



# **Results of the SWCCIP Tourism Group's Tourism Business Survey February 2010**

## **Executive Summary**

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## Executive Summary

This project has been informed by the findings of the 2008 Tourism Business Climate Change survey commissioned by South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership (SWCCIP) Tourism Group<sup>1</sup>.

The 2010 Tourism Business Climate Change Survey has been conducted to identify how far tourism businesses have taken up the challenge of preparing for climate change. It will help to inform future priorities for strategy work and resource deployment for the SWCCIP Tourism Group membership. The survey was conducted from 12 Feb to 4 March 2010, as an online questionnaire sent out to the South West Tourism (SWT)'s Tourism Industry Newsletter database and re-promoted by several Destination Management Organisations (DMOs). 240 responses were obtained.

Respondents are mainly from Cornwall (33%), Somerset (19%), Devon (12%) and Poole (19%). The majority of them are from the accommodation sector (71%).

### Key findings:

- 135 respondents (56%) have been affected by extreme weather in the past. Heavy rainfall followed by snow and ice are the two extreme weather events that mostly affected this group.
- 63% of the respondents think that in the future their businesses will be affected, and the main concern is heavy rainfall.
- For sources of advice and information on extreme weather and impacts of climate change on their businesses, most turn to the Environmental Agency (29%), while 13% turn to South West Tourism and 5% have referred to SWCCIP.
- In terms of informing future strategy work, the research found that 59% of respondents think that climate change could lead to extreme weather and that business need to adapt to it.
- As a business planning priority 50% see it as a medium to high priority.
- When asked about what actions they have implemented, of the given 13 measures 46% of businesses have implemented some measures, either as normal practice, or in response to extreme weather events. 29% do not intend to do anything.
- The most popular actions implemented by businesses in response to changing weather conditions include: attention to assessment of flood risk, improvement of business drainage and installation of flood defence measures.

NB. It should be noted that this survey was conducted in February 2010, following a period of extreme winter weather and several months when climate change science had been scrutinised with increased scepticism in the media. Both factors may have influenced some of the findings and perceptions of the respondents.

To help prioritise the SWCCIP Tourism Group's future resource, the research reveals that 69% of respondents are interested in finding out more about the implications of climate change for their own business. 52% want a report showing climate projections for the South West over the next 10

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<sup>1</sup> Note that SWCCIP changed its name to Climate SouthWest on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010.

years. 45% need help to source grants. One third would like an adaptation checklist and a free visit from a climate change advisor.

In terms of future resource priority, the research revealed that greater concentration on the effective promotion of existing materials and tools would help support businesses most efficiently at the present time, rather than investment in new initiatives. Ease of access of support materials is essential. If the SWCCIP Tourism Group link were more visible on the environment agency's website this would help.

If there is an intention to invest in more initiatives, businesses really want an evidenced based report on the likely implications for the region's weather and climate over the next ten years and greater signposting of grants to help them

The overall research finding is that respondents are either confused by, or side tracked by the 'debate' surrounding the 'cause'/'validity' of climate change arguments and data. Consequently, we recommend a shift of emphasis in communications with tourism business owners, from 'Climate Change' issues, to a focus on using a less politicised and contentious term such as 'extreme weather events'.