

**EPA Region 8**  
**Climate Adaptation Implementation Plan**  
**FY24 Addendum**



**September 30, 2024**

# Addendum to Region 8 Climate Adaptation Implementation Plan

September 30, 2024

## 1. Introduction

In October 2021, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its *Climate Adaptation Action Plan*<sup>1</sup> in response to Executive Order (E.O.) 14008: *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*<sup>2</sup>. E.O. 14008 directed all federal agencies to prepare Climate Adaptation Action Plans. EPA's Climate Adaptation Action Plan included a Policy Statement on Climate Adaptation from EPA Administrator Michael Regan, directing all EPA National Program and Regional Offices to develop Climate Adaptation Implementation Plans. In October 2022, EPA Region 8 released its *Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan*<sup>3</sup>, alongside 10 National Program Offices and the nine other Regional Offices<sup>4</sup>. Collectively, the implementation plans provide a pathway for EPA to continue to fulfill its mission of protecting human health and the environment even as the climate changes and disruptive impacts increase.

## 2. Climate Adaptation Priority Actions

The October 2022 *Region 8 Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan* included a set of climate adaptation priority actions for FY22 and FY23. With this addendum, Region 8 has expanded its climate adaptation priority actions into FY24 (see Appendix 1). The identified priority actions contribute to an Agency-wide effort to meet the first Long-Term Performance Goal under Objective 1.2, *Accelerate Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Change Impacts*, of the *FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan*<sup>5</sup>.

## 3. FY24 Office of Policy Climate Adaptation Key Focus Areas

In addition to expanding climate adaptation priority actions into FY24, EPA Office of Policy's (OP) Climate Adaptation Program required all National Program and Regional Offices to focus efforts on actions that:

1. Integrate climate adaptation into Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) investments.
2. Partner with Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA)/American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) to explore ways to integrate Indigenous Knowledge (IK) into projects and decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/epa-climate-adaptation-plan-pdf-version.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-10/bh508-R08%20Climate%20Adaptation%20Implementation%20Plan%209-16-22.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/climate-adaptation/climate-adaptation-plans>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-03/fy-2022-2026-epa-strategic-plan.pdf>

3. Increase climate literacy of staff and external partners.

EPA Region 8 is taking the following steps in FY24 to further advance the three focus areas.

### 3.1 Integrate climate adaptation into BIL and IRA investments.

At an Agency-wide level, EPA established the Resilient Infrastructure Subgroup on Climate (RISC) to help meet EPA's long-term commitment to modernize its financial assistance programs to encourage climate-resilient investments, where appropriate. Region 8 has two staff members participating in RISC, helping bring the regional perspective to the development of various tools and resources such as example funding opportunity language and a "job aid" tool for identifying EPA projects that support climate adaptation and resilience. Region 8 is committed to building awareness across regional staff of the RISC tools and resources as they become available.

Additionally, Region 8 developed two new FY24 climate adaptation priority actions (one within Region 8's Air and Radiation Division (ARD) and one at the regional level) that focus on building the region's awareness and capacity to integrate climate adaptation considerations into BIL and IRA investments managed at the regional level (see Appendix 1). As an example, EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program under the IRA, while focused on reducing climate pollution, creates an opportunity for grantees to build upon and incorporate efforts to adapt to and/or become more resilient to a changing climate as a co-benefit to reducing climate pollution. The nexus between reducing climate pollution and building adaptive capacity has become a topic of conversation within Region 8 and with grantees as they develop and implement their climate plans.

### 3.2 Partner with OITA/AIEO to explore ways to integrate IK into projects and decisions.

Indigenous knowledge is "a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, innovations, practices, and beliefs developed by Tribes and Indigenous Peoples through interaction and experience with the environment<sup>6</sup>." In late 2022, the White House Council on Environmental Quality and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy jointly released government-wide guidance and an accompanying implementation memorandum for federal agencies on recognizing and including IK in federal research, policy, and decision making<sup>7</sup>.

EPA Region 8 is home to 28 federally recognized Tribes, each with their own unique IK. Region 8 is committed to working with OITA/AIEO to expand

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/OSTP-CEQ-IK-Guidance.pdf>. Page 4.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/OSTP-CEQ-IK-Guidance.pdf>.

awareness of IK as it pertains to climate adaptation and resiliency, and to identify opportunities to integrate IK into our regional climate adaptation work. To that end, for FY24, Region 8 developed a new climate adaptation priority action to memorialize this commitment (see Appendix 1). In cooperation with OITA/AIEO, Region 8 is focused in FY24 on taking initial steps to learn and to build awareness of IK within the realm of climate adaptation and resiliency. Region 8 participates in quarterly IK discussions with OITA/AIEO and the other nine regional offices. These quarterly discussions have included information sharing sessions, led by various EPA program offices, highlighting how IK is being considered in EPA's core work. Region 8 also regularly amplifies events, such as the National Tribal Caucus/EPA Tribal Climate Town Hall meetings, to regional staff. In FY24, Region 8 completed an inventory of the climate adaptation and environmental plans developed by the 28 federally recognized Tribes in the mountains and plains region. To raise awareness of IK, this inventory highlights examples where IK was included in planning documents and associated projects.

### 3.3 Increase climate literacy of staff and external partners.

For FY24, Region 8 included a priority action to generally capture the sharing of and participation in climate training across the region, with the understanding that training and capacity building can come in many forms (see Appendix 1). Region 8 regularly amplifies participation in larger opportunities for climate adaptation training, peer discussion, and capacity building such as the Climate Conversations series sponsored by Office of Policy and the Office of Research and Development. Region 8 also sponsors region-specific training such as the March 2024 climate adaptation training, co-led by the Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization and Region 8, which was an internal and external opportunity for partners to learn more about regional climate change risks to contaminated sites and communities at large. On a smaller scale, increasing climate literacy often takes the format of smaller peer group discussions on a focused topic. The influx of recent BIL and IRA climate-related assistance has opened many new doors for increasing climate literacy and relationship building with new partners.

### 4. Senior Career Leader for Climate Adaptation

With this addendum, Region 8 designates Adrienne Sandoval, Director, Air and Radiation Division, as its new Senior Career Leader responsible for overseeing climate adaptation activities in Region 8.

## Appendix 1: EPA Region 8 FY24 Climate Adaptation Priority Actions

**Identify and promote opportunities to integrate climate adaptation and resiliency into Region 8 Air and Radiation Division (ARD)-managed Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding programs.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Number of meetings with Region 8 ARD BIL and IRA staff, and interactions with grantees, on climate adaptation opportunities within these funding programs.
Lead Division	ARD
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	All relevant impacts and vulnerabilities in Region 8.
Outcome	Improved understanding of how ARD-managed BIL and IRA investments in our region can provide a co-benefit of climate adaptation.

**Reduce exposure to wildfire smoke in Region 8 by promoting EPA and other appropriate and relevant external tools and resources.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Number of external engagements where wildfire smoke resources are shared.
Lead Division	ARD
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	Wildfire smoke.
Outcome	Increased knowledge of wildfire smoke adaptation strategies.

**Engage in cross-branch discussions within Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division (ECAD) and with Office of Regional Counsel (ORC) on further defining specific "climate change-related components" of inspections and case resolutions that should be tracked. Track inspections and case resolutions that have climate-related components (for example, climate-related injunctive relief, mitigation, or Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs)) where possible.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	Existing
FY24 Measure	Number of business review meetings held to track and discuss inspections and case outcomes that resulted in climate-change related components.
Lead Division	ECAD
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	All relevant impacts and vulnerabilities in Region 8, with a focus on wildfire, drought, flooding, and infrastructure loss.
Outcome	Improved understanding of how compliance and enforcement actions are addressing climate impacts and developing adaptations.

**Identify Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) hazardous waste facilities that could benefit from addressing flooding possibilities in permits, work plans, etc.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Number of states analyzed for RCRA hazardous waste sites impacted.
Lead Division	Land, Chemicals, and Redevelopment Division (LCRD)
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	Flooding.
Outcome	Increased awareness of RCRA hazardous waste facilities that may be impacted by flooding due to significant rainfall and would benefit from changes in permits, workplans, etc. that address the vulnerabilities.

**Assist Focus Point Family Resource Center in the design and construction of pilot agrivoltaic project.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Project completed and Fact Sheet developed detailing the results of research from the first growing season.
Lead Division	LCRD
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	Extreme heat, severe weather, and energy grid reliability.
Outcome	Lessons learned on how to utilize raised solar installations to improve crop production in urban agriculture and make urban gardens more resilient in the face of increasing temperatures and more severe storm events.

**Refine climate adaptation science priorities based on Region 8's FY24 and FY25 Climate Adaptation priority actions.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Near term science/research needs identified in Region 8's climate adaptation priorities and integrated into regional science priorities.
Lead Division	Laboratory Services and Applied Sciences Division (LSASD)
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	Wildfire, drought, emissions, etc.
Outcome	Improved connection of science priorities across Region 8's planning documents. Increased preparedness for research opportunities that can address knowledge or data gaps.

**Work with the divisions to ensure sufficient monitoring, technical, and analytical resources (Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and equipment) are available to allow programs to address climate change impacts.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Number of meetings held with Region 8 divisions and technical assistance requests addressed pertaining to current and foreseeable climate adaptation needs related to lab capacity and technical assistance.
Lead Division	LSASD
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	HABs, drought, and contaminated site vulnerability.
Outcome	Improved preparedness for climate related disasters. Improved technical and laboratory assistance to address climate adaptation needs across Region 8.

**Evaluate and begin to implement, in partnership with Office of Mission Support (OMS), opportunities to enhance the resilience of Region 8's internal workforce, facilities, and processes. For example, ensuring building and IT equipment resilience to the impacts of a changing climate, such as potential power outages and storm damage.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	Existing
FY24 Measure	Resilience measures evaluated and implemented where appropriate and feasible.
Lead Division	Mission Support Division (MSD)
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	All relevant impacts and vulnerabilities in Region 8.
Outcome	Improved resiliency of Region 8's internal workforce, facilities, and processes.

**Provide legal advice to Region 8 program clients to advance consideration and incorporation of climate and climate change considerations in decisions.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Legal advice provided to Region 8 program clients to incorporate climate adaptation in decisions.
Lead Division	ORC
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	Drought, aridity, wildfire, flooding, infrastructure loss, etc.
Outcome	Increased Region 8 program consideration and implementation of climate adaptation and resiliency in decisions.

**Assess/utilize Geographic Information System (GIS) data and tools to analyze National Priorities List (NPL) sites and other Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) sites for impacts associated with natural disasters and climate.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Number of Remedial Project Manager Practice Group brownbag sessions to train/educate Superfund and Emergency Management Division (SEMD) personnel on the emergency response ArcGIS (TERA) data layers and analysis capabilities using an existing Region 8 NPL site.
Lead Division	SEMD
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	Natural disasters and associated impacts such as wildfire smoke, drought, flooding, etc.
Outcome	Increased level of preparedness for climate related impacts on NPL site remedies and other CERCLA actions. Increased awareness of tools available to analyze NPL sites.

**Develop a template to integrate climate change impacts into aquifer exemption decisions.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Template developed.
Lead Division	Water Division (WD)
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	Drought and aquifer protection.
Outcome	Improved resiliency.

**Make recommendations on ways to build resiliency to threats and hazards in National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits and/or the statement of basis related to asset management.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Number of EPA issued permits.
Lead Division	WD
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	Drought, infrastructure loss, and asset management.
Outcome	Improved resiliency.

**Provide recommendations and develop tools to integrate climate change impacts into plan development (Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), Advance Restoration Plans (ARPs), and/or Protection Plans (PPs)) and implementation planning for Region 8 states.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Provide recommendations to integrate climate change impacts into plan development (TMDLs, ARPs, and/or PPs) and implementation planning for Region 8 states.
Lead Division	WD
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	Improved flow management and water quality impacts due to projected changes in future climate conditions.
Outcome	Improved water quality and resiliency.



**Incorporate, where possible, climate adaptation and mitigation considerations into programs that received funding from BIL/IRA.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Number of meetings with Region 8 BIL/IRA programs where climate adaptation and mitigation considerations are discussed.
Lead Division	Region-wide (ARD lead)
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	All relevant impacts and vulnerabilities in Region 8.
Outcome	Improved understanding of how regionally managed BIL and IRA investments can benefit climate adaptation.

**Elevate considerations of those disproportionately impacted by climate change, taking into account existing traditions and knowledge (Indigenous Knowledge, IK) and in coordination with AIEO.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Number of meetings and/or products rolled out, in coordination with AIEO, that assist in considering Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in climate adaptation programs and activities.
Lead Division	Region-wide (ARD led)
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	All relevant impacts and vulnerabilities in Region 8.
Outcome	Improved integration and consideration of IK best practices and guidance in climate adaptation programs and activities.

**Provide climate adaptation training to Region 8 staff and regularly share both internal and appropriate external climate adaptation training materials with relevant regional staff.**

Existing or New Priority Action?	New in FY24
FY24 Measure	Number of climate adaptation training opportunities shared with regional staff.
Lead Division	Region-wide (ARD led)
Climate Impacts and/or Vulnerabilities Addressed	All relevant impacts and vulnerabilities in Region 8.
Outcome	Increased knowledge of climate impacts, program-specific vulnerabilities, and potential adaptation strategies.