key terms

The following key terms are used throughout this guidebook.

Adaptive capacity: describes the ability of built, natural, and human systems to accommodate changes in climate (including climate variability and climate extremes) with minimal potential damage or cost. As a general rule, systems that have high adaptive capacity are better able to deal with climate change impacts. For instance, agriculture in a given region will have greater adaptive capacity if the farms of that region have a choice of water sources for irrigation (i.e., in the face of water shortage) and the financial ability and training to switch crop types (i.e., if another crop were proven to grow better based on new climate characteristics).

Climate resilient community: one that takes proactive steps to prepare for (i.e., reduce the vulnerabilities and risks associated with) climate change impacts.

Implementation tools: the authorities and/or avenues over which your government has control or influence in policy, planning and infrastructure, in order to take your preparedness actions successfully.

Measure of resilience: a quantitative or qualitative judgment that you make and track over time to determine how well your actions meet the preparedness goals you have set.

Planning areas: describe the areas in which a government or community manages, plans, or makes policy affecting the services and activities associated with built, natural, and human systems. Planning areas can be as broad or as specific as you deem necessary. Examples of planning areas include water supply, wastewater treatment, public health, road operations and maintenance, forestry, and parks. Planning areas are a subset of sectors.

Preparedness action: the activity or activities that your government undertakes to achieve its preparedness goals.

Preparedness goal: what you want to accomplish in your priority planning areas through preparedness action.

Priority planning areas: the planning areas which your community or government determines to be most important for focusing your preparedness efforts, based on your community's vulnerabilities to climate change and associated risks.

Sector: a general term used to describe any resource, ecological system, species, management area, activity, or other area of interest that may be affected by climate change. General examples include forests (a resource), wetlands (an ecological system), salmon (a species), water supply (a management area), agriculture (an activity), or human health. The term may also be used to describe more specific aspects of these examples that are important to the community, such as water quality, coastal marshes, Oregon Coast Coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), dryland wheat farming, or elderly populations.

Sensitivity: the degree to which a built, natural, or human system is directly or indirectly affected by changes in climate conditions (e.g., temperature and precipitation) or specific climate change impacts (e.g., sea level rise, increased water temperature). If systems in a planning area are likely to be affected as a result of projected climate change, then that system should be considered sensitive to climate change. For instance, a community of coldwater fish at the southern edge of its range is highly sensitive to changes in climate, because even a slight

warming may make its habitat unsuitable. In turn, regional economies based on fisheries solely targeting those fish would also be highly sensitive to changes in climate.

Systems: refer to the built, natural, and human networks that provide important services or activities within a community or region. Built systems can refer to networks of facilities, buildings, and transportation infrastructure such as roads and bridges. Natural systems can refer to ecological networks of fish, wildlife, and natural resources like water. Human systems can refer to networks of public health clinics, courts, and government.

Vulnerability: the susceptibility of a system to harm from climate change. Vulnerability is a function of a system's sensitivity to climate and the capacity of that system to adapt to climate changes. In other words, systems that are sensitive to climate and less able to adapt to changes are generally considered to be vulnerable to climate change impacts. For example, coral reefs are vulnerable to damage from climate change, as they are sensitive to changes in climate and have limited capacity to adapt to those changes.