



## **Integrating Climate Information and Decision Processes for Regional Climate Resilience**

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An integrated multi-disciplinary team of researchers from the University of Arizona and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society at Columbia University have joined forces with communities and institutions in the Caribbean, South Asia and West Africa to develop relevant, usable climate information and connect it to real decisions and development challenges.

The overall objective of the “Integrating Climate Information and Decision Processes for Regional Climate Resilience” program is to build community resilience to negative impacts of climate variability and change. We produce and provide science-based climate tools and information to vulnerable peoples and the public, private, and civil society organizations that serve them. We face significant institutional challenges because of the geographical and cultural distance between the locale of climate tool-makers and the locale of climate tool-users and because of the complicated, often-inefficient networks that link them. To use an accepted metaphor, there is great institutional difficulty in coordinating the supply of and the demand for useful climate products that can be put to the task of building local resilience and reducing climate vulnerability.

Our program is designed to reduce the information constraint and to initiate a linkage that is more demand driven, and which provides a set of priorities for further climate tool generation. A demand-driven approach to the co-production of appropriate and relevant climate tools seeks to meet the direct needs of vulnerable peoples as these needs have been canvassed empirically and as the benefits of application have been adequately evaluated. We first investigate how climate variability and climate change affect the livelihoods of vulnerable peoples. In so doing we assess the complex institutional web within which these peoples live—the public agencies that serve them, their forms of access to necessary information, the structural constraints under which they make their decisions, and the non-public institutions of support that are available to them. We then interpret this complex reality in terms of the demand for science-based climate products and analyze the channels through which such climate support must pass, thus linking demand assessment with the scientific capacity to create appropriate decision support tools.

In summary, the approach we employ is: 1) Demand-driven, beginning with a knowledge of the impacts of climate variability and change upon targeted populations, 2) Focused on vulnerability and resilience, which requires an understanding of broader networks of institutional actors who contribute to the adaptive capacity of vulnerable peoples, 3) Needs-based in that the climate needs matrix set priorities for the assessment of relevant climate products, 4) Dynamic in that the producers of climate products are involved at the point of demand assessment and can respond directly to stated needs, 5) Reflective in that the impacts of climate product interventions are subject to monitoring and evaluation throughout the process.

Methods, approaches and preliminary results of our work in the Caribbean will be presented.