

# **Working Group Guidelines**

## **Insights and Tools for Adaptation: Learning from Climate Variability**

The four sets of concurrent working group sessions are the heart of the workshop proceedings. They are designed to stimulate creative thinking and maximize the time available for discussion. The overall objectives of the working groups are to:

- Draw out and synthesize lessons learned (both successes and failures) across case studies on climate variability;
- Identify constraints in current research projects and capacity building, as well as limits of knowledge;
- Identify where lessons from variability can and cannot be applied to adaptation to longer-term change;
- Identify opportunities for the future, including key gaps in research, programs and capacity building.

Working group sessions will begin with two or three brief presentations aimed at providing an overview of the working group topic and a snapshot from several perspectives. An OGP facilitator will then highlight key themes from related background papers. We encourage you to draw upon this strong group of papers and the rich experience of session participants as fodder for discussion. Think outside the box, be creative, and enjoy the dialog. But be sure to stay focused on gathering key findings and recommendations to report in the plenary session; each group will have 5-7 minutes to report back.

Specific questions for each session are provided below. Put on your thinking caps!

### **Lessons from Variability**

**Concurrent Sessions: Fresh Water Supply and Management, Sustainable Food Supply, Public Health, and Risk Management and Disaster Preparedness  
Tuesday, November 18, 1:45 - 3:45 PM**

*What coping strategies have been effective (and ineffective) in the face of current climate variability (e.g., droughts and floods and their impacts on water management, agriculture, livelihoods, health and safety, forest management, urban planning) and how well would these hold up in the face of long-term change? Where do they not hold up in cases of longer-term change?*

*How can we take all that has been learned about the importance of scale (temporal, spatial, societal) and build it in productively to (1) an on-going dialogue with stakeholders and (2) the development of the research agenda and its products.*

**Capacity Building (Institutions, Infrastructure, and Education)**  
**Concurrent Sessions: Domestic Perspectives, International Perspectives**  
**Wednesday, November 19, 9:00 – 10:45 AM**

*What institutional structures facilitate or impede adaptation? How do we build flexible systems and adaptive institutions?*

*What do we know about how people make decisions under uncertainty and what roles do social, political, and economic factors play in how individuals and societies cope with climate variability? How do we improve capacity to support decision-making under uncertainty?*

*What factors influence the ability (and willingness) of societies, institutions, and individuals to adapt to climate variability? What are the implications for building capacity to adapt to climate change?*

**Communication, Dissemination, and Evaluation**  
**Concurrent Sessions: Domestic Perspectives, International Perspectives**  
**Wednesday, November 19, 11:00 AM – 12:45 PM**

*What dissemination channels, information formats, and communication methods have been effective in communicating climate information for decision-making? What criteria and methods have you used to evaluate communication? What role has communication played in helping societies and economies adapt to the present climate? Are the same approaches likely to be efficient and effective for communicating the information needed to adapt to climate change? Why or why not?*

*What are the best practices developed on interannual timescales for improving interactions between stakeholders and the research community, and supporting public discussion of and participation in planning, adaptive management, and policymaking? How might these approaches apply to climate change adaptation, and what are the limits of their applicability?*

**Tools and Products**  
**Wednesday, November 19, 2:15 – 3:45 PM**

*Where have we been successful in transferring research beyond individual insights and into operational change? Which of the tools and products designed to help societies adapt to climate variability might also be helpful in adapting to climate change? How are they likely to hold up under climate change?*

*Where can we offer insights/recommendations back to the climate observation/modeling/research/forecasting community in terms of the production of climate information (e.g., downscaling, articulating the effects of climate change on the*

*skill of seasonal predictions; importance of changes in dominant patterns of variability in the context of longer-term changes)?*

**Performance Measures and Program Evaluation**  
**Wednesday, November 19, 2:15 – 3:45 PM**

*What performance measures are effective for documenting and measuring changes in policy, management, and decision-making based on climate information? How do you measure the success or failure of adaptive strategies?*