

Climate Adaptation: AXA Climate Publishes a White Paper to Help Companies Take Action

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AXA Climate and the Climate School have released a white paper designed to help UK organisations understand the critical challenges of climate adaptation – along with the practical tools and strategies needed to prepare and respond effectively.

This publication builds on the adaptation training course launched two years ago by the Climate School, and provides an updated framework for organisations ready to move from awareness to action.

Mitigation and adaptation are two complementary facets of climate action: it is essential to reduce emissions and limit global warming, but also to adapt to the consequences already unfolding. The task companies face today is to deploy a clear and realistic adaptation strategy aligned with scientific trajectories, while continuing to be ambitious on mitigation. In short: to do everything they can to avoid the unmanageable and, at the same time, manage the inevitable.

A growing exposure across all sectors

By 2100, global temperatures are expected to rise by 2.2°C to 3.4°C if current trends continue – well above the 1.5°C to 2°C target of the Paris Agreement. Companies are on the front line, as extreme weather events increasingly disrupt every link in their value chain, from physical infrastructure and operations to financial performance and human resources. All sectors are affected: tourism, energy, finance – and even those perceived as less exposed, such as IT services.

A geographic lens to understand risk

AXA Climate's white paper encourages organisations to rethink how they approach climate risk – viewing it first and foremost as a geographical challenge. Businesses must assess where they are vulnerable and identify all the places in which they will need to implement their adaptation strategy.

This requires strong governance at every level of the organisation, with structured dialogue between departments and across different locations. The white paper provides a clear methodology to support this: from analysing past events, their intensity, duration and impact, to incorporating long-term climate projections. Because the lifespan of a business activity often extends beyond 30 years, short-term forecasts are no longer sufficient. Risks must then be prioritised based on their criticality for the organisation.

Once the diagnosis is established, companies can begin identifying realistic adaptation actions. These should be designed in consultation with those directly affected, and evaluated not only from an economic perspective, but also through organisational, technical and regulatory lenses. This step is key to avoiding the risk of maladaptation.

Operational and nature-based solutions already underway

Diagnosing risks and implementing tangible adaptation solutions is no longer theoretical. Large companies such as Michelin and Suez are already working at site level to address their vulnerabilities.

Nature-based solutions are also emerging as a core strategy. These involve protecting, managing and restoring natural ecosystems in ways that benefit both biodiversity and human well-being. Examples include the creation of rain gardens to increase soil permeability and reduce flooding, or incorporating vegetation into infrastructure to limit heat exposure.

A comprehensive and expert-led learning experience

The white paper “Managing the inevitable, How can we meet the challenge of Climate Adaptation” answers the core questions companies are asking: What are the most common impacts by sector? Which roles are most exposed to climate risk?

The resources are enriched by expert insights from professionals such as Arnaud Vanon, expert in risk management; Bertrand Pigeat, Group Audit Director & Risk Manager at Michelin; Huu-An Pham, Director of Business Consulting and expert in climate adaptation at AXA Climate; and Estelle Rouhaud, adaptation project manager at Suez Consulting.

“The increase in extreme weather episodes in recent years marks the beginning of a growing awareness among companies, which we must support and develop. The path of adaptation is the most robust way to deal with the irreversibility of global warming – it takes into account the imperative of risk reduction, the maintenance of activities and the hope of a pathway to a regenerative model,” explains Huu-An Pham, Director of Business Consulting at AXA Climate.

“In the United Kingdom, we’ve seen adaptation rise on the corporate agenda last year: which scenario to choose, where to adapt first, how to avoid maladaptation. For companies, the challenge involves combining a global, strategic vision with a very local understanding of the issues. This requires the involvement of a wide range of profiles – HR, site managers, and more. Our white paper meets that need,” adds Olivia Partington, UK Business Development Lead, AXA Climate.