

Report writing guide

ClimateXChange responds to policy-relevant questions raised by the Scottish Government through independent, evidence-based research that supports better policy decisions.

Our audience is time poor and not science specialists. It's important to keep it short and keep it in plain language.

The reader should be able to skim your text and understand:

- > What is the problem/issue/challenge?
- > Why does it matter?
- > What can be done?

We are constructive and identify solution, and focus on meaning, not method, in presenting our work. To do that we set the science in context – answering questions: what do the research findings mean? This sets ClimateXChange work apart from traditional academic work, where the method is more prominent.

Use annexes for technical detail and methodology. These aspects of our work should be available and accessible but are not of primary interest to the policy reader. Reports over eight pages long should have an executive summary of no more

than two pages. The CXC Secretariat can advise on the appropriate structure for the executive summary.

▶ Getting help

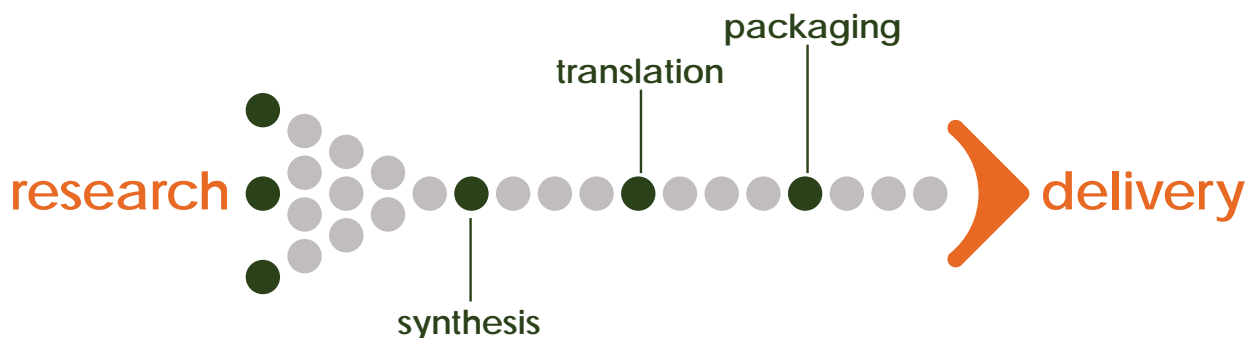
The Secretariat works to make all CXC outputs as accessible and user-friendly as possible. The reporting format for your project will be discussed at the project start-up meeting, when you will also get the template.

We can help with:

- > Structuring content
- > Formulating conclusions and recommendations
- > Developing presentations

For more information please contact:

info@climatexchange.org.uk



▶ Formatting CXC outputs

Please use the CXC template to format reports. This guide uses this formatting.

The left screenshot shows a report template with the following structure and style options:

- Report title **Style=Title**
- Author Name, Institution **Style=Subtitle**
- Month/Year
- 1 Executive summary **Style=Heading**
- 1.1 Aims and findings **Style=Heading 2**
- 1.2 Recommendations
- Contents
- 1 Executive summary **Style=Heading** 1
- 1.1 Aims and findings **Style=Heading 2** 1
- 1.2 Recommendations 1
- 2 Section 1 3
- 2.1 Sub heading 3
- 3 Conclusions and recommendations 4
- 4 References 4

The right screenshot shows the formatting details, including a table, corporate colours, and contact information:

2 Section 1
Body text style=Normal...

2.1 Sub heading
2.1.1 Sub section
Table 1: style=Table Text

3 Conclusions and recommendations
This should not be identical to the summary BUT the two sections must correspond.

4 References

CXC Corporate colours
These ClimateXchange corporate colours should be used as the main palette for any diagrams, charts and headings. This box can be removed on completion.

Orange CMYK: 3/72/100/0 RGB: 234/101/15 HEX: #E67E22	Teal CMYK: 74/110/80 RGB: 49/172/147 HEX: #31A29D	Dark Grey C: 88/84/44/62 RGB: 65/65/65 HEX: #444444	Light Grey C: 33/33/33 RGB: 188/188/188 HEX: #C0C0C0
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Style: Use the 'Styles' options in the Word menu bar for headings/ text

Formatting: Please follow the same colour palette for charts etc.

▶ Writing in Plain English

Keep your sentences short:

15-20 words in a sentence. Most commas can be replaced by a full stop.

Use active verbs:

Active verbs move the action and reveal the actors.

✓ *Government will review the plan next year*

Passive verbs emphasise the object or receiver.

✗ *A review of the plan will be undertaken by government next year*

Use 'you' and 'we':

Be as personal as you would be if you were speaking to your reader.

Use words that are appropriate for the reader:

Using everyday language and terms does not make your text less credible. It makes it more accessible for anyone who may want to read it.

Check your spelling

Word's squiggly lines are helpful but not a substitute for proofing your text

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