

Improving the accessibility of the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment: Part 2

Lead organisation:

Sustainability West Midlands

Project Manager: Alan Carr (Senior Sustainability Adviser)

Customers:



WM Sustainability Roadmap themes addressed:



Project Duration:

November 2019 – June 2020 (part 1)

July 2020 – September 2021 (part 2)

The Project

This is one of seven research projects commissioned by the [Climate Change Committee](#) (CCC) to inform the development of the third [Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk](#) (CCRA3), which was published in June 2021. The evidence and assessment used to compile CCRA3 is then applied by Defra to inform the next [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment](#) (published in 2022) and [National Adaptation Programme](#) (published in 2023).

Our project focuses on how improvements to the accessibility of CCRA3 can be made by building on the good work already carried out for CCRA2 through better use of communications, providing engagement opportunities and reframing of outputs. Part one of our support looked at the provision of advice on improving the accessibility of the outputs of the CCRA Independent Assessment, formulated by stakeholder feedback and international examples that outline how CCRA3 can be better accessed by its primary intended audience, i.e. government departments and arm's length bodies. [See here](#) for our first case study on this part of the project.

Part two to which this case study refers focuses on producing outputs that considers the above advice, to bring thousands of pages of text to life and make the key findings and messages clearer, more digestible and understood by the primary audience, which is central Government.

Aims

- To produce four summaries reflecting the risks to each UK nation in a way that makes it digestible to a UK Government audience.
- To provide a series of additional briefings to summarise the risks to key sectors.
- To enable engagement with key stakeholders to allow them reflect on the risks and their implications, and discuss how they can respond to the CCRA's key findings.

SWM's role

SWM is the lead partner on this project as commissioned by the CCC and as such is the contracted project manager. We oversaw the production of all outputs and contributed heavily to their delivery too. However, we are sub-contracting the services of various other partners whom we have worked with before as part of the [Climate UK](#) network that ran until 2017. This includes [Northern Ireland Environment Link](#), [Sniffer](#), [London Climate Change Partnership](#) and Mike Peverill (freelancer). Their involvement means we can draw upon years of collective experience of climate risk and adaptation, climate change communications and stakeholder engagement, as well as ensuring a nationwide coverage. We also enlisted the services [Slingshot Design](#), with whom SWM has worked for over ten years, to improve the visual aspects of our outputs to the CCC.

Challenges

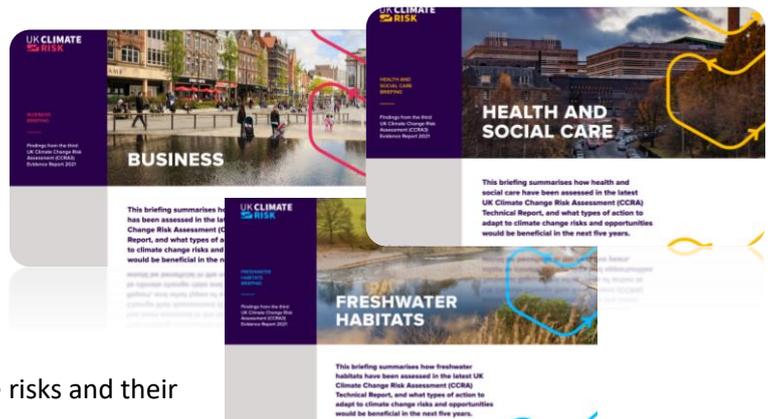
- SWM is a micro-enterprise and therefore managing a complex project such as this with multiple partners does not come without its challenges. Strong organisation and good communication skills are always required to ensure deadlines are met and tasks are not held up by consultation.
- Ensuring national coverage is hugely important for this project and making sure each outputs is relevant to the whole UK involved frequent communication with both our sub-contracted partners and other stakeholders from each nation.
- Satisfying the requirements of the individuals and organisations who form the various committees and groups convened by the CCC was critical to our success; this involved frequent liaison and structure review periods to ensure our advice was realistic and of most use.
- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic meant that the [Technical Chapters](#) that we were required to use to inform the other outputs (briefings and summaries primarily) were delayed, leading to a domino effect on our work. This has led to two contract extensions but a combination of our and CCC's flexibility and meant that we were able to deliver all the outputs to the revised deadlines.



The Outcomes

Through extensive engagement and research, the following has so far been achieved:

- [17 sector briefings](#) were published and are being used across Government departments and in other organisations (such as local authorities) too.
- [Four national summaries](#) outlining the risks and their urgency to each nation were published.
- Three stakeholder ‘deep-dive’ events for the devolved administrations (Scotland, Wales, NI) were run in September 2021 with well over 200 attendees in total. This fulfils one of the key recommendations in part one of this work which was to create better engagement opportunities with the UK nations outside England.
- About halfway through the contract, based on the feedback gained in part one of this project, in agreement with CCC we decided to change the scope of the project to include the briefings and events outlined above, which we felt would provide more useful outputs than the original outputs would have done. This seems to have been very well received, showing our adaptability and willingness to be stakeholder led.
- Because of our >10 year relationship with Mat Burhouse from Slingshot Design, his involvement as Designer for this project led him to become the creator and host of the new website dedicated to all CCRA3 outputs, i.e. www.ukclimaterisk.org. This also allowed for consistency between the new website and the outputs Mat was designing for our project.
- We have since been commissioned by the Environment Agency to produce a West Midlands version of the CCRA alongside a regional Adaptation Plan. Supporting the CCC with this work has meant securing this new project was made easier, and will be completed with greater credibility as we apply the UK methodology to our regional equivalent.



In the Future

Ultimately, our role is to ensure that more people employed by central government and the bodies that support them can access, understand and apply the findings of the CCRA. We know how important this will be so that they can effectively advise on how the country needs to deal with the climate emergency. While this appears to have been achieved, ultimately the findings of the CCRA

make for sobering reading. This, therefore, should just be the start of our journey in supporting organisations on climate adaptation which needs to be accelerated rapidly. The aforementioned West Midlands Adaptation Plan is the first step; the next requires scaled-up implementation of actions to ensure our people, ecosystems, infrastructure and economy are adequately protected.

Accolades

“Building on the successes of part one of this project, we were pleased to continue working with SWM and their partners to help us produce an engaging suite of resources that helped Government officials and other users to digest the key messages of the Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk (CCRA). This included 17 briefings that we can now use to quickly summarise the findings in different sectors. We also appreciated the ‘Deep Dive’ workshops that SWM and partners ran a few months after the CCRA was published, to help us to provide more tailored engagement to our devolved administration colleagues. Overall, we were hugely appreciative of SWM’s support both before, during and after the publication of the CCRA and we hope to maintain a constructive relationship with them going forwards.” – Jo Barrett, Head of Communications, Climate Change Committee

Contact Details

For further information on the project or to work with us in one of a variety of ways, please contact the SWM team on enquiries@swm.org.uk.