

Adapting to Rising Tides

The Adapting to Rising Tides (ART) Program is an initiative led by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. ART provides staff support and other resources to help agencies and organizations plan for sea level rise and storm impacts.

What is the ART approach to adaptation planning?

The ART approach is a road-tested, outcome-oriented adaptation planning process. It follows a traditional framework – from scoping to implementation – that has been refined to address the specific challenges of building resilience across different assets, jurisdictions and owners in order to develop adaptation responses to sea level rise and storm impacts that achieve multiple benefits.

THE ART PLANNING PROCESS

Each stage of the planning process – project scoping; assessing impacts, vulnerabilities and consequences; defining issues; planning adaptation responses; and implementing responses – informs later stages and builds a clear and transparent case for taking action. To help local governments use this approach, the ART Portfolio provides planning guidance, tools, data and findings from past ART projects, and in-person Help Desk support from the ART Program staff. (See sidebar, opposite.)



Detailed guidance, tools and findings developed by the ART Program to help planners use this approach provide an efficient process for developing a comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes of climate vulnerability and risk, building effective and equitable adaptation responses, and finding paths forward for implementing these responses.

An ART-based planning process:

Convenes and engages a working group of staff from agencies and organizations in the project area to build local capacity and ensure results will be actionable and resonate locally

Leverages findings from the ART Program to streamline the assessment and planning tasks.

Uses the road-tested, ART assessment questions to systematically and efficiently evaluate existing conditions, vulnerability and consequences for a wide variety of assets

Uses vulnerability and consequence classifications – that are seamlessly integrated into the assessment questions – to organize and communicate assessment outcomes in clear terms that are more useful to current and future stakeholders than ranking, scoring or numerically prioritizing issues

Develops adaptation responses for planning issues that create a path to implementation by including a variety of actions to address underlying vulnerabilities

Three Factors for Success

Experience with a variety of adaptation planning efforts that range from broad to focused scales, single to multi-sector, has led ART to emphasize three success factors.

COLLABORATIVE BY DESIGN

Planning for climate change means planning across jurisdictions, geographies, sectors, and time frames to address complex, cross-cutting issues. This requires active, ongoing participation of stakeholders representing the diverse values, viewpoints and responsibilities that are relevant to the project. ART emphasizes convening and closely collaborating with a stakeholder working group throughout a project to achieve project goals and build relationships that lead to future collaborations.

A TRANSPARENT PROCESS

To build a strong and actionable case for adaptation, the ART Portfolio resources help maintain transparency in decision-making and support clear communication to stakeholders about decisions and project outcomes.

SUSTAINABILITY FROM START TO FINISH

The relevance and implications of all aspects of sustainability are considered in each step of the ART approach, from who is included in the initial working group list to what criteria are selected to evaluate adaptation responses. ART frames the components of sustainability as:

Society & Equity: Effects on communities and necessary services, including disproportionate impacts of inequalities.

Economy: Economic values that may be affected such as costs of infrastructure damages or lost revenues.

Environment: Environmental values that may be affected, including ecosystem functions and services and biodiversity.

Governance: Factors such as organizational structure, ownership, management responsibilities, jurisdiction, mandates, and mechanisms of participation that affect vulnerability.

How are these success factors used in the ART Portfolio guidance, tools and information?

Findings: ART Program outcomes that are summarized by sectors and adaptation planning issues specifically address the four sustainability frames. These findings jump-start different steps of the process.

Design Your Project: This detailed, step-by-step guidance on how to organize and lead an adaptation planning project, lays out the roles and tasks of the project team and stakeholder working group in each step.

Process Agendas: To help the project team have productive meetings with the working group, these example agendas describe how to lead effective and efficient workshops and meetings for the different stages of the project.

Engagement Exercises: These instructions for leading interactive exercises with a working group support development of work products that integrate sustainability and maintain transparency, and build trust and relationships among stakeholders.

How-to-Guides: These step-by-step tools include the ART Assessment Questions which provide an efficient, yet robust methodology for understanding the causes and components of vulnerability and consequences. The questions explicitly address all four sustainability frames, and help planners validate findings with efficient and targeted stakeholder input.

Help Desk: Support that connects users to knowledgeable ART Program staff who can assist them with understanding and using Portfolio content.