

Risk experts test scalable solutions to tackle systemic crises facing people and planet

LONDON, UK, August 21, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Accelerator for Systemic Risk Assessment \(ASRA\)](#) has launched an ambitious series of pilot projects testing tools that can enhance policy and decision-makers' capacity to respond to complex, interconnected risks, such as climate change, pandemics, and the unchecked proliferation of AI. Hosted by the [United Nations Foundation](#), ASRA is an independent non-profit initiative set up to advance the field of systemic risk and advocate for transformative action that protects the Earth's ecological systems and humanity.

From the Volta River Basin in West Africa to the Mekong Delta in Vietnam, and across Europe, South Africa, India, and Brazil, the projects are focused on critical issues such as public health, climate and conservation, governance, and inequality, amongst others. ASRA has awarded USD 250,000 to fund the trials for six months, testing prototypes of its tools and creating evidence of what works.

Two key tools—ASRA's Systemic Risk Assessment (SRA) and Systemic Risk Response (SRR) Criteria—are being evaluated in a mix of socio-economic and political environments. The pilots will provide critical insights into how risk planning must adapt to keep pace with the challenges of a complex, interconnected world, helping to transform ASRA's innovative ideas into scalable, practical, ready-to-use tools. The outcomes will inform the refinement of these vital new tools, which will be officially launched in June 2025 at ASRA's Systemic Risk Summit at Les Fontaines, France.

The pilot projects include:

1. Responses to the Covid-19 'polycrisis' in Sao Paulo's largest slum: To understand how vulnerable urban communities that lack official infrastructure respond to polycrises, researchers at the University of São Paulo are looking at the interrelated risks faced by young people living in one of Brazil's largest favelas during the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. Food system risks in the Volta River Basin: With food and agricultural systems in West Africa's Volta River Basin at high risk of collapse due to the climate crisis, this pilot, led by a Researcher Fellow at Utrecht University's Earth System Governance Project, will map out how systemic risks and the related polycrisis are evolving and cascading locally with implications for global food governance. The aim is to highlight practical responses and policies necessary for their

mitigation towards transforming and transitioning to sustainability.

3. Building resilience for vulnerable populations: To help understand how to build resilience to systemic risk in vulnerable populations facing the greatest social and economic challenges, public health non-profit Swasti and humanitarian emergency platform Community Action Collab have set up this pilot project in New Delhi, India, to introduce ASRA's frameworks to key private and public sector stakeholders through in-person and virtual workshops.

4. Applying a systemic risk lens to implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework: To help achieve the Global Biodiversity Framework's goal of halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030 with a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, a group of experts will carry out three systemic risk assessments in Vietnam, Tanzania, and Papua New Guinea to assess and understand whether current responses, policies, and programs have been designed to adequately respond to the systemic risks identified.

5. Exposing growing risks over the last half century: Led by researchers at Societal Dynamics (SoDy) and climate risk data company XDi Systems, this research aims to develop a dataset to track key social stresses for a range of societies over the last 50 years, as well as particular responses that have impacted risks, with the aim of evaluating their effectiveness and shedding light on how we can address systemic risks going forward.

Ruth Richardson, Executive Director at ASRA, said:

"While we can't predict every potential shock, we can strengthen our readiness by updating our risk management frameworks and experimenting with new approaches.

"The insights gained from these pilots will be instrumental in guiding decision-makers through the intricacies of navigating complexity, balancing trade-offs, and driving the strategic changes needed to build resilience and transformation in these challenging times.

"Lessons from the process will also help inform how to redesign our systems so that they not only mitigate future risks, but also nurture wellbeing and stability for all people, societies, species, and ecosystems."

An additional three pilot projects will also be undertaken:

6. Governing global catastrophic risk: Through a series of case studies, this pilot, led by researchers at the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and University of Cambridge, will capture risk interconnections linked to the existential hazards identified in a landmark [UN report](#). Via workshops with stakeholders in research, disaster risk management, and humanitarian response, it will map out responsibilities, governance mechanisms, and resources to improve responses to an array of potential future crises.

7. Globalizing a geological approach to nature conservation: Led by environmental risk consulting group TMP, this project is about mapping key global locations in terms of Conserving Nature's Stage—a new approach to protecting the natural world based on the varying resilience of different soils, topographies, landforms, and bedrocks to climate change.

8. Feeding South Africa: This pilot will introduce ASRA's systemic risk and response framework to organize the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Food Sovereignty Campaign, which runs a range of activities designed to give people in South Africa control of their own food system.

As policymakers prepare for a vital series of policy milestones this autumn, including the UN Summit of the Future, Climate Week NYC and COP29, ASRA is urging decision-makers around the world to radically rethink how they understand and respond to risk. In mid-September, ASRA will release a landmark report outlining the practical actions that can be taken to equip policymakers, business leaders, and stakeholders with the capacity and capabilities to address complex, interconnected risks, ensuring insights from pilot initiatives are swiftly integrated into local and global strategies.

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