



# **PROVIA Guidance on Assessing Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation to Climate Change**

**CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

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The Global Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation (PROVIA) is a scientific initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) that seeks to harmonize, mobilize and communicate the growing knowledge base on vulnerability, impacts and adaptation.

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## Preface

In 1994 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published *Technical Guidelines for Assessing Climate Change Impacts and Adaptations*. These guidelines outlined a series of generic steps to be followed when designing and conducting a climate change impact and adaptation assessment. The guidelines were complemented in 1996 by the *UNEP Handbook on Methods for Climate Change Impact Assessment and Adaptation Strategies*. The IPCC Guidelines and the UNEP Handbook were applied in a range of country studies during the decade following their publication. They also inspired the publication of additional guidance, including the *International Guidebook for Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessments* carried out as part of the US Country Studies Program, and the *Adaptation Policy Frameworks for Climate Change: Developing Strategies, Policies and Measures*, published by UNDP.

The past decade has seen a shift from centralized guidance for climate vulnerability, impact and adaptation assessment to the development of specific, often sectoral or place-based approaches. There has been a proliferation of assessment methods and tools, and it has become increasingly difficult for potential users to understand the utility, benefits, requirements and tradeoffs of those methods and tools. Stakeholders' demand for knowledge on vulnerability, impacts and adaptation needs to be matched with the supply from the research community of clear technical guidance that takes into account both the academic

developments of the past 20 years as well as user needs at local, national and international levels.

The Global Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation (PROVIA) has responded to this challenge by revising and improving existing guidance for assessing climate change vulnerability, impacts and adaptation, covering the range of available approaches, methods and tools. This document is the result of this effort, which has been a pleasure for me to coordinate. The PROVIA Guidance is meant to be informative rather than prescriptive; its intended users are researchers, adaptation practitioners, decision-makers and those involved in project, programme and policy formulation. The Guidance is conceived as a "living document": the current version is a consultation document that will benefit from feedback from users.

The PROVIA Guidance has been prepared by a ten-strong author team, supported by a large group of experts and reviewers (see opposite page). The conceptual basis, the decision trees and the methods and tools included in the PROVIA Guidance build on research conducted within the project MEDIATION: Methodology for Effective Decision-making on Impacts and Adaptation. MEDIATION was funded by the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme under contract number 244012. The preparation of the PROVIA Guidance was funded by UNEP, with additional support provided by the Government of Sweden.

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