

This policy brief....

... introduces the Open NAP initiative of the LEG

... describes how the Open NAPs are closely connected to other work areas of the LEG

... shows how countries can participate in the initiative

... and describes how interested organizations and experts can contribute

Developing countries have been undertaking the process to formulate and implement National Adaptation Plans since 2011, scaling up their previous and other ongoing work on adaptation. Two issues led to this initiative on Open NAPs.

Firstly, a number of operational questions arose in the early years by countries embarking on the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans. This motivated the LDC Expert Group (LEG) to try out typical processes by putting the technical guidelines for the formulation and implementation of NAPs into practice with a few real country situations.

Secondly, the LDCs continue to struggle and face severe capacity gaps in formulating their NAPs, given limited technical expertise available to them to cover the broad set of issues necessary in developing quality NAPs. This is evidenced by the small number of LDCs that have completed a NAP, compared to other developing countries.

The LEG has developed the Open NAP as an initiative to work directly with country teams in formulating their NAPs, by mobilizing and engaging a wide-range of organizations and experts ("crowd-sourcing"), in addition to exploring innovative solutions to some common problems faced in formulating adaptation plans. The SBI highlighted the potential to make the Open NAPs even more useful to countries (SBI 49, under the LDC Matters item, December 2018).

The Open NAP initiative

The Open NAP initiative is an open-ended collaboration, led by the LEG, designed to mobilize the widest inputs from all interested and available actors and stakeholders to support the LDCs and other interested developing countries, in the development of their NAP. The main motivation is to build on collective experience, expertise and intelligence that exists beyond national borders, with the aim of producing most effective adaptation solutions to common vulnerabilities and risks due to climate change.

This is especially welcomed in the LDCs where technical capacity, data and access to the rich global knowledge-base on adaptation is limited, despite being the most vulnerable and in most need of adaptation interventions sooner rather than later.

The specific objectives of the Open NAP include:

- To mobilize the widest range of inputs from different actors globally in support of NAPs;
- To develop and try out innovative approaches in adaptation for more effective adaptation data collection, assessment, planning, implementation and impact, leading to the identification of best practices and enhancing learning by doing;
- To identify well-tested data and models developed and promote their application in country assessments as appropriate, as well as the replication of successful national-level methodologies and approaches in other countries;
- To promote building up of common databases to support implementation of different frameworks and agreements;
- Promote consistency, comparability and scaling in methodologies, assessments and outputs related to NAPs



Least Developed Countries
Expert Group

About the process to formulate and implement National Adaptation Plans

The process to formulate and implement National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) was created under the UNFCCC in 2010, with accompanying support. The LEG was mandated to provide technical guidance, advice and support on NAPs, along with UN organizations and other relevant actors. Financial support under the UNFCCC is provided through specific provisions under the financial mechanism of the Convention, notably through the GCF (currently mainly for the formulation of NAPs through the readiness window), and through the LDC Fund.

As a national plan, the NAP is developed by government teams under the leadership of the UNFCCC focal point. Implementing agencies are usually those that have traditionally been supporting a country on related environment/climate change issues. The LEG was requested by the COP to develop technical guidelines for the NAP process, and to provide technical guidance and support to the LDCs.

Questions being addressed through the Open NAPs

The Open NAP collaboration provides a basis for exploring different questions related to adaptation planning. The following are some of the questions being addressed in some of the ongoing case studies:

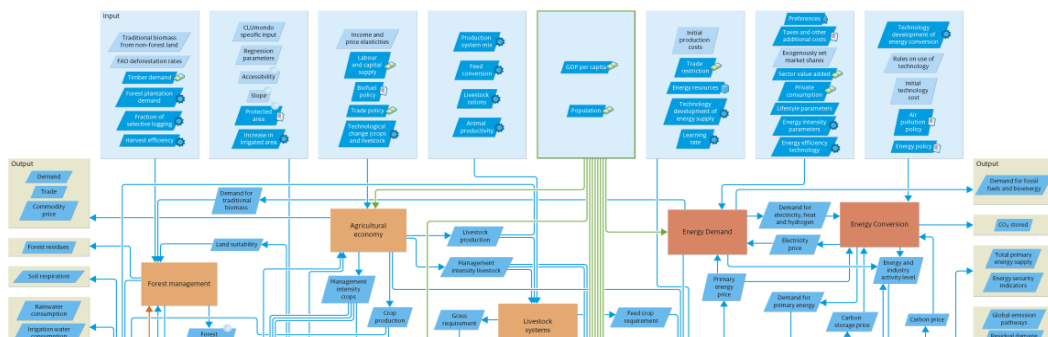
- What are operational definitions of adaptation?
- How can benefits of adaptation towards development be quantified?
- How can countries best coordinate actions that would address adaptation goals and objectives while also contributing towards the achievement of the SDGs and other goals from other frameworks such as Sendai?
- How can different processes be harmonized at the national level, between NAPs, and reporting related to NDCs and the SDGs?
- How can the NAP effectively connect to international support measures while also integrating into ongoing development efforts?
- How can countries manage the full spectrum of climate risk?
- What is a reasonable selection of systems that would ensure that the NAPs adequately reflect both objectives and all guiding principles of the NAP process?
- What are successful methods and lessons related to the mainstreaming of gender in adaptation?

- What are options for adequately addressing and considering vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems in the NAPs?
- How can countries optimize the role of different actors?
- How can countries take advantage of big data and related emerging technologies to advance adaptation?
- How can regional approaches to adaptation be integrated into national adaptation plans?
- How do plans relate to each other across levels and scales, such as how does the national NAP connect with subnational, sectoral or local plans with a country?
- What are effective approaches for arriving at adaptation plans and how to incorporate iterative updates to the plans over time?
- What are well-tested methodologies for dealing with common risks and vulnerabilities?
- What are emerging good practices in the development of effective processes for the formulation and implementation of NAPs?
- What methodologies for adaptation are applicable and suitable for the LDCs given obvious limitations due to limited data and research underpinnings?
- How can the vast (international) scientific efforts in aspects relevant to adaptation be made useful in the formulation and implementation of NAPs in real life?

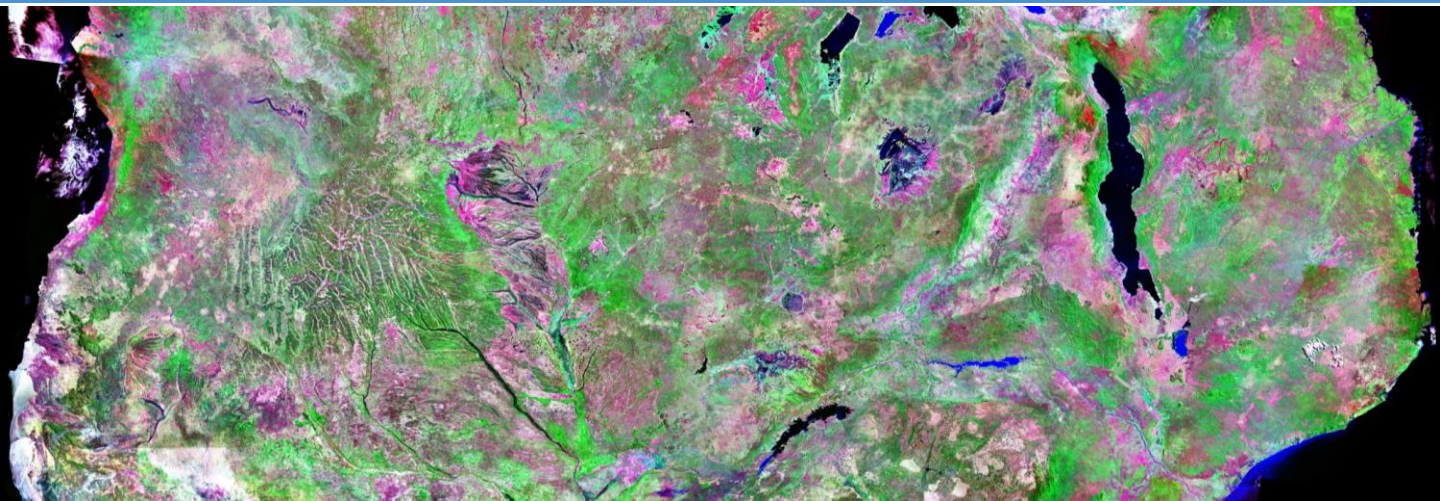
Application of the Open NAP approach in future training

- During training events, a complete workout for a country case is developed to show how all essential steps of the process to formulate and implement the NAP can fit together, build on available science, e.g. the IPCC reports, and how the work can be split between different teams or workstreams;
- The Open NAPs are not linear, and there is no optimal outcome. The flow of work depends on decisions made along the way, thereby promoting problem-solving as opposed to simple steps or templates. During training events, different approaches are tested, such as starting in the middle and working backwards to fill in gaps and provide in-depth details to help in fine-tuning adaptation solutions, using a prototyping approach;
- The Open NAP workouts are being used to explore multiple entry points, and to explore how to integrate across sectors, levels and scales from individual locations to the national and regional level;
- By exploring different case studies, useful lessons from one case can be explored in connection with others, to maximize learning and refinement of working solutions to common issues, such as institutional arrangements, involvement of non-state actors including the youth and the private sector, legislative basis for NAPs, development of effective M&E systems, etc;

Image 3.0 in detail



An extract of the detail of a global integrated assessment model, IMAGE 3.0, as an example of the global knowledge base underlying environmental change assessment, part of a rich heritage of scientific understanding of many components and systems considered during adaptation planning and implementation. Source: Accessed on 22 May 2019 at https://models.pbl.nl/image/index.php/Big_Flowchart. The image on the following pages is the Landsat satellite mosaic showing land cover in 2000 for Southern Africa (courtesy of NASA), part of a rich source of freely available land cover data as well as maps produced by different space agencies.



How can countries participate in the Open NAPs

In the formative stages of the Open NAPs, a few countries were selected in order to create support materials for LEG NAP regional workshops, as case studies in the application of the NAP technical guidelines. Work continued with a few other countries that expressed interest.

Of late, many more countries have expressed interest in participating in Open NAPs, and the following steps are being implemented to make the Open NAPs more useful:

- Countries can consider this to be an open call for expressions of interest to participate, and they can simply write to the LEG (leghelp@unfccc.int). This will trigger a discussion on expectations and commitments between the country and the LEG. In general, the country would avail its plans for NAPs to the LEG, and be willing to receive advice on technical matters, including suggestions for partners that can assist in delivery of specific outputs. Where necessary, a letter of agreement would be signed to outline respective responsibilities.

- The LEG is creating repositories of relevant materials (case studies, data, tools, training materials and other resources) under the NAP Central ecosystem, and a website for the public compilation of the key elements of the NAP at <http://napexpo.org/opennap>. A specific virtual space for each country will also be explored, to provide a space to consolidate specific information and data flows as well as outputs.
- The LEG is in the process of mobilizing partnerships with relevant actors for each specific Open NAP case, including through the usual partner agencies and organizations.
- The LEG will hold regular online meetings with country teams and partners to advance the objectives of the Open NAPs.

A central tenet of the Open NAPs is the free and open access to information wherever possible. All materials would be made available to all interested partners, including results of analyses, to facilitate learning and peer review of outputs.

The Open NAPs will actively link to major initiatives for the LDCs, including the LIFE-AR initiative.

Over time, the data and information supporting the formulation of NAPs as well as technical support and inputs from all stakeholders and actors, would be readily available, with wide inputs and assistance coming in from all over the world in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of a NAP.

The focus is on exploring and implementing adaptation actions identified and established by the best available science and has been proven to be good practice.

The scope of each Open NAP case is being envisioned to be very flexible, and can vary in scale and extent based on the interests of the stakeholders, and also on the nature of the systems being considered. The exact boundaries of the component systems will dictate the appropriate scale of consideration.

How can other actors participate in the Open NAPs

The LEG, with technical support from the UNFCCC Secretariat, is coordinating the Open NAP initiative. The NAP Technical Working Group is the primary platform for agencies and organizations that provide support to developing countries on NAPs to contribute towards this initiative.

Researchers and other entities interested in participating are invited to contact the LEG through the secretariat at leghelp@unfccc.int to express their interest and indicate how their work could contribute. The initiative also welcomes ideas on how to partner with specific programmes and projects that are working on some interesting adaptation topic, to further explore how national adaptation plans and efforts can benefit.

Regular exchanges will be held to share experiences and results from the Open NAPs, with a view to developing good practices.

Upcoming steps

An update on the Open NAP initiative was featured at the NAP Expo in April 2019 (<http://napexpo.org/2019>) and received broad support and interest from all stakeholders present. The following are immediate next steps:

- Continue to register interest of countries interested in participating in the Open NAPs;
- Terms of reference for Open NAPs will be finalized for each country, clarifying the role of stakeholders and protocols on data;
- The typology of questions for each case to be decided, taking into account progress by the country in undertaking the process of formulating and implementing the NAP, including but not limited to the status of GCF support to the country for NAPs;
- Initiate assembly of data and tools to be used in the Open NAPs including through a central depository under the Google Earth Engine in the form of a NAP Data Catalog;
- An Open NAP workout to be applied in a NAP workshop for the LDCs during August 2019.
- A website is being implemented under the NAP Central ecosystem for the assembly of the Open NAP results by participating country (<http://napexpo.org/opennap>). A web portals for managing knowledge resources and the active workouts involving different partners is also under development.

About the LEG

The LEG was established in 2001 as part of the suite of support to the LDCs under the Convention. Over the years, the group has developed and implemented several activities on adaptation by virtue of its mandates to provide technical guidance and support to LDCs on adaptation. The mandates include the provision of technical guidance and advise to countries on the formulation and implementation of NAPs. It also includes supporting the implementation of the LDC work programme under the UNFCCC, including the earlier process to prepare and implementation National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). The LEG is also mandated to provide technical guidance and advice on accessing funding from the GCF for the process to formulate and implement NAPs, in collaboration with the GCF secretariat.

The LEG meets twice a year to develop and review progress on the implementation of its work programme. It implements its work programme through a variety of modalities including technical guidance and advice to the countries, technical guidelines, technical papers, training activities, workshops, expert meetings, NAP Expos, case studies, capturing and sharing of experiences, best practices and lessons learned, NAP Central, monitoring of progress, effectiveness and gaps, collaboration with other bodies, programmes and organizations, and promotion of coherence and synergy.

About the UNFCCC

The 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (referred to as the UNFCCC or the Convention) provides the foundation for multilateral action to combat climate change and its impacts on humanity and ecosystems. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol and the 2015 Paris Agreement were negotiated under the UNFCCC and build on the Convention. To date, 197 countries have ratified the Convention and considered Parties to the Convention.

The objective of the UNFCCC is to “stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system”. In pursuit of this objective, the UNFCCC establishes a framework with broad principles, general obligations, basic institutional arrangements, and an intergovernmental process for agreeing to specific actions over time, including through collective decisions by the Conference of the Parties, and as well as other international legal instruments with more specific obligations – such as the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement.

The Paris Agreement of 2015 established the global goal on adaptation of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view to contributing to sustainable development and ensuring an adequate adaptation response in the context of the temperature goal referred to its Article 2.

About the publication

This brief is produced by the LDC Expert Group in June 2019. For more information, visit See <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/constituted-bodies/least-developed-countries-expert-group-leg>

