



PHOTO | Windhoek city stakeholders participating in the co-exploring language activity.

## “How-to” Guide CO-EXPLORING TERMINOLOGIES

This brief:

- Explains how to conduct a terminology co-exploration exercise for climate change adaptation decision-making.
- Outlines the basics of the activity, explains the process, offers tips for success, and highlights potential pitfalls to avoid.
- Provides an overview of two exercises: one that discusses weather and climate, and a second that discusses adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk reduction and development. Facilitators can run one after the other or concurrently (by splitting into two groups) if staffing allows.

### THE BASICS



**Objectives:** Explore misunderstood or unfamiliar terms/language relating to weather, climate, adaptation, mitigation, development and disaster risk reduction.



**Number of facilitators:** Possible with one facilitator (if you run exercises one after the other on the same table), but easier with two facilitators (one table per exercise; split group in two; swap halfway).



**Ideally six to 10 participants, one facilitator; eight to 24 participants, two facilitators.** Larger groups may need four facilitators.

**Number of participants:** Flexible. This exercise can work well with different group sizes.



**Time:** 30-40 minutes (depends on the number of terms discussed and whether exercises run concurrently or in rotation).



**Skill level of facilitators:** Facilitation skills ●●○○○; Familiarity with content and concepts ●●●○○



**Resources:** Coloured cards (large/smaller cards); marker pens; tables; (optional) timer to end exercise or change groups.

## THE ACTIVITY

### Before the event

Write concepts (weather, climate, adaptation, mitigation, development, and disaster risk reduction) on large cards. Write descriptive statements (e.g. “a very hot day”, “a prevailing southwest wind”) or actions (e.g. “rainwater harvesting”, “switching to drought-resistant crop types”) on smaller cards.

### Set up and delivery

Lay the large cards displaying “weather and climate” on the table. Distribute the smaller statement/action cards among the participants. Each participant should get a few cards. (It does not matter how many cards they each have; each card will have a different statement/action on it.)

Ask participants to discuss the statements/actions on the smaller cards with another participant. Participants can share if there are not enough. Ask partners to discuss the question, “To which concept is the statement/action related and why?” Ask participants to place the smaller statement/action cards on the table alongside the concept. (5 mins)

Once participants have placed all the smaller cards alongside concepts, ask the group to look at all the cards. Does everyone agree? Would anyone move any card? Why? Allow time for discussion. (5 mins)

Explain the definition of concepts to participants. For example, describe the difference between weather and climate. Ask again, would anyone move any card? Allow time for discussion. (5 mins)

Ask participants for their reflections and learning. (5 mins)

Conduct the same exercise for the “adaptation and mitigation” discussion. After differences have been discussed, co-benefits and trade-offs of potential actions can also be discussed. (With two facilitators, split the participants into two separate, smaller groups, each beginning with a different exercise, for rotation between the two tables.)

#### The facilitator needs to:

- be familiar with the different concepts, statements and actions.
- know how and why these relate to one another.
- keep discussions focused.
- be aware that adding new terms from participants can broaden the discussion, but it can also be a distraction.
- be aware that discussing climate variables can be a good conversation starter, but it may also lead to more confusion among participants unless the right expertise is in the room.

The tables below show suggested discussion points. We recommend tailoring discussions to your national/local/city context.

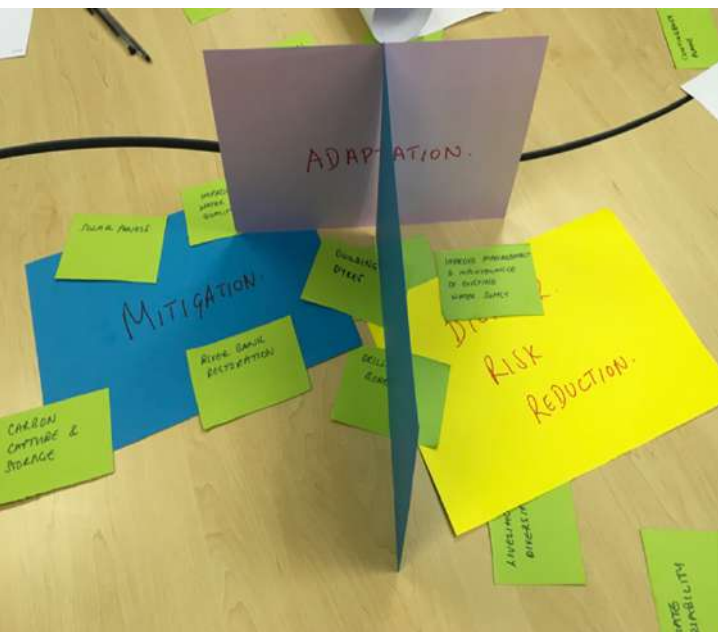
POINTERS FOR WEATHER & CLIMATE EXERCISE	POINTERS FOR ADAPTATION & MITIGATION EXERCISE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weather reflects short-term conditions at a particular place and time. It can change in a matter of hours or days.</li> <li>• Seasonal conditions occur over a weeks or months.</li> <li>• Climate is the average weather conditions at a location (city, region, country) over an extended period of time (&gt;30 years).</li> <li>• The historical weather observations that underpin climate records cannot predict future climate. Adaptation decisions must instead rely on projections from climate models.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigation actions (to address climate change) seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. Note that these are different from actions that seek to mitigate climate or disaster risks (see below).</li> <li>• Adaptation actions seek to manage or lower risks from climate impacts to protect communities and minimize damage. This requires considering future climate information.</li> <li>• Disaster risk reduction actions seek to lessen damage caused by natural hazards – whether linked to climate (floods, droughts) or not (earthquakes).</li> <li>• Actions often overlap and provide co-benefits for mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction.</li> <li>• Recognition of differences should not detract from efforts to develop more integrated approaches for the broader, sustainable development context.</li> </ul>

The table below shows suggested terms. We recommend tailoring terms to your national/local/city context.

	LARGE CARDS (concepts)	SMALL CARDS (statements or actions)
WEATHER AND CLIMATE	Weather	A very hot day Today it is raining. The maximum temperature today is 19°C. A thunderstorm There is a 30% chance of rainfall today. The average windspeed today is 14 mph.
	Climate	This is a semi-arid region. Mean precipitation for January is 91mm. We have over 300 sunny days annually. The rainy season extends October-April. Annual average temperature here is 19.5°C. The rainy season has an average of 57 days. We have a prevailing south-west wind.
ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION	Adaptation	Switching to drought-resistant crop types Water reclamation Rainwater harvesting
	Mitigation	Carbon capture and storage Solar panel installation Clean cookstove installation
	(Sustainable) Development	Improving water access and quality Borehole drilling
	DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction)	Early warning systems Flood risk mapping Updating building codes
	Overlapping	Riverbank restoration Livelihood diversification Conservation of water catchment areas Afforestation (tree planting) Green infrastructure (such as green roofs)

## PRO TIPS

- 1 At the start, ask participants to share any concepts or terms that they find unclear or confusing, or that they do not understand. If relevant integrate these concepts or terms to make the exercise more relevant to participants. When working through the exercise, participants may wish to add new examples. Facilitators should be aware that this can be a distraction to the learning objective.
- 2 Bring out the links between the two exercises (“climate and weather”; “adaptation and mitigation”) where possible. Moving from one exercise to another should reinforce participants’ learning. For example, adaptation should be informed by climate, rather than weather data. Once participants have a clear understanding of the differences between weather and climate, a parallel discussion comparing disaster risk reduction and adaptation can take place with participants using medium- to long-term climate information (historical and future) to consider longer time horizons for adaptation planning.
- 3 Having a climate scientist on hand helps in explaining more about the types of climate information available, and in introducing climate variables (such as temperature, precipitation, humidity, rainfall intensity, and wind speed and direction), which can refer to both weather and climate, depending on the timescale. Including these can expand the discussion.
- 4 Feel free to discuss additional concepts or terms, such as resilience, trends, climate projections and climate predictions.



PHOTOS | Left: The use of the large and smaller cards and participants’ ability to move these around enables discussion and challenge between participants.



Right: Windhoek city stakeholders considering the statements/actions on their cards.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

Further resources for this activity are available at <https://www.weadapt.org/knowledge-base/co-exploring-terminology>

## AUTHORS

Elizabeth Daniels, SEI  
Sukaina Bharwani, SEI

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to FRACTAL colleagues and partners for their input to this activity, namely Kornelia Iipinge (University of Namibia (UNAM) /City of Windhoek (CoW)), Olavi Makuti (CoW), Saima Haukelo (CoW) and Dr John Mfuno (UNAM). The authors also thank FRACTAL colleagues and partners who supported in delivering this activity in multiple cities.

Photo credits: Kornelia Iipinge (UNAM/CoW), Elizabeth Daniels (SEI), Sukaina Bharwani (SEI).