

Designing an adaptation engagement strategy

ADAPTATION LEARNING EXCHANGE GUIDANCE NOTE



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Adaptation Scotland provides advice and support to help organisations, businesses and communities in Scotland prepare for, and build resilience to, the impacts of climate change.

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Introduction

The impacts of climate change will affect all of us. No one organisation or community will be able to adapt in isolation. Those who embrace a genuinely collaborative approach to adaptation action are more likely to be successful, but creating this kind of collaboration requires reaching out to new audiences and making climate change adaptation relevant to them.

This short guide, based on an [Adaptation Learning Exchange](#) workshop in 2014, will help you to design an effective engagement strategy, allowing you to build the foundations for new action and new partnerships. There are two key steps to follow:

1. Stakeholder mapping
2. Creating engagement activities

Key principles, top tips and practical examples of each step are given below.

1. Stakeholder mapping

Before you can reach-out to people, you first need to know who they are, what they want, and what areas you can work together on. Therefore the first element in designing any engagement process is stakeholder mapping. This is a relatively straightforward step which allows you to identify and understand your audience.

To create a useful map of your stakeholders you need to answer these three questions:

- ❖ **Who do you want to engage with?**
- ❖ **What do you want from engaging with them?**
- ❖ **What is in it for them?**

TOP TIP: You will encounter a diverse range of partners who have different backgrounds, knowledge and drivers. These partners will have equally diverse motives for engaging with you, based on their interests, values and needs. Try to see the issue from their point of view: why does adaptation matter to them specifically. This will help you to find a common language and common goals.

Example

The tables on the following page show possible answers to the stakeholder mapping questions given by participants at an Adaptation Learning Exchange workshop (participants were drawn from a range of public sector organisations).



2. Creating engagement activities

Once you understand your stakeholders, you are ready to create engagement activities to attract their attention and hopefully gain their buy-in for taking joint action.

When developing engagement activities, whether a one-off or part of a series, you need to carefully consider both strategic and practical issues. Without due care in preparation, design and planning, there is a risk that you achieve little, waste people’s time and put them off future engagement.

To achieve a ‘fit for purpose’ design, you need to answer the following questions:

- What are your objectives?
- Do you need a single or multiple engagement event(s)?
- What time and resources do you have?
- How can you tailor the activities to the needs of your audience?

During this process you will have to make strategic choices, such as deciding where/if preliminary collaboration is needed (and if so, with which stakeholders), and deciding how to frame the process (are you looking for help or are you here to help them; are you bringing opportunities or challenges or a bit of both). For more information refer to “Designing Engagement” by Wendy Faulkner.

Example

The below example shows the planning for an internal climate change adaptation awareness raising workshop at a large organisation.

Weeks to workshop	Milestone	Rationale
6	Date in calendar	Secure date well in advance to ensure good attendance
5	Analyse attendee needs and workshop objectives	Select achievable objectives based on the needs of likely attendees
4	Senior management briefing	Secure senior management buy-in to increase momentum
3	Send pre-workshop questionnaire	Assess current level of knowledge and ensure workshop is pitched correctly
2	Preparation, props, promotion	Select examples/images/case studies based on local or sector-specific climate impacts
1	Reminder to attendees	Ensure good attendance from key stakeholders
	WORKSHOP	
+1	Follow-up with attendees	Maintain momentum and give a sense of progress

3. Further reading

For further information on speaking to new audiences about climate change adaptation, read our guide to [Values-Based Communications](#), co-produced with climate communications experts Climate Outreach.

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