

Fourth National Climate Assessment Vol. II

Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States

FAQs

Note: This is an update of the content currently available at globalchange.gov/content/nca4-planning. This content will be updated on the day of release and is intended as a resource for media and/or members of the public who have questions about the process.

General

- ***What is the U.S. Global Change Research Program? What does it do?***
The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) was established by Presidential initiative in 1989 and mandated by Congress in the Global Change Research Act (GCRA) of 1990. Its mandate is to develop and coordinate “a comprehensive and integrated United States research program which will assist the Nation and the world to understand, assess, predict, and respond to human-induced and natural processes of global change.” USGCRP comprises 13 Federal agencies that conduct or use research on global change.
- ***What is the National Climate Assessment and why is it written?***
Through the GCRA, USGCRP is mandated to produce a quadrennial assessment, which has become known as the National Climate Assessment (NCA). The NCA is required to a) integrate, evaluate, and interpret the findings of the Program and discuss the scientific uncertainties associated with such findings; b) analyze the effects of global change on the natural environment, agriculture, energy production and use, land and water resources, transportation, human health and welfare, human social systems, and biological diversity, and c) analyze current trends in global change, both human-induced and natural, and project major trends for the subsequent 25 to 100 years.
- ***What about previous NCAs?***
To date, three NCAs have been released. The first NCA was published in 2000, and the second was published in 2009. These reports can be accessed [here](#). The third NCA, *Climate Change Impacts in the United States* was published in 2014 and released in printable format and as an interactive [website](#). The Fourth NCA (NCA4) builds on the work of these previous assessments.
- ***What is the relationship between the Climate Science Special Report and this report?***
For the Third NCA (released in 2014), authors developed a large physical science appendix. In the early planning stages for NCA4, it was decided that to best inform the impacts assessment, the physical science assessment should be completed in advance. As a result, NCA4 was developed in two sequential volumes.

Volume I, the *Climate Science Special Report*, or CSSR, was released in November 2017. It can be accessed by visiting science2017.globalchange.gov. The CSSR assesses the science of climate change with a focus on the United States. It is intended to serve as the foundation for efforts to assess climate-related risks and inform decision-making about responses. The findings in the CSSR are based on a large body of scientific, peer-reviewed research, as well as a number of other publicly available sources, including well-established and carefully evaluated observational and modeling

datasets.

NCA4 Volume II, *Impacts, Risks and Adaptation in the United States*, is a technical, scientific assessment of climate change-related impacts, risks, and adaptation. It assesses a range of potential impacts, helping decision makers better identify risks that could be avoided or reduced. Like the CSSR, the findings in Volume II are based on a large body of scientific, peer-reviewed research, as well as a number of other publicly available sources, including well-established and carefully evaluated observational and modeling datasets. Volume II is being released today in its final form, at nca2018.globalchange.gov.

- ***Does NCA4 offer policy recommendations?***

Consistent with common practice for USGCRP assessment products, both Volume I and Volume II of NCA4 are technical scientific assessments. Neither makes policy recommendations or evaluates existing or proposed policies.

Process

- ***Who wrote NCA4 Vol. II?***

NCA4 Vol. II is the responsibility of the Subcommittee on Global Change Research (SGCR), which directs the activities of USGCRP. The SGCR established a Federal Steering Committee to oversee the NCA4 process. NCA4 Volume II was written by more than 300 Federal and non-Federal authors representing a range of expertise, a number of whom were selected through a public call for author nominations. Technical contributors were invited to provide input on specific topics, as needed.

- ***What was the review process?***

NCA4 Vol. II underwent a rigorous, 8-step review process both internal and external to the U.S. Government: (1) Initial chapter outlines were reviewed in December 2016 by the Federal Steering Committee, and (2) a Zero Order Draft (consisting of annotated outlines) was then reviewed by the SGCR. A full First Order Draft underwent (3) a technical and editorial review by the NOAA Technical Support Unit (TSU), which resulted in a Second Order Draft that was (4) reviewed by the SGCR. The Third Order Draft of NCA4 Vol. II was released for (5) public comment and (6) simultaneous review by an expert panel of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in November 2017. This review resulted in a Fourth Order Draft for (7) final agency review and clearance in May 2018. The Federal Steering Committee ensured all final agency review comments were adequately addressed and (8) a final round of technical and editorial review was provided during summer 2018 on the Fifth Order Draft by NCA leadership and the NOAA TSU. NCA and TSU staff, as well as the authors themselves, performed a final showstopper review of chapter proofs in Autumn 2018.

- ***How long has this report been in production?***

Planning for Volume II of NCA4 began shortly after the release of the Third NCA in 2014. A draft prospectus was released for public comment in the summer of 2016.

Other

- ***Can I use this report to [teach a class, etc]?***

Yes. Unless otherwise stated, all information and figures in this report are in the public domain. We just ask that you use the appropriate citation when using this document.

Content (General)

- ***How does Volume II of NCA4 differ from NCA3?***

Most fundamentally, the majority of the report's focus has shifted from national-level chapters to regional chapters, in response to public demand for more localized information on climate impacts. As a result, not only do the regional chapters provide more detail, but the Great Plains chapter has been split into separate Northern and Southern Great Plains chapters, and a new chapter focusing exclusively on the U.S. Caribbean has been added. Volume II also reflects a number of advances in the science of climate change impacts and adaptation with the inclusion of new national-level chapters on Air Quality; Climate Effects on U.S. International Interests; and a chapter on Sector Interactions, Multiple Stressors and Complex Systems. Finally, and again in response to public feedback and input, the report reflects three cross-cutting contextual advances: (1) more of an international context, (2) enhanced coverage of the economic impacts, and (3) greater focus on risk-based framing.