Development & Recommendations for Equity-First Community Engagement for Climate Adaptation Planning Efforts

2023

SDGE

Prepared for **SDG&E**
by the **San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative** and **The Nonprofit Institute**
at the University of San Diego

Climate Collaborative SAN DIEGO REGION

University *of* San Diego
SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATION SCIENCES

About The San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative

The San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative (SDRCC) was established in 2011 as a network for public agencies to advance climate change solutions that mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change. Partnering with academia, nonprofit organizations, and business and community leaders, the Climate Collaborative raises the profile of regional leadership, shares expertise, and leverages resources. By bringing people together, we envision a region that is prosperous and resilient with a commitment to maintaining a high quality of life and fostering a green and growing economy with an equitable and unified approach.

For more information, please visit our website: https://www.sandiego.edu/soles/hub-nonprofit/initiatives/climate-collaborative/

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PROJECT INFORMATION & INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of Project & State Requirements

In 2020, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) made a decision that mandated all investor-owned utilities (IOUs) must use best climate science available to upgrade their infrastructure, operations, and services to adapt to climate change impacts and provide safe and reliable energy for all Californians, especially the state-designated Disadvantaged Vulnerable Communities (DVCs).[1] Part of this process will require State of California IOUs to conduct a vulnerability assessment (VA); these VA's will inform the CPUC of areas that need extra funding, outreach and education, and infrastructure or service changes to respond to climate risks.[2] These VA's must include robust attention towards DVC's – as defined by the state, DVCs fall under four major categories: (1) census tracts with the highest 25% of CalEnviroScreen overall scores, (2) census tracts lacking overall scores due to data gaps but with the highest 5% of CalEnviroScreen Pollution Burden scores, (3) census tracts recognized as disadvantaged in CalEPA's most recent SB 535 designation in 2017, and (4) areas under the control of federally recognized Tribes.[3]

In compliance with the CPUC, as an IOU, San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E), must develop a community engagement plan that prioritizes communities in SDG&E's territory that are state-designated DVCs in coordination with the climate adaptation vulnerability assessment. SDG&E has collaborated with the San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative (SDRCC) and The Nonprofit Institute (NPI), located at the University of San Diego, to develop a robust community engagement framework for this process. Utilizing SDRCC's *Equity-First Approach to Climate Adaptation* guidance document (Equity Guidance) and data from focus groups and surveys, the community engagement framework will synthesize community input and provide high level recommendations for SDG&E to more effectively engage directly with communities in their service territory throughout the scope analysis, goal development, implementation, administration and review of the utility VAs.

2. AN EQUITY-FIRST APPROACH TO CLIMATE ADAPTATION

In 2020, led by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), SDRCC supported the development of a Regional Adaptation Needs Assessment (NA). The NA concluded that San Diego regional practitioners need continued guidance and accessibility to best practices for climate adaptation planning, particularly how to integrate equity. As a result, SANDAG in partnership with SDRCC developed an *Equity-First Approach to Climate Adaptation* guidance document (Equity Guidance; document), as well as a curriculum-based framework that provides support and training for practitioners to apply an equity-first approach to the

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[1] California Public Utilities Commission (2020). *Proposed Decision on Energy Utility Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments and Climate Change Adaptation in Disadvantaged Communities (Phase 1, Topics 4 and 5).* Available online at: https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M346/K285/346285534.PDF (accessed July 25. 2022).

[2] California Public Utilities Commission (2020).

[3] California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (2022). *Final Designation Of Disadvantaged Communities Pursuant To Senate Bill 535.* Available online at: https://calepa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2022/05/Updated-Disadvantaged-Communities-Designation-DAC-May-2022-Eng.a.hp_-1.pdf (accessed July 25, 2022).

climate adaptation planning process. The Equity Guidance synthesizes the latest academic literature, climate reports, and regional, state, and national adaptation reports and provides best practices for designing, planning, and implementing equitable climate adaptation. The document assumes that equity is not an add on, but a fundamental part of building a climate adapted future.

This process supports practitioners, individuals and communities undertaking an adaptation planning effort to develop the tools needed to deeply and intentionally understand how historical inequities connect to present-day climate concerns, how to effectively identify the vulnerable populations of their communities, and how to better envision opportunities to address starting-point vulnerabilities to climate hazards. Starting-point vulnerabilities can be defined as the deeply rooted causes or casual mechanisms that produced the vulnerability in the first place; these starting-point vulnerabilities are embedded across many existing processes, institutions, and systems.[4] The equity-first approach employed here supports efforts to (1) increase an organization's capacity with equity-first adaptation training, (2) ensure that projects or programs increases the capacity of the target community to become more resilient to climate impacts, (3) strategize and identify how to continuously collaborate with the target community, and (4) set up evaluation, monitoring, accountability, and community feedback mechanisms to help ensure the development and implementation of equitable adaptation projects and programs. The equity-first approach ensures that throughout all phases of the climate adaptation planning process there is consistent, equitable community engagement and the strong cultivation of a two-way learning environment between practitioners and the community they are working with.

2.1 Climate Impacts & Equity Intersections

For a successful equity-first approach, it is critical to identify the connection between climate impacts and social inequities. For the San Diego region, climate hazards of particular concern are: extreme heat, drought, wildfire, sea level rise, and the frequency and intensity of storms (precipitation).[5] As shown in Figure 1 below, impacts from these climate hazards also exacerbate pre-existing social inequities.[6] For example, those who cannot afford in-home air conditioning, rely on public transportation, have an outdoor labor job, or are currently experiencing homelessness are especially vulnerable to extreme heat events. Impacts from climate change intersect with socioeconomic conditions. By prioritizing equity throughout the planning process and community engagement, SDG&E's climate adaptation efforts can proactively support building resilient communities that are better adapted to climate change.

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[4] Shi, L. and S. Moser, Transformative climate adaptation in the United States: Trends and prospects. Science, 2021.
[5] Kalansky, J., et al., California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment: San Diego Summary Report. 2018.
[6] San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative and San Diego Association of Governments, "An Equity-First Approach to Climate Adaptation" (2022). *San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative*. 19.
https://digital.sandiego.edu/npi-sdclimate/19

Figure 1: Offers examples and a snapshot of how some of the major climate impacts in the San Diego region could exacerbate preexisting social inequities.

Wildfires increase the likelihood of communities being impacted by air pollution and poor air quality which can cause severe and potentially prolonged health risks. This is especially a concern for vulnerable populations such as youth or essential outdoor workers.

Extreme Precipitation impacts water quality, increasing polluted run-off. As well as the local food agricultural system, both distribution disruptions and crop damage are a risk. These event can also leave un-homed individuals especially vulnerable to vector borne disease.

Extreme Heat events can cause health threats those who cannot afford or have AC, individuals work outside, or those who rely on public transportation. This is especially critical for vulnerable populations such as un-homed individuals, elderly, and youth populations.

Sea Level Rise can cause severe coastal erosion and lead to the displacement of coastal communities. Coastal flooding and inundation events can also damage or impact transportation corridors or critical power infrastructure.
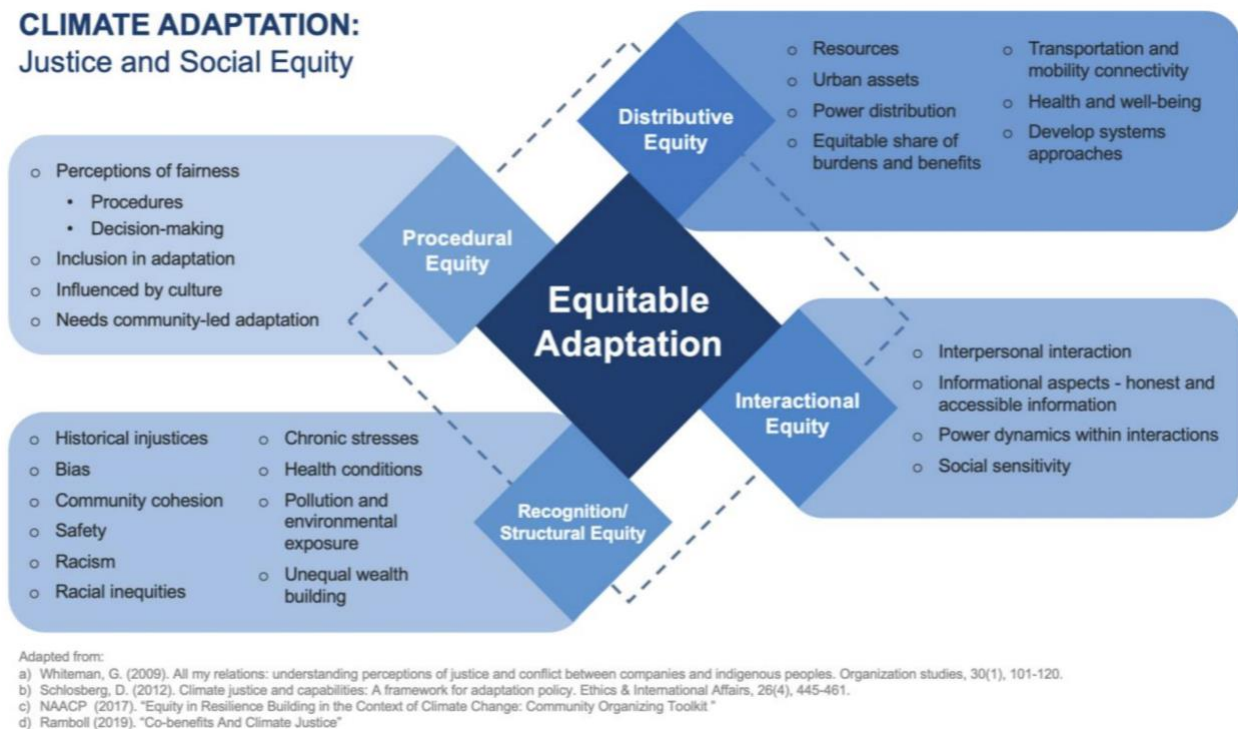
Drought can cause lasting damage to our local ecosystems, which provide an outlet for community connection and wellbeing. Prolonged drought and destabilization of or water systems can also negatively impact the local food an agricultural markets.

2.2 Community Engagement Best Practices

The Equity Guidance utilizes the four dimensions of equity – structural, procedural, distributive, and interactional – to guide practitioners through the preplanning and the four major phases of climate adaptation planning. Figure 2 (below) highlights the four dimensions of equity and how they can be used in climate adaptation planning.

Figure 2: Illustrates examples of considerations across the four dimensions of equity that may be utilized to evaluate processes throughout adaptation planning

CLIMATE ADAPTATION:
Justice and Social Equity

Adapted from:
a) Whiteman, G. (2009). All my relations: understanding perceptions of justice and conflict between companies and indigenous peoples. Organization studies, 30(1), 101-120.
b) Schlosberg, D. (2012). Climate justice and capabilities: A framework for adaptation policy. Ethics & International Affairs, 26(4), 445-461.
c) NAACP (2017). "Equity in Resilience Building in the Context of Climate Change: Community Organizing Toolkit "
d) Ramboll (2019). "Co-benefits And Climate Justice"

The goal of an equity-first approach to adaptation is to "enhance marginalized communities' access to the services, infrastructure, and livelihoods required to sustain their well-being and potential for improvement, rather than exacerbating their vulnerability."[7] To achieve this, it is essential to recognize that communities more vulnerable to climate impacts likely have existing social capital and are already engaged in a suite of integrated adaptation activities. The climate change component of a community's adaptation activities may not be as clear, as such it is critical to learn from and seek to understand directly how climate change impacts may exacerbate existing community concerns. Supporting the work communities are already involved in, such as providing additional technical expertise, funding, fulfilling data needs, can enhance their overall resilience and effectiveness of these existing efforts.[8] Therefore, implementing best practices for community outreach and engagement is essential to adopting equitable adaptation policies and

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[7]Shi, L., et al., Roadmap towards justice in urban climate adaptation research. Nature
Climate Change, 2016. 6(2): p. 131-137.
[8] An Equity-First Approach to Climate Adaptation (2022).

strategies. This is important for ensuring that they can be implemented efficiently and complement needed community capacity.[9] Establishing partnerships with choice communities ensures a commitment to developing a two-way learning environment and builds stronger consensus among local decision-makers and community members. Each phase of the adaptation planning process should include intentional and comprehensive community outreach and engagement.[10]

An equity-first approach to the climate adaptation planning process should be framed by addressing processes through the four dimensions of equity: structural, distributive, procedural, and interactional. First, practitioners must recognize structural equity "seeks to correct past harms and to anticipate and prevent future unintended consequences for disadvantaged social and racial groups [and] examines whether planning decisions to achieve climate resilience also eliminate poverty, create workforce development opportunities, address racism, increase civic participation and social cohesion, protect housing availability and affordability, increase educational outcomes, and improve public health outcomes."[11]

Distributive equity, addresses the fair distribution of resources, benefits, and burdens that can result from climate adaptations.[12] Distributive equity also encourages practitioners to more deeply recognize who is "at the table". Recognizing distributive equity also includes seeking an understanding of the perceived distribution of power and is important to enable opportunities for engagement and community ownership in decision-making throughout all aspects of the climate adaptation planning process.[13] While examining the costs, benefits, and the efficacy of projects, it is important to intentionally listen to and seek community knowledge about the ecological costs, social costs and benefits, spiritual costs (e.g., losses from wildfires, land-use changes, and historical injustices), and effects on social cohesion.[14]

FOUR DIMENSIONS OF EQUITY

Procedural: Establish trusted and ongoing (mutually-beneficial) relationships with the community, community groups, and CBOs.

Structural: Recognize systemic injustice and persistent inequities embedded in systems including policies, procedures, and the distribution of resources.

Interactional: Enhance the community's adaptive capacity through accessible, trust-based engagement that is mutually beneficial.

Distributive: Direct resources to communities that have experienced racism, chronic disinvestment, carry pollution burden, high unemployment, etc.

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[9]Howell, J. and J.R. Elliott, Damages done: The longitudinal impacts of natural hazards on wealth inequality in the United States. Social Problems, 2019. 66(3): p. 448-467.

[10]Cal-OES, California Adaptation Planning Guide. 2020: Mather, CA.

[11]SANDAG, CCS II Appendix D – Incorporating Equity into Climate Resilience Activities.

[12]SANDAG, CCS II Appendix D – Incorporating Equity into Climate Resilience Activities.

[13]Roos, M., Climate Justice Summary Report. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment. E4 Strategic Solutions, 2018. SUM-CCCA4-2018-012.

[14]Whiteman, G., All my relations: understanding perceptions of justice and conflict between companies and indigenous peoples. Organization studies, 2009. 30(1): p. 101-120.

Procedural equity deals with elements that are directly embedded in existing or perceived decision-making procedures. It is best-practice to create engagement opportunities that are fair and inclusive and center community needs and also the barriers to participation.[15] Effective procedural equity requires training, addressing policies already in place and building staff capacity and their understanding of these practices.

Finally, interactional equity, includes both interpersonal and informational justice. It seeks to address the existing and/or the perceived power imbalances among communities and the entity undergoing the planning process. Interactional equity should be at the forefront in all spaces when a public or planning entity is engaging directly with community members. Interactional equity acknowledges that traditional definitions of "technical" and "expert" knowledge are often amplified over community knowledge, culture, and knowledge gained through lived experience. Remediating these existing imbalances in adaptation processes and the associated engagement can better facilitate fairness in both the interpersonal and informational aspects of encounters between parties through honest information sharing, respect, and accountability.[16]

2.3 Identifying Community Partners

A crucial step for a successful and ongoing community engagement for a climate adaptation project is to appropriately identify and connect directly with all relevant communities. Establishing intentional, and strong partnerships with Disadvantaged Vulnerable Communities (DVCs) early on and with sustained commitment is important for maintaining trust, iterating solutions, and sharing information. Potential partners can include but are not limited to: individual community members, small businesses or community based organizations (CBOs), local jurisdiction staff or elected representatives, state and federal agencies, sovereign tribal governments or tribal partners, academic and research institutions, and regional nonprofit organizations.[17] To ensure historically marginalized voices are amplified, practitioners must recognize the connection between present-day structural inequities and past actions of institutions, systems, and sectors.[18] Sectors connected either indirectly or directly to climate impacts, such as housing or high-polluting industries, should be considered as target areas that can help enhance knowledge and accelerate adaptation efforts. Other strategies to identify community partners include through identifying key demographics and behaviors such as: vulnerability to climate hazards and stressors, renting versus home ownership, housing insecurity, transportation access, and occupation (including outdoor labor jobs and first responders). To support the inclusion of all vulnerable populations, practitioners should leverage the expertise of community groups, organizations, and leaders in early identification exercises; as well as create clear opportunities in the engagement process that includes reciprocity and support to participate over a long period of time with real decision-making power to ensure choice voices are present.

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[15] SANDAG, CCS II Appendix D – Incorporating Equity into Climate Resilience Activities.

[16] Whiteman, G., 2009.

[17] An Equity-First Approach to Climate Adaptation (2022).

[18] Martin, C.a.L., Jamal *The State of Equity Measurement: A Review for Energy-Efficiency Programs*. 2019, The Urban Institute.

3. APPROACH & METHODS

3.1 Our Approach

The goal of this Community Engagement Framework is to provide SDG&E detailed recommendations and strategies for consideration to implement effective and equitable community engagement. Through these practices, SDG&E may increase community participation in the scope analysis, goal development, implementation, administration and review of the future climate adaptation utility vulnerability assessment (VA). For equitable best practices, the recommendations of this community engagement framework are not only built from the Equity Guidance, but also through direct feedback from the community, collected from a survey and focus groups. The survey was sent to regional CBOs that are trusted advocates and partners with Disadvantaged Vulnerable Communities (DVCs). Their survey answers helped shape the topics and participants for the proceeding focus groups. This feedback was then analyzed and with support of known equity-first best practices to develop key recommendations for future engagement.

3.2 Data Collection

Surveys

The survey was designed to better identify potential areas of collaboration between SDG&E and local organizations as well as to inform deeper community engagement efforts by the company. The survey responses helped determine the topics and participants of the focus group

The survey was sent via email invitation to individuals and organizations who had pre-existing relationships with either SDG&E, SDRCC, or NPI. The individuals were primarily representatives and staff members of regional nonprofits, CBOs, or local public agencies with the intention of this group knowing the most about ongoing climate adaptation in the region and having close connections with DVCs. The survey aimed to gain clarity on each individual/organization's (1) priority climate impact areas, (2) familiarity with the CPUC's mandate and SDG&E's ongoing adaptation efforts, and (3) level of interest in engagement with SDG&E's vulnerability assessment process.

Focus Groups

The main goals of the focus groups were to: (1) provide necessary space for key partners and CBOs to develop the community engagement strategy for SDG&E, (2) deeply integrate information gathered from the survey in the development of the community engagement strategy, (3) identify strategies that ensure communities and CBOs are involved in scope analysis, goal development, implementation, administration, and review of the utility vulnerability assessments, (4) identify approaches to increase community resilience and capacity and prioritize communities in SDG&E's territory identified by the State of California as "Disadvantaged Vulnerable Communities."

Three, 90-minute focus groups were conducted to gather direct feedback, suggestions, and best practices for SDG&E to implement effective and equitable adaptation planning. Focus group participants, 35 in total,

provided more direct and deep feedback as it relates to both primary climate impact concerns, considerations of adaptation strategies, as well as input on engagement methods. The focus group participants were largely organizational leaders that frequently work with key communities in the SDG&E territory, but not necessarily representatives of those communities themselves. Collectively, the focus group attendees included individuals with in-depth knowledge of the intersectional climate change challenges the San Diego region faces and deep connections with DVCs.

4. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

4.1 Survey

The survey was sent to 507 different individuals and organizations who had pre-existing relationships with either SDG&E, SDRCC, or NPI. We received an 11% completion rate at 57 total complete responses; of these responses: 79% identified as a Nonprofit/CBO, 7% identified as local or regional government, 2% identified as academia, 3.5% identified as private or for-profit business, 2% identified as philanthropy, and 5% identified as other or did not specify their sector. Slightly more than half, 51%, of the respondents were at least moderately familiar with SDG&E's existing sustainability initiatives

Almost three-quarters (73%) of respondents were not aware of CPUC's 2020 mandate for IOU's to improve the energy reliability and safety of Disadvantaged Vulnerable Communities (DVCs). 84% of respondents indicated they were at least potentially interested in directly engaging with or supporting SDG&E's vulnerability assessments. Specifically, survey respondents indicated they would prefer to work on the following VA project phases, in order of preference: implementation, review, data gathering, administration, goal development, and scope analysis. Of the respondents who were interested in helping SDG&E with their VAs, 56%, more than half, expected compensation. When asked how they would like SDG&E to engage with them about the IOU's climate adaptation work, survey respondents listed the following as their preferred method of engagement, in order of preference: surveys, large community meetings, small focus groups, 1-on-1 interviews, all the above.

Respondents indicated the preferred method to receive updates about SDG&E's VAs and other climate adaptation efforts was, in order of preference: social media/e-newsletter/email outreach, virtual large community meetings, in-person and virtual small group meetings, print media, no updates, in-person large community meetings, and SDG&E adaptation website. When respondents were asked to recall a recent engagement effort they participated in and describe what made it successful, they responded with the following themes, in order of greatest frequency: adequate outreach and education on the topic prior to event, including stakeholders and partners in the conversation, working with the community to build cohesion, trust, and influence, and building in time for interactive community feedback and discussion *(this includes: Jamboard, breakout groups, live polls, and Q&A session)*.

Survey respondents who identified as nonprofits or CBOs were additionally asked to elaborate on their organization's specific needs for capacity building. Respondents listed the following, in order of importance, as major barriers to pursuing climate adaptation projects or efforts through their own organizations: lack

of funding to implement projects or hire staff and lack of organizational capacity or staff time to execute projects.

4.2 Focus Groups

Focus groups identified the following climate impacts and hazards as the top priorities for San Diego, in order of greatest frequency: extreme heat, infrastructure collapse, wildfire, increased vulnerability due to pre-existing health conditions, sea level rise/coastal erosion, lack of greenspace and shade cover. In response to key climate impacts and hazards, the focus groups suggested the following top strategies and opportunities for SDG&E to consider as a stakeholder and asset owner, in order of greatest frequency: improving outdoor access and enhancing urban greenspace, coordinate with community to understand assets and needs, expanding community guidance for extreme heat events and blackouts, improving grid resilience, nature-based solutions, vegetation management, and flooding mitigation.

The focus groups identified key groups that should be considered, including: digitally disadvantaged communities, youth, non-English speaking populations, and rural and isolated communities. Additionally, focus group participants highlighted effective engagement best practices to consider, including: direct collaboration and investment with CBOs, work with resident leaders and their networks, compensation for participants, access to non-digital outreach materials and visual outreach materials, and creative and innovative ways to meet community partners through messengers they know and trust.

4.3 Special Considerations

Conversations during the focus groups and informal dialogues with additional partners highlighted key additional recommendations for the community engagement framework. It was recommended that future language be utilized to identify relevant groups as partners and not 'stakeholders.' The word stakeholder may imply counter-productive power dynamics between the agency conducting the planning exercise and the community; this also may imply the 'stakeholder' will be a passive, not an active participant or committed entity as part of the adaptation process.

Participants identified the challenge of climate adaptation as a people-problem, one that needs thoughtful, clear and effective communication in addition to data. Communication recommendations included: removal of climate jargon, adapting language effectively for youth populations, and ensuring that opportunity is front and center. Additionally, a clear definition of equity should be provided for consistency and cohesion.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Key Objectives of Community Engagement Recommendations
1. Ensure Equity-First Approach at the Forefront of Engagement Measures
2. Increase Knowledge of SDG&E's Climate Adaptation Efforts
3. Develop Network of Engaged, Diverse, Community Partners, and SDG&E staff
4. Increase SDG&E Staff Capacity to Collaborate with Community Partners

5.1 Administer Equity-First Adaptation Community Coalition

- **Develop Equity-First Adaptation Community Coalition Guidelines:** Clear, transparent and publicly accessible guidelines should be developed to design and outline the creation of the Equity-First Community Climate Coalition (EC3). The EC3 will operate as project advisors, partners and ambassadors that will provide direct input across all phases of the project. Key factors for guideline development, at minimum, must include provisions for: (1) Time Commitments and Compensation, (2) Geographic Diversity, (3) DVC Representation, (4) Intersectional Expertise (5) Size and Meeting Frequency. These guidelines should include clear commitments and staff provisions from SDG&E (or consultants) to administer and support efforts and administration of the Coalition.

- **Launch Equity-First Community Climate Coalition (EC3):** Based on Guidelines, EC3 should launch in alignment with the project timeline. EC3 should be utilized as a resource once launched to: provide direct feedback, support information sharing, and identify new partnership pathways, and provide direct support to complementary EC3 member efforts.

- **Ensure Longevity, Engagement and Support of Equity-First Adaptation Community Coalition:** It is critical the project team ensure they have the fiscal and staff resources to maintain the Coalition for the entire duration of the project. This includes the staff time required to administer and support as well as the compensation needed to support the engagement.

- **Program Evaluation & Effectiveness Surveys:** Once operational, it is recommended that evaluation and success metrics are developed and deployed. This may be conducted through traditional pre and post program surveys issued annually or semiannually to the Coalition members. By ensuring on-going program evaluation, opportunities to ensure equity-first goals are being met or not being met, are made available to the project team, as well as issues clear direction for improvement.

5.2 Enhance Outreach & Project Information Materials

- **Website & Digital Access:** Create clear and concise messaging about the project, including but not limited to: project summary and overview, key goals and intended outcomes, project timeline, contact form for interested parties and project team contact information. It is recommended this information be integrated into the existing SDG&E Climate Adaptation Program Website. Recommended considerations include information that gives an entry-level overview of climate change, climate adaptation and San Diego hazards are recommended. It is recommended that SDG&E work to identify additional innovative information platforms, such as leveraging social media platforms, public libraries, local sports teams, etc.

- **Project Overview One-Pager:** The SDG&E Climate Adaptation Department, along with other departments, currently engage and facilitate many outreach and education events (including the Wildfire Safety Fairs). Having a ready to share project overview one-pager for staff to provide community members will aid in information sharing and provide pathways for increased engagement. This one pager at minimum should include key project objectives, clear direction to learn more, and project contact information. It is recommended this be developed in multiple languages utilizing the Language Spoken at Home Census datasets to aid in prioritization.

5.3 Develop & Support Improved Communication Pathways

- <u>Climate Adaptation Project Newsletter:</u> It is recommended that SDG&E should seek to develop and deploy a semi-annual project update newsletter. Interested partners, individuals and community members should be encouraged to sign up through the updated website, with the recommendation to utilize the existing outreach list developed for this project to initiate outreach. This newsletter should include key project information, such as progress reports, updates to timelines, and other key information identified by the project team or partners. SDG&E should leverage existing relationships and partner networks to alert community members and organizations of newsletter launch, and provide consistent outreach on updates.

- <u>Community Surveys</u>: For each phase of the process identified (e.g. implementation, review, data gathering, administration, goal development, and scope analysis), the project team should develop and deploy a community input survey. This will require a consistent review and feedback period for members to engage with the updated information or available data. The recommendation for this period is 30 days at minimum to allow for both appropriate circulation and notification of feedback period as well as to provide for optimal participation. Considerations to address disparities in the "digital divide" should be identified and leveraged to ensure hard-copy or physical distribution of surveys are available across the territory, as well as seek to develop the survey in multiple languages. This could include examples such as making them available at SDG&E offices and rate collection sites, working with partner networks to distribute at events, or leveraging public community forums such as libraries or community centers to distribute.

5.4 Workshops & Supporting a Two-Way Learning Atmosphere

- <u>In-Person & Virtual Workshops:</u> For each component of the adaptation planning process, SDG&E should commit to hosting both in-person and virtual workshops to share updates and obtain feedback. Each of these engagements should be treated as a two-way learning opportunity, both to listen to and inform the community and key partners on the project progress as well as to gain critical feedback on areas for improvements, needs for clarity and support, among others. These meetings should be hosted in geographically diverse locations across SDG&E's territory, as well as hosted in accessible and community focused locations. If hosted in-person, equity-first considerations for childcare, physical safety, and language access should be made priority considerations. If hosted virtually, meetings should utilize a platform that will at minimum enable closed-captions in multiple languages and/or include additional sessions presented in multiple languages.

- <u>Leverage Existing & Partner Opportunities:</u> SDG&E and project leads should leverage and invest in supporting opportunities to add on or aid in existing meetings with communities and target audiences. This may require that the content and outreach presentation will need to be adapted to the specific circumstance; which should be taken into consideration. Advantages of leveraging existing outreach includes: broader and diverse engagement, building community trust and opportunity to connect multiple efforts or programs.

- **Support & Nurture Positive Feedback Loops:** SDG&E should be sure to document the actions, efforts and community responses across all recommendations. This work should also develop and support a process for how community feedback will be integrated and is reflected into future processes and action. SDG&E should consult community partners, experts and thought leaders to ensure transparency and honesty are elevated in these processes.

5.5 Additional Considerations

- <u>Compensation & Community Experts:</u> Equity-first best practices, as well as community feedback indicated the clear responsibility to compensate community members and experts for their time. It is recommended a discretionary budget is available to this project to ensure when necessary needs arise, compensation may be provided to maintain equity-first standards of practice. This could include needs such as: expanding EC3 membership, hiring equity consultants, compensating partners for hosting meetings, or supporting translation services.

- <u>Tribal Governments & Communities:</u> Special consideration, expertise and fiscal commitment should be invested to directly engage with sovereign tribal governments as well as tribal community partners. Climate adaptation strategies and risk assessments should be evaluated in direct partnerships with the tribal governments and communities. Intentional commitment to these partnerships and opportunities should be pursued to ensure communities are informed, involved and have opportunity to lead and participate actively during each phase of this project.

- <u>On-Going Equity-First Training & Workshops for Project Staff:</u> SDG&E team leadership should commit to implement 1-2 capacity building training workshops annually that tackle the core team needs, identify and support best practice in equitable community engagement and climate adaptation planning. The workshops will incorporate best practices in leadership development and equitable climate adaptation planning.

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