Successful Adaptation:

Key Dimensions of an Elusive Goal

Susi Moser, Ph.D.

Stanford University
Successful Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal Environments

West Coast-wide, transdisciplinary research project (2011-14)

Thank You
5 Reasons to Think About Adaptation Success

1. Communication and Public Engagement
   – Communicating hope and desirable goal to work towards
   – Defining a common vision among diverse stakeholders
Why Think About Adaptation Success?

2. Deliberate planning and decision-making
   - Setting clear goals, aligning means and ends (internal consistency)
   - Best fit with other policy goals (external consistency)
Why Think About Adaptation Success?

3. Justification of adaptation expenditures
Why Think About Adaptation Success?

4. Accountability/good governance
Why Think About Adaptation Success?

5. Support for learning and adaptive management

Source: SCIRO
And Good Reasons NOT to Think About Success

• Political sensitivities
What Does Success Look Like?
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“I don’t know many churches that have to put the tide chart on their Web site” so people know whether they can get to church.

The Rev. Jennifer Slade, Norfolk, VA
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Some Tough Questions

• How much can science help?
• Or is it all subjective and political?
• What is the right scale at which to consider success?
• How and how much do we integrate across sectors? Across scales or levels of government?
• How do we address trade-offs?
• When can we declare success (or not)?
• How should we measure success?
• Who gets to say?
“Success” in the Real World

- Washington State
- Oregon
- California
Six Key Dimensions of Adaptation Success

Adaptation Barriers
- Identify and develop effective strategies to overcome barriers to adaptation (institutional, motivational, political, financial, scientific etc.)

Adaptive Capacity
- Establish enabling conditions
- Build up social, technical, human, financial etc. capacities

Adaptation Process
- Conduct the assessment and planning process “right”
- Engage in continual assessment of adaptation needs

Adaptation Decision-Making
- Select a “good” adaptation option
- Make a “good” adaptation decision

Adaptation Implementation
- Successfully implement specific adaptation actions, next step
- Set up ongoing process

Adaptation Outcomes
- Find adaptation outcomes to be “good”, or “acceptable”
- Avoid maladaptation
Thank you!

Susi Moser, Ph.D.
Susanne Moser Research & Consulting and Stanford University

Email: promundi@susannemoser.com
Web: www.susannemoser.com

Book available from:
http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415525008/
http://www.amazon.com/Successful-Adaptation-Climate-Change-Changing/dp/0415525004

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