

CLIMATE IRELAND ADAPTATION NETWORK SEMINAR 2024 – WORKSHOP SUMMARY REPORT

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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Disclaimer

This seminar report summarises discussions from the Climate Ireland Adaptation Network annual seminar 2024 and is intended to reflect a range of perspectives shared during the event. It should be treated as a working document and not interpreted as representing the official views or endorsement of individual contributors or the EPA.

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Executive summary

The second annual Climate Ireland Adaptation Network seminar was held on 9th October 2024, in the Hyatt Centric, Dublin. Organised and hosted by the EPA, the event was attended by people from over 60 organisations (Appendix B). It provided a platform for discussing advancements in climate adaptation at a national level while incorporating international perspectives.

The day was split into three sessions, an introductory session with updates from key national bodies in Ireland on their work in the adaptation space. The second session explored international policy directions in adaptation, and the day concluded with thematic case studies and interactive workshops that addressed critical adaptation and resilience challenges. The full agenda is provided in Appendix A.

The seminar emphasised the importance of collaboration, knowledge sharing and co-creation among adaptation practitioners on issues such as just resilience, decision-making under uncertainty, and the value of interdisciplinary approaches. It provided inspiration from real world examples through practical case studies, offering insights into successes, pitfalls and lessons learned.

Based on the strong attendance and active engagement on the day, and informal post-event feedback, the event was successful in terms of its core objective of building and enhancing the burgeoning adaptation practitioner network in Ireland. To advance on the active participation to date, the EPA is proposing setting up four working groups within the Climate Ireland Adaptation Network, to work on:

- Technical definition of resilience
- Just resilience
- Robust decision-making
- Indicator development



1. Event overview

Session 1

Session 1 commenced with opening remarks by Tara Higgins (EPA), followed by organisational updates from:

- Seosamh O Laoi, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications,
- Claire Scannell, Met Éireann and the National Framework for Climate Services,
- Conor Quinlan, EPA,
- Joe McGovern, Marine Institute,
- Mary Walsh, Climate Action Regional Offices,
- Stephen Flood, Climate Change Advisory Council.

Session 2

Session 2 featured presentations from two international speakers:

- **Marie Carrega** from the French Ministry of Ecology, Energy and Regional Cohesion (Ministères Écologie Énergie Territoires) presented on the French reference warming trajectory for climate change adaptation (TRACC) which defines a baseline warming trajectory for the purposes of adaptation in France. This warming trajectory will be used to update risk guidelines, standards and technical regulations, be incorporated into local and regional adaptation plans and allow for more comprehensive sectoral plans. France is planning to issue a Government Decree directing authorities to plan for a 4°C France (i.e. 3°C global warming level) by end of Century.
- **Kirsten Sander** from the German Environment Agency (UBA – UmweltBundesAmt) presented on the development of measurable climate adaptation targets for Germany. These targets are in a draft consultation phase and will be further refined, but they comprise 34 measurable targets that are directly in response to the most urgent risks from their climate risk assessment.

Workshop 1

The experiences of other EU countries and different approaches given by these speakers led into a workshop on **resilience targets**. This workshop was facilitated in mixed table groups and examined the questions:

- Would a technical definition of resilience (e.g.: resilient to RCP4.5 by 2050) facilitate planning and decision-making in your sector?
- If a technical definition would help, how would it best be framed (e.g.: temperature threshold or pathway)
- Where should that sit – in sectoral or technical guidance (e.g.: operational technical guidance or standards), legislation – and how would it be aligned with the private sector?

Session 3

Session three included three facilitated workshops, each commencing with a relevant case study introducing the theme of the workshop.

Presentation & Workshop 2

This second workshop of the day began with a presentation on the incorporation of just resilience into adaptation planning from **Camille Manning-Broome**, Centre for Planning Excellence, Louisiana. This was followed by a workshop discussion on the question:

- What areas do you see just resilience applying to your sector?

Presentation & Workshop 3

The third workshop began with a presentation on identifying and implementing no regrets decisions and decision-making under uncertainty from **Dr. Sadie McEvoy**, Deltares, Netherlands. The questions addressed in the workshop were:

- Does your sector have a clearly recognised and implemented framework for decision making under uncertain conditions (outside of adaptation)?
- A standard recognised approach or framework with accompanying guidance to decision-making for adaptation – is it required/would it be helpful?

Presentation & Workshop 4

The final workshop of the day was on the development of indicators for measuring and assessing adaptation, with a presentation from **Dr. Ned Dwyer**, Randbee Consultants followed by a workshop discussion on:

- Has your sector considered potential outcome indicators (i.e.: indicators of resilience)? If so, what indicators? Name some resilience indicators for your area.

The workshop Agenda is presented in Appendix A. All presentations are available on request.

2. Summary of workshop discussion

Each of the workshops elicited good discussion and a range of responses, which are summarised below.

Workshop 1: Resilience targets

National resilience targets/technical definitions of resilience to specific temperature thresholds and time horizons (such as that likely to be implemented in France) were felt to be useful by many participants for consistent planning, but some felt that resilience is different for each sector and cannot be generalised. Representatives from the financial sector and industry were particularly interested in a national target, as this would drive action and compliance. The need for flexibility was emphasised by some. Some concerns were raised over targets being seen as the aim, rather than the minimum amount of preparation needed, and that there may be critical sectors where the minimum needs to be higher than others. There was also concern over who would be the correct body to define a national target.

There were differing opinions about the framing of a technical definition of resilience. Some said that it needed to be pathways (RCPs and SSPs) in line with the NCCRA and to more easily align with the IPCC definitions, while others felt that thresholds were much simpler to explain and are being used by other EU countries. Many were unclear about both framings and unsure how they could be put into practice. Some attendees were unsure whether a quantitative definition was the correct approach.

Similarly, there was a range of views about where a technical definition should sit. Legislation, CSRD, operational/technical documents, local authority climate action plans, the National Adaptation Framework and the planning bill were all mentioned as possible places where a technical definition could be placed. Some participants felt that legislation would be too onerous, but others felt that legislation was necessary – advocating that it would allow for better certainty for the sectors and the private sector.

In summary, there are a range of perspectives and levels of understanding about whether a quantitative target is required and would be beneficial, how such a target should be defined, and how it would be implemented. What is not clear from this initial discussion is whether views on this topic are linked to degree of adaptation knowledge or experience, sector, or role in adaptation planning or operationalisation.

Workshop 2: Just resilience

There was also a wide range of responses around where attendees saw just resilience applying to their sector. Some participants held strong views on where their sector intersected with just resilience and social vulnerability, while others were more tentative in their views. Attendees talked about just resilience from different angles depending on outlook and sector. For example:

- Some attendees from infrastructure-dominated sectors such as water, energy and transport saw provision of adequate infrastructure for all to be the primary way that their sectors intersected with just resilience.

- Some sectoral attendees were more business-focused, such as tourism and the commercial and finance sectors, but they also highlighted issues of equitable access to supports for, and information on, the effects of climate change.
- Attendees from the agriculture, health and the local authority sectors in general took broad views on the intersection of vulnerability and adaptation planning in their sectors – particularly mentioning how just resilience applied to all areas of their remits.

Managed retreat and relocation possibilities and plans were raised by most tables and sectors during discussion. In addition, the need for high levels of preparedness within communities was raised by many attendees.

Concerns were raised over unequal access to engagement opportunities and to information about risk prevention. More robust and accessible citizen engagement and feedback was recommended by some attendees – diversity of expertise setting up engagement opportunities was seen as a way to encourage this. Concerns were also raised about the perceived side-stepping of issues of vulnerable and marginalised communities in the adaptation policy space.

In summary, a range of views was noted as to what just resilience is understood to mean, and how it could or should apply across sectors. The concept of just resilience appears to be less well understood than just transition, and the topic needs to be explored further by those grappling with its implementation.

Workshop 3: Decision-making under uncertainty

It was made clear at the beginning of the workshop that we were focusing on decision-making methods, as opposed to climate or model uncertainty. Most attendees did not feel like their sector had frameworks in place for planning under uncertain conditions. The exceptions were those in flooding, who use decision pathway for flood relief scheme design, and in national policy, where the national and sectoral planning systems are considered to be frameworks for future planning under uncertainty. Most attendees also felt that a decision-making framework would be a positive step but would need to be targeted at the correct level to function across sectors while still being useful.

Case studies and narrative approaches were repeatedly called out by some tables in the workshop as key additions to any decision-making framework. Many attendees commented that further work examining specific management approaches, such as dynamic adaptation pathways, or robust decision making, would be beneficial in providing them with methods for taking into both climate services outputs, and non-climate data into account in their planning processes.

Workshop 4: Indicator development

At the outset of the session, participants were asked to focus in particular on outcome indicators. When discussing whether their sector had considered potential outcome indicators, there was a mostly affirmative range of responses from participants. Some participants had either engaged in pilot indicator development already or were adjacent to groups who had (such as different sections of the transport sector). Feedback included

examples of outcome indicators for different sectors. Most examples took just resilience into consideration in some way and included possible indicators that could be used to include social vulnerability.

Examples of outcome indicators discussed included:

- Energy sector: change in the total number of households with power outages/cumulative hours of outages due to orange or red warnings.
- Water sector: change in average household water consumption in summer months.
- Health sector: change in number of admissions due to climate related events.

Examples of indicators that specifically include just resilience/social vulnerability included:

- Health sector: changes in prescription of anti-depressants in flood-affected areas.
- Transport sector: small area access to public transport services or the monitoring of uptake of Bus Connects.
- Social/political realm: changes in capacity to engage in public consultation.

Within the discussions, the difficulty of gathering information for monitoring, reporting and evaluation was raised. While people could name theoretical indicators that could work for assessing outcomes of adaptation actions, the difficulty in counting and consolidating that data and information is still a live issue for all sectors.

3. Recommendations and next steps

As outlined in the previous section, the workshop sessions addressed topics within adaptation that are still unclear and have yet to be clearly defined at a national level. Attendees expressed interest in establishing a shared framework or strategy to support more comprehensive planning across their areas and sectors.

To advance this, the EPA is proposing setting up four working groups within the Climate Ireland Adaptation Network, to work on:

- Technical definition of resilience
- Just resilience
- Robust decision-making
- Indicator development

The working groups would be comprised of interested parties from the membership of the CIAN and run for a period of between six and eight months in 2025. The aim of the working groups would be to gather perspectives and feedback on each of the topics with input from across the membership. These working groups could explore each topic at a practitioner level by generating a shared understanding and drawing on international examples for guidance. Each working group would produce a summary paper which would be circulated to CIAN members. Additionally, these summary papers will inform EPA and national adaptation work in other agencies and bodies.

It is envisaged that the summary papers from the working groups will synthesise participants discussions, perspectives and insights on the interpretation, challenges and opportunities related to each topic in a clear and concise format. It will include an introduction outlining the purpose, scope, and audience, followed by background context and key issues. The papers will highlight shared understandings, challenges, and relevant frameworks, incorporating international examples and case studies for comparative insights. Key recommendations will provide actionable guidance for practitioners, addressing implementation considerations.

The working groups would meet two to three times during the duration of the group with reports finalised by Q3 2025.

Appendix A: seminar agenda

Date: 9th October 2024

Time: 10:00 – 16:00

Venue: Hyatt Centric, Dublin

10:00 – 11:00: Session 1 (1hr, 7 minutes each followed by panel/Q&A)

- Opening remarks – EPA (Tara Higgins)
- DECC on policy, NAF update, SAP guidelines (Joe Lee)
- Met Éireann on data, NFCS & TRANSLATE (Claire Scannell)
- EPA on NCCRA including technical guidance, ICCA, Climate Ireland, EIONET, research and regulation (Conor Quinlan)
- Marine Institute (Joe McGovern)
- CAROs – LACAPs (Mary White)
- CCAC (Stephen Flood)

11:00 – 11:30: Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00: Middle session of international policy direction and facilitated discussion on objectives

Presentations (2 x 30 minutes)

International perspectives on risk assessment criteria and technical adaptation and resilience objectives

- 11:30: Marie Carrega, Ministry of Ecology, Energy and Regional Cohesion, Ministères Écologie Énergie Territoires
- 12:00: Kirsten Sander, German Environment Agency, UBA

12:30: Workshop on resilience targets (30 minutes)

- Facilitated workshop session on technical resilience targets/objectives in mixed groups
 - a) Would a technical definition of resilience (e.g.: resilient to RCP4.5 by 2050) facilitate planning and decision-making in your sector?
 - b) If a technical definition would help how would it best be framed (e.g.: temperature threshold or pathway)

- c) Where should that sit – in sectoral or technical guidance (e.g.: operational technical guidance or standards), legislation – and how would it be aligned with the private sector?

13:00 – 14:00: Lunch (soup, sandwiches, coffee and tea)

14:00 – 16:00: Session 3 (2hrs, case studies and related workshops session)

3 x 35-40 minute facilitated workshop sessions (15-20 minute presentation, 20 minute workshop), all at same table. Sessions including variety of stakeholders designed with adaptation planning in mind but focusing on outcomes and actions rather than data, resources and inputs.

1. **14:00: Incorporation of just resilience into adaptation planning** Camille Manning-Broome, Centre for Planning Excellence, Louisiana (15 minutes)
 - a. What areas do you see just resilience applying to your sector?
 - b. Assuming data can be obtained for present and future vulnerability (NFCS scope) what steps need to be taken to ensure management of vulnerability? (taking into account uncertainty)
2. **14:35: Identifying and implementing no regrets decisions and decision-making under uncertainty** Dr. Sadie McEvoy, Deltares, Netherlands (15-20 minutes)
 - a. Does your sector have a clearly recognised and implemented framework for decision making under uncertain conditions?
 - b. A standard recognised approach or framework with accompanying guidance to decision-making for adaptation – is it required/would it be helpful?
3. **15:15: Development of indicators** Dr. Ned Dwyer, Randbee Consultants (15 minutes)
 - a. Has your sector considered potential outcome indicators (i.e.: indicators of resilience)? If so, what indicators? Name some resilience indicators for your area
 - b. How might you go about incorporating just resilient indicators for your area?
 - c. What would the barriers be to implementing those?

Appendix B: CIAN seminar attendees

121 sign ups

60 organisations represented, plus 16 non-affiliated attendees

20fifty Partners	DHLGH	Marine Institute
ACT Studio	EPA	Met Éireann
AIB	ESB	National Transport
An Fóram Uisce	Faite Ireland	NTMA
An Taisce	Department of Finance	Offaly County Council
ARUP	Fisheries Ireland	OPW
Atlantic Technological University	Gas Networks	Randbee
AWN Consulting	Global Action Plan	Skanstec
BPFI	Greenbelt	Sustineo
Cavan County Council	GSI	Tipperary County Council
Central Bank	Department of Health	DTCAGSM
Chartered Accountants	HPSC	Department of Transport
Climate Matters	IPA	Trinity
Climate Secretariat	Irish Green Building Council	TUD
Cork City Council	Irish Rail	UCC
Cork County Council	JBA	UCD
DAFM	Kerry County Council	University of Galway
DCU	Kildare County Council	US Bank
DECC	KPMG	Westmeath County Council
Deloitte	Leitrim County Council	Wicklow County Council