



Good practices in and lessons learned in relation to national adaptation planning

CARE International submission to the UNFCCC's Nairobi Work Programme on national adaptation planning, August 2014

CARE International, one of the leading international, non-governmental development and emergency agencies, is pleased to share with the Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability under the UNFCCC its views in response to the call for inputs on:

- Available and implemented tools and methods for adaptation planning processes addressing the four issues of ecosystems, human settlements, water resources and health;
- Good practices and lessons learned in relation to adaptation planning processes, including on monitoring and evaluation, addressing the four issues of ecosystems, human settlements, water resources and health;
- Good practices and lessons learned related to processes and structures for linking national and local adaptation planning.

CARE is working with people at the frontline of climate change and has been responding to climate change in over 70 projects in ca. 30 countries in recent years. Poverty reduction, social justice and gender equality have been at the center CARE's efforts to respond to climate change. CARE has also approved a CARE Climate Change Strategy (2013-2015).

1. Key Messages

(1) National adaptation plans should focus on decreasing the current and future vulnerabilities across sectors, and on increasing the adaptive capacities of the most vulnerable people and communities to climate change. National adaptation plans should take a risk management lens to addressing climate change as well as address issues related to poverty and inequality.

(2) Building on, and promoting the application of the principles of community-based adaptation (CBA) is essential for national adaptation planning. CBA is a highly effective approach to base national adaptation planning on because it helps identify the underlying causes of climate vulnerability, supports appropriate choices of adaptation options grounded in the local context, supports healthy balance between “hard” (infrastructure) and “soft” (practice and process) measures, is cost effective, and builds on existing knowledge and capacities in addressing climate variability and shifts and related issues.

(3) Addressing social inequalities and differential vulnerability needs to be a key concern in national adaptation planning as they increase harmful climate change impacts on many poor people while constraining their options for taking action to reduce them through adaptation. Gender, along with other factors such as wealth and ethnicity, often determines the roles, opportunities, power, access to and control over resources for women and men in any context. These are often key factors in determining the extent to which people’s rights are fulfilled. As such, social inequalities form an important and often insufficiently addressed barrier to equitable adaptation. Differential vulnerability needs to be addressed at all levels of response to climate change, from the local to the national.

(4) Integrating gender at all stages of the planning process is key. In order to be equitable and address one of the key underlying causes of climate vulnerability, adaptation planning needs to commit to gender equality and promote gender-equitable, rights-based and participatory action. This includes i) promoting gender equality and increasing women’s participation in decision-making, project development, identification and implementation, financial allocation, monitoring and evaluation, and ii) ensuring adaptation builds on the strengths of women and men, as well as girls and boys, to ensure that their skills, knowledge, and capacities are used to contribute adequately to climate action

(5) Adaptation is as much about [decision-making processes informed by local and scientific information](#) as about technical interventions. Building adaptive capacity is a continuous process of understanding, planning for and responding to an uncertain changing climate. The tools and resources that are used need to better reflect this part of adaptation planning. Critically, to be adapted and climate resilient, interventions must be decided through an informed planning process together with the people whose lives are affected by climate change. CARE uses a wide range of tools and processes to make adaptation planning a continuous and iterative process.

(5) Building local capacity is critical for national adaptation. The development, application and sharing of effective participatory tools and approaches in CBA can help to build the capacity of local actors and officials, and promote the sustainability of adaptation activities and processes. This building of capacity is critical to developing national adaptation plans and strategies that respond to local context and realities.

(6) Working with multi-stakeholders and partners helps increase adaptive capacity. Climate change impacts all members of society and can have complex and cascading impacts. It requires concerted effort of a large number of organizations and people to develop appropriate solutions. No one organization will be able to build adaptive capacity on its own at the national level. Thus, partnerships and working with others are often a key factor in the

success of adaptation. Working with existing civil society networks and platforms can facilitate the local to national-level advocacy requirements. Governments need to work across ministries and sector silos. Community based organizations will need to work with and liaise with other organizations working in different localities. CARE has learned that a multi-stakeholder platform enable sharing, understanding, interpreting and communicating climate information, by giving space for dialogue on local adaptation issues and options. Working together is essential for responding to the challenge of unknown futures at all scales—local and national.

2. Available and implemented tools and methods for adaptation planning processes addressing ecosystems, human settlements, water resources and health

The principles and approaches of community-based adaptation are essential for adaptation planning addressing ecosystems, human settlements, water resources and health, because

- CBA, across sectors, uses an analytical and holistic method to identify and address the underlying causes of vulnerability such as poor governance, gender and other social inequalities in influence and control over key assets, and access to basic services, along with climate change risks. Without doing so, climate risks will continue to grow, in particular for the poorest and most exposed populations.
- Adaptation initiatives that are not embedded in local context and without the effective participation of vulnerable people can lead to mal-adaptation, and increase inequality. Generating adaptation strategies with communities and other local stakeholders improves their uptake and sustainability. CBA approaches can establish strong partnerships with local and national government agencies, which can provide support for communities' adaptation priorities, build local technical capacity, and include adaptation in development, budgeting, agricultural extension or disaster risk reduction (DRR) plans and processes.
- Enhancing communities' awareness and understanding of climate change and uncertainty enables them to create responsive plans and make more flexible and context-appropriate decisions. Activities that embed new knowledge and understanding into existing community structures expands and strengthens those structures as well as institutional mechanisms.
- CBA is a cost effective approach to developing adaptive capacity and building resilience across different sectors; the social, economic and environmental benefits outweigh the costs of implementation in virtually all scenarios.
- CBA approaches address the real need in communities and can thus result in a balance between physical infrastructure and building of skills and capacities. A bias towards physical infrastructure alone without improving capacities to deal with climate change risks will not result in increased adaptive capacity of the most vulnerable men and women. In this context, strengthening the ability of national and local institutions to address climate risks needs to be a key component of national adaptation planning.

The tools and methods available and implemented by CARE International for adaptation planning processes are the following:

A. Ecosystems and Human Settlements

CARE International has a holistic understanding of ecosystems and human systems. We see ecosystems and human settlements as intrinsically linked. The following are the tools and methods CARE has developed and used to address climate change in this interconnected way:

- **Assessing current and future vulnerability of communities as a critical component of adaptation planning:** CARE's [Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis \(CVCA\) Handbook \(2009\)](#) has been a popular practitioner tool providing key insights into the climatic, environmental, social, economic and political factors that determine people's vulnerability to climate change at the local level. A completed CVCA informs the community, project staff, partners and policy makers in their targeting of resources and design of interventions how and where they are needed most for adaptation. Operating under CARE's CBA framework, the CVCA presents an framework of climate change vulnerability along with a set of participatory rural appraisal tools that can be used to identify, together with local focus groups and key informants how people in a given setting may be vulnerable to climate change. Of late, the CVCA has also been adapted for more specific needs, for example a strengthened integration of ecosystem considerations in our projects in Ethiopia and Nepal (see the Example from Practice below).
- **Analysing the social and economic benefits of adaptation in a local context:** CARE's Africa Adaptation Learning Program (ALP) in partnership with the New Economics Foundation (nef), has developed a methodology for the social & economic analysis of community based adaptation. The work documented in [Managing Uncertainty: An economic evaluation of community based adaptation in Dakoro, Niger](#) demonstrates that CBA is both an effective and cost efficient approach to supporting communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. [Simplified guidelines for Social Cost-Benefit Analysis of Climate Change adaptation projects on a local scale](#) have been developed and is aimed at building the capacity of local governments and NGOs to undertake such cost-benefit analyses. The tool presents a simplified evaluative framework and focuses primarily on climate change adaptation interventions, but can also be useful for appraising and evaluating development projects more broadly (e.g. health interventions, education programs and others.). An [excel spreadsheet template](#) associated with the tool provides practitioners and local government with an indicative template with which to assess the social, economic and environmental impact of community based adaptation in their local context.
- **[Integrating Community and Ecosystem-Based Approaches in Climate Change Adaptation.](#)** CARE International, together with WWF and IUCN developed a [framework for better integration of ecosystem- based and community based approaches to adaptation](#). The framework seeks to reconcile differences between CBA and EBA and presents an approach that empowers local communities to manage ecosystems under resilient governance arrangements that can provide the ecosystem services on which they depend. This adheres both to principles of human rights and of sound environmental management, recognising their inter-dependent roles in

successfully managing climate variability and long-term change. Integrated approaches thus have a better chance to address short-comings of the mainstream top-down, “hard” infrastructure-based approach to adaptation.

- Participatory monitoring, evaluation, reflection, and learning (PMERL):** PMERL Can inform national planning with the necessary feedback and grounding from a local perspective. CARE’s recently revised [PMERL manual](#) guides a participatory process that supports monitoring and evaluation, reflection and learning in CBA initiatives. CBA involves learning at all stages – learning about how climate change affects people and their livelihoods and environment; learning how to adapt to these changes; measuring progress; and then reflecting on how to improve all of the above. PMERL seeks to provide a platform for local stakeholders (community members and other people involved in a CBA initiative) to articulate their own needs, priorities and vision of change, since empowerment is a fundamental part of building adaptive capacity among poor and vulnerable people. It also seeks to instigate continuous and joint learning and reflection between these groups. These concerns will need to inform any national planning process that occurs as well.
- Key civil society principles for national adaptation planning.** The Southern Voices for Adaptation project (which includes CARE International) has developed the [Joint Adaptation Principles](#): a set of seven key principles that civil-society from across the world considers a benchmark for good adaptation planning.

<i>Joint Principles for Adaptation Planning</i>
A. The planning process is participatory and inclusive
B. Public funds for adaptation are utilised efficiently and managed transparently and with integrity
C. All government sectors and levels of administration have defined responsibilities and appropriate resources to fulfil them
D. Local adaptation plans developed through community-based approaches are a core element
E. The resilience of women and men who are most vulnerable to climate change is built
F. There is a balance between the investment in physical infrastructure and the building of skills and capacities
G. Plans respond to evidence of the current and future impacts of climate change

Table 1: Joint Principles for adaptation planning

[Criteria](#) that guide civil society on how to assess the effectiveness of their national adaptation planning accompany these principles. A National Adaptation Status Report template is also available for civil society groups to report back on the results of their assessments. The Joint Principles can be used in one or more of the following three ways:

- To set advocacy objectives for civil society, by identifying necessary changes to national and international policy and practice; (advocacy mode)
- To promote civil society dialogue with government by providing a common language for ongoing dialogue between civil society organisations, government and

- other stakeholders; (dialogue mode)
- To determine capacity building needs of public institutions (capacity-building mode)

Adaptation, ecosystems and the integrated approach: examples from our practice

In Nepal's USAID funded [Hariyo-Ban project](#), an Integrated CVCA has been developed that attempts to assess the vulnerability of various ecosystems and their services along with the vulnerability of people to climate change. In the USAID funded Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion (PRIME) project in Ethiopia, CARE has conducted vulnerability assessments using the CVCA as a basis for understanding climate change vulnerability of range-land ecosystems as well as of various market systems. For example, a variety of methods like resources mapping, hazard overlays, user access and decision making, historical climate trend analysis, alternative preparedness and response strategies were used with communities living in these rangelands were used for assessing the vulnerability of range-land ecosystems.

Based on this, the integrated adaptation approach informs the preparation and implementation of adaptation plans at various levels from the community to the district and landscape level. The corresponding guidelines and training materials support a process whereby both human and ecosystem scales are addressed.

B. Water resources

- In 2011 CARE piloted an approach to participatory planning for watershed management that proved extremely effective and of relevance for most types of CBA projects in Vietnam. This [Visioning Approach](#) is now used within CARE to encourage community engagement with adaptation planning as well, in Vietnam and other countries. Visioning is an effective methodology for empowering communities to take command of their future by deciding how they wish it to be in their own terms. Participants discuss and develop a single vision, an ideal future, for the entire community. It creates a forum for people to come together to share their hopes, expectations and come to consensus about an ideal future. Developing a long term vision can also be an important step in developing sustainable natural resource management and adaptation strategies.
- In the Where the Rain Falls initiative in Tanzania, and elsewhere, the Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA) approach (see above) has been used to identify vulnerabilities, capacities and potential solutions in communities situated upstream and downstream in a watershed. The interdependence of vulnerabilities and adaptation options identified in these contexts illustrates the importance of guidance for adaptation to include applying an ecosystem lens.

3. Good practices and lessons learned in relation to adaptation planning processes, including on M&E, addressing ecosystems, human settlements, water resources and health

CARE's good practices and lessons are not specific to sectors but are cross-cutting, addressing all aspects of adaptation planning. Major lessons and good practices are reflected in the **key messages** outlined on pages 1 and 2 in this document.

Further to this our work in the [Africa Adaptation Learning Program \(ALP\)](#) points to the need to stress the importance **of accessing, understanding and responding flexibly to two key areas of information in order to succeed in achieving climate resilient development**. Firstly, **understanding the vulnerabilities, capacities and development priorities and aspirations of people**; and secondly, **accessing and interpreting climate information from past trends and future forecasts into accessible and usable messages** relevant to the local conditions. Hence participatory planning processes at community and local government level are critical. Several CARE experiences speak to how best to do this kind of local level planning. CARE's [Participatory Scenario Planning \(PSP\)](#) toolkit used in ALP points to how an iterative process can be established for making sure that climate information informs local adaptation decision making. PSP is a mechanism for collective sharing and interpretation of climate forecasts. It is conducted as soon as a seasonal climate forecast is available from meteorological services, meaning it occurs as many times in the year as there are rainy seasons in that particular area. Combining local and scientific knowledge systems is important for making climate information relevant locally and for empowering communities. And local adaptive capacity is enhanced by including communication and use of climate information in adaptation planning processes, enabling communities to live with the uncertainty and risks that climate change presents.

With regards to differential vulnerabilities, capacities, priorities and aspirations of people, national adaptation planning can also draw from the following **gender-related lessons and recommendations** developed through ALP: To make adaptation planning effective,

- **gender and power analysis should be conducted *prior*** to adaptation planning
- **an understanding of the drivers of change** behind social including gender roles and relations needs to inform adaptation planning
- **gender needs to be integrated at all stages of the planning cycle**
- **gender-related progress and achievements need to be monitored and documented** to generate critical knowledge and evidence. Gender dynamics should be monitored not merely in absolute terms (e.g. numbers of beneficiaries male and female) or in isolation (impacts on men versus impacts on women), but in *relative* terms (increases or decreases in gender gaps, changes in inequality)

4. Good practices and lessons learned related to processes and structures for linking national and local adaptation

Adaptation planning balances top-down with bottom-up approaches to planning in a continuous process whereby one informs the other. The principles of, and information and priorities generated at the local level are valuable inputs to national planning as much as the guidance from the national level provides the framing for the local level action. Our work in

Africa, Latin America and the Asia Pacific speak to various components of effectively linking the local level into national adaptation planning. The major lessons from this work include:

- **Adaptation is not an issue to be addressed in isolation but must be integrated into development and sector planning implementation. Specific climate-specific interventions, in turn, must have clear development benefits.** Development and sector plans, and budgets need to be based on actions that will result in climate resilient development, whether or not finance specific to adaptation has been accessed. Integrating climate change adaptation considerations into the annual development planning process of local bodies and governments is a critical component of building sustainability and ensuring implementation. This learning derived from the [Adaptation Learning Programme for Africa, described in more detail in its recent magazine on integration](#) of CBA into local planning. CARE has done significant work on integration processes in Vietnam ([mainstreaming manual](#) and [CBA planning manual](#) see page 46) CARE has also produced a [toolkit](#) on integrating climate change into other non-climate change projects. If rightly designed, national adaptation planning (including National Adaptation Plans) can drive the necessary integration and are not a barrier to it.
- **There are multiple entry points for linking local adaptation planning into national and development planning.** Working with existing disaster risk reduction planning activities, for example, can be an effective way to integrate climate change risks into mainstream development planning processes. In the Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO II) program in Bangladesh, CARE and partners have been working on improving the adaptive capacities and resilience of char dwellers to disaster and climate change impacts. An integrated CBA/DRR (disaster risk reduction) approach, which combines traditional knowledge with innovative strategies, has been adopted to address current vulnerability while building adaptive capacity to face new and dynamic challenges. Climate change adaptation considerations are first integrated into local government disaster management plans, which then collectively inform local government development plan.