

Canada's Climate Change Adaptation Platform

Terms of Reference (Final)

1. Context

Adaptation to the changing climate has become an increasingly active area of work in Canada. There are more players engaged, and ownership of adaptation-related issues is broad. Effective solutions must therefore address aspects that cut across regions, jurisdictions, organizations, disciplines and sectors.

The Adaptation Platform is a pragmatic response to this operating environment. An innovative model for collaboration, the Adaptation Platform is structured to bring together the knowledge, capacity and financial resources to effectively and efficiently address adaptation priorities, and to ensure the results of that work are broadly accessible to end users.

The Adaptation Platform facilitates a range of collaborative work as determined by the priorities and resources of its membership. It is comprised of four components:

- 1) *Plenary* – a senior-level body that coordinates work carried out under the Platform. Plenary meetings provide a face-to-face forum for strategic discussion on adaptation wherein Plenary members discuss adaptation priorities, approaches and resources, and learn about other adaptation-related initiatives and opportunities.
- 2) *Working Groups* – experts responsible for information-sharing, designing and delivering a Program of Work for a given subject-matter area;
- 3) *Adaptation Platform members* – members of Plenary, Working Groups, as well as the Regional Adaptation Collaboratives and identified individuals engaged in adaptation-related discourse; and
- 4) *Secretariat* – supporting activities of the Adaptation Platform and Plenary

Achieving Adaptation Platform outcomes requires a collaborative approach involving resources and expertise across all stakeholders. Regional Adaptation Collaboratives are integral in supporting regional dissemination and uptake of Adaptation Platform products. In addition, the Platform is a key component of Natural Resources Canada's Climate Change Adaptation program.

2. Vision

A Canada where policy and actions from the local to the national scale enhance resilience and prosperity, including of communities, the economy and the environment, in a changing climate.

3. Objectives

The aim of the Adaptation Platform is to support efforts within Canada to:

- Mobilize new resources and more efficiently use existing resources to address common adaptation issues and advance shared interests;
- Identify linkages and synergies across issues, regional and national efforts, and generate support for adaptation action; and
- Enhance communication amongst decision-makers, policy-makers, scientific experts across public, non-profit and private sectors contributing to a deeper understanding of the issues and pointing to innovative and effective ways of addressing them.

4. Membership

Adaptation Platform membership is unrestricted. It includes members of Plenary and the Working Groups and others with a working interest in adaptation. Members receive information updates from the Adaptation Platform Secretariat.

Plenary Members are senior representatives (director or vice-president) from regional and national entities including federal government departments, provincial and territorial governments, academics, national Indigenous, industry, professional and not-for-profit organizations.

- Members shall represent their organization's mandate and have authority to identify and speak to their organization's resources.
- Members are champions of adaptation within their sectors, having an authoritative voice and an established distribution network.
- Members shall bring financial and/or knowledge resources to the table.
- Membership is by invitation from the Chair and is not to be reassigned without consulting with the Chair.
- If a member is unable to participate at a Plenary meeting they may designate an alternate at their discretion

Plenary Observers are appointed at the discretion of the Chair.

Working Group members can be appointed by members of Plenary, or invited to participate by the Working Group chair or co-chair.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Plenary

Members shall serve as their organization's point of contact and shall liaise with their affiliates on Plenary-related matters. More specifically, Plenary members shall aggregate input from and disseminate information to their respective organizations.

The Plenary is a not decision-making body. While Plenary members will be asked to endorse the creation of new working groups, and to express their interest in and support for potential work themes and Programs of Work, their endorsement is an indicator of the extent of support but is not approval of whether the work will be carried out under the Platform. Decisions of individual Members with respect to resourcing Programs of Work remain the prerogative of those Members.

In deciding whether or not to endorse a Program of Work, the Plenary may consider, among other things:

- Relevance to adaptation priorities;
- Adequacy of resources (financial, expertise, time) to deliver the proposed work; and
- Degree of support among the Plenary membership for undertaking the work.

Members can identify resources (financial and / or expertise) to be considered as contributions when establishing work themes.

Secretariat

Responsibilities of the Secretariat in support of the Adaptation Platform include:

- Establishing and managing the processes by which Platform work is instituted and conducted;

- Distributing information updates to members;
- Preparing the Annual Report of the Adaptation Platform;
- Establishing the agenda for Plenary meetings in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair, taking into consideration input from the Plenary Members;
- Managing logistics for Plenary meetings;
- Maintaining a record of Plenary meetings;
- Facilitating discussion on scope of work and resources to deliver Platform activities (including which priorities to address and identification of needed resources, etc.);
- Providing guidance, analysis and synthesis capacity to Plenary; and
- Convening teleconference meetings of the Working Group chairs at least twice per year.

NRCan's Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Division shall serve as the Secretariat for the Adaptation Platform.

Chair

The Chair of the Adaptation Platform shall:

- Provide overall leadership and direct discussion and activities to achieve the objectives of the Platform;
- Chair Plenary meetings so as to facilitate open discussion among equals;
- Invite organizations to join Plenary that will enhance collaboration opportunities, respecting the characterization of members described above under section 4;
- Approve the Adaptation Platform Annual Report; and
- Approve the content of Adaptation Platform newsletters.

The chair is held by the Director of NRCan's Climate Change Impact and Adaptation Division within Natural Resources Canada.

Vice-chair

The Vice-chair of the Adaptation Platform shall:

- Support the role of the chair to achieve the objectives of the Platform;
- Provide logistical support for Plenary meetings held in their region; and
- Input to Plenary planning to profile regional adaptation work;

The Vice-chair rotates yearly and is typically occupied by the Plenary member hosting the regional meeting.

Working Groups

Terms of Reference shall be established for each Working Group, including identification of the chair or co-chairs. Once established, each Working Group shall develop a Program of Work that will be brought to Plenary for endorsement.

Working Groups established through this mechanism shall report to Plenary as appropriate on their progress towards delivery.

6. Governance

6.1 Operating

The Plenary will typically meet face-to-face twice yearly, with one meeting per year held in Ottawa, and the second meeting hosted regionally. To the extent possible the date and location shall be set at the end of one meeting for the next meeting.

As Chair and Secretariat, NRCan shall cover the cost of the meeting venue and other expenses such as simultaneous interpretation, audio/video equipment, welcoming contributions from other Plenary members as available. NRCan will partner with Members in the host location to ensure effective meeting delivery, help reduce meeting costs and enhance the local visibility of adaptation implementation activities and policy directions.

Members are representing the interests of their jurisdiction or organization and are responsible for their own travel, accommodation and associated costs.

Experts and representatives of key organizations not formally involved in the Plenary may be invited to participate in Plenary meetings. Expenses of experts and representatives of key organizations who are not Plenary members will be covered by their organization or by a sponsoring organization.

New working groups under the Adaptation Platform can be proposed by any Plenary member. A brief proposal should be shared with all Plenary members and endorsed.

A virtual workspace is available for Plenary and Working Group members to use.

6.2 External Communications

Membership in Plenary or Working Groups may be detailed in Adaptation Platform products (such as annual reports or newsletters) including name and affiliation of members. Contact information will not be published without permission.

It is suggested that the following descriptors be used to describe the Adaptation Platform:

Title and tag-line:

The Adaptation Platform

Equipping Canadians for a changing climate

Stand-alone full title:

Canada's Climate Change Adaptation Platform

Short title:

Canada's Adaptation Platform

6.3 Conflict of Interest

Plenary Members have an ethical obligation to avoid a real, perceived or potential conflict of interest situation by contributing to the Platform work without a view to any benefit arising from it that is not otherwise available to the general public. The Plenary Chair shall ensure that all processes are carried out in a fair and transparent manner.

7. Review

These terms of reference shall be updated as required, as determined by the Adaptation Platform Chair in consultation with the Vice-Chair and other Plenary members.