**Quick Start Guide to the**

**Resilient Community Development Finance**

**Strategic Planning and Impact Measurement Workbook**

**Introduction**

**Purpose:** This Workbook is intended to help community development lenders to take stock, plan, and take action in terms of integrating resilience into their organization and lending practice. While some lenders may choose to adopt this workbook wholesale, many lenders will adapt this work to fit their needs or just use it as a model as they revise their existing materials. The template may need to be augmented or modified to for a particular asset type or lending sector.

**User:** This workbook can be used as part of an organization-wide strategic planning process or as part of an annual review. In addition, this Workbook can be used by an individual staff member or Board member to think about resilience and how the organization does and could invest in resilience building.

**Instructions:**

**Step 1: Articulate a commitment to equitable holistic resilience** through your organization’s mission, vision, and core values.

Complete the exercises in the first three tabs of this Workbook—“***Mission***”, “***Vision***”, and “***Core Values and Beliefs***”. As you do, consider the extent to which your organization’s mission, vision, and values include equitable resilience. Do your fundamental guiding principles express a commitment to equitable resilience explicitly or implicitly? Does your organization understand your mission, vision, and values to require investments in equitable resilience or to permit resilience-building, but not require such investments? Perhaps your organization has not considered equitable resilience at all—many organizations have not.

As a thought exercise, explain how your mission could be furthered if viewed through a resilience lens. Pretend you want to convince your colleagues that your mission could and should be furthered through proactive investments in resilience building. Connect the dots for your colleagues. What are your talking points?

**Step 2: Embrace your proactive role as a Resilient Community Development Lender (R-CDL).**

What would it mean for CDFIs, green banks, and other community development lenders to be truly resilient organizations? To answer that question, the Resilient Community Development Finance (ResCDF) Initiative has developed the concept of a Resilient Community Development Lender (R-CDL). Intentionally, this concept sets a very high bar. A R-CDL can be an organization, an individual, or both. An individual R-CDL may be the change agent who is working to change their organization into a R-CDL.

Use the “***Organizational Role***” tab in the ***Strategic Planning and Impact Measurement Workbook for Community Development Lenders*** to reflect on your organization’s understanding of its role and responsibilities and how it compares to the model R-CDL. Where is your organization on its path to becoming an R-CDL? Does your organization demonstrate the R-CDL’s characteristic through its words, actions, and accomplishments? How could your organization strengthen those characteristics? Is your organization functioning as a R-CDL? If not, what would it take?

**Step 3: Make sure that your organization integrates a resilience-based process in all its endeavors, one grounded in a robust culture of learning and innovation and meaningful community engagement and accountability.**

Complete the exercises in the “***Resilience Process***” tab. List the organization's stakeholders and explain how and the extent to which each stakeholder has been or will be engaged, how the organization plans to maintain accountability to each stakeholder, and the priorities of each stakeholder, if known.

Has your organization thoroughly investigated and digested the key reports and plans about and for its target community? Document the key community objectives—particularly ones related to resilience—contained in those reports and plans.

Assess your organization's culture of learning and community engagement and accountability using the Resilience process Assessment.

**Step 4: Know your target community.**

How well do you know your community?

In the “***Needs and Opportunities***” tab, capture the strengths and weaknesses of your community and your organization, the needs of both, and the opportunities for meaningful impact.

Depending of where you are in your cyclical planning process, you may wish to engage in research and community engagement activities to ensure deep understanding of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

At minimum, conduct an assessment of your primary target community using the exercises in the “***Shocks and Stresses Assessment***” tab. Once you have identified the highest risks and greatest burdens from key shocks and stresses, enter them as “threats” on the “Needs and Opportunities” tab.

**Step 5: Plan for action and impact.**

Time to build out your strategic and impact measurement plans using the following tabs:

* Theory of Change
* Objectives—Process
* Objectives—Performance
* Existing Activities
* New Activities
* Impact Measurement Worksheet

What are your organization's existing strategic outcome objectives? Use the “***Objectives-Process***” and “***Objectives-Performance***” tabs of the ***Workbook*** to reconsider your organizational objectives with a resilience lens. Brainstorm on how your organization could strengthen its current objectives and embrace and implement the model objectives developed through the ***Resilient Community Development Finance Initiative***.

Are your existing lending programs and products tailored to deliver?

Resilient community development finance best practice demands that, to the extent feasible, the project, program, product, or service be structured to avoid, minimize, mitigate, and recover from all reasonably foreseeable risks and potential cascading events.

Further, lenders should invest in “precovery” strategies to increase the reliability of each investment. Projects financed should meet standards of excellence equal to or exceeding those of market rate investments and those considered best practice.

Financed projects should contribute to the safety and health of the organization’s borrowers and beneficiaries and build their capacity to survive, adapt, and thrive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

Next, with your objectives and assessment in mind, tailor programs and products to proactively build equitable resilience for the organization, borrowers, beneficiaries, and the community.

Using the “***Existing Activities***”, optimize your organization’s existing loan products to deliver resilience benefits for the borrower, beneficiaries, community, and the lender. The existing products may have been developed without consideration for resilience, instead focusing on affordable housing preservation or development, small business entrepreneurship, or homeownership. Such products may be delivering considerable resilience benefits, nonetheless. That said, it is likely that the resilience benefits of these products can be increased many times over if they are assessed and tweaked with a resilience lens.

What could your organization accomplish if it added new loan products targeted to achieve resilience objectives? Using the “***New Activities***” tab, brainstorm how your organization could deepen its work through the development of new products.

Using the final tab “***Impact Measurement Worksheet***”, connect all the pieces into a functional feedback loop for each loan product. Articulate what success looks like with indicators and metrices and what data you will use to prove it. Declare your intentions. What can your organization accomplish? Make sure to articulate SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Finally, in the last line "strategic product enhancements", describe any product features that will be key to your success.

Feel free to suggest enhancements that could be made to the product to improve its effectiveness.

Using the theory of change template, develop a theory of change for your organization, that summarizes needs and opportunities, objectives, strategies and activities, and outcome goals.