

Response ID ANON-FA8X-YNMQ-V

Submitted to Climate change - draft Scottish National Adaptation Plan 3: consultation
Submitted on 2024-04-23 10:15:59

Lived and local experience

1 What do you think the current effects of climate change are on people in Scotland?

Please give us your views:

Please note that responses to the Lived and local experience sections are personal reflections of EAUC Scotland staff. The rest of the consultation response is from an organisational view point.

- Health and wellbeing impacts: mental health impacts (e.g. PTSD following flooding, climate anxiety) and physical health (e.g. heatwave impacts, breathing in smoke from wildfires)
- Financial impacts (e.g. increased insurance costs)
- Short and medium-term travel delays – major train lines, roads and bridges closing more often due to storms. Increasing longer delays due to rail and road operators having to repair the damage from landslips, flooding, trees blown over etc.
- Cancelled plans due to extreme weather. I have had multiple social events cancelled due to storms in 2023 – either I can't get to the social event or they can't get to me.
- Less predictable gardening temperatures and weather conditions for growing
- Increased repairs to houses – fences blown down, roof tile damage, increased need to secure items more than usual due to high winds. This is exacerbated due to Brexit with less tradespeople to do the work, so the costs and waiting times are higher, exacerbating damage.
- Lack of certain foods on the shelves in supermarkets – e.g. some fruit and vegetables not being available due to extreme weather in Europe. Coffee and olive oil availability and price are notable items too.
- Increasing water and fire restrictions.
- Noticing changes in bird migrations, when insects appear, tick season, midge season etc.

2 What effects, if any, do you expect climate change will have on people in Scotland over the next five years?

Please give us your views:

- Health and wellbeing impacts
- Financial impacts
- Same as mentioned above, just with increasing frequency, strength and unpredictability.

3 What actions, if any, would you be willing and able to take to adapt to climate change?

Please give us your views:

- Installing a water butt and low-flow water appliances.
- Planting more trees in my garden to soak up extra rainfall in the winter-time and to create shade in the summertime.
- Installing home adaptation and greater efficiency, but with help from the government to find trusted traders (finding good tradespeople and not employing 'cowboys' is one of the biggest barriers to change. There are social media advertisements all the time asking people to upgrade their houses with no links to accreditation schemes).
- Volunteering in my community to make our transport system more resilient. Helping my neighbours create resilient gardens that aren't just gravel or astroturf.
- Give the local animals a home in my garden and on my house (e.g. installing bird boxes, creating a pond, creating wildlife friendly hedging and flower planting schemes).

4 What factor(s), if any, would prevent you from taking action to adapt to climate change and become more climate-resilient?

Please give us your views:

- Not having open access to granular localised climate forecasting and GIS data.
- Trustworthy tradespeople available to adapt my house.
- Cost of living and mortgage interest rate hikes preventing home repairs and upgrades.
- Lack of public transport resilience to climate change e.g. if a rail track or a train goes down on a single-line railway (e.g. Highland Main Line), all trains can be stopped in both directions.
- Lack of up-to-date information available to the public. The Net Zero Scotland webpage is very infrequently updated and often has out of date information.
- Not having access to an emergency warning system e.g. if a wildfire is approaching my house.

5 What action(s) do you think the Scottish Government should prioritise in order to build greater resilience to the impacts of climate change?

Please give us your views :

- Increased accountability on public sector leaders for evidencing quality climate risk assessments and response.
- Raise awareness of climate risk to Scottish businesses, ideally through climate scenarios and questions prompts, with signposting to relevant support.

- Flood risk reduction (inland, urban and coastal) – peatland restoration and native tree planting; restoration of natural riparian zones; expansion of sustainable urban drainage systems.
- Urban shading and cooling – increased quality blue and green spaces, for example through tree planting and sustainable urban drainage systems.
- A better maintenance programme of repairing footpaths and cycleways. Walking, wheeling and cycling are the ultimate modes of transport when everything else fails. Scotland's footpaths are in terrible condition on the whole and the mechanism for funding their repair via revenue funding doesn't work.
- Greater priority spending on win-win projects for the planet and people. This will mean reducing spending on new road infrastructure and directing that funding to making our transportation system more diverse. The more options people have apart from using the car, the more resilient Scotland will be.
- Greater communication of what is adaptation and what are some simple, and more elaborate, steps every day people can take to adapt.

Outcome one: Nature connects

6 The draft Adaptation Plan sets out actions which will be taken to protect and restore nature. Which of the following actions proposed around protecting and restoring nature should the Scottish Government prioritise for a better adapted Scotland?

More trees and green spaces in built-up places for flood resilience and cooling, More joined up natural habitats ("nature networks"), Managing pests and diseases which will be more prevalent with climate change, Restoring forests and peatland, Reinforcing natural coastal barriers such as dunes, Other

If you selected 'other', please share detail below:

- Restoring 'blue corridors' along tributaries to allow for better meandering, slower water flows, increased water retention and improved biodiversity. Improved protection of coastal zone bed and replanting of sea grass meadows to reduce coastal erosion potential and improve biodiversity.
- Restoring and protecting keystone species such as beavers and bats to naturally manage floods and vectors for disease (e.g. mosquitoes).
- A focus on developing landscape-scale healthy ecosystems as the default approach to managing pests and diseases.
- Nature based solution protections and enhancement both rural and urban.
- Sustainable urban drainage should be required as part of local planning policy
- Prioritise being firm on animal agriculture intensities to prevent diseases such as various strains of influenza and antibiotic resistance from threatening our populations of both people and wild animals. This will help prevent species extinction in already strained wild populations that are impacted by climate change (e.g. farmed salmon impacting wild salmon populations). Putting firm limits on intensities of animal agriculture will also help our river systems with reduced nitrogen load and thus algal blooms, less erosion and flooding issues etc. Between 2020 and 2023, 60% of the 114 dairy farms initially inspected by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency between 2020 and 2023 were in breach of regulations - <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/apr/19/most-uk-dairy-farms-ignoring-pollution-rules-as-manure-spews-into-rivers#:~:text=Sixty%20nine%20per>
- Attractive scheme options & other incentives for landowners/farmers that have multi-functional benefits (public good) flood alleviation, storage, slow the flow, surface roughness, rewetting, biodiversity, wildfire prevention, carbon storage etc.

7 When you consider your local natural space e.g. park, canal, woodland or beach, what would you like to see improved in terms of blue and green space in your local area?

Please give us your views:

Increased shared recreational access and quality to blue and green space for a variety of uses e.g. sports, play, outdoor swimming, fishing, paddle sports, walking and wheeling. This can mean wider paths that allow space for walkers and wheelers with accessible grading where possible; improved maintenance of pathways and adjacent ditches so that routes remain open in wet weather; improved access to public toilet facilities; landscape interpretation boards; more picnic benches and areas to shelter out of the rain.

Improved quality of the natural environment e.g. reduced mowing of parks and road verges to improve biodiversity and slow storm run-off; replanting of tributary riparian zones to shade water, improve biodiversity and reduce flood flows.

Increased use of trees and shrubs in public spaces that provide food for people as well as shade and increased biodiversity e.g. apple, pear, plum, hazel, elder, dogrose. Signage of these areas should make clear that local people may harvest the fruit and nuts for community gain.

Outcome two: Communities

8 For Scotland to adapt to the impacts of climate change, lots of different groups, such as individuals, communities, businesses and public bodies, will need to work together and support each other. How could others support you (or your organisation) to adapt to climate change over the next five years?

Please give us your views:

EAUC Scotland works to support Scotland's colleges and universities embed whole-institution approaches to sustainability. Our experience identifies that key barriers to institutions adapting to climate change are broadly:

- a lack of staff capacity
- limited skills, knowledge and/or confidence regarding climate risk and adaptation
- a lack of wider institutional and partner buy-in, with the perception that adaptation is very much secondary to mitigation.

This has meant that despite the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 placing duties on colleges and universities to tackle climate change through exercising their various functions - including Part 4 of the Act states, [a] "public body must, in exercising its functions, act: in the way best calculated to help deliver any [Scottish adaptation programme]" -, institutional understanding of current and future climate risk against their assets, operations and communities remains limited generally and not embedded across institutional planning.

Central government and the Scottish Funding Council can better improve adaptation responses within institutions by increasing public body

accountability towards the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and embedding it in sector processes and guidance e.g. requesting evidence of up to date climate risk registers within Outcome Agreement reporting on sustainability; requesting evidence of up to date climate risk registers as part of applications for energy efficiency, heat decarbonisation and wider substantial estates upgrade funding. These measures should not increase organisational burden on institutions that are already meeting their statutory duties, whilst giving a strong steer to institutions that are not meeting their statutory duties that climate risk and adaptation should be a leadership priority.

Scottish Government should work with Scottish Futures Trust, Zero Waste Scotland and Sniffer to embed adaptation as a mandatory component within the Net Zero Public Sector Buildings Standard. Adaptation remains poorly regulated and considered in building design, construction/retrofit and use.

Central Government, in collaboration with Sniffer and public sector bodies, need to provide clear expectations of public bodies and set out a shared approach to monitoring and evaluation of adaptation responses. EAUC Scotland welcome the inclusion of an M&E framework to be embedded within annual reporting to Scottish Parliament. For public bodies this should be embedded as part of the annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duties reports.

Sniffer, lead of the Adaptation Scotland programme, could hold a depository of public body climate risk and adaptation plans broken down by region. This would help improve shared knowledge and understanding of local climate change risk and adaptation projects across public bodies, wider sector agencies and local businesses and organisations.

Funding support could be provided to Sniffer and EAUC Scotland to produce specific guidance on climate risk and adaptation for the college and university sector and identify 'what success looks like'. This action point recognises that the current draft plan highlights detailed action plans and guidance for health boards and schools, but this is lacking for other public sector organisations, including colleges and universities. Whilst it is expected there will be areas of commonality between public bodies and public sectors, some operational areas will be unique to specific sectors, for example international research, partnerships and student mobility within the university sector. The guidance should also set out 'what success looks like' in terms of proactive prevention of or reduction of climate impacts, as well as a focus on response during and after impacts are experienced.

9 In what way(s) could the plan help different groups across Scotland and/or its regions to collaborate on climate adaptation?

Please give us your views:

As suggested above, a depository of public body climate risk and adaptation plans broken down by region would be beneficial to improve shared knowledge and understanding of local climate change risk and adaptation projects across public bodies, wider sector agencies and local businesses and organisations.

The Plan should drive increased clarity of expectations and accountability across the public sector. Having clear expectations around roles, responsibilities and local/regional engagement between public bodies would be beneficial and make climate risk and adaptation an institutional priority. The efficacy of public bodies fulfilling these roles and delivering on core responsibility should be audited annually (for example through PBCCD reports) and remediation action taken if public bodies are not meeting expectations.

Outcome three: Public services and infrastructure

10 Advice from the Climate Change Committee (the Scottish Government's independent advisors on Climate) is to adapt to 2°C of warming and assess the risk for 4°C. To what extent do you agree with this advice?

Strongly Agree

Please share detail on your answer:

EAUC Scotland strongly agree that the Scottish Government and Scotland's public bodies should formally adopt as a minimum an adapt to 2°C of warming and assess the risk for 4°C approach. It should be viewed as a moral and leadership failure if Scottish Government and public bodies do not holistically take this approach. However, there is real cause for considering a higher minimum threshold. The Climate Action Tracker identifies that current policy globally leads to a warming of 2.7°C (median forecast) in their combined estimate in 2100 but will also continue to rise after that date.

In addition, if public bodies do not adapt operations and assets to at least 2°C it is then expected to cost more in remediation action in future compared to the initial adaptation costs (as set out by the Climate Change Committee). There are also the significant health costs associated with climate change impacts - such as heat-related deaths or PTSD following experiencing a flood event and its disruption to life. By adapting to at least 2°C and considering risk up to 4°C, Scotland is being responsible to its communities from a health, wellbeing and wealth perspective.

11 Would further guidance on future climate scenario(s) be useful when making plans and investment decisions?

Yes

If yes, what sort of information or advice would be useful for you or your organisation when considering future climate scenarios in long-term planning or investments?:

A mix of short-term and medium-term weather scenarios within 2°C, 3°C and 4°C global warming contexts would be beneficial.

Short-term weather scenarios should include high-rainfall events, high-wind events, a combination of these, storm-surges (tidal areas) and heatwaves.

Medium-term weather scenarios should include the above combined with amplifying antecedent conditions e.g. high-rainfall event when ground is at or near saturation already; heatwave or dry weather following extended dry/hot period.

Questions prompts would be useful following the scenario details. For example, "Is your building guttering able to cope with xmm of rain in x period of time?" "Are on site drains regularly cleared of debris or residue build-up?" "What operations would be effected by a heatwave and how can these impacts be reduced?" "Consider off-site impacts - whilst your site might not be flooded, other areas might be which can have cascading impacts on your operations and communities". These questions could also be presented as cascades or layered questions to highlight the knock-on impacts of climatic events.

The Plan references NHS National Services Scotland's action to "Continue implementing its web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) Climate Change hazard and vulnerability Mapping Tool. This enables Health Boards to assess risks to sites, key transport and access routes, and supporting infrastructure based on current and projected future climate conditions." Could this resource be made available to all public bodies?

12 Would an assessment of "cascading" risks from weather-related disruptions to infrastructure help you or your organisation to adapt?

Yes

Please give us your views:

Based on analysis of college and university adaptation responses within Public Bodies Climate Change Duties reporting, there remains a significant sector focus solely on-site flooding in understanding and responding to climate risk. However, the operations of Scotland's colleges and universities have become increasingly complex, for example due to supply chain globalisation, internationalisation, moving critical infrastructure such as data-centres off-site.

An assessment of cascading risks would be useful in helping sector communities better understand the interdependencies that exist in the running of institutions, their risks from climate change, and spur discussions on improving system resilience. Again, including event scenarios would be helpful as part of this and ideally these would include general and sector specific scenarios.

Outcome four: Economy, business and industry

13 What, if any, are the barriers to businesses accessing advice and support on climate risks?

Please give us your views:

Feedback from within EAUC Scotland's procurement community of practice identifies that many businesses in Scotland do not see climate change mitigation and adaptation as a strategic priority. This is evidenced by the majority of businesses being unable to share basic emissions footprints at an organisational level or a product-level despite tools being openly and freely available to support this. It has been identified that a systems barrier to businesses accessing advice and support on climate risks is that sustainability is generally under-weighted across public sector procurement processes. This creates a barrier for business engagement with climate risk as there is not a clear, immediate business case that provides a return on investment.

14 How should farming, fishing and forestry businesses be supported to adapt to climate change?

Please give us your views:

Establishing attractive scheme/grant options (CAP replacement) as well as ELS/HLS forestry grants aligned to adaptation priorities. These should deliver multiple public goods, including improving sequestration, biodiversity, water quality, and flood attenuation.

15 How do you anticipate disruption to domestic and/or international supply chains caused by climate change will affect Scottish business, industry and consumers?

Please give us your views:

Broadly, EAUC Scotland anticipate disruption to domestic and/or international supply chains caused by climate change will affect colleges and universities through increased price volatility, increased capital project delivery timeframes and costs, and service/operational disruption.

16 What, if any, should the role of government be in supporting more resilient supply chains?

Please give us your views:

Resilient supply chains are critical to the continuation of services across Scotland, including within colleges and universities. However, feedback from within EAUC Scotland's procurement community of practice identifies that few Scottish businesses understand climate risk broadly and fewer on how this relates to their business operations.

Scottish Government should work with key delivery partners to support Scottish SMEs undertake whole-business climate resilience assessments. This would build on support already available, for example through the Business Energy Scotland SME energy efficiency loan, Carbon Trust's SME Carbon Footprint Calculator and Sniffer's resources for businesses on adaptation. Whilst these are useful resources, they are isolated from each other and this presents a missed opportunity for more impactful support and intervention. For example, when applying for an SME energy efficiency loan businesses should be shown how to also calculate and communicate their emissions footprint. They should also be provided information on climate risk and how to understand its impacts to the business and ways to improve resilience.

Alongside these actions, Scottish Government should work with public procurement organisations to advocate for stronger sustainability weighting within public sector procurement exercises. This would then provide a clear steer to SMEs and larger businesses that undertaking climate mitigation and adaptation activities should be considered as producing a competitive advantage and therefore an economic opportunity.

Examples of current support offers:

<https://businessenergyscotland.org/smeloan/>

<https://www.carbontrust.com/our-work-and-impact/guides-reports-and-tools/sme-carbon-footprint-calculator>

<https://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/how-adapt/your-sector/businesses>

17 What, if any, do you think are the business and innovation opportunities arising from climate change in Scotland?

Please give us your views:

If we do this well as a nation, institutions and businesses could sell their expertise to other nations wanting to adapt and/or help developing nations for free to enhance climate justice globally.

18 What, if any, support would be required to encourage businesses in Scotland to take advantage of innovation opportunities arising from climate change?

Please give us your views:

Creating spaces for peer-to-peer stories and effective knowledge exchange, utilising already established professional trade bodies. These should be framed alongside wider co-benefits, for example opportunities for local, shorter supply chains and more money being retained in the local economy.

Outcome five: International action

19 How could the Scottish Government support communities impacted by climate change across the world?

Please give us your views:

20 Scotland is known for its excellence in climate change research. Are there international adaptation focussed research opportunities which Scottish-based academic work should focus on?

Please give us your views:

EAUC Scotland isn't aware of specific international research opportunities. However, more broadly, it is expected that there could be better information sharing and/or use on climate forecasting and adaptation through already established international partnerships, including through Scottish university satellite campuses abroad.

Enabling factors

21 What do you see as the main barrier to private investment for adaptation action?

Please give us your views:

While universities in Scotland can leverage their own private funding independently, there are new constraints on their ability to do this following the 2024-25 Scottish Budget which saw the removal of SFC's Financial Transactions programme. This funding provided low-cost loans to universities for estates investment, and supported many net zero and climate adaptation projects. Financial Transactions have delivered £207m to universities across 60 different projects since it started in the 2017-18 financial year. The University of Aberdeen received £4m to install a combined heat and power engine to connect the university to the city-wide district heating network. Strathclyde's Heart of the Campus project received funding to install green infrastructure and instigate 'pedestrian first connectivity'. SFC prioritised those projects which had leveraged additional private investment for funding, meaning institutions were incentivised to seek out alternative private investment for adaptation and mitigation actions. Without support through Financial Transactions, many projects in development at Scotland's universities are unlikely to go ahead.

Regarding colleges, Scotland's colleges are restricted in the ways they can borrow or leverage private investment. This creates a structural barrier to many routes for private investment in adaptation measures.

22 How can the Scottish Government support or incentivise more private investment in adaptation action?

Please give us your views:

23 The proposed approach to monitoring and evaluating progress of the Adaptation Plan is set out below. Do you agree with the proposed approach to monitoring adaptation?

Strongly Agree

24 Do you have suggestions of data or indicators that could be used to track adaptation outcomes in Scotland?

Please give us your views:

Given its use within the Scottish public sector already, EAUC Scotland propose that monitoring should be aligned with Adaptation Scotland's Benchmarking Tool. However, this tool would need to be regularly updated (currently last revised August 2020) to ensure continued relevance - <https://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/how-adapt/your-sector/public-sector/benchmarking>

Similar to the ISO 14001 ethos, public bodies should demonstrate continuous improvement each year in understanding and responding to climate risk. There should also be a raising 'minimum floor' to expectations set by Scottish Government that supports this. The Plan highlights that Adaptation Scotland are focussing on adding additional steps to the mature stages of their capability framework, while it's likely that many institutions haven't looked at/completed the early stages. Without a continuous improvement framework to monitoring and evaluation underpinned by no or limited leadership accountability, it is likely we will see further stratification between public bodies with regards to their response to climate risk

One suggested indicator: Cost of repairs/replacement of public sector assets following weather-related events

Impact assessments

25 What, if any, impacts do you think this Adaptation Plan will have on groups/individuals who share protected characteristics?

Please give us your views:

26 In respect to protected characteristics, what, if any, measures could be taken to strengthen any positive impacts or lessen any negative impacts of the draft Adaptation Plan?

Please give us your views:

27 What, if any, impacts do you think the proposed Adaptation Plan will have on inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage?

Please give us your views:

28 In respect to inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage, what, if any, measures could be taken to strengthen any positive impacts or lessen any negative impacts of the draft Adaptation Plan?

Please give us your views:

29 What, if any, impact do you think the Adaptation Plan will have on children's rights and wellbeing?

Please share your views:

30 What, if any, measures could be taken to strengthen any positive impacts or lessen any negative impacts of the draft Adaptation Plan on children's rights and wellbeing?

Please give us your views:

31 What, if any, impacts do you think the Adaptation Plan will have on Island communities?

Please give us your views:

32 What, if any, measures could be taken to strengthen any positive impacts or lessen any negative impacts of the draft Adaptation Plan on Island communities?

Please give us your views:

About you

33 What is your name?

Name:
Matt Woodthorpe

34 Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

35 What is your organisation?

Organisation:
EAUC

36 Further information about your organisation's response

Please add any additional context:

This response was developed through EAUC Scotland's 16 years experience working with Scotland's colleges and universities on sustainability issues. A draft response was shared with key contacts within selected institutions to sense-check and provide further details, which have all been incorporated into the response.

37 The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response with name

38 Do you consent to Scottish Government contacting you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

39 What is your email address?

Email:

mwoodthorpe@eauc.org.uk

40 I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.

I consent

Evaluation

41 Please help us improve our consultations by answering the questions below. (Responses to the evaluation will not be published.)

Matrix 1 - How satisfied were you with this consultation?:

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.:

Matrix 1 - How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?:

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.: