



National Assessment of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in Canada: Using the Assessment

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2008 National Science Assessment – Target Audiences

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

2008 National Science Assessment – Managing Expectations

Issue: Relevance of assessment to local level decision making

Resolution: Provision of local case studies, direction to decision-support tools and regional experts

Issue: Lack of assessment of climate science

Resolution: Refer to IPCC assessments as the most appropriate scale to assess climate science and attribution

Issue: Absence of recommendations – policy, practice, research

Resolution: Note the goals of the assessment as input to decision-making

- Emphasize importance of credibility – when process lead by government need to avoid perception that preconceived recommendations dictated content



2008 National Science Assessment – Role of Users

1. **Advisory Committee** - representatives from:
 - Federal, provincial and territorial governments
 - Federation of Canadian Municipalities
 - Aboriginal organizations
 - Canadian Council of Professional Engineers
 - Academia and research organizations.
2. **Data / knowledge providers** – as authors or through contributions to writing teams
3. **Reviewers** - government and expert review
4. **Product Creators** – targeted to their professional audience
5. **Champions / Disseminators** – via existing networks

2008 National Science Assessment – Users

Expected Users

Government planning

- Foundation for priorities supported through Regional Adaptation Collaboratives (RACs) – 2009-2012
- Justification for renewed federal government investment in adaptation in 2010 (\$150M over 5 years) and development of Federal Adaptation Framework
- Advanced policy discussion of impacts and adaptation in many provinces and territories – contributed to development of P/T adaptation strategies and plans

Capacity building

- Used extensively in post-secondary teaching materials

Unexpected Users

Private sector - examples

- Canadian Standard Association – provides business case for climate change work
- Financial sector – used as a preliminary screening tool for climate risk

2008 National Science Assessment – Users

How do we know this?

- Largely anecdotal (beyond our own uses)
- Issues of attribution - is it feasible / useful?

Adaptation Platform (Science Assessment Working Group) currently planning to conduct survey of how decision-makers have used past assessments, and perceived needs for future assessments – advice welcome,



2008 National Science Assessment – Dissemination

Short-term problems

- programmatic approach failed despite detailed communications plan and professional training
- more media coverage addressed how report was released than the content of the report

Long-term success?

- after 2 – 3 years wide range of users were citing value of the report
- dissemination appears to have been primarily through personal contacts, less so through professional networks (despite that being a responsibility of Advisory Committee members).

Absence of a simple, plain language summary may have limited awareness, and hence dissemination of broader report.

Lessons learned

- Need for a monitoring and evaluation framework in advance of release
- Keeping key players engaged between completion of writing and release of report (up to one year) is difficult
- Diversify responsibility for communication

Challenges

- Understanding user needs / anticipating future needs
- Documenting how past assessments have been used (monitoring and evaluation)
- Better utilizing the various phases of assessment development (especially review phase) to enhance awareness and build capacity
- Elevating the level of stakeholder participation - obtaining organizational commitment to assessments, rather than just representatives from organizations
- Equipping users with materials to champion within their networks.