



Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research



**IAI Training Institute On Vulnerability Associated with Climate Variability and  
Climate Change in the Americas  
October 17 - 28, 2005, Asuncion, Paraguay**

**Announcement**

The Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) is pleased to announce its Training Institute on Vulnerability Associated with Climate Variability and Climate Change in the Americas. This activity will be hosted by the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences of the National University of Asuncion in Paraguay.

**Background:** Climate change and variability is a global threat and is likely to adversely affect natural and human systems and undermine long-term economic development prospects and in particular the ability of many countries to deal with environmental threats. The Earth's climate has warmed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, precipitation patterns have changed, sea levels have risen and most non-polar glaciers are retreating. Many sectors in developing countries are already vulnerable to current climate variability and climate change is adding additional vulnerability. Loss of life and damage from extreme climatic events is already a major barrier to development. In this scenario, the cooperation among climate experts, natural resource and risk disaster managers, in addition to policy and decision makers is needed to improve an integrated understanding of the environmental processes taking place and their socioeconomic impacts in order to provide end users and those making decisions with useful information and better tools to deal with these changes and the potential negative impacts.

**Objectives:** The central objective of this Training Institute is to contribute to the development and strengthen the local and regional capacity (human resources) to deal with vulnerability associated with climate variability and climate change in the Americas, particularly Latin America.

**Programmatic Objectives:**

1. Provide participants with a comprehensive and integrative framework approach to better understand climate variability and change and its potential impacts on some productive sectors in the Americas;
2. Provide information on the evolution of vulnerability and risk patterns associated with climate variability and change in the Americas and on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of existing disaster risk management initiatives;
3. Examine the vulnerability, including its social aspect, associated with climate variability and change to determine its causes and identify possible responses that can lessen its negative impacts in the region;
4. Build relations and improve communication among natural, social scientists and disaster risk professionals, researchers, managers and decision makers and maximizing the use of existing capability mechanisms.

**Institutional Objectives:**

1. Develop a cooperative network of professionals in the region that can exchange knowledge and experience in future activities, share data and promote exchange and training of local professionals, as well as the development of partnership among governments, industries, communities;
2. Develop a multi-institutional partnership of national and international organizations working in the Americas to promote capacity building and the transfer of scientific and technological knowledge;
3. Connect local and regional professionals and institutions in the Americas with other initiatives and networks of other organizations dealing with the same subject in other regions;

4. Inform local and regional professional on the funding opportunities available to support projects dealing with vulnerability associated with climate variability and change, disasters prevention, mitigation strategies and related fields.

**Program Coordinator:** Luis José Mata  
Center for Development Research (ZEF) of the University of Bonn

**General Coordinator:** Marcella Ohira  
Communications, Training and Outreach Officer  
Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI)

**Tentative Program and Content:** The Institute organizers are developing an interesting program that should be of interest to many professionals coming from the natural and social sciences background and professionals such as resource managers, and policy and decision makers involved with the multiple dimensions of vulnerability in the Americas. The two-week Training Institute will include lectures from leading experts, seminar discussion and case study presentations, as well as time to work with colleagues in small working groups.

The program of the Institute will include the general topics outlined below:

### **Module 1: Fundamental concepts**

Why to study climate changes (i.e., today's climate variability and tomorrow's climate change) associated with vulnerability of natural and human systems?

Basic scientific aspects of climate changes (e.g., ENSO in the region, mitigation issue)

Extreme events from both climatologically and impact views

Basic concepts of modelling climate changes and their association with vulnerability of systems

Socioeconomic aspects of the impacts of climate changes

### **Module 2: Potential Applications**

Why is important to analyze vulnerability and adaptation to disasters?

Evaluation of Vulnerability and Risk (including social vulnerability and adaptive capacity as part of the process)

Methods to assess vulnerability (e.g., indicators)

Perception and evaluation as part of the risk reduction process: Early Warning systems and their factors.

Application of these concepts and methods in sample case studies using an interdisciplinary approach.

**Seed Grants Program:** At the end of the Training Institute the IAI will launch a Seed Grants Program. The objective is to invite participants to submit proposals outlining concrete plans of how they can implement the knowledge and training gained at the Institute at their home institution or local community (through further training courses, small projects, engagement with civil and grassroots community or the like). An initial budget of approximately US\$ 20,000 has been allocated to support the sub awards as a follow up and assessment of impact activity of the Training Institute. One time awards of \$3-5K will be given to the most competitive proposals. About 5 grants could be made and grantees will be participants along with their home institutions (engage institutions). IAI encourage projects that are multinational and multidisciplinary. The grantee will be responsible for submitting a final report after completion of the task to be funded with specifics about how the knowledge gained at the Institute was further disseminated and concrete and potential impacts of these activities in capacity building, institutional strengthening and/or science-policy interface. Guidelines about the Training Institute Seed Grants Program will be announced during the Institute in Asuncion.

**Language:** The activities of the Training Institute will be conducted in Spanish and simultaneous interpretation may be available (Spanish-English). However, it is desirable that participants have fluency in English. Furthermore, participants will be expected to have fundamental computer skills.

**Who Should Apply?** The Training Institute is aimed at mid-career researchers, stakeholders, and decision makers from the Americas working in the fields of vulnerability associated with climate change and variability and their socioeconomic impacts. The Institute is particularly oriented to professionals and scholars who have conducted

studies, or developed projects, or have otherwise been involved in the management, planning or development of policy and actions to deal with vulnerability, extreme events, disasters and their related impacts. It seeks to include a mix of participants (scientists, policy makers, stakeholders) which can encourage the work and discussion from multidisciplinary and multifunctional perspectives and in an integrated and comprehensive fashion.

**Eligibility:** Eligible applicants must be affiliated with a resource, policy, research management institution, governmental or not, university or research centers. Examples of type and profile of suitable candidates and organizations are provided below:

Type of professionals: natural resources managers, community leaders, policy and decision-makers, stakeholders, professionals and users of climate information in important socioeconomic sectors working in the assessment of vulnerability and in the formulation and/or implementation of policies or in the organization of the civil society for the solution of vulnerability problems in the Americas. In this case, applicants are expected to show a record of working in the formulation and/or implementation of policies, in the foundation or management of Non-Governmental Organizations, or in the development of projects assessing impacts of vulnerability and climate change and variability in the Americas.

Type of organizations: organizations working in agriculture, water resources, health, tourism, coastal zones and disaster prevention, relief and mitigation agencies, civil defense from governmental and non-governmental organizations, insurance companies, civil and rural associations, communities and industries.

Academics and researchers: mid-career scientists from natural and social sciences working on vulnerability studies.

**Requirements for Application and Financial Support:** Applicants must be a citizen or permanent resident of a member country of the IAI (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, USA and Venezuela); 1-2 applicants from non-IAI member countries from Central America and the Caribbean may be considered.

Applicants must:

- hold the minimum of a Bachelor's degree in a field that is related to the areas to be covered by the course;
- have a minimum of 3 years working experience in the areas to be explored by the course: agriculture, water resources, health, tourism, disaster, coastal zone and/or climatology associated with vulnerability issues;
- have a formal affiliation with a governmental, non-governmental, international organization, associations, communities, university, industry and/or research or policy institution;
- attend in full the two weeks Training Institute program and are required to participate in all Institute program activities.

**Financial Support:** Financial support will be evaluated on a case by case basis and will take into account academic and professional experience, relevance of work being developed in relation to the Training Institute program, as well as country, thematic and gender balance. Up to 20 participants will receive financial support. Priority for funding will be given to Latin American applicants from IAI member countries. Financial support will cover travel to and from Asunción, Paraguay, lodging, meals, local transportation and travel insurance.

We encourage national/international and non governmental organizations interested in fully and/or partially sponsoring their own participants to the course, as long as they can demonstrate the benefits of this training to their current programs and activities.

**Application Deadline is August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Applications must be submitted on-line at the IAI Website [www.institutes.iai.int](http://www.institutes.iai.int) by no later than August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005.**

Please fill out the website application form completely (all fields).

Applications will not be admitted after August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005 and incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applicants will be informed on the application selection (by e-mail) by September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

**IAI Institute Website:** For further information on the IAI Institutes, please visit the IAI website at [www.institutes.iai.int](http://www.institutes.iai.int)

**For questions and inquiries:** please write to the following email address: [i2005-v@dir.iai.int](mailto:i2005-v@dir.iai.int)