

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY



REGION 4

Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan

2024 ADDENDUM

Disclaimer

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Cover Photo: Prescribed coastal prairie burn in the Everglades, coordinated by EVER Fire & Aviation. Image by National Park Service, Jennifer Brown via <https://www.flickr.com/photos/evergladesnps/5794177994/>.

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CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN LEADERSHIP

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PRIORITY ACTIONS

U.S. EPA Region 4 has prioritized a number of actions to support the Agency's Climate Action Plan. This effort began in Fiscal Year 2022, and EPA Region 4 has extended and expanded these priority actions for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025. The actions identified below also include separate Division- and Office-specific priorities that will further support the advancement of climate adaptation-related actions across the Region, while furthering the plans developed in close collaboration with the National Program Managers.

The Agency has established priority and supporting actions, as well as the initial performance metrics, and is developing an assessment of potential resource issues to provide a foundation to work effectively with U.S. EPA's partners going forward. To further these goals, the Region has set ambitious actions to stress the need for acting internally, enhancing our partners' capabilities, and supporting the capacity of those that are most vulnerable across the Southeast to adapt to climate impacts affecting their communities.

The Region is committed to supporting the activities that are critical to building a region that is more resilient to climate challenges. Supporting Resiliency, Loans and Grants, Partner Engagement, Training and Accountability will drive our priority actions, as further described below.

A. Process Resiliency:

Integrate climate adaptation into U.S. EPA programs, policies, rulemaking processes, and enforcement activities.

Continuing Priority Actions

<i>Develop and update Region 4 Climate Implementation Plan, as needed.</i>	
<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metric</i>	Update Region 4 Climate Adaptation Implementation Plan by required deadline. Share with partners.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Changing climate; Region 4 planning to target and implement adaptation actions.
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase awareness of and resiliency to climate change within Region 4 by providing Region 4 information as to the climate change risks and Region 4's priorities in addressing those risks.• Describe how climate change adaptation is to be integrated into Region 4 work in a manner consistent and compatible with circumstances and objectives.

<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Staff time to complete; Timely guidance on updates.
<i>Notes</i>	2022: Climate Adaptation Implementation Plan released. 2024: Addendum to Climate Adaptation Implementation Plan with FY 2024 and 2025 priority actions.

Develop and implement instructional documents (Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or similar) to integrate climate adaptation into our Regional programs, policies, rulemaking processes, oversight, and enforcement activities, with an emphasis on assisting underserved and overburdened communities. Update as appropriate.

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2023 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metric</i>	Develop Regional or incorporate/adapt HQ instructional documents (SOPs or similar) to integrate climate change into Regional programs, policies, rulemaking processes, oversight, and enforcement activities, with an emphasis on assisting underserved and overburdened communities. Review and update, as appropriate.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Changing climate. Many vulnerabilities with the risk of climate adaptation not being integrated as robustly as possible across Region 4's policies, regulations, and programs.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Embed climate change impacts into applicable decision-making across the Region.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Training; HQ guidance and SOPs for specific programs; staff time to develop or incorporate/adapt documents.
<i>Notes</i>	None.

New Priority Action

Assist headquarters' offices in activities that increase capacity to anticipate, prepare for, adapt to, or recover from the impacts of climate change.

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2025 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metrics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance to HQ with respect to activities and programs that increase capacity to anticipate, prepare for, adapt to, or recover from the impacts of climate change, as requested. • Amplify and promote HQ programs that increase climate resiliency, as appropriate.

<i>Climate Risk</i>	Changing climate.
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity to adapt to climate change by supporting efforts across the agency. • Increased experience with climate adaptation efforts across the agency for Region 4 employees.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Existing staff time to support.
<i>Notes</i>	Requires opportunities from other offices to support their work.

B. Mission Resiliency:

Implement measures to protect the agency's workforce, facilities, critical infrastructure, supply chains and procurement processes from the risks posed by climate change.

Continuing Priority Actions

<i>Evaluate and implement, in partnership with Office of Mission Support (OMS), opportunities to enhance the resilience of Region 4's internal workforce, facilities, and processes (e.g., building and equipment resilience to the changing climate, EPA staff safety when deployed to disasters). Review and update as appropriate.</i>	
<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metric</i>	Review and update (as appropriate) OMS assessment of identified resilience projects for EPA Region 4 buildings and equipment, as well as workforce and staff activities.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Climate change impacts (e.g., flooding, extreme weather) to Region 4 facilities and operations.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Ensure that Region 4 can complete its mission objectives even in a changing climate.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Staff time to review and update.
<i>Notes</i>	None.

Enhance the reliability of logistics support operations by coordinating within Region 4 to increase local stockage level of critical response, monitoring, and enforcement expendable materials.

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metric</i>	Review and restock minimum stockage levels and reorder points, considering climate change.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Climate change impacts (e.g., flooding, extreme weather) to Region 4 facilities and operations and ability to respond to climate change-related disasters.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Ensure that Region 4 can complete its mission objectives and respond to disasters, even in a changing climate.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Staff time to review and update.
<i>Notes</i>	None.

C. Grants and Loans:

Modernize U.S. EPA financial assistance programs to encourage climate-resilient investments across Region 4.

Continuing Priority Actions

Provide timely grant awards and loans, as well as oversight, for climate adaptation-related work to ensure that EPA is assisting partners in adapting to climate change.

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metric</i>	Grants with climate adaptation-related elements will be awarded within statutory and regulatory timeframes.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Changing climate – each grant will address specific impacts related to climate (e.g., flooding, extreme weather, air quality degradation).
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that grants supporting or related to climate adaptation are made available to grantees in a timely fashion. • Expand grantees' ability to adapt to a changing climate.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	HQ guidance on financial document language; staff resources to incorporate language; training.
<i>Notes</i>	None.

Consider climate adaptation in funding mechanisms, including expenditure of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds.

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metrics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Resilient Infrastructure Sub-Committee (RISC) • Provide technical assistance to make climate-smart investments with funds received from EPA.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Changing climate – each funding will address specific impacts related to climate (e.g., flooding, extreme weather, air quality degradation).
<i>Outcomes</i>	Ensure that EPA funding will support efforts that consider the changing climate and undertake efforts to adapt to a changing climate by providing funding.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Direction from HQ on language to incorporate for some funding mechanisms; availability of funding or continued availability of funding; staff resources.
<i>Notes</i>	2024: Added IRA.

D. Staff Training:

Train U.S. EPA Region 4 staff on climate change in order to integrate climate change across regional work.

Continuing Priority Actions

Provide training for Region 4 staff on the principles of climate change, climate change adaptation, and role in promoting the Region's climate adaptation activities now and going forward.

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metrics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train new staff on climate change. • Continue training of Regional Staff by providing/promoting new and updated HQ trainings to existing staff.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Many vulnerabilities with the risk of climate adaptation not being integrated as robustly as possible across Region 4's policies, regulations, and programs.
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff educated on current information on the risks posed by

	climate change and ways to incorporate measures to adapt to and address those risks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate climate change across regional work; lead climate adaptation by example.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	HQ trainings and updates made available.
<i>Notes</i>	None.

E. Partner Engagement:

Consult and partner with states, tribes, territories, local governments, environmental justice organizations, community groups, businesses, and other federal agencies to strengthen adaptive capacity and increase the resilience of the nation, with a particular focus on advancing environmental justice.

Continuing Priority Actions

<i>Provide information or resources to external stakeholders to adapt to climate change.</i>	
<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metric</i>	Provide updated information about opportunities and resources to help partners assess and implement adaptation activities going forward.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Changing climate – each resource provided will address specific impacts related to climate (e.g., flooding, extreme weather, air quality degradation).
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders begin evaluating or implementing climate adaptation efforts. • EPA staff develop relationships with outside parties by providing high-level or introductory climate change information so that they can begin evaluating or implementing climate change adaptation efforts.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Staff time to compile and distribute resources.
<i>Notes</i>	2024: Previous priority action was restructured.

Provide technical assistance to external stakeholders to implement climate adaptation activities.

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metric</i>	Provide technical assistance to partners to implement climate adaptation activities.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Changing climate – each resource provided will address specific impacts related to climate (e.g., flooding, extreme weather, air quality degradation).
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders fully evaluate or implement climate adaptation efforts. EPA staff develop trusted relationships with external stakeholders by providing in-depth technical assistance.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Funding/resources to provide technical assistance; partners' ability/capacity to accept the technical assistance.
<i>Notes</i>	2024: Previous priority action was restructured.

Provide education and training for external stakeholders on the principles of climate change.

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metric</i>	Continue to provide or conduct training for external stakeholders, highlighting new opportunities as appropriate.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Changing climate – each training provided will address specific impacts related to climate (e.g., flooding, extreme weather, air quality degradation).
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders educated on the risks posed by climate change and ways to incorporate measures to adapt to and address those risks. Integrate climate change across regional work.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Staff resources to create and provide training; external stakeholder capacity to attend training; ability to meaningfully track all external education.
<i>Notes</i>	2024: Previous priority action was restructured.

Meet with Region 4 state, local, tribal, and other key stakeholders to catalog their current adaptation work and identify gaps where Region 4 can assist.

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metrics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with stakeholders. • Updated catalogue and list of needs/opportunities.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Changing climate.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Region 4 has a resource it can work from to prioritize work and resources for climate adaptation.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	External stakeholder capacity to engage in these conversations; budget and staff time to compile the catalogue.
<i>Notes</i>	None.

Perform a targeted assessment to determine areas of focus for providing resources, education, and training to external stakeholders. Emphasize areas where climate change impacts will be the greatest and communities would be disproportionately affected.

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metric</i>	Completion of the assessment and a resulting list of areas of focus.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Changing climate.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Region 4 has resource prioritizing work and resources for climate adaptation.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Budget and staff time to compile the catalogue.
<i>Notes</i>	None.

Consider climate change in future communications and publications; evaluate and revise, if appropriate, existing communications and publications to incorporate climate change considerations.

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2023 – ongoing
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<i>Performance Metric</i>	Develop, refine and review standard operating procedures (SOPs) integrating climate change into communications and update as needed.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Changing climate; providing consistent messaging and information regarding climate risks.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Provide methods for ensuring that climate adaptation is incorporated into Region 4's external communications to increase awareness on climate change.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Quick timeframe for communications materials; staff time to complete the SOP.
<i>Notes</i>	None.

New Priority Actions

<i>Respond to climate-related disasters and weather events timely and effectively in order to assist in recovery efforts.</i>	
<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2024 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metrics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploy to climate-related disasters. • Provide technical assistance to recover from climate-related disasters in a way that assists in adapting to a changing climate.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Extreme weather events and other disasters.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Recover from climate-related disasters and weather events. Ensure recovery from climate-related disasters and weather events is resilient in a changing environment.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Budget and staff time to deploy and provide technical assistance.
<i>Notes</i>	Often efforts are state-led and Region 4 may not be invited into the recovery efforts or partners may not be aware of the full range of opportunities for EPA assistance.

<i>Elevate considerations of those disproportionately impacted by climate change, taking into account existing traditions and knowledge.</i>	
<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2024 – 2025

<i>Performance Metrics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024: Region 4 will work with the Office of International and Tribal Affairs to begin to learn how to consider Indigenous Knowledges (IK) in its climate programs. • 2025: Upon request, provide assistance and resources to tribes to increase capacity to anticipate, prepare for, adapt to, or recover from the impacts of climate change.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Communities vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate adaptation measures take into account the needs and history of those disproportionately impacted. • Increased capacity to adapt to a changing climate while honoring the government-to-government relationship with Federally Recognized Tribes.
<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Information from OITA; training; staff time to incorporate IK.
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Fiscal Year 2024, efforts are limited to the performance metric, but Region 4 will consider expanding in the future. • Region 4 will respect the decisions of Tribal Nations and Indigenous peoples on whether and how to incorporate IK.

F. Accountability:

Measure and evaluate performance.

Continuing Priority Actions

<i>Develop Region 4-specific goals, metrics, and a tracking system to evaluate and report progress in adaptation activities both internally and at the external stakeholder level. Track and report on national metrics.</i>	
<i>Fiscal Years</i>	2022 – ongoing
<i>Performance Metric</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide requested input to national metrics reporting. • Determine if additional regional metrics are needed and report.
<i>Climate Risk</i>	Many vulnerabilities with the risk of climate adaptation not being integrated as robustly as possible across Region 4's policies, regulations, and programs.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Ensure actions are undertaken, and obtain data regarding actions that are not completed to resolve issues or adjust actions going forward.

<i>Resource Requirements</i>	Significant staff time across the region to accurately and comprehensively report.
<i>Notes</i>	None.