and why the audience is using products
- Delivering relevant information across spatial scales – managing expectations at the local level
- Conveying findings in innovative ways – use of new media
- Communicating uncertainty
- Ensuring scientific rigour
- Time