

Project: Met Office Hadley Centre Review

Client: Defra

The Requirement

Risk Solutions, led a multi-disciplinary team of experts to deliver the recent fundamental review of the Met Office Hadley Centre for Climate Change Research on behalf of Defra and the MoD. This comprehensive review addressed:

- the excellence of the scientific research carried out
- the relevance and utility of the research to policy makers
- the people, processes, system and culture that supports delivery of these.

The review took place at something of a watershed in the history of the Met Office Hadley Centre:

- There is increasing acceptance that climate change is occurring, that this can be attributed to human activities and that it presents a significant risk worldwide.
- Modelling has increased in complexity creating further challenges for modellers in balancing their resources.
- Both Defra and the MoD were reviewed the way they procured climate change research.

In the light of this the review needed to be forward looking, the question we had to answer was not simply “how well is the Met Office Hadley Centre performing?” but also “how well can it continue performing into the future?”

Method

The review was required in a very short timescale. Our first task was to develop and agree the review framework with the client. We carried out interviews with senior stakeholders (including Professor Sir David King and Professor Sir Howard Dalton – chief scientific advisor for Defra) and senior management at Hadley and the Met Office. We used this to populate a high-level inputs to outcomes map.

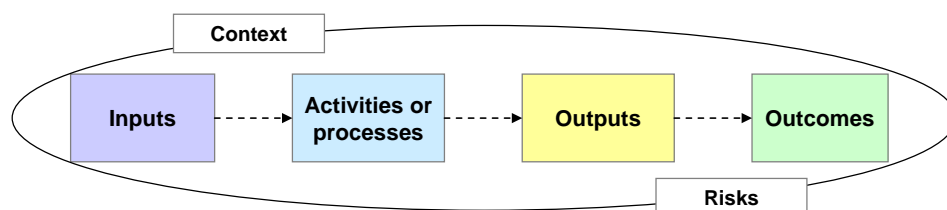


Figure 1: Elements of the Review Framework

We collected data to inform the review in a variety of ways including:

- Interviews of customers, staff, collaborators and broader stakeholders including the media
- A workshop of Met Office Hadley Centre staff
- A two day Expert Panel visit of leading international climate scientists
- Peer review of papers, and
- Critical review of brochures, briefing materials, strategy and other documents

Findings

The conclusions of the review were generally very positive. The Met Office Hadley Centre is currently internationally regarded as one of the leading climate modelling centres in the world, and in general it is providing high quality, fit for purpose outputs focused on the customers' requirements. The UK Government's leading role in international climate change policy has been strongly supported by Hadley's world leading status and Hadley's stakeholders value this international standing. The report made a number of practical recommendations to ensure that the Centre could continue to deliver world class, policy relevant science into the future.

We also recommended that the UK Government take a strategic decision about the value it places on the Met Office Hadley Centre's world-leading status. Other governments around the world are developing their climate science capabilities, so for the UK to remain ahead of the world may require an increase in resources, in real terms, particularly in the area of supercomputing.

The final report is available on Defra's website at www.defra.gov.uk.