

Summary of
CRISTAL

**Community-based Risk
Screening Tool –
Adaptation and Livelihoods**



Photo: Ghislaine Grasser



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➔ What is CRiSTAL?

CRiSTAL (Community-based Risk Screening Tool – Adaptation and Livelihoods) is a project planning and management tool that helps users to integrate risk reduction and climate change adaptation into their community-level work. Specifically, it provides an analytical framework to help users understand:

- How climate-related hazards affect a project area and local livelihoods
- How people cope with the impacts of these hazards
- Which livelihood resources are most affected by climate hazards and which ones are most important for coping
- How project activities affect access to or availability of these critical livelihood resources
- What adjustments can be made to a project to increase access to or availability of these critical livelihood resources



CRiSTAL follows a series of logically linked analytical steps. Most information is gathered through stakeholder consultations, although some secondary scientific information on climate change is required. The tool itself runs on Microsoft Excel so that users can record and summarize the gathered data.

➔ Background

CRiSTAL was developed in response to the outcomes of the first phase of the Livelihoods and Climate Change initiative, which demonstrated how ecosystem management and restoration and/or sustainable livelihoods projects contribute to risk reduction and climate change adaptation. By securing the local natural resource base and diversifying livelihood activities, these projects can reduce exposure to climate hazards and increase community resilience to a range of threats, including climate variability and change.

Recognizing this potential, project planners and managers began asking how they could systematically integrate risk reduction and climate change adaptation into their work. Community-level project planners rarely consider the implications of climate variability and change, especially how project activities might affect local adaptive capacity. IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature), IISD (International Institute for Sustainable Development), SEI (Stockholm Environment Institute) and Intercooperation therefore decided to dedicate the next phase of the Livelihoods and Climate Change project to developing a decision-support tool that will help project planners and managers better understand the links between climate, livelihoods and their work so they can design activities that foster adaptation and minimize maladaptation. Because of its focus at the community level, CRiSTAL promotes the development of risk reduction and adaptation strategies based on local conditions, strengths and needs.



Photo: Anne Hammill

➔ Applying CRiSTAL

The tool guides users through a number of analytical steps, which are divided into two modules:

Module 1: Climate and livelihood information

Step 1:
Climate context

- Current climate hazards
- Climate change
- Key climate impacts
- Coping strategies

Step 2:
Livelihood context

- Identify livelihood resources (LR)
- Rate impacts of hazards on LR
- Rate importance of LR for coping

Module 2: Planning and Managing Adaptation

Step 3:
Project impacts

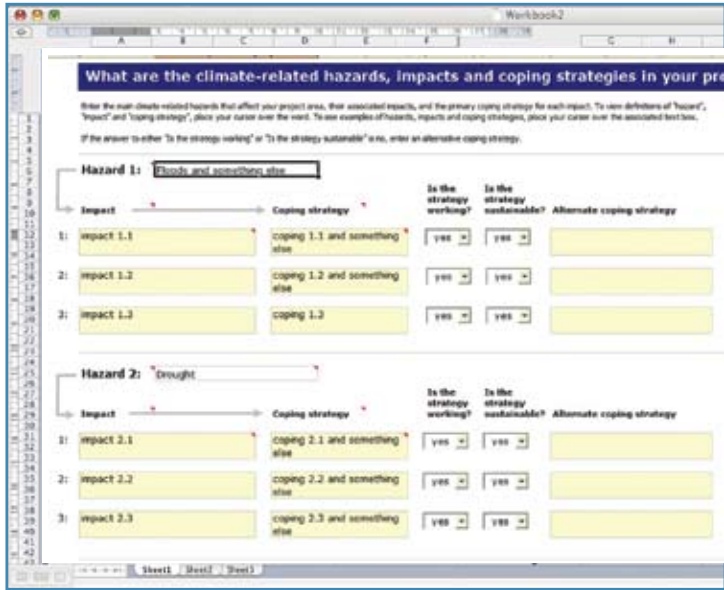
- Assess impact of project on LR:
 - most affected by hazards
 - most important for coping

Step 4:
Project adjustment

- Add or change project activities to reduce vulnerability and enhance adaptive capacity

While some scientific information is required to characterize the climate context in Step 1, the remaining steps can be completed by collecting information through community consultations and discussions with other project stakeholders. The logical sequencing of CRiSTAL's steps helps users to analyze this information, which is compiled and summarized in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.

CRiSTAL is being applied in many contexts around the world. Initial field tests on natural resource management projects in Mali, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Nicaragua and Sri Lanka yielded feedback that was rolled into subsequent versions and applications of CRiSTAL. Since its launch in 2007, CRiSTAL has been applied in over 20 countries. Furthermore, CRiSTAL training workshops have been offered in various countries.



CRiSTAL spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel

➔ Website and Contacts

A range of resources has been made available on the CRiSTAL website, www.cristaltool.org, including:

- Downloads of the tool and User's Manual in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, as well as background documents
- A database of reports on CRiSTAL applications around the world, which are also shown on an interactive map
- An events calendar showing upcoming training sessions and other activities



Photo: iStockphoto

To learn more about CRiSTAL and associated training opportunities please contact: Marius Keller (mkeller@iisd.org) or Anne Hammill (ahammill@iisd.org), International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).