

Input by Bertrand Reyset, National Observatory on the Effects of Climate Change, France

1. French adaptation policy: short state of play

In France, a national adaptation plan (NAP) is being implemented over the 2011-2015 period. The NAP is a roadmap with 80 adaptation actions splitted into 20 themes (transports, knowledge, agriculture, health, communication, etc.). The NAP is a crosscutting document and it gathers actions from different ministries. The whole monitoring process is led by the Ministry of ecology.

In addition, for each of the 26 French Regions, a policy document named "Regional Climate Air Energy Framework" states the regional strategic priorities in terms of adaptation. At the more local level, - e.g. a city - adaptation actions can be planned within a "Local Climate Energy Plan".

2. AC question #1: Given the diverse set of indicators that currently exist to measure and evaluate adaptation, how can communities, countries and development and adaptation agencies build on a common understanding of success in achieving climate resilience?

While theoretical aspects of M&E of adaptation are rather clear, it is a real challenge in practice to define adaption or resilience indicators that are S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound). Measuring success in adaptation is thus very complex either for the national level or the local/individual level. There are very high transactional costs in building specific indicators for adaptation in general and even for a single adaptation measure (need of baseline data that don't necessarily exist, need to consider the fact that some results in adapting can't be monitored every year but need more time, etc.).

At the national level, the idea of defining specific indicators of the level of climate resilience in general or sector specific is considered to be the best option, but a costly option. In France, the idea of identifying specific "resilience index indicators" for every action of our first NAP has been set aside. The NAP has adopted a more pragmatic approach of monitoring progresses, monitoring outcomes and monitoring processes. This "proxy approach" is less accurate but avoids to spend as much time in setting-up indicators as in defining adaptation actions.

From our perspective, monitoring the implementation of the NAP actions is a cost-effective way of monitoring adaptation policy and is also a way to have a proxy of how our climate resilience is evolving. Despite its very pragmatic and simple approach, this process is nevertheless effective and demanding. It involves three steps : 1) to assess first climate vulnerabilities in the different sectors, 2) to build an action plan (national or local) to address these vulnerabilities and 3) to define monitoring indicators for every action from the beginning to enable a continuous monitoring process.

Thus monitoring actions that reduce climate vulnerability can be a relevant first step to measure success in achieving climate resilience. It is by the way feasible at the national but even at the project level without generating too much constraints except anticipating that process/outcomes monitoring from the beginning.

3. AC question #2 : How can a framework be created that links individual assessments with national level assessments to broaden the focus from the means of achieving outcomes (individual interventions) to the desired end result (countries' becoming less vulnerable and having more adaptive capacity)?

In France the NAP is an example of framework that gathers assessment of national adaptation interventions. Every action of the NAP is monitored, and that information is aggregated for each of the 20 themes of the NAP. A general implementation percentage is calculated for the annual monitoring report. Implementing the NAP is believed to reduce our climate vulnerability thus efforts in implementing actions of the NAP reflects efforts in increasing our national climate resilience.

Key elements to perform that pyramidal monitoring scheme are:

- Implementation/process/outcomes indicators specific to each action of the NAP have been defined when actions of the NAP have been decided. The NAP and M&E have been built at the same time ;

- Every action of the NAP has a leader who is also responsible for reporting on the implementation of the measure of which he's in charge ;
- Leaders in charge of implementing adaptation actions have contributed to define the M&E indicators : it ensures that the different actors will be able to timely produce the required M&E information ;

By the way, the data produced for annual monitoring report are very measure-specific. It is aggregated in term of percentage of outcome achievement or percentage in spending of the action budget. Today our reporting cannot be quantitatively translated into adaptive capacity measurement or level of adaptation measurement. That would be interesting but would need a deep work to enable an intercomparison between indicators that are often very different depending on the sector or the type of action considered.

From our perspective, M&E of an adaptation action plan (at any scale) is a way to monitor climate resilience, even if it is not fully comprehensive.

4. AC question #3 : How can results from monitoring and evaluation be reported and disseminated so as to ensure that they are fed back into the respective adaptation process but also to allow for lessons learned and good practices identified to be shared with the wider community of adaptation planners and practitioners?

In France, monitoring reports of the NAP are communicated to stakeholders that have participated in the preparation of the NAP. They are also available online. That feedback on what is happening is important to show that the national level is committed in adaptation and builds on what have been planned in a participative way. It is also important to show that adaptation matters: if the national level is acting, everyone have a good reason to feel concerned and to adapt at the individual scale.

The NAP is too cross sectoral and global to underline individual good practices in its monitoring reports. But the mid term review planned for the end of 2013 will underline some key lessons learned at the national level.

By the way, lessons can be drawn from the French NAP process in terms of lessons learned on planning adaptation. We think that our NAP planning approach (cross sectoral, participatory, with thematic leaders) and its M&E pragmatic and semi-quantitative approach can be translated at various scales. For example, Regions have drawn inspiration from the NAP to plan their own regional policy, both in terms of actions as in terms of planning methodology.

A major challenge for adaptation monitoring is to 1) identify local or individual adaptation or adaptation-friendly actions and 2) be able to evaluate them. We believe that integrating national cross sectoral approach with feedback from local adaptation practices (linked to the NAP or not) will be a key interaction for our next NAP in the coming years. We're today moving into identifying local or individual adaptation actions through an adaptation-wiki where any adaptation practitioner can report its actions. It is complemented with top-down studies that investigate local adaptation-friendly practices and investments.

Thus some key elements are:

- Transparency in what is done by the government in terms of adaptation (both for accountability and to show that adaptation matters);
- Looking for existing adaptation actions that are currently insufficiently documented and evaluate them;
- Enabling bottom-up feedback on local or individual adaptation practices through a dedicated portal (e.g. adaptation-wiki in France).

5. Contact

Bertrand REYSSET, adaptation officer at the National Observatory on the Effects of Climate Change (France)