



PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

BENCHMARKING CIP MEMBERS

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INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) has been in dialogue with its members on climate change since 2007. Part of this dialogue comprised a series of benchmarking surveys and focus groups. Since March 2008, CIP has conducted four benchmarking surveys. To augment the survey data, focus groups were held in every Affiliate between the second and third survey. These surveys and the supporting focus groups were made possible by the financial support from Natural Resources Canada under the Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Program.

This report represents the conclusion of the benchmarking and focus group process. It reviews the benchmarking surveys of 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2012. Also, the outcome of the seven focus groups, while presented in a report in 2011, is included in this report to allow for a comprehensive analysis. Together, the four benchmarking surveys and the seven focus groups establish the current benchmark (March 2012) for CIP members on various aspects of climate change understanding, climate change tools and climate change planning.

The report also reflects the change in opinions of CIP members about climate change over the four-year survey period. In total, more than 4,800 CIP members participated in the four benchmarking surveys. This permits a very accurate analysis of members' changing attitudes and opinions on climate change and tools that support climate change planning. It also allows CIP to determine an accurate benchmark.

CIP's benchmarking initiative has produced several reports. Each of the four surveys and the focus group process have been reported on in detail. Summaries of the supporting data are provided in these separate reports and are not repeated in this report. All reports can be found on CIP's website www.planningforclimatechange.ca.

Gary Davidson, FCIP and Beate Bowron FCIP, who are principal researchers for CIP's climate change program, *Mainstreaming Climate Change Tools for the Professional Planning Community*, authored this report.

METHODOLOGY

To benchmark its members on a wide range of climate change issues CIP conducted four surveys. The surveys were conducted in March 2008, November 2009, January 2011 and January 2012. To augment the survey data and gather detailed opinions of CIP members, seven focus groups were held in 2010. In order to obtain a broad cross section of national opinion, one focus group was held in each of CIP's seven Affiliate organizations.

All four surveys and the focus group series led to their own reports. These reports and all supporting information are available on CIP's website as noted in the introduction. These reports are quite detailed and stand on their own. This report does not repeat the findings of the individual surveys or focus groups. Rather, it summarizes them in order to establish a new benchmark and investigate the trends that have emerged over the four-year survey period.

The benchmarking approach adopted by CIP for both the surveys and the focus groups covers six themes. These are:

- 1. The level of awareness of climate change among CIP members*
- 2. The impact of climate change on planners' day-to-day work*
- 3. The appropriate tools for climate change planning*
- 4. The barriers to implementing climate change planning*
- 5. The tools that planners require to address planning for mitigation and adaptation*
- 6. The information that planners require to do climate change planning*

The four surveys employed these six themes to engage participants. The focus groups used the same six themes to facilitate discussion. Following the first survey additional questions were added to augment CIP's understanding of specific responses. Where clarifying questions have been added, they are noted and an explanation for their inclusion is provided. For questions that asked respondents to rank various statements there was a change following the 2008 survey to yield a higher level of gradation. The 2008 survey used a 5-point scale with two possible responses above and two below the central point of the scale. In the 2009, 2011 and 2012 surveys a 7-point scale was used with three possible responses above and three below the central point¹. In order to make the four surveys comparable, the tables in this report present data for percentages or ranks either above or below the central point of the scale.

All four surveys produced statistically significant responses, although the 2009, 2011 and 2012 surveys had much higher response rates than the 2008 survey. Table 1 provides the number of responses to each survey.

¹ An "I don't know / Not applicable" response was also included.

**TABLE 1
SURVEY RESPONSE RATES**

Survey Date	Number of Responses
March 2008	309
November 2009	1843
January 2011	1273
January 2012	1387

The surveys also tracked seven variables to determine whether the responses received, in addition to being statistically valid, are also representative across the entire CIP membership. Information on the following seven variables was collected in each survey.

- Affiliate
- Size of community of practice (major city to remote communities)
- Age of respondent
- Years worked as a planner
- Current position
- Type of planning specialty
- Current employment (government, consultant, academia, etc.)

These variables were then compared against the characteristics of the CIP membership for each survey. The “fit” was very good across all seven variables². In developing a benchmark on climate change, CIP is confident that the data from the surveys represents the general population of its members and further represents its membership across all specific variables. This denotes a very high level of statistical confidence for the benchmark for CIP members.

Surveys yield important data but can miss the nuances that face-to-face discussion brings. To add this type of input, a focus group was held in each Affiliate³. Each focus group included 15 to 20 invited planners and was designed to cover a broad range of members from students to Fellows. The focus group discussion followed the same six themes used for the surveys and provided considerable information that has been integrated into the benchmark.

The benchmark described in this report combines the results of all four surveys and the findings of the seven focus groups. Results are presented in the following section under each of the six themes.

² Each survey report contains its own analysis of these variables. The 2012 survey also contains detailed analysis for each variable and a comparison among the 2009, 2011 and 2012 surveys.

³ A detailed review on the focus groups can be found in the report *Results of Focus Group Discussions with Canadian Planners*, located at www.planningforclimatechange.ca.

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

As mentioned in the methodology section above, CIP’s benchmarking surveys and focus groups cover six themes. This section analyzes the major trends for each theme.

Level of Awareness

Each survey asked respondents how aware they are of the impact of climate change on planning issues. This represents the “perceived awareness” of the respondent. Table 2 shows the level of awareness for all categories above the central point, as a percentage of the survey respondents.

**TABLE 2
LEVEL OF AWARENESS**

Survey Date	Level of Awareness
March 2008	55%
November 2009	84%
January 2011	88%
January 2012	95%

The awareness of planners has grown substantially over the survey period, from 55% to 95%. The reason for this cannot be attributed directly to any specific cause. During the survey period there was considerable media attention on climate change, but also CIP was actively promoting its climate change policy, holding climate change workshops at Affiliate conferences, sponsoring a Northern Symposium and organizing a major international conference on climate change to showcase its work.

The 2011 survey also looked at the number of new participants in the survey between 2009 and 2011. Only 23% said they participated in both surveys. For the 2012 survey, 42% indicated that they had participated in the survey conducted in 2011. This indicates that, as more planners become aware of climate change, they participated in CIP’s benchmarking surveys.

The 2011 and 2012 surveys also probed what planners think is the “cause of climate change”. Of the planners responding, 83% in 2011 and 82% in 2012 feel that humans “impact the advancement of climate change”. It should be noted that 25% (2012) and 30% (2011) of the respondents chose not to respond to this question.

The discussions in the focus groups support the survey finding that planners have a high level of awareness. Or, as one planner noted: “We are painfully aware”. This awareness is at a general level and does not include much “scientific understanding”. The focus groups noted, however, that the language of climate change is too diffuse and terms like climate change, global warming, sustainability, green, resilience, livability, etc. get used interchangeably.

In summary, it can be concluded that planners are very aware of the climate change impacts on planning and that this awareness has increased considerably over the benchmarking period.

This awareness is seen as a “general awareness” and needs additional scientific content. Also, the language planners use to discuss climate change impacts and solutions needs to be sharpened. At a 95% general awareness level, it can be concluded that the CIP membership is fully aware of climate change and the mainstreaming process is complete.

Impact on Day-to-Day Planning

All four surveys asked planners: “How often do you incorporate climate change impacts into your professional deliberations?” Table 3 tracks the changes and indicates the percentage of respondents that fall into the categories above the central point of the question’s scale.

**TABLE 3
INCORPORATION OF IMPACTS**

Survey Date	Incorporation Rate
March 2008	39%
November 2009	41%
January 2011	48%
January 2012	46%

To refine this theme, the 2009, 2011 and 2012 surveys added the following questions and asked for the respondent’s agreement on a seven-point scale.

1. Climate change has had a substantial impact on my planning work
2. The impact of climate change should be incorporated into planning reports
3. Stakeholders are demanding that the impact of climate change be incorporated into planning decisions.

Table 4 indicates the responses to these questions. Again, the percentage figures reflect positive responses above the central point of the scale.

**TABLE 4
CLIMATE CHANGE DEMAND**

Survey Date	Impact on Work	Include in Reports	Stakeholder Demand
November 2009	62%	79%	43%
January 2011	63%	82%	44%
January 2012	65%	81%	38%

When combined, the four surveys yield some interesting information on planners’ perceptions of the impact of climate change on their work and where the pressure to incorporate climate change arises. Over the survey period, the number of planners incorporating climate change impacts into their work has increased from 39% to the mid-40% range. Currently, almost half of Canada’s planners incorporate climate change considerations into their work.

From Table 4 it is apparent that there is still a ways to go. Approximately two thirds of planners feel that climate change has a “substantial impact” on their work. Further, approximately 80%

feel the impacts of climate change should be included in planning reports. It appears that the demand for including climate change impacts in planning decisions arises from planners themselves, as only 38% in the most recent survey indicated that concerns about climate change impacts are driven by stakeholders.

In all four variables reported in Table 4 the percentages are relatively constant. Also, the “incorporation rate” (Table 3) seems to have leveled off in the mid 40% range. There is still a considerable gap between what planners actually do and what they feel they should be doing.

Responses from the focus groups shed further light on some of the differences in the survey data. The general feeling in all the focus groups was that planners are “just too busy” to include climate change impacts in their reports. They feel they should be incorporating climate change in their reports, but there is not enough time and there are too many conflicting priorities. It was suggested CIP amend its climate change policy to require the inclusion of climate change impacts in planning reports. If this were to occur, then planners would have more ammunition to convince their managers and politicians that climate change impacts should be routinely considered.

Climate Change Planning Tools

A major objective of CIP’s benchmarking program is to determine what “planning tools” Canadian planners use now to address climate change impacts and what tools they would like to see developed. The first survey undertook the identification of tools while the remaining three surveys focused on the prioritization of planning tools.

The 2008 survey asked the following:

- Please list the three planning tools you use most often
- In your opinion, which three planning tools would be most able to incorporate mitigation measures
- In your opinion, which three planning tools would be most able to incorporate adaptation measures
- What additional tool(s) would make it easier for you to assess the climate change impacts of planning projects

Planners were able to list easily the tools they use most often. The top two were zoning and official plans. Public consultation and design guidelines tied for third place. However, the answers to the other three questions were instructive. The top ranking answer to these three questions was “I don’t know or I’m not sure”. The gap in frequency between the “I don’t know” response and the next cited tool is always significant.

The preponderance of “I don’t know or I’m not sure” answers indicated a need to redesign the questions for the next three surveys. In the 2009, 2011 and 2012 surveys the following questions were used:

- Please indicate which planning tools, if any, you have used most frequently when addressing the impact of climate change over the last two years
- In your opinion, what three planning tools would be most useful in assisting you in addressing climate change impacts in your planning reports

- Over the last two years how often did you consider climate change mitigation when preparing your planning reports
- Currently, how often do you consider climate change mitigation when preparing your planning reports
- Over the last two years how often did you consider climate change adaptation when preparing your planning reports
- Currently, how often do you consider climate change adaptation when preparing your planning reports

All four surveys probed tools that planners use in their work and the three top tools for addressing climate change impacts. The 2009, 2011 and 2012 surveys also tried to differentiate the frequency of mitigation and adaptation appearing in planning reports. The Climate Change Planning Tools theme targets the role and frequency of tools and a separate theme (Theme 5) addresses mitigation and adaptation.

Table 5 presents information on which planning tools are used most frequently across the four surveys. The top 10 from each survey are noted.

**TABLE 5
TOP 10 TOOLS PLANNERS USE**

Planning Tool	2008 Rank	2009 Rank	2011 Rank	2012 Rank
Zoning	1	5	3	4
Official plans	2	1	1	1
Design guidelines	3			6
Public consultation	4	7		
Plans of subdivision	5		5	
Policy documents	6	3	2	2
Site plan control	7		9	7
Community / neighbourhood plans	8		8	8
Provincial policy / legislation	9	6		
I don't know	10			
Research / studies		2		5
Environmental sustainability		4		9
Environmental impact assessment (EIA or EIS)		8	4	3
Sustainability planning		9	6	10
LEED standards		10		
Development review / permits			7	
Smart growth policies			10	

The next set of questions asked planners to rank the top three planning tools for addressing climate change impacts. Table 6 lists these by survey year. For comparative purposes, ranking positions of any tool that fell outside the top three in any of the surveys are listed in brackets.

**TABLE 6
TOP 3 PLANNING TOOLS FOR
ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS**

Planning Tool	2008 Rank	2009 Rank	2011 Rank	2012 Rank
Zoning	1	3	2	(4)
Official plans	2	(4)	1	1
Design guidelines	3	(21)	(23)	(6)
Policy documents	(6)	1	(6)	2
Provincial policy / legislation	(9)	2	3	(22)
Environments impact assessments (EIA or EIS)	(Not indicated)	(9)	(4)	3

Tables 5 and 6 show a fairly consistent pattern of planning tools used by planners and tools planners feel are best suited for addressing climate change impacts. Over the survey period five tools dominate both tables. There is a heavy weighting towards policy tools, with all but zoning falling into the broad “policy” category. Zoning remains the development control tool of choice.

This grouping is important. It indicates that planners gravitate to tools they know best and are looking for ways to adapt known tools when addressing climate change. Some new tools do appear in the top 10 list. As the field of climate change planning matures, the use of design guidelines and environmental impact statements is becoming more prevalent. While these are standard tools for planners, it appears they are being modified for use in climate change planning.

The focus groups added some important observations to the use of existing tools for climate change planning. They indicated that planners need to remove barriers within existing planning tools, such as zoning bylaws and policy tools, so they can be used more creatively. Removing these internal barriers would help planners use their existing tools more effectively. The focus groups concurred that adapting existing tools is preferable to developing a new suite of tools for climate change planning.

There is a need to stay focused on comprehensive and integrated planning and not be lured into single purpose climate change planning. Sustainability or resilience plans may provide a comprehensive framework, while being more open to the inclusion of climate change considerations. There will be a need for specific climate change tools to contribute more effectively to comprehensive plans such as; expanded use of GIS, scenario building and risk assessment tools.

Barriers to Climate Change Planning

All four surveys asked planners to list various barriers to implementing climate change planning in their professional work. The 2008 survey produced a comprehensive list of potential barriers, and then these barriers formed the list of potential barriers respondents chose from in the following three surveys. The original list of barriers was quite extensive and even though additional barriers could be added, few were. Table 7 ranks the top 10 barriers from each survey by frequency of mention.

**TABLE 7
BARRIERS TO CLIMATE CHANGE PLANNING**

Barrier	2008 Rank	2009 Rank	2011 Rank	2012 Rank
Lack of awareness	1	1	1	1
Lack of political support / will	2	2	2	9
Time / cost / profit implications	3	3	10	2
Developer / market resistance	4	9	8	3
Resources (HR, skills, financial)	5	6	7	
NIMBY	6	8		5
Information at regional / local level	7	4	6	7
Lack of legislation / policy	8	5	4	4
Lack of tools	9	10		
Silo mentality	10			
Disbelief in climate change		7	5	6
Reluctance to change life style			3	8
Conflicting priorities			9	
Climate change not measurable				10

Planners have been quite consistent over the survey period on the barriers to climate change planning. In all surveys “lack of awareness” and “lack of political will and support” for climate change planning initiatives have been noted in the top 10. In the 2012 survey cost implications and developer resistance have again moved up as significant barriers. Overall, the list of barriers, while jostling around in the rankings, has remained quite constant over the four survey years.

The focus groups added an interesting perspective to the discussion on barriers. The focus group approach allowed for an extensive examination of the causes of the barriers and what planners should do about them.

The focus group report indicates six types of barriers. These are:

- Resources
- Will
- Communications
- Planners

- Leadership
- Complexity

The barriers of resources and will also were identified as critical in the surveys. However, the focus groups identified planners and complexity as significant barriers. They feel planners need more education on climate change and have to work harder at communicating the importance of climate change planning within their organizations. This is a distinct challenge due to the overwhelming complexity of climate change and how it affects all aspects of a community’s development. Finally, the focus groups see an important opportunity for CIP and individual members to take a leadership role in promoting climate change planning.

Mitigation and Adaptation

This theme is designed to gauge planners’ understanding of mitigation and adaptation and how frequently both are considered in the reports they write.

The initial questions in the 2008 survey produced inconclusive results for the questions that asked about mitigation and adaptation tools that planners use. The most frequent answer, and by a wide margin, was “I don’t know” or “I’m not sure”. Hence, for the three following surveys the questions on mitigation and adaptation were revised to probe how often mitigation and adaptation have been considered, both over the last two years and currently in planners’ work. The results provide both a time perspective and an indication of the relative weight of the two types of climate change planning. Table 8 displays these two dimensions. Again, the percentages indicate positive responses in the three categories over the central point of the scale.

**TABLE 8
MITIGATION & ADAPTATION**

Survey Date	Mitigation		Adaptation	
	Past 2 Years	Currently	Past 2 Years	Currently
November 2009	50%	57%	34%	39%
January 2011	45%	50%	39%	44%
January 2012	44%	47%	37%	42%

The results of Table 8 show two divergent trends. Consideration of mitigation in planning reports decreases between 2009 and 2012, while the consideration of adaptation increases and stays relatively constant. By 2012 both adaptation and mitigation are similar, with consideration of adaptation only 5 percentage points behind consideration of mitigation in current planning activity.

The reason for the drop in the numbers for mitigation is unknown. However, the increased focus on adaptation by planners came at the same time as CIP was promoting adaptation planning through presentations to Affiliate conferences, the promotion of its climate change policy, presentation of a 2-day intensive workshop, conducting a Northern symposium and the hosting of an international climate change conference. Given the situation at the start of the

benchmarking cycle, awareness and incorporation in planning work of climate change adaptation have grown significantly.

Planners in the focus groups feel there is still a great deal of confusion over the two terms. This applies to the profession, but especially to the general public. There is a consensus that the understanding of climate change adaptation is growing. The initial reaction of planners that climate change planning is all about mitigation is receding. Table 8 corroborates this perception. There still needs to be a great deal of work done by planners on understanding the differences and similarities between mitigation and adaptation planning and communicating this to decision-makers and the public at large.

Information Needs

All four surveys asked planners to identify additional information sources that would be helpful in assessing the climate change impacts of planning projects. The 2008 survey provided an open-ended listing. The 2009, 2011 and 2012 surveys also asked planners to rank the three most useful information sources. The analysis of the 2008 responses determined usefulness by the frequency of responses, while the 2009, 2011 and 2012 surveys used a seven-point scale to determine usefulness. Table 9 lists the information by frequency for the 2008 survey.

**TABLE 9
INFORMATION SOURCES BY FREQUENCY
2008 SURVEY**

Information Source	Frequency
I don't know	94
Local information on climate change threats	17
Education tools for the public	10
Best practices	7
Models to calculate GHGs	7
Practical implementation tools	5
CPL courses for planners	5

In light of the frequency of the “I don't know” response in the 2008 benchmarking survey, the 2009, 2011 and 2012 surveys developed a “weighted ranking” to determine the respondent's top three choices. Table 10 compares requested information sources from these three surveys. It also includes the 2008 survey results for reference. The top ten information sources are noted for the 2009, 2011 and 2012 surveys. The 2008 survey produced only 6 requested sources. The “I don't know” category has been dropped, as it is not an information source.

TABLE 10
INFORMATION SOURCES
2009 & 2011 SURVEYS

Information Source	2008 Survey	2009 Survey	2011 Survey	2012 Survey
Data / statistics / science		1		10
Impacts of climate change		2		
Emissions information	4	3		
Policy / legislation / regulations		4	3	2
Research studies and examples		5	10	
Local area information	1	6	5	6
Risk mitigation		7	9	
Best practices	2	8	1	1
Cost / benefit analysis		9	6	3
Public education and awareness	3	10	2	5
Training and education for planners	6		4	7
Government initiatives			7	9
Funding sources			8	8
Practical implementation tools	5			
Sharing of information				4

There is some consistency throughout the four surveys. Local information on climate change impacts, best practices and public awareness / education appear in all four surveys among the top ten information sources. Also, there is a need for up-to-date information on various policies, legislation and regulations that apply throughout Canada. In addition, more research on climate change and climate change tools is needed. Finally, planners see a need for more training for themselves.

The focus groups observations reinforce the need for local information such as: scenarios, community vulnerabilities, lists of specific impacts and community benchmarks. Sharing information was an important consideration at the focus groups. It was noted that, while information and best practices are being produced at an ever-increasing rate, often the agencies collecting the data want to charge municipalities for this information. A strong plea was made that climate change information should be provided to municipalities free of charge.

SETTING A BENCHMARK

The previous section on survey and focus group results explored the information for each of the six themes around which CIP wants to set a benchmark for its members. Now the benchmark needs to be established from the trends that arise out of the four surveys and the focus groups.

CIP first established a benchmark in the March 2011 report “Benchmarking CIP Members”. The 2012 Survey became a way of seeing if any major changes had occurred and calibrating the benchmark, if necessary. The 2012 survey revealed no great surprises, not even small ones. However, the 2012 survey is important in that it indicates that there is now a great deal of confidence in the key climate change themes that CIP uses for benchmarking purposes in conformity with its policy on climate change.

Trends

Important trends appear under each of the six themes. Drawing these trends together establishes the basis for a current benchmark and suggests future directions. The trends indicate the road planners have travelled since 2008. The benchmark specifies where planners are today. Together, they signal a future course for CIP and the Affiliates to pursue to assist their members with climate change planning.

Level of Awareness

Planners’ level of awareness has grown considerably over the past four years. In fact, it has grown from 55% in 2008 to 95% in 2012, a significant 73% increase over the base year. Planners are “well aware” of climate change and its impact on planning. This level of awareness has now spread throughout the profession. There is no room for growth in the general level of awareness. Rather, the challenge is to deepen planners’ understanding of climate change and climate change planning. This result can be seen as a major success in mainstreaming climate change within the profession.

Impact on Day-to-Day Planning

The incorporation of climate change impacts in the daily work of planners has improved over the four years and risen from 39% to 45%. It appears to have stabilized in the mid 40% range. Currently, almost half of all planners consider climate change impacts in their work. However, they have even higher expectations. Approximately two thirds indicate that climate change impacts their daily work and approximately 80% say that climate change considerations should be included in their reports. There is still a significant challenge to increase the inclusion of climate change impacts in planning reports and move from the current level to the goal of 80%. However, this gap has stabilized over the last three years and movement will definitely be a challenge.

Climate Change Planning Tools

Planners consider policy tools the most useful for dealing with climate change impacts. They are quite familiar with these tools and their use. There is a need to fine-tune existing planning tools to address climate change in a more creative fashion. Also, some new special purpose climate change tools, such as scenario building, are seen as promising. Over the four-year survey period

there has been little change in the tools that planners rank as useful for dealing with climate change.

Barriers to Climate Change Planning

Planners are very aware of the barriers they face. There is widespread agreement that the lack of awareness of climate change within the general public, the lack of political support and the need for dedicated resources are the key barriers. The challenge is to develop ways to overcome these barriers now that they are clearly defined. Again, there is considerable consistency over the survey period suggesting that there is a strong consensus on barriers.

Mitigation and Adaptation

Planners still consider mitigation slightly more important than adaptation in climate change planning. However, over the four years of the benchmarking project, the understanding and acceptance of adaptation has grown considerably and now there is only a 5% difference between the two in current practice. About half of Canada's planners now use both mitigation and adaptation approaches in their work. Adaptation planning is firmly entrenched in the planning consciousness, which is a considerable achievement. The challenge now is to grow both mitigation and adaptation considerations in day-to-day planning decisions.

Information Needs

There will always be a need for more information, especially in a growing field like climate change where new information seems to appear daily. However, planners consistently identify public awareness and education, local area information and best practices as key information needs to support climate change planning.

It is always difficult to speculate on what causes the trends that appear in the six themes. Climate change planning is complex and there are numerous influences on planners' understanding of the topic. Over the four years of the surveys and focus groups, CIP, with the assistance of Natural Resources Canada, has invested heavily in two aspects of climate change planning within the profession. First, CIP has developed and delivered workshops on climate change and climate change planning throughout the country. These have helped to "mainstream" climate change for the professional planning community. Secondly, CIP through its policy and workshops has drawn attention to the difference between mitigation and adaptation and championed planning for adaptation. It is most probable that CIP's activities have helped raise awareness, encouraged planners to incorporate climate change impacts into their day-to-day work and sharply raised the profile of adaptation planning. The fourth and final survey has solidified these conclusions.

The Benchmark

The benchmark indicates where planners and CIP are positioned on climate change planning. It describes the current situation and provides the base from which we should measure progress over the coming years. What is the current benchmark?

The benchmark for climate change planning encompasses two elements. The first is the individual planner and her or his knowledge and actions. The second is institutional. CIP and the Affiliates supply information, help to break down barriers and have Continuous Professional

Learning (CPL) programs that encourage planners to acquire new tools. Firm benchmarks can be established for planners, whereas, directional benchmarks can be determined for CIP and the Affiliates.

The Planner

As of January 2012, the vast majority of Canadian planners are aware of climate change. The benchmark is 95% for awareness and probably has peaked. Inclusion of climate change considerations in day-to-day work is growing. The current benchmark is 46% and seems to have stabilized. Planners now understand that both mitigation and adaptation are important in climate change planning. When it comes to including these two aspects of climate change in day-to-day work, the benchmark for mitigation is 47% and 42% for adaptation and again appears to have stabilized.

These three elements – awareness, considerations of climate change impacts in day-to-day work and the understanding and inclusion of mitigation and adaptation – form the benchmarks for individual planners and the areas where improvement can be sought and measured.

Awareness has peaked. However, the future challenge will be to raise the bar for inclusion of climate change in the work planners undertake on a day-to-day basis.

CIP and Affiliates

The other three themes relate to supports that planners require to raise their benchmark performance. While planners play a role in improving their performance, much of the assistance needs to come from their professional organizations and from within their workplace.

The challenge for CIP is to develop depth in adaptation planning. This is the rightful task for the CPL program. CIP has workshops on how to broaden planners' proficiency in climate change planning. Also, CIP has developed tools that use planners' core skills but focus specifically on climate change planning. These will assist in improving the benchmark.

The barriers to climate change planning and the information needs have been clearly identified through the benchmarking process. This is another area in which individual planners need support from their professional organizations. The results of the benchmarking process can focus the attention of these organizations on the barriers and information needs identified by planners.

CIP has developed a policy on climate change. Strengthening it by requiring planners to include climate change considerations in reports would help planners overcome some of the barriers they have identified and give them more support within their workplace. Additional information needs for climate change planning have also been identified. These provide a directional benchmark for Affiliates and CIP to consider in designing new CPL courses.

Future Directions

How do we measure progress? What is reasonable over the next several years? How can CIP and Affiliates help? General awareness is probably as high as it can get at 95%. Efforts should be directed at deepening climate change knowledge within the profession, removing barriers and providing information.

Including climate change considerations in a planner's daily work is a significant challenge. Currently approximate 78% think they should, but only 46% do. However, significant barriers and information needs have been identified. Perhaps the biggest challenge for planners and their professional organizations is to raise the percentage of planners who routinely include the impact of climate change in their reports and plans.

Through CIP's climate change initiative a series of specific tools for climate change planning have been developed and are circulating within the profession. These include a Toolkit on climate change adaptation planning in northern communities, a Handbook for climate change adaptation planning in small Canadian communities, a Model Standard of Practice for climate change planning and a Report Card for planners and municipalities to assess their climate change planning efforts. These tools will provide additional help to planners over the next few years and improve overall climate change planning in Canada.

NOTE ON SUPPORTING DATA

As indicated in the methodology section, this report contains no appendices providing supporting data. The four surveys and the focus groups each generated individual reports that contain appendices with full supporting data. This material can be found at www.planningforclimatechange.ca. All other tools mentioned in this report are available on the same website.