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A guide to climate-smart programmes and humanitarian operations

Using climate information
across timescales
to enhance
humanitarian efforts

What is in the Handbook?



What is climate-smart?

Addressing common questions

Offers templates, tools and resources to use

A handbook for practitioners

Enabling conditions to work with climate information across timescales

Examples

Offers 3 easy steps

Defining “climate-smart”

Using climate information across timescales, both



- short-term weather and seasonal forecasts
- long-term climate change projections

in designing, adjusting and implementing activities to ensure that they contribute to reducing long-term climate risks and vulnerabilities, including likely unprecedented climate-related extreme events.



PURPOSE

Aim of the Guide



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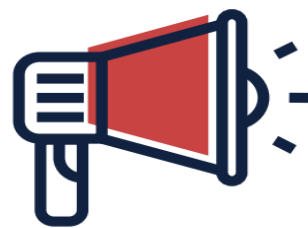
A guide to climate-smart programmes and humanitarian operations

Using climate information across timescales to enhance humanitarian efforts

Reduce the current and future humanitarian impacts of climate change and support people to adapt in the face of it

1

Scale up climate-smart DRR, early action and preparedness



2

Reduce health impacts of climate change



3

Address climate displacement



4

Enable Climate Resilient Livelihoods and Ecosystem Services



Reduce our own carbon footprint
GREEN THE RED

Does not address **Green the Red**

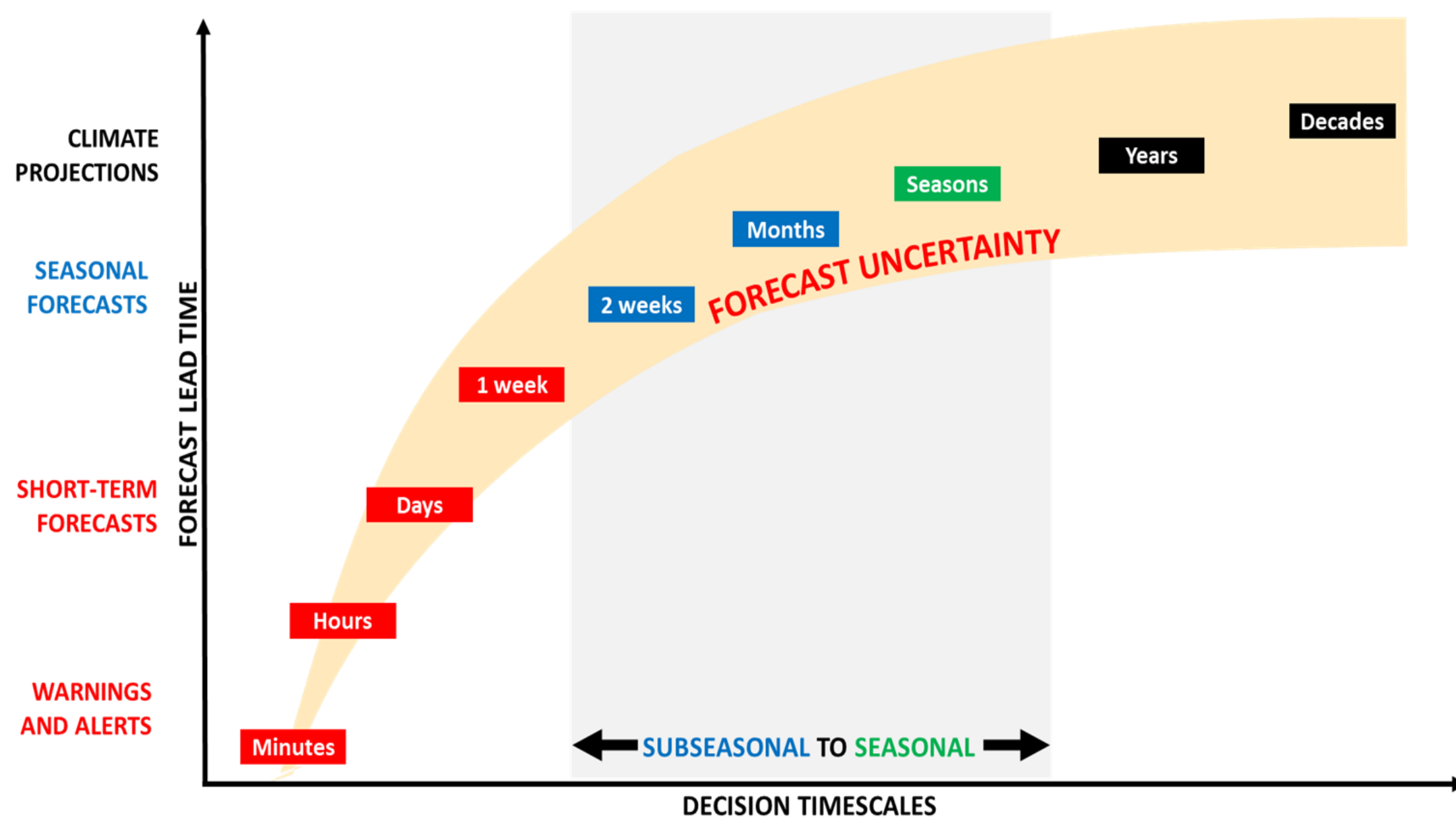
CLIMATE RISK IMPACT ALL OUR AREAS OF WORK

							
Disaster management, DRM, & DRR	Health & care systems	Water, sanitation & hygiene	Livelihoods & food security	Shelter, housing & settlements	Migration & displacement	Climate change adaptation	Other National Society activities
More frequent and extreme weather-related disasters & increasingly erratic seasons.	Human health impact of stronger heatwaves, floods, droughts & changing disease patterns.	Changing water availability: too much or too little.	Effects of warmer weather and more variable rainfall on food production & businesses.	Emergency operations challenged by increasingly intense & frequent disasters.	Increasing displacement & livelihood loss from climate change & disasters.	National Societies/IFRC will increasingly need to engage in dedicated adaptation.	Many National Societies have other activities that can also be affected by climate & weather.



Very few activities are completely safe from the changing impacts of climate and weather extremes

Using climate information across timescales



Sector examples at different timescales

Water resources and WASH

- Emergency WASH interventions, Emergency Response Unit (ERU) deployment in case of an imminent disaster
- Pre-emergency distribution of water purification tools and ERU units in case of potentially upcoming heavy rainfall
- Plan for equitable safe water access and allocation during drought or flood in case of a potentially erratic season
- Plan for rising water stress, based on long-term projections of drought episodes: Invest in landscape-scale solutions to ensure water availability through improved water efficiency and the sustainable management of watersheds and aquifers,
- Build capacity at local institutions and communities to expand green and grey local water storage infrastructure

More examples in the Guide

3 steps to climate-smart programming



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STEP 1

National climate risk assessment



STEP 2

Climate-smart screening of strategies, plans and programmes



STEP 3

Prioritization and planning

Step 1 – National climate risk assessment



For several- countries/ regions, basic science information is available in [Climate Factsheets](#)

Support partnership with weather agencies

The Guide offers a template, process guidance and links to other key sources, such as:

- [World Bank Country Climate Risk Profiles](#)
- [IPCC regional factsheets on Weather & Climate and Impacts & Risks](#), respectively



Step 1 – National climate risk assessment



To assess climate change **impacts** on vulnerability and exposure – and how it affects communities and our work within different sectors

Support for “Sector Impact Checks” within:

- Disaster Risk Management
- Livelihoods, agriculture and food security
- **Health programmes**
- **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene – WASH**
- Shelter, housing and settlements
- Migration and displacement

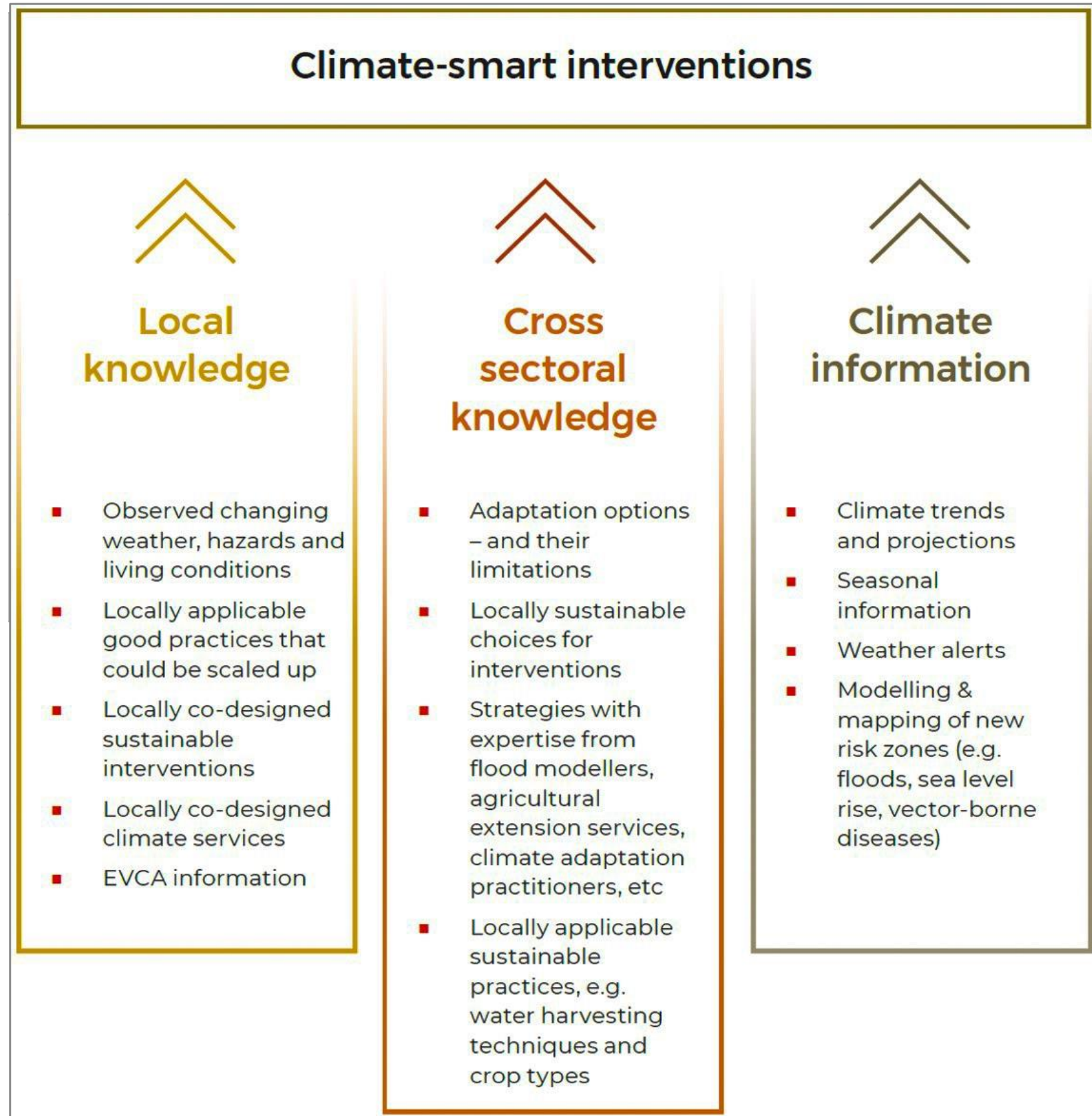
Annex 2 of the guide has the "right questions to ask"

Step 2 – The screening process

Identify likely climate risks	Review current practises and learnings		
1 List potential climate-related risks to manage in the intervention	2 Identify existing 'good practices' where climate risk is already considered	3 Identify potentially maladaptive practices	4 Missed opportunities in earlier interventions (if any)

A supporting Excel “Notebook” also can help keep track of the information in this step (links in the Guide)

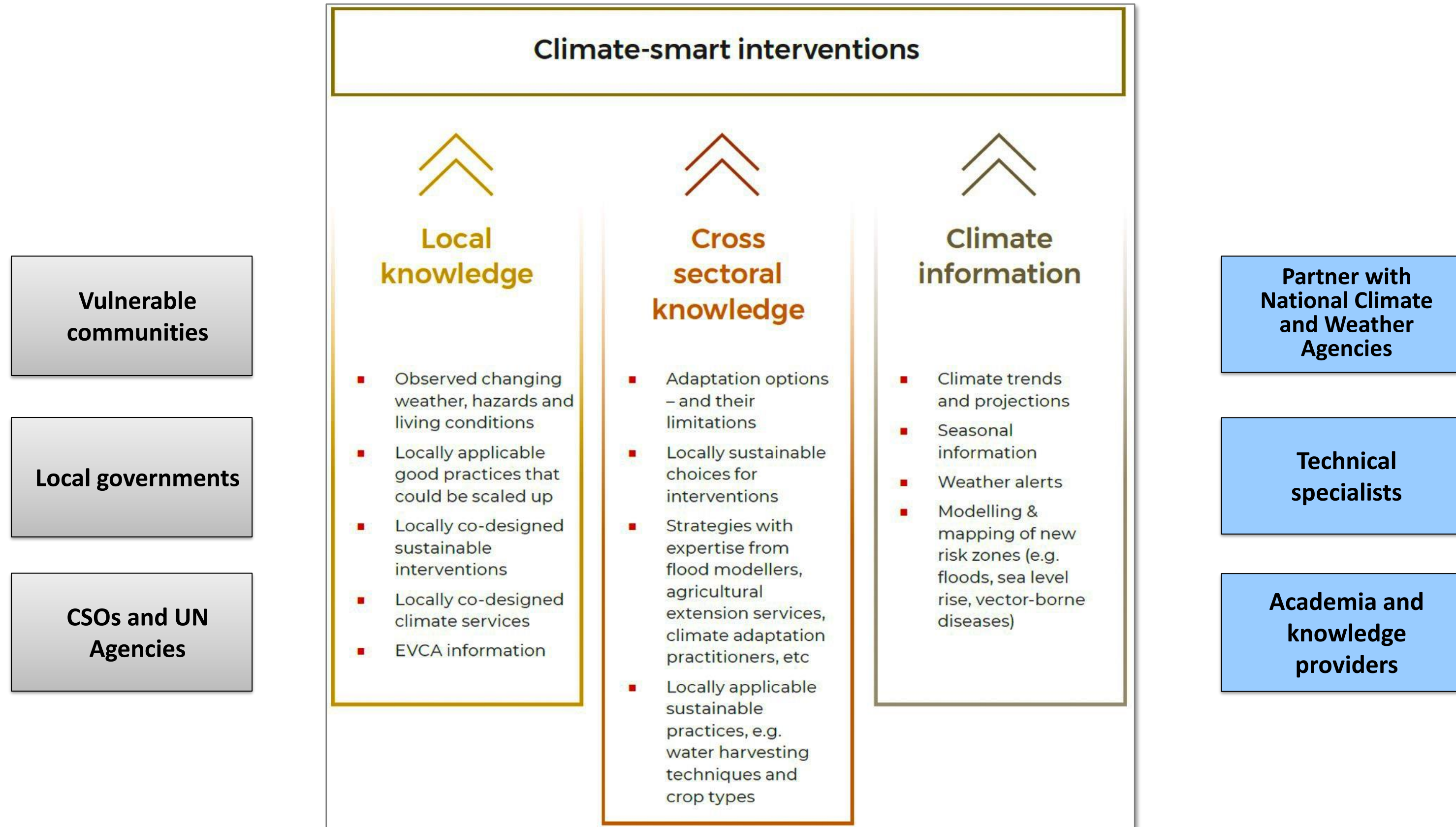
... leading to **Step 3** – planning and prioritisation



Practises and learnings		List climate-smart suggestions
Identify locally applicable practices	4 Missed opportunities in earlier interventions (if any)	5 Key recommendations to make the intervention climate smart

- Compile ideas and options for selecting “good practise” solutions
- - and consult different expertise to design the best locally relevant interventions

Enablers and partnerships



Overview of the 3 steps

3.1 Climate risk assessment

Basic

A. Check weather and climate information in:

- IFRC climate factsheets
- Relevant IPCC regional factsheets
- World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal

... and take notes in supporting [XL Notebook](#) (sheet 3.1.A):

Recent changes in temperatures and rainfall
Projected changes in climate patterns and associated drought, flood and heatwave risks etc.

B. Assess, with relevant sector colleagues:

- How could the changing climate impact existing vulnerabilities and the exposure in your target area? – take notes in [XL Notebook](#) (3.1.A)
- How would different “sectors” be impacted (disaster management, livelihoods, WASH, shelter etc.)? Use *Sector Impact Check* ([Annex 2](#) or [XL Notebook](#) 3.1.B) and insert your notes

In-depth

A. Review weather and climate information by:

- Consulting a range of sources ([Annex 1](#))
- Collaboration with weather service experts
- Use the template provided ([Annex 1](#))

... and compile report on:

Recent changes in temperatures and rainfall
Projected changes in climate patterns and associated drought, flood and heatwave risks etc.

B. Assess, with representatives from all NS departments and key external stakeholders:

- How could the changing climate impact existing vulnerabilities and the exposure in your target area? – take notes in [XL Notebook](#) (3.1.A)
- How would different ‘sectors’ be impacted (disaster management, livelihoods, WASH, shelter etc.)? Use *Sector Impact Check* ([Annex 2](#) or [XL Notebook](#) 3.1.B) and insert your notes.

Consider climate information at **all timescales**

- **Weather forecasts** (up to max. 15 days)
- **Seasonal forecasts** (3–6 months)
- **Climate projections** (decades to century)



3.2 Screening of strategies, plans and projects

1. **Select and review all issues you ranked as ‘relevant’** (green) in *Sector Impact Checks* (Step 3.1.B)
2. **With notes from 3.1.B in mind, review activities in your strategy, project plan or emergency operational plan, appeal etc.** and insert notes in the [XL Notebook](#) (3.2–3.3):
 - Potential climate-related risk to manage
 - Existing good practises, needs and missed opportunities in the previous interventions

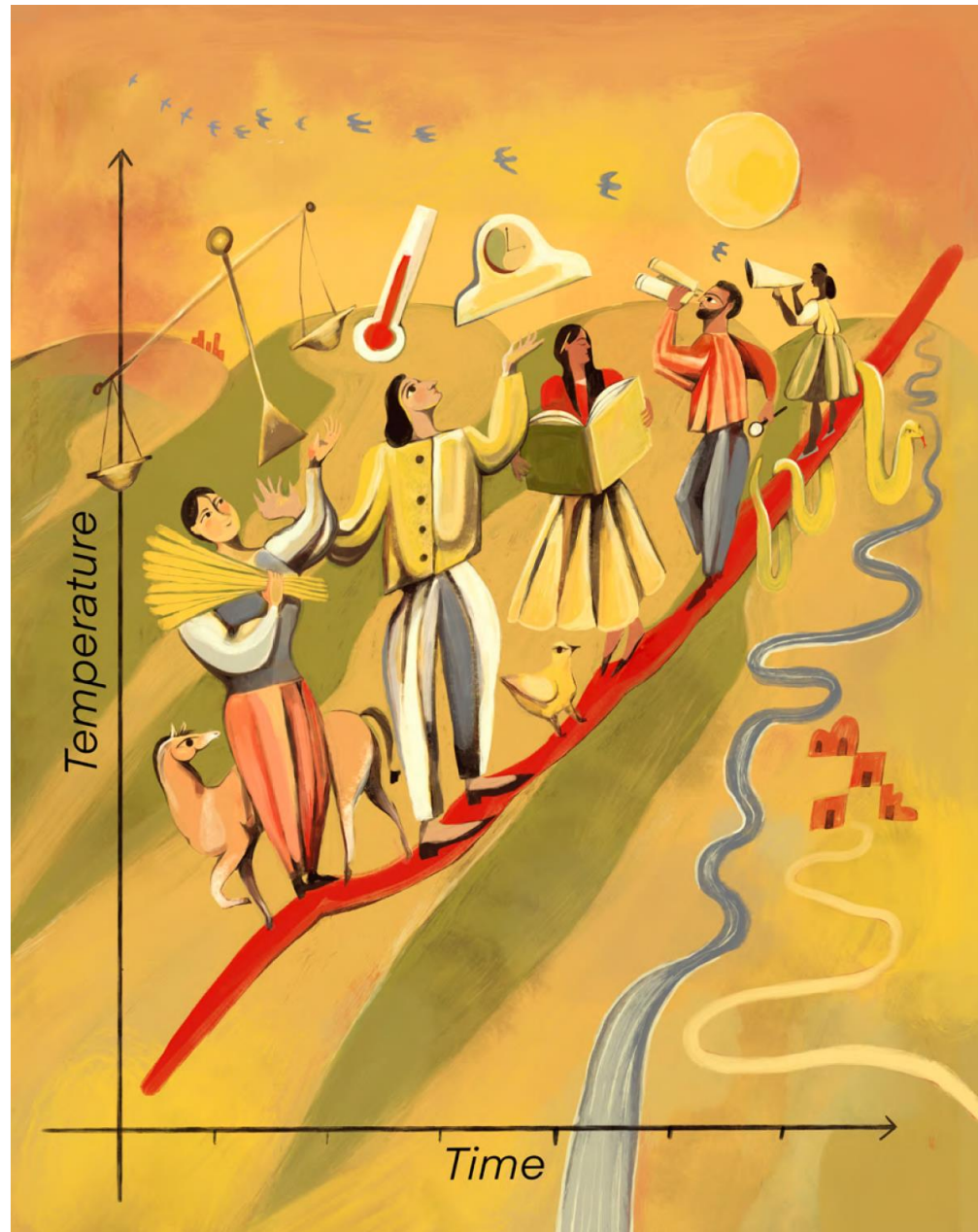
3.3 Prioritize and design climate-smart interventions

1. **Based** on the notes compiled in step 3.2., continue to the next column (3.3) in [XL Notebook](#) (3.2–3.3); for **each of your strategy, project plan or emergency operational plans, appeals etc.** insert:
 - Recommendations to make the planned activities for each intervention climate-smart
 2. Consolidate the recommendations with all partners and National Society leadership
 3. Operationalize the intervention – with the climate-smart activities embedded
- Note: Exactly how to adjust project activities or strategy objectives may require consultations with different specialists that have knowledge of the local context (no generic checklists possible).*



Conduct these steps jointly with specialists relevant for each of the documents you screen:

- **Always** involve sector-specific expertise from the National Society
- **Where feasible**, draw upon external partners from the Movement or beyond



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Putting climate-smart programming into practise: from the lense of a health adviser

1) Collaboration and literature review

- Seek dialogue and actively work together, exchange and toss ideas with your DRR/CCA colleagues
- Look for, read and jointly discuss your country specific national climate assessment, regional or country climate fact sheet
- Look for collaboration with your national meterological office/institute

2) Apply «instruments» for climate-smart programming

- National Climate Risk Assessment, Screening and Planning Notebook (page 42)
 - offers a comprehensive framework and detailed guiding questions to examine climate-smartness of SNSs strategies, policies and programming
 - useful to start an open discussion in SNS and partners

[National Climate Risk Assessment, Screening and Planning Notebook](#)
- Guiding sections for checking health and WASH programmes (Annex 2; page 78 ff)
 - offer sector specific questions to examine the relevance of themes and specific issues to consider in relation to climate
 - useful to start a programmatic and project specific discussion and thinking about actions.

Guiding [section for health](#), example page

Executive summary	Introduction	The basic principles	The steps to get to climate-smart programmes	mean for emergency operations?	generic plans and strategies climate-smart?	Concluding remarks	Annexes
THEME	ISSUES TO CONSIDER <i>Consider how marginalized populations may be impacted differently</i>					RELEVANT? <i>– for your context and region/operation?</i>	
HEALTH, FOOD SECURITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is there a risk that climate variables will negatively affect the nutritional value of key nutritional crops? 					Yes / Maybe / No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is it likely that there may be an impact of climate-linked declines in dietary diversity? 					Yes / Maybe / No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could there be particular health impacts for child development given climate impacts on food supply chains or crop survival? 					Yes / Maybe / No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could the economic impacts of climate change increase the risk of communicable and non-communicable diseases 					Yes / Maybe / No	
HEALTH SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are health facilities and their related energy and water supplies planning for the increased risks of flooding, drought, landslides and/or storm surges? 					Yes / Maybe / No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Would access roads to health facilities and/or markets likely be washed out and/or damaged in an emergency? <i>Consider what risks that would pose to relief/response efforts, ongoing treatments and other healthcare services in the area – and if there are contingency plans?</i> 					Yes / Maybe / No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could national or regional medical supply chains be impacted by climate extremes? 					Yes / Maybe / No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could rising temperatures (and heatwaves) impact day-to-day operations and patient outcomes? 					Yes / Maybe / No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could health services for marginalized populations be affected by higher temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, sea level rise and other climate stressors? 					Yes / Maybe / No	
MIGRATION AND HEALTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could migrating/displaced people be at risk from specific health impacts exacerbated by climate change (e.g., inadequate access to services, psychosocial ill-health, infectious disease risk, inadequate WASH servicing, inadequate shelter conditions)? 					Yes / Maybe / No	
SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could existing issues around access to sexual and reproductive healthcare be exacerbated by climate change? 					Yes / Maybe / No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could the impacts of climate change such as food security issues, air quality or disease risk impact maternal and infant health? 					Yes / Maybe / No	
AIR QUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are there existing “smog” risks that could be exacerbated by higher temperatures/heatwaves – increasing the impact on existing health conditions? 					Yes / Maybe / No	

Health

Guiding [section for WASH](#), example page

D: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - WASH

THEME	ISSUES TO CONSIDER	RELEVANT? – for your context and region/operation?
VECTOR- AND WATERBORNE DISEASES	Please see the list of questions compiled in the previous health table.	
WATER SUPPLY AND ACCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are changing rainfall patterns likely to affect recharge rates, the quality of groundwater and overall groundwater supplies? 	Yes / Maybe / No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a foreseen risk of increased (or decreased) temperatures that will affect the evaporation rates of surface waters? 	Yes / Maybe / No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a foreseen increased risk of prolonged droughts that may increase the competition / conflict for freshwater? 	Yes / Maybe / No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are water sources at risk to being impacted by climate change? <i>Consider: are water points poorly sited and, hence, at risk? Are water points already too low during hot seasons and is this trend likely to continue? Is access to clean water during floods at risk with higher flood levels in the future? Are water storage tanks well-constructed and located to withstand higher flood levels?</i> 	Yes / Maybe / No
WATER AND SANITATION INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could the current WASH infrastructure and/or operations and maintenance be compromised by projected increasing flood levels? <i>i.e., Is there a risk of flooding leading to the contamination of drinking water infrastructure and spread of waterborne diseases?</i> 	Yes / Maybe / No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are WASH facilities in healthcare centres and schools compromised by projected increasing flood levels? 	Yes / Maybe / No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is drought and reduced groundwater recharge likely to lead to borehole failures? 	Yes / Maybe / No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is household water treatment and storage at risk of being damaged by climate extremes? 	Yes / Maybe / No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are investments in the WASH sector likely to be insufficient to deal with climate change impacts? 	Yes / Maybe / No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is crop survival at risk with water scarcity? 	Yes / Maybe / No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a risk of groundwater contamination due to bad sanitation infrastructure and hygiene behaviours? 	Yes / Maybe / No

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - WASH

»

Screening our thematic health priorities for climate smartness

<https://swissredcross.sharepoint.com/sites/ICNet50/SitePages/IC-Focus-Session-01-2023-Earth-Concerns-%E2%80%93-Focus-on-climate-smart-programming.aspx>

(examples in WASH; Blood Safety and Availability and Community Health)

Conclusions for SRC IC

- 1) The guide provides very useful examples, resources with links and templates.
- 2) Initiating a **workshop with the partner** to think about climate in the program is a worth while investment to **stimulate the discussion on climate smartness** and a first step to start climate smart programming in practise.
- 3) The **checklists** provide an added value in that they stimulate discussion, help to think of enlarging or adapting services / activities, set the right mindset for strategic planning and are **useful for awareness raising on climate risk in general**.
- 4) However, the **structure of the checklists could be improved**, the actual version contains a mix of diseases and environmental issues and some duplication. Also, the evidence of some questions, e.g. under the NCD topic was raised. Furthermore, the attribution of access to health as well as the nexus of climate and health with fragility and security are missed.

Conclusions for SRC IC

- 5) The thematic working groups ‘community health’, ‘healthy ageing’, ‘BSA’ and ‘WASH’ all identified a number of climate-smart activities that are already being implemented in SRC supported projects, not necessarily because of climate change but for other reasons. For **communication purpose, however, the climate-smartness of the interventions could be emphasized more strongly.**
- 6) In a poll, the slight majority of PCs voted to have the adapted health and WASH **climate –smart checklists as compulsory instruments for project screening.**



Thank you for your attention

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