



REGIONAL
CLIMATE
WEEKS

Building capacities for national adaptation plans (NAPs) implementation strategies

Outcome Article

PCCB Regional Thematic Dialogue at LACCW 2023



United Nations
Climate Change

in collaboration with



NAP
Global
Network

As the impacts of climate change continue to challenge nations worldwide, one vital tool in this battle is the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), a comprehensive strategy to address climate change impacts at the national level. During the 2023 Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Climate Week, experts and practitioners gathered at the regional thematic dialogue organized by the Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB) in collaboration with the NAP Global Network, to discuss the intricate process of “building capacities for NAP implementation strategies”. This outcome article summarizes the key insights shared during the dialogue.

What are the key capacity needs and gaps faced by countries in the LAC region to implement their adaptation strategies and plans? How can we build and scale-up capacities in NAP implementation to address the main needs and gaps?

In the LAC region, it was noted that the NAPs serve as a guiding framework for climate change adaptation at the country level, with a strong focus on reducing exposure and vulnerability, increasing adaptation capacity, and seizing opportunities for improvement. Panelists identified agriculture to be the most vulnerable sector, and called for effective implementation of transgenerational, gender, and intercultural approaches.

To address the needs and gaps of NAP implementation, it was recommended that there should be training and implementation projects with a specific focus on adaptation. It was also suggested bridging national emission reduction goals to NAP and establishing a program for climate action in agriculture for the entire region would be beneficial. Regional collaboration was advocated as a means to achieve objectives more efficiently.

Capacity challenges in the LAC region encompass human, institutional, and financial aspects. One lesson learned was that many countries face a shortage of capacity for adaptation planning, with some having only one person dedicated to this task. It was recommended that additional resources and personnel are necessary to support and drive adaptation actions forward. Further technical support from various entities was also seen as needed to develop NAPs in the region. Out of the 29 countries in the region, only 13 have submitted NAPs, with five of them being Small Island Developing States (SIDS), indicating a gap in NAP delivery.

The financing aspect was highlighted as a significant challenge in bringing sectors and required actors together to address the priorities outlined in NAPs. One of the notable challenges that was pointed out during the session was that financing for climate change is primarily directed toward mitigation, creating a barrier for implementation. It was noted that ambition in climate plans often fails to translate into actions at the community level, emphasizing the need for a stronger connection between national documents and community-level work. In this regard, it was emphasized that capacity-building is crucial and should encompass planning, design, and evaluation of actions in NAPs. Strengthening the capacity of finance ministries to design fiscal sustainability policies that reduce climate impacts and incentivize adaptation was also seen as essential. In addition, NAP implementation requires intersectoral collaboration, as adaptation should not be treated as solely an environmental issue but also involves health, education, transportation, and energy sectors.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) processes are particularly important for tracking progress in relation to adaptation. How can these processes support the effective implementation of NAPs in the LAC region?

The role of the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) process in supporting effective NAP implementation was emphasized during the dialogue. It was noted that this role is particularly significant in the early stages of NAP implementation. In the case of Panama shared by one panelist, initiatives have been launched to establish a monitoring and evaluation system and create indicators for measuring adaptation progress and updating climate change scenarios. These indicators are made publicly available on the National Climate Transparency Platform, fostering transparency and engagement. It was recommended that collaboration with various actors from public and private sectors, NGOs, and organizations is essential to gather valuable information for the indicators. Panama's NAP focuses on ten specific sectors to manage the vast amount of information effectively. Empowering and engaging individuals and communities is prioritized to ensure that the adaptation plan is based on real experiences and needs.

The challenges of integrating monitoring and evaluation into NAP implementation were also identified. It was argued that NAPs are more than documents; they represent an ongoing process that requires periodic evaluations and updates. It was emphasized that tracking the implementation of adaptation priorities, accessing climate finance, and involving relevant stakeholders are critical aspects of such a process. To address these challenges, the panelist from the NAP Global Network introduced the monitoring and evaluation toolkit under development to support countries in the region at different stages of their NAP development, aiming for integration into national development processes and involving all relevant stakeholders.

In the context of NAP implementation strategies, the inclusion of marginal or particularly vulnerable groups, such as women, youth & children, and indigenous communities is vital. However, their disadvantaged social status may undermine their willingness or capacities to contribute to the NAP. What capacity-building measures can be adopted to facilitate and encourage their meaningful engagement, ensuring equal and voluntary contributions to the NAP implementation process?

One vital approach, as panelists noted, involves the establishment of institutionalized instruments that promote the active participation of marginalized groups. However, it was emphasized that the effectiveness of these instruments is contingent on the willingness of governments to support these efforts. These instruments can take the form of national exchanges and mechanisms that enable youth and other underrepresented communities to participate directly in adaptation processes, giving them a voice in shaping climate action.

Empowerment was highlighted as a key element of capacity-building, and it was recommended that it can be achieved through programs that focus on skill development and knowledge transfer. These initiatives should aim to equip individuals to take an active role in implementing climate actions effectively. It was further pointed out that ensuring the sustainability of these programs necessitates adequate funding and support.

Additionally, it was recommended that local action plans play a pivotal role in the capacity-building process by adapting national strategies to the specific needs and contexts of local communities. This approach can enhance the connection between the development of adaptation plans and their practical implementation, tailoring solutions to address the unique challenges faced at the local level.

Effective communication was identified as a central element of capacity-building efforts, involving the use of clear and accessible language to convey climate change information. This approach recognizes that many community members possess practical knowledge about climate change but may not be familiar with technical terminology. Simplifying language ensures that information is comprehensible and inclusive.

The engagement of the media was regarded as a valuable tool in conveying climate-related issues and their impact on various sectors. This approach was noted to broaden the audience and to emphasize the economic implications of climate change, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Customizing communication for the private sector was seen as another important step in the capacity-building process, emphasizing how climate change affects businesses. This includes considerations such as economic impact, supply chain resilience, and the reduction of carbon footprints.

Finally, a whole-of-society approach was advocated for involving various stakeholders in climate action. This approach ensures that the responsibility for climate adaptation is not borne solely by a few institutions but becomes a collective endeavor. By implementing these multifaceted capacity-building measures, marginalized groups are better equipped to actively engage in the adaptation process, contributing to more inclusive and effective climate action.

The lack of implementation strategies of NAPs has been identified as a major barrier to NAP implementation. What kind of capacities are needed to forge stronger linkages between adaptation at the local level and the implementation strategies at the policymakers' level?

It was recommended that capacity-building measures should extend beyond targeting decision-makers exclusively and should be directly implemented at the local level. In doing so, specialists, farmers, investors, research institutes, and various stakeholders can be actively engaged in on-the-ground actions, allowing for a comprehensive approach that harnesses local knowledge.

Local knowledge, which includes traditional wisdom passed down by ancestors, was recognized for its great potential in creating effective adaptation strategies that are sensitive to the specific needs of communities. The importance of effective communication was reiterated in integrating local knowledge with scientific expertise. Climate change information should be conveyed in simple, accessible language to ensure that a broader audience, including marginalized groups, can understand and engage with the information.

Furthermore, it was acknowledged that adaptation efforts are fundamentally local and require engagement with various stakeholders, including community groups, NGOs, church groups, and other actors. While involving the private sector can be challenging, it was noted that it necessitates special attention and efforts to encourage its participation.

Continuity in adaptation actions was identified as a significant challenge in the LAC region, given changes in decision-makers and governments. To address this, it was recommended to establish a legal framework to support NAP implementation strategies and their regular updates. Additionally, it was promoted to establish institutionalized mechanisms to bridge the gap between implementation strategies and the involvement of decision-makers and communities.

