



UCL POLICY COMMISSION ON COMMUNICATING CLIMATE SCIENCE

**Developing Better Climate
Mitigation Policies: Challenging
current climate change risk
assessment approaches**

Challenges within a particular stakeholder groups can act as a barrier to effective communication between stakeholder communities. For instance, how 'novelty' is incentivised over 'policy relevance' in academic research plays a role in the misalignment between the questions policymakers would like to see answered, and the research the scientific community performs.

Some of the challenges that emerged are among the "usual suspects", i.e., challenges that are endemic to the problem of climate change and can be expected to persist. For example, the desire for certainty among end users of CCRAs versus the uncertainty inherent in climate science; or the differences in timescales between the UK policy cycle (3 to 5 years) and the long-term consequences of climate change (30 years+). However, the discussion identified interventions that can deliver positive change in spite of this.

Workshop Aims and Format

The aims of the UCL CCSPC workshop were to map the perceived barriers to change, and identify ways to move forward. It assembled a group of decision makers from government departments, climate researchers and research funders in a one-day, facilitated co-production format. An implicit aim was to identify the diversity of perspectives on CCRAs, the tensions between the different stakeholder communities, and the potential areas for improvement. Rather than representing a consensus position of all participants, this document captures a collective picture of the challenges as well as key points for future development.

Conclusions

The range and variety of the proposed interventions available highlight how the responsibility for delivering change is fragmented across different stakeholder groups, and would therefore benefit from coordination and continued dialogue across the different stakeholder domains. The UCL CCSPC has started to identify opportunities to support this dialogue, and will continue to do so in the near future.

King, D., Schrag, D.P., Dadi, Z., Ye, Q., and Ghosh, A. (2015). *Climate Change: a Risk Assessment*. Centre for Science and Policy, University of Cambridge.

Workshop participants identified a number of concrete steps which can be developed to improve how CCRAs inform the formulation of climate change policy.

- **Establishing new 'knowledge broker' roles**, common in other domains, to bridge stakeholder perspectives. For instance, in defence and security, risk analysts translate primary research into decision-relevant risk assessments. In health, co-production facilitators help to bridge the perspectives of patient groups, medical staff and health service management. Both the risk analyst and co-production facilitator role are currently absent for climate change.
- **Establishing a network of risk analysts**, which would establish CCRAs comparable across regions and nations, as well as provide a training blueprint for the capabilities required for 'risk analysts'.
- **Case studies to support decision making**. Plausible worst-case scenarios would bring to life the potential scale of the problem for decision makers.
- **Establishing a network of risk analysts** for the express purpose of informing CCRA reports. Previous reports had to mostly rely on research that had not been tailored to the purpose of carrying out risk assessments.

The workshop also identified broader areas of systematic change:

- **Improved co-production between researchers,**



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The **UCL Policy Commission on Communicating Climate Science** is an incubator of projects aiming to:

1. Identify gaps in climate change communication and policy and create targeted interventions with significant impacts.
2. Help break down communication barriers within and between professional communities and the wider public.

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www.ucl.ac.uk/public-policy