## **Communication adaptation and working terminologies**

**Climate Security National Foresight Group** 

Report 1



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This report firstly, it explores the different terms used and aims to outline a set of commonly understood and used terms. Secondly it identifies issues relating how to communicate adaptation. It then concludes with recommendations on ways in which the group has agreed to operate.

Reports by this group will provide key insights on topics of importance tasked by this group or key stakeholders. They intend to provide a context and start point for discussions.

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## Terminology

We have spent time reviewing the different ways in which terminology is used across our different sectors. This is summarised below.

**Energy security**- Ensuring that the UK's energy supply is less exposed to manipulation by hostile actors and volatility in global markets (this is more the focus of Department Energy Security and Net Zero).

Mitigation - Reducing the magnitude by reducing emissions (net zero).

**Adaptation** - Reducing effects by reducing vulnerability. The Met Office describe it as "the adjustments needed from individuals, communities, governments and countries in response to changes to our planet's climate...Adaptation can be done ahead of time, which is referred to as anticipatory adaptation, or in a reactive situation, after an event happens, for example, in response to extreme weather."

**Preparedness**-The strengthening of local, regional, national and international resilience, taking into account the impacts of climate change (NATO Report, Climate Change and Security Action Plan 2021).

**Climate impacts** - Climate change will continue to have direct impacts on infrastructure and capability as well as more indirect implications for activities, supply chains, the environment and health.

**Climate resilience**- Strengthening the UK's resilience to the range of interlinked risks associated with climate change and environmental damage. In accordance with the Integrated Review Refresh (2023) this group will focus on the delivery of UK-focused interventions, including through the upcoming Third National Adaptation Programme, which will protect infrastructure, homes and health, communities, the natural environment, and businesses.

**Climate Security** - Ensuring the security of people, places, organisations and UK society in the face of adverse changes brought about by climate change, being conscious of climate variability and climate attribution.

## A review of communicating adaptation and resilience

Literature identifies key methods and narratives for communication about adaptation, rather than mitigation. These are not specific to the UK but may provide a basis communication by this group about adaptation. Whilst these plans are designed to communicate with the wider public, these could also be used in back briefings and organisational communications. Adaptation communications can struggle to present meaningful, positive and balanced tone that enables engagement due to the nature of the narratives.





Increasing the shared understanding of concepts between group members will increase our ability to engage in meaningful dialogue and effect positive change and support wider communications. Below are a series of methods for consideration.

**Solutions Journalism** – an emerging reporting 'genre' surrounding an altered method of reporting climate issues and events to be framed around solutions way (effectively utilising the STAR method) rather than focusing on the negative outcomes of an event (i.e., problem-oriented reporting). Research suggests that solutions focused journalism encourages narrative engagement and self-efficacy (Dahmen et al., 2019) and is positively associated with perceived behavioural control and support for collective climate adaptation action (Thier & Lin, 2022)

#### What does solutions journalism look like?

Solution journalism has four key elements: **response** (i.e., the story surrounds the response to the problem), **evidence** (i.e., the story provides evidence of results, which are more often than not, successful), **insights** (i.e., the story culminates in lessons or approaches than can be adapted), and **limitations** (i.e., the story does not avoid addressing limitations to successes). An example is shared here: '<u>Sinking Cities'</u>.

**Decision uncertainty as a lived experience and engagement method** –Research suggests that embracing uncertainty when discussing adaptation, rather than avoiding discussion of uncertainty, fosters willingness to participate and a reconciliation of interests (Moure et al., 2023). It aims to embrace and use uncertainty to promote action (i.e., eco-anxiety and social pressure as a force for promoting engagement).

#### What does decision uncertainty as an engagement method look like?

Discussion about decision uncertainty requires strong narratives for effective communication. In the case of informative journalism and scientific evidence, these may look like written reports, images or statistics. Other key actors involved in climate adaptation communication, such as activists, may choose to utilise forms of communication rooted in culture. For example, through music, art or storytelling. Partnerships between key cultural and informative actors can bridge gaps when communicating about uncertainties. A key example of this is the <u>Music</u> <u>Decarbonization Project</u>, which connects musicians, venues, non-profits and brands to effectively communicate and promote environmental awareness and potentially action.

**Geovisualisation and electronic media** – Research into the use of electronic media is relatively new, however serious games are considered to enhance social learning and connection (Hügel & Davies, 2022 in using gamified media, such as 'serious games' in order to promote and effectively communicate with the public and bridge knowledge gaps.

#### What does geovisualisation and electronic media look like?

Utilising tools such as interactive media (<u>VisAdapt</u>) allows homeowners to assess risks and consider alternatives when managing their own residential buildings by interacting with geographic data on heat-map style interfaces. Serious games have been created to increase public understanding of climate adaption processes by allowing civilians to make decisions and understand uncertain pathways in a





simulated environment. These allow for the visualisation of abstract and complex concepts, presented in comprehensive and engaging media forms. One example of this is <u>iADAPT</u> which allows you to climate-proof your city within 5 years. The development of knowledge systems is also a valuable resource as seen by the <u>Climate ADAPT Case Study Explorer.</u>

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Figure 1: VisAdapt

Figure 2: <u>iAdapt</u>

Figure 3: <u>Climate-ADAPT</u>

**Transnational perspectives and migrant experiences** – Research suggest that those with lower cultural capital are more aware of climate adaptation strategy and issues, but that those with higher cultural capital were more likely to contribute to adaptation measures. By utilising migrant perspectives to reconcile attitudes towards adaptation measures and strategy there may be scoped to reframe migration as a positive adaptation strategy alongside building on their valuable experiences (Van Praag, 2023b). For both those with higher and lower cultural capital, transnational bonding social ties were key factors in awareness and attitudes towards adaptation (Van Praag, 2023a).

#### What do transnational perspectives and migrant experiences look like?

There are multiple ways to link migration and climate adaptation through policy. These can include the promotion of temporary or circular migration schemes, legal migration channels and managed or facilitated migration. Migration schemes such as Australia's Pacific Seasonal Worker Programme are an example of how this could successfully be implemented. Facilitated and planned migration has proven to have some success, although it is suggested that the development of resettlement policy is key for successful planned migration.

Government agencies may also work in combination with other organisations to consider migrant and transnational experiences. For example, <u>USAID partners with the</u> <u>Government of Guatemala</u>, the private sector and charitable bodies to develop and implement programmes designed to ensure migrant security, prosperity and government strength.

An example of effective organisational communication of migrant experiences and transnational perspectives is shown in the work of The UK Climate and Migration Coalition, which hosts workshops, provides testimonies and educational resources to enable a better understanding of migrant experiences, and to aid in boosting civilian and governmental support for migration focused adaptation action and policy implementation.

**Localising best practice, interactive intervention and incentives** – Research suggests that localising abstract concepts is an effective method of communicating climate





adaptation measures to comprehensively educate citizens. Demonstrations of urban design and difference in environments (i.e., what climate adaptation looks and feels like) has been suggested to increase participation and awareness of adaptation measures through 'social pressure'. Finally, incentives such as funding for areas in need of climate adaptation has been proposed, although this is not suggested to be the best method of communication (Lenzholzer et al., 2020)

What do localised best practices, interactive interventions and incentives look like? Reconciliation of local and national needs through interventions that initially focus on local short terms solutions but provide longer term national benefits may create tangible and manageable change. Bottom-up approaches to responsive climate adaptation interventions such as the <u>Climate Smart Villages</u> showing high-risk farm villages what adaptation looks and feels like and allowing for the testing of innovative climate-smart technology. The key features of these bottom-up approaches to climate adaptation intervention and communication, such as the Climate Smart Village, are community integration, willingness and participation. integration, willingness and participation.

**Combining layers of communication** – It is suggested that the best methods of communication regarding climate adaptation are to:

- 1) utilise real-world examples with a scientific basis and frame scenarios for target groups,
- 2) include emotional or value driven content and,
- 3) use key actors and 'messengers' to work with target groups in 'peer' environments (Wirth et al., 2014)

Summary: Key messages to consider about public narratives

- Cultural value and emotion are key to effectively communicating about climate adaptation
- Interactivity increases understanding and willingness to support adaptation measures
- Positively driven language is crucial, but social pressure and eco-anxiety have also been proven to drive participation and understanding
- Driving factors that lead to adaptation action are self-efficacy and hope
- Combining multiple 'layers' of communication is important for multiple stakeholders and citizens
- Examples of communication and intervention are smaller-scale and focused on local needs, rather than on national needs

#### Challenges for an adaption approach to the UK

UK narrative surrounding climate adaptation can be seen as disengaging, and immediacy of adaptation needs are not effectively conveyed. Issues include inaccessible information, a disconnect between local, national and international needs and policy and a set of clear challenges around communicating adaptation. Adaptation





communication does not always clearly discuss the economic benefits of adaptation intervention. Lastly, to note, climate narratives and understandings are, globally, inextricably linked with politics.

**On balance, the public are not well engaged with the adaptation debate** – Discussions with stakeholders (Tangney & Howes 2016) highlight the need for climate science to be contained in adaptation communication by recognising the socio-political and cultural position in the UK. This position seeks to promote independence and self-sufficiency (reducing the 'nanny state' narrative, reducing regulatory interventions and instead supporting citizen empowerment and whole of society approach). UK participants generally consider climate science to be credible but suggested that not all uncertainties were accounted for. In the Tangney and Howes paper, participants suggested that community input was too minimal in outputs (an ask for more coproduction). Further, information was suggested to be 'poorly presented' and that the scale of information did not match policy, making resources inaccessible and confusing. Finally, participants suggested that economic benefits were not communicated effectively, making it difficult to rationalise adaptation measures.

**Key adaptation responsibility is narrowly held** - Through Lorenz & Porter (2019) analysis of Government documents they mapped key organisations cited with climate adaptation responsibility. There was a large variety of key actors identified in literature (n = 568), the majority of which were public bodies, not reflecting the bottom-up approach narrative. Additionally, these were England-focused organisations, rather than those across the whole of the UK. There was a lack of representation for financial, business and agricultural bodies. Further, responsibility was focused highly on central rather than local government. The study highlights the need to work cross sector, rather than treating each sector as a discrete entity.

**Scaling and docking issues with adaptation policy in the UK-** Kythreotis et al. (2023) highlight the lack of interconnection between urban, national and international scaling of climate adaptation policy in the UK. Discourse is framed based on mitigation/net zero and shows a disconnect between science and policy. Participants of their research suggested regional approaches but discussed the lack of regional authority to interlink national and local. Participants suggested a need for local policy and reframing of politically neutral international policy. Economic perspectives were a key issue with mitigation seen ass cost effective, but adaptation did not. This also highlights the linking and connection between adaptation and mitigation.

**Summary**: We aim to ensure that when we are presenting academic knowledge to the group, we are aware and transparent with you when we feel these are impacting on the implications/discussions. We also want to highlight these findings, so we can apply them to our own communications to you, including influencing how/what solutions we might make to the group. We will also continue to remind ourselves of these challenges as we look to support you in your own sector contexts.





# Climate Security National Foresight Group: Our focus

**Recommendation 1**: The group seeks to understand the resilience, risks and vulnerabilities across the localities of the UK from the changes in climate and will seek to provide decision-makers with a realistic understanding of how those localities are likely to experience impacts from our changing climate. In particular, the ways in which these impacts and risks are becoming increasingly complex and more difficult to manage.

**Recommendation 2**: We will seek to provide a realistic scenario to build resilience and adaptation activities. These will be across communities, systems and governance structures in response to the high confidence the IPCC report AR 6 (2022) has of the increase of "multiple climate hazards occurring simultaneously, and the likelihood that multiple climatic and non-climatic risks will interact, resulting in compounding overall risk and risks cascading across sectors and regions. Some responses to climate change result in new impacts and risks."

**Recommendation 3**: We will seek to understand this increasingly complex future, in the immediate, mid (2040) and long term (2100). We will ensure that when considering immediate issues, our solutions will not negatively impact on the longer term by mistake.

**Recommendation 4**: We will seek to learn from interdisciplinary and cross-sector knowledge and understanding, to pool and synthesise our expertise to gain greater insight into what works and to establish possible ways forward and to provide an evidence base for policy decisions.

**Recommendation 5**: Bringing a local to national understanding of the risks, resilience needs, and evidence of adaptation to reduce our individual, community and system vulnerabilities. We will consider the impact of climate variability and climate attribution. This is what we define as Climate Security.

### Key messages to consider

- Cultural value and emotion are key to effectively communicating about climate adaptation
- Interactivity increases understanding and willingness to support adaptation measures
- Positively driven language is crucial, but social pressure and eco-anxiety have also been proven to drive participation and understanding
- Driving factors that lead to adaptation action are self-efficacy and hope





- Combining multiple 'layers' of communication is important for multiple stakeholders and citizens
- Examples of communication and intervention are smaller-scale and focused on local needs, rather than on national needs

## Suggested ways forward for CSNFG communication

The framing of our work will:

- Be long term (up to 2100)
- Not use extremeS
- Acknowledge close links with politics (especially in international learning)
- Be inclusive of as many perspectives as possible
- Be interdisciplinary

#### **References available on request**

