**SUMMARY BRIEFING FOR INTERNAL & EXTERNAL AUDIENCES – ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE & EMBEDDING OUR REVISED APPROACH WITHIN EPR PERMITTING**

Adapting to climate change is a priority and we want to support regulated businesses to keep complying with their permit whilst coping with:

* an increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events as well as gradual changes to usual weather patterns causing unforeseen challenges
* disruption and failure of supply chains locally and globally because of climate change
* increased risks from mean global temperature rises of 2 oC by 2050 and 4 oC by 2100

**Background**

Within our third adaptation report: - [Living better with a changing climate (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1025955/environment-agency-climate-change-adaptation-report.pdf#page=84). we committed to “*all regulatory permissions and activities [within Regulated Industry] to support & deliver embedding of climate change adaptation based on a mean global temperature rise of +4oC by 2100 including a corresponding rise by 2050’.*

This means we needed to move away from the previous permitting approach and move to a much broader approach. We are doing this by refocussing on an existing requirement to consider climate change adaptation within sites management systems.

On the 31st August 2022, the Environment Agency launched our revised approach and committed to supporting business to update their management systems over time, prioritising highest hazard activities first. By 2026 we expect all permitted activities to have appropriate climate change adaptation planning embedded into their management systems. In the meantime, we expect all relevant sites to at least have completed a risk assessment by April 2024. When we assess management systems (through routine compliance activity), we will offer advice and guidance initially but by applying increasing scrutiny of management systems over time, we expect to see all sites fully incorporating climate change adaptation planning by 2026. We are working with sector leads to determine the best way and timescale for this.

**Support for embedding the revised approach**

From the 31st August 2022 we no longer have an additional risk assessment process for new bespoke waste and installations permit applications. Instead, the overarching Management System guidance was clarified to explain what operators should consider and do to help make themselves and their operations more resilient to climate change.

To support operators we clarified how to comply with the existing requirement within our overarching MS system guidance: [Develop a Management System: environmental permits](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fdevelop-a-management-system-environmental-permits&data=05%7C01%7Cheather.barker%40environment-agency.gov.uk%7C8a16c7c27ac14afbcbf008da43b678ba%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C637896748225798983%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=lKSp7bQ8ycCq509P%2FlyxP5tj%2BQ9veeWUmYEvgOCbpWc%3D&reserved=0)

Since August 2022 we have been working on developing a package of support measures to help permitted sites embed the requirement to consider the risks from climate change more fully.

We are now in the process of publishing or have published the following to support operators in that task:

Sector specific risk assessment examples on GOV.UK are being updated

There are already sector specific examples of climate related risks to regulated activities and possible mitigations to support the existing requirement which provide a helpful steer on some of the commonly encountered issues. These are published here: Adapting to climate change: industry sector examples for your risk assessment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and are being updated to ensure they capture a lot of the learning from the extreme weather events of 2022.

We will look to revise these risk assessments with input from sectors regularly in future.

The revised management system guidance has been amended

We have updated the management system guidance to clarify the position for existing permit holders and when they will need to comply with the revised requirements. This amended guidance is published here: [Develop a Management System: environmental permits](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fdevelop-a-management-system-environmental-permits&data=05%7C01%7Cheather.barker%40environment-agency.gov.uk%7C8a16c7c27ac14afbcbf008da43b678ba%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C637896748225798983%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=lKSp7bQ8ycCq509P%2FlyxP5tj%2BQ9veeWUmYEvgOCbpWc%3D&reserved=0) and states that we expect all relevant operators will have at least completed a risk assessment by April 2024.

Supporting guidance has been published

With help and input from industry bodies we have produced a supporting guidance document to help operators comply with the revised requirement to embed adaptation more fully within management systems. The [supporting guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/climate-change-risk-assessment-and-adaptation-planning-in-your-management-system) is also published on GOV.UK and linked from the management system guidance.

A best practice guidance template is being produced

By working with others and reviewing what support already exists we have been able to produce an example best practice guidance document that trade associations and other professional bodies may find helpful to develop their own best practice documents from to support their members.

**What next?**

We need to act faster than the climate is changing. We need to move at pace and start adapting to climate change. We need to embed climate change adaptation into all that we do to ensure and maintain resilience.

If you would like to discuss any of the above with us, then please get in touch via your usual contacts or sector leads.

03/04/2023.