

Response to call for inputs on the application of impact, vulnerability and risk assessments

September 4th, 2026

Prepared for UNFCCC Adaptation Committee by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, September 2026.

IISD's Resilience Program has worked on IVRAs since its inception more than 20 years ago. Our work involves generating and implementing our own IVRAs as well as reviewing IVRAs that are developed and implemented by partners. Two recent case examples are presented below.

Case study #1: Understanding climate risks through an intersectional approach (ICRA) project

Context: Most IVRAs do not capture a nuanced picture of who is most at risk from climate change and why, often relying on broad categories like "women," "youth," "elderly," or "people with disabilities." An intersectional approach offers a more nuanced understanding by examining how overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalization, such as racism, ageism, and gender-based discrimination, shape people's exposure and vulnerability to climate change. Practical experience applying this approach to IVRAs remains limited.

Purpose and use of findings: Between January 2025 and December 2026, IISD and local partners in Nepal (Prakriti Resources Centre, Tewa – Women's Fund of Nepal, Community Development & Advocacy Forum Nepal) and South Africa (Urban Earth, Triangle Project, Western Cape Association of and for Persons with Disabilities) [piloted an intersectional IVRA approach](#) through two case studies. In a neighbourhood of the city of Cape Town, South Africa, the IVRA examined how women of colour with disabilities and people of colour from the LGBTQIA+ community are disproportionately affected by drought and extreme heat. In a rural settlement of Madhesh province, Nepal, it examined how Madhesi Dalit women of reproductive age and senior Madhesi Dalit women are disproportionately affected by drought and flood. Findings informed how an intersectional IVRA can shape adaptation pathways, particularly around improving marginalized groups' access to climate services and information.

Factors influencing application: Policy analyses found that both countries already have anti-discrimination laws in place, meaning effective adaptation depends on stronger implementation of these existing frameworks. Adaptation plans are being developed/updated in the localities of the case study research, providing influencing opportunities for the intersectional IVRA approach and findings.

Key lessons: An intersectional approach to IVRAs is achievable but adds complexity, and methodologies remain underdeveloped. Given the sensitivity of discussing personal identities and

the systems of inequity that are normalized and legitimized in our societies through institutions, laws, policies, and social norms, traditional methods like large surveys are unsuitable. Instead, the project drew on trusted local partners already working with marginalized groups, using dialogues and co-production workshops to engage groups safely and meaningfully.

Existing guidance: The working framework for the IVRA process is available in this [working paper](#), and the approach to understanding how systems of inequity influence vulnerability is presented [here](#). IISD will release a guidance note on intersectional IVRAs by the end of December 2026.

Case study #2: Community-level IVRAs to inform locally-led adaptation action

Context: The [Community-based Adaptation: Scaling-up Community Action for Livelihoods and Ecosystems \(CBA SCALE+\) project](#) works with local authorities, communities, and policymakers in Southern Africa and beyond to scale up community-based adaptation (CBA) approaches that are nature-based, gender-responsive, and fair. As part of its CBA approach, participatory IVRAs were conducted in nearly 100 communities in Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe in 2024-2025.

Purpose and use of findings: The IVRA findings were used to inform community adaptation action plans, which identify adaptation priorities for the communities to be implemented by individuals and community-based organizations, as well as local governments and other relevant actors.

Factors influencing application: CBA SCALE+ is a longer-term project that allows time for the development of the plans and implementation of urgent priorities, as well as engagement of local governments, other service providers, and national policymakers to secure support for actions that require additional resources and longer-term institutionalization. The participatory IVRAs were therefore one stage in a longer-term process of community engagement and mobilization of resources for locally-led adaptation.

Key lessons: Integrating community knowledge with climate science in participatory assessments remains a challenge. Involving local government in community engagement processes from the outset builds ownership and support for the planning processes that followed. Communities are already adapting to the impacts of climate change, and their experiences and knowledge must inform adaptation planning. Meaningful community engagement in IVRAs takes time, particular skills, and a strong understanding of climate science.

Existing guidance: Lessons learned from the IVRA processes are documented in this [report](#), as well as this [article](#).

Contact point: Emilie Beauchamp, ebeauchamp@iisd.org

References and further reading

Dazé, A., Hunter, C., & Dekens, J. (2026). *An intersectional approach to climate risk assessment: A working framework*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. [An Intersectional Approach to Climate Risk Assessment | International Institute for Sustainable Development](#)

Dekens, J., Dazé, A., Hunter, C. (2026). *How an intersectional approach can help us address vulnerability to climate change*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://www.iisd.org/articles/explainer/how-intersectional-approach-can-help-us-address-vulnerability-climate-change>