

Fifth meeting of the Adaptation Committee Bonn, Germany, 5–7 March 2014

Report on the workshop on the monitoring and evaluation of adaptation

Follow-up action by the Adaptation Committee

The AC, at its 5th meeting, considered the information contained in the draft of this report and agreed to revise it with the support of the secretariat before making it available on the AC's website. It also agreed that the Co-Chairs, assisted by the secretariat, would prepare a concept note outlining possible next steps and recommendations to the COP, for consideration by the AC by early July and adoption at AC6. The concept note is available in a separate document.

1. Introduction

The Adaptation Committee (AC) as part of its three-year work plan agreed to conduct a workshop on the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of adaptation, building on and contributing to existing processes related to this topic. The workshop engaged leaders in the monitoring and evaluation of adaptation with expertise in implementing adaptation at different levels, including the national, programme and project levels, from governments, regional organizations, development banks, bilateral technical cooperation agencies, research institutions and civil society.¹ The workshop addressed the following three broad policy questions:

- (a) Given the diverse set of indicators that currently exist to measure and evaluate adaptation, how can communities, countries and development and adaptation agencies build a common understanding of success in achieving climate resilience?
- (b) How can a framework be created that links individual assessments with national-level assessments to broaden the focus from the means of achieving outcomes (individual interventions) to the desired end result (countries becoming less vulnerable and having more adaptive capacity)?
- (c) How can the results of monitoring and evaluation be reported and disseminated so as to ensure that they are fed back into the respective adaptation process but also allow for lessons learned and good practices identified to be shared with the wider community of adaptation planners and practitioners?

Following its consideration of the workshop report at its fifth meeting, the Adaptation Committee will develop recommendations and guidance for consideration by the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its twentieth session with a view to providing technical support and guidance to the Parties in order to facilitate the enhanced implementation of adaptation actions.

The following report first provides an overview on the proceedings of the workshop (section 2) before offering an analysis of the key issues addressed at the workshop (section 3). It concludes with possible issues for further consideration by the Adaptation Committee when developing recommendations and guidance for the COP (section 4).

2. Proceedings

The AC workshop on the M&E of adaptation was held in Nadi, Fiji, from 9 to 11 September 2013. It was organized by the AC and the secretariat, funded by the Governments of Japan and Norway and hosted by the Government of Fiji. The workshop was chaired by Ms. Christina Chan, Vice-

¹ The agenda and presentations made during the workshop are available at <unfccc.int/7744>.

Chair of the AC and facilitated by Ms. Marita Manley, Climate Change Advisor for the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Participants at the workshop comprised nine AC members and 40 experts from governments, regional organizations, development banks, bilateral technical cooperation agencies, research institutions and civil society that are active in the M&E of adaptation at different levels and sectors. They included experts involved in auditing national climate change policies, in designing and implementing community-based learning networks for resilience, and in building learning into national M&E systems.

Discussions at the workshop were informed by a background note providing an overview on the current state of the M&E of adaptation, including related to common concepts and approaches, methodological challenges, and ongoing M&E efforts. In addition, experts provided information on the state of M&E of adaptation in their area of work in line with the above policy questions.²

The opening of the workshop on the first day was followed by an introductory session, during which three presentations were made – one on the role and work of the AC, one on the scope and input to the workshop, and another on the current state of play on the M&E of adaptation. Following that, participants addressed the first policy question in plenary with presentations and in small groups. Afterwards, participants initiated discussions on the second policy question through presentations and worked in groups to identify key principles and elements that should underpin the establishment of integrated frameworks as well as to identify good practices, lessons learned, opportunities and constraints.

The second day started with sharing of experiences with existing national level monitoring and evaluation systems and tools through presentations and discussions of a variety of case studies³ in plenary and in small groups. The final day focused on learning from M&E and addressed the third policy question through presentations in plenary and group discussions. In the final session, experts considered take home messages and issues for further consideration. The workshop concluded with a summary by the AC.

3. Analysis of key issues addressed at the workshop

3.1 Introduction to the M&E of adaptation

In light of the complexity and long-term nature of climate change and its impacts, it is essential that adaptation be designed as a continuous and flexible process and subject to periodic review. Knowledge and information gained from M&E of adaptation actions should thus be fed back into the adaptation process to ensure that future adaptation efforts are successful.

The purpose of monitoring is to continuously keep track of progress made in implementing a specific adaptation action in relation to its objectives and inputs, which include financial resources. Monitoring enables planners and practitioners to compare between the actual and the expected performance and to subsequently improve adaptation efforts by adjusting processes and targets where necessary. It should be carried out during implementation, as well as during the lifetime of the adaptation action and in some cases beyond.

Evaluation is a process for systematically and objectively determining the effectiveness of an adaptation action. Evaluation can be carried out during implementation (ongoing/interim evaluation), at the completion of implementation (final evaluation), and/or some years after completion (post evaluation). Assessing effectiveness involves two questions: first, have the objectives and targets been achieved? And second, can this achievement be attributed to the

² Information from experts is available at <unfccc.int/7746>.

³ Experience was shared from the following case studies: Cambodia, France, Germany, Grenada, Nepal, Niger, Norway, Samoa, South Africa, and the UK.

adaptation measure taken? Besides determining effectiveness, evaluations may have additional purposes⁴, including:

- Assessing efficiency;
- Understanding equity;⁵
- Providing accountability;
- Assessing outcomes;
- Improving learning;
- Improving future activities or interventions;
- Comparing with other similar activities or interventions.

Evaluation must satisfy certain quality criteria and be carried out systematically, with due concern for factual accuracy and impartiality, i.e. they should be carried out by independent evaluators that have not had any other involvement in the project cycle.

Successful monitoring and evaluation frameworks require two basic questions to be answered up front: what has to be monitored and evaluated (scope), and who has to monitor and evaluate it (responsibilities)? According to UNDP's Adaptation Policy Frameworks, a good M&E framework includes clearly formulated goals, objectives, and output measures and depends on the availability of quality data. A well designed M&E framework can reveal how social, economic, institutional and political factors support or impede adaptation. In this way, countries and organizations can incrementally adjust their adaptation strategies to ensure that they are increasingly effective.⁶

Participants through a presentation learned about methodological challenges faced, including as they relate to:

- The nature of adaptation, including long timescales and uncertainty associated with impacts and difficulties in setting of baselines and targets;
- A lack of agreed metrics to determine effectiveness, e.g. no agreed method to measure the reduction of vulnerability;
- Complementing intermediate assessments with long-term evaluations as enhanced resilience today may contribute to greater impacts in the future;
- The difficulty of attributing cause and effect. It may be more realistic to look at the contribution of an adaptation component to the overall outcome.

In addition, results of a review of national M&E systems for adaptation in Germany, Mozambique, Nepal and the UK were shared by an expert from the OECD.⁷ The OECD observed that there is a lag between the planning and implementation of policies and the formulation of M&E frameworks. The focus of the M&E approaches in the different countries is to a large extent defined by the different policy approaches and funding mechanisms. The German and the UK M&E frameworks are structured around a limited number of priority adaptation areas and they did not include an assessment of the political enabling environment needed to facilitate the adaptation process. Instead, they examined if the integrated approach to adaptation contributed to more climate resilient societies. In contrast, in Nepal all development initiatives – including those focusing on adaptation – are subject to national monitoring mechanisms and tracking of

⁴ Taken from Pringle, P. (2011): *AdaptME: Adaptation monitoring and evaluation*. UKCIP, Oxford, UK. Available at <<http://www.ukcip.org.uk/adaptme-toolkit>>. The toolkit provides further information on the purpose and types of evaluations.

⁵ This includes the consideration of uneven distribution of impacts among different groups/communities, of varying levels of ability to engage in the design of the intervention, and of the differing needs for adaptation etc.

⁶ UNDP (2004). *Adaptation Policy Frameworks for Climate Change: Developing Strategies, Policies and Measures*. In particular technical paper 9. Available at <www.preventionweb.net/files/7995_APF.pdf>.

⁷ See <unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/adaptation_committee/application/pdf/national_level_m&e_lamhauge.pdf>.

progress in implementing agreed activities. In parallel, adaptation initiatives implemented with support from development partners have their own M&E frameworks. The OECD further highlighted that there are differences in the objectives and constraints faced by the M&E systems in the different countries. For example, there are no baselines or targets in the indicator systems in Germany and the UK, which instead make use of trend analysis. Both Germany and the UK have followed similar timescales to develop their M&E frameworks and to get them operational. Although they adopted their legal frameworks in 2008, the first assessments are not expected until 2015. This contrasts with the timescales and pressures faced by developing countries such as Nepal or Mozambique, as they seek to analyze the effectiveness and value for money, in particular at the instigation of reporting requirements from donors. Data availability, in particular at the appropriate scale, timeframe and format, and the capacity to use it is an issue common to all countries and determines the extent and quality of the M&E systems.

3.2 Building a common understanding of success in achieving climate resilience

Participants shared their experience from different countries, sectors and levels and reflected on the objectives of M&E, the different needs of stakeholders, whether or not a common understanding of success is needed and helpful and on who should be involved in determining how success is measured.

Participants agreed that, since adaptation is a process, success is context specific and dynamic, i.e. it means different things at different levels and to different stakeholders. **There won't be a single measure of success and participants cautioned to trying to identify and agree on a set of common indicators.**

While having a common understanding of success has a significant value, it should not be a requisite for undertaking adaptation action. At the outset, vulnerabilities and impacts need to be identified, actions be prioritized and underlying principles be agreed upon, including targets and indicators to measure whether those targets have been met. **Participants emphasized that targets should not only encompass those that can be measured quantitatively but also qualitative factors.** These qualitative factors could include reasons, including looking for reasons for vulnerability, e.g. inequity, lack of agency/skills to overcome challenges.

Participants highlighted that different stakeholders, including local, national and international decision-makers; practitioners; communities; researchers; and producers and disseminators of knowledge, will have different M&E needs. Stakeholders need to be assigned clear roles defining their responsibility and accountability in data provision, quality assurance and in creating the necessary channels for ensuring that the relevant information derived from M&E reaches the relevant stakeholders.

3.3 Creating frameworks that align subnational/project-based assessments with national-level assessments

Participants were asked to answer the question about how a framework could be created that links individual assessments with national level assessments in order to capture progress toward strengthened adaptive capacity at a national level. This question was not fully addressed. Some interpreted the question to mean: can we aggregate subnational/project-based assessments up to a national level assessment of adaptive capacity? In response to that question, **participants agreed that adding up indicators from local level to get an aggregate number is neither necessarily possible nor desirable. Rather than creating a framework that links the two levels, experts suggested that the Adaptation Committee consider** that national level assessments measure different aspects of adaptive capacity than subnational/project-based assessments. National level assessments could, for example, seek to measure the degree of coordination and integration of adaptation into national priorities.

Participants instead focused this session on key elements of M&E frameworks, including associated success factors, opportunities and challenges. Experts presented on the Tracking

Adaptation and Measuring Development (TAMD) project,⁸ Norway's experience,⁹ Nepal's Environment Friendly Local Governance monitoring framework,¹⁰ Germany's monitoring system of its adaptation strategy¹¹ and the M&E Framework developed under the Pilot Programme on Climate Resilience (PPCR).¹²

TAMD is an evaluative framework for assessing the effectiveness of adaptation and adaptation-relevant interventions that seek to address outcomes and longer term impacts. It encompasses a two-track approach by evaluating adaptation success as a combination of how widely and how well countries or institutions manage climate risks (Track 1) and how successful adaptation interventions are in reducing climate vulnerability and in keeping development on course (Track 2). Using TAMD as an example, participants also conversed on theories of change and other narratives as tools, provided they are empirically robust, and are based on sound, transparent evidence, for assessing the attribution/contribution of a certain adaptation measure to a certain outcome thus spanning different levels. Empirically-grounded theories of change can identify potential causal mechanisms linking outputs, outcomes and impacts. Evaluation can then examine whether these mechanisms are evident in reality thus verifying these theories and narratives.

Participants also learned about the Norwegian approach to M&E, which is characterized by integrating climate and adaptation consideration into existing planning processes. While it may not require a lot of financial resources, it requires time, capacity-building and collaboration among different actors. In order to align the local with the national level, Norway put in place arenas for peer-learning, regional support and learning platforms through the County Governor's office, a national clearing house and it involves local planners in developing tools and methods. In order to enhance and assess adaptation, Norway utilizes platforms for exchange and learning and strengthens the multi-level governance system.

Experts from Nepal and Germany shared their respective frameworks for monitoring their adaptation efforts. Following its National Adaptation Programme of Action, Nepal developed a national framework for Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPA) and an Environment Friendly Local Governance (EFLG) framework. Through the EFLG, the household level is linked to the settlement, and up to the municipality and district level. Progress is monitored annually along 149 indicators, which are measured at different levels (household, community or local government level). Germany monitors its progress on its adaptation strategy along 15 action fields and associated impact and response indicators and based on existing data. In order to enhance M&E, Germany seeks to avoid adding additional operating expenses, which would be incurred by establishing a specific monitoring system, but instead to align with existing reporting requirements and data sets and to share tasks and responsibilities.

The PPCR also presented on its experiences and lessons learned from its M&E framework. According to the PPCR expert, the results framework developed for the PPCR has already been revised and simplified as most pilot countries did not have the capacity to establish a complex M&E system, which would have been required under the original results framework. The revised PPCR results framework has 11 (5 core and 6 optional) instead of 22 indicators covering resilient development planning, adaptive capacity, decision making, and innovative investment approaches to reflect the expected transformation process in PPCR countries. In addition, the PPCR has developed a monitoring and reporting toolkit, which consists of guidance and reporting tools (score cards and tables) for the five PPCR core indicators, two of which are to be applied at

⁸ See <unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/adaptation_committee/application/pdf/tamd_fisher.pdf>.

⁹ See <unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/adaptation_committee/application/pdf/mande_norway_karlsen.pdf>.

¹⁰ See <unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/adaptation_committee/application/pdf/building_community_resilience_through_environment_friendly_local_governance_sharma.pdf>.

¹¹ See <unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/adaptation_committee/application/pdf/das_rueth.pdf>.

¹² See <unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/adaptation_committee/application/pdf/m&r_eandl_roehrer_day_2.pdf>.

the national level while the other three at the project/programme level. Three of the core PPCR indicators are qualitative in nature, and it was noted that using scorecards can bring-a quantitative element to qualitative information.

Taking into account the experiences shared, participants identified key elements of M&E frameworks, including associated success factors, opportunities and challenges.

Participants emphasized that **the context, purpose, stakeholders involved and their respective roles are all important factors that determine the key elements of an adaptation M&E system and the process through which it is developed.** There is a clear distinction between developed and developing countries in terms of who drives/uses the M&E framework. In many developing countries, M&E frameworks are donor-driven and for the purpose of accountability. **Many participants proposed to review existing M&E systems to identify gaps in taking integrated approaches. Having a functional national M&E system is essential to the viability of adaptation M&E frameworks and in this regard existing national processes, such as NAPAs or LAPA, were identified as possible entry points for linking national level assessments with project/programme level M&E.** Flexibility needs to be maintained though in order to allow for the incorporation of updates and new indicators.

Participants stressed that **indicators are not the only tools for M&E and are not always appropriate.** Learning through dialogue and qualitative narratives can be useful, as indicators can sometimes exclude the most vulnerable. While process-based indicators are currently most used, outcome and impact indicators should be considered, too. In addition, raising awareness among stakeholders, including through capacity-building, is important and so is the promotion of coordination, particularly between ministries responsible for planning, finance and climate change, to ensure that adaptation is integrated into the national M&E framework.

Additional key elements of M&E frameworks identified include communication channels that can foster sharing and exchange of information and knowledge; and forums and networks that provide the necessary space for exchanging lessons learned. Finally, the design of an M&E framework should be guided by pragmatism rather than idealism.

Participants emphasized that **M&E frameworks should be transparent, flexible, responsive, reviewed regularly and capable of promoting learning and integrating knowledge.** In terms of opportunities, participants identified the presence of some tested methods and tools ('learning from others'), related plans and policies, and interested organizations. For example, practical tools, such as scorecards and tables, could be used to create a system that satisfies monitoring and reporting requirements and at the same time is flexible enough to allow for tailoring to national circumstances. Identified challenges, include insufficient data and capacities to use data and the need to harmonize and aggregate data; as well as financial barriers and insufficient policies and legislation.

Participants underlined that current M&E, including as it was presented, focuses on monitoring actions. However, there is also a need to evaluate impact to assess the contribution of actions to enhancing adaptive capacity. According to participants, results of evaluations depend on their purpose (value for money, capacity building and learning, etc.), who's undertaking them (independent experts, communities, etc.) and the methodology used (document analysis, interviews, participatory analysis, etc.). In terms of enhancing evaluations, participants suggested that:

- National planning can set medium-term priorities, which could be evaluated with inputs from projects (typically short-, medium-term);
- Purpose and scope of evaluations are communicated well in advance, so as to get buy-in and to create a positive environment;
- Learning becomes an important part of evaluation and that evaluations also include unintended/unexpected impacts.

In light of the increasing demand for robust M&E frameworks, more tools and methodologies are under preparation. For example, the UNFCCC Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG)

developed a tool (Progress, Effectiveness and Gaps – PEG),¹³ for use by the LDCs in their national systems and a tool for the monitoring and evaluation of progress, effectiveness and gaps in the formulation and implementation of NAPAs and National Adaptation Plans at the national level.

3.4 Reporting and disseminating results of M&E, including sharing of lessons learned and good practices

Finally, participants considered the issue of learning and feedback from M&E, in particular how a positive learning environment could be created; which formats, channels and categories could be used to share information with different stakeholders; and how institutional learning could be encouraged and supported.¹⁴

An expert from Brazil shared relevant experience from an adaptation audit undertaken by the Brazilian Federal Court of Accounts to provide the parliament with objective information to help them examine the government's public spending and performance. The audit focused on adaptation measures in the agriculture and livestock sector, coastal zones and in the Brazilian semi-arid region regarding water security.¹⁵ The Federal Court of Accounts concluded that there is a lack of adaptation goals in the national plan on climate change; that there are conflicts of jurisdiction and lack of coordination between federal and state managers; that there is a need for implementing permanent monitoring systems and consolidation of isolated databases; and that there is a need to enhance access to meteorological data. As a result of the audit, the government created a National Center for Monitoring and Disaster Alert; provided open access of the historical series of meteorological data to researchers; and incorporated adaptation consideration in sector plans.

Participants also learned about the inclusive resilience framework in Vanuatu,¹⁶ which has a strong community grounding. Among the key learning elements are learning networks, peer monitoring, and the inclusive engagement of government and civil society organization. Vanuatu's experience shows how community participation throughout the program cycle and reflections at multiple levels can contribute to learning and building resilience; the benefits of drawing and building on diverse sources of knowledge, including traditional and scientific; the advantages of participatory approaches with multiple stakeholders to encourage joint reflection, joint analysis and peer-to-peer learning; and the need to put emphasis on understanding underlying inequality/rights/ structural causes and multiple shocks and stresses in order to avoid maladaptation.

While the importance of learning was recognized, participants identified a number of barriers, including:

- Conventional M&E objectives and institutional structures can inhibit learning;
- Reluctance to share bad experiences and to challenge fundamental assumptions;
- Overwhelming number of lessons learned and case studies;
- Resource implications.

In terms of overcoming barriers and enhancing learning through M&E, participants stressed that:

- M&E should be designed as a tool for enabling learning, including on what works, within what context and how, instead of simply measuring results;
- Enabling effective learning means considering information gathered and how this information is communicated and how feedback is incentivized;

¹³ See <unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/adaptation_committee/application/pdf/peg_tool_latasi.pdf>.

¹⁴ See <unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/adaptation_committee/application/pdf/m&e_and_learning_pringle.pdf>.

¹⁵ See <unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/adaptation_committee/application/pdf/auditing_arifa.pdf> and the audit reports are available here: <www.environmental-auditing.org/tabid/126/CountryId/410/Default.aspx>.

¹⁶ See <unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/adaptation_committee/application/pdf/learning_in_vanuatu_labau.pdf>.

- A diversity of stakeholders need to be engaged as different groups will provide different lessons, in particular through face-to-face learning and innovative, non-conventional methods;
- A positive learning environment and “safe spaces” is a prerequisite for M&E to facilitate learning so that learning is not only about successes and good practices, but also about learning/discovering factors that contribute to failures/non-delivery;
- Institutional learning could be enhanced through clear legislation and mandates, making learning part of the job and budget.

4. Issues for further consideration by the Adaptation Committee

In terms of enhancing the M&E of adaptation, participants suggested the AC to consider the following issues:

Lessons and key messages from experts to the Adaptation Committee, as they relate specifically to the three policy questions identified for this workshop:

Policy Question 1: How can we build a common understanding of success?

- M&E has multiple purposes and benefits, including raising awareness, learning, accountability etc., it is a tool not an end in itself;
- Planning and allocation of resources, both technical and financial, are key for effective M&E systems;
- M&E frameworks need to be appropriate and relevant to the needs and tailored to country-circumstances, there is no one-size fits all framework and not just one measure of success for adaptation – clearly formulated goals, objectives, and output measures are essential for good M&E frameworks;
- Indicators are useful, but not the only means to monitor progress – if used, indicators should not only be used to monitor the process, but also outcomes and impacts; a common set of indicators that can be applied to monitor any adaptation action is not useful due to the context-specific nature of adaptation.

Policy Question 2: How can a framework be created that links individual assessments with national level assessments?

- Adding up indicators from local level to get an aggregate number is neither necessarily possible nor desirable. Rather than creating a framework that links the two levels, experts suggested that the Adaptation Committee consider that national level assessments measure different aspects of adaptive capacity than subnational/project-based assessments. National level assessments could, for example, seek to measure the degree of coordination and integration of adaptation into national priorities.

Policy Question 3: How can results from M&E feed back into the adaptation process and be shared?

- Formal and informal learning is a key part of M&E and should be encouraged, including through creating the necessary enabling environment, drawing from different sources of knowledge, establishing respective communication channels and incentives, building in and budgeting for learning and involving all relevant stakeholders including communities and civil society;
- Peer-to-peer learning and participatory approaches can be effective and help to reveal underlying inequality/rights/ structural causes for vulnerability;
- Learning should also include sharing of negative experience and challenging of fundamental assumptions.