

Social Science Coordinating Committee: Input on Topics for Fourth National Climate Assessment

The USGCRP Social Sciences Coordinating Committee reviewed the Third National Climate Assessment and developed this set of suggestions for societally relevant topics to be covered in NCA4 and other future Sustained NCA reports.

1. Highlights of Climate Science Update
 - a. Highlights from separately-published (c. 2017) Climate Science Update
 - b. Suggested approach:
 - i. Focus it towards the impacts of climate change for people (e.g., floods, droughts)
 - ii. Use this section to frame rest of report re: what this means for people
 - iii. Integrates climate science, impacts, and people
 - iv. Includes discussion of historical record (e.g., insights from archaeology)
 - v. Quantifies current emissions by region and by sector
2. Special Topics Update
 - a. Highlights from recently-published special reports (e.g., c. 2016 Climate and Health Assessment, c. 2016 Food Security Report, c. 2017 State of the Carbon Cycle Report)
 - b. Integrated discussion of topics of interest that cut across sectors and regions (e.g., drought)
3. Regions [See "[General Process](#)" document for suggestions about definitions of regions.]
 - a. People are most likely to look for an integrated discussion about climate change, impacts, and responses in the places that they live. Therefore, the regional chapters should make up the bulk of the report.
 - b. Suggested content and approach:
 - i. Key messages (3-5), focusing on key sectors / sectors of concern [See "[Best Practices](#)" document for more information about construction of key messages.]
 - ii. Regional context
 1. Integrate information about human and natural systems.
 2. When discussing findings from scenarios, include people in discussion of impacts and responses. [See "[Best Practices](#)" on Scenarios.]
 3. Highlight key subregions and connections to other regions (including international connections).
 4. Include historic context (e.g., insights from archaeology, history).
 - iii. Sectors. [See "[General Process](#)" for suggestions about sector definitions.]
 1. Sectors of concern (3-5)
 - a. May be cross-cutting and defined in a way that is most relevant for the region (e.g., tourism or recreation). Any

- combined / cross-cutting sectors should reference which GCRA sectors are included.
 - b. Include information about both impacts and responses.
 - c. Make connections between people and the impact / response.
 - d. Highlight interdependencies across sectors.
 - 2. Sectors summary
 - a. Include a brief paragraph on each of the GCRA sectors that are not covered in depth for the region.
 - iv. Responses [See [Best Practices](#) section on “Responses”.]
 - 1. Provide examples and case studies at regional, community, and individual levels. [See [Best Practices](#) on “Case Studies”.]
 - 2. Highlight barriers to the adoption and implementation of response strategies and opportunities to address barriers.
 - 3. Discuss effectiveness of responses in improving readiness, reducing climate change impacts, reducing emissions, providing co-benefits.
4. Sectors
- a. Readers will want to see chapters on GCRA sectors, in addition to the discussion of sectors within each regional chapter.
 - b. Suggested content and approach:
 - i. Short chapters (2-4 pages) on GCRA sectors
 - ii. May also include chapters on additional sectors.
 - iii. Chapter content:
 - 1. 3-5 nationally relevant Key Messages for each chapter
 - 2. Highlight relevant climate change for the sector.
 - 3. Provide information on key drivers, impacts, and responses.
 - a. Significant climate change drivers from sector (e.g., emissions, land use, mitigation)
 - b. Key aspects of sector that make it particularly vulnerable or resilient to climate change
 - i. e.g., for high-elevation ecosystems, vulnerability because no place higher to go
 - c. Illustrative discussion of responses
 - 4. Provide place-based examples / case studies at range of scales (households, communities, local, state, tribal, regional, federal)
 - 5. Identify how socioeconomic and cultural differences influence drivers, vulnerabilities, and responses
 - 6. Include map of regions, showing key risks and opportunities for the sector for each region. [See [Best Practices](#) on “Risk and Opportunity”.]
5. Responses [See [Best Practices](#) section on “Responses”.]

- a. Readers will want to see a national-level chapter focused on responses, in addition to the information on responses within regional and sector chapters.
 - b. Suggested content and approach:
 - i. One Response chapter that integrates adaptation and mitigation.
 - ii. Provide information on the efficacy of response options, considering both process and outcomes.
 - iii. Provide information on decision-making tools that are applicable across the country (e.g., [Climate Resilience Toolkit](#), [CAKE](#), [Surging Seas](#))
 - iv. Provide valuation information at the national level (e.g., [EPA CIRA](#)). [See "[Best Practices](#)" on Valuation.]
6. Expert Commentaries
- a. Written by topical experts (often, but not always, in assessment user community)
 - i. e.g. as in [Nebraska state assessment](#).