

# What is a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment?

## Why should we care about climate change?

Climate change is not a distant problem. It is an immediate regional and local phenomenon that must be taken into account by local governments, cities, states and nations around the world. This fact sheet describes a useful tool that can be used by decisionmakers to meet the emerging climate challenges.

## What is Vulnerability?

Vulnerability has emerged in recent years as a central organizing concept for facilitating a structured process to identify and assess relative risks.

**Vulnerability** is defined as the “degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes”(IPCC, 2014).

Vulnerability (V) is measured as function of Exposure (E), Sensitivity (S), and Adaptive Capacity (AC)  
 $V = f(E, S, AC)$

Vulnerable systems are usually both sensitive to climate and are less able to adapt.

## What is a Vulnerability Assessment?

Vulnerability assessments (VA)'s are an approach for synthesizing information on biophysical conditions, infrastructure, economics, social characteristics and other locally important factors. They provide a framework and iterative process for examining vulnerabilities and evaluating potential intervention

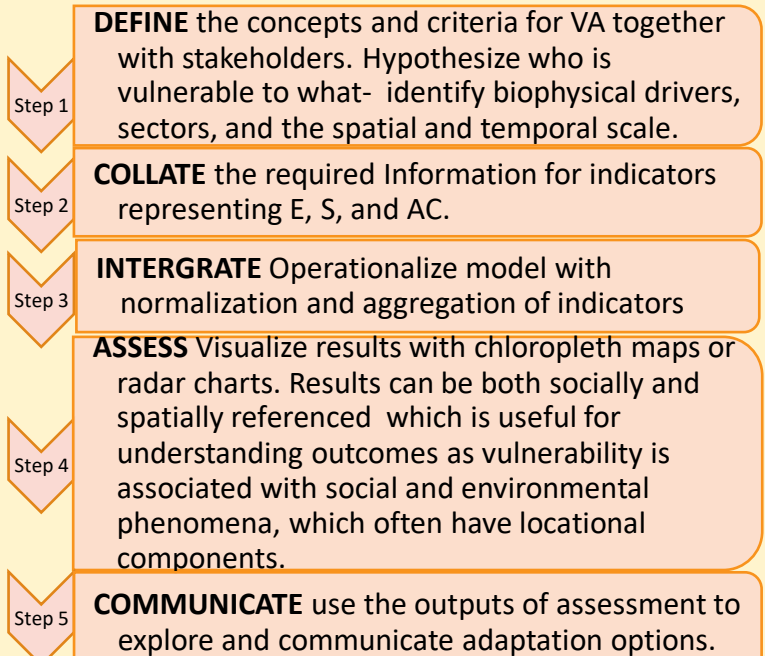
## Who Uses Them?

To prepare for the risks imposed by climate change VA's are used in a variety of sectors including – disaster management, public health, poverty, food security, ecology and climate change research. Practitioners include land, water utility, and natural resource managers, local authorities, planners, policymakers, academics, scientists, as well as agricultural producers.

## Vulnerability Assessments are useful for?

- **Identifying and prioritizing threats** - that are regional; and assessing local vulnerability across different sectors.
- **Guiding decision-making** - for prioritizing specific mitigation strategies that reduce vulnerability.
- **Advancing your own discourse** - and dialog about adaptation and resilience using language and indicators that reflect local concerns.
- **Identifying and strategizing funding** - for the accompanying range of adaptation measure that need to be taken.

## General Steps-



## Conclusion – Take Away Points

1. VA's are used for informing the decision-making of specific stakeholders about adapting options
2. Completion of a VA provides a diagnosis. With this information decision-makers are better equipped to identify threats, communicate challenges and respond to emerging challenges pro-actively.
3. **NEXT STEPS-** Attend our next two webinars with ITEP, or contact Anna (apalmer@dri.edu) or Derek (kaunecki@ohio.edu) for more information.