



Participatory Climate Vulnerability Assessment

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Abstract: Adapting to climate change is a matter of understanding how changing environmental conditions can affect project or program performance, in the context of a range of stresses, and making adjustments to minimize negative impacts. USAID is using its adaptation investments to strengthen development programs that are sensitive to climate change. USAID has developed a new approach that relies on array of stakeholders to help identify and prioritize program options to build resilience to climate change and support high priority development objectives. In a pilot workshop in the Eastern Caribbean, USAID worked with participants from several government ministries, the private sector and civil society to identify climate stresses that could undermine development objectives. To ensure that adaptation programs support economic or development goals, participants first identified key economic drivers and development goals. They then discussed critical inputs or conditions necessary to support those drivers, followed by discussion of climate and non-climate stresses that could impede achievement of development goals. Finally, participants identified a broad range of interventions that could reduce stress, improve the enabling environment, and support economic development. Participants identified critical inputs and stresses that went well beyond those traditionally raised in environmental or climate assessments, including better enforcement of regulations, public education, information, sector reform, as well as watershed management, coastal management. During the workshop, stakeholders laid out dozens of ideas for interventions, some of which are appropriate to implement in a climate change program, others that should be pursued by other programs. Taken together, these interventions should provide a comprehensive approach to reducing risks that undermine development.

Summary: USAID is using stakeholder-defined problem analyses as the basis for vulnerability assessment. Stakeholders identify priority development goals, critical inputs for achieving these goals, and then explore the climate and non-climate stresses to focus further analysis. The approach helps to tailor assessments to problems and ensures alignment with broader goals.