



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Economics of Climate Resilience

Ministerial Foreword

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Our climate is changing and we need to be prepared for the consequences. Extreme weather events in recent history provide stark warning of the great cost of recovery. Severe heat waves extended across Europe in 2003 and Texas in 2011 and increases in heavy rainfall which contributed to the recent floods in the United Kingdom, all created widespread disruption. All have led to huge human and financial cost. These types of extreme events, as well as others, are likely to become more frequent in the future¹. Furthermore, changes in long-term averages of climate pose risks that society needs to account for in strategic and planning decisions.

I am pleased to publish the first phase of the Economics of Climate Resilience Project (ECR). This is a groundbreaking study undertaken by Frontier Economics, Irbaris and Ecofys. It improves our understanding of the drivers of behaviour that affect the adoption of adaptation actions across the UK. The ECR comprises of nine themes in agriculture, forestry, transport, power, overheating in residential housing, business continuity, health and wellbeing, fisheries and natural flood defences. The analysis builds on existing assessments, such as the Climate Change Risk Assessment, of current climate and projected climate change risks. It will inform Defra in developing the National Adaptation Programme Report due to be published later this year.

The ECR develops an economic framework to assess the case for adaptation in the UK. It is an independent piece of research, commissioned by Defra with the contribution of the Devolved Administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. It identifies the responsibilities of households, organisations and government to ensure our society is resilient to climate change. I welcome that substantial effort has been made in engaging with industry, academic experts, other government departments and others.

The answer to when and how to adapt to climate change is still evolving. However, I consider this work will help to improve our understanding of the barriers that inhibit adaptation and the enablers which support it.

LORD DE MAULEY

Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Resource Management, the Local Environment and Environmental Science

¹ For example, see IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation, 2011