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Principles for Conducting
Watershed-scale
Vulnerability and
Adaptation Assessment
(W-VAA)



Principles

- Intentionally broad
- Generic
- Non-prescriptive
- Applicable regardless of the governance and management structure the W-VAA is intended to inform



Principles

01

Principle 1: Focus on informing decisions

02

Principle 2: Adhere to a well-articulated scope

03

Principle 3: Consider the complexities of socio-ecological systems

04

Principle 4: Embrace and communicate future uncertainties and risks

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Principle 5: Ensure a participatory approach

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Principle 6: Increase social capacity to reorganize in the context of risk

07

Principle 7: Monitor, evaluate and learn



Principle 1: Focus on informing decisions

- Focus on the delivery of the best information and recommendations to aid decision-making across a watershed.
- Identifying the relevant decision-space and engaging decision-makers at the outset is important.

Principle 2: Adhere to a well-articulated scope

- What and whose vulnerabilities are to be assessed, and why?
- What are the geographical parameters?
- What components of the socio-ecological system must be evaluated?
- Where will data come from?
- Over what timeframe will the analysis be conducted?



Principle 3: Consider the complexities of socio-ecological systems

- Ecological processes
- Socio-economic impacts
- Diversity of stakeholders
- Governance
- Data



Principle 4: Embrace and communicate future uncertainties and risks

- Suites of scenarios should be developed that encompass a range of outcomes.
- At minimum these should include scenarios that reflect a probable case, a best case and a worst case.
- Using scenarios and shared vision planning processes, rather than blueprints, can help society better understand uncertainties and risks as well as develop actions that do not undermine abilities to make adjustments should reality deviate from predictions.



Principle 5: Ensure a participatory approach

- Adaptation is place and context-specific
- Ensure transparency in negotiating trade-offs
- Greater ownership of outcomes



Principle 6: Increase social capacity to reorganize in the context of risk

- W-VAA processes are not one-time exercise, but iterative.
- Long-term resilience requires the ability to learn and reorganize in the face of changing circumstances, and shifting patterns of shocks and crises.





Principle 7: Monitor, evaluate and learn

- Learn
- Adjust
- Establishing effective monitoring and evaluation plans includes setting baselines and defining the indicators to measure short and long-term progress.

"We do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience."



1st Break-out session (4 groups): Principles

- What principles did you follow in your past work?
- Do the W-VAA missing some principles?
- How would you implement the W-VAA principles in your future work?

The image features a dark grey background with a decorative pattern of overlapping circles in various shades of blue. A horizontal white band runs across the center of the image, containing the text "Reporting back".

Reporting back