



2019 GLISA Small Grant White Paper

Bringing For-Profit Companies into the Boundary Chain

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Background and Approach

BACKGROUND, MOTIVATION, AND GOALS

Between 2016 and 2019, The American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP) staff and members observed both increased demand and shifting provider demographics in the climate adaptation and resilience service marketplace. This shift was reflected in ASAP membership; between 2016 and 2018, ASAP members from for-profit companies increased from 15% to over 30%. According to Climate Change Business Journal, climate adaptation and resilience services market growth was in the double digits from 2018 to 2020 and is forecast to continue its growth at least 12-15% per year to at least 2022. This market growth signaled that it was a critically important time to strengthen for-profit service providers' competencies for using and building upon the climate data, information, services, and strategies that had been developed primarily by the public and social profit sectors.

In order to achieve the integration and increased competencies described above, ASAP assessed the current practices and needs of for-profit climate service providers, convened them with GLISA staff and other stakeholders for a workshop on existing climate data, models, and strategies for the Great Lakes region, then scaled that workshop model in the following year to cover three distinct U.S. regions. We sought to help adaptation and resilience service providers operating in the Great Lakes region:

- Build relationships with GLISA and its partners;
- Learn how to use GLISA products such as the Great Lakes Ensemble, Great Lakes Adaptation Data Suite (GLADS), regional and local climatologies, and municipal stormwater vulnerability assessment template; and,
- Build relationships with other private sector companies who may be potential future collaborators.

We also sought to enable GLISA and ASAP to:

- Learn about the state of the adaptation and resilience marketplace in the region;
- Better understand how for-profit companies want to engage with boundary organizations to co-create climate resources for the adaptation and resilience marketplace; and,
- Strengthen the cross-sectoral relationship between GLISA and for-profit climate service providers, increasing the market and reach of GLISA's products and services.

PROJECT TEAM COMPOSITION

The project team was composed of the ASAP staff and staff from Adaptation International:

- ASAP staff team: project lead; developed methodology for assessing service providers' practices and needs; led practice and needs assessment data collection, analysis, and reporting; convened project advisory group; compiled list of private sector companies operating in the region; contributed to Academy design; led Academy execution.
- Adaptation International: co-developed assessment methodology; led pedagogical design for Academy; co-facilitated Academy sessions.
- GLISA: climate data and information integration lead: advised on workshop direction and agenda; advised on how to engage CAP/RISA teams and integrate the presentation of climate data and information in workshop sessions; presented NOAA and GLISA overview information; participated in workshops session and 1-on-1 consultations.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT APPROACH

To achieve our goals, we created tools to better understand for-profit providers' practices and needs and support the integration of existing public-sector climate data and information into providers' products, services, and strategies.

We designed and tested a cutting-edge virtual [workshop](#) to build service provider knowledge and skills. The workshop supported the development of higher-quality, competitive adaptation services and enhanced new business viability. It also helped to foster innovation and cooperation across sectors and functions in the climate data, information, and service marketplaces.

Through the workshop, parallel surveys, and interviews we identified the most important provider [needs and barriers](#) for using publicly available, vetted, region-specific climate data and information. This is critical for advancing the definition and maturation of the climate service marketplace.

We used a [relationship-centered](#) approach throughout, one that holds much promise for ensuring that as the market grows, the quality of services also advances. This approach enables important progress on our goals of standardizing future climate information used in projects across the region and centering justice and equity as core values for adaptation and resilience services.

Relationships

ASAP-GLISA RELATIONSHIP

Prior to the project, ASAP had a strong working relationship with GLISA through collaboration on the Great Lakes Adaptation Forum (GLAF), and Beth Gibbons (ASAP Executive Director)'s former employment with GLISA as the Program Manager. GLISA provided a high level of support to the project, including a thorough review of project materials (e.g., practice and needs assessment data collection instruments and Academy materials), participation in the project advisory group, and serving as a trainer during the Academy events. We continue to have a strong relationship with GLISA and hope to continue working with GLISA through their small grants program, GLAF, and other potential collaborations.

STAKEHOLDER NETWORKS ENGAGED

Project advisory group, which then became the ASAP private sector member-led interest group (now becoming an affiliated group). Approximately 20 people, mostly from private sector companies with some academic, nonprofit, and government representatives.

- We partnered with the following CAP/RISA Teams for Climate Data and Information Week in Year 2: Carolinas Integrated Sciences and Assessments (CISA) and Climate Assessment for the Southwest (CLIMAS). We also engaged with the national CAP/RISA network to recruit RISA teams and share lessons learned.
- Survey respondents and focus group participants: We engaged an additional 3-4 people in surveys and focus groups, although the majority of those participants were from the advisory group.
- Academy participants: We engaged 33 participants in the 2020 Academy and 50 participants in the 2021 Academy.
- Adaptation International was our implementation partner for the project, providing pedagogical and facilitation support.
- We engaged with other GLISA 2019 small grantees via quarterly calls organized by GLISA.

Use of Climate Information and Services

We anticipated that the project team would draw on existing GLISA data and data products during the Needs and Practice Assessment phase and the Workshop phase of the project. We thought those data/products would likely include: the Great Lakes Ensemble, Great Lakes Adaptation Data Suite (GLADS), regional and local climatologies, and the municipal stormwater vulnerability assessment template. Indeed, GLISA did present on many of those data/products during the 2020 and 2021 workshops. However, we expected participants might work more directly with GLISA to get hands-on experience with those resources, and that did not quite happen due to needing to generalize some of the Academy content to multiple types of service providers.

Detailed information about service providers' perceptions and interactions with GLISA and GLISA data/products is available in the Practice and Needs Assessment Report: "major findings" section and the Private Sector Climate Service Providers Academy Final Report: "Needs and interests of private sector climate service providers" section.

Outcomes and Outputs

Through this project, we created the following outputs:

- Practice and Needs Assessment [Report](#)
- Year 1 Workshop [Report](#)
- [Blog](#) on the ASAP website with a shareable summary of accomplishments and lessons learned across all project components.
- Year 2 Final project report (attached to email to Jenna Jorns Dec 1, 2021)
- Participant materials folder for 2021 Academy which includes:
 - Academy participant contact list
 - Session recording, agenda, slide deck, and jamboard from each session
 - A document which compiles all of the resources shared in each session as well as questions and answers for questions that we did not get to during the live session time.
 - Take-home worksheets
 - Instructor and speaker bios
- ASAP [Webpage](#)
- Working spreadsheet of climate service providers operating in the Great Lakes region.
- Evaluation data

HOW OUTPUTS ARE BEING USED

At the University of Minnesota, researchers are adapting the methodology for assessing for-profit companies' climate data practices and needs to inform the development of better extension services.

- As a result of these workshops, ASAP launched a private sector member-led interest group. Several workshop attendees joined this group and have since moved to positions in the private sector, primarily in the transportation and community planning sectors.

SIGNIFICANT OUTCOMES

Nurtured the ability of partners to self-organize by supporting peer collaboratives or networks.

- The advisory group for this project has evolved into a monthly peer learning group at ASAP. This group is carrying forward many of the needs and opportunities identified through the project, including providing a space for private sector companies to share challenges and explore partnerships with recognition of the challenges around privacy and competition.

Boosted learning outcomes, resulting in a deeper understanding of science or local knowledge related to climate, impacts, and adaptation.

- Many participants provided positive feedback on the knowledge they gained during the Academy and how they expect to apply it in their work.

Elevated a sense of agency by building the expertise, confidence, and capability of partners to act.

- Many participants provided positive feedback on the connections they gained during the Academy and how they expect to rely on those going forward to enhance their work.

Additional funding received or applications submitted to leverage the small grant funders.

- We collected workshop fees to offset additional costs.
- We submitted a NOAA Broad Area Announcement (BAA) proposal to scale the Academy nationally. We are optimistic about our prospects for running the Academy nationwide in 2023 in partnership with the CAP/RISAs, Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs), and other federally-funded climate data and information centers.

The following testimonials from Academy attendees were shared with the project team:

“I enjoyed the [Climate Service Providers Academy] and feel that I learned what I was hoping and more. It was a great high-level overview; even so, there was enough detail to apply what I was learning in the sessions to my work.”

“I’m very much looking forward to utilizing projection data to develop risk mitigation strategies for clients. Furthermore, I’m looking to galvanize entities (e.g. Climate-Sister-City) with a collaborative approach to minimize cost, risk and enhance hive-mind connectivity to the circular economy professionals.”

Challenges and Lessons Learned

We originally intended to run the Academy in person and made the switch to virtual very early on. Ultimately, this was a boon to the long-term sustainability, cost-effectiveness, and ability to run the Academy in multiple regions. We went through many iterations of guidance and training for CAP/RISA PIs, staff, and partners to participate effectively in the Academy context. It was a good learning experience for us as training organizers and for our CAP/RISA partners to co-create session archetypes that would truly achieve the learning objectives we proposed for private sector participants.

We discovered the following through the Academy development process:

- **“Homework” can create a rigorous and private experience for those who desire it.** While drafting the practice and needs assessment for this project, Advisory Group members noted that it was important to be mindful of for-profit providers’ desire to keep proprietary information private. To make this accommodation, the project team gave participants the option to work collaboratively or independently throughout the workshop and made time for individual work during Week One. At the same time, many participants readily engaged in collaborative work, and the project team received participant feedback asking for more collaborative work time.
- **Deepening relationships yields emergent value.** The Advisory Group became a great asset for the workshop. The Advisory Group’s familiarity with and support for the project and their perspective as practitioners made them ideal case study contributors, panelists, and peer leaders during the workshop. Advisory Group members also became a source of targeted, candid feedback between workshop sessions, supporting the instruction’s teams work building responsive agendas. The Expansions of this work could benefit from continued investment in long-term, highly collaborative relationships between project team members and an Advisory Group of practitioners.
- **Responsive engagement strategies.** The workshop team consistently received supportive comments from participants on the engagement strategies applied in the workshop. The instruction team’s success can be largely attributed to its collective experience running virtual events, real-time feedback from the Advisory Group, and the decision to discuss and adjust engagement strategies after each workshop session according to participant feedback and instructor expertise.
- **Workshop design that supports a wide variety of participant interests.** The content and structure of the workshop was based on the results of the project’s practice and needs assessment, input from the Advisory Group, and the participants’ registration information. The project team designed the workshop and its content around these assessments to appeal to as

many prospective participants as possible. Each component of the workshop received a variety of reactions from participants. Comments from the evaluation form and Advisory Group suggest that this reflects, in part, the variety of workshop goals among the workshop participants.

- **Cover greater breadth and depth on GLISA tools, resources, and services.** Through evaluation feedback, Advisory Group members and a large portion of workshop participants expressed both satisfaction with GLISA content presented at the workshop and a desire for a variety of additional content. Project teams designing future iterations of the workshop could consider reallocating more time to training on GLISA tools, resources, and services.

Next Steps

ASAP and our collaborators are looking forward to running the Academy again in 2023 and have begun to reflect on how to improve the course to make it even more valuable to participants. Goals for 2023 include covering all U.S. regions and attracting at least 100 participants. In order to meet these goals, we need to connect with additional public sector climate data and information partners and refine the Academy audience and marketing strategy. In order to expand nationally, we plan to partner with GLISA, Carolinas Collaborative on Climate, Health, and Equity (C3HE), and CLIMAS again as well as recruit additional CAP/RISAs to participate. We also plan to reach out to other public sector climate data and information providers, such as USGS Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs), NOAA/NCEI's Regional Climate Centers (RCC's), and USDA Climate Hubs. In addition to supporting the nationwide training, this would be an opportunity to strengthen the national network among federally-supported, regional climate data and information providers. It would encourage them to think about commonalities and opportunities for partnership, allowing them to scale other activities and services from multiple levels.

References

1. Environmental Business International. EBI Report 4800: Climate Change Adaptation & Resilience Markets. EBI Report 4000 Series on The Climate Change Industry. June 2019.