

Welcome ..... 4

START at a Glance..... 6



pg  
2

# About START

Timeline..... 8

Context for Our Work..... 10

# WELCOME

In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro collectively agreed to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development from which came the conventions on climate change, biological diversity, and desertification. The major theme of the declaration concerned sustainable development: “humanity has the ability to make development sustainable—to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” START was created in this same year and, in the spirit of the original Rio Conference, was granted the mission to promote research-driven capacity building to advance knowledge on global environmental change in the developing world. START’s vision, as initially enunciated at its founding, is to enable communities to address the issues of sustainable development and to “see the future” in their context and for their needs. The concept of “seeing the future” is an essential part of sustainable development. As we have better understood the Earth’s environmental system, we have come to understand the interconnectivity between actions and responses across the planet.

A core principle of our mission is to enable scientists, and all sectors of society, to work together to realize the future they want.

START celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2012 and is proud to meaningfully contribute to the continuing aims of the Rio effort as articulated in the June 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) meeting report, which states that “[sustainable development] can only be achieved with a broad alliance of people, governments, civil society and private sector, **all working together** to secure the **future we want** for present and future generations.” [emphasis added]

A core principle of our mission is to enable scientists, and all sectors of society, to work together to realize the future they want. The ability to “know” possible futures must be built on knowledge generated locally and placed appropriately in a regional-to-global context. The foundation of such knowledge requires building more robust systems for generating, interpreting, and sharing information about environment and development, including climate change, disaster risk management, biodiversity loss, forest degradation, and food security, which in turn requires significant and well-targeted investments in building research capacity through education and training.

One way that the international scientific community is responding to such global challenges is with *Future Earth: Research for Global Sustainability*. The goal of *Future Earth* is “to provide the knowledge required for societies in the world to face risks posed by global environmental change and to seize opportunities in a transition to global sustainability.” START is committed to contribute to its capacity building priorities, and more generally to the overall goals of this initiative.

This report describes START’s programs and areas of engagement in 2012–2013. Drawing on START’s new strategy for the next decade, we also provide a glimpse of the road ahead. We are grateful to our donors, partners, and members of the START family who help us advance global change science for development.



GORDON MCBEAN

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordon McBean".

President, Board of Directors,  
*START International, Inc.*



HASSAN VIRJI

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hassan Virji".

Executive Director,  
*International START Secretariat*

## START AT A GLANCE

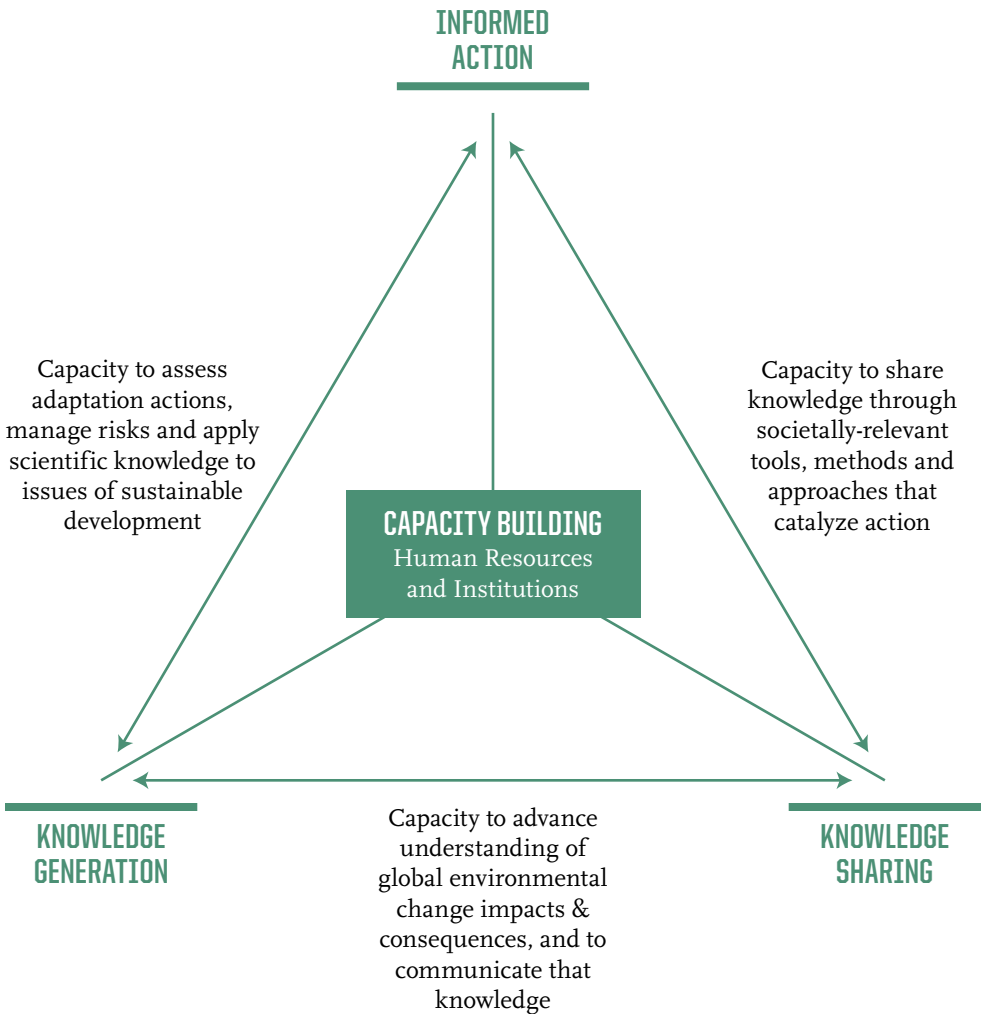
**S**TART, founded in 1992, promotes research-driven capacity building that advances knowledge generation and sharing on global environmental change (GEC) issues, including climate change. Our work is carried out by regionally based affiliates and centers in Africa and Asia-Pacific, together with the International START Secretariat based in Washington, DC. In our research-driven capacity building efforts, we actively engage with our strategic partners in the global environmental change community, including the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, and the World Climate Research Programme.



Our programs strengthen skills and capacity for understanding and managing GEC. We promote capacity development through grants and fellowships for research and assessments, university curricula development and advanced training institutes, and multistakeholder dialogues and other activities that promote outreach to decision makers. START's work advances science and strengthens communications among science, policy, and practice on issues where global environmental change and sustainable development intersect. On an annual basis, START engages approximately 1,000 scientists, policymakers, and practitioners from developing countries in its research, training, and communications/

outreach programs. In all of its programs and activities, START's goal is to integrate knowledge generation with knowledge sharing in ways that lead to informed action, which in turn strengthen knowledge systems overall. The figure below illustrates this framework for capacity building.

START's programs create opportunities for diverse groups of individuals to come together for exchange and collaboration. START and its partners facilitate exercises that stimulate dialogue and debate, tease out answers to challenging questions, and shepherd participatory processes of investigation, discovery, and reflection. These shared experiences among participants form a strong foundation for follow-on collaboration and partnerships.



# 2012

JAN

START Staff Retreat

page 65

FEB

ACCFP Writing Retreat



page 28

MAR

CCaR Training Workshop and Project Committee Meeting

page 23

MAR

Advanced Institute on Forensic Investigations of Disasters (FORIN)



page 46

APR

MAIRS Scientific Steering Committee Meeting

page 42

JUL

Science-Policy Dialogue: Challenges of Global Environmental Change in Southeast Asia



page 37

MAY

Workshop on Participatory Learning and Dialogue for Climate Risk Management

page 56

MAY

Workshop on Bridging Health and Climate Knowledge in West Africa



page 58

JUL

Curriculum Development Planning Meeting—UDSM

page 50

JUL

9-City Team Meeting: Assessments on Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture



page 26

OCT

CAS-START Training on Regional Climate Change

page 42

OCT

Advanced Institute on Coastal Cities at Risk



page 46

DEC

Fourth Annual Meeting of the START Board of Directors

page 65

DEC

UDSM Curriculum Review and Faculty Climate Change Training Workshop

page 50

NOV

2012 Global Environmental Change Research & Learning Forum (Africa)



page 52

# 2013

JAN

Centre for Climate Studies (CCCS) officially established at UDSM



page 50

FEB

CCaR Project Committee Meeting

page 23

FEB

CORDEX Africa Training Event—Climate Data Exemplars

page 54

MAR

Workshop on Food Security in an Urbanizing World



page 49

JUN

Improving the Integration of Social Vulnerability into Robust Decision Making—HCMC Workshop



page 24

MAY

Executive Committee Meeting: Assessments on Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture

page 26

APR

Climate Games Facilitator Training Workshop



page 56

APR

Proposal and Academic Writing Workshop with CCCS-UDSM

page 50

MAR

Cities at Risk Workshop—Africa

page 25

JUL

International Conference on Challenges of Urbanization and Development in Africa in the Context of Climate Change



page 50

SEP

START Board of Directors & Staff Retreat

page 65

SEP

Fifth Annual Meeting of the START Board of Directors

page 65

SEP

Program Planning Meeting: Pan-Asia Risk Reduction Fellowship Program



page 32

DEC

Risk Interpretation & Action: Decision-making Under Uncertainty

page 48

NOV

Mainstreaming Climate Change into Undergraduate Education—UDSM Faculty Workshop

page 50

NOV

Culmination Conference—PICAS North Jakarta



page 22

OCT

Young Scientist Conference 2013



page 36

SEP

GEC and Governance Workshop—Africa

page 33



## CONTEXT FOR OUR WORK

The emerging challenges associated with global environmental change (GEC), including climate change, require strong knowledge systems capable of supporting informed decision making about adaptation and risk management. Adaptation planning is moving forward in all regions of the world, but truly proactive planning remains constrained by, among other factors, uncertainties around future vulnerabilities and impacts, insufficient human and institutional capacities, lack of financial resources, and inconsistent political will to support the translation of knowledge into action. These constraints manifest in both rich and poor regions, though the situation is more acute in the global south where systems to support global change science and planning are weak, yet negative impacts of GEC are expected to be quite substantial.

“START genuinely seeks to encourage action and change with its research and puts considerable effort into communicating results.”

—Miles Bredin, *Communications Consultant with Well Told Story*



Global environmental change is quite complex, with drivers and stresses of vulnerability deeply interconnected and impacts highly contextualized. Addressing critical knowledge gaps with respect to this problem requires research approaches that are systems-oriented and action-based, and START has a strong track record of initiatives that support such approaches in both Africa and Asia. START programs strengthen the capabilities of developing country researchers to undertake integrated place-based research and assessments, as well as gain skills and insights in education and in science communication. We work at the intersection of GEC and sustainable development, with emphasis on a range of issues including disaster risk reduction, land-use/land-cover change, biodiversity conservation, urban resilience, human health, water resources management, agriculture and food security, and regional climate modeling and climate services.

START recognizes that excellence in research must extend beyond advancing science itself. A robust and outcomes-driven way forward must include strong consideration of how

research inquiries can be shaped to positively affect decision making. In this regard, we view engagement of stakeholder groups from across policy and practice domains to be a primary determinant of excellence in research, to the extent that such processes prioritize applying research to planning and management.

START programs strengthen the capabilities of developing country researchers to undertake integrated place-based research and assessments, as well as gain skills and insights in education and in science communication.

But how do we get there? We believe a long-term, integrated process of knowledge generation, sharing, and action that depends on the collaboration of diverse expert and user communities is essential. Such efforts can—

- Help to develop a strong cross-disciplinary knowledge base for identifying key risks and vulnerabilities;
- Allow researchers to understand and contextualize end-users' needs and priorities in research queries; and
- Develop the requisite knowledge and skill base within end-user groups to robustly incorporate and apply research findings, such as from climate change projections, in a manner that enhances the ability to make decisions under uncertainty.