



DISCOVER and ECRP Glossary of Terms

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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| Adaptation | Any adjustment, whether passive, reactive or anticipatory, that is proposed as a means for reducing the anticipated adverse consequences of, or taking advantage of any benefits associated with, climate change (based on Stakhiv 1993). |
| Adaptive capacity | The ability of a system to adjust to climate change, including climate variability and extremes, to moderate potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities or to cope with the consequences (IPCC 2007). |
| Advocacy | A process that tackles disadvantage by working with communities and key stakeholders to bring about changes in policy, process, practice and attitudes in order to ensure communities' rights are recognised and realised. The aim is to actively support disadvantaged people to influence the decisions that affect their rights and lives (VSO, 2009). |
| Capacity | A combination of all the strengths and resources available within a community, society or organization that can reduce the level of risk, or the effects of a disaster. <i>Capacity may include physical, institutional, social or economic means as well as skilled personal or collective attributes such as leadership and management. Capacity may also be described as capability.</i> |
| Capacity building | Efforts aimed to develop human skills or societal infrastructures within a community or organisation needed to reduce the level of risk. <i>In extended understanding, capacity building also includes development of institutional, financial, political and other resources, such as technology, at different levels and sectors of the society.</i> |
| Carbon credit | Any tradable certificate or permit representing the right to emit one tonne of carbon dioxide or the mass of another greenhouse gas with a carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO ₂ e) equivalent to one tonne of carbon dioxide (UNFCCC, 2007). A Certified Emission Reduction (CER) |

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| | represents the same level of reduction in a greenhouse gas, a CER being issued by the Clean Development Mechanism to the emission mitigating institution for sale on the carbon market. |
| Climate change | Statistically significant variation in either the mean state of the climate or its variability, persisting for an extended period (typically decades or longer) and resulting from anthropogenic (man-made) greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC 2007). |
| Risk mitigation | Structural and non-structural measures undertaken to limit the adverse impact of natural hazards, environmental degradation and technological hazards |
| Climate change mitigation | Technological change and substitution that reduce resource inputs and emissions per unit of output. Although several social, economic and technological policies would produce an emissions reduction, with respect to climate change, mitigation means implementing policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance sinks (see also greenhouse gas) (IPCC 2007). |
| Climate hazard | Potentially damaging physical manifestations of climatic variability or change, such as droughts, floods, storms, episodes of heavy rainfall, long-term changes in the mean values of climatic variables, potential future shifts in climatic regimes and so on (Brooks 2003). |
| Climate model | A numerical representation of the climate system based on the physical, chemical, and biological properties of its components, their interactions and feedback processes, and accounting for all or some of its known properties. The climate system can be represented by models of varying complexity (ie for any one component or combination of components a hierarchy of models can be identified, differing in such aspects as the number of spatial dimensions, the extent to which physical, chemical, or biological processes are explicitly represented, or the level at which empirical parameterisations are involved (IPCC 2007). |
| Climate trend | The general direction in which climate factors, such as average annual temperature or rainfall, tend to move over time |
| Climate variability | Variations from the mean state (and other statistics, such as standard deviations, the occurrence of extremes, etc) of the climate on all temporal and spatial scales beyond that of individual weather events (IPCC 2007). |
| Community | People living in one geographical area, who are exposed to common hazards due to their location. Groups within the locality will have a stake in risk reduction measures. |
| Consortium partners | Organisations or institutions that will be directly involved in implementing the programme. |
| Coping capacity | Level of resources or abilities by which people, organizations or systems use to deal with adverse consequences that could lead to a disaster. |

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| Beneficiary | Direct beneficiaries are defined as those who will participate directly in the programme, and thus benefit from its existence. Indirect beneficiaries are often, but not always, all those living within the zone of influence of the programme. It is often only possible to make broad estimates of indirect beneficiaries for two reasons: (a) there is no clear line separating those influenced by a programme from those beyond this zone, as the boundary will depend on the person and the degree of need or importance of the programme output; (b) for many components of the programme, there may be no clear distinction between a beneficiary and a non-beneficiary (FAO). |
| Disaster risk management | The systematic process of using administrative decisions, organization, operational skills and capacities to implement policies, strategies and coping capacities of the society and communities to lessen the impacts of natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters. This comprises all forms of activities, including structural and non-structural measures to avoid (prevent) or to limit adverse effects of hazards |
| Disaster risk reduction | The concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events (UNISDR 2009). |
| Diversification | State of engaging in more than one enterprise for a means of living. |
| Early warning | The provision of timely and relevant information, through identified institutions, that allows individuals exposed to a hazard to take action to avoid or reduce their risk and prepare for effective response |
| El Niño | Or El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), is a complex interaction of the tropical Pacific ocean and the global atmosphere that results in irregularly occurring episodes of changed ocean and weather patterns in many parts of the world, often with significant impacts over many months, such as altered marine habitats, rainfall changes, floods, droughts and changes in storm patterns (UNISDR 2009). El Niño and La Niña are defined as sustained sea surface temperature anomalies of magnitude greater than 0.5°C across the central tropical Pacific ocean, El Niño being a warming and La Niña a cooling event. El Niño events are associated with wetter weather in East Africa and drier conditions in Southern Africa. La Niña events generally cause the opposite. Malawi is situated roughly on a line between the influences on East and on Southern Africa, so southern Malawian climate usually responds in the same way as Southern Africa, northern Malawi less so. Climate change may increase the strength and frequency of the oscillation. |
| Extreme weather event | An event that is rare within its statistical reference distribution at a particular place. Definitions of 'rare' vary, but an extreme weather event would normally be as rare as or rarer than the 10 th or 90 th percentile. By definition, the characteristics of what is called 'extreme |

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| | weather' may vary from place to place. Extreme weather events may typically include floods and droughts (IPCC 2007). |
| Food security | Access by all people at all times to adequate and quality food for a healthy and active life. |
| Forecast | Definite statement or statistical estimate of the likely occurrence of a future event or conditions for a specific area (UNISDR 2009) |
| Greenhouse gas | A gas that absorbs radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of radiation (infrared radiation) emitted by the Earth's surface and by clouds. The gas in turn emits infrared radiation from a level where the temperature is colder than the surface. The net effect is a local trapping of part of the absorbed energy and a tendency to warm the planetary surface. Water vapour (H ₂ O), carbon dioxide (CO ₂), nitrous oxide (N ₂ O), methane (CH ₄) and ozone (O ₃) are the primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere (IPCC 2007). |
| Hazard | A potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation. |
| Hazard impact | Impacts related to dangerous phenomena, substances, human activities or conditions that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage (UNISDR 2009). |
| Implementing partners | Partner organisations that are directly implementing consortium projects |
| Indigenous knowledge | Also referred to as local knowledge, is the ancient, communal, holistic and spiritual knowledge that encompasses every aspect of human existence (Brascoupé and Mann 2001). Local knowledge of climate change includes historical knowledge from experience and local indicators used to predict future climate, usually on short-term to seasonal time scales. |
| Indirect beneficiary | Beneficiaries that are not directly targeted or supported by the consortium interventions. |
| Innovation | <i>Innovations are products, services, solutions or processes that have no logical antecedent and are potentially value-creating to a specific group (based on White, 2011). Innovation does not only refer to new ideas but can include the application of existing ideas and approaches to areas or communities for which they have not yet been available – so innovation is change that creates a new dimension of performance (Drucker, 2005). Being innovative implies being prepared to accept a negative as well as a positive result.</i> |
| Livelihoods | A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, |

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| | maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation: and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels in the long and short term (Chambers and Conway 1992). A secure livelihood reduces poverty and marginalisation; equips and empowers an individual, household or community to protect and claim their rights to the resources and assets essential for their livelihood; strengthens them against the impact of disaster; and deepens their understanding of and ability to respond to climate change (derived from Christian Aid Secure Livelihoods Strategy 2007–11). |
| Maladaptation | Actions that increase vulnerability to climate change. This includes making development or investment decisions while neglecting the actual or potential impacts of both climate variability and longer-term climate change (Burton et al 1998). |
| Maladaptation feedbacks | Consequences of actions taken to reduce short-term vulnerability which then accelerate medium or long-term vulnerability to climate change. In Malawi, this could include charcoal making and other activities which use natural resources unsustainably. |
| Poverty | Poverty is multidimensional, including more than a lack of income or material resources. Poverty is a broader concept in which insufficient income is one among many dimensions of human deprivation: limited control over assets, limited access to basic services, and absence of work, isolation, powerlessness, voicelessness, discrimination, insecurity, humiliation and physical weakness. The ways in which these deprivations combine are complex and diverse, varying among countries and communities and over time. Poverty is disempowerment and the injustices that result. |
| Preparedness | Activities and measures taken in advance to ensure effective response to the impact of hazards, including the issuance of timely and effective early warnings and the temporary evacuation of people and property from threatened locations |
| Prevention | Activities to provide outright avoidance of the adverse impact of hazards and means to minimize related environmental, technological and biological disasters. |
| Programme location | Geographical area where the programme will be implemented |
| Recovery | Decisions and actions taken after a disaster with a view to restoring or improving the pre-disaster living conditions of the stricken community, while encouraging and facilitating necessary adjustments to reduce disaster risk. |
| Relief/Response | The provision of assistance or intervention during or immediately after a disaster to meet the life preservation and basic subsistence needs of those people affected. It can be of an immediate, short-term, or protracted duration |

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| Renewable energy | Renewable energy includes resources that rely on fuel sources that restore themselves over short periods of time and do not diminish. Such fuel sources include the sun, wind, moving water, organic plant and waste material (biomass), and the earth's heat (geothermal). Although the impacts are usually small, some renewable energy technologies have an impact on the environment. For example, large hydroelectric resources can have environmental trade-offs associated with issues such as fisheries and land use (US EPA, 2011). |
| Resilience | The capacity of a system, community or society to cope with and bounce back from stresses and shocks without undermining its future coping capacity or natural resource base. A resilient livelihood is one that enables people to feed, clothe, house, educate and take care of themselves and their household with dignity, <u>and</u> to build up savings and/or other resources, while <u>also</u> enabling them to prepare for and cope with shocks (whether posed by natural hazards, economic factors, resource degradation or disease) <u>and</u> to actively adapt to new and emerging threats and longer-term changes in their context. |
| Risk | The probability of harmful consequences, or expected losses (deaths, injuries, property, livelihoods, economic activity disrupted or environment damaged) resulting from interactions between natural or human-induced hazards and vulnerable conditions. |
| Risk reduction | Processes aimed at minimizing vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society to avoid or to limit the adverse impacts of hazards. |
| Scenario | A plausible and often simplified description of how the future may develop, based on a coherent and internally consistent set of assumptions about driving forces and key relationships. Scenarios may be derived from projections, but are often based on additional information from other sources, sometimes combined with a narrative storyline (IPCC 2007). |
| Shock | A sudden upsetting or surprising event or experience. In livelihoods, key concepts are that they are unpredicted and significant enough to cause negative impact regardless of their size and transience. |
| Sustainable development | Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. |
| Vulnerability | State of susceptibility to harm from exposure to stress associated with environmental and social change and from the absence of capacity to adapt (Edger, 2006) |