



**UP NORTH ON CLIMATE**  
Climate Change Impact and Adaptation  
Study for the North of Ontario

# **ADAPTATION FRAMEWORK ROADMAP**





## Step 1 – Set the Groundwork

Start your project with a strong foundation. Build your knowledge of climate change and start to make connections in the community.

### *Learn about climate change science*

Working towards climate change adaptation will mean talking about climate change with community members, community leaders, or other groups. Get prepared to speak about why climate is changing and the role that human activity is playing with a base knowledge of climate change science.

Visit <https://www.upnorthonclimate.ca/what-is-climate-change> for resources to get started. Find more suggestions on \*pg. 2.

### *Learning about probable future climate*

Knowing what to expect from future climate is important for adaptation planning. These predictions (often called ‘climate projections’) come from complex computer models of the Earth’s climate (\*pg. 3).

Climate change will impact different regions in different ways, so knowing the projections for the area you’re working in is important. The Climate Atlas of Canada ([www.climateatlas.ca](http://www.climateatlas.ca)) is a user-friendly website that provides projections for all of Canada via an interactive map.

### *Becoming familiar with the impacts of climate change*

Become familiar with how climate change is/will affect people and communities in the north. For example, what does it mean to have warmer winters? What happens when rain or snowfall changes?

Although the specifics of how a community is affected may vary from place to place (and is the focus of Step 2), learning about climate change impacts in the broader area (like northwestern Ontario, or along the coast) will be helpful as a starting point.

Try these resources to get you started:

- Fictional Community Climate Adaptation Report (\*pg. 4)
- Climate Atlas of Canada – Indigenous Knowledges ([www.climateatlas.ca/indigenous](http://www.climateatlas.ca/indigenous))

### *Learning about climate change adaptations*

The goal of an adaptation is to reduce the harm that climate change can bring to people, communities, and the land. Discover the adaptation options that might be effective and look to other communities that are preparing for climate change for examples (\*pg. 4-5).

Visit <https://www.upnorthonclimate.ca/impacts-and-adaptations> for resources to get you started.

### *Connections in the community*

Creating an adaptation plan will depend on the participation of community members. Reach out to any contacts you might have and introduce the idea of adaptation planning; connect with community members who may have an interest in addressing climate change; introduce yourself to community leaders and professionals. Having an involved community can go a long way towards moving adaptation projects forward.

## Step 2 – Climate Change in the Community

Learn how climate change is being experienced by people in the community you're working with and what impact it is having on their lives. **Gather information** on things like:

- How the climate in the area has changed over time
- How climate change is impacting community buildings, roads, and other infrastructure
- How climate change is impacting the land, water, plants and animals people rely on
- How climate change is impacting people's health, safety, and ability to practice traditional activities
- Priority issues and top concerns in the community

Traditional Knowledge (TK) can be an important part of the information you gather, providing valuable details about the land, animals, changes over time, etc. Some information, like culturally important locations or features, can only come from TK.

There are many ways to go about collecting this information (\*p. 8-10). You could:

- Speak to community members 1-on-1 or in small groups
- Organize a Sharing Circle
- Host a community meeting or workshop
- Create a survey or questionnaire
- Use reports like vulnerability or infrastructure assessments that have already been done
- Find past weather data online at Environment Canada or Climate Atlas

Consider which approach or approaches might be best for your situation. For instance:

- Is there enough time to conduct a series of interviews? If not, then it might be best to speak to people in a group setting like a workshop.
- Can you travel to the community in person? If not, perhaps someone in the community can speak with or interview people and share notes or recordings.

You might also opt to talk with community members about climate change impacts (Step 2) at the same workshop or meeting you talk about adaptation options (Step 3). This option is further covered in Step 3.

Wondering how to start conversations about climate change impacts? Find **Tips for learning from community members** on \*pg. 9. You can also try these **resources**:

- Assess Prioritize Prepare (APP) – This 'rapid risk assessment' tool provides questions to help start climate change discussions and a planning table to link observations and impacts with adaptation options.
- Questionnaire for interviewing Elders and community members – Created in collaboration with Indigenous partners, this set of questions is aimed specifically for First Nation community members.

Find both documents at: <https://www.upnorthonclimate.ca/adaptation-planning>

### Step 3 – Adaptation Workshop

Once it's clear how the community is being impacted by climate change, it's time to consider adaptation options. This can be done with community members as part of a workshop or community meeting.

An adaptation workshop or community meeting could cover:

- A brief, plain language description of why climate change is happening and the role of human activities.
- A look at the possible future climate (the climate change projections) for the community
- A review or discussion of climate change observations/concerns/impacts in the community.
- A discussion or exercise to choose which climate change impact(s) to address
- A discussion of adaptation options to determine which one(s) the community is interested in using to address the climate change impact(s)

*\*Find a graphic illustrating the possible flow of an Adaptation Workshop on \*pg. 11*

Having community leadership (Chief, Council members, decisions makers) involved in the workshop could be helpful since their support/involvement might be needed when putting adaptations in place in the community.

#### **Discussing community climate change impacts**

If community interviews, conversations or other research (Step 2) has given you an idea of what climate change impacts might be important to the community, the discussion can start there. Share what you've learned and try to answer questions like: *Do these impacts represent what's happening in the community? Have any been missed? What impacts would people most like addressed?*

If you're doing Step 2 as part of this workshop, decide how you'd like to approach learning about impacts in the community. You could guide a discussion, break community members into smaller groups, use workshop activities, etc. Resources like the Assess Prioritize Prepare (APP) tool or the Fill-It-In Climate Change Impacts Worksheet could be helpful. Find them at <https://www.upnorthonclimate.ca/adaptation-planning>

#### **Discussing adaptation options**

Start the adaptation conversation by discussing traditional or cultural methods for dealing with challenges (how this issue might have been dealt with in the past, for example). You could also present adaptation options for the community to consider. The Climate Change Adaptation Quick Guide (an illustrated guide to climate change impacts and adaptation relevant to northern First Nation communities) could be a useful tool. Find it at <https://www.upnorthonclimate.ca/adaptation-planning>

#### **Choosing adaptation options** (\*pg. 14)

It's up to the community to decide which adaptation option is best for their situation. They may want to consider factors like: *How much does this adaptation cost? Is it in line with our cultural values? How long will it take to put in place? Etc.*

The Adaptation Options Worksheet could be helpful when considering the pros and cons of adaptation options. Find it at <https://www.upnorthonclimate.ca/adaptation-planning>

## Step 4 – Moving into Action

This step covers the planning involved to put adaptations in place in the community. To do this you'll have to finalize the adaptation choice(s) and create an implementation plan. Getting projects up and running will take time and dedication. Having a “champion” (a person or group of people in the community dedicated to moving the adaptation forward) could be important (\*pg. 16).

### *Finalize adaptation choice(s)* (\*pg. 16-17)

From the Adaptation Workshop you know what adaptation options community members would like to use, but further decisions, conversations, or research might be needed. This could include:

- Gathering feedback from people who were not part of the adaptation workshop (Traditional Knowledge holders, locally knowledgeable professionals, those most impacted by the issue being addressed, etc.)
- Connecting with community leadership (Chief, Council members, decision makers, etc.)
- Determining which adaptations are most possible (time, money, or circumstance may limit what can be done)
- Connecting with other adapters (like communities that have tackled similar problems)
- Looking for “quick wins” (adaptations that can be done quickly to get the ball rolling)

### *Make an implementation plan* (\*pg. 18)

A detailed plan will be needed for each adaptation you wish to put into practice. To create an implementation plan you may have to:

- Create a budget and seek out funding
- Create a project team and assign responsibilities
- Get necessary approvals
- Define timelines and set targets along the way
- Outline the criteria for a successful adaptation (This will help you answer the question “Is it working?”, Step 5)

If including youth in the adaptation process is important to the community, look for opportunities to do so. It may also be helpful to look to other successful projects and learn from their experiences.

### *I can't go any further* (\*pg. 17)

Limits of time or money, the lack of a community champion, or other circumstances may mean that you can't take the adaptation process for the community further than Step 3. If this is the case, you can still promote adaptation and the findings of the adaptation workshop in the community with actions like:

- Creating a report or presentation for community members and community leadership
- Inviting other adapters to speak about their projects and experiences
- Continuing to look for project funding and/or a community champion
- Keeping the conversation about adaptation active

## Step 5 – Is it Working?

Once an adaptation has been put into place, it's important to ask "Is it working?". Checking in during the process and learning from it afterward can also be helpful for ensuring future projects are successful.

To know how well your adaptation is working, trying asking questions like (\*pg. 21):

- Does it meet our criteria for success? (criteria for success might be things like counting how many people use the adaptation or comparing conditions before and after) (\*pg. 22)
- Is it reaching everyone it was intended to?
- Is it affecting anyone negatively?
- Will it still work in the future?

It can also be important to **evaluate the adaptation process along the way**, especially for projects that take months or years to complete. This could include asking questions like:

- Is this adaptation still on track to accomplish our goal?
- Has any new information come to light that might change how well the adaptation works?
- Is this adaptation still in line with projections of future climate? With our community goals?
- Are we on track to meet our timeline? Our budget?

What we **learn from the adaptation process** can help future projects run more smoothly and effectively. It may be helpful to ask questions like:

- What barriers have there been in the adaptation process? What solutions were found?
- Were there things you wish you had done differently? How would you change them?
- What part of the project went well? What was the reason for their success?
- Have there been unexpected co-benefits?
- Were there other people who should have been involved?
- Was the timeline realistic? Was the budget realistic? Did they stay on track?

Despite the best laid plans, it's possible that an adaptation won't perform as expected. **What do we do if the adaptation has not been successful?** Explore question like:

- What areas did the adaptation miss?
- Were we missing some information about the impact or adaptation?
- Was the scale of the adaptation too small? Was there a problem with the project design?
- Did the adaptation fail because of an unexpected or extreme event?
- Have people been using the adaptation as expected?
- Were our expectations realistic?

If we know why the adaptation isn't working, it may be possible to adjust it for better results. If not, the adaptation process can start again.

**One successful project can inspire another!** Keep the conversation about adaptation going and use what you've learned from the adaptation process to help guide your next project.

Learn more about project evaluation with The AdaptMe toolkit for monitoring and evaluation (UKCIP) <https://www.ukcip.org.uk/wp-content/PDFs/UKCIP-AdaptME.pdf>



[www.upnorthonclimate.ca](http://www.upnorthonclimate.ca)