

CLIMATE RISKS: BUILDING RESILIENCE

A guide to preparing your business for the
impacts of a changing climate



Bristol Climate &
Nature Partnership

Foreword

Climate resilience means preparing for climate impacts, both those we are seeing already and those we expect to see in the future. If we just focus on getting to net zero, we will not be resilient to climate shocks, which are already impacting the country, such as extreme heat and flooding.






We don't have a choice about preparing for the impacts of a changing climate. Sea levels are rising, and we are seeing more extreme weather events. Research on the costs and benefits of adapting to climate change is clear that investment now will have strong returns, and businesses that are resilient to climate shocks will have a competitive advantage. It's also important to make sure that climate impacts are considered when implementing your climate action plan so that your investments towards net zero are future-proof.

Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership has created this guide to help organisations prepare for a changing climate. The Partnership is a network of over 1,300 organisations committed to working towards a zero carbon, socially just Bristol where all our communities and nature thrive.

The guide forms part of the Partnership's Climate Action Programme, which aims to help organisations reduce their carbon emissions through a series of events, resources, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.



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Credit: Mat Fascione

Why climate resilience is important



Impacts and opportunities

We are already feeling the impacts of a changing climate, with evidence from across the country in the form of heat extremes, increasingly damaging floods, and unprecedented wildfires impacting urban areas.

We are not currently prepared for these impacts and need a renewed focus on building climate resilience across society and the economy.

Failure to adapt will also reduce our ability to mitigate as we have to channel more time and money into reactive responses, rather than planned resilience.

A changing climate will impact every part of the way we live our lives and manage our businesses through changing seasonality, floods, storms, droughts, wildfires, changes in pests and diseases, damages to infrastructure, heat stress, and climate-induced migration. We need to be prepared for all these eventualities.

There is also the opportunity to learn from the process of recovering after climate shocks and stresses. Businesses that have prepared for the impacts of a changing climate can recover more quickly from a severe weather event.



Credit: Jeremy Segrott

How a changing climate will impact every business



Credit: John Dal



A business risk

A changing climate is a business risk.

It is and will continue to affect all businesses in a myriad of ways, not just those sectors working more closely with the land.

For example:



Credit: Alastair Johnstone / Climate Visuals



Damage to assets from extreme weather

This might be direct storm damage to your buildings, but it's also about where your business sits within the economy. Supporting infrastructure such as transport networks, ICT, and energy are all impacted by climate change. What are the systems your business relies on? How resilient are they? What plans could your business put in place to increase its resilience?



Impact on your supply chain

All businesses will be impacted by global supply chains. Global severe weather and climate events, as well as war and political instability, impact prices and availability of raw materials. Where do the things your business relies on come from, and where are the potential pinch points? It's important to find out and assess the risks.

Access to business enablers such as insurance and finance

SMEs globally are increasingly facing barriers to accessing adequate insurance or finance if they haven't prepared for climate risks. Businesses that better understand their risks can mitigate and spot where the opportunities are.

Impact on your employees

The safety of your people, their ability to travel, as well as productivity levels can be impacted by extreme weather, especially heat. It will be increasingly important for businesses to be able to demonstrate that they are prepared and have plans in place to keep their staff safe. This will be especially important for employees who have been traumatised by first-hand experience of extreme weather events such as floods and wild fires.

Changes to demand for goods and services

Customers have different requirements depending on the weather. They may also have a higher expectation that businesses they use are climate resilient.



Of course, as well as the above, the direct operations of some businesses will be impacted, for example, if they rely on water or specific temperatures to operate.



Getting prepared



A business opportunity

Building resilience is a business opportunity. Businesses that move first on this will get ahead of the competition and show resilience when there is a shock. They will also be able to recover more quickly after an event — giving them a competitive advantage and saving money.

Planning for a changing climate can be overwhelming, but you don't need to understand climate projections fully. Keep it simple – it's about extreme weather and how to plan for shocks and trends both now and in the future. It's about risk management, people, processes and procedure — all very familiar to the world of business.

Follow these steps

Understand
direct and
indirect risks

Reduce
risks

Prepare for
impacts

Recover and
respond



Credit: ARG_Flickr

Here are some prompts to help you get prepared:



Check your heat risk

Check the heat vulnerability of your business' buildings using Bristol City Council's heat mapping tool [Keep Bristol Cool](#) or Climate Just's [heat map](#). What can be done to keep your buildings cool as well as reduce the risk to those working outdoors or travelling?



Check your flood risk

Check your flood risk using [flood risk maps](#) from the Environment Agency or [Climate Just's flood index map](#). Understanding your risk is the first step in managing it. For businesses in a high-risk area, you can find ways to adapt, such as signing up for flood warnings, moving vulnerable equipment like computer servers, increasing the flood resistance of your building, or implementing soakaways or rain gardens to reduce surface water flooding.





Utilise existing regulation frameworks

Reporting requirements and regulations are coming. It is now mandatory for listed companies to report on climate risks, and this will be more widespread in 2025. Even if you're not reporting at the moment, you can use the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures framework to help you work out what you need to do at your organisation and where there are gaps through the four main pillars:

- Governance: what's your governance process for climate risk? Where does accountability for recognising and responding to the changing risks sit within your organisation?
- Strategy: what's the strategy in place to do this?
- Risk management: have you got processes for identifying climate risk? How does that fit into existing risk management processes?
- Metrics and targets: are you disclosing the metrics and targets used to assess and manage relevant climate-related risks and opportunities?



There is a ISO standard detailing how to embed adaptation into business processes and governance. However, there is a fee.



* Review your supply chain

Assess how resilient your supply chain is.

Talk to your suppliers, not just about their footprint but about their supply chain and how it might be impacted by global changes in climate — it's all connected!

For larger companies with more resources, support the smaller companies in your supply chain to become more resilient through access to funding and the sharing of tools and resources — this is a win win.

✎ Identify the risks and barriers to action

Assess the risks to your business by asking yourself what you can control and what you can't. Identify the barriers to acting on the risks, for example changes to building standards, and see if there is the possibility to band together with other businesses and lobby for changes.

* Collaborate

Look at solutions together with your locality, your neighbours, and your community, rather than only looking at your own operations. This collaborative approach will benefit everyone. Join Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership to stay connected with what is happening locally.

Preparing for the impacts of a changing climate is an opportunity to create thriving, healthy, resilient places for people and nature.



Resources



Climate risk advice

- ☒ Met Office [effects of climate change](#)
- ☘ Met Office [Bristol climate change summary](#)
- ⌘ Bristol City Council [climate emergency action plan](#)
- ☘ UK Climate Risk [sector briefings](#)
- ✱ Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)
 - [Recommendations on climate-related financial disclosures](#)
 - [Knowledge Hub](#): resources for implementing TCFD recommendations
- ☘ [UK climate risk indicators](#)



Credit: Carl Jorgensen / Unsplash

Practical tools



Business Resilience Health Check



Bristol City Council heat vulnerability index Keep Bristol Cool



Climate Just heat and flood risk mapping tool



Climate Central coastal risk screening tool



C40 Knowledge Integrating climate adaptation toolkit



Local Partnerships climate adaptation toolkit



Environment Agency Assessing and managing climate change risks in supply chains



Adaptation Scotland for advice and support to help businesses and communities be prepared and resilient to the effects of climate change



Local Climate Adaptation Tool from The European Centre for Environment & Human Health

Find out more

Thank you for using this guide and finding out how your organisation can build climate resilience. We'd love to hear your feedback about the guide and what other resources would be useful to you. Please get in touch at contact@bristolclimatenature.org.

This guide is part of Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership's Climate Action Programme, which offers events, communications, and resources to help organisations at all stages of their climate action journey reduce their carbon emissions. [Find out more about the programme.](#)

If you aren't already one of the Partnership's 1,300+ member organisations and would like to join, please visit [our website](#) to register. You'll be the first to hear about our events, activities and opportunities to get involved and support our work. You'll be in good company.

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