

Scotland's EIA Conference 2026

Climate Change and EIA

What comes next?

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“This summer’s scorching heat, raging wildfires and deadly floods are a warning of what lies ahead. We must make the overshoot above 1.5 degrees as small and short as possible. That demands an overshoot of ambition..... At the same time, following this pathway would involve adaptation actions that reduce vulnerability to the current, expected and unexpected impacts of climate change on societies, communities and economies, although there will likely be limits to adaptation and irreversible impacts, especially if peak temperatures are not minimised”

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 2nd September 2026

Purpose of Workshop Session

Quick recap on current state of play, including key guidance documents

- Group feedback on familiarity with/use of these (**Slido poll**)

Outline of plans for guidance updates

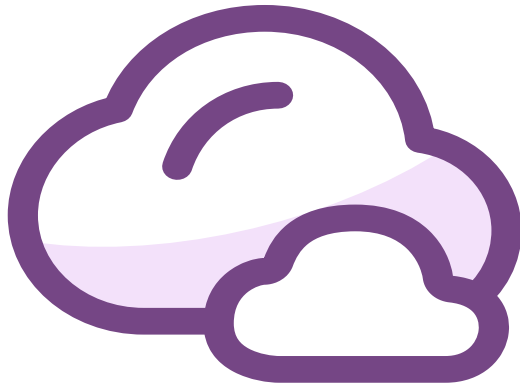
- Group feedback on which topic most needs additional guidance and what type of support practitioners would find most useful (**Slido poll**)
- Wider discussion/Q&A session (time permitting)

..... but first, an 'ice melter'



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What word springs to mind when you think of 'climate change and EIA'?

- Essential
- Fundamental
- Complicated
- Difficult
-?



What springs to mind when you think of 'climate change and EIA'?

Current Requirements

Schedule 4, paragraph 5 of the EIA Regulations requires:

"A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from, inter alia:....

(f) the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change"

What might happen with EORs?



Climate Change Mitigation: Emissions Reduction

Version 2.1 published in April 2026

Competence and skills - **technical** and **wider** within EIA co-ordination team and decision makers

Test of significance:

- No **fixed percentage threshold** of a carbon budget that determines significance
- Significance should be judged not just on **absolute magnitude** of emissions but on degree of mitigation relative to an **applicable net zero trajectory**, which may need to go beyond the minimum required by regulation
- A conclusion of non-significant GHG effects **is a high bar** and requires clear evidence



Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation

Second edition to reflect emerging practice (2020)

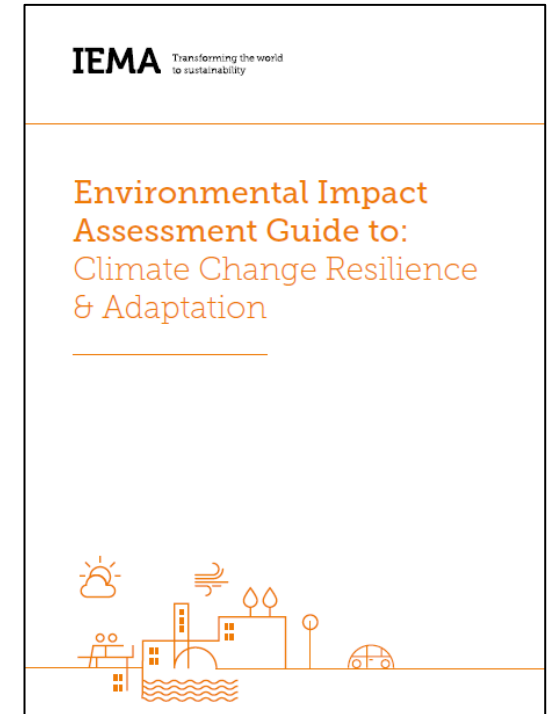
Two considerations:

- the **vulnerability** of the Project to climate change
- any implications of climate change for the predicted impacts of the project, as assessed by the other topic specialists ('**in-combination climate effects**')

Key principles:

- adopt a **design led** approach rather than end of line mitigation
- adopt a **precautionary** approach to assessment

Reporting: within a climate change chapter or within project description/technical assessments – just signpost clearly upfront

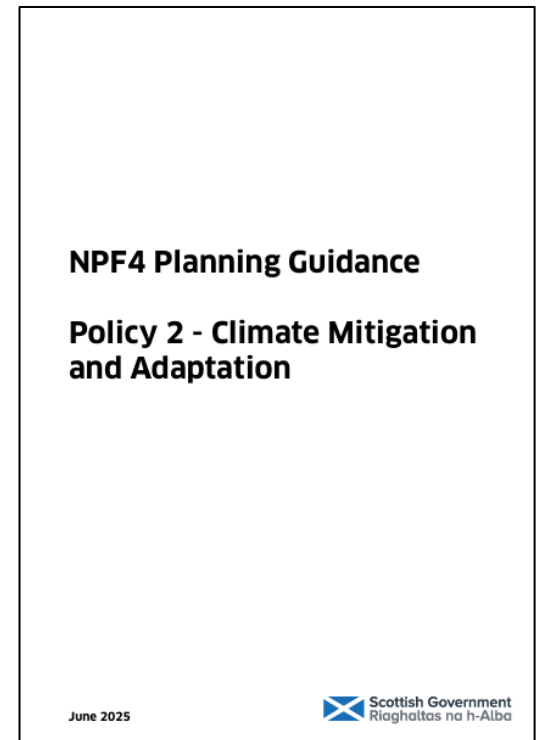


NPF4 Policy 2: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

NPF4 Policy 2 Climate Mitigation and Adaptation: ‘...development proposals will be sited and designed to **minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions** as far as possible **and adapt to current and future risks from climate change**. Retrofit measures to existing developments for emissions reduction or climate change adaptation will be supported.”

- **Early** and **effective** dialogue
- A **place-based** approach
- A **proportionate** and **transparent** approach
- Avoid **duplication** of other regulatory/assessment regimes

Three main sections: development plan preparation, determining planning applications - adaptation and mitigation



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Before today, how familiar were you with the guidance just discussed?

- Regularly use
- Use occasionally
- Aware of guidance but not used
- Not familiar
- Mixed – depends on guidance



How familiar were you with the guidance discussed before today?

Proposed Guidance Updates (ISEP)

Assessing GHG Emissions and Evaluating Their Significance (planned)

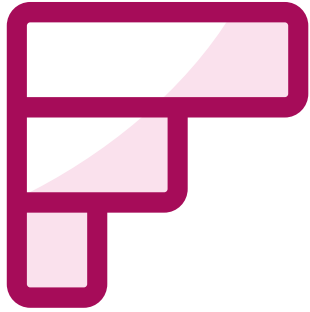
- Version 3 – further updating/clarification or more fundamental review?



EIA Guide to Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation (in progress)

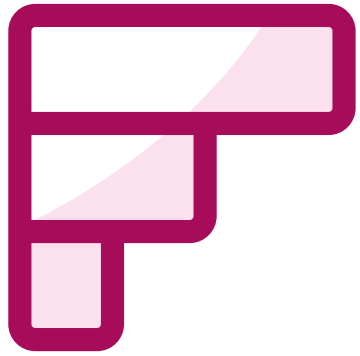
- Version 3 – somewhere between the two:
 - review of risk-based approach to project resilience and ‘fit’ with EIA significance criteria
 - better integration of climate change into topic assessments (links with other professional institutes?)

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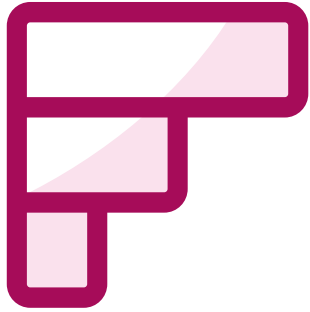
Which topic most needs additional guidance?

- Greenhouse gas assessment methods
- Climate resilience assessment methods
- Integrating climate change into other topic assessments
- NPF4 policy 2 implementation
- Monitoring and adaptive management (all)
- Presentation in EIA Report/ES (all)



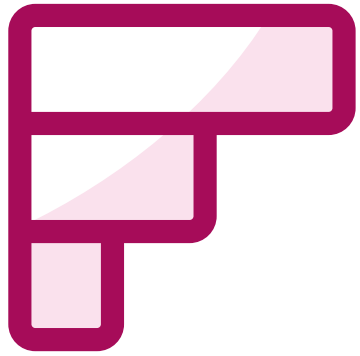
Which topic most needs additional guidance?

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What type of support would practitioners find most useful?

- Checklists for EIA Co-ordinator/determining authority
- More guidance generally on 'significance'
- Updated advice on available tools
- Guidance on how to interpret climate change projections (what will change in future, when and by how much, including understanding probabilities)
- Example templates
- Worked examples/case studies



What type of support would practitioners find most useful?

Wider discussion/Q&A session



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Thank you!

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Additional thoughts and feedback welcomed
and will be fed back to the ISEP Guidance
Working Groups/Scottish Government as
appropriate.



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