



KASLO/RDCK AREA D PARTNERSHIP

Climate Change Adaptation & You



Appendix N - Glossary

Glossary of terms

Adaptation

Actions in response to actual or projected climate change and impacts that lead to a reduction in risks or a realisation of benefits. A distinction can be made between a planned or anticipatory approach to adaptation (i.e. risk treatments) and an approach that relies on unplanned or reactive adjustments.

Adaptive capacity

The capacity of an organisation or system to moderate the risks of climate change, or to realise benefits, through changes in its characteristics or behaviour. Adaptive capacity can be an inherent property or it could have been developed as a result of previous policy, planning or design decisions of the organisation.

Climate

The composite of surface weather conditions such as temperature, rainfall, atmospheric pressure, humidity, sunshine and winds, averaged over a period of time ranging from months to thousands of years. The classical period for averaging, as defined by the World Meteorological Organisation, is 30 years.

Climate change

Any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity.

Climate change mitigation

Response measures that reduce the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere or enhance their sinks, aimed at reducing their atmospheric concentrations and therefore the probability of reaching a given level of climate change.

Climate scenario

A coherent, plausible but often simplified description of a possible future state of the climate. A climate scenario should not be viewed as a prediction of the future climate. Rather, it provides a means of understanding the potential impacts

of climate change, and identifying the potential risks and opportunities to an organisation created by an uncertain future climate. A 'climate change scenario' can be defined as the difference between a climate scenario and the current climate.

Climate projection

A projection of the response of the climate system to scenarios of greenhouse gas emissions or atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases. Climate projections are often based upon simulations of the climate system by computer based mathematical models. Climate projections depend on assumptions about emission rates and concentrations and response of the climate system to changes in these variables and can therefore be distinguished from climate predictions.

Climate variability

Variations or deviations from the mean state of the climate. The climate system has natural, internal variability but variability could be affected by external factors driving climate change such as changes in the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases.

Enhanced greenhouse effect

Increases in the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide due to human activities, leading to an increase in the amount of thermal radiation near the Earth's surface. Most scientists agree that the enhanced greenhouse effect is leading to an increase in global average surface temperature (see global warming) and other changes in the atmospheric environment (see climate change). See also greenhouse effect.

Extreme event

Weather conditions that are rare for a particular place and/or time such as an intense storm or heat wave.

Global warming

An increase in the global average surface temperature due to natural or human caused factors.

Greenhouse effect

The process where gases in the lower atmosphere such as carbon dioxide and water vapour trap radiation released by the Earth's surface after it has been warmed by solar energy. These gases then radiate heat back towards the ground, adding to the heat the ground receives from the Sun. The surface of the Earth would be about 33°C colder on average than it is without the natural greenhouse effect. See enhanced greenhouse effect.

Sensitivity

The degree to which a system is affected, either adversely or beneficially, by climate related variables including means, extremes and variability.

Vulnerability

The extent to which a system or organization can cope with the negative impacts of climate change, variability and extremes. It is a function of risk and adaptive capacity.

Risk management

Consequence

Outcome or impact of an event

1. There can be more than one consequence from one event.
2. Consequences can range from positive to negative.
3. Consequences can be expressed qualitatively or quantitatively.
4. Consequences are considered in relation to the achievement of objectives.

Control

An existing process, policy, device, practice or other action that acts to minimise negative risk or enhance positive opportunities. The word control may also be applied to a process designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives.

Event

Occurrence of a particular set of circumstances.

1. The event can be certain or uncertain.
2. The event can be a single occurrence or a series of occurrences.

Frequency

A measure of the number of occurrences per unit of time.

Hazard

A source of potential harm

Likelihood

Used as a general description of probability or frequency. Can be expressed qualitatively or quantitatively.

Monitor

To check, supervise, observe critically or measure the progress of an activity, action or system on a regular basis in order to identify change from the performance level required or expected

Probability

A measure of the chance of occurrence expressed as a number between zero and one.

1. 'Frequency' or 'likelihood' rather than 'probability' may be used in describing risk.

Risk

The chance of something happening that will have an impact on objectives.

1. A risk is often specified in terms of an event or circumstance and the consequences that may flow from it.
2. Risk is measured in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event and their likelihoods.
3. Risk may have a positive or negative impact.

Risk analysis

Systematic process to understand the nature of and to deduce the level of risk.

1. Provides the basis for risk evaluation and decisions about risk treatment.

Risk assessment

The overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation.

Risk evaluation

Process of comparing the level of risk against risk criteria. 1. Risk evaluation assists in decisions about risk treatment.

Risk identification

The process of determining what, where, when, why and how something could happen.

Risk management

The culture, processes and structures that are directed towards realising potential opportunities whilst managing adverse effects.

Risk management process

The systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the tasks of communicating, establishing the context, identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating, monitoring and reviewing risk.

Risk treatment

Process of selection and implementation of measures to modify risk.

1. The term 'risk treatment' is sometimes used for the measures themselves, in addition to the process of generating the measures to deal with a risk.
2. Risk treatment measures can include avoiding, modifying, sharing or retaining risk.