
**Twelfth meeting of the Adaptation Committee
Bonn, Germany, 19-22 September 2017**

Information paper on experiences of countries in accessing the readiness programme of the Green Climate Fund to finance adaptation activities

Recommended action by the Adaptation Committee

The Adaptation Committee (AC), at its 12th meeting, will be invited to consider this revised information paper and consider deriving recommendations to the COP in response to decision 4/CP.21, paragraph 10, as contained in section 6 of this document.

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1. Introduction

1. The Adaptation Committee (AC) as part of its 2016-2018 workplan, aims to provide guidance to Parties on ways to enhance support, including finance as it relates to access, institutional arrangements and enabling environments, including for the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans (NAPs).¹ In addition, COP 21 requested the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) and the AC to consider how they can provide more information on accessing funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for the process to formulate and implement NAPs and to include such information, as appropriate, in their reports (decision 4/CP.21, paragraph 10).
2. The AC included in its workplan the development of an information paper, in collaboration with the LEG, the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF), and the GCF, on experiences of countries in accessing the GCF readiness programme, including for the process to formulate and implement NAPs. At its ninth meeting (AC9) the AC decided that this paper would also contribute to the AC's response to the COP mandate referred to in paragraph 1. It further decided to treat the paper as an evolving product, given the early stage of countries accessing the readiness programme and the additional experiences that needed to be captured during its evolution. The AC, at its eleventh meeting (AC 11), considered a first draft of the paper² and agreed to continue collecting experiences from countries in order to develop a revised version by AC 12 including further lessons learned and good practice examples from countries.

2. Overview and status of the GCF readiness programme³

3. The GCF provides resources for readiness and preparatory activities through a dedicated and cross-cutting programme that particularly targets the most vulnerable developing countries.⁴ The aim of the programme is to enhance country ownership of its climate change activity/proposal and access to the GCF and to continuously strengthen a country's engagement with the Fund. It supports the development of strategic frameworks, including country programmes and project pipeline development. This may include the preparation and strengthening of, for example, low-emission development strategies or plans, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), formulation of NAPs or National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). It also supports in-country institutional strengthening, including the strengthening of capacities for country coordination and to meet fiduciary principles and standards and environmental and social safeguards.⁵ The programme has been operational since 2014. In June 2016 the GCF Board decided to establish an additional activity area under the programme through which countries may access additional resources for the formulation of national adaptation plans and/or other national adaptation planning processes.⁶
4. Resources from the readiness programme are provided in the form of grants and technical assistance. An individual country may access up to USD 1 million of readiness funds per calendar year and up to a total of USD 3 million for the formulation of NAPs and/or other national adaptation planning processes. The country's National Designated Authority (NDA) or focal point can access the funds either directly or through a qualified institution that the country chooses as its delivery partner,

¹ See the annex of the report of the AC to the COP contained in document FCCC/SB/2015/2.

² Contained in document AC/2017/8.

³ More detailed information on the readiness programme and its status is available at the GCF website at <www.greenclimate.fund/funding/readiness-support>.

⁴ Under the GCF, vulnerable countries include LDCs, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and African States. A minimum of 50 per cent of country readiness funding is targeted at supporting these countries.

⁵ Refer to the Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund (decision 3/CP.17).

⁶ Decision B.13/09 (June 2016).

provided that both meet the financial management capacity standards of the GCF. Delivery partners may be international (e.g. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment (UNEP), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)) and the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) with which the GCF has concluded framework agreements for readiness and preparatory support), regional (e.g. Regional development banks, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)) national (e.g. Centre de Suivi Ecologique) or sub-national.

5. As of 31 July 2017, the GCF has approved 118 readiness and preparatory support requests, covering 87 countries and totalling USD 38.5 million.⁷ Of the 118 requests, 66 have received disbursements and are under implementation or have been completed. Of the 87 countries with approved readiness requests, almost 70 per cent are LDCs, SIDS and African States. Twenty-nine countries have submitted requests for support for the formulation of NAPs and/or other adaptation planning processes of which three have been approved (from Liberia, Nepal and Pakistan)⁸. Two of the three countries have received their first disbursement.⁹ In addition to the 118 approved readiness requests, the GCF has received 89 requests which were under review as of July 2017. Overall, demand for readiness support is increasing.¹⁰

3. Scope, methodology and structure

6. The paper was developed by drawing primarily on the results of surveys and in-person or telephone interviews conducted by the AC in 2016 and in the first half of 2017 with:

- a) Countries that have accessed the GCF readiness programme and have moved into implementation of their proposals (18 countries);
- b) Countries that have accessed the GCF readiness programme for the formulation of their NAPs and/or other adaptation planning processes, but not started implementation (8 countries);
- c) Delivery partners appointed by National Designated Authorities (NDAs) or focal points to assist countries in formulating and implementing their readiness activities (5 delivery partners).¹¹

7. Countries that have started implementation were selected according to whether their readiness activities were adaptation-related. Such activities include, for example, those that help to strengthen a country's NDA or focal point in coordinating future GCF-supported activities on adaptation. They also cover activities that help to include adaptation priorities in a country's GCF country programme, such as taking stock of and building on existing adaptation strategies, policies and needs. Countries which have accessed the readiness programme for support to their NAP and/or other adaptation planning process had not started implementing their activities at the time of the interviews and surveys since the

⁷ Report of the GCF to COP 23 available at <unfccc.int/resource/docs/2017/cop23/eng/05.pdf>.

⁸ The remaining 26 countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Niger, Serbia, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe.

⁹ According to information from the GCF secretariat shared in August 2017.

¹⁰ Progress and outlook report of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, document GCF/B.17/Inf.06.

¹¹ Refer to the Annex for a detailed list of countries and delivery partners interviewed and surveyed.

Board had taken the decision on this additional activity area only in June 2016.¹² However, the AC considered that it was important to capture their early experience as interest of countries in this kind of support is high.

8. Countries were selected for in-person interviews according to the availability of the UNFCCC focal point or his/her representative during the forty-fourth and forty-sixth sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies of the UNFCCC.

9. In addition to the surveys and interviews, information on the readiness programme, including on changes to access procedures and on the progress made by countries, was received via direct communication with the GCF secretariat as well as from relevant GCF documents.

10. Section 4 of the paper synthesizes experiences of countries in accessing the GCF readiness programme and provides initial lessons learned as well as good practice examples from countries. Section 5 summarizes recommendations from countries and delivery partners on how to improve access to the readiness programme. Section 6 proposes next steps that the AC may take to facilitate such access.

4. Experiences of countries in accessing the GCF readiness programme

11. The following sections present experiences of countries that have accessed the GCF readiness programme. Experiences have been retrieved with regard to (i) information and communication by and with the GCF, (ii) the establishment of NDAs/focal points, country coordination mechanisms and national accredited entities or national delivery partners, (iii) the proposal development and (iv) the implementation phase. Initial impacts of the readiness programme as well as further needs of countries with regard to future access to the GCF are also shared. A separate section is dedicated to experiences of countries that have accessed readiness funds for the formulation of their NAP and/or other adaptation planning processes. Under each category, good practices from countries as well as initial lessons learned are summarized

4.1. Information and communication

12. The main sources that countries used to obtain information on the readiness programme, in the order of importance, were the GCF secretariat including regional advisors, the GCF website, GCF regional events, GCF briefings, accredited entities and finally other, for example regional organizations. Some countries had also received information through other readiness programmes such as the one implemented by UNDP, UN Environment and the World Resources Institute supported by the German government. In general, information was described as being easy to access and of sufficient quality. However, it was underlined by several countries that direct information channels such as representation on the GCF Board and active participation in the UNFCCC process constituted the most efficient way of retrieving up-to-date information. The Readiness Guidebook, a how-to guide for accessing the GCF readiness programme available at the GCF website,¹³ was appreciated as a very useful document. New forms of information sharing, such as the Country Connections newsletter and the GCF 101 that have been published in 2017, were as much valued as the introduction of specific deadlines for readiness submissions and approvals and target start dates of implementation. Furthermore, clearer guidelines regarding eligible readiness activities and their costs were recognized.

¹² Decision B.13/09 (June 2016).

¹³ See <www.greenclimate.fund/funding/readiness-support/fine-print>.

Some countries expected that the clarity of information provided by the GCF would also improve as the GCF further matures.

13. In terms of communication by and with the GCF, the staff of the GCF secretariat, including regional advisors, were described as being very accessible and responsive to countries' needs. In many cases, communication was referred to as straightforward, quick and effective. The detailed technical feedback by the GCF secretariat on countries' proposals was also regarded as very helpful by many countries.

4.2. Challenges

14. While most countries described access to, and quality of, information on the readiness programme as easy and reliable, some rated the process of obtaining information as somewhat or very challenging. One reason brought forward by those facing challenges was that the information was available in English only which provided a barrier for some non-Anglophone countries. Another reason was the high frequency in which the readiness templates and application process were revised and changed, particularly during 2015–2016, which made it difficult for countries to stay up-to-date on the latest requirements. Overall, due to the early stage of readiness work at the country level and cases in which readiness work has been initiated without multi-sectoral dialogues, delivery partners noticed that many countries and/or sectoral stakeholders remain unaware of the opportunities provided by the readiness programme.

15. With regard to individual sources of information on the readiness programme, the website was criticized by some countries and delivery partners for being difficult to navigate, making it challenging to find information and documents. However, countries confirmed that navigability had improved over time. One country also complained that access to some of the information on the website, such as specific country information, was restricted to the respective NDA which made it challenging for staff outside the NDA to be actively involved in the proposal process. However, the GCF clarified that areas on the GCF website, which are restricted to NDAs, are not operational today so that all country stakeholders have access to the same information. The Readiness Guidebook, however useful, was said to have lacked regular updates, for example, with regard to web links and recent changes in access procedures. The revised version that has been published in June 2017 is an improvement in this regard.

16. In terms of communicating with the GCF, countries and delivery partners noted that the staff of the GCF secretariat had changed rather frequently and that the distribution of roles and responsibilities within the secretariat, including those of regional advisors, had not always been clear. This had led to confusion by countries. In some cases, it had also resulted in an unstable flow of information or even diverging information provided to countries and delivery partners. Some delivery partners and countries noted that information was sometimes shared only with the NDAs and not with delivery partners or vice versa, leading to inconsistent guidance provided to countries by the GCF secretariat and delivery partners. One country lamented that the communication by the GCF was sometimes very technical and could be better adjusted to the recipient of the information.

Box 1. Initial lessons learned regarding information and communication

1. Keeping countries, delivery partners and other stakeholders up-to-date on latest developments under the readiness programme is essential, particularly in times of frequent changes in procedures and staff.
2. The fact that GCF documents and templates are available in English only hampers the application process of non-Anglophone countries.
3. Continuous outreach is required to inform country stakeholders on the opportunities of the readiness programme and to respond to increasing and evolving country needs.
4. Direct and prompt communication between the GCF secretariat and the countries on their proposals and other queries is highly appreciated and helps to improve the quality of readiness proposals.

4.3. Establishment of NDAs/focal points, country coordination mechanisms and national accredited entities or national delivery partners

17. In most of the surveyed countries the NDA or focal point is hosted by the same institution that coordinates mitigation and adaptation activities in the country and therefore has good leverage over the country's adaptation activities. It often also hosts the UNFCCC focal point. In these countries, the identification of the NDA or focal point seems to have been straightforward.

18. The establishment of country coordination mechanisms has in most cases been based on existing inter-ministerial mechanisms. Readiness resources were referred to as very helpful in mobilizing additional human resources required and in organizing appropriate consultations, for example in the form of inception workshops, in order to involve additional stakeholders specifically for the engagement with the GCF.

19. Although not part of the survey many countries shared their experience with regard to the accreditation of national entities or the nomination of national entities as delivery partners which demonstrates the strong desire of countries to take full ownership of readiness and overall GCF activities and to access the Fund directly. Only six countries had actually been able to nominate a national entity to become their delivery partner for the readiness process despite the fact that not a full accreditation is required to become delivery partner but only the passing of the Fiduciary Management Capacity Assessment. In all but one of these cases the entities had also been or were in the process of being accredited. Three others mentioned that they had nominated or were in the process to nominate a national entity for accreditation that was already accredited by the Adaptation Fund and hoped that this would speed up the accreditation process. Still others planned to use the readiness funds to build the capacity of national entities in order to become accredited.

Box 2. Country good practices: Nomination of national entities as delivery partners

Colombia chose Fondo Acción, a national organization which is in the process of becoming an accredited entity, as its delivery partner. Prior to the selection, Colombia's NDA assessed Fondo Acción's administrative capacity and its experience in managing adaptation projects. Subsequently, Fondo Acción attached the Fiduciary Management Capacity Assessment questionnaire to Colombia's readiness proposal.

4.3.1. Challenges

20. Some delivery partners reported on countries that had selected NDAs or focal points that did not have a good understanding of, nor leverage on, mitigation and adaptation activities. These faced significant difficulties in assuming their role properly.

21. Some NDAs/focal points also faced challenges in establishing an effective country coordination mechanism. Challenges included the alignment of such a coordination mechanism with the multitude of existing coordination mechanisms at the country level and the mobilization of stakeholders to assume active responsibility of readiness activities.

22. One delivery partner recognized the problem that the appointment of a single institution or even an individual as NDA or focal point would not encourage country ownership but rather empower one individual or group over other national institutions and interests. This was seen particularly problematic in cases where no effective country coordination mechanism was established that would include representatives from various stakeholder groups with appropriate technical capacity in order to truly contribute to the decision-making process.

23. Several countries regretted that they had not been able to nominate a national accredited entity or a national delivery partner before accessing GCF funds and therefore continued to rely on international support despite the GCF's strong advocacy on country ownership. The main reasons brought forward were a general lack of national capacities and the small size of many national entities that prevented them to demonstrate the ability to manage large-scale projects. One country feared that the Environmental and Social Management Systems (ESMS) being developed by the GCF may further complicate the process of securing future access to the GCF by national direct access entities. However, the GCF clarified that the new ESMS being developed is for the GCF and will not entail new obligations to entities undergoing the accreditation process. In general, country responses to the survey suggested that not all countries seem to be aware of the requirements for a national entity to become accredited nor of the less restrictive requirements to serve as national delivery partner.

Box 3. Initial lessons learned regarding the establishment of NDAs/focal points, country coordination mechanisms and national accredited entities or national delivery partners

1. The more leverage the NDA/focal point has over mitigation and adaptation activities in a given country, the more effectively it can assume its role.
2. It is an advantage if the NDA is already experienced in financial instruments under the Convention, e.g. through acting as the focal point for other funds under the Convention.
3. Creating or mobilizing an effective country coordination mechanism and ensuring active participation of sectoral stakeholders in readiness work is a challenge for many countries.
4. The appointment of a single institution or even an individual as NDA or focal point, particularly in countries without an effective country coordination mechanism, can lead to the empowerment of one individual or group over other national institutions and interests and discourage country ownership.
5. Countries struggle to nominate national entities for accreditation or as delivery partners despite their strong desire to access the GCF directly and take full ownership of GCF-funded activities. One reason might be a noted lack of awareness of many countries of the requirements for a national entity to become accredited and of the less restrictive requirements to serve as national delivery partner.

4.4. Readiness proposal development

24. In most of the respondent countries the development of the readiness proposal followed their established national practices of preparation and approval with one institution taking the lead and various other institutions and stakeholders providing input. In some countries, the UNFCCC focal point played an active role in the process. Many countries used existing inter-ministerial committees and similar arrangements for the coordination of the proposal development. Others set up special teams comprised of members of different ministries and/or departments as an interim measure, for example, in cases where an NDA had not yet been identified. Some countries organized small workshops in order to initiate the exchange between the different stakeholders.

25. Almost all countries identified a delivery partner to support the proposal writing process. Fifteen of the twenty-six surveyed countries worked with international accredited entities as delivery partners. Only six worked with a national (accredited) entity and one with a regional accredited entity. The remaining countries had either received some support from regional organizations or developed the proposal internally, for example within the NDA. The degree of the delivery partner's involvement in the proposal writing depended on the technical and human capacity of the NDA or team in charge. Most countries relied to a large extent on the support of the delivery partner.

26. The time it took countries to turn the readiness request into a full readiness proposal ranged from one to seven months, whereas most countries needed fewer months. In most cases the GCF only required two months to review and approve the proposal which was appreciated by the respective countries. However, there were a few exceptions. In three cases, it took the countries over twelve months to move from the first concept preparation to signing of an implementation agreement. In other cases, countries had submitted a proposal but not received a response or the approval from the GCF within a prolonged time period or had received the proposal approval but were still waiting for the first disbursement at the time of the survey (some since several months). Some countries did not indicate the timeframe.

27. Countries with existing adaptation planning processes, that had not applied for specific NAP and/or other adaptation planning support under the readiness programme, found different ways of linking their adaptation priorities to the GCF readiness activities (see Box 4). Most of these countries reported that the linkages had been created through anchoring the countries' adaptation priorities to the development of the GCF country programme which in turn formed the basis for the identification of a pipeline of concrete adaptation projects. In other countries, linkages between readiness proposals and national adaptation planning processes have so far only indirectly been created. Countries in which the NDA also constitutes the national accredited entity, as well as countries in which the NDA has strong leverage over adaptation activities, stated that this constellation ensures strong synergies between readiness and adaptation activities and appropriate prioritization of adaptation needs. In addition, those departments of the NDAs and national accredited entities responsible for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of adaptation activities would be enabled to play their roles more effectively as a result of the institutional capacity-building planned to be supported by the readiness programme.

Box 4. Country good practices: Linking readiness and adaptation activities

In **Senegal**, a NAP had been developed with the support of USAID and GIZ with a sectoral focus on fisheries. This was reflected in the adaptation component of Senegal's NDC. The NAP thus represents the operational part of the NDC. Senegal's GCF country programme, which will be developed with the help of readiness funds, will be aligned with the country's adaptation priorities as identified in its NAP.

The **Federated States of Micronesia** have just completed their Joint National Action Plan on Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change, which identifies priority adaptation areas for all four autonomous states. These priority areas will be anchored to the GCF country programme which will identify concrete adaptation activities.

Timor-Leste is planning to develop a check list for the development of proposals for GCF funds. One of the criteria of the list will be the need for any proposal to respond to one of Timor-Leste's National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) priorities. Once the NAP will have been finalized, its priorities will also be included in the check list.

Togo, through its NAP, has identified water as its priority sector for adaptation. Consequently, through its readiness activities, Togo has identified a hydrometric project on adaptation and submitted it as part of its GCF project pipeline. The project is in line with the NAP priorities and will provide access to and analysis of hydrometric data.

Ethiopia has developed a NAP in collaboration with USAID and the US Forest Services. This is part of the government's determination to consider climate change adaptation as one of the priority areas in dealing with the country's long-term development needs. In order to further mainstream adaptation planning, the NDA plans to use the readiness funds for the development of regional and sectoral adaptation plans and their respective implementation strategies.

In **Antigua and Barbuda** integration of adaptation and readiness activities is facilitated by the fact that the Department of Environment (DOE) has been nominated as a national direct access accredited entity, and shares NDA responsibilities along with the Ministry of Finance. One concrete example of the integration is that the readiness funds are building institutional capacity in the DOE, for example, in the Internal Audit Unit and other departments, such as Physical Planning. All these departments play a key role in adaptation and will now have strengthened capacity to advance the implementation of Antigua and Barbuda's NAP

4.4.1. Challenges

28. Countries encountered various challenges during the proposal development until its submission, ranging from technical problems to difficulties in meeting the GCF requirements.

29. In general, one delivery partner had noticed that some NDAs lacked clarity of what exactly the readiness programme can cover and that this uncertainty prevented NDAs from hiring the right capacities for proposal development and implementation. It also noticed that NDAs are often too ambitious with the activities that they want to accomplish in the planned implementation period, which usually lasts two years or less.

30. In terms of receiving support for developing the readiness proposals, some NDAs struggled to adequately manage competition between different bilateral and multilateral agencies. Other NDAs faced challenges in raising awareness of the GCF, its opportunities and procedures at the country level in order to win stakeholders for the proposal development.

31. Technical issues included language barriers as in the case of accessing information on the readiness programme. Some non-Anglophone countries mentioned that the involvement of national and particularly local stakeholders (e.g. mayors, women's associations) in the proposal process was complicated due to the language barrier, others faced difficulties in developing all proposal documents in English. One country even feared that proposals had been rejected due to inadequate translation. Other technical obstacles included the costing of activities and the definition of indicators.

32. In terms of meeting the GCF requirements, some countries faced challenges in clearly understanding them and distinguishing between requirements for readiness proposals versus those for regular GCF funding proposals. Challenges also included the alignment of GCF requirements with national actualities and additional requirements of delivery partners. Ensuring their possibility of managing GCF readiness resources in line with the environmental, social and fiduciary standards of the GCF was not an easy task for some countries either, particularly if information had to be collected from different ministries with varying degrees of willingness to cooperate. Problems were created by the various changes that were introduced to the readiness proposal procedures and templates by the GCF over time. This did not only present a challenge for countries to stay up-to-date on the latest requirements, but also required some countries to revise their proposals several times and demanded intensive consultations with the GCF and at the country level. Furthermore, some countries experienced that a fruitful exchange with the GCF on the proposal was hampered due to the fact that the GCF staff based at the secretariat had difficulties in totally understanding the country's particular context and circumstances. In one case, this problem was solved when a regional advisor with regional knowledge and experience was appointed to support the country.

33. Still other challenges were faced by countries after the submission of the proposal and before the start of project implementation. The review of the different components of the readiness proposal (proposal, inception report, budget, procurement) by the GCF, including the respective consultations with the country, were described as cumbersome, particularly if GCF staff changed along the way. In many cases the GCF asked for several revisions of the proposal which required countries to go through several rounds of internal coordination and approval. Deficits in the technical capacity of some NDAs and national accredited entities, as mentioned above, made it even more difficult for them to efficiently respond to the GCF's comments. Some countries reported delays in hiring staff required to start the implementation process. Other countries were unsure about the legal instruments (e.g. type of disbursement request, need for project document to be shared or not) that are required to be in place before being able to start implementation. One delivery partner noticed that the legal arrangements, in particular, are very stringent. It feared that some national entities might be overwhelmed by the requirements.

Box 5. Initial lessons learned regarding the development of readiness proposals

1. Existing inter-ministerial committees and similar arrangements at the country level are in most cases appropriate for the coordination of the proposal development.
2. Close communication between the GCF secretariat, regional advisors, the delivery partners and the recipient countries during the proposal development process is essential to facilitate the process and respond to countries' needs, particularly if requirements, procedures and templates are changing along the way.
3. Some countries face challenges in distinguishing between requirements for readiness proposals versus those for regular GCF funding proposals.
4. Strong leverage of an NDA over adaptation activities in a country ensures effective synergies between readiness and adaptation activities and appropriate prioritization of adaptation needs.
5. Anchoring national adaptation priorities to the GCF country programme is an effective strategy to link adaptation and readiness activities.
6. Drawing together senior experts from line ministries, development partners and consultants to technically review and respond to the comments of the GCF on readiness proposals can support NDAs/NIEs in cases where they would otherwise face technical and capacity-related challenges.
7. More education of NDAs is needed on the scope of the readiness programme in order to receive high quality proposals that are not over-ambitious.

4.5. Implementation

34. The average time originally planned by countries for the implementation of readiness activities were 1-2 years. At the time of the interviews and surveys, two countries were close to the finalization of their readiness activities and most others had completed at least six months of implementation.

35. As in the case of proposal development, coordination and stakeholder involvement mechanisms had mostly been built on structures and mechanisms already existing in countries with varying degrees of success. Many countries had organized an inception workshop or forum at the beginning of the implementation phase which brought together various stakeholders, including from government, academia, civil society, development partners and the private sector. The experience with these workshops was very positive, particularly in terms of creating momentum for close collaboration on GCF readiness activities. Some countries continued conducting such workshops throughout the implementation phase.

36. Countries valued the opportunity to use resources from the readiness programme to develop a pipeline of projects by undertaking sound project identifications and respective stakeholder consultations that would ensure alignment with national priorities.

37. One country commented the GCF for its openness to work with countries and delivery partners on improving proposals and projects even during the implementation phase. The country was granted the opportunity to re-allocate funds to an activity that had not been part of the original proposal but had been considered adequate and timely by both the country and the GCF considering changed circumstances.

38. Ensuring complementary and coherence between the GCF and other readiness support programmes was largely seen as the responsibility of the respective NDA and its capacity was deemed decisive of the effectiveness of the coordination. The Readiness Coordination Mechanism, which brings together partner agencies that are supporting different readiness programmes, has supported the coordination of these partners, their mutual updating on activities and avoidance of duplication of efforts.

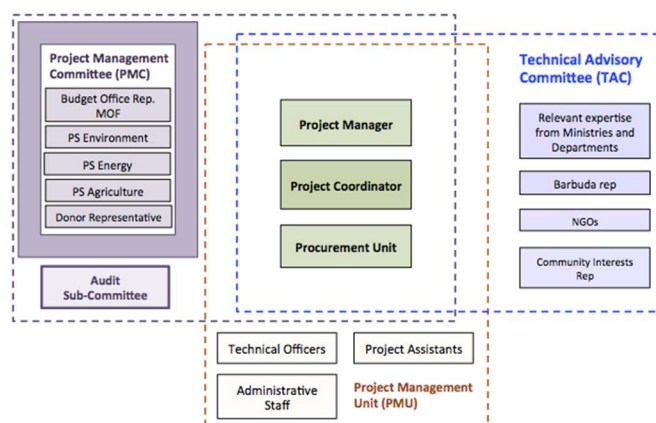
Box 6. Country good practices: Country coordination mechanism for implementing readiness activities

The **Federated States of Micronesia** (FSM) have established a GCF Unit within their NDA. Within that Unit, three staff are developing FSM's GCF strategic programme. In that programme, the team is including input from stakeholders from the four states to which they are conducting public awareness visits in order to inform on the programme and the GCF in general. They have also used the opportunity of teachers coming from all outer islands to the main island centres for the annual summer training courses to supply them with outreach material on the GCF to be disseminated through the education system in local language. In order to finalize the country programme, support from a national coordinator as well as an international consultant is expected under the readiness fund. In addition, an inception workshop is planned which will help to consolidate all adaptation and mitigation activities into the country programme. Besides on the development of the country programme, the NDA also involves other national entities on the various aspects of GCF proposals. For example, all financial details of proposals are contributed by the Ministry of Finance which not only fosters the capacity of the Ministry of Finance but also the cooperation among both entities. Finally, the NDA has nominated a local bank to be accredited to the GCF encouraging the involvement of the private sector in GCF-supported activities.

When setting up its national institutional structure for the coordination of climate change activities, **Zambia** intended to create a system of mutual linkages that would encourage close interaction and collaboration among the involved ministries. This structure is also responsible for the coordination of readiness activities. The Council of Ministers, which is chaired by the Vice President, is the supreme decision making body for overseeing climate change interventions in the country. It is responsible for providing policy guidance on the implementation of climate change activities across the sectors. The Ministry of National Development Planning is responsible for the overall coordination, oversight and mainstreaming of climate change considerations into national development planning processes. In case of adaptation this includes, for example, the definition of minimum performance standards in each sector and the development of an M&E framework. The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources is the lead institution in overseeing the implementation of climate change activities on the ground. The institutional component of Zambia's Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR) supported awareness raising on and coordination of GCF readiness activities by contributing to the organization of respective stakeholder workshops.

Timor-Leste has established a Working Group on Climate Change that has its legal mandate through a Ministerial Diploma (No. 2/2017) as a climate change knowledge sharing platform. The main focus of the platform is adaptation but also includes mitigation activities. It is responsible for the identification of priorities with regard to climate change and climate change policy. In the context of GCF readiness activities, the platform is responsible for bringing together all relevant national stakeholders through the organization of GCF workshops and meetings.

Antigua and Barbuda:



The Technical Advisory Committee is Antigua's national coordination mechanism for projects.

4.5.1. Challenges

39. Coordinating country efforts, consolidating input from and achieving agreement among various stakeholders, particularly also those at the local level, while also ensuring cost-effectiveness was seen as the most challenging and time-consuming part of the implementation phase. Experience was shared that sectoral ministries, institutions and agencies had not always been prominently represented at consultations and dialogues related to GCF procedures which created situations in which the needs of most vulnerable sectors were not properly addressed.

40. One country described the challenge of setting up sustainable coordination structures within the NDA under the condition of readiness funding limits and expected constraints of government funds to maintain the established structures in the future. Against the background of a limited funding horizon for the coordination structure, the country faced the problem of not being able to hire a national expert that would take the risk of such a short-term job.

41. The lack of financial and technical capacity of various stakeholders at the country level, particularly the municipal level, and often a general lack of staff to work on GCF readiness activities such as the development of a country programme and pipeline of bankable projects, was seen as another challenge.

42. As much as the support of delivery partners was appreciated, it was also seen critical and as undermining country ownership during the implementation phase. One country described the effort of developing a pipeline of projects that is entirely demand-driven, from the perspective of the country, instead of supply-driven, from the perspective of the supporting entity, as a challenge. Another country feared that in cases where readiness funds are channelled through international or regional delivery

partners it leaves the governments without much responsibility on how funds are used and prevents them from demonstrating the credibility of their financial management systems. The GCF clarified, however, that delivery partners must implement the readiness programme under the leadership and guidance of the respective NDA or focal point. The delivery partner is responsible for fiduciary management, but the destination of funds is responsibility of the country. A country may also request that readiness resources be directed at its national institutions, whether financial or non-financial, by demonstrating, at the proposal submission stage, the capacity of the chosen institution for fiduciary management.

43. Some countries criticized long time lags between the signing of grant agreements or submission of funding requests and actual disbursements. The fact that activities needed to be discontinued while subsequent disbursements had not arrived posed problems particularly for a country that had planned only twelve months for the implementation process. However, the slow disbursement was in this case due to outstanding requirements on the part of the country.

Box 7. Initial lessons learned regarding the implementation of readiness proposals

1. The effectiveness of the country coordination and stakeholder engagement mechanism depends to a large extent on the capacity of the NDA.
2. The organization of stakeholder workshops at the beginning of the implementation phase creates momentum for close collaboration on GCF readiness activities.
3. Countries keep struggling with the difficult situation of being dependent on international delivery partners for readiness support due to insufficient national capacity on the one hand, and the willingness to achieve full country ownership on the other hand.

4.6. Impact

44. Countries were asked to evaluate whether the readiness activities had left an impact with regard to (i) their capacity to access and deploy international funding for adaptation, (ii) the involvement of the private sector in adaptation activities, and (iii) their capacity to achieve the paradigm shift that is part of the access criteria of the GCF.

45. Countries concurred that the readiness activities had strengthened their capacity to better access and deploy international funding, including for adaptation activities. The readiness activities contributed to moving GCF funding up on countries' agendas. They also improved national capacities ranging from stakeholder involvement and coordination and the development of country programmes and climate-resilient projects and programmes to more specific capacities in, for example, internal auditing processes and knowledge and information management systems. As the requirements of GCF funding are expected to add substantial rigour to many aspects of adaptation planning and implementation, it is assumed that countries will further strengthen institutions, technical aspects of vulnerability, risk and impact analyses, prioritization of adaptation actions, and multi-sectoral collaboration for the creation of synergies. In general, readiness activities have improved countries' understanding of the GCF process, requirements and general work mode which will be beneficial for future access to the Fund. They have also raised the interest of stakeholders to become involved in developing and implementing GCF funding proposals. Countries also reported that the successful access of readiness funding have attracted offers of support from international accredited entities for future GCF funding proposals. Despite these successes, expectations regarding country ownership had in many cases not yet been fulfilled. Being able to access the GCF directly remained a high priority for many countries but many of them admitted that they still lacked the required national capacity.

46. In some countries, the readiness activities contributed to building stronger ties with the private sector in view of engaging it in adaptation activities. In this regard, the readiness inception workshops played an important role. In some countries, they contributed to involving the private sector in climate-related activities for the first time. One country shared that it had nominated a private sector entity as national accredited entity and another country mentioned that it was highly inspired by such experience which had been shared at a regional GCF workshop. In other countries, it was still too early to evaluate improvements of private-sector engagement. A delivery partner was rather sceptical regarding the role of the private sector in GCF-supported interventions. It mentioned that many financial institutions feared that the cheap finance resources of the GCF would undercut their current products and that the GCF process took too long to benefit them. It suggested that a study be undertaken to assess the private sector's view on GCF-supported interventions and objectives.

47. Initial signs were also noticed regarding strengthened capacity of countries to achieve the paradigm shift that is part of the access criteria of the GCF. Strengthened NDAs and national accredited entities, in case where they existed, will better position countries to receive scaled-up climate finance for adaptation. Countries also mentioned that the readiness activities and GCF access criteria pushed them to be more strategic regarding their national adaptation process and the mainstreaming of climate change/adaptation aspects into sectoral processes. In some cases, participants of readiness inception workshops had requested countries to move away from single entity initiatives towards more transformative programmes. Stakeholder involvement and awareness-raising on climate change, environmental and GCF-related issues in local language had also contributed to the paradigm shift. However, only a minor portion of readiness funds have yet been used for programme design. In this regard, one delivery partner reported that a true understanding of adaptation best practice for transformative project design was still missing among many NDAs and executing entities.

4.7. Further needs

48. Countries confirmed that their expectations towards the GCF readiness programme had in general been met. However, most countries underlined the need for continuous support to build on the activities and achievements reached under the programme. In particular, institutional capacity building for NDAs/focal points, accredited and executing entities was highlighted as an area which required sustained support in view of a long-term engagement with the GCF. Related to that was the need for support in stakeholder engagement activities, particularly regarding local actors, civil society and the private sector, with examples and south-south learning on how these groups have been engaged in other countries. Some larger countries stated that they would need to conduct more outreach and stakeholder engagement workshops to reach all relevant stakeholders and argued for a country allocation approach that would allow larger countries to access more readiness resources than the USD 1 million per year. In general, the strong call for sustained support for capacity-building and stakeholder engagement activities reflected countries' desire to increase country ownership with the ultimate goal of accessing the GCF directly without the involvement of a delivery partner.

49. Some countries shared that they had expected the process of accessing the readiness programme to be easier. They lamented that the requirements had been quite demanding and that the GCF secretariat was in some cases too ambitious in perfecting the proposal instead of concentrating on the important proposal aspects. It was argued that this lengthy process did not comply with the function of the readiness programme which is to prepare countries for accessing the larger funds of the GCF. In this regard, countries concurred that the GCF needed to make more efforts to comply with the vision of Parties to the UNFCCC that established the Fund in order to help developing countries to meet their obligations under the Convention. Consequently, they reminded the GCF of the importance of adhering

to COP guidance and expediting the readiness process. Suggestions in this regard included that instead of holding back the entire readiness proposal process in cases where only one component remained with deficits, the secretariat could approve the proposal on condition of eliminating such deficits. It was also proposed that the GCF secretariat should be positioned to approve all readiness proposals without the need of going through the Board, as in the case of proposals for NAP or other adaptation planning processes. This last point, however, was clarified by the GCF as already being the case.

4.8. Experiences regarding proposals for NAPs and/or other adaptation planning processes

50. Of the respondent countries, eight had submitted proposals for readiness support in order to formulate their NAPs and/or other national adaptation planning processes. At the time of the surveys, none had started implementation. Many were in the process of refinement together with the GCF Secretariat, and others were awaiting resubmission by the NDA to be eligible for support based on established requirements. This section summarizes the experience of these countries regarding information and communication with the GCF on readiness support for NAPs and/or other adaptation planning processes, the establishment of NDAs and country coordination mechanisms, the proposal development process, initial impacts and further needs.

51. With regard to **information** on how to access readiness funding for adaptation planning processes, countries appreciated efforts by the GCF to share such information after the Board had taken the respective decision in June 2016.¹⁴ However, initial guidance, which was mainly provided face-to-face and often by delivery partners in the absence of available information directly from the GCF Secretariat, was described as poor and inconsistent. Given the initial absence of information on the GCF website and a NAP-specific proposal template, countries referred to the technical material on NAPs developed by the LEG and the AC to guide the development of their proposals. Over time, however, information provided by the GCF secretariat and on the website was reported to have improved. Particularly the publication of an updated version of the Readiness Guidebook and a revised proposal template in June 2017 helped to address the concerns of countries over a lack of guidance regarding the possible nature of a NAP and/or other adaptation planning readiness proposal (e.g. cross-sector versus sector-specific) as well as on the types of outcomes and outputs that can be funded under a NAP and/or other adaptation planning readiness proposal versus a full GCF adaptation proposal. The revised Guidebook provides an indicative list of adaptation outcomes and sub-outcomes and the proposal template has been slightly adjusted to also serve countries applying for adaptation planning support. The provision of general deadlines for the submission and approval of readiness proposals as well as target start dates for the proposed activities was also appreciated. Finally, first staff hired in the GCF secretariat dedicated to managing the adaptation planning support helped to close a previously identified gap of personnel ready to be contacted by countries working on NAP and/or other adaptation planning proposals. Despite these improvements, many countries are still struggling with the identification of synergies between the GCF readiness programme and the NAP and/or other adaptation planning processes and delivery partners noticed that many country stakeholders remain unaware of such links.

52. In terms of **communication**, all countries shed a very positive light on the availability of adaptation planning and country dialogue staff at the GCF secretariat as well as regional advisors to respond to their queries, provide feedback on proposals and inform on follow-up procedures. Particularly the short response time was highly appreciated.

¹⁴ Decision B.13/09 (June 2016).

53. In all of the countries that have submitted NAP and/or other adaptation planning proposals, the **GCF NDA or focal point** is an entity that is directly responsible for the coordination, financing and/or implementation of national adaptation activities. As such, no problems have been experienced regarding an NDA's leverage over such activities.

Box 8. Country good practices: GCF NDAs/ focal points with leverage over adaptation planning

In **Mongolia**, the NDA for the GCF is the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Within that Ministry a National Focal Point for the GCF has been established which is also the UNFCCC Focal Point. The focal point is involved in all aspects of climate change work in Mongolia, including the development of the NAP, INDCs, and climate finance schemes. The NDA plays a key coordination role when it comes to the development and implementation of climate policies and measures.

Colombia's National Planning Department is the GCF NDA and at the same time the coordinator of the Colombian Climate Change National Adaptation Plan (PNACC). The aim of the readiness proposal is to establish stronger synergies between the country adaptation planning and the structuring of ambitious and fundable adaptation proposals that can contribute to the PNACC's implementation.

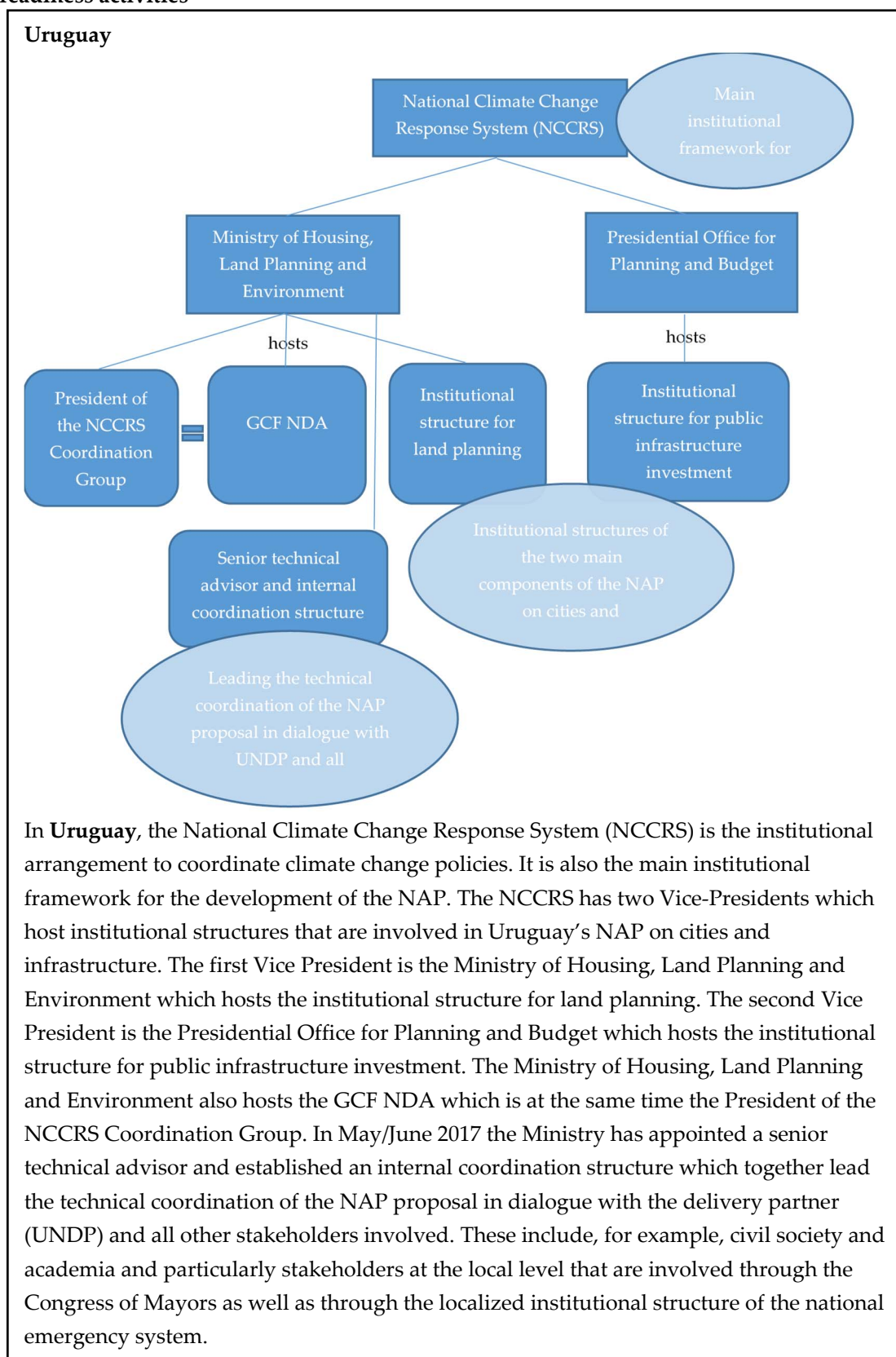
In **Nepal**, the NDA is hosted by the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance provides funding for all types of climate change activities, particularly for adaptation. For the fiscal year 2016/17 it has channelled almost 30 percent of the total budget through the dedicated climate change budget code. This way, the Ministry of Finance, acting as GCF NDA, coordinates and expedites all national processes related to accessing domestic and international climate change funding sources.

Uruguay has established a Climate Change Response System, which is the institutional arrangement to coordinate climate change policies within Uruguay. The president of the coordination group of the response system is at the same time Uruguay's NDA enabling a direct relationship between the NDA and adaptation leadership in the country.

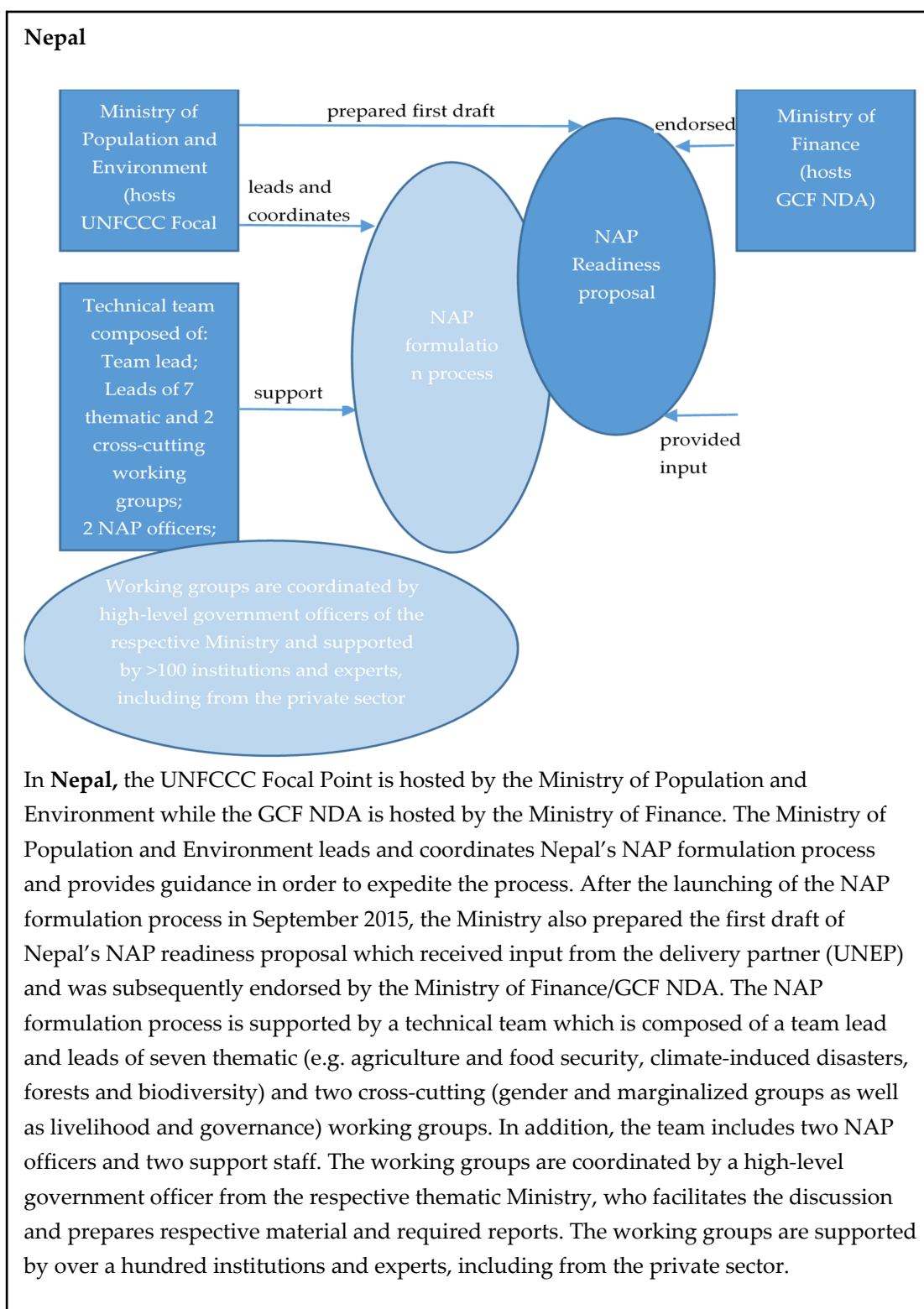
In **Liberia**, the NDA is hosted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) whereby the EPA's Executive Director is the NDA's Focal Point. Her back-up is the UNFCCC Focal Point and GCF Coordinator which enables constant information flow regarding climate change/ adaptation and financing issues. The EPA is in charge of all climate change related activities in Liberia, including the NAPA, the National Communication, the NDC and the process to formulate and implement NAPs.

54. In terms of linkages between a country's **GCF coordination mechanism** and institutions that are involved in the NAP and/or national adaptation planning process, most respondent countries count with an inter-ministerial or inter-institutional coordination mechanism that is responsible for overall climate change policies. This mechanism represents the link between climate finance, in this case readiness finance, and planning, in this case NAP and/or other adaptation planning, at the highest political level and often includes the GCF NDA and the UNFCCC Focal Point. For the technical planning and implementation of readiness activities related to NAP and/or other adaptation planning

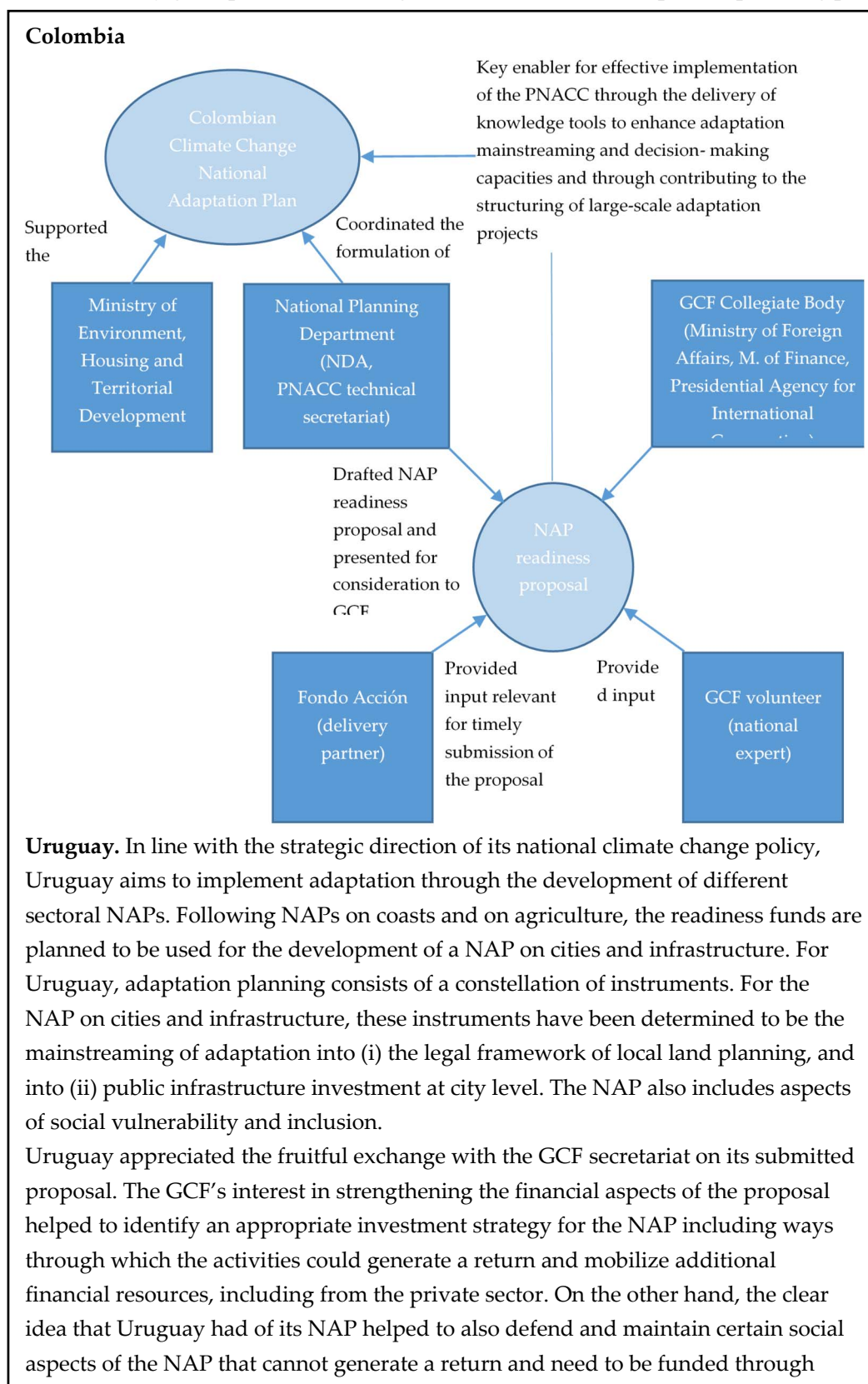
processes, most countries either use existing technical adaptation planning teams or plan to establish them with the help of the readiness support. These teams are usually comprised of representatives of different ministries and institutions and are responsible for the further involvement of relevant stakeholders. In some countries, the delivery partner provides an additional bridge between the GCF readiness and adaptation activities in cases where it supports both processes.

Box 9. Country good practices: Country coordination mechanism for NAP/ adaptation planning readiness activities


Box 10. Country good practices: Country coordination mechanism for NAP/ adaptation planning readiness activities, cont.



55. Regarding the experience of **linking their readiness and NAP and/or other adaptation planning processes**, the respondent countries can be divided into two groups – those countries that already had a national adaptation plan or planning process in place before drafting the adaptation readiness proposal and the others that initiated their NAP formulation process in parallel to applying for adaptation readiness support. Both groups reported advantages of their respective situation. Countries of the former group highlighted that they benefited from having a clear idea of their national adaptation priorities that they were able to defend when discussing and fine-tuning the proposal with the GCF and delivery partner.

Box 11. Country good practices: Linking readiness and NAP/ adaptation planning processes

56. Most of these countries are using the readiness funds in order to develop particular tools and capacities as well as to structure bankable adaptation projects that will help them to move from adaptation planning to implementation. Countries of the latter group reported that the parallel initiation of the NAP and/or adaptation planning and readiness processes facilitated effective matching of both processes including the coordination of respective stakeholders and the development of a common understanding of national adaptation needs and priorities among them. The main activities that these countries plan to undertake with the support of readiness funds include the prioritization of adaptation activities, building frameworks and methods for mainstreaming adaptation into sectors and policies, and building the respective knowledge and capacity among stakeholders to apply them. With regard to the latter group a delivery partner's experience demonstrated that greater synergies between the adaptation planning and the readiness activities had been built when both were supported by the same delivery partner. In general, countries mentioned that it was important to follow the NAP guidance by the COP and technical work by the AC and the LEG while adhering to a country-driven approach when designing the adaptation aspects of a readiness proposal and following GCF guidance for the readiness aspects. This would also allow for ensuring coherence between different NAP and/or other adaptation planning support programmes.

57. **Challenges** that countries encountered when drafting the adaptation planning readiness proposal included a lack of national staff with adequate capacity on adaptation, coordination of national stakeholder's priorities, collecting required data from different government sectors, understanding GCF terms and templates, such as regarding the level of detail of the information required and respective proposal evaluation criteria, and attending to different work modalities and requirements of the GCF and the delivery partner. Countries also reported challenges in adequately responding to the GCF's comments and/or suggestions for the proposal while adhering to their national priorities. Regarding the standardized packages of support offered by the GCF, some countries felt that, although expediting the proposal process, these provided quite rigid top-down support. This was felt to be particularly counterproductive in case of the adaptation planning proposals as NAP-related activities and outputs need to be more flexible to accommodate the diverse adaptation planning processes in each country.

58. The most important **challenge** that arose **after the submission** for countries that had submitted their proposals in 2017 was the long-time lag between the submission and the approval of the proposals which continued even at the time of the interviews although most countries had submitted their proposals several months ago. According to countries this was a critical issue particularly with regard to timelines of related processes, such as the development and implementation of nationally determined contributions.

59. In terms of **support** received for the development of the proposals, seven of the eight countries had worked with an international delivery partner and one with a national delivery partner. Several countries are receiving NAP support through the NAP Global Support Programme and benefited from workshops and technical input received under the umbrella of this programme for the development of their proposal. Other countries used technical inputs from consultants that support them in the context of other readiness programmes, such as the one funded by the German Environment Ministry.

60. Some initial **impacts** have been experienced by the countries in the context of the development of their proposal. In terms of strengthened national capacity to better access and deploy international funding for adaptation, the stock-taking of national adaptation needs and priorities was mentioned as well as the collection of general experience in writing project proposals. Regarding progress in the involvement of the private sector in adaptation activities, about half of the countries had included the private sector in the proposal writing phase, for example, via consultations or its participation in workshops. Others attributed a concrete role to the private sector in the planned readiness activities (see

box 12). In relation to contributing to the paradigm shift advocated by the GCF, the adaptation planning readiness activities were reported to have raised awareness and understanding of national adaptation needs and priorities, of the importance of inter-sectoral coordination and of the potential of synergies with other environmental issues. A different evaluation of climate risks and ways to mitigate them was also mentioned in this regard. Finally, one country referred to existing national deficits in achieving the paradigm shift that had been identified through the proposal writing and would now be addressed by the planned activities. These deficits included the formulation of adaptation projects at scale, the integration of the private sector and a wide range of information systems to improve decision-making and the need to gather a wide range of stakeholders behind national adaptation goals.

Box 12. Country good practices: Involving the private sector in NAP and/or other adaptation planning-related readiness activities

Uruguay will engage societies of the private sector (e.g. commissions of engineers or architects) and mainstream adaptation into their standards, for example design standards, as these have an enormous impact on the built environment. It will also collaborate with the private sector, for example through chambers, in order to address its concerns regarding climate risks and strengthen its capacity, for example with regard to taking decisions under uncertainty. Finally, the private sector will be involved in the planned NAP readiness activities by being commissioned by the public sector for important public infrastructure projects.

Colombia plans to perform an analysis of the regulatory framework needed to enable private sector investments in adaptation and to design tools for the private sector to consider climate risk information in its cash flow models. The analysis will be performed in two key economic sectors based on the progress of their adaptation plans and private sector leadership and interest. The sectors will be selected from the prioritized sectors under Colombia's Climate Change National Adaptation Plan. Colombia will also use the readiness funds to design two concrete adaptation projects with the potential of being financed and implemented by private actors that can contribute to the PNACC's implementation.

Armenia has involved private actors from the tourism, energy, infrastructure, and insurance sectors in the development of its readiness proposal through consultations and their involvement in stakeholder workshops.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is planning to support the private sector in terms of "climate proofing" products, to establish public-private partnerships for scaling up financing for adaptation, to develop strategies to foster private investment in new climate sensitive technologies and to encourage private funding of adaptation options.

61. For most countries, it was too soon to say whether their **expectations** regarding readiness support for NAP and/or other adaptation planning processes have been met, given that at the time of the survey most proposals were receiving feedback by the GCF or were being revised by the countries, except for Nepal and Liberia. In this regard, several countries even stated that their expectation had not been met as the approval had taken much longer than expected. Despite the outstanding approvals, some countries were very satisfied with the GCF secretariat's efficient and productive review of their queries and proposals.

62. **Gaps** that remained in countries' understanding and application of the GCF's policies, standards and procedures included the criteria for the approval of NAP or adaptation planning proposals. One country mentioned that without having had a clear idea of its NAP before applying for readiness funds it would not have been in a position to formulate an ambitious proposal by only basing it on GCF guidance and templates. Another country mentioned discrepancies in the understanding of GCF procedures at its federal and provincial levels with the provincial level having a lower level of comprehension of the requirements. This had the potential of leading to problems in the actual implementation of activities that usually happened in the provinces. Another critical issue that countries were eager to better understand were links between readiness activities on adaptation planning and legal requirements for adaptation reporting under the Paris Agreement. Some countries said that they would not have been in a position to apply for GCF funding without the support of the delivery partner but that the experience had helped them to conduct future application processes on their own.

63. **Further NAP and/or adaptation planning-related readiness needs** of countries include the provision of support that would further prepare and enable the implementation of adaptation activities. In the case of one country this includes support for capacity-building and an information system that would enable accurate decision making, evaluation and monitoring of the integration of territorial and sectoral adaptation priorities. For another country this meant building capacity for decision-making under uncertainty. For a third country this included support for pilot adaptation projects that could demonstrate adaptation benefits and raise interest for follow-up activities. Still another country required additional funds for comprehensive vulnerability assessments along its large coastal areas. Countries also called for more opportunities to share lessons and good practices of NAP and/or other adaptation planning-related readiness activities. In general, countries desired additional support for building in-country capacity to access regular GCF funds for the implementation of scaled-up adaptation projects.

64. Besides considering national and sub-national resources and eventually other international adaptation funds, most countries intend to access the larger funds from the GCF for the **further financing of NAP** and/or other adaptation **planning** and particularly **implementation**. Some countries also count on private funding sources as they would like to become more independent from international public funds. Most countries expect that the readiness activities, particularly country programming activities, will help them in developing adequate financing strategies. Furthermore, countries demonstrate great willingness to accelerate the accreditation of national entities to enable direct access to the GCF.

Box 13. Lessons learned regarding the development of NAP and/or other adaptation planning-related readiness proposals

1. Close communication between countries and the GCF secretariat as well as prompt and direct feedback is essential in this initial phase of NAP and/or other adaptation planning-related readiness work.
2. Countries have a clear idea of how they are planning to coordinate adaptation planning and readiness work, but often lack sufficient national resources and/or capacities.
3. Both options, having a NAP already in place or starting the formulation process in parallel to developing a readiness proposal, have advantages and it lies in the hands of the applicant to make best use of readiness resources to progress from its respective starting point.

4. Some countries have found it useful to include a financing strategy as a component of their proposals to support NAP and/or adaptation planning processes. This can include priority project concept ideas and opportunities to finance them, including by the GCF, as well as ways to continue to fund adaptation planning activities after the GCF support is completed.
5. NAPs and/or other adaptation planning processes are ensuring coherence and consistency of GCF programming by linking priorities articulated in country programme briefs and leading to identification, prioritisation and design of project concept ideas.
6. It is useful to include an explanation for how social dimensions, including differences based on gender, will be integrated into the proposed activities. Defining priorities at all levels (national, sub-national, and others) to ensure that differences based on gender will be captured and that inequalities will be addressed in planning and implementation is a useful exercise in this regard.
7. A clear mechanism for how stakeholders will be engaged through the adaptation planning process is a further useful element of adaptation planning proposals.
8. Synergies between readiness and NAP and/or other adaptation planning-related activities can be enhanced if both are supported by the same delivery partner or if there is a close collaboration between their delivery partners.
9. Countries are eager to better understand linkages between readiness work on adaptation planning and the timelines and requirements of related processes, which are still under UNFCCC negotiations, such as NDCs or adaptation reporting. They require flexibility in the timeline of their adaptation planning processes in order to being able to take into account future COP guidance.

5. Summary of recommendations by countries and delivery partners

65. The following recommendations have been shared by countries (C) and delivery partners (DP) on the different aspects of accessing readiness funds. They are primarily directed at the GCF secretariat but could in some cases be addressed with the help of other stakeholders.

- a) Information and communication:
 - i) Assess and improve, where needed, effectiveness of existing mechanisms designed to ensure that countries and other relevant partners are kept up-to-date with developments under the readiness programme, particularly on the types of activities that can be funded under the programme, changes in access procedures and in roles and responsibilities of GCF staff (C).
 - ii) Continue reaching out to country stakeholders to inform them on the opportunities of the readiness programme and to respond to increasing and evolving country needs (C).
 - iii) Provide readiness documents in French, Spanish and potentially other languages and keep updating the Readiness Guidebook and template regularly (C).
 - iv) In alignment with the first bullet point above, engage actively with NDAs after each Board meeting to help them understand the outcomes and their implications (DP).
- b) Establishment of NDAs/focal points, country coordination mechanisms and national accredited entities or national delivery partners

- i) Assess and improve, where required, countries awareness of the requirements for national entities to become accredited and/or to serve as national delivery partners and keep supporting entities in meeting such requirements (C).
- c) Readiness proposal development
 - i) Assess and, if required, recommend avoiding overambition in countries' readiness proposals regarding the amount of activities planned in the proposed timeframe to ensure good quality of project outcomes (DP).
 - ii) In cases where NDAs lack the technical capacity for proposal development and implementation, provide the opportunity of funding an individual to support the NDA over the period of the readiness process and transfer knowledge instead of different consultants supporting various aspects of the readiness process without leaving an institutional memory (DP).
 - iii) Regularly assess opportunities to simplify and thus expedite the proposal approval process in order to enable countries to quickly implement their readiness activities and be prepared to access the larger GCF funds (C).
 - iv) Provide clarity on the legal instruments required to be in place before implementation (C).
- d) Implementation
 - i) Explore opportunities to disburse readiness funds through national systems even in cases in which countries work with international or regional delivery partners to give governments the chance to create confidence in their institutions and combine this with guidance and support on fiduciary standards for national entities (C).
 - ii) Ensure scheduled funding disbursement, e.g. by working with countries and delivery partners on timely satisfaction of project milestones (C).
- e) NAPs and/or other adaptation planning processes
 - i) Keep improving guidance on how to develop NAP and/or other adaptation planning-related readiness proposals based on the initial experience of countries, delivery partners and the GCF secretariat and in the context of NAP guidance provided by the COP and related technical work developed by the LEG and the AC (C).
 - ii) Consider adapting the GCF standardized packages of support to allow for more flexibility in the proposal development which is needed to respect the diversity of adaptation processes in the countries (DP).
 - iii) Establish an exchange platform that would enable countries with similar vulnerability profiles to share good practices on NAP and/or other adaptation planning-related readiness activities (C).
 - iv) Allow for flexibility in the implementation of NAP and/or other adaptation planning-related readiness activities in order to enable countries to take into account evolving COP guidance on NAPs and related processes such as NDCs or adaptation reporting.

6. Next steps

66. The AC, based on the experiences, lessons and recommendations of countries summarized in the paper, may wish to:

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- a) Agree on a set of recommendations for consideration by COP 23. The COP may wish to:
- i) Welcomes the GCF Board's decision to initiate a review of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme and encourages the GCF to continue improving access to GCF resources and communication about available support with relevant GCF stakeholders, including National Designated Authorities;
 - ii) Invites the GCF, as an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism, to provide information on how to access GCF resources, including through the Readiness and Preparatory Support programme, in French and Spanish and potentially other languages to facilitate the application process for non-Anglophone countries;
 - iii) Request the GCF to further improve the efficiency of approval and disbursement processes to accelerate access to readiness funds, allow for seamless continuation of readiness activities in case of subsequent proposals and continue to enable countries to swiftly access GCF funds;
 - iv) Request the GCF to continue improving guidance on how to develop proposals, based on the experience of, and input from, countries, delivery partners and the GCF Secretariat with particular attention to be given to NAP-related readiness proposals in the context of the assessment of country circumstances and needs, NAP guidance provided by the COP and related technical work developed by the LEG and the AC, as appropriate;
 - v) Request the GCF to allow for flexibility in the implementation of NAP-related readiness activities in order to enable countries to take into account evolving COP guidance on NAPs and related processes such as NDCs or adaptation reporting;
- b) Use the findings of this paper to inform the preparation of the workshop included in its workplan to advance the understanding and overcome challenges relating to:
- i) The establishment of national entities for direct access; and
 - ii) Accessing the GCF readiness programme for adaptation;
- c) Continue work on collecting experiences from countries in accessing the readiness programme and expanding the scope to also cover GCF funding beyond the readiness programme, to relevant information on accessing funding from the GCF for the process to formulate and implement NAPs, in response to decision 4/CP.21, paragraph 10, to be included in its annual report and through other means.

Annex: Overview of countries and delivery partners that provided responses via the survey and/or interviews

Countries

| Name | Survey date | Interview date | Status of readiness activities at the time of survey/interview | Activity areas |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--|---|
| Antigua and Barbuda | Jan 2017 | | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Armenia | May 2017 | | Proposal submitted | National Adaptation Planning (NAP) |
| Benin | | May 2017 | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + direct access support |
| Bolivia | | May 2017 | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | July 2017 | | Proposal submitted | National Adaptation Planning (NAP) |
| Central African Republic | | May 2017 | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Cook Islands | | May 2017 | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + direct access support |
| Colombia | June 2017 | | Proposal submitted | National Adaptation Planning (NAP) |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | | May/ July 2016 | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Dominican Republic | | May 2017 | Implementation (1-2 weeks) | NDA strengthening + country programme + direct access support |
| Ethiopia | January 2017 | | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Federated States of Micronesia | | May 2016 | Implementation (| NDA strengthening + country programme + direct access support |
| Georgia | June 2017 | | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Liberia | | December 2016 | Proposal approved | National Adaptation Planning (NAP) |

| Name | Survey date | Interview date | Status of readiness activities at the time of survey/interview | Activity areas |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Mali | | May 2016 | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Mongolia | | May 2017 | Proposal submitted | National Adaptation Planning (NAP) |
| Nepal | | December 2016 | Proposal approved | National Adaptation Planning (NAP) |
| Niger | | May 2017 | Proposal approved | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Pakistan | June 2017 | | Proposal submitted | National Adaptation Planning (NAP) |
| Senegal | | March 2017 | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Timor-Leste | July 2017 | | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Togo | | May 2017 | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Tunisia | June 2017 | | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Uruguay | | May 2017 | Proposal submitted | National Adaptation Planning (NAP) |
| Vanuatu | Jan 2017 | | Proposal approved | NDA strengthening + country programme |
| Zambia | | May 2017 | Implementation (> 6 months) | NDA strengthening + country programme |

Delivery partners

| Name | Survey date | Countries supported |
|--|---------------|---|
| Centre de Suivi Ecologique (CSE) | January 2017 | Senegal, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Togo |
| Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) | December 2016 | Vanuatu ¹⁵ |

¹⁵ GIZ has supported additional countries under the readiness programme. However, responses to the survey were provided by the representative responsible for supporting readiness activities in Vanuatu.

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| Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) | January 2017 | Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan |
| United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) | February 2017 | Armenia, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia-and-Herzegovina, Burundi, Chad, Congo, DR Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Thailand, Uruguay, Uzbekistan |
| United Nations Environment | April 2017 | Zimbabwe, Comoros, Benin (other countries are supported but proposals have not been approved yet) |