How the Benchmarking Tool aligns with other Adaptation Reporting Mechanisms

This briefing note is part of Adaptation Scotland's 'Adaptation Capability Framework' public sector guidance on adapting to climate change.

1. Purpose

This guidance provides an overview of climate adaptation reporting. It introduces the benchmarking tool to support progress against the Adaptation Capability Framework and describes how it aligns with and supports delivery of alternative reporting mechanisms, including the Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting duties, Climate Change Assessment Tool (CCAT) and the Covenant of Mayor's Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP).

2. Introduction

Across organisations, effort needs to be made to consider if sufficient adaptation is occurring and what more is required. Whilst mitigation is a bounded problem that can be easily measured in terms of carbon reduction, adaptation is more complex, requiring diverse adjustments and actions across different scales. Despite adaptation being less easily measured, it is equally important as reporting not only allows you to reflect on progress and demonstrate successes but may also help secure further buy-in and funding for adaptation interventions.

The Benchmarking Tool is one method to report on adaptation progress, and is based on Adaptation Scotland's 'Scotland Adapts: A Capability Framework for a Climate Ready Public Sector'. It should be used to provide a baseline assessment of an organisation's current adaptation capabilities and how they develop over time. It highlights which capability areas the organisation is excelling at and others where more work may be needed. It illustrates an organisation's adaptation journey. The aim of benchmarking is to:

- Describe your organisation's current adaptation capabilities and provide a baseline from which progress may be measured
- Identify your current organisational position within the Adaptation Capability Framework
- Illustrate what you've already done on adaptation
- Highlight where improvement is needed
- Provides a way to understand and track ambitious change

The benchmarking tool aims to assess the adaptation progress of an organisation not an individual employee, team or department. This exercise, therefore may need to be completed by you or a small group of colleagues initially and then finalised through discussions with management and/or different departments. Taking stock of your organisation's current progress with adaptation is an essential first step needed to inform the scope of future work and to identify strengths and weaknesses to your existing approach.

The benchmarking process aligns with other reporting mechanisms and the benchmarks have been designed taking SECAP and CCAT into consideration. Output from the self-assessment will be able to be used directly for the SECAP and Public Bodies Climate Change duties reports.

The rest of this guidance is structured as follows:

3. [Alignment with the Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting Duties](#)
4. [Alignment with the CCAT](#)
5. [Alignment with the SECAP](#)

Adaptation Reporting Landscape

There are a number of other legislative and voluntary adaptation reporting mechanisms. At a UK level, the Adaptation Reporting Power (ARP) outlined in the Climate Change Act 2008 mandates direct reporting from organisations with functions of a public nature or statutory undertakers (such as regulators, utilities, harbour authorities or strategic airport operators) to report on how they are addressing current and future climate impacts. Reports are available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/climate-change-adaptation-reporting-second-round-reports

In Scotland, all public bodies are required to report on their adaptation progress as part of the Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting duties. These duties are supported by the Climate Change Assessment Tool (CCAT). Some local authorities may also participate in the Global Covenant of Mayors, and if so must report on mitigation and adaptation regularly through the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) reporting framework. These different mechanisms are described here, with reference to the relevant tasks within the Adaptation Capability Framework which support progress.

3. Alignment with Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Reporting

Public sector organisations play an important role in adapting to a changing climate. As providers of a range of local services, they will be impacted by changes in temperature, extreme weather and heavy rainfall. This will have a range of consequences on service delivery by creating new demands on, for example, the maintenance of buildings, emergency response services and longer term health issues. As such there are strong legal drivers requiring public bodies in Scotland to adapt to a changing climate.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act places duties on public bodies with respect to climate change. Part 4 of the Act states that a *"public body must, in exercising its functions, act: in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of (Scotland's climate change) targets; in the way best calculated to help deliver any (Scottish adaptation programme); and in a way that it considers most sustainable"*. This means that all public sector organisation must ensure their activities and programming are designed so as to best deliver any Scottish statutory adaptation programme. The second statutory Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (SCCAP) will be released in 2019 and should be consulted for reporting.

The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) requires public bodies to provide annual reports on how they are complying with climate change duties. These reporting results are publicly available on the [Sustainable Scotland Network website](). Public Bodies Climate Change Duties **(Part 4)** focuses specifically on adaptation. It requests updates from organisations on a variety of adaptation activities including assessing and reviewing future climate-related risks, actions and arrangements in place to manage risks and progress against the Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (SCCAP) objectives.

Adaptation Scotland's new public sector guidance will help organisations progress their adaptation work which can be recorded within Public Bodies Climate Change Reports. The tasks within the new guidance and the Adaptation Capability Framework which directly relate to questions within the Public Bodies Climate Change reporting questionnaire are summarised in Table 1.

PBCCDR	Adaptation Scotland PS Guidance Update '18
Section 2 Governance	
2(a) How is climate change governed in the body?	OC2C Establish governance arrangements for adaptation OC3C Put governance arrangements for adaptation into operation OC4C Review and Update governance arrangements for adaptation
2(b) How is climate change action managed and embedded by the body?	OC3A Identify opportunities to include adaptation in plans, policies and procedures OC4A Mainstream adaptation into your organisation's plans, policies and procedures UC4A Mainstreaming of climate change risk assessment PI4B Taking action o adaptation is mainstreamed into your organisation's functions or services
2(c) Does the body have specific climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives in its corporate plan or similar document?	OC3A Identify opportunities to include adaptation in plans, policies and procedures
2(d) Does the body have a climate change plan or strategy?	PI2C Develop and initial adaptation strategy PI3C Develop a comprehensive adaptation strategy
2(e) Does the body have any plans or strategies covering the following areas that include climate change?	OC1B Identify resources available for adaptation PI1A Identify actions already delivering adaptation
Section 4 Adaptation	
4(a) Has the body assessed current and future climate-related risks?	UC3B Undertake strategic climate change risk assessment UC3C undertake project-level risk assessment
4(b) What arrangements does the body have in place to manage climate-related risks?	PI3D Implement a programme of adaptation measures
4(c) What action has the body taken to adapt to climate change?	PI3D Implement a programme of adaptation measures

	PI4A Adopt an ongoing adaptive management cycle for adaptation planning PI4B Taking action on adaptation is mainstreamed
4(d) Where applicable, what progress has the body made in delivering the policies and proposals included in the Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (a) ("the Programme")?	PI1B Consider how you contribute to Scotland's adaptation outcomes
4(e) What arrangements does the body have in place to review current and future climate risks?	UC4A Mainstreaming of Climate Change Risk Assessment
4(f) What arrangements does the body have in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the adaptation actions?	PI3D Implement a programme of adaptation options PI4A Adopt an ongoing adaptive management cycle for adaptation planning
4(g) What are the body's top 5 climate change adaptation priorities for the year ahead?	PI2A Define a vision and outcomes for adaptation

4. Alignment with the Climate Change Assessment Tool (CCAT)

The Climate Change Assessment Tool (CCAT) was created to help public sector organisations comply with the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 in relation to both mitigation and adaptation.

The CCAT tool enables self-appraisal within an organisation through recording responses to 28 questions across five themes including governance, adaptation, mitigation and procurement. It is utilises an Excel template to capture responses and produce an output score between 0-4. It is designed so that the CCAT may be completed by organisations in a workshop setting, with diverse range of colleagues and team-members contributing. The responses to the questions are intended to be used to create an actionable plan to address highlighted areas.

It is to be completed annually for up to five years to present a trajectory of progress which can be examined to identify persisting areas of weakness.

Its adaptation section is broad and covers six questions which are presented on p. 9 along with relevant supporting Adaptation Capability Framework tasks.

CCAT Question	Relevant task/ support
3a Have you defined the challenges of climate change adaptation?	UC2A Develop understanding of climate risk and vulnerability UC2B Consider how your organisation's functions might be affected by climate change UC2C Explore the impact of recent weather events on your organisation
3b Have you assessed climate change threats and opportunities?	UC2C Explore the impact of recent weather events on your organisation UC3A Explore future change by developing scenarios and/or storylines for climate impacts
3c Have you assessed climate change risks and identified actions?	UC3B Undertake strategic climate change risk assessment UC3C Undertake project level climate change risk assessment PI2B Identify a range of potential adaptation options PI3B Appraisal of adaptation options
3d Which specific risk areas have you considered?	UC3C Undertake project level risk assessment
3e Have you reported and implemented your adaptation arrangements and do you have a process for monitoring and review?	PI2C Develop an initial adaptation strategy and action plan PI2D Take action to deliver initial adaptation (measures, options, actions) PI4A Adopt an ongoing adaptive management cycle for adaptation planning UC4A Mainstreaming of climate change risk assessment UC4B Accessible climate adaptation knowledge that is integrated into internal systems and procedures
3f Has your organisation identified its responsibilities under the Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (SCCAP) objectives?	PI1B Consider how you contribute to Scotland's adaptation outcomes

5. Alignment with the SECAP

Purpose: This document outlines the synergies and overlaps between the Adaptation Capability Framework and the SECAP.

Synergies with SECAP

Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP)

The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy supports local and regional authorities to take action on climate change (both mitigation and adaptation) to achieve the European Union's climate and energy objectives. It provides guidance and a standardised reporting template.

Local authorities joining the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy initiative commit to submit a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) within two years following the formal signing. The SECAP is based on a Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI) and a Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment(s) (RVAs) which provide an analysis of the current situation. These elements serve as a basis for defining a comprehensive set of actions that local authorities plan to undertake in order to reach their climate mitigation and adaptation goals.

The Adaptation Capability Framework supports progress against many of the actions within the SECAP adaptation cycle as outlined on p.11-14.

SECAP	PS Guidance
Risks and Vulnerabilities Section	
1) Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment(s) – outline year, scope and method used to produce risk and vulnerability assessment.	UC3B Undertake strategic climate change risk assessment UC3C Undertake project-level risk assessment
2) Climate hazard risks particularly relevant for your local authority or region. For the applicable hazards, complete the next four sections of the table: current hazard risk level, expected change in intensity, expected change in frequency and timeframe in which you expect the risk frequency/intensity to change.	UC2B Consider how your organisation's decisions and functions might be affected by climate change UC2C Explore the impact of recent weather events on your organisation UC3A Explore future change by developing scenarios and/or storylines for climate impacts
3) Vulnerabilities of your local authority or region - This section asks you to describe the type of vulnerabilities faced in broad terms: socio-economic and physical and environmental vulnerabilities.	UC2A Develop understanding of climate risk and vulnerability UC3B Undertake strategic climate change risk assessment
4) Expected impacts in your local authority or region This section asks you to list policy sectors that are impacted in your local authority.	UC1B Learn about Scotland's changing climate UC2B Consider how your organisation's decisions and functions might be affected by climate change UC2C Explore the impact of recent weather events on your organisation
Adaptation Actions	
1) Adaptation Action Plans This section 1) asks you to list your local Adaptation Action Plan and other planning documents where adaptation has been integrated (if any).	PI1A Identify actions already delivering adaptation PI2C Develop and initial adaptation strategy and action plan PI3C Develop a comprehensive adaptation strategy and action plan PI4B Taking action on adaptation is mainstreamed into your organisation's functions and services
2) Adaptation Actions This section asks you to list your adaptation actions in the table. Actions can be comprehensive or can be a smaller list of selected examples demonstrating the range or types of actions that your local authority has committed to undertaking.	PI2B Identify a range of potential adaptation options PI3B Appraisal of adaptation options

SECAP Adaptation Scoreboard overlaps with Adaptation Capability Framework

Adaptation Cycle Steps	Actions	Relation to PS Guidance
Step 1 – Preparing the ground for adaptation : STRATEGY	Adaptation commitments defined/integrated into the local climate policy	OC3A Identify opportunities to include adaptation in plans, policies and procedures
	Human, technical and financial resources identified	OC1B Identify resources available for adaptation OC2A Secure resources to plan and deliver adaptation
	Adaptation team (officer) appointed within the municipal administration and clear responsibilities assigned	OC2A Secure resources to plan and deliver adaptation
	Horizontal (i.e. across sectoral departments) coordination mechanisms in place	OC2C Establish governance arrangements for adaptation
	Vertical (i.e. across governance levels) coordination mechanisms in place	OC3C Put governance arrangements for adaptation into operation
	Consultative and participatory mechanisms set up, fostering the multi-stakeholder engagement in the adaptation process	PI1C Identify relevant stakeholders to engage with on adaptation planning
	Continuous communication process in place (for the engagement of different audiences)	
Step 2 – Assessing risks & vulnerabilities to climate change : RISKS & VULNERABILITIES	Mapping of the possible methods & data sources for carrying out a Risk & Vulnerability Assessment conducted	UC2A Develop understanding of climate risk and vulnerability UC3A Develop scenarios for future climate change impacts and vulnerabilities

	Assessment(s) of climate risks & vulnerabilities undertaken	UC3B Undertake strategic climate change risk assessment UC3C Undertake project-level risk assessment
	Possible sectors of action identified and prioritised	PI2B Identify a range of potential adaptation options
	Available knowledge periodically reviewed and new findings integrated	UC3D Identify knowledge gaps, seek expertise and foster links with research and innovation UC4B Accessible climate adaptation knowledge is integrated into internal systems and procedures PI4A Adopt an ongoing adaptive management cycle for adaptation planning
Steps 3 & 4 – Identifying, assessing and selecting adaptation options ACTIONS	Full portfolio of adaptation options compiled, documented and assessed	PI2B Identify a range of potential adaptation options PI3B Appraisal of adaptation options
	Possibilities of mainstreaming adaptation in existing policies and plans assessed, possible synergies and conflicts (e.g. with mitigation actions) identified	PI4B Taking action on adaptation is mainstreamed into your organisation's functions and services OC4A Mainstream adaptation into your organisation's plans, policies and procedures
	Adaptation actions developed and adopted (as part of the SECAP and/or other planning documents)	PI3C Develop a comprehensive adaptation strategy and action plan PI3D Implement a programme of adaptation

Step 5- Implementing	Implementation framework set, with clear milestones	
	Adaptation actions implemented and mainstreamed (where relevant) as defined in the adopted SECAP and/or other planning documents	PI4B Taking action on adaptation is mainstreamed into your organisation's functions and services
	Coordinated action between mitigation and adaptation set	
Step 6 – Monitoring and evaluating	Monitoring framework in place for adaptation actions	Guidance on M & E can be found on the Adaptation Scotland website at: https://adaptationscotland.org.uk/how-adapt/tools-and-resources/monitoring-evaluation
	Appropriate M&E indicators identified	
	Progress regularly monitored and reported to the relevant decision-makers	
	Adaptation strategy and/or Action Plan updated, revised and readjusted according to the findings of the M & E procedure.	

6. Conclusion

Having clear processes in place to track progress of your adaptation efforts, combined with the flexibility to alter plans if required, is an important aspect of adaptation. The Benchmarking Tool provides an opportunity to transparently track progress and record details of your adaptation work which can be used to support other reporting requirements.

If you have feedback, queries or comments on the Benchmarking tool please contact us at adaptationscotland@sniffer.org.uk