

Evaluating the effectiveness of flood and coastal erosion risk governance in England and Wales

Research project FRS17186/3

Flood and Coastal Research Team
Environment Agency

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Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



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Project overview

Aim: to evaluate the effectiveness of current flood and coastal erosion risk governance in England and Wales

Objectives:

- I. Assess multi-level governance arrangements for flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) to identify opportunities for enhancing effectiveness
- II. Examine governance arrangements within selected partnerships at the local scale to identify good governance practices and transferable lessons
- III. Create practical guidance on effective governance to support existing and future partnerships.

Methods: Interviews (x60); in-depth document analysis & literature review; x2 workshops

Project outputs

This presentation addresses objective I. These findings are reported in full in “*Evaluating the effectiveness of flood & coastal erosion risk governance in England and Wales*”.

A **separate presentation** summarises findings from the accompanying report “*Supporting flood and coastal erosion risk management through partnerships*”.

Guidance on implementing effective governance arrangements, includes:

1. Journey Planner: Legitimate partnerships
2. Journey Planner: Internal partnership dynamics
3. Journey Planner: Cross-sectoral coordination and integration
4. Governance self-assessment framework for partnerships

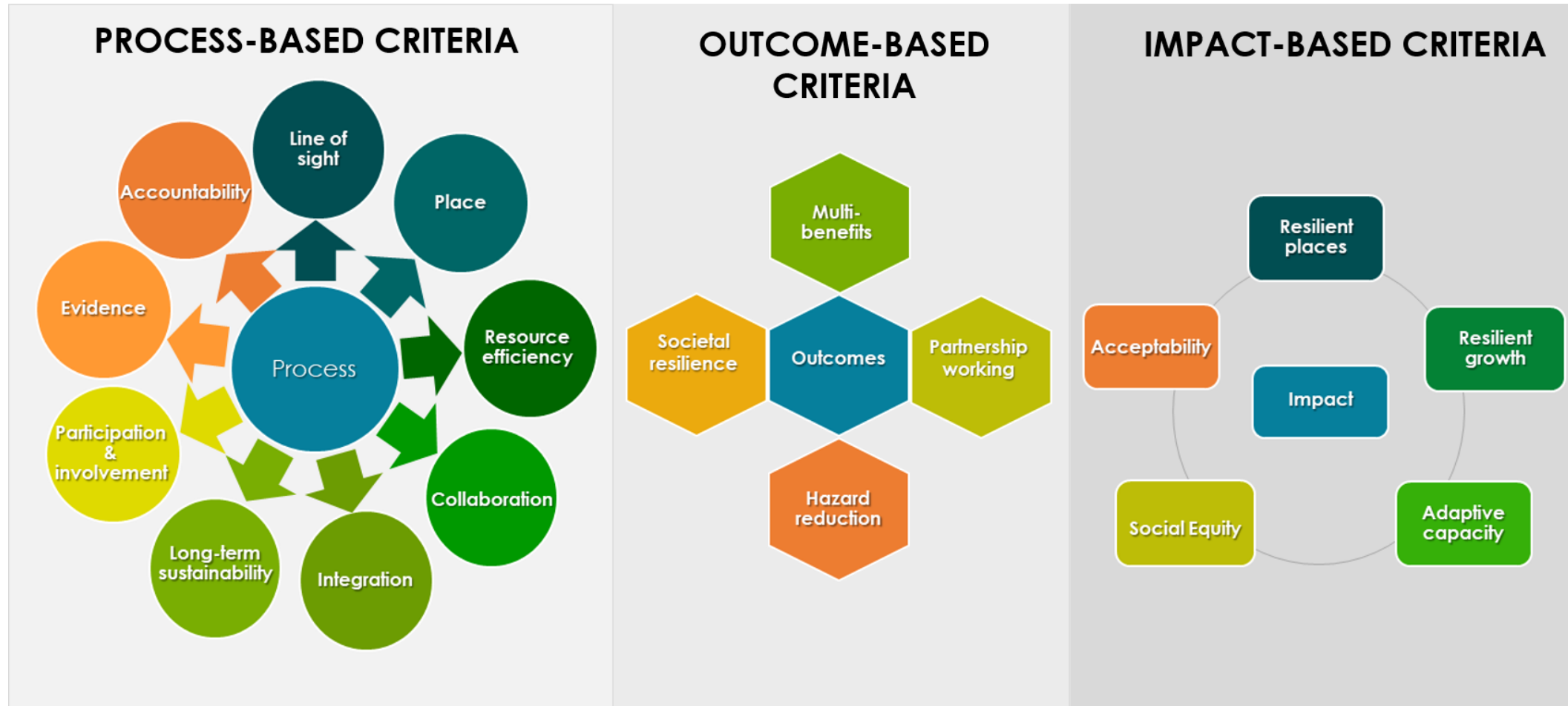
What is governance?

- Governance refers to the range of **actors** (public, private, civil society etc.), **'rules'** (formal and informal), **resources** (financial, knowledge, technological etc.) and **discourses** that shape the decision-making process, as well as the outcome and impact of this process, in relation to a collective goal (i.e. effective FCERM).



- **Multi-level governance** refers to dependencies and interactions that occur between national, subnational and local scales – both within FCERM (*vertical governance*), and, between FCERM & other policy areas (*horizontal governance*)

Governance evaluation framework



Findings

35 findings organised around 7 themes:

- Theme 1: Reconciling complexity through coherent governance arrangements
- Theme 2: Resourcing effective FCERM governance
- Theme 3: Addressing governance barriers to adaptation
- Theme 4: Establishing climate resilient places through spatial planning and resilient design
- Theme 5: Facilitating socially just recovery and building back better through flood insurance
- Theme 6: Maximising opportunities for FCERM through land use management and agricultural policy reform
- Theme 7: Aligning nature recovery and FCERM agendas



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Theme 1: Governance coherence

Findings:

- Consideration should be given to where regional governance mechanisms might enhance the effectiveness of FCERM.
- New FCERM strategies present opportunity for further clarification of roles and responsibilities for operational delivery and climate change adaptation.
- Legislative review could identify potential conflicts, ensure consistency and improve clarity.
- Improved coordination, cross-departmental working and shared problem ownership via improved/new bridging mechanisms (e.g. funding mechanisms) could be used to address climate change adaptation.
- Resources are needed to establish partnership working as 'business as usual'.



Theme 2: Resourcing

Findings:

- Long-term sufficient settlements for resource/revenue funding are essential to maintain assets and support wider FCERM activities.
- Systematic and coherent strategy needed for involving the private sector and incentivising private finance.
- Opportunities via new funding streams (e.g. Environmental Land Management Scheme (England) and Sustainable Farming Scheme (Wales)), but boundaries between funding streams need to be clear alongside mechanisms for blended funding.
- High transaction costs involved in Partnership Funding (England) could be addressed to improve resource efficiency. Potential to learn from Wales' Small Scale Works Grant, where it is easier to access funding for maintenance and natural flood management.
- FCERM funding inadvertently favours defences. Multi-benefits need greater recognition.



Theme 3: Barriers to adaptation

Findings:

- Adaptation funding gap could be addressed through revised funding formulas, cross-sector working and alternative finance.
- Existing governance mechanisms are considered insufficient and further research is required.
- Strategic and practical guidance is necessary for implementing local adaptation.
- Legal consideration should be given to how provisions for diverting and extinguishing Public Rights of Way may be amended to reflect better the dynamic nature of the coastline and enable future adaptation.
- Profile and accessibility of Shoreline Management Plans should be raised.
- Proactive long-term planning for adaptation should happen now, with active involvement of local communities. Additional resources and capacity building required.



Theme 4: Spatial planning

Findings:

- Planning horizon for Local Plans (minimum of 15 years) could be aligned with Shoreline Management Plans (100 years) to avoid locking-in potentially unsustainable patterns of development.
- Opportunities to strengthen governance capacity to ensure adherence to Environment Agency/Natural Resources Wales advice and enforce compliance, alongside consideration about mandating this.
- Mechanisms could be used to make developers more accountable for flood risks created or exacerbated by new developments.
- Building regulations could be extended to establish a legally-enforceable expectation for flood resilient/resistant construction and use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).
- Access to property flood resilience grants could be increased.
- Governance capacity could be enhanced to proactively monitor uptake of SuDS in new developments.



Theme 5: Flood insurance

Findings:

- The National Adaptation Programme could set out clear targets for transition to risk-reflective insurance pricing.
- Ensure inequalities are not exacerbated by changes to insurance pricing.
- Insurance mechanisms (such as reduced premiums and flood performance certificates) have the potential to facilitate wider uptake of property-level measures, however these should be delivered as part of a wider package of cross-sectoral initiatives.



Theme 6: Land use management and agriculture

Findings:

- New opportunities exist to deliver flood mitigation and climate adaptation via the Environmental Land Management Scheme (England) and Sustainable Farming Scheme (Wales).
- Payment rates should be attractive to facilitate uptake and include quality as well as quantity of outcomes, while supporting ongoing maintenance works and previous mitigation actions.
- Maximise opportunities for cross-border learning and transferability of pilot approaches.
- Governance of schemes should incentivise coordination to deliver public FCERM goods at-scale.
- Liabilities should be clearly outlined to ensure clarity and accountability.
- Consideration should be given to the boundaries between different finance streams and how blended funding might be allowed and encouraged.



Theme 7: Environment

Findings:

- Area Statements in Wales should be evaluated to assess the extent to which integration, collaboration and delivery is enhanced.
- UK Government should consider opportunities to mandate 'environmental net gain' obligations in spatial planning.
- Planning reforms in England should establish how 'net gain' ambitions will be delivered and enforced.
- FCERM indicators for implementing 25 Year Environment Plan could be aligned with FCERM Strategy in England.
- Effective governance and capacity could maximise potential of Local Nature Recovery Strategies in England.



Further information

Research project FRS17186

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Project webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-research-reports/understanding-effective-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-governance-in-england-and-wales>

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