

The Least Developed Countries Expert Group has released the technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan process

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The Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) has recently released the technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan (NAP) process, to assist least developed countries (LDCs) in comprehensively addressing adaptation in a coherent and strategic manner.

Background to the NAP process

The NAP process was established to plan and implement medium- and long-term adaptation, building upon the rich experiences of LDCs in addressing adaptation through their national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). It aims to assist LDCs to reduce their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by building adaptive capacity and resilience, and by facilitating the integration of climate change adaptation into development planning. The LEG is mandated by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to provide guidance and support to the NAP process for the LDCs.

The NAP Technical guidelines

The technical guidelines offer a range of options for dealing with each element of the NAP process, based on the initial guidelines and consistent with the guiding principles of the NAP process, that were agreed upon by the COP at its seventeenth session in Durban, December 2011. The four elements of the NAP process, as laid out in the initial guidelines, are as follows: laying the groundwork and addressing gaps; preparatory elements; implementation strategies; and reporting, monitoring and review.

The technical guidelines were developed by the LEG in response to a request from the COP, with input and feedback from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its agencies, and experts from other organizations. They “...are not prescriptive, and countries can decide on the specific activities for their national process. They are developed in a way that seeks to support countries in enhancing the coherence of adaptation and development planning, and to embrace adaptation activities already undertaken or underway. They are intended to facilitate country-owned, country-driven action that harnesses and builds upon national-level capacity, with support from various partners, as appropriate. They include recommendations on how countries can monitor and review the effectiveness of their adaptation actions on a regular basis, and on how to update their NAPs in an iterative manner,” said Pepetua Latasi, Chair of the LEG.

Latasi further mentioned that “the NAP is adaptable enough to serve as a holistic adaptation plan by itself, or it can also integrate and synergize with any existing sectoral or thematic adaptation efforts in order to ensure a comprehensive and mainstreamed approach to adaptation planning which is fully consistent with national priorities.”

Moving forward in the NAP process

According to Prakash Mathema, Chair of the LDC Group under the UN climate change negotiations, “the LEG has been instrumental in supporting the LDCs to prepare and implement NAPAs, and LDCs will continue to rely on the support of the LEG for their full implementation. This will go hand-in-hand with LEG support for the NAP process, thus capitalizing on synergy and ensuring coherence and effectiveness between both processes. NAP preparation should proceed in parallel with NAPA implementation, as both are urgent and important for effective adaptation in LDCs.”

According to Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, “[c]limate change risks magnify development challenges for LDCs. The NAP process can enable the LDCs, and all other countries that choose to engage in the process, to assess their vulnerabilities, mainstream climate change risks and address adaptation over a longer time-scale”. She added that for LDCs to apply the technical guidelines “[f]inancial and technical support needs to be provided as soon as possible. The NAP process needs to be supported in a continuous and pragmatic manner, based on country needs and situations. Now that the NAP technical guidelines have been released, LDCs should embark at the soonest on their NAP process, including declaring their steps to be undertaken. For some this may entail putting in place institutional arrangements and setting up clear mandates at the national level for their adaptation planning and implementation as a first step, if not already available. Others may start with a stocktaking exercise and the identification of gaps that need to be addressed in order to advance their adaptation efforts.”

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More information is available at: <<http://unfccc.int/nap>> and <<http://unfccc.int/6057>>