

Submission by the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH to the UNFCCC SBSTA on recent work in the area of climate impacts on human health

Bonn, 29.08.2016

The *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH* implements the climate policy commitments of the German Government and other donors, by translating these into practical interventions. GIZ has extensive experience in integrating adaptation into development planning. In the past five years, GIZ has implemented in collaboration with its partner countries more than 450 development projects taking into consideration adaptation needs. GIZ [supports](#) governmental and non-governmental actors in accessing and using climate-relevant information, in conducting climate risk and vulnerability analyses, in identifying, prioritising and implementing appropriate adaptation measures, and in establishing systems to specifically monitor and evaluate adaptation measures. GIZ also works with partner countries to systematically integrate climate risks in their national and sectoral planning and decision-making processes. Targeted support of the national adaptation plan (NAP) process is provided by GIZ since 2012 for a total of 20 countries to a varying extent.

One specific area that GIZ focuses on is addressing climate impacts on human health. On behalf of the *German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)*, GIZ (a) supports the work of the *World Health Organization (WHO)* at international and regional level; (b) facilitates networks by bringing together different actors from the political and administrative spheres, from civil society and from the research community; (c) supports partners at national and local level in African and Asian countries in developing concrete adaptation measures; and (d) integrates the topic into ongoing bilateral German development cooperation projects

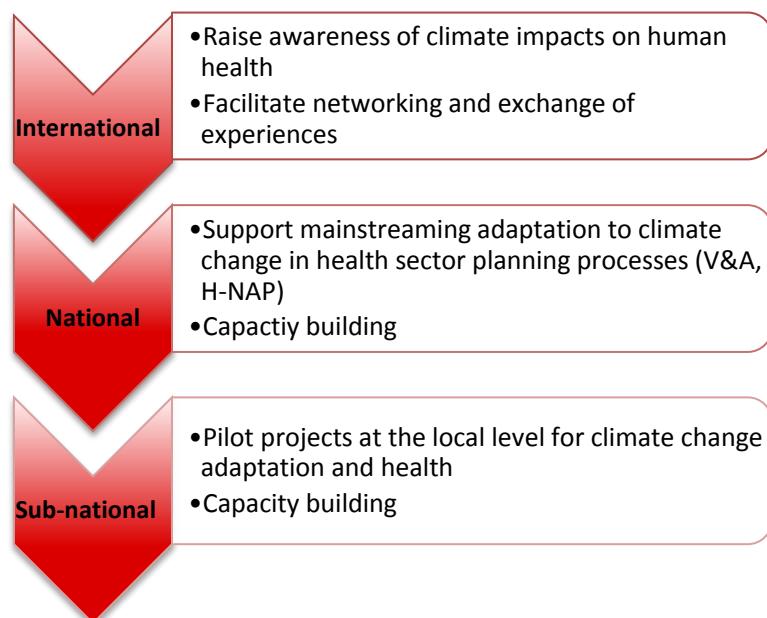


Figure 1: GIZ activities in the field of climate impacts on human health

(see Figure 1). All these activities on international, national and sub-national level contribute directly or indirectly to gaining more knowledge about the changes in the geographical distribution of diseases, and about new and emerging health issues, including tropical diseases and their impacts on social and economic structures, malnutrition, water-borne diseases, vector-borne diseases and disaster impacts.

Building core capacities for adapting to climate change in the health sector

Raising awareness of the climate impacts on human health and building capacities in the health sector to adapt to climate change are critical. Supporting WHO and its regional offices in developing and conducting trainings for member countries has thus been one of the fundamental activities of GIZ. These trainings build the foundation for countries to assess and adequately respond to the impact of climate change on human health.

Prior to the COP 20 in Lima, for instance, GIZ organised trainings developed by the *United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)* in collaboration with WHO for UNFCCC delegates from the Ministries of Health and of Environment of 53 Asian and African member countries to strengthen their ability to successfully engage in the climate negotiations, while considering the impact of climate change on health and to raise awareness on the climate change impacts on human health. GIZ also supported the update of existing [WHO climate change and health training materials](#) by WHO/SEARO in cooperation with WHO/WPRO and organised a [5-day training](#) workshop for 30 participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Maldives, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vietnam in January 2015.

Considering the lack of capacity in many African countries in the area of climate change and health, GIZ has supported since 2014 [Malawi](#), Zambia, Madagascar, Ghana, Benin, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea to receive guidance and capacity building from WHO on conducting national vulnerability and adaptation analysis (V&A) and on integrating health into national adaptation plans (H-NAP). Depending on the availability of climate information and epidemiological data, the selected countries have been guided at joint workshops on using a qualitative or quantitative methodology to assess the current and future climate-related risks for population health, specifically concerning selected climate-sensitive diseases. These exercises have often been the first attempts in the supported countries to describe and analyse changes in geographical distribution of diseases and to identify new and emerging health issues. On the basis of these analyses, adaptation measures have been proposed to be taken into consideration during the NAP processes in the respective countries. The lessons learnt and the feedback from participants of these workshops are currently used to update and improve [WHO guidelines](#) on conducting national climate change and health V&As.

Facilitating networking and exchange of experiences

Another important area of work in the context of climate impacts on human health has been providing platforms for scientists, development practitioners and policy-makers to engage in networking and knowledge exchange. Internationally, GIZ, for instance, supported together with WHO/EURO a session on climate change and health at the World Health Summit in 2014, and the First and Second Climate and Health Summit during the COP 20 and COP 21 organised by the *Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA)* and WHO. In the African context, GIZ supported the participation of Ghana, Madagascar, Zambia and Malawi at the [Clim-HEALTH Africa](#) Conference in 2015.

Development and implementation of adaptation measures at the local level

GIZ has supported the development and implementation of four pilot projects at the local level in Malawi, Cambodia and the Philippines by partners from the non-governmental sector. These projects intend to generate knowledge and lessons learnt about climate impacts on human health at the local level and experiences in implementing community-based adaptation measures to reduce negative health outcomes of climate change.

In Malawi, GIZ supported *Concern Universal* and *the Great Lakes Cotton Company* in Chikwawa to conduct a vulnerability assessment, on which basis adaptation measures, training curricula and materials were developed. The assessment indicated that women have restricted access to climate-sensitive health information, and that, apart from water-borne diseases, the burden of schistosomiasis seems to be relatively high, though not considered as a health problem by the communities themselves. Food-insecurity due to flooding or drought was the main concern of the assessment respondents.

In Cambodia, GIZ supports [Malaria Consortium](#) to implement an integrated dengue vector management project in Kampong Cham in collaboration with WHO, the *US Naval Medical Research Unit-2 (NAMRU-2)* and the *Cambodian National Centre for Parasitology, Entomology, and Malaria Control (CNM)*. This community-based vector control project is set up as a randomised control trial to test the feasibility and efficacy of reducing the number of *Aedes* mosquitoes by using the guppy fish (*Poecilia reticulata*) in larger water storage containers and a slow-release pyriproxyfen (PPF) matrix in smaller water containers. This is combined with a Communication for Behaviour Impact (COMBI) strategy, which is a social mobilisation and communication approach that connects knowledge and behaviour, addresses the value of engaging in healthy behaviours, and recognises the gradual stages of behaviour change. Final results are expected at the end of 2016, which will inform dengue vector control policy recommendations.

In Siem Reap, Cambodia, GIZ supports *Malteser International* in implementing a pilot project to increase the resilience to health related impacts of climate change in 13 villages in the Slaeng Spean and Moun Commune. A [participatory vulnerability and adaptation assessment](#) at the beginning of the project indicated that the access to safe drinking water was the main concern for the communities in the project area. The importance of addressing disaster risk reduction was also evident with communities being regularly exposed to flooding events and extreme dry spells. This lead to the development of a flexible and participatory climate change curriculum, and training to raise awareness of climate change and in implementing community based disaster risk management plans and strategies. Improved awareness of the need for coordination, dialogue and exchange between health providers and local stakeholders on the topic of climate change and health has been ensured through regular coordination and planning meetings at the sub-national level. Furthermore, complementary WASH measures have been implemented with a focus on improving access to water throughout the year for the most vulnerable households by supporting the construction of concrete household rainwater harvesting tanks with a capacity of 3000 Litres. First aid training has been provided for primary stakeholders, such as village health support group members, youth volunteers, village chiefs, and water user group members. To provide more information to both users and researchers, a health seeking guide for vector borne diseases, specifically dengue and malaria, has been developed giving insight into the experiences of users accessing the local health system. Vector borne (malaria, dengue, chikungunya) and water related disease (diarrhoea, schistosomiasis, leptospirosis) awareness raising, particularly for prevention and treatment, has been implemented in target villages as part of wider disaster risk management planning with specific IECs developed for this purpose.



Figure 2: Community awareness raising session in Cambodia – Malteser International (©GIZ/Maylin Meincke)

At the nexus of climate impacts on human health and disaster risk reduction, GIZ supports the *German Red Cross*, which in collaboration with the *Philippine Red Cross (PRC)* implements a project to climate-resilient and health barangays in the provinces of Ilocos Sur, La Union, Benguet and Ifugao. The project aims to provide training and information materials on vulnerabilities and control of climate-sensitive diseases for professional and lay health workers and community members, to strengthen the capacities of professional health staff and lay health workers in the provinces and to integrate the lessons learnt and the climate change perspective into all PRC community-based primary health care projects. It is planned that through the community trainings the Barangay disaster action plans will include health issues related to climate change as well. The end-line results are expected by the end of 2016 to give an indication of success of the project.

Mainstreaming adaptation to climate change in the health sector

GIZ teams up with bilateral German development cooperation projects in partner countries to mainstream adaptation to climate change in the health sector. For instance, in Cambodia the Ministry of Health was supported in developing an M&E framework for its health and climate change action plan. In [Grenada](#) GIZ has conducted a qualitative vulnerability and adaptation assessment, which informed the development of a draft climate change and health action plan. This plan will become part of the NAP, which is currently still under development and supported by the *Integrated Climate Change Adaptation Strategies (ICCAS)* project in Grenada. Strengthening the surveillance system and improving access to climate information for climate-sensitive surveillance have been identified as a primary adaptation measures.

Together with the German development project *Participatory Development Programme in Urban Areas (PDP)* based in Cairo, GIZ is conducting a vulnerability and adaptation assessment in informal settlements in Cairo, focusing on heat impact and prevention. The results of the assessment are expected by the end of 2016.

Good practices and lessons learnt

On the basis of recent activities by GIZ in the field of climate change impacts on human health the following lessons learnt can be formulated:

- Availability and access to (sub-national) climate information has to be improved in order to assess the changes in the geographical distribution of diseases, and new and emerging health issues, including tropical diseases and their impacts on social and economic structures, malnutrition, water-borne diseases, vector-borne diseases and disaster impacts
- There is a need for capacity building at the national and especially at the sub-national level to conduct vulnerability and adaptation analyses
- Qualitative risk analyses can be sufficient and informative, especially if there is a lack of adequate climate information and epidemiological data
- Ministries of Health need to be assisted to get sufficiently involved into the NAP process in order to include climate impacts on human health into national adaptation planning
- Countries lack technical capacities to access climate finance to implement health adaptation measures

Finally, participatory vulnerability and adaptation assessments, which at the same time can function as baseline studies, have been shown as beneficial for developing needs-based adaptation projects at the local level. However, weak health systems at the local level, that characteristically lack financial resources and capacity, hamper sustainable adaptation to climate change and the reduction of the negative outcomes on human health. It is therefore important not only to build capacity at the national level, but to ensure that capacity building and support also reaches the sub-national level in order to successfully avert climate impacts on human health. Climate-resilient health system strengthening at all levels is paramount.

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