

Larger centres across Canada are taking a more proactive approach to preparing for climate change, a university study has found. Larger centres across Canada are taking a more proactive approach to preparing for climate change, a university study has found.

The National Municipal Adaptation Project surveyed governments across the country to see what plans and policies they have in place, what their needs are and what information they still require.

"The good news from our survey is that Canada's major cities recognize the importance of adaptation and are moving ahead," said Kevin Hanna, an associate geography professor at UBC Okanagan.

"The bad news is that many small communities are not there yet, and they may be the most vulnerable."

Hanna said communities in B.C. and Ontario are leading the way, largely due the influence of their provincial governments. The federal government has no overall plan to adapt to climate change.

"Steady provincial policy support not only for adaptation initiatives, but for areas such as reducing climate change contributions and alternative energy development, are important for spurring local governments to think about how they can protect themselves from the impacts of climate change."

Hanna said many communities want to know what to do to adapt to climate change, but the answer is not simple.

"We know the climate is changing and it will result in changes to our so-called normal weather," said Hanna. "As climate changes, it will result in changes to reliable weather patterns."

Those changes could result in more extreme weather such as flooding, heavier or lighter snowfall, or other conditions that could impact cities financially as well as infrastructure.