Table 1: Critical Assessment of the State of the US Adaptation Field

FIELD COMPONENT AND BASIC DEFINITION (Chapter 2)	**Purpose** The widely valued goal a field is focused on or organized around. It is centered on the clear delineation of a common problem, and linked to a vision of a world in which that problem is addressed once and for all or in an ongoing manner.
KEY FINDINGS: CURRENT STATE OF THE FIELD (Chapters 3 & 4)	• Climate impacts are driving adaptation, yet crisis-driven adaptation is reactive, expensive, and treats symptoms rather than root causes. • There is greater acceptance of the need for adaptation, yet polarization on climate change prevents concerted engagement on mitigation and adaptation. • Some have recognized that resilience requires attention to root causes. • There is new awareness of equity, but little agreement or action. • The adaptation field lacks an all-encompassing vision. • The field needs a unifying values framework to guide adaptation, even if it will be expressed in many locally meaningful visions. • The federal leadership vacuum could spur visioning in communities. • Many communities are not yet aware of the need to adapt. • There is a lack of clear regional, sectoral, and cross-cutting priorities to drive focus.
VISION OF A MATURE FIELD (Chapter 2)	• A well-developed adaptation field creates the nationwide capacity to effectively and equitably close the resilience gap. • The field is singularly focused on working toward a world in which that gap is closed for all. • It understands its mission as preventing, minimizing, and alleviating climate change threats to human well-being and to the natural and built systems on which humans depend. • It works to create new opportunities by addressing the causes and consequences of climate change in ways that solve related social, environmental, and economic problems.
CLIMATE-DRIVEN AND SOCIETAL DEMANDS ON THE FIELD (Chapter 1)	• Humanity is now moving out of the Holocene and into the Anthropocene, and exceeding four out of nine planetary boundaries. • The climate is changing, and society is at rapidly growing risk. • Evidence of climate-driven changes is emerging across the US in the form of extreme events and other progressively more-severe impacts.
OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE FIELD	• Adaptation professionals lack a common definition of the problem due to the heterogeneous nature of climate impacts, the politicized responses to climate change, and the prevailing reactive stance taken to climate impacts. • Adaptation professionals lack a unifying vision of what they should be able to do or what shared goals they could accomplish. • For many, a common purpose built from a shared problem understanding and unifying vision would need to involve social equity and cohesion, but this view is not widely or deeply shared. • Priorities for adaptation investment are values-driven and difficult to reconcile. As a result, there is no field-wide agreement on adaptation priorities. • The field lacks a pervasive sense of urgency.

Table 1: Critical Assessment of the State of the US Adaptation Field (continued)

FIELD COMPONENT AND BASIC DEFINITION (Chapter 2)	**People** The field actors—individuals, organizations, and networks—that come together to address a particular problem and, in so doing, create a field of practice. Actors may change over time, are networked, and include visible leaders.
KEY FINDINGS: CURRENT STATE OF THE FIELD (Chapters 3 & 4)	• New actors and networks have energized the adaptation field, including city networks, community groups, utilities, and the private sector. • Smaller cities and rural areas are at risk of being left out of the action. • Adaptation actors are not working together effectively. • Leadership is distributed and not solidly established; yet, it is increasingly needed to unify and propel the field forward. • There are many opportunities for closer integration between the climate justice movement and the adaptation field. • There is a need to engage under-represented actors, including funders, insurers, investors, workers in related fields, people in rural areas, and youth. • Some existing networks are not utilized effectively for advancing adaptation.
VISION OF A MATURE FIELD (Chapter 2)	• The mature adaptation field is a powerful, widely recognized, confident, respected, and deeply integrated area of work accomplished by highly skilled people who share a common identity. • Individuals, communities, organizations, businesses, and government agencies within the field have taken full ownership of the complementary strategies of climate mitigation and adaptation, implemented in ways that build social cohesion and equity, to achieve the transformational changes required to keep communities safe and thriving. • With ready access to a wide range of relevant expertise, deeply interconnected field actors share goals and collaborate. • Field actors have adopted a culture and practice of adaptive thinking and acting in a world of constant and disruptive change. • Benefiting from widespread social capital, adaptation actors widely share knowledge and resources with each other.
CLIMATE-DRIVEN AND SOCIETAL DEMANDS ON THE FIELD (Chapter 1)	• With the emergence of more-severe and/or more-frequent climate extremes and other impacts across the US, the challenges of adaptation and resilience building have become an everyday reality for decision makers, although the types and magnitudes of risks faced differ significantly. • The convergence of economic and climate crises has illuminated deeper threats to community resilience. Those threats require that a wider range of actors be included in adaptation planning and implementation processes.
OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE FIELD	• The field has seen significant growth in new actors over the past several years, some of whom are well-networked and developing a common identity (particularly city practitioners), but also many others who are not yet linked to each other or across networks. • Connecting beyond existing networks within the field or to people outside the field is insufficient, at present, to capture all the talent and expertise needed to close the resilience gap. • A fundamental tension exists between growing the number and diversity of actors needed to build an effective adaptation field and establishing useful networks and a sense of community. • There is significant danger of smaller cities and rural areas being left behind. • In the absence of strong federal leadership, the field is losing or lacking a well-established and influential cohort of leaders. • The climate justice movement is influencing the field, yet much remains to be done to effectively integrate movement concerns into adaptation practice.

Table 1: Critical Assessment of the State of the US Adaptation Field (continued)

FIELD COMPONENT AND BASIC DEFINITION (Chapter 2)	**Practice** The actions taken and the knowledge, tools, and skills used to fulfill the field's purpose. Practice involves mechanisms for innovation, learning, information sharing, collaboration, common action agendas around shared goals, advocacy, and communication within and beyond the field.
KEY FINDINGS: CURRENT STATE OF THE FIELD (Chapters 3 & 4)	• The knowledge base on adaptation is improving. • Investment in capacity building has strengthened the field. • Tools supporting adaptation are increasingly available, but remain difficult to select and use. • Science and practice are increasingly working together, yet more collaboration is needed. • The field is experimenting widely, but not yet discerning best practices. • Powerful approaches have spurred real change on the ground, but they are not widely recognized or used as best practices. • Practice is advancing, but barriers stymie progress from planning to action. • Adaptation is increasingly mainstreamed into existing institutions; while this addresses some barriers, there are also important limitations to this approach. • More systemic changes are needed to close the resilience gap. • The field must build capacity for deeper thinking, committed action for equity, greater sophistication and professionalization of practice, and transformative change.
VISION OF A MATURE FIELD (Chapter 2)	• Exemplary models and best practices for effective and equitable adaptation are available, widely known, and backed up with robust evidence. • Scientists and practitioners work closely to distill (and update) core principles and tenets of adaptation knowledge and approaches. They produce, test, and assess innovations in a forward-looking professional culture that is focused on long-term transformative goals. • Effective, co-creative science–practice partnerships are the norm. • Rigorous professional standards and certification are established, based on guiding principles that can be applied to diverse contexts. • The field uses 21st-century communications platforms and tools to convey the urgency of climate action, and to identify and share adaptation stories and lessons learned. • Field actors are skilled in using dialogue to advance mutual understanding and, where possible, consensus around the challenges of transformative change. • Professional trainings enable newcomers to gain proficiency in core concepts, technical and social issues, and ethical principles. • Key competencies needed to build resilience are ubiquitous and drive toward transformation. • Field actors approach adaptation challenges through systems, integrative, holistic, and out-of-the-box thinking, while embracing deep uncertainty and risk-taking. • Tracking of progress and feedback mechanisms support rapid learning, cross-fertilization, and maturation of the field's practice and enable rapid response to threats and needs. • The field facilitates social networking, trust building, and collaboration at scale. • Actors help communities envision—and achieve—desirable futures.

Table 1: Critical Assessment of the State of the US Adaptation Field (continued)

CLIMATE-DRIVEN AND SOCIETAL DEMANDS ON THE FIELD (Chapter 1)	• Recent climate-related disasters show the interconnected nature of climate change impacts across sectors, scales, and regions; adaptation, too, must cross those boundaries. • The socio-economic disparity between the 1% and the 99% is growing wider, demanding that adaptation practice address a wider set of challenges. • Growing inequity demands inclusive processes, and embedding adaptation in solutions that address long-standing vulnerabilities and problems in communities. • Response capacities of those affected by climate change are highly uneven. • Rural areas and small cities are receiving less support for growing their adaptive capacity; however, urban areas depend on those rural areas for many of their basic needs (water, clean air, food). • Many types of climate-related disasters are on the rise, and adaptation to more-frequent and more-severe disruptions will only become more difficult.
OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE FIELD	• The adaptation field's practice has advanced in a number of important ways in recent years, but the evidence base for what constitutes "best practice" is still weak or spotty. • Despite some progress, practice is not yet advanced to implementation except in limited circumstances. • Incremental progress in adaptation does not match the accelerating pace of climate change. • Communication is better within the adaptation field than to outside actors and the public, perpetuating obstacles to awareness raising and the movement of ideas across different fields of work. • There is limited communication about, and media attention to, adaptation—except when disasters strike. • There is a lack of clarity around what, if any, values are shared across the field, reflecting the lack of a unifying vision or shared goals. • There is a strong preference for integrating adaptation into existing practices and structures ("mainstreaming"), but the approach is limited in that it does not address deeper causes of climate, environmental, and socio-economic crises. • Awareness, understanding, and acceptance of the need for transformative change is present among some, but extremely limited across the field as a whole.

Table 1: Critical Assessment of the State of the US Adaptation Field (continued)

FIELD COMPONENT AND BASIC DEFINITION (Chapter 2)	**Pillars** The funding and policy support that enables the realization of the field's goals.
KEY FINDINGS: CURRENT STATE OF THE FIELD (Chapters 3 & 4)	• International and federal policies have influenced the field. • There are new threats to adaptation policy under the Trump Administration. • Adaptation mandates are emerging in some states; some initiated from the bottom up. • Funding from philanthropy and government has been crucial for field growth. • Foundations are not collaborating effectively. • Strategic interventions are required to help diverse sets of adaptation professionals meet needs and achieve higher impact. These include: policy levers; regional scaling of local efforts; collaboration with professional societies; establishment of standards; and creative, sustained, and coordinated financing and funding mechanisms.
VISION OF A MATURE FIELD (Chapter 2)	• Philanthropic and government funders and private investors are fully committed to funding field building and resilience building until the resilience gap is closed. • Funding is not only available after disasters, but is sustained and coordinated and available for proactive, preventive measures. • Funders help to grow resources commensurate with the threat, build funding coalitions, and inspire new financial instruments and systems to support transformative interventions. • The economic case for adaptation is well established. • Policymakers at all levels embrace the need for mitigation and adaptation, enacting strong resilience legislation and removing legal and institutional barriers to adaptation. • Policy interventions are coordinated with funding instruments and approaches, supporting and requiring stringent mitigation efforts and adaptation practice with concerted attention to social cohesion and equity. • Policies supporting the adoption of best practices and climate-sensitive standards for buildings, infrastructure, and other systems are applied, evaluated, and regularly updated to move communities toward greater resilience in the face of climate disruptions.
CLIMATE-DRIVEN AND SOCIETAL DEMANDS ON THE FIELD (Chapter 1)	• Most nations—including the US—signed the Paris Climate Accord in December 2015, agreeing to limit warming to less than 3.6°F (2°C) above pre-industrial levels by the end of the 21st century, and preferably to less than 2.7°F (1.5°C). The agreement also includes an explicit adaptation goal. • In June 2017, the Trump Administration withdrew the US from the Accord, although many states, cities, universities, and businesses remain committed to achieving the Accord's goals. • Any lag in commitment makes it more challenging to limit warming to levels most consider tolerable and manageable in terms of impacts and adaptation challenges. • Limited funding and staff capacity are among the most frequently mentioned and most impactful barriers to adaptation and resilience building.
OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE FIELD	• Crisis-driven funding from federal and state governments and philanthropy has had an important influence on the adaptation field's development in recent years. • There are, however, no institutionalized, coordinated, or sustained funding streams in support of adaptation, and federal assets are diminishing. • With lacking federal leadership, the field has lost an important pillar of support, placing greater pressures on state and regional policymakers to help advance the field. • Lack of federal leadership weakens the signal to the public and policymakers at state and local levels to take climate action seriously. • Development of the field's pillars is lagging, likely slowing down the development of other field components.