

Working with consultants

Effective adaptation draws expertise from many different disciplines, and so organisations are very likely to use external consultancies at some or all stages in the process. Here we provide guidance on making the best use of consultancy services.

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At a glance

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- The complexity of the adaptation planning process means many organisations will use external consultancies for some or all stages.
- When organisations first embark on the climate change adaptation process, it is generally new territory. The organisation may lack the capacity, experience or appropriate resources to undertake activities in-house. As organisations progress through the process, and continue to improve their technical understanding, they are still likely to need specific expertise from external consultancies at various stages of the process.
- Good quality consultants should be experts in their field, and be up to date with relevant innovations in climate change and adaptation science (e.g. climate change projections, models, analyses, data collection techniques, management options, community engagement and so on).
- Here we provide a number of resources to support organisations working with consultants. These are listed in Box 1.

Box 1: Resources in CoastAdapt to support organisations working with consultants

1. A guide [How to hire and make the best use of consultancy services in adaptation](#) to help client organisations such as local, state or federal government agencies to avoid common problems, and get the best product when engaging an external consultant for any stage of the adaptation planning process.

Please cite as:

Rollason, V., Fisk, G. and Haines, P. 2016: How to hire and make the best use of consultancy services in adaptation. Report prepared by BMT WBM for CoastAdapt. National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Gold Coast.

2. Checklists for organisations working with consultants in the form of three templates which can be printed off and filled in:
 - Template 1 [Designing the project brief for hiring consultants](#)

Please cite as:

Rollason, V. 2016: Template 1 Designing the Project Brief for Hiring Consultants. Prepared by BMT WBM for CoastAdapt. National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Gold Coast.

- Template 2 [Desirable skills of the consultant and client](#)

Please cite as:

Rollason, V. 2016: Template 2 Desirable skills of the consultant and client. Prepared by BMT WBM for CoastAdapt. National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Gold Coast.

- Template 3 [Awarding the contract](#)

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Rollason, V. 2016: Template 3 Awarding the contract. Prepared by BMT WBM for CoastAdapt.

National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Gold Coast.

- Template 4 [Evaluating the consultant's performance](#)

Please cite as:

Rollason, V. 2017: Template 4 Evaluating the consultant's performance. Prepared by BMT WBM for CoastAdapt. National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Gold Coast.

Main text

How to use these resources

The Guide to how to best use consultants was developed through a series of workshops and feedback from end users, particularly local and state government staff. The approach taken was to ask a series of questions to identify key guidance for using external consultancies that is specific to climate change projects. The Guide addresses these questions in turn as follows.

- What makes consultancy for climate change adaptation different to standard consultancy engagements?
- With the key differences for climate change projects in mind, what are the common problems with climate change consultancy engagements?
- Now that we understand the key differences and the problems common to climate projects, how can the common problems be avoided or managed for climate change consultancies?
- What does 'Value for Money' look like? The Guide provides a list of desirable skills and competencies for the client and the consultant.

Box 2 provides more detail on the arrangement of content in the Guide. Users may wish to view all or one of these pages, as suits their needs.

The three templates provide a further practical resource for working with consultants.

Box 2: Content in the Guide 'How to hire and make the best use of consultancy services in adaptation'

1. What makes consultancy for climate change adaptation different to standard consultancy engagements?
2. What are the common problems with climate change consultancy engagements?
3. How can the common problems be avoided or managed for climate change consultancies?
 - Building flexibility into your project brief
 - Ways to encourage flexible quotes from consultants
 - Things that must be clear in the project brief
 - Getting help to write a project brief
 - Ways to build the internal capacity of the organization
 - Useful tips when awarding the contract
 - Useful tips for managing the project and milestones
4. What does 'Value for Money' look like? A list of desirable skills and competencies for the client and the consultant.

Appendix 1: A summary of the results from the two workshops held with end users, particularly local and state government staff, during the development of the Guide.

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[Also in CoastAdapt](#)

[How to conduct a climate change risk assessment](#)

[Hire and make the best use of consultancy services](#)

[Barwon South West: Testing the application of CoastAdapt's: Working with consultants information](#)

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