



BRIEFING

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Climate Change Adaptation Briefing 1

CLIMATE-SMART CONSERVATION

Using climate-smart language in our conservation plans

Introduction

Since our inception more than 50 years ago, WWF's approach to nature conservation has evolved. And it must continue to evolve as we confront climate change. Even if we succeed in eliminating all non-climate threats to our priority places and species, they will be affected by the continuously changing climate.

We can adapt to unavoidable change by making our conservation planning climate-smart. This means addressing the non-climate threats we are already familiar with and the less familiar threats posed by climate change, as well as the new synergistic impacts between the two.

About this briefing

We can start by examining the language we habitually use when writing our conservation plans. Are we assuming a static climate or are we facilitating change?

This briefing examines the language used in the WWF-US strategy for the Coral Triangle Program which, while aiming to mainstream climate change adaptation, used language that represents business as usual conservation. We worked with the program to develop alternative language and here explain why it is climate-smart.

Vision

Business as usual from the Coral Triangle Global Initiative

The oceans and coasts of the Coral Triangle, the world's center of marine biodiversity, **remain** vibrant and healthy providing food and livelihoods for generations to come.

Climate-smart adopted by WWF-US Coral Triangle Program

The oceans and coasts of the Coral Triangle, the world's center of marine biodiversity, **are** vibrant and healthy providing food and livelihoods for generations to come.

Theory of Change

Business as usual

Healthy oceans and coasts and the sustainable use of marine resources are fundamental pillars of **long-term** sustainable development for the communities and economies of the Coral Triangle as well as for the global community that benefits from the region's extraordinary fisheries. By collaborating with governments, the private sector and local communities to promote and improve **long-term** fisheries management, develop a network of MPAs to **safeguard** marine resources, and minimize the impacts of climate change, behaviors will shift and the oceans and coasts of this region **will remain** healthy, providing livelihoods for generations to come.

Climate-smart adopted by WWF-US Coral Triangle Program

Healthy oceans and coasts and the sustainable use of marine resources are fundamental pillars of sustainable development for the communities and economies of the Coral Triangle as well as for the global community that benefits from the region's extraordinary fisheries. By collaborating with governments, the private sector and local communities to promote and improve **forward-looking** fisheries management; develop a network of MPAs to **provide marine resources in the face of a changing climate**, and **help people reduce their vulnerability to climate change and disasters**, behaviors will shift and the oceans and coasts of this region will **provide livelihoods** for generations to come.

Original language

remain – suggests a static world where it is possible to preserve the past.

Climate-smart language

are - being climate-smart recognises and manages changing ecosystems so that they are vibrant and healthy in a changing climate.

Original language

long-term – implies that a situation can be sustained over time and that change is not a reality.

safeguard – also suggests a static rather than dynamic world where maintaining the status quo will be increasingly difficult and costly.

Climate-smart language

forward-looking – climate-smart plans are continually reviewed and adapted going forward. They seek to maximise flexibility.

provide marine resources in the face of a changing climate - changing natural systems need to be proactively managed in a changing climate.

help people reduce their vulnerability - climate-smart conservation supports people to adapt in ways that support the ecosystems on which they depend.

Original language

Climate change adaptation programme – conservation in a climate changing world needs to respond to both climate and non-climate threats. Climate change adaptation should not be a separate, parallel project or programme of work but integrated into all projects and programmes.

projects - adaptation does not come in the form of projects. It is an on-going process comprised of vulnerability assessment, informed planning, capacity building, implementation of activities, learning and adaptive management.

vulnerability assessment.... is completed –assessment is on-going as climate change continues to affect people and places.

disaster risk reduction - the vulnerability of species, habitats and people is assessed to inform disaster risk reduction and adaptation strategies.

replicated – vulnerability and how decision makers respond to it is context specific, making replication difficult if not impossible.

Climate-smart language

The goal now integrates vulnerability assessment into climate informed conservation planning and action.

Goal

Business as usual

By 2015, a CCA program is implemented for the Pacific: mangrove protection and restoration projects in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea are completed; and a seascape-level vulnerability assessment in the Pacific – with a focus on habitats, key species and disaster risk reduction – is completed and replicated in other Coral Triangle seascapes to understand vulnerability across the region.

Climate-smart adopted by WWF-US Coral Triangle Program

By 2015, conservation activities in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea are informed by seascape level vulnerability assessment, and activities such as mangrove protection and restoration are contributing to reducing vulnerability to the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Cover Image: © Jürgen Freund / WWF- Canon

Photo: massive school of silversides (*Atherinomorus lacunosa*) around the reef. Moluccas, Indonesia.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.