Measuring the unmeasurable: Developing adaptation indicators

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The drive for indicators

• Political drivers
• Accountability for actions
• Monitoring outcomes
• Need for evaluation of actions
• Identify changes in a system
• Enable adaptive management
The problem with adaptation indicators

• Trying to measure
  – an avoided event
  – at no fixed time in the future
  – against no fixed baseline

• Attribution of changes

• Outcome vs Process

• Glut of indicators already out there
A resilience led approach

Desired objective: a natural environment that continues to be resilient in the face of climate change (and other pressures).

Characteristics of a resilient natural environment

- Diverse natural environment
- Non-climate anthropogenic pressures minimised
- Flexible management
- Delivers ecosystem function

Package of new and existing indicators

Criteria for assessing indicators
Challenges to this approach

- Not everything is easily measurable
- Accept it’s not just about adaptation
- Weighting and integrating components
- Interpreting the indicators
- Capturing the local nature of adaptation
Technical report will be available at

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