SEI STOCKHOLM ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE

In collaboration with CSAG CLIMATE SYSTEM ANALYSIS GROUP

Global Climate Adaptation Partnership

Module:

Climate Risk Communication

C3D CLIMATE CHANGE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Module Description:

Despite the magnitude and relative immediacy of climate change risks to society, there has been little effort to develop relevant and actionable climate risk communication strategies. The lack of effective climate risk communication has contributed to inadequate interpretation of scientific findings pertaining to climate change risks, and has hindered efforts to develop effective adaptation responses.

Communicating information on potential climate change impacts in terms of societal risks helps to create awareness and shared understandings, support adaptation decisions, and build capacity for action. Communicating climate risks starts with understanding the local context and know-how, as well as the priorities of the stakeholders you engage in the process. It also involves using terms that are relevant and familiar to different stakeholder groups; addressing climate risks and adaptation in an integrated, multidisciplinary way; conducting contextualized analysis through a process of negotiating perceptions, meanings and understandings; engaging stakeholders substantively through participatory and innovative approaches; and partnering institutions operating within the scientific and policy spheres to better understand and manage climate risks.

These considerations are an integral part of supporting an ongoing dialogue between climate change experts (and other sciences relevant to climate risk) and users of the information they produce (i.e. acknowledging different information streams are used). This will ultimately help to take more robust decisions on how to adapt to changing climatic conditions and extreme events.

This session looks into principles and approaches of risk communication drawing on lessons learned from projects such as the Advancing Capacity to Support Climate Change Adaptation (ACCCA) project, and the Climate Change Capacity Development (C3D+) project, which helped improve knowledge on risk communication by involving multiple stakeholder groups, over a range of diverse environments, socio-economic conditions, and climate risks, in developing climate risk communication strategies tailored to different needs and decision contexts.

Learning Objectives:

- Improved understanding of and ability to apply principles and approaches for effective climate risk communication
- Skills to analyze and make an interpretation of the climate, socio-economic, and biophysical information relevant to the specific context of a case study

- Ability to engage targeted stakeholder groups in a two-way dialogue and communicate possible climate risks using approaches tailored to their specific context
- Realize the complexities of communicating climate information and risks in relevant ways to different stakeholders in varying contexts

Key Messages:

- Risk communication uses a progression from data, to information, to usable knowledge
- Strategies, tools and methods to communicate climate risk evolve through a two-way participatory dialogue between the agents that generate, use and manage the relevant information streams
- Effective risk communication approaches are tailored to the needs and decision contexts of targeted stakeholder groups
- Building effective risk communication strategies requires engagement in the process, collective generation of knowledge, shared understandings, and partnerships that will sustain the process of communicating risk through innovative, credible, and salient ways
- Risk communication helps building capacity to make informed adaptation decisions and develop capacity for action

Activities:

- Presentation: principles and approaches of risk communication
- Discussion: sharing experiences and different views
- Examples: some ACCCA pilot studies will be narrated based on the ACCCA Tour prepared with the weADAPT Adaptation Layer in a Google Earth interface
- Analysis and interpretation: in groups participants will be requested to analyze climate, socio-economic and biophysical information to identify possible future climate-related risks within a broad multi-dimensional context that frames vulnerability as a function of multiple stresses
- Role-play exercise: once possible climate-related risks are identified, participants will develop climate risk communication strategies tailored to specific stakeholders groups in the context of the case studies. Participants will be given different roles to play and they will interact and implement the risk communication strategies according to these roles.

Resources Required:

- Classroom layout: small groups
- Flipcharts, paper, post-it notes, white boards, markers
- Data beamer and a computer
- Climate, socio-economic and biophysical information for each case study (generated by the participants in previous sessions)
- Course handouts, notes required in the session

Recommended Readings & Web Resources:

1. FAO (2004). Communication and Natural Resources Management. An E-forum on perspectives, principles and future directions. Rome: FAO.
2. FAO (2004). Participatory Communication Strategy Design. Handbook. Rome: FAO.
3. Genilo, J. W. (2006). Community-Based Communication: A New Approach to Development Communication. Paper Presented in the Sixth Annual Conference Bangkok July 3-4, 2006. Asian Scholarship Foundation. URL: http://www.http://asianscholarship.org/asf/hilightsearch.php?f=publications6.php&hl=genilohttp://asianscholarship.org/asf/hilightsearch.php?f=publications6.php&hl=geniloasianscholarship.org/asf/hilightsearch.php?f=publications6.php&hl=genilo
4. Moench, M. and A. Dixit, eds. (2007). Working with the Winds of Change: Toward Strategies for Responding to the Risks Associated with Climate Change and other Hazards. 2nd Edition. Provention Consortium. Pp. 296.
5. Quarry, W. and Ramirez, R. (2009). Communication for Another Development. Listening before telling. London: Zed Books Ltd.
6. Sternman, J. D. (2008). Risk Communication on Climate: Mental Models and Mass Balance. Science. 22(5901): 532 – 533.
7. Patt, A. G., and D. Schröter. (2007). Perceptions of environmental risks in Mozambique: Implications for the success of adaptation and coping strategies. Policy Research Working Paper 4417. The World Bank. 21 pages.
8. Ward, B. (2008). Communicating on Climate Change: An Essential Resource for Journalists, Scientists, and Educators. University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography. URL: http://www.metcalfinstitute.org/Communicating_ClimateChange.htm
9. weADAPT has useful material at:

Risk communication in the context of climate change
Risk communication, social learning and storyboard exercise

Acknowledgements:

This module was developed with support from the "weLEARN" project and the "Climate Change Capacity Development (C3D+)" project funded by:

- *The European Commission through EuropeAid Co-Operation Office*
- *Irish Aid*
- *Danish International Development Agency*
- *Swiss Federal Office for the Environment*
- *Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency*

The funders were not involved in the design of these training materials and do not necessarily support the views advanced.

This module was co-developed with advise/support from:

- *Tahia Devisscher (SEI)*
- *Anna Taylor (SEI)*
- *Ben Smith (SEI)*
- *Jon Padgham (START)*
- *Lawrence Flint (ENDA)*