



UNIT ONE

A resource for building climate resilience in Alberta

1

Key steps in the climate resilience action planning process

What this unit will help you do

You have been directed to this unit because:

- ➔ You are looking to develop a complete Action Plan for your community and want to understand what that entails.

This unit contains four sections to help you:

Section 1: Understand the four main steps in the “express” action planning process that communities can apply to build climate resilience, and effectively manage risks and opportunities.

Section 2: Know, for each step in the process, the primary purpose, the main outputs, and where to go in the Action Kit for practical guidance.

Section 3: Understand how the phased approach used in the Action Kit focuses a community’s limited resources on priorities.

Section 4: See how the one-day workshop with local stakeholders is used to execute the “express” action planning process within the Action Kit.

Section 1: Overview of action planning process

The overall approach to developing climate resilience action plans through Climate Resilience Express is grounded in existing standards for risk management based on the International Organization for Standardization's (ISO) 31000, Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines.

Designing a climate resilience action plan for small communities is made easy by following a series of simple, sequential steps (shown in Figure 1). These include:

- 1: Get started.
- 2: Assess risks and opportunities.
- 3: Formulate actions.
- 4: Plan, implement and review.

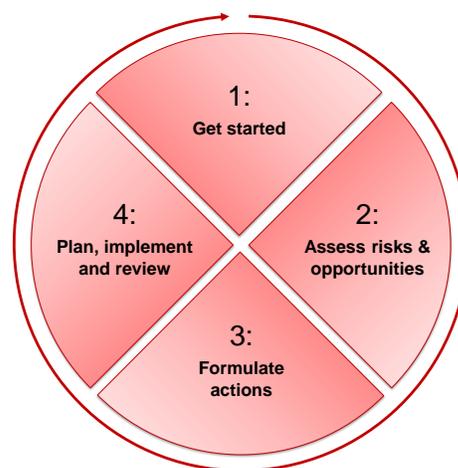
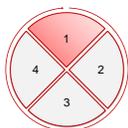


Figure 1: Climate Resilience Express: action planning process

The arrow surrounding the four steps indicates that climate resilience action planning is a dynamic, as opposed to a static, process. For a start, our knowledge about the science and physical impacts of climate change is constantly evolving. Building long-term resilience to climate change involves an ongoing process of context setting, assessment, action, review, learn, update, reassessment, further action, and so on. Each iteration of the process should be viewed as one more stride along the journey towards a climate resilient future.

Section 2: The four steps



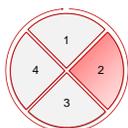
Step 1: Get started



Unit 2
Unit 3
Unit 5

The purpose of this step is to, first, get support from senior staff or elected officials to proceed with a climate resilience planning effort, and second, to establish the local context for the exercise. It provides a critical foundation upon which subsequent steps rest. Key outputs include:

- A climate adaptation champion (and depending on the size of the community, a project team to support their efforts);
- Political and high-level support within the ‘corporation’ for the adaptation planning effort;
- A list of internal (and possibly external) stakeholders that need to be engaged throughout the process;
- An agreed scope, covering affected sectors (e.g., the ‘corporation’, specific service areas, the entire community), geographic boundaries (e.g., direct impacts within ‘corporate’ limits only or with the inclusion of indirect effects from outside corporate limits) and timeframes (e.g., the 2020s, 2050s, 2080s, or all);
- An inventory of past (extreme) weather events and how they have affected your community, either positively or negatively;
- Information on historical climate trends and future climate projections for the local area; and
- An agreed approach to assign an ‘importance score’ to all identified climate-related risks and opportunities as a basis for establishing priorities.



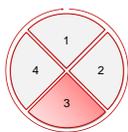
Step 2: Assess risks and opportunities



Unit 6

The purpose of this step is to identify, analyze and prioritize risks and opportunities facing your community, delineating between those that are currently acceptable and those that require immediate action. Key outputs include:

- A description of all potential climate-related risks and opportunities, including the relevant climatic variables, the pathways through which they cause impacts, and the potential consequence, positive or negative, for the community;
- An importance score for each identified risk or opportunity, based on stakeholder perceptions of the magnitude of potential consequences for the municipality (e.g., negligible,, major) and the likelihood of those consequences occurring (e.g., very unlikely, ..., almost certain); and
- A prioritized list of risks and opportunities, separating those requiring immediate action from those judged to be acceptable at this point in time (that can be simply observed for now and revisited during a subsequent iteration of the process) on the basis of their importance score.



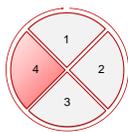
Step 3: Formulate actions



Unit 7

The purpose of this step is to identify and select the most promising actions to manage the priority risks and opportunities with a view to determining priorities for the climate resilience action plan. Key outputs include:

- An inventory of actions needed to manage priority risks and opportunities—whether improvements to existing actions, new actions, or a combination of both;
- A list of the most promising actions for inclusion in the climate resilience action plan—i.e., those actions anticipated to be most effective, most feasible, most acceptable, most equitable and most flexible; and
- Basic information on the most promising actions to support decision-making for implementation, including approximate capital and annual recurring costs, timelines for implementation, as well the department(s) or organization(s) responsible for implementation.



Step 4: Plan, implement and review



Unit 8

The purpose of this step is to draft the climate resilience action plan, and to develop a blueprint to both implement priority actions within the plan and to regularly update the plan. Key outputs include:

- A starter climate resilience action plan summarizing the above process and documenting key outputs at each of the previous three steps;
- A list of priority actions for implementation;
- A plan to implement the priority actions, including budgets, target dates, responsible departments or organizations, and an approach to integrate the actions within existing municipal strategies, policies, programs, and practices;
- A strategy to monitor progress with implementation and resulting outcomes, and to regularly update the action plan;
- A communications strategy for the action plan.

Section 3: Phased approach to focus effort and resources

The Climate Resilience Express and Action Kit employ a phased approach (as shown in Figure 2), in which you move from the broad to the more focused, in terms of both assessing risks and opportunities (at Step 2) and assessing viable adaptation actions (at Step 3). Rather than jumping straight into a detailed qualitative or quantitative assessment of every climate impact and management option, a phased approach starts with a high-level screening of risks and opportunities, and then moves into more detailed assessments, only when necessary, to generate a set of viable, fully resourced actions. This phased approach focuses a community's limited resources on the most promising actions to manage the most important risks and opportunities. The rationale is simple—it would be wasteful to identify and evaluate the viability of every action to manage all of the identified climate impacts.

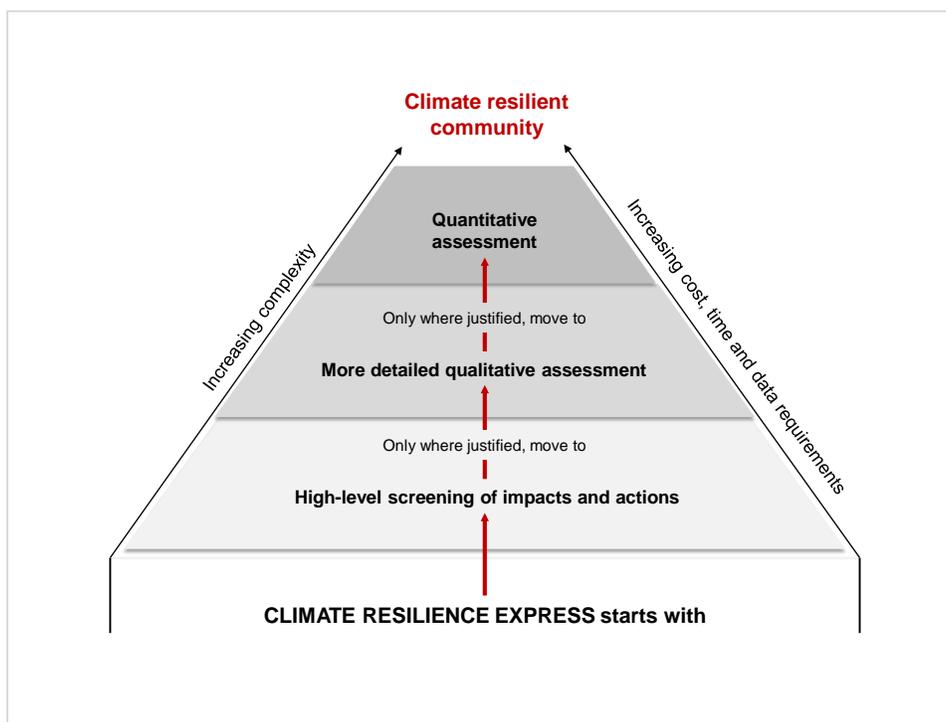


Figure 2: Climate Resilience Express high-level screening of impacts and actions as part of phased approach to assessing risks and opportunities and formulating actions

Section 4: Implementing the process with the Action Kit

At the heart of Climate Resilience Express is a full day workshop with municipal staff and local stakeholders. A community interested in applying the entire climate resilience planning process depicted in Figure 1 would proceed as follows (as shown in Figure 3):

- 1: Step 1 of the process is undertaken in advance of the workshop. You should be prepared to spend 2-3 days using the Action Kit to prepare for the workshop. If you do not yet have the necessary support to get started, you should be prepared to spend an additional 1-2 days to prepare a case to present to senior staff or elected officials.
- 2: Step 2 and Step 3 of the process take place at the workshop. The workshop is designed to take place in one day, but as the workshop program is modular—comprising four sessions—it can be broken up into two separate mini-workshops (of about 3-4 hours each) and run over the course of several days or weeks to suit the availability of stakeholders.
- 3: Step 4 of the process, including writing and approving the Action Plan, takes place after the workshop. You should allow 1-2 days to write the Action Plan using the templates provided in the Action Kit.

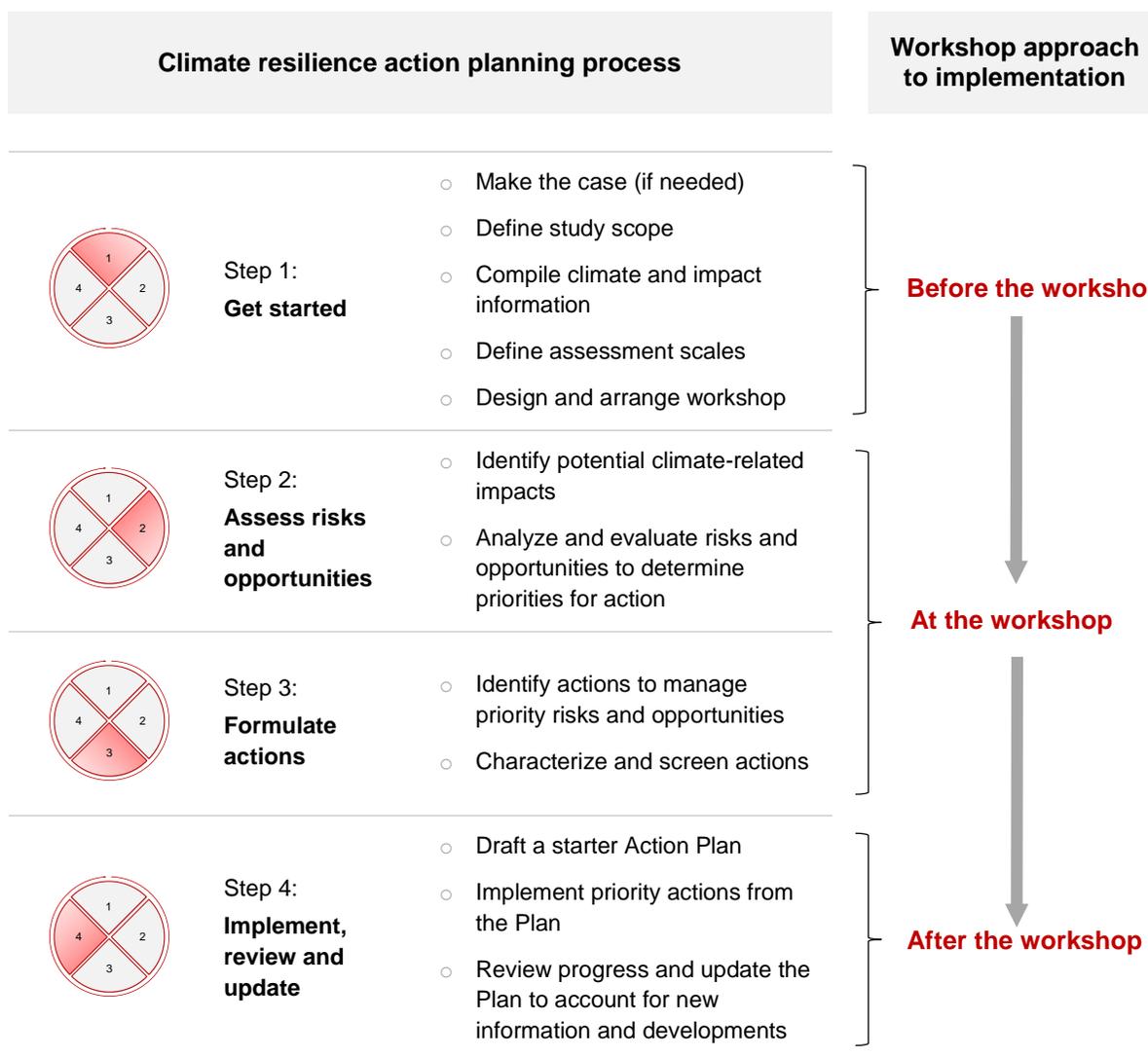


Figure 3: Climate Resilience Express: executing the action planning process through collaborative workshop with municipal staff and local stakeholders

If you still need the support of senior staff or elected officials to proceed with developing a community Action Plan, go to Unit 2.

If you already have the support of senior staff or elected officials to proceed with developing a community Action Plan, go to Unit 3, and begin to prepare your workshop.

[Intentionally left blank]