

Adapting to Climate Change

A Review for the House of Commons Environmental Audit
Committee

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Outline

- UK climate change impacts
- Planning process
 - Aim
 - Scope
 - Methodology
- Key findings
- Communication
- Impacts
- Lessons learnt and tips

UK climate change impacts

- Information on future climate change

 - The UK Climate Projections 2009

- Projected climate changes

 - Warmer and wetter winters

 - Hotter and drier summers

 - Sea level rise

 - More severe weather

- Likely impacts

 - Water stress, flooding, heat waves, coastal erosion...

What was the aim of our review?

- To enable the Committee to hold government to account on government policy on climate change adaptation
- To help add value and have impact

Planning process

- What?
- Feasibility?
- How?

What?

- Background research
 - Legislative framework, policy responsibilities and strategy
 - Develop expertise on effective adaptation, and risks to cost-effective delivery
 - Learn from stakeholders, policy officials and other SAIs

Initial research found...

- Effective climate change adaptation is based in good risk management
- UK has a cross-government Adapting to Climate Change programme and strategy
- Implementation is at an early stage
- Government departments had not reported systematically on risks to their business
- **Adaptation is a potentially huge topic to review...**

Our initial research led to the following review scope:

- **Review** the strategy and work of the cross government Adapting to Climate Change programme
- **Identify** key issues and challenges for implementation
- **Summarise** departments' assessments of their risks from future climate change
- **Present** individual departments' assessments of their capacity to assess and manage the risks from future climate change

Feasibility?

Risk areas (what conclusions can we draw?)

- Cross government programme at an early stage
- Individual departments capacity to assess or manage climate change risks likely to be varied
- Hard to monitor progress as majority of strategy focused on capacity building and research

Implementation risks

- Difficult to manage project across 16 bodies
- Risks with consistency of self-assessment and presenting information
- Hard to synthesise risks across government departments

How?

- Development and use of a self assessment framework for Departmental capacity to assess and manage climate change risks
- Survey of 16 Departments
- Interviews with policy officials
- Review of literature
- Interviews with stakeholders

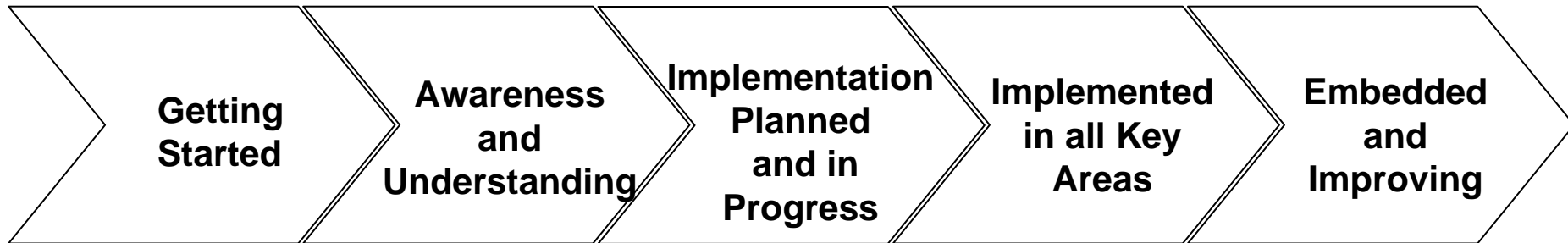
Developing the self-assessment framework for assessing and managing climate change risks

- Focused on capacity to assess and manage risks
- Started with UK government guidance on risk management, not from scratch
- Took time to develop a consistent and robust framework
- Piloted approach with Department and key stakeholders
- Self assessment chosen as approach, recognising limitations

The Self-Assessment Framework

- Centred around 5 themes for effective management of climate change risks
- Leadership; Policy and Strategy; People; Partnerships and Processes
- 5 Levels of Progress

Developing capacity to assess and manage climate change risks →



Key findings

Departments identified a wide range of potentially significant risks to their objectives

Infrastructure

Transport
Energy
Water Supply

Public Health

Changes in health
Demand for services
Changing immigration patterns

Agriculture, Food Security and the Natural Environment

Biodiversity
Forests and Woodlands
Crop Yields

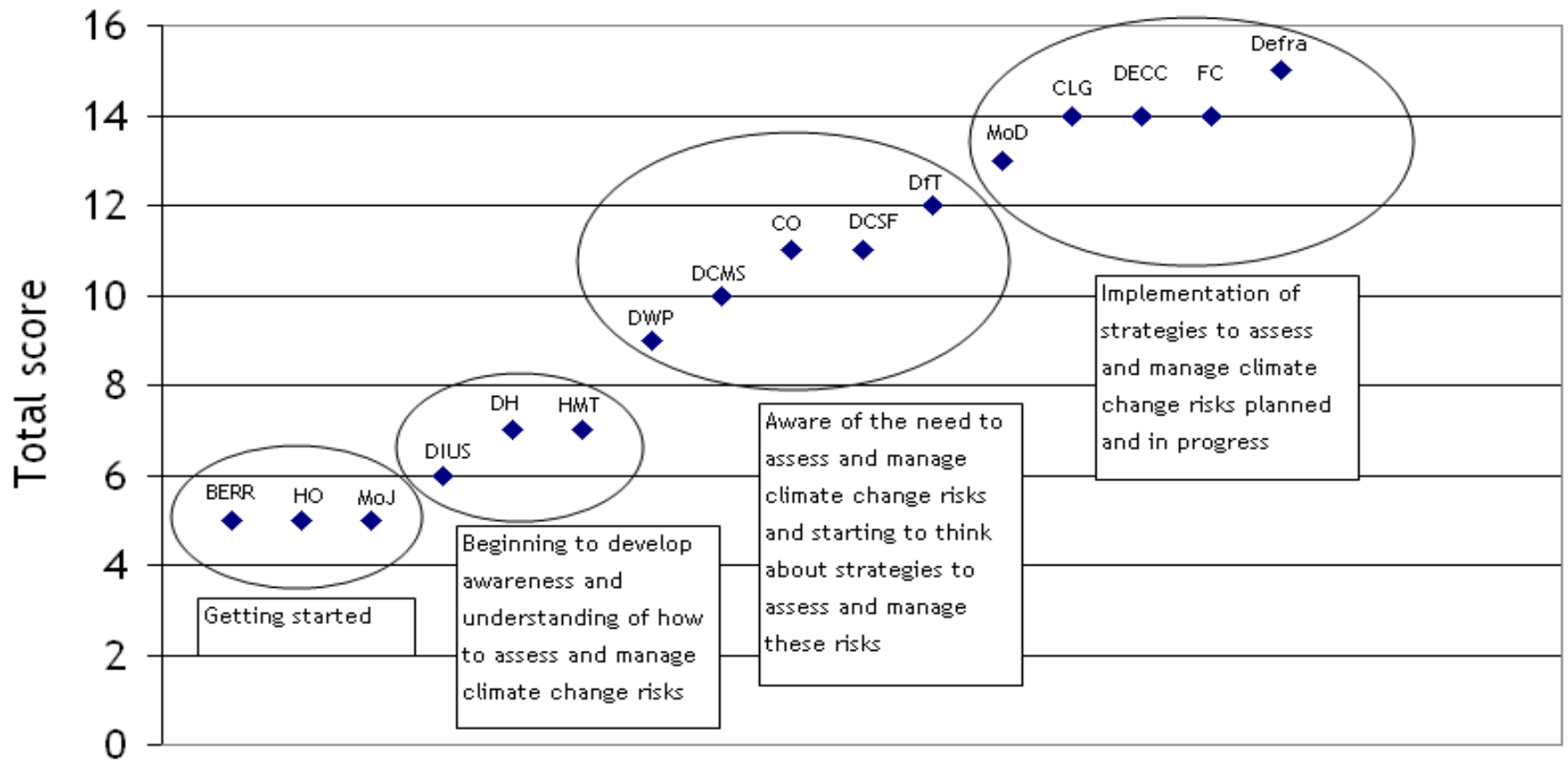
Business and the Economy

Risks to business
Costs to consumers
Cost of flood defences

Homes and buildings

Coastal communities
Damage
Comfort and safety

Climate change adaptation is a relatively new issue for most Departments, and their self-assessment scores of their capacity to assess and manage risks from future climate change vary significantly



Other key findings

- Departments find climate change risk management challenging
 - Timescales
 - Uncertainty
 - Prioritising resources
 - Capacity
- Some of the actions required to adapt to a changing climate will involve significant costs
- Government recognises the need to develop evidence base to make risk based decisions on adaptation, and is funding further research

Communication

- Launched report on same day as the EAC inquiry
- Sent out to interested stakeholders,
Departments involved and colleagues at NAO

Impact

- The Department recognised that NAO work contributed to government's decision to prepare, publish and monitor Departmental Adaptation Plans
- Informed the preparation of the Departmental Adaptation Plans
- Provided a strong launch pad for the related Environmental Audit Committee inquiry which will have its own impact (which hasn't yet reported)

Lessons Learnt and Top Tips

1. Wide reviews of adaptation programmes at an early stage are possible and valuable
2. Climate change adaptation is about much more than the environment
3. Define your audit scope very carefully
4. Speaking to stakeholders early on is vital
5. When developing a new assessment framework, draw on existing models where possible
6. Piloting your approach is incredibly useful, but takes time
7. If attempting to include 16 Departments, you need to be organised, have good communication with audited bodies and set clear expectations with others
8. A good working relationship with the lead department helped enormously

Any questions?