

ANNEX 1

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

adaptation	action taken by society in response to the potential impacts of predicted climate change.
adaptive capacity	the ability of a system to adjust to climate change (including climate variability and extremes) to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences.
anthropogenic component	that part of the driving forces of climate change which is attributable to human activities.
baseline climate	the thirty-year period from 1961-1990 relating to either observed data or model simulated data which is used as the standard reference point from which future changes in climate are currently based.
climate	the average weather experienced in a region over a long period, (normally 30 years).
climate change	the continuous pattern of changes in climate, in response to a variety of natural and man-made causes.
climate change scenario	a coherent and internally-consistent description of the change in climate by a certain time in the future, using a specific modelling technique and under specific assumptions about the growth of greenhouse gas and other emissions and about other factors that may influence climate in the future.
greenhouse effect	the result of certain gases in the atmosphere (so-called greenhouse gases) absorbing energy that is radiated from the Earth's surface, and so warming the atmosphere.
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	an international forum of experts brought together by the United Nations to undertake periodical assessments addressing how climate will change, what its impacts may be and how we can respond. It was originally formed in 1988 and published its Third Assessment Report (TAR) in 2001.
mitigation	activities which seek to reduce the human effects on global warming by reducing the quantity of greenhouse gases released to the atmosphere.
natural component	that part of the driving force of climate change which is attributable to natural activities.
precipitation	water falling in some form be it rain, snow, sleet or hail.
return period	the average time between climate events of a given magnitude. For example, in parts of Southern England, a rainfall total of 100mm in one day has a return period of 100 years. A 100-year return period is the equivalent of the event that has a 1% probability of occurring in any one year. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that this might occur in the current year!
sensitivity	the degree to which a system is affected, either adversely or beneficially, by climate-related stimuli.
vulnerability	the degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes.