Building Resilience to a Changing Climate:
A Technical Training in Water Sector Utility Decision Support

Training Participant Experience and Challenges

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Participant Overview

• Participants cover a variety of backgrounds including:
  – Government (Local, State, Federal) (32%)
  – Drinking Water Utility (21%)
  – Combined Utility (18%)
  – Wastewater Utility (4%)
  – Academia (4%)
  – Consultants (4%)
  – NGOs (4%)
  – Professional Associations (4%)
  – Other (11%)

• NOTE: Based on 28 responses out of 40 surveys distributed.
Pre-Training Survey: Group Composition

• Primary Job Responsibilities:
  – 46% responsible for climate adaptation planning, climate mitigation, and sustainability
  – ~43% responsible for water resources, water demand, and long-term planning

• Other Significant Job responsibilities:
  – Wastewater/stormwater management
  – Research
  – Engineering / capital projects
  – Operations and maintenance
  – Environmental planning
  – Regulatory compliance
  – Public relations/communications
Pre-Training Survey: Science Use & Challenges

• Use of climate projections or climate change assessment information:
  – ~71% currently use some form of climate data
  – ~18% do not use climate data currently, but are interested in doing so in the future
  – No participants indicated their organization does not use climate information and will likely not in the future

• Challenges integrating climate information into work:
  – ~57% identified lack of training or understanding of climate data
  – Other key challenges (39% each):
    • Funding for climate adaptation evaluations and investments
    • Other utility priorities taking precedent
Other challenges integrating climate information into work:

- It is technically challenging
- We produce the science – we are not managers
- Have not yet established consistent policy direction or internal guidance on how to use climate change projections or how to determine which scenarios to consider
- Lack of confidence in projections
- Meeting regulations and compliance
- Culture of disbelief/denial
Pre-Training Survey: Learning Goals

• Climate Modeling:
  – How to identify the best information for use in utility planning (68%)
  – How to communicate about the complex uncertainty inherent in climate adaptation (43%)

• Uncertainty Planning Methods:
  – How to identify the best planning methods for use at my utility (46%)
  – A better understanding of robust decision-making approaches (46%)
  – A basic understanding of approaches to planning and decision making within a highly uncertain context (43%)

• Communicating Climate Science
  – Communications best practices for integrating climate science into utility planning operations (79%)
Small Group Discussion Format and Questions

• Small groups of 4-5 participants will cover:
  – Introductions (Name, Affiliation, Job Description)
  – Discussion Questions
    • What kind of drinking water, wastewater or stormwater utility climate adaptation planning issues are you currently working on?
    • What are the greatest challenges you are facing integrating climate information into utility planning and business processes?
    • What question do you most want to address during this training?
Small Group Discussion and Report Outs

• Small Group Discussion (25 minutes)
  – Get to know your group and cover discussion questions
  – Synthesize group responses to questions

• Report Outs (25 minutes)
  – Share who is in each group
  – Briefly describe key challenges and 1-3 questions your group would most like to address during the training