

# BUILDING URBAN CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE

ACCCRN Intervention Project Criteria, Process & Progress



ARUP



## 1.1 | PURPOSE

A core objective of The Rockefeller Foundation’s Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN) is to increase the evidence base of practice around how cities – especially for poor and vulnerable populations within cities – understand and build resilience to a wide range of projected climate impacts. This goal is motivated by the challenge of taming the “*three-headed hydra of climate risk, poverty, and precipitous urbanization*”<sup>1</sup> identified by Rockefeller Foundation in conceiving the ACCCRN program.

In order to build this evidence base, Rockefeller Foundation has allocated approximately half of the ACCCRN program funding (~US\$20M) to support a set of specific city level climate change resilience building measures. From 2010 to 2013 city stakeholders will develop a range of proposals for Rockefeller Foundation to consider. Each intervention would aim to contribute to building urban resilience to climate change, thereby reducing the vulnerability especially of poorer communities within the city.

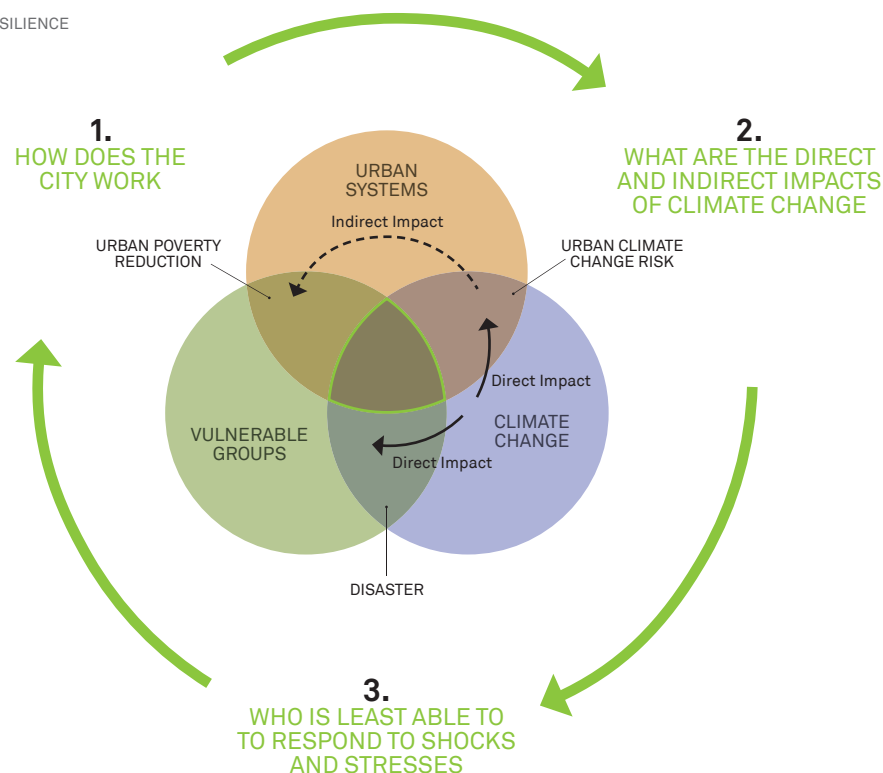
1. Judith Rodin, President, The Rockefeller Foundation

## 1.2 | BACKGROUND

Urban resilience is complex and multi-sectoral, thus requiring an integrated approach with wide-ranging action at multiple levels over many years. Given this reality, the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) has underscored the importance of ACCCRN cities developing a *City Resilience Strategy* as a necessary precursor to proposal development. These strategies reflect the culmination of city-level assessments, sectoral analyses, and iterative processes, in particular focusing on reducing the vulnerability and exposure that poor and vulnerable populations face with respect climate change.

Part of the City Resilience Strategy is the identification of a set of prioritized measures to undertake to increase urban resilience. There is significant overlap between urban development/poverty reduction programming and climate change resilience which can result in on-the-ground interventions that look remarkably similar. To articulate how ACCCRN’s approach focussed on the urban resilience element, a venn diagram of climate change, vulnerability and urban systems (Figure 1) has been consistently used to articulate the focus of ACCCRN.

FIGURE 1  
GUIDING URBAN CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE



The intersection of these three circles was initially conceived as a guide to ensure that proposed interventions are framed to consider climate change impacts, in the context of how the city works and who is least able to respond to shocks and stresses. It also offers a structure to help advance and coordinate cross-sector actions at the city scale, and allow the cumulative effect of incremental action from multiple projects and different levels and scales to be articulated.

With the City Resilience Strategy providing the context, each ACCCRN city will develop proposals to undertake specific interventions that increase urban climate change resilience. RF expects these interventions to build on the three program related outcomes contained in the ACCCRN Results Framework. Interventions should:

- Demonstrably improve the resilience of ACCCRN cities to current and future climate risks, and act as a catalyst for on-going comprehensive climate change resilience planning within ACCCRN cities (ref. ACCCRN Result 1);
- Provide tangible examples and an evidence base of learning to inform approaches to solving key climate change resilience problems in other cities in the region and globally (ref. ACCCRN Result 2).
- Attract and leverage additional resources and funding for further interventions which will strengthen the resilience of both ACCCRN and other cities (ref. ACCCRN Result 3).

These result areas provided the basis for generating outcome oriented criteria, which would be supported by more project implementation oriented criteria. An early vision of what the portfolio of intervention projects might look like is outlined below:

## › VISION & PRINCIPLES

Through engagement in up to ten Asian cities, the Rockefeller Foundation seeks to support a promising collection of urban climate change resilience interventions that address a range of climate impacts and vulnerability contexts, scales, and geographies. RF seeks to assemble a portfolio that will include individual or linked interventions that are:

- Preferably in all **four countries** and in **several cities**
- Initiated by **different** types of **institutions**, including government entities, non-governmental organizations, private sector firms, and community based organizations
- Employing a diversity of approaches such as capacity building, policy development, infrastructure developments, financial interventions etc.
- Garnering a **spectrum** of types of **support from RF**, including costs for pre-feasibility or feasibility studies, direct funding, co-finance, resource brokering, and assistance in the marketing of proposals
- Demonstrating a **diversity of financial** size and **timeframes** for implementation
- Relevant across a **range of sectors** that are impacted by climate change
- Targeting a **variety of climate risks** – and include direct and **indirect** impacts, as well as impacts that relate to current and future risks
- Addressing a range of **vulnerabilities** and **vulnerable groups**
- Affecting **different urban scales**: from community-level, to sector-level to city-wide

## 1.3 | THE CRITERIA

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These principles were tested with program partners in late 2009, using a working paper which outlined draft criteria against which intervention project proposals would be evaluated in order to attract RF funding. These criteria set out to ensure that proposals were: **CREDIBLE** and relevant; **VIABLE** and sustainable; able to **LEVERAGE** other resources; **REPLICABLE** and scalable; **INNOVATIVE**, and contribute to the broader **PORTFOLIO** of ACCCRN city interventions. The draft criteria were again tested in March 2010 with ‘dummy projects’ from the World Bank Development Marketplace. This process was used to enable ACCCRN partners to test the criteria against real proposals, and continued the process of socialising the criteria among project partners. While the outcome of the test was largely positive, strong commentary was made by the ACCCRN Advisory Group on the need for ecosystem services, and environmental sustainability in general, to play a less passive role in the criteria. While the potential for co-benefit projects (mitigation-adaptation) has always been recognised, as has the importance of ecosystem services in building urban resilience, the need for more explicit recognition led to the introduction of ‘Do No Harm’ and ‘Ecological Sustainable Development’ as guiding principles for any intervention project.

## 2.0 | ACCCRN INTERVENTION PROJECTS

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In Phase 3 of ACCCRN, RF envisaged funding a range of intervention projects that had been generated through the Phase 2 City engagement process. It was expected that these intervention projects would respond directly to some of the actions that Cities had identified in order to build urban resilience to climate change, and that these actions would be supported by a City Resilience Strategy.

The question of ‘what constitutes an urban climate change resilience project’ and what criteria would be used to evaluate and ultimately fund these projects, was posed by RF in mid 2009. Arup and RF worked together, in consultation with ACCCRN partners, to design a robust process and establish criteria that provided a clear target for city level projects to meet their own as well as program objectives.

## 2.1 | REVIEW OF EXISTING EXPERIENCE

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To understand the kind of projects that might emerge from ACCCRN, and inform the development of an appropriate evaluation process and set of criteria, a brief review of existing climate adaptation project experience was undertaken. In 2009, for example, IIED<sup>2</sup> reviewed of progress of 40 Least Developed Countries (LDC’s) in implementing their National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA’s).

IIED’s review of projects implemented over the past 8 years highlighted that most NAPA projects are direct investments in capacity building or mainstreaming activities, with fewer focused on awareness raising, improving information and research. Further most NAPA projects are at a ‘sectoral scale’, with projects responding to urgent and immediate adaptation needs, prioritizing the most vulnerable communities and seeking to build institutional capacities.

From a 2007 review of NAPA’s, Osman and Downing<sup>3</sup> identified some common criteria and key constraints to implementation of projects. Common criteria developed through the NAPA process included:

- Technical feasibility of each measure
- Economic costs and benefits
- Sustainability of livelihoods
- Crosscutting issues and synergies
- Magnitude of impacts

2. Jessica Ayers (2009) Progress Implementing National Adaptation Programmes of Action <http://www.tiempocyberclimate.org/newswatch/comment090517.htm>

3. Osman, Elasha, B., and T. Downing (2007) Lessons learned in preparing National Adaptation Programmes of Action in Eastern and Southern Africa. Policy Analysis Report. Oxford: European Capacity Building Initiative.

Key constraints to project implementation included:

- Institutional barriers, which delay the implementation of some activities
- Lack of sufficient technical capacities at local levels to play an active role
- Need for additional technical and financial assistance to develop the concept notes, and turn them into full projects.
- The practical means of integrating climate change into sectoral and structural planning decisions are largely lacking.

It was also notable that first order screening of potential adaptation activities is undertaken through the NAPA process to ensure that activities are:

- Consistent with country specific strategies and plans for risk reduction
- Address the most urgent vulnerability
- Are appropriate for implementation through the NAPA process.

While ACCCRN has a slightly different focus, scope and implementation process, the principles of ‘first order’ or ‘gateway’ screening is one that resonated with ensuring the ‘credibility’ of ACCCRN interventions as an initial step in the process. It was also as important from an ACCCRN perspective to begin the criteria and process development process with a proxy for what kind of projects might emerge, and what constraints to implementation need to be identified early in the process.

## 2.2 | PROCESS OF INTERVENTION PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION

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The ACCCRN proposal development process envisaged 3 stages, which built on standard RF grant making practices, experience from NAPAs and recognised the strong engagement process at the city level throughout Phase 2 shared learning dialogues. The three stages are:

- 1) Generation of a large number of ‘ideas’ through the resilience planning process, which could be floated as possible intervention projects
- 2) Some of these ideas would be refined into short (6 page) Intervention Concept Notes, which would be given a more formal review against ‘Gateway criteria’
- 3) Concepts that emerged from the Gateway review would be developed into Intervention Project Proposals for RF Funding as urban climate change resilience interventions.

The early discussions with partners about this proposed process unearthed a range of issues including:

- Need for clear articulation of criteria to country partners and cities so that these can be internalized into the resilience planning and intervention project proposal development process.
- Need for well articulated expectations in terms of the level of detail/ content required for RF to fund projects (and that different ‘categories of proposals’ might require different levels of detail)
- Development of a review and decision making process which responds to local needs and issues (political and statutory)
- The need for a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities of ACCCRN partners and cities (i.e. where do roles start and stop).

It was further recognized that each country (and even city) may interact with this process in a different way, due to the way in which shared learning dialogues have evolved in each city and country, and the differing decision making and approval processes that may exist in each local context. In response, templates were developed to guide both the Intervention Concept Note and final Intervention Project Proposal.

## 2.3 | THE OUTCOME

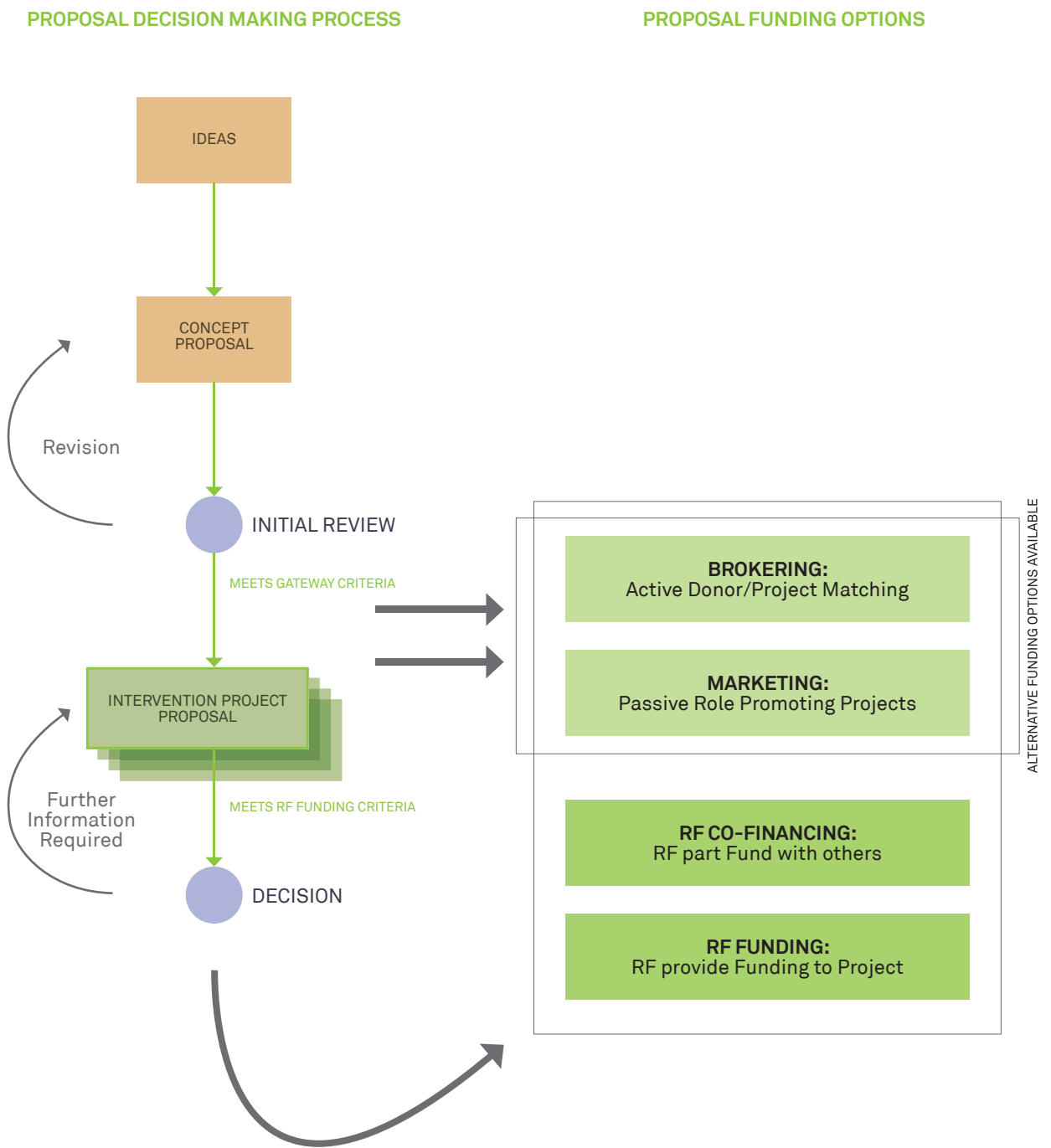
The final process and criteria built on a review of existing experiences in climate change adaptation programs, the ACCCRN ‘Results Framework’ established by the RF to guide the vision and outcomes of ACCCRN, and previous grantee and donor experience of project review and implementation. Figure 2 shows the final ACCCRN criteria, while Figure 3 shows the decision making process.

At Intervention Concept Note stage, the use of Gateway Criteria was aimed to prioritize those criteria which each intervention project must satisfy in order to receive RF funding. These include:

FIGURE 2  
ACCCRN CRITERIA

PRINCIPLES	
<b>Ecologically Sustainable Development</b>	Contributes to urban climate change resilience without negatively straining or degrading ecological systems or resulting in environmentally unsustainable practices
<b>Do no harm</b>	Contributes to urban climate change resilience without negatively generating negative consequences or producing trade-offs that would yield detrimental impacts on poor and vulnerable populations and ecosystem integrity while attempting to achieve a wider-scale solution
CRITERIA	CRITERIA WEIGHT
<b>Credibility</b>	1. Contribution to building urban climate change resilience <i>GATEWAY</i>
	2. Impact on lives of poor and vulnerable populations <i>GATEWAY</i>
	3. Potential to integrate with other resilience building measures at city level <i>PRIMARY</i>
	4. Scale of impact <i>PRIMARY</i>
<b>Viability &amp; Sustainability</b>	5. Technically and operationally viable <i>PRIMARY</i>
	6. Financially viable and sustainable <i>PRIMARY</i>
	7. Prospects for timely implementation <i>PRIMARY</i>
	8. Local ownership <i>PRIMARY</i>
<b>Leverage capacity</b>	9. Ability to leverage other resources (financial, human, technical) <i>PRIMARY</i>
<b>Replicable &amp; scalable</b>	10. Prospects for replication in other places <i>GATEWAY</i>
	11. Ability to achieve scale <i>GATEWAY</i>
	12. Ability to contribute new urban climate change resilience knowledge and practice <i>SECONDARY</i>
<b>Innovation</b>	13. Innovative <i>SECONDARY</i>
<b>Portfolio balance</b>	14. Contribution to a diverse and balanced set of projects and interventions ACCCRN-wide <i>SECONDARY</i>

FIGURE 3  
INTERVENTION PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



## > GATEWAY CRITERIA

- **Criteria 1:** Contribution to building urban climate change resilience
- **Criteria 2:** Impact on lives of poor and vulnerable populations
- **Criteria 11:** Prospects for replication in other places
- **Criteria 12:** Ability to achieve scale

In addition RF has, in accordance with ACCCRN Result Area 3 (Leverage), intended to facilitate the generation of projects for consideration of funding using its own resources, but also to share with other donors. The proposal evaluation process was therefore conceptualised with opportunities for RF to identify interventions that might be eligible for other types of support from RF, including: co-finance, brokering support from other donors, or marketing of the proposal. These options, and when they might be considered in the process, are shown in Figure 2 on page 7.

With the first round of projects now recommended for approval, this provides an opportune moment to reflect on the process of evaluation and challenges of applying a diverse and aspirational set of selection criteria (see *ACCCRN: Guidelines on Intervention Funding Criteria and Proposal Submission*, April 2010).

### 3.0 | LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE: APPLYING THE CRITERIA & PROCESS

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The first round of intervention proposal development and review will close in December 2010, meeting an internal RF deadline of funding disbursement before the close of the calendar year. The process has provided a learning experience for evaluators (e.g. RF) and proposers (e.g. city stakeholders and ACCCRN country partners) alike, and has required a high level of iteration, discussion and alignment on a country-by-country basis.

The initial step of the intervention project proposal development process was initiated through a set of face-to-face workshops with RF (and Arup as technical consultant) and city representatives from ACCCRN cities in India, Vietnam and Indonesia (Thailand not yet being ready to propose project ideas given slightly different program timelines). In these forums, cities presented their early conceptions of urban climate change resilience projects (“ideas” or step 1 of the process). This step surfaced the question of ‘what is an urban climate resilience project’ in a collaborative environment and provided the basis for a focused discussion on how the idea, if developed, could contribute to ACCCRN results areas.

This early process of exchange led to the submission of approximately 21 Intervention Concept Notes across all three countries and eight cities. These Intervention Concept Notes were evaluated by RF and Arup against the Gateway, Primary and Secondary Criteria. While the Gateway Criteria had been intended as the early bar for proposals to meet, seeing the Intervention Concept Notes raised immediate questions about implementation and whether the concepts had the potential to meet other criteria. Feedback to proponents was therefore able to include both questions about areas of uncertainty, but also suggestions about how the project might better meet ACCCRN criteria at the Intervention Project Proposal stage. Intervention Concept Notes that did not progress to the next stage either did not sufficiently meet the criteria, or were held back on that basis that adequate time did not exist for the concepts to be reformulated to meet the 2010 deadline.



Nine Intervention Project Proposals were submitted for funding, including four that were consolidated into one proposal (Vietnam City Coordination Offices). These nine covered all eight of the ACCCRN cities, with some cities in Vietnam (Quy Nhon and Da Nang) having multiple proposals submitted. The proposals covered a wide range of issues central to building urban climate change resilience, and will start the build the case evidence from ACCCRN around where cities can intervene to start this process.

## 4.0 | CONCLUSION

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Lessons from this first round of proposal development and evaluation are many and varied, with clear distinctions between countries on how well the process worked and how it can be improved in the next funding window. Certainly having preliminary agreed City Resilience Strategies from each of the cities will help to provide a strong context for projects in the future, as will an improved understanding of how cities can interact with RF to access project funding. The next 3 years will see a 'pipeline' of projects emerging from cities, particularly as initial projects are implemented and capacities and institutional buy-in improves. The next round of Intervention Concept Notes is being planned for early 2011.

Opportunities for cities to access funding from other donors will present a new set of challenges, as criteria and processes will differ. However, the objective of generating interventions which build urban climate change resilience will hopefully put those projects in a strong position to access those other sources of funding.



## > CONTACT

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**Anna Brown**

Associate Director

Rockefeller Foundation, Asia

t: +66 (0)2 2620091

e: [abrown@rockfound.org](mailto:abrown@rockfound.org)

**ARUP**

**Sam Kernaghan**

Senior Consultant

Arup (Thailand)

t: +66 876 711 588

e: [sam.kernaghan@arup.com](mailto:sam.kernaghan@arup.com)

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