



An Overview of NCAnet
Building a “network of networks” to support the National Climate Assessment
<http://ncanet.usgcrp.gov>

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1. What is NCAnet?

Much of the stakeholder engagement of the National Climate Assessment (NCA) will be accomplished through a network of partner organizations that can extend the NCA process and products to a broader audience. In the largest sense, this “network of networks” (NCAnet) will include all of the organizations that deliberately work to connect the NCA with a broad array of stakeholders. More specifically, the NCA is seeking to build long-term capacity to conduct and use assessments by cultivating partnerships with organizations that will participate as a part of the sustained assessment process. The NCA has identified four levels of partnership for organizations within NCAnet:

- Sustained process partners will be engaged in establishing and facilitating ongoing dialogue between the NCA, producers of information used in assessments, and users of assessments. Sustained process partners might work with individuals and groups within their own network(s) to develop and update technical inputs, provide and track case studies of climate impacts or human responses to climate change, identify and maintain important data sources, hold workshops or support ongoing discussions focused on specific assessment topics, create educational and outreach materials drawing on the findings of the NCA, or analyze the capacity of the NCA and its partners to conduct and support the use of assessments.
- Contributing partners are those that are interested in and able to make specific contributions of technical inputs or assessment capacity, but are not able or do not wish to establish a sustained link to the NCA. Contributing partners might work with individuals and groups within their own network(s) to develop technical inputs, provide case studies of climate impacts or human responses to climate change, identify important data sources, hold workshops focused on specific assessment topics, create educational and outreach materials drawing on the findings of the NCA, or conduct focused analyses of NCA processes and products.
- Communication partners will be engaged primarily in spreading the word about the NCA process and products, but will not play a direct role in creating products or offering assessment capacity to the NCA. Communication partners might provide space in their newsletters to announce NCA-related activities and requests, assist the NCA in identifying and contacting key representatives within their own networks that might contribute to assessment processes and products, or otherwise provide a conduit between the NCA and their stakeholders, but such partnership would be primarily on an *ad hoc* basis.

- Federal partners represent individual programs within agencies, interagency efforts, and other federally-led activities that align with the objectives of the NCA and NCAnet. Federal partners may work with the NCA and NCAnet partners to coordinate efforts on topics of mutual concern, including on development of a variety of technical inputs and assessment capacities.

2. What partners should expect from the NCA and what is expected of partner organizations

Setting expectations for both the NCA and partner organizations is an essential step in establishing NCAnet. This section describes the roles of the National Climate Assessment Development and Advisory Committee (NCADAC), the US Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) agencies, and the NCA staff and sets forth general expectations for NCA partners. Section 3, on characteristics of partnership, further explores desired qualities of partner organizations and discusses the level of effort that sustained process partners, contributing partners, and communication partners might expect. Section 4 contains a number of questions for potential partners to consider as they organize their participation in NCAnet and contributions to the NCA.

The NCADAC is an advisory body convened to produce a National Climate Assessment. As a part of its mission, it will

- Synthesize and summarize the science and information pertaining to current and future impacts of climate change upon the United States
- Provide advice and recommendations toward the development of an ongoing, sustainable national assessment of global change impacts and adaptation and mitigation strategies for the United States

NCA staff and USGCRP agencies, working through the Interagency National Climate Assessment (INCA) Working Group, will

- Provide information about the NCA process, including information about guidelines and processes related to the types of information that might be included in the NCA
- Create processes to integrate information coming from many sources as inputs to the NCA and provide all inputs to the NCADAC
- Build the core infrastructure needed to support ongoing engagement, dialogue, and information exchange associated with the NCA

Partnering organizations will

- Receive information from the NCA and disseminate it through appropriate channels within their own network of stakeholders
- Aggregate and provide information from their stakeholders to the NCA via technical inputs and other reporting mechanisms
- Help identify individuals and groups within their networks who can actively contribute to assessment activities
- Provide feedback to NCA staff on NCAnet and the NCA as a whole, including suggestions on how to expand and strengthen the network

3. Characteristics of partnership

Building NCAnet will require balancing the ability to build networks that reach a broad range of stakeholders with the ability to establish and maintain meaningful relationships with each network

partner. The NCA has created a list of characteristics it seeks in potential partners. These characteristics are:

- Organization's ability to support its own participation. The NCA is not able to fund partners' development of technical inputs, facilitation of assessment-related activities such as workshops or outreach events, or development of other assessment capacities. Therefore, partners should have or may seek out the financial and human resources necessary to support their own short- or long-term participation in NCAnet.
- Interest (and experience) in climate-related issues. Partnering organizations should have an interest in climate-related issues as a part of their organization's purview. This level of interest may vary widely, from a single statement or informal discussion within the organization to climate being a major focus of the organization.
- Support for the objectives of the NCA (<http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment/nca-overview/objectives>). The objectives of the NCA encompass creating a sustainable assessment process, establishing a consistent and replicable approach to assessment, nesting specific high-priority investigations in regions or sectors within the broader assessment context, designing a centrally-coordinated but nationally-distributed assessment process that engages partners within and outside of the federal government in both the assembly and use of assessments, recognizing the international context in which the US impacts of and responses to climate change occur, and building a strong stakeholder engagement process for the assessment.
- Ability to contribute knowledgeably and meaningfully to the NCA. Contributions from partners should target specific needs within the NCA, ranging from inputs targeting specific topics and reporting timeframes to sustained capacity to provide information and analyses or develop and implement outreach to stakeholders.
- Capacity to link to key regions, sectors, and stakeholder groups for the NCA. Partners should identify the specific regions, sectors, or stakeholder groups to which they can connect the NCA.
- Responsive point of contact within the partner organization. Partners should identify a primary point of contact within the organization that will coordinate communication and cooperation within the organization and will serve as a conduit to the NCA.
- Willingness and ability to meet deadlines and participate in a collaborative fashion. Any partners that include in their plan for participation in NCAnet an interest in contributing specific inputs to the NCA should be aware of and able to meet the deadlines for these inputs, and should distribute any information about the NCA process and products to their stakeholders in a timely fashion.

4. Questions for potential partner organizations to consider

The following set of questions is meant to help potential partner organizations think about both what they would like to get out of the NCA process and products and what they might be able contribute. Organizations should think about these questions in advance of joining NCAnet, as they will form a basis for planning how organizations might be a partner in NCAnet.

- A. How can the National Climate Assessment process (including the staff, the NCADAC, the 2013 report, and the post-2013 ongoing assessment) help you? *Please consider your regular activities and services to your stakeholders, contributors and partners (e.g., circulation of newsletter, webpage development, meetings) as well as any related or aligned one-time events or activities (e.g., a big upcoming conference, a stakeholder survey). Specifically:*
- 1) What information do you most need about the National Climate Assessment process?
 - 2) In what form(s) would this information be most useful to you?
 - 3) How can we help you meet the information needs of your stakeholders?
 - 4) In what other ways could the process help you assess and address the risks associated with climate change?
 - 5) Do you need help in designing effective stakeholder engagement processes?
- B. How can you help the National Climate Assessment process? *There are many ways in which you can help the ongoing assessment process. The following questions may help you decide the level and type of commitment you wish to make:*
- 1) Technical inputs
 - Do you have or can you produce syntheses of available scientific or technical literature, discussion papers, white papers, reviews of recent advances in the field in which you are an expert?
 - Do you have case studies written up that illustrate key climate risks or ways in which entities have reduced their climate related risks?
 - Do you have new modeling results, data sets or topical reports that are relevant to the topics that the NCA will cover in its 2013 report?
 - 2) Assessment capacities
 - Have you assessed the needs of your stakeholders relevant to climate change information? If so, can you provide us with the results of that assessment? If not, can you conduct such an assessment?
 - Can you conduct vulnerability and climate risk assessments with your own or independently obtained resources?
 - What kind of research do you conduct on an ongoing basis that is relevant to the NCA? Do you manage or have access to an ongoing data collection effort that is currently producing or will soon produce results relevant to monitoring changes in the climate and/or impacts of climate change in a particular region or sector?
 - How can you see yourself assisting the ongoing assessment effort past the 2013 report?
 - 3) Stakeholder engagement
 - Who else (which other stakeholders) can you help to engage in the National Climate Assessment process? Could you play a networking role? What else can you do to help create an ongoing National Climate Assessment process?
 - Could you organize and facilitate NCA-related meetings and workshops (virtual or in-person)?
 - Could you help with information dissemination, communication, and effective engagement of stakeholders (in your region or sector or among your members)?