

International/Global Working Group Guidance for NCA Writing Teams

I. Overview

Climate change is global, as are US interests and our economy. Both are dependent upon events, materials, goods and resources outside of its borders.

A single extreme event in one part of the globe can and has impacted supply chains, resource availability and economic stability across the globe. A series of events related to climate change can – and we believe, will – have enormous social and economic impact on the United States – even if those events do not occur within our borders.

To make the work of the National Climate Assessment useful to decision makers, the science on climate change and its impacts must be presented in a manner that clearly links it to economic and social impacts. Thoughtfully and purposefully addressing the interconnectedness of the impacts of climate change outside the borders of the US is critical for the contextual interpretation and application of the National Climate Assessment.

The United States contributes intellectually and financially to assessments such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), and the newest entry, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) - all of which are entirely or significantly related to climate and/or global environmental change more broadly. At the same time, there are several recent or ongoing domestic assessments, some oriented around the national security implications of climate change on the United States. We need not duplicate this work, although we do indeed want to draw on it for the NCA.

A National Climate Assessment that does not consider the international context of climate change would be incomplete. Decisions and investments, particularly those where the environment is a major consideration, are dependent upon and affected by major events regardless of where they occur. Earth system processes and ecosystems operate on scales that reach far beyond the borders of any one country. Many of the proposed topics for the National Climate Assessment are directly influenced by negotiations, related decisions and actions that take place in the international context. Several of the regions considered by the assessment have inherent international connections. A national climate assessment that seeks to provide the “scientific underpinnings of informed policy” should properly consider the international context. The following sections will help guide National Climate Assessment working groups and author teams in their consideration and inclusion of those international issues that have domestic relevance.

II. Key Considerations

Below are the key issues the IGWG thinks need to be considered within each NCA chapter, and applicable technical inputs, with respect to international/global connections.

These bullets provide an essential base from which to work. Please reach out to the contacts listed in Section VI for additional assistance on specific topics, as referenced.

- How might U.S. supply and demand chains be affected by climate change outside our borders? For regional and cross-sectional analyses, are there key economic activities that are vulnerable to climate change beyond the region or sector?

Key are essential food commodities (e.g. grains); discretionary, but highly coveted food commodities (e.g. coffee, tea, chocolate); and commodities where changes would impact lifestyle or require substitutions (e.g. fruits, vegetables). Industrial supply chains are also highly vulnerable. Think about storms wiping out limited source manufacturing facilities or drought affecting the processing or transportation of key minerals, especially rare earth metals, fuels and fibers. Especially consider sequential or simultaneous events which have cumulative impact – such as those seen in Japan in the spring of 2011 or in the Eastern US in the summer of 2011.

- How will global markets and economic growth be affected if resource scarcity or fluctuation is induced by climate change and how might this affect the US economy including consumers, commodity prices and the financial sector?

For example, what effect might events beyond the US have on insurance rates, inflation, employment or wages within the US?

- How might U.S. investments and programs be impacted, positively and negatively, by climate change and by policies on adaptation and mitigation?
- How might climate risks affect the availability, demand and conservation of natural resources and species especially those that are transboundary? What are the likely/projected consequences of these impacts? How might climate change affect the migration of people, diseases and pests to and from the US?
- Are there useful lessons for the US in how other countries, as well as transnational corporations, incorporate climate risks into decision making and in particular, how they address uncertainty, scenarios, adaptation strategies etc.

In addition to these “key” considerations, the following questions may help chapter authors to decide whether to include additional information in domestic focused chapters:

1. Does the information/analysis connect in direct and predictable ways to the mandate as articulated in the GCRA of 1990 (<http://www.gcrio.org/gcact1990.html>)
2. Does the information support and complement other ongoing USG assessment activities related to climate?
3. Does the analysis represent a current or emerging concern which is global in nature or scope over the mandated period of consideration of the assessment - present, 25, 100 years?

4. Does the analysis provide support for decision-making or prioritization of investments, partnerships, and data collection?
5. Does the analysis illustrate how international events, decisions, activities, and climate stresses elsewhere can contribute to vulnerabilities and opportunities in the United States, including studies on supply chain, inter-related impacts from climate and price spikes?
6. Does the analysis identify U.S. information needs, knowledge gaps and interests that are not satisfied by other current global assessments.
7. Does the information or analysis inform U.S. overseas development assistance (ODA) decisions (incl. where U.S. investments may be at risk due to climate stresses)?
8. Does the analysis assess the degree to which the events / conditions might affect U.S. interests or resources (Capital flows/financial markets, intellectual property, commodity prices and market opportunities, regional regimes (UNFCCC), opportunities for REDD and emissions trading, migration of people, diseases and pests)?
9. Does the assessment evaluate whether the issues require U.S.G. resources or leadership to deal with? e.g. development issues, global public health systems, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief implications.

III. General Information about Access to IG WG consultation / Approach

The International/Global Working Group (IGWG) is organized to provide expertise and consultation from appropriate members of the DAC, and from carefully selected experts. We recognize that information teams and chapter authors may well include such expertise, and wherever possible will work closely with and rely on chapter authors to identify points of emphasis and suggest text. Where chapter authors may want additional consultation or suggestion of sources of information or expertise, the IGWG will identify contact points for specific chapters and issues. These contacts are available to assist with additional resource, referral and research needs. Ideally, a specific point of contact on international/global context will be identified for each chapter of the NCA. When possible, these contact points will be drawn from those already working directly with the chapters.

Early consultation is critical as Chapter Authors begin to identify aspects of international context for possible inclusion in chapters. The IGWG will provide a comprehensive overview of topics that are under consideration by multiple chapters in order to avoid redundancy and ensure consistency. For example, many chapters may be interested in including information on transboundary water availability; it is important that such references be coordinated.

NCA Report (2013) Approach:

- (1) A dedicated text in the report introduction that concisely places the global aspects of climate change in context and highlights unique issues that are relevant to U.S. international priorities and interests (e.g. foreign development interests, international financial commitments, humanitarian assistance, engagement with

existing global initiatives). Focus will be placed on issues that are not otherwise addressed within domestic-focused chapters.

(2) Integration of priority international topics in the appropriate regional and sectoral chapters of the report. It is anticipated that the treatment of international topics within chapters will draw heavily on the use of text boxes.

Long Term Approach:

As is the case with all aspects of the NCA, it is important that we consider ongoing activities, information networks, and systematic assessment. Discussions of this aspect of our work will be initiated at the DAC November, 2011, meeting. The IGWG will rely heavily on the Sustained Assessment Working Group for guidance, and will invite thoughts and advice on how to undertake and coordinate these responsibilities from all DAC members.