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POLICY BRIEF

National Adaptation Planning: Emerging Lessons Learned From UNEP Projects

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Catalysing ecosystem restoration for resilient natural capital and rural livelihoods in degraded forests and rangelands of Nepal. Credit: UNEP

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GLOBAL ADAPTATION NETWORK

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1 Introduction

Adapting to climate change is an increasingly urgent imperative as we witness rising climate change risks, impacts, loss, and damage around the globe. National-level adaptation processes are a critical element to accelerating medium- and long-term responses to the impacts of climate change, as underscored by the Paris Agreement. The Adaptation Gap Report (2022) highlighted that although there has been significant progress in adaptation planning and implementation, this progress has not kept up with increasing climate risks (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] 2022a).

To better inform adaptation planning and implementation, this briefing note summarises lessons, practices and areas of future adaptation support from the National Adaptation Plans (NAP) that UNEP is supporting in 23 countries from Africa (Eswatini, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Uganda, and Zimbabwe), Latin America (Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Panama), and the Middle East and Asia (Iraq, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar[1], Nepal, and Pakistan). Many of these NAPs are at an early stage of implementation, and this analysis, therefore, builds on from 6 countries that have progressed the furthest in their NAPs (Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Iraq, Nepal, Sao Tome and Principe and Zimbabwe).

2 Key features of the UNEP NAP portfolio

The Technical Guidelines for the National Adaptation Plan Process (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC] 2012) provides a very useful scaffold through which the UNEP support has been structured for the participating countries. The technical guidelines outline how the national adaptation planning process can be structured around four key elements, each of which includes several support areas.

Of the 23 countries that are being supported by UNEP[2], 18 NAPs are under implementation with the focus of support on preparing countries to develop comprehensive NAPs. This focus on the 'preparation' phase is not surprising as the activities involved in developing the evidence base is the foundation for a successful NAP process. Consequently, there has been

1 The project activities are on hold since February 2021 due to political situation in Myanmar.

2 Panama and Maldives approved their NAPS in late 2022. For the purpose of this brief the analysis has been limited to 18 NAPs under implementation

significant effort on the five steps of the Technical Guidelines for the National Adaptation Plan Process

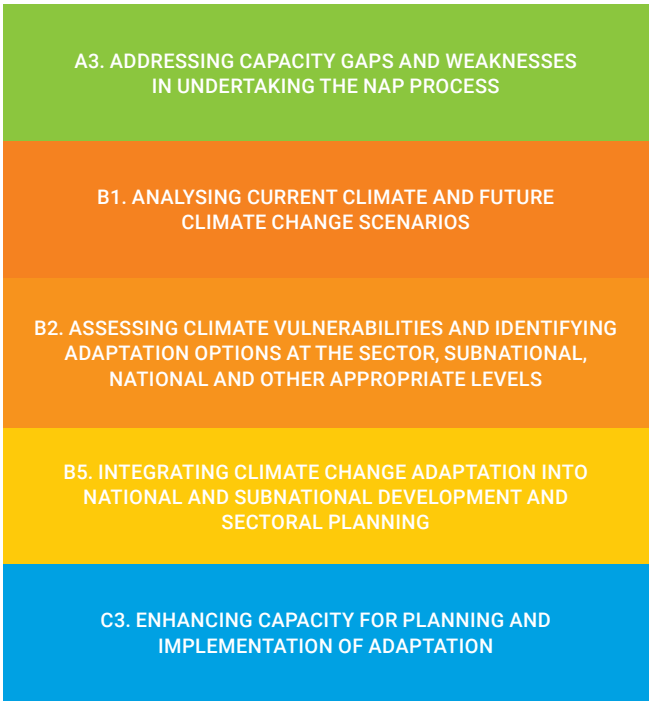

FIGURE 1: PRIORITY SUPPORT ACTIVITY AREAS ACROSS ALL 18 NAP PROJECTS

The 18 NAPs have an average lifespan of 3 years and an average budget of $2.45 million. The bulk of the funding across all 18 countries was allocated to the "Preparatory elements" of the NAP process (Figure 2). For example, activities such as assessing climate vulnerabilities, identifying adaptation options and analysing current climate and future climate change scenarios constituted the greater part of the budget proposals[3].

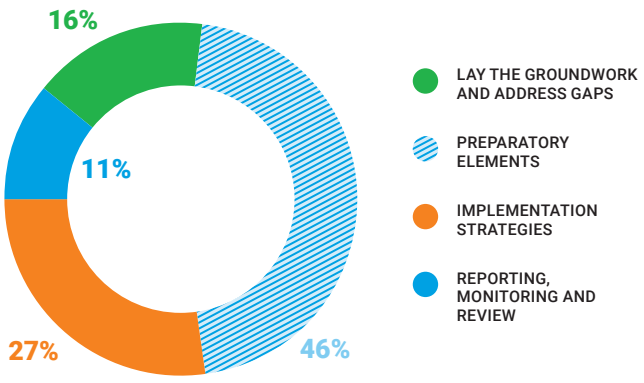

FIGURE 2: TOTAL PROPOSAL BUDGET FOR ALL 18 COUNTRIES

CATEGORISED BY NAP GUIDELINES ELEMENTS

In addition, one of the observations from the current portfolio of NAP projects is the fact that the various steps of developing and implementing a NAP is not linear and can vary significantly depending on the context of a particular country. Figure 3 shows the typical sequence of NAP process steps over a 36-month period that has been outlined in the 18 country proposals. This graph shows that many of the steps and activities take place in parallel, which can require a high level of national coordination. It is evident that some activity areas are dependent on others, especially climate vulnerability assessments to guide other steps. For example, it is necessary to for collect and analyse climate scenarios (step B1) before it is possible to assess the most appropriate adaptation options (step B3). The graph also shows that the initial inception steps can take up to 12 months before the necessary systems are in place.

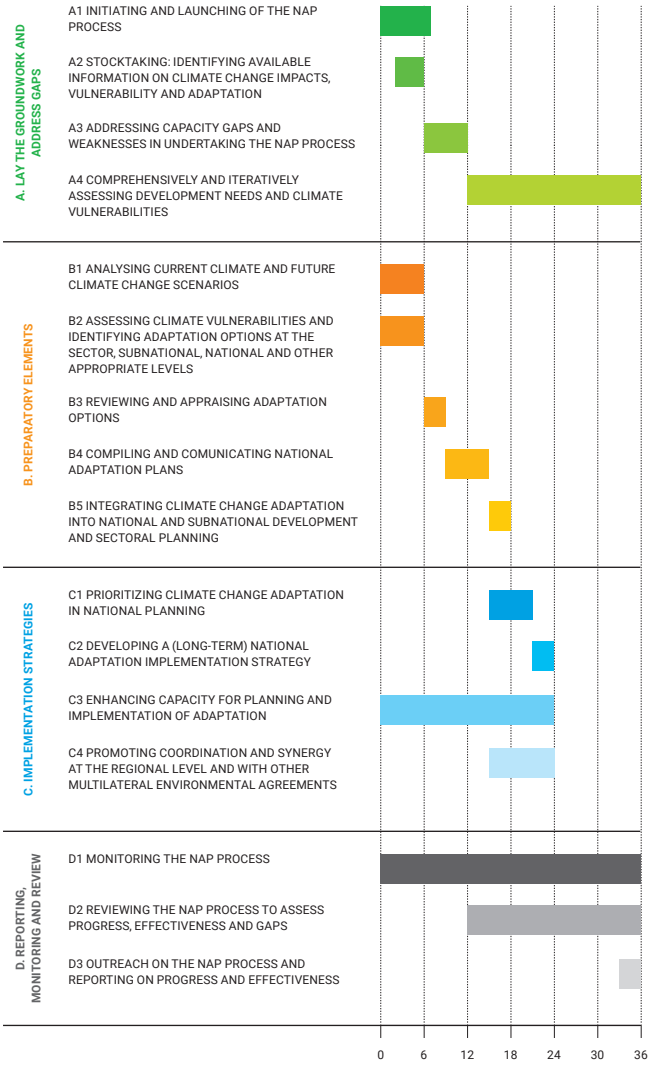

FIGURE 3: TYPICAL SEQUENCE OF NAP PROCESS STEPS OVER 36 MONTHS.

3 Some countries did not allocate budgets by activity, but rather by outcome. This comparison is therefore indicative rather than absolute.

3 Summary of lessons from the UNEP NAP portfolio

The following section provides a more detailed description of the lessons, observations, and cases across the countries. The assessment is structured using the Adaptation Gap Report's five assessment criteria. In each criterion, a summary is provided of where investment and support is required and what examples of good practice and innovation could enhance cross-country learning.

3.1 Comprehensiveness

ADAPTATION GAP REPORT DESCRIPTION OF COMPREHENSIVENESS

"Identifying climate risks and hazards and assessing vulnerability to existing and future climate hazards and impacts constitute foundational steps of the adaptation planning process. Countries can then use this information to prioritise sectors for adaptation measures and develop a comprehensive adaptation plan by identifying adaptation options that align with these priorities and respond to the risks, hazards and vulnerabilities they face."

A key observation is that government officials, business owners and communities have increased awareness and understanding of climate change and its current impacts on their lives, livelihoods, and the economy. All countries have also placed significant effort on building a sound knowledge base and on better understanding of local and regional climate risks. This improved understanding of the potential impacts of climate change, has been a good basis to co-develop adaptation strategies and tools to assist with decision making and prioritising of future adaptation options. Furthermore, considering that socioeconomic factors are a key component of adaptation, there is a clear need for a comprehensive analysis of social and economic opportunities that can be unlocked from adaptation actions by the different stakeholders. This level of assessment can aid in attracting investments from government, non-government and private sector investors.

However, it is also evident that this understanding can be limited to current climate risks with a gap on uncertainties of projected and actual climate change impacts as well as the frequency and severity of future impacts. In some countries, there is also insufficient recognition of the adaptation measures available that can be put in place and their related benefits (UN Climate Change [UNFCCC] 2015). This can be largely attributed to limited climate data, scenario planning and changing nature of climate events.

3.1.1 Areas for support and investment

There is a need to invest resources in improving communication between key stakeholder groups and particularly between scientists and decision-makers. Climate research can be very complex with many uncertainties, and there is often an unrecognised need to package this information in a way that allows key stakeholders to make decisions effectively. This need can be addressed through better methods for communicating risks that will allow scientists to avoid using language that is difficult to understand and trigger action. In some instances, there may be a need to integrate local and indigenous knowledge of climate risk that can help bridge the language divide between key stakeholders.

There is also a need to address capacity challenges in country meteorological offices. Activities to respond to these capacity constraints include increasing the availability of sufficiently trained staff, as well as improving access to information technology (hardware and software) to receive and analyse climate data from the meteorological stations and other data sources. In many instances, there is also insufficient coverage of meteorological stations which are being addressed through the planned expansion of existing local observation networks.

Adding to this capacity constraint challenge is the need to improve the resources available to generate climate change data or access sub-national climate services. This was highlighted in Iraq, where it was noted that localised hydrological modelling would help quantify the water balance and therefore greatly improve the adaptation storylines that were developed (Walker Institute 2022). Many countries have highlighted this sub-national data gap that it is particularly relevant in the preparatory and planning steps of the NAP process (UNFCCC 2012).

Countries have also noted that the availability of appropriate data to calculate both the costs and benefits of adaptation interventions can be a significant challenge when embarking on a prioritisation and economic appraisal exercise. The direct costs of interventions are often known, but the data for indirect costs for different adaptation options are not immediately available. Similarly, there is an urgent need for data to calculate benefits beyond the traditional biophysical and social returns. Data and research are needed to capture the economic returns that

can demonstrate a financial and economic return on investment (such as enterprise opportunities and jobs) that can be unlocked from adaptation actions.

3.1.2 Good practice approaches and innovations

Both Iraq and the Dominican Republic went through a process of developing a comprehensive set of indicators to track climate impacts. Based on this research, they were able to develop different future scenarios. For example, Iraq developed "plausible climate storylines" for two of the main eco-regions (the Persian Gulf and the Shatt Al-Arab eco-region in the south of the country). The two storylines that were developed were for 1) a 'warm (hot)-humid and more extreme precipitation' and 2) a 'warm (hot)- humid and less extreme precipitation' future. Once the different storylines were defined, it was possible to assess the potential impact on the environment, food security and other at-risk sectors in each scenario (Metroeconomica 2021; Walker Institute 2022). The study also developed potential future climate change pathways which were used to inform policy makers and to develop adequate response to these potential changes.

One of the main observations from this storyline approach was the identification of risk mitigation strategies that could inform other sector specific storylines. The analysis showed that, although there were different plausible climate futures, most risk mitigation strategies could be applied across different scenarios and could therefore be included as part of the priority list of adaptation investments.

CASE STUDY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCENARIOS

A key lesson from the Dominican Republic's experience in identifying adaptation solutions was that combining climate projections with socio-economic scenario planning is a useful approach when assessing risks and identifying priority adaptation responses.

The Dominican Republic developed different socio-economic scenarios for the country and based on these scenarios, developed climate vulnerabilities, risk assessments and priority responses in 10 priority territories. The effects of climate change were analysed by developing a risk index for three different time horizons (present, 2050 and 2100) and for three climate scenarios: SSP2-RCP4.5, SSP3-RCP7.0 and SSP5-RCP8.5. A set of indicators (and proxy indicators) were developed and identified for each risk component. These indicators included socio-economic data, such as population and economic projections and biophysical data, such as changing rainfall patterns. The three scenarios assumed different changes in the indicators. For example, the SSP2-RCP4.5 would assume slower growth projections than SSP5-RCP8.5. (Metroeconomica 2021a)

A key observation from this exercise was a general increase in risk irrespective of the different time horizons and future scenarios. In general, the territories' vulnerability improved (for example, the poverty rate was reduced), and there was less exposure (driven primarily by a decrease in population). However, these "positive" socioeconomic changes were outweighed by the increase in climate impacts in the future. This translated into a general increase in the level of risk across scenarios. These risk increases are also greater in higher emissions scenarios (higher risk in SSP-5 (RCP8.5) than in SSP2 (RCP4.5)), and equally higher in the farthest horizon (higher risk in 2100 than in 2050).

The scenario planning also identified risks common across different scenarios and territories. For example, flooding driven by extreme precipitation was identified as the most important risk in 6 of the 10 territories. This commonality helps the national government prioritise efforts in adapting to climate impacts (Metroeconomica 2021b).

Some countries (such as Costa Rica and Zimbabwe) have also conducted comprehensive multi-criteria qualitative analyses and cost-benefit analysis to help prioritize and select adaptation measures. This process typically included an economic study to help with information gaps and estimating the costs of implementing different adaptation options as well as studies to identify options for scaling up adaptation investments. Costa Rica was able to use this assessment process to help identify potential new sources of climate finance (public, private, bilateral and multilateral) in order to support prioritized adaptation measures. Costa Rica also developed a guideline for the prioritization of climate change adaptation measures using multi-criteria analyses, which has a strong focus on stakeholder participation and gender equity as key elements of the MCA process (UNEP 2022b).

ADAPTATION GAP REPORT DESCRIPTION OF INCLUSIVENESS

"For adaptation planning to adequately reflect existing and forthcoming risks and vulnerabilities and to effectively enhance the ownership of any implementation, engage all stakeholder groups, paying due regard to differentiated needs of women and men."

3.2 Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness has been a foundational element of the UNEP NAP portfolio. Significant effort has been made to identify representative local stakeholders, particularly those vulnerable to climate change, and ensure that relevant decision makers are involved across all stages of the NAP processes. However, it has often been challenging to secure active engagement of key stakeholders in the NAP process. For example, in conducting the cost-benefit analysis for prioritised NAP options in Zimbabwe, the lack of engagement with a wider audience was highlighted as a key limitation of the study and possible risk to future acceptance of the prioritised adaptation options. Ensuring inclusivity has also been hampered in many instances by travel and engagement restrictions put in place during the COVID19 pandemic.

3.2.1 Areas for support and investment

Ensuring there is inclusive national stakeholder engagement as part of the NAP process can require significant resources and budgets, which is often not available or financially feasible. However, it is possible to improve stakeholder engagement by developing and implementing a detailed stakeholder engagement plan that lists activities to achieve certain outreach objectives. These activities could include mechanisms to reach better alignment between the NAP with other government stakeholder engagement processes that are being conducted or to partner with organisations with existing networks, communications systems and channels with local communities.

Another area of investment in improving inclusiveness is the meaningful integration of traditional knowledge and the know-how of indigenous peoples into climate knowledge systems and NAP processes, in particular to identify key risks and adaptation options. Investment in improving the integration of traditional knowledge systems could include documenting traditional knowledge or incentives that encourage the generation and mainstreaming of indigenous knowledge systems.

Significant effort also needs to be made to ensure balanced participation of men, women, and non-binary stakeholders. It is often challenging to conduct gender-sensitive risk assessments, identify gender responsive and transformative adaptation measures and create viable gender-disaggregated indicators. These activities could require additional engagements with separate gender groups and the onboarding of gender and equity specialists.

3.2.2 Good practice approaches and innovations

Countries that have made significant progress in identifying and engaging stakeholders have typically developed specific NAP stakeholder engagement strategies and plans (for example Costa Rica and Zimbabwe). Stakeholder engagement strategies can help structure the process of identifying and prioritising vulnerable stakeholder groups (Global Environment Facility [GEF] et al. 2021; UNEP 2021b). The experience in Mongolia, where a details roadmap was produced, showed that ensuring a stakeholder engagement strategy is gender sensitive and inclusive can bring the voices of vulnerable groups into the decision making, essential for the local ownership and long term implementation of the NAP (Mongolia, Ministry of Environment and Tourism 2020).

CASE STUDY: ZIMBABWE GENDER MAINSTREAMING APPROACH

The Government of Zimbabwe has developed a Gender and Climate Change training initiative and manual to provide guidance on mainstreaming gender in climate change projects and programmes. This training programme was informed by a gender analysis of the NDCs in Zimbabwe as well as consultations with key stakeholders, which highlighted gaps regarding the links between gender equality and climate change. The training covers a range of gender mainstreaming tools and methodological approaches applicable to various climate change initiatives. It is also contextualised to Zimbabwe with country-specific examples. A number of "train the trainer" workshops were held which covered a range of gender mainstreaming tools and methodological approaches, applicable to a broad range of climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives (Government of Zimbabwe 2022).

Many countries have been very successful at establishing NAP communication systems and tools (e.g. Costa Rica, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mongolia, Nepal, Sao Tome and Principe and Zimbabwe). Most of the countries supported by UNEP have set up dedicated project webpages anchored to government websites or have plans to do so. For example, Costa Rica has established an interactive story map platform on adaptation to provide information on their NAP process, including an Atlas of Climate Risks. Iraq has set up a Climate GIS Data portal and Mongolia has developed a NAP webpage and plans to develop an online web portal with a monitoring and reporting system for their NAP process. Nepal has developed a NAP project web portal that makes available their NAP process updates and reports.

Some countries are also making use of innovative communication practices to communicate and raise awareness of climate change adaptation and their NAP processes to stakeholders. Examples include the use of mobile theatre groups in Sao Tome and Principe (UNEP 2022c), the use of a football competition in Iraq, and training for the media in the Dominican Republic to increase media coverage of climate adaptation. Training for journalists, artists and poets on climate change-related content was also provided in Eswatini (UNEP 2022d).

3.3 Potential for implementation

A key observation from this study is the importance of senior leadership taking an active and visible role in the governance structure and championing the NAP. Leadership in decentralising the NAP governance focusing on local and regional levels to identify and implement climate change adaptation priorities. In addition, having a political mandate to develop and implement the NAP at different levels helps ensure that the governance structures for the NAP process are critical to engaging local communities in identifying adaptation priorities. However, there have also been challenges, particularly when the environmental ministry or department drive the NAP process alone, without having strategic sector ministries active in the multi-level coordination mechanism.

3.3.1 Areas for support and investment

ADAPTATION GAP REPORT DESCRIPTION OF POTENTIAL FOR IMPLEMENTATION

"Planning can be assumed to be effective if it leads to real implementation by public and private actors. As such, planning can benefit from a central administrative body that is officially in charge of adaptation policymaking and a variety of policy instruments, including investment, incentives and regulations that lead to the desired outcomes."

It is vitally important to support mandated ministries and departments to take responsibility for climate change adaptation to elevate the NAP to a senior level in government. Interventions that can assist with this elevation are to publicly launch the NAP and to communicate the importance of how the NAP process can support other government responsibilities and mandates.

An additional area for improving the potential for implementation is facilitating the establishment and convening of cross-sectoral working groups. The cross sectoral working groups can help to identify linkages between climate risks and adaptation interventions, break down ministry and departmental silo thinking and enable mainstreaming of adaptation across sectors.

Experience in different countries has also shown that

efforts to secure local or national climate finance for specific adaptation actions promotes the potential for implementation. This can be achieved by the inclusion of adaptation in sectoral and sub-national policies and plans, which creates the opportunity for adaptation to enter fully into the domestic budget allocation process. Mainstreaming also provides a stronger rationale for funding adaptation actions from other budget sources. There is also a need for clear investment plans that indicate the return on investment that would accrue to different actors and at different levels who take part in NAP implementation. Such plans are critical to attract implementation resources from the diverse actors.

3.3.2 Good practice approaches and innovations

The best case for improving potential implementation (as demonstrated by Costa Rica) is for the country's president, prime minister, or head of the ministry leading the apex climate change coordinating structure to be responsible for overseeing the NAP process. When very senior leadership champion the NAP process, it elevates the importance of climate change and recognises the NAP as a key strategic intervention that encompasses all sectors. In countries such as Iraq, central coordination has been achieved where a pre-existing national committee with a mandate for overseeing and coordinating outcomes related to climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts in a country already exists. In the absence of a committee of this nature, some countries such as the Dominican Republic are in the process of establishing new "inter-institutional" governance and coordination structures that include representation and active participation from key sector ministries.

Decentralised governance systems have played a key role in pro-active local adaptation plans being developed. For example, in Nepal, local decision-makers, community-based organisations and other local institutions play a key role in implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This has been demonstrated through the Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA) process, which identifies local adaptation priorities and integrates them into development planning. To ensure that the NAP is successful, the roles and responsibilities of provincial and local governments needed to be clarified, and resources directed to these actors to ensure they have the capacity and resources to implement, monitor and evaluate adaptation actions. Linkages between sub-national and national levels also needed to be established to enable the NAP process to create an enabling environment for local adaptation (Nepal, Ministry of Finance 2017; Nepal, Ministry of Forests and Environment [MoFE] 2018). Costa Rica has also demonstrated the importance of regional ownership and involvement in the NAP process. Current and future climate risk assessments were developed by municipalities for a number of Cantons in Costa Rica.

CASE STUDY: ZIMBABWE CLIMATE ADAPTATION FINANCE STRATEGY

In 2022, Zimbabwe developed a climate adaptation finance strategy as part of the broader NAP process. The strategy aims to assist in reviewing and strengthening existing funding institutions, identifying new funding sources and supporting the effective distribution of funds across adaptation priorities. The strategy provides a summary of what international and national climate financing options are available, what barriers exist in accessing this financing and strategies around resource mobilization at a sectoral level. Importantly, the strategy has a particular focus on unlocking national financing opportunities.

The finance strategy development processes highlighted several challenges in budgeting for adaptation options. Government spending on sector-specific adaptation interventions could not always be accurately estimated. Budget coding at the sector level and systems to track climate adaptation activities funded in each sector were missing. It was also not possible to provide comprehensive cost estimates for each sector due to the lack of research data to draw on. The strategy noted that further work is needed to develop cost estimates for the entire adaptation needs in each sector, particularly those that were challenging to quantify. An important observation in the finance strategy is that significant proportions of sector spending is investment, which provides an opportunity to mainstream adaptation into existing funding envelopes. Another conclusion is that the agriculture and water sectors and infrastructure sectors have significant potential for leveraging private sector financing and investment for climate adaptation. This can be achieved through a range of financing mechanisms such as public-private partnerships, insurance, and blended finance. However, this private sector investment would necessitate government implementation and enforcement of incentive measures, which could involve reducing the risk associated with private sector investment in adaptation actions by utilising the strong banking sector.

By December 2021, 20 municipalities and municipal councils had signed formal political agreements in which they commit to integrating adaptation actions in development planning instruments, and for initiating this process during 2021 with the support of the project. From this process several Cantons have now developed regional institutional structures which have taken over the responsibility of implementing prioritised adaptation options. Lessons from the Cantons were also used as bottom-up inputs into the revision of the Costa Rica NAP (UNEP 2022b).

An additional element of ensuring potential for implementation is setting up systems to better access climate finance. Typically, UNEP's NAP projects incorporate a variety of actions to understand national finance structure, requirements and potential for enhancing adaptation investments. These include assessing financial needs and gaps when implementing NAPs as well as identifying possible sources of finance beyond national ones. In addition, many NAPs include activities to undertake public expenditure and institutional reviews to address the challenges associated with securing domestic public finance. Most countries also develop financing and resource mobilisation strategies (e.g. Zimbabwe, Nepal and Costa Rica,) which can assist in addressing the adaptation finance gap and capacity challenges to resource mobilisation (Zimbabwe, Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate 2017).

3.4 Integration

Experience of the UNEP NAP portfolio has shown that integrating climate change adaptation options into wider national policies and planning processes is crucial for effective climate change response. Successful adaptation from national to local scales requires integration to ensure consistency between local decisions and actions and national-level strategies. This integration, however, also needs to beyond national adaptation planning, and efforts need to target integration of other sectoral and cross-sectoral plans and policies. Countries are implementing a wide range of integration activities that include reviewing and updating the existing legal, policy and planning landscape to improve coordination between key sectors and key stakeholders in their response to climate change challenges.

ADAPTATION GAP REPORT DESCRIPTION OF INTEGRATION

"Integrating or mainstreaming adaptation planning and action horizontally (across sectors) and vertically (across levels of administration) is increasingly recognized as an important component of effective adaptation planning. This helps ensure that adaptation planning is comprehensive, avoids the duplication of effort or maladaptation, and enhances synergies."

3.4.1 Areas for support and investment

Ensuring that national and local legal landscapes promote and regulate climate change adaptation measures is a very effective and often low-cost response for governments. While integration of climate change adaptation into national and sub-national development plans can take up to five months (see figure 3), country-specific experience indicates that creating new legislation and updating policy frameworks and legal provisions can take a long time to realise. It is important, therefore, to dedicate sufficient time, resources and capacity building to this activity for the long term.

As countries have started implementing their NAPs it has also become evident that, in some instances, mainstreaming climate change may require a paradigm shift in institutional practises and culture (UNEP 2021c), rather than a tweaking of "business as usual" practices. To achieve this, countries need leadership, and to allocate resources and effort to involve key decision-makers at the sector and sub-national levels in the NAP process.

In addition, leveraging empirical data on beneficial impacts of NAPs in driving developmental priorities envisaged in country development plans is critical to enhance the integration of NAPs into development processes and the allocation of necessary implementation capacity. Therefore, supporting countries to establish this impact data feedback loop to inform policy is critical.

3.4.2 Good practice approaches and innovations

Introducing a national climate change law or decree can significantly improve the vertical and horizontal integration of climate change. In Honduras, Executive Decree 123-2021 was approved and published in December 2021 as the official document that institutionalises the Honduras NAP and links it to relevant national development policies (Republic of Honduras 2021). The decree aims to build institutional capacities, strengthen multisectoral and multi-level

coordination, promote adaptation measures, promote the protection, good management and restoration of ecosystems, and promote the transfer and appropriation of adaptation technologies. In addition, Article 3 of the decree states that the NAP needs to be integrated into the Sustainable Development Planning of Honduras (Republic of Honduras 2021) and a plan for this is now being implemented (Republic of Honduras 2021; Stufkens 2021) to link the NAP with national development policies and for the inclusion of adaptation measures within the institutional, programmatic instruments.

It is also important to effectively screen and better understand policies, plans, laws and budget cycles in order to identify entry points and areas of harmonisation. Countries such as Nepal, Mongolia, Dominican Republic and Iraq achieved this by conducting a stocktake of existing policies, laws and regulations to identify gaps and contradictions in their legal landscapes with regard to climate change adaptation.

An additional observation is that mainstreaming should not be restricted to the policy and planning environments. For example, many countries (including Eswatini, Iraq and The Dominican Republic) have activities that relate to mainstreaming climate change within the education system. For example, one of the key NAP activity areas in Eswatini is the review of the school curriculum and the development of material to mainstream climate change into the school curriculum. These vertical mainstreaming processes can have a very pragmatic benefit to local communities by improving awareness and understanding of climate change issues within society and youth.

3.5 Monitoring and Reporting

3.5.1 Lessons in Monitoring and Reporting

Countries have demonstrated that monitoring and reporting is important not only for tracking progress of NAP implementation, but also for ensuring long term sustainability. This sustainability can be achieved through stakeholder involvement in monitoring as well as by using the findings from the monitoring process to constantly revise, update the NAP process. All countries have a range of current and planned monitoring and reporting activities that involve setting up monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems and capturing and communicating lessons from the NAP process. However, even at the planning stage, it is clear there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to monitoring and reporting for a NAP process and it is often very challenging to set up NAP monitoring systems (UNEP 2021b). Many countries do not have well established and integrated national monitoring and evaluation systems and there are significant challenges with data collection and baselines establishment. However, many countries have noted that it is essential to acknowledge the monitoring and data gaps that exist and include activities to address these challenges in the NAP processes.

ADAPTATION GAP REPORT DESCRIPTION OF MONITORING AND REPORTING

"For planning to remain adequate and effective, it must be monitored and evaluated."

3.5.2 Areas for support and investment

Experience in different countries show that there is a need for support in developing, identifying and harmonising indicators that can effectively track progress of the NAP process. This support could include screening of existing sectoral reporting systems for appropriate indicators that could inform the NAP process as well as the development of new indicators that are pragmatic and can assess outcomes and a project level and outcomes at a national level.

Once indicators are in place, there is a need for support in establishing a baseline and collecting data to track progress towards these indicators. However, quantitative data that helps to establish a baseline for adaptation progress is seldom easily accessible or documented (UNEP 2021c). There is a need to include specific activities for baseline-data collection at the outset of the project, which can help inform the project implementation. It is also vital to allocate resources to collect data and information throughout the NAP process for effective MEL in the medium and long term.

There is also a need to improve stakeholder involvement in the monitoring process. Sustainability of the NAP process once external support has ended can be greatly improved if local stakeholders are actively involved in and take ownership of the monitoring process (UNEP 2021c). Effort therefore needs to be placed on the outreach components of the monitoring and reporting activities as well as creating synergies within and between key stakeholder groups.

CASE STUDY: NEPAL NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLAN MONITORING AND REVIEW FRAMEWORK

Nepal has developed a National Adaptation Plan Monitoring and Review (M&R) Framework describing the current monitoring systems and structures and across different spheres of government (there are 25 federal ministries and 753 local governments) and how to leverage and integrate NAP reporting into these systems.

The M&R Framework highlights several gaps in the current adaptation M&R system. These include significant data gaps, particularly at a site-specific level. An assessment of data availability showed that of the 479 sustainable development goal indicators that are being tracked of Nepal, 151 have no data available. The M&R framework also highlighted inadequacies in the legislative framework, weak M&R institutionalization and "limited technical capacities and financial resources for data management".

To address these gaps, the following activity areas are included in the M&R Framework:

1. Improving access to primary and secondary data sources (e.g. setting up systems to improve intra-government data sharing practices)
2. Developing a data collection plan. This will include a summary of what data sources, when the data will be collected, who will collect it and how will the data be processed.
3. Analysis and dissemination of data. This includes examining relationships, creating data displays and working with development partners to help disseminate the information.

3.5.3 Good practice approaches and innovations

A key success factor for the monitoring and evaluation of a country's NAP is the integration of the NAP's M&E system into the country's existing M&E frameworks, budget allocation processes, national development plan, and its sectoral plans and strategies (Bours, McGinn and Pringle 2014; Leiter 2021). For example, Costa Rica has worked with the regional councils and municipal governments to assist with reviewing, monitoring or communicating results of their adaptation initiatives. Eswatini does not have an existing M&E system for climate change, but there is a nationally coordinated M&E system (with sectoral M&E sub-systems) that can be adapted for the NAP M&E processes.

4 Conclusion

This briefing note provides a snapshot summary of the early lessons learned from UNEP's NAP project portfolio. Although the assessment focussed on 6 of the 18 countries being supported, several key messages and design recommendations have emerged from this process, and is summarised below.

SUMMARY KEY MESSAGES ON GOOD PRACTICE APPROACHES AND

Adaptation Gap Report Criteria	Key messages
Comprehensiveness	• Overall, there is increasing awareness and understanding of climate change, its current impacts, and the importance of adaptation • Countries have demonstrated the importance of incorporating both climate change and social and economic indicators to clearly understand vulnerability and identify appropriate adaptation actions. • Resources should be invested in translating climate risk information into language and formats that decision-makers can understand, for example, storylines and scenarios. • There is a need for resources to generate and access sub-national climate change data, particularly for assessing costs and benefits of adaptation interventions.
Inclusiveness	• Countries that have developed explicit NAP stakeholder engagement strategies have ensured that stakeholder participation is gender-sensitive, participatory, and transparent, while also taking vulnerable groups into account. • There is a need to commit additional resources and prioritise the development of detailed stakeholder engagement to ensure balanced participation of men, women, and non-binary stakeholders. The stakeholder plans should also ensure that stakeholders are not seen as recipients of information but actively engage in the NAP process • Countries are using innovative communicative tools and systems to ensure the NAP process has been communicated to a wide audience. • There is a need for support to better integrate traditional knowledge into a climate planning processes.
Potential for implementation	• Countries which have the most senior leadership in government taking an active and visible role in the implementation of the NAP process are progressing quickly. • Countries with decentralised governance structures that include decision makers from sectors (for example from line ministries, the private sector and non-government organisations) have better coordination and stakeholder relationships, which, in turn, is improving potential for implementation. • It is important to clarify roles and responsibilities of key provincial and local government actors and ensure they are resourced and have capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate adaptation actions. • There is a need to assist countries to identify and secure local or national climate finance from the outset of the NAP process
Integration	• Integrating climate change adaptation, especially ecosystem-based adaptation, into wider national policies and planning processes is essential. • The introduction of national adaptation laws or decrees has proved to be a key catalyst with vertical and horizontal integration. • As a complete revision of certain sector policies and plans is sometimes required, there is a need for long-term support and commitment of resources to mainstream climate change in laws, policies and legal instruments • There is a need to support countries to mobilise key decision-makers at the sector level so that they are actively involved in the NAP process. • Mainstreaming climate change should not be restricted to the policy and planning environment, but be embedded in programmes and projects that can help in the response to climate impacts

Adaptation Gap Report Criteria	Key messages
Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)	• There is no one-size-fits-all approach to monitoring and reporting for a NAP process and monitoring systems need to be context specific. • NAP Monitoring and Reporting system should ideally integrate into existing country monitoring frameworks, budget allocation processes, national development plan, and its sectoral plans and strategies. However, in some instances systems may not exist and the NAP process can act as a catalyst for the development of these systems. • There is a need for support in developing, identifying and harmonizing indicators. • There is a need for support in establishing data collection processes, particularly for baseline establishment.

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