United Nations Climate Change
Paris Committee on Capacity-building

PCCB TECHNICAL PAPER

Enhancing the ownership of developing countries of building and maintaining capacity for climate action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Developing countries, in particular least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS), need to urgently build or enhance and find ways to maintain adequate systemic, institutional and individual capacities to carry out climate change adaptation and mitigation actions at large. This requires the development of endogenous capacity, meaning capacity that is locally and nationally owned and that ultimately can be maintained and enhanced independent from international support. The Paris Agreement, in its Article 11.2, provides a universal consensus that capacity-building for climate action "should foster country ownership… at the national, subnational and local levels", while being "country-driven, based on and responsive to national needs". This technical paper identifies experiences, good practices and lessons learned related to enhancing the ownership of developing countries of building and maintaining capacity for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The paper is the result of the analysis and synthesis of submissions received by the Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB) in 2021 and of findings from expert interviews and desk research conducted in 2022 on the matter.

The paper presents findings on experiences, good practices and lessons learned with regard to enhancing country ownership of building and maintaining capacity. It does so by focusing on the different stages in capacity-building processes, starting with the identification of capacity-building needs (Chapter 2.1), planning and design of capacity-building interventions (Chapter 2.2), implementation of capacity-building interventions (Chapter 2.3) and monitoring and evaluation in this regard (Chapter 2.4). The paper also looks at experiences, good practices and lessons learned with regard to maintaining capacity (Chapter 2.5). The paper further identifies challenges to enhancing the ownership of developing countries of building and maintaining capacity. The paper concludes with recommendations for how to address these challenges by building on identified experiences, good practices and lessons learned.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
COP	Conference of the Parties
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GGGI	Global Green Growth Institute
LDCs	Least developed countries
MRV	Measurement, reporting and verification
NAP	national adaptation plan
NDA	national designated authority
NDC	nationally determined contribution
PCCB	Paris Committee on Capacity-building
SIDS	Small island developing States
SPC	The Pacific Community (formerly the South Pacific Commission)
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the context of the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established the PCCB with the aim to address gaps and needs, both current and emerging, in implementing capacity-building in developing country Parties and further enhancing capacity-building efforts, including with regard to coherence and coordination in capacity-building activities under the Convention.[1] The PCCB became operational at its 1st meeting in June 2017.

In 2019, the COP refined the mandate of the PCCB to focus on the following three priority areas[2]: Enhancing coherence and coordination of capacity-building under the Convention; identifying capacity gaps and needs, both current and emerging, and recommending ways to address them; and promoting awareness-raising, knowledge- and information-sharing and stakeholder engagement. In the same year, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) decided that the PCCB shall also serve the Paris Agreement[3].

The Paris Agreement addresses capacity-building predominantly in its Article 11. In Article 11.2 it specifies that capacity-building should be "country-driven, based on and responsive to national needs, and foster country ownership of Parties, in particular, for developing country Parties, including at the national, subnational and local levels".

In its workplan for 2021-2024[4], under the priority area on "identifying capacity gaps and needs, both current and emerging, and recommending ways to address them", the PCCB decided to carry out an activity (Activity B.3) on collating, reviewing and sharing information on experience, good practices and lessons learned related to enhancing the ownership of developing countries of building and maintaining capacity, and providing recommendations in this regard. Under this activity, the PCCB issued in 2021 a call for submissions from Parties and non-Party stakeholders on experiences, good practices and lessons learned related to enhancing the ownership of developing countries of building and maintaining capacity. Due to the lack of submissions received from Parties and a geographic imbalance of submissions, the PCCB decided at its sixth meeting (June 2022) to conduct expert interviews with Parties and non-Party stakeholders from geographic regions underrepresented in submissions to ensure that such views also inform the preparation of this technical paper.

The technical paper will be presented at the 4th Capacity-building Hub at the twenty-seventh session of the COP in November 2022 and inform the development of recommendations to the COP and CMA on this matter in 2023.

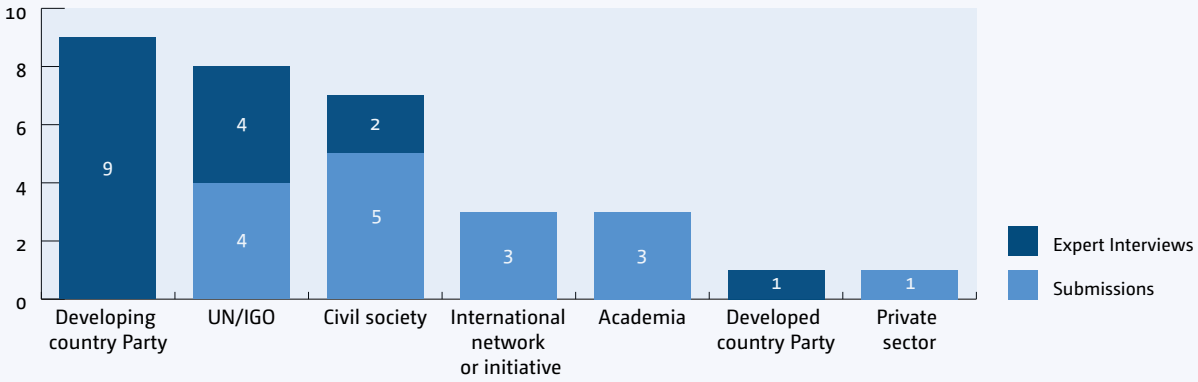
1.2 Objective

This technical paper identifies experiences, good practices and lessons learned related to enhancing ownership of developing countries of building and maintaining capacity for climate action with the objective of informing the PCCB's work in this area and to serve as a basis for the development of recommendations by the PCCB to the COP and CMA on this matter.

1.3 Methodology

This technical paper is mainly based on the information contained in 16 submissions received by the PCCB in response to its call for submissions from July to November 2021[5] and responses to 16 semi-structured interviews conducted in August and September 2022 with capacity-building experts nominated by PCCB members. Figure 1 shows the types of entities that made submissions and participated in expert interviews.

Figure 1: Submissions and expert interviews by type of entity



Figures 2 and 3 show submissions and expert interviews by region as well as by type of countries, where submitting or interviewed entities are based.

Figure 2: Submissions and expert interviews by region of entity

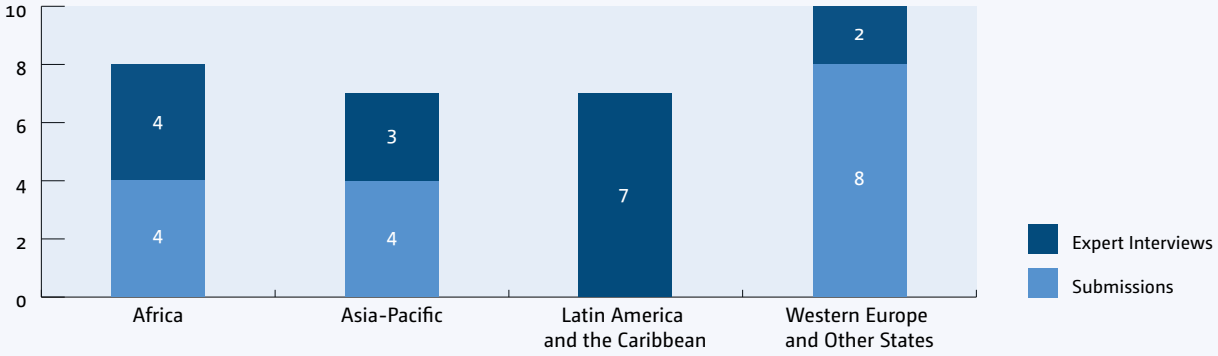
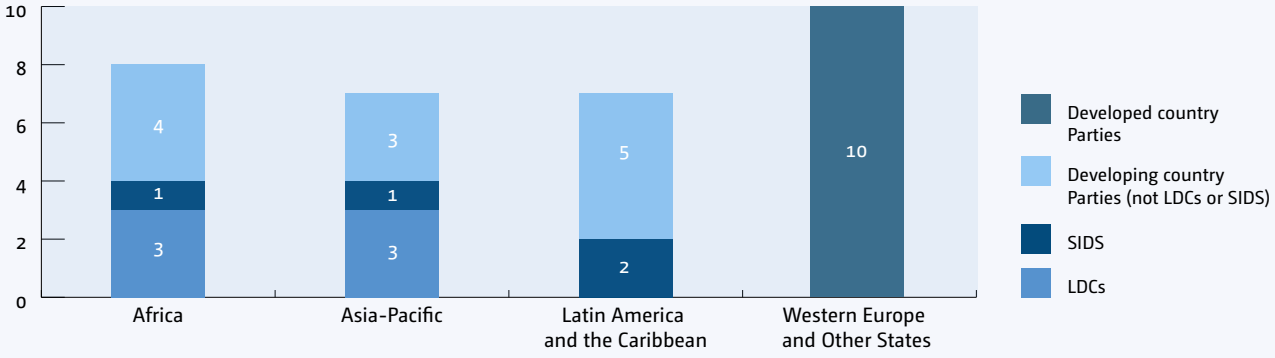


Figure 3: Submissions and expert interviews by type of countries of entity

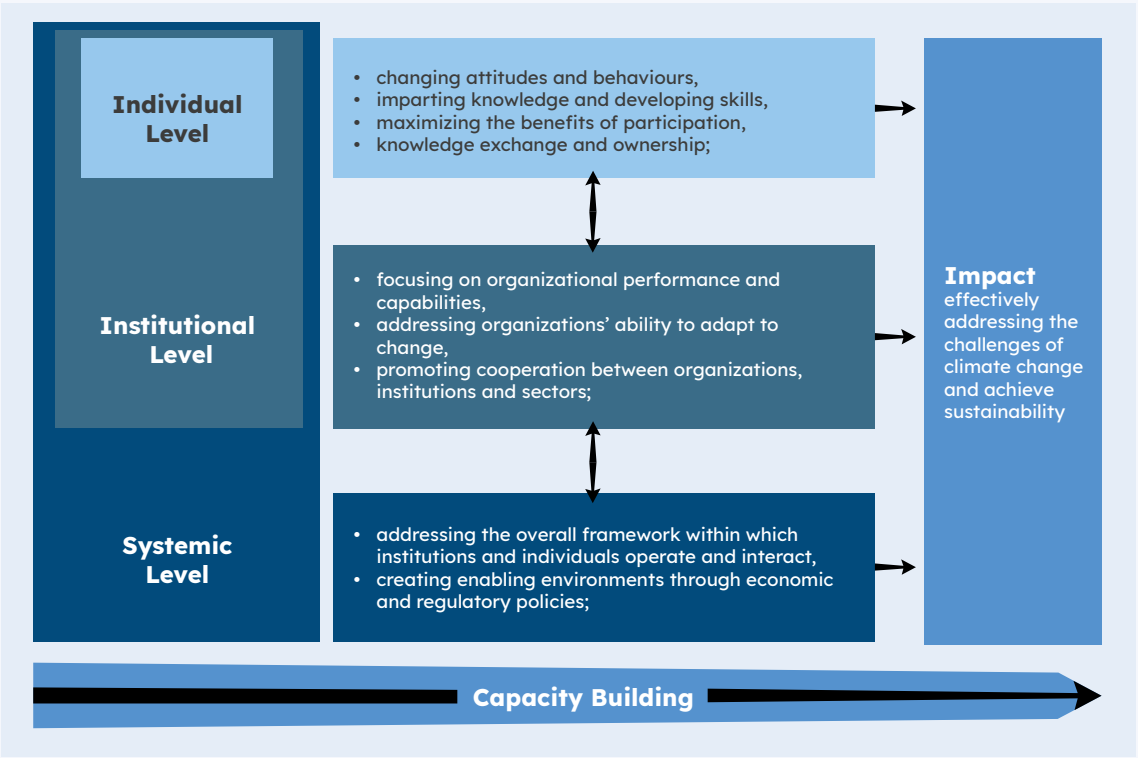


Insights from the submissions and interviews are complemented with findings from the PCCB's previous work on country ownership and the review and analysis of information shared by interviewees and bilateral and multilateral capacity-building providers.

1.4 Definitions

For the purpose of this paper, ***capacity-building*** at the systemic, institutional and individual levels has been considered, with systemic capacity focusing on the overall framework within which institutions and individuals operate and interact, including policies, rules and regulations; institutional capacity focusing on the capabilities and performance of institutions and their ability to adapt to change and to cooperate with one another; and individual capacity focusing on knowledge and skills development, including for effective participation, exchange of knowledge, and behavioural change as shown in Figure 4 below[6].

Figure 4: Capacity-building at the systemic, institutional and individual levels



Capacity-building that fosters country ownership is understood here as capacity-building that is planned, designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated by developing country Party and non-Party stakeholders in a collaborative manner based on self-identified capacity needs in line with national climate change strategies and priorities.

2 ENHANCING OWNERSHIP OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF BUILDING AND MAINTAINING CAPACITY:

Experiences, good practices and lessons learned

This chapter starts with the presentation of findings on experiences, good practices and lessons learned with regard to enhancing country ownership of building and maintaining capacity. It does so by focusing on the different stages in capacity-building processes, starting with the identification of capacity-building needs (Chapter 2.1), planning and design of capacity-building intervention (Chapter 2.2), implementation of capacity-building interventions (Chapter 2.3) and monitoring and evaluation in this regard (Chapter 2.4). The chapter concludes with findings regarding maintaining capacity (Chapter 2.5).

2.1 Identification and assessment of capacity-building gaps and needs

Enhancing country ownership of building and maintaining capacity starts with the identification of capacity needs by Party and non-Party stakeholders within the respective developing country. The identification of such needs requires a holistic, multi-level, participatory and collaborative approach to ensure that existing capacities and processes as well as perspectives of different stakeholders are appropriately reflected from the outset (PCCB 2022, UNFCCC 2021; Interviews 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 16; Submissions 2, 5, 8, 9, 13 and 15).

GOOD PRACTICE

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES, SUPPORTING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS FOR CLIMATE FINANCE

Under its Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (Readiness Programme) the Green Climate Fund (GCF) provides support to national designated authorities (NDAs) in developing countries to strengthen institutional capacities, convening stakeholders and assessing capacity needs towards developing and realizing nationally-owned low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways.

For example, a grant under the Readiness Programme supported the NDA of Côte d'Ivoire to staff the NDA office and engage domestic stakeholders to enhance their ownership of and capacity for the preparation of GCF project proposals. The Readiness Programme grant also supported stakeholders with the development of GCF project proposals through a learning-by-doing approach and capacity needs assessments for improving project proposal preparation in future (Submission 11).

Another example comes from Cuba, where the NDA was able to secure support from the Readiness Programme to set up a National Technical Unit. The Unit continues to operate after the end of the readiness support and already trained more than 300 people in various sectors, using materials prepared by the Unit based domestically assessed capacity-building needs (Interview 9).

→ https://www.greenclimate.fund/readiness

The basis for being able to identify capacity-building needs is to ensure that there is a common understanding of climate change and what adaptation and mitigation means in practice for different Party and non-Party stakeholders**. In some countries it may therefore be necessary to first enhance awareness of climate change before being able to identify capacity-building needs.** Capacity-building is not an end but a means. It needs to address the capacity to understand the nature of the climate change problem as it pertains to a country, and the capacity to formulate and implement national actions consistent with national needs and priorities, including the needs for sustainable development (UNFCCC 2021; Interviews 7, 9 and 11; Submissions 5, 7 and 15).

"Climate change is a very broad topic. Many are involved in addressing climate change without knowing it. This needs to be considered when planning capacity-building activities".

Kunzang Rinzin, Bhutan

The PCCB has worked on the identification and assessment of capacity-building gaps and needs since its inception in 2017. A technical paper produced by the PCCB in 2019 confirmed that all countries continue to face institutional, technical, and financial capacity barriers, and that significant differences exist among countries in terms of the scope and scale of their needs and ability to address them. In response to this finding, the PCCB developed a toolkit to inform developing country Parties' assessment of capacity gaps and needs related to the implementation of the Paris Agreement (PCCB 2021).

GOOD PRACTICE

PCCB TOOLKIT TO ASSESS CAPACITY BUILDING GAPS AND NEEDS TO IMPLEMENT THE PARIS AGREEMENT

The PCCB has developed a toolkit to support the efforts of countries to identify and address their capacity needs and gaps. The toolkit provides an overview of a capacity assessment cycle as well as complementary resources including case studies, tools, best practice and lessons learned to guide the assessment process that enables countries to identify appropriate steps they can take to strengthen their national capacities to address climate change.

Capacity assessment is a challenging but vital undertaking and is part of a robust and iterative climate policy development and implementation process. It enables organizations to set appropriate climate objectives and identify steps needed to deliver on them. The resources in the UNFCCC Capacity-building Portal supplement the toolkit and are constantly updated to provide the best possible support to developing country officials. They are drawn from a global cross-section of implementing experts and international processes, including from members of the PCCB Network and other constituted bodies of the UNFCCC.

→ https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/constituted-bodies/paris-committee-on-capacity-building-pccb/areas-of-work/capacity-building-portal/pccb-toolkit-to-assess-capacity-building-gaps-and-needs

2.2
Design and planning of capacity-building

Multi-level stakeholder approaches that include Party and non-Party stakeholders at the national, sub-national and local levels, and from different sectors, are key for enhancing country ownership of capacity-building. Motivation through **collaboration mapping and mission alignment exercises to identify common goals and opportunities** is important to help foster buy-in and coordination among different stakeholder groups. In addition, positive messaging was identified as an important factor for making multi-stakeholder partnerships work. This could be certification provided for the accomplishment of training or showcasing concrete benefits of engagement, for example how the protection of mangroves provides socio-economic benefits through better fishery and apiculture (UNFCCC 2021; Interviews 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 16; Submissions 5, 12 and 15).

GOOD PRACTICE

ENHANCING COUNTRY-OWNERSHIP OF CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT THROUGH MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

Forests play a pivotal role in combating climate change by absorbing and storing carbon from the atmosphere. Robust and easy-to-access forest data can support the formulation, monitoring and adjustment of forest-related policies, inform citizens and stakeholders, help track progress towards sustainable forest management and reduce emissions related to forest loss. FAO supported Thailand to enhance transparency of forest data through capacity-building for and the conducting of a multi-stakeholder assessment of the national forest monitoring system with the participation of government entities and different civil society representatives. The assessment provided unique insights on a broad range of key forestry topics, from institutionalization to sampling design, data collection, data management and dissemination of the results. Based on the assessment, participating stakeholders jointly developed a roadmap for improving the country's forest monitoring system by utilizing, and creating synergies with, existing government programmes and international support in this area (Submission 9).

→ https://www.fao.org/in-action/boosting-transparency-forest-data/news/detail/en/c/1388189

Building strategic alliances with non-Party stakeholders, including academia, civil society, indigenous peoples, youth and the private sector, does not only foster ownership of capacity-building efforts, but also results in **better informed and more targeted capacity-building interventions**. For example, such an approach will allow to **reflect different ways of learning, understanding and accessing information**, including of indigenous peoples, youth and the elderly. In addition, multi-level stakeholder approaches can also **help to overcome resource constraints of government entities** and therefore help **ensure long-term approaches** (Interviews 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14 and 16; Submissions 1, 3, 4, 6, 12 and 15)**.**

Stakeholders involved in the identification of capacity needs also need to be part of the design and planning process of capacity-building interventions. In this stage, it is important to not only focus on the development of specific skills and knowledge as objectives, but also to set the **establishment of trusted relationships based on mutual respect** as an objective. This will serve as an important enabling factor for the successful implementation of the capacity-building intervention. Trusted relationships need to be built between different stakeholders at the national, sub-national and local levels within a country as well as between all national, sub-national and local level stakeholders and international support providers. Within the design and planning process, sufficient funds need to be allocated for relationship and trust-building activities to achieve set objectives in this regard (UNFCCC 2021; Interviews 3, 8 and 9; Submissions 5, 8, 12, 14 and 16).

"The first questions should always be what does the capacity-building ecosystem look like in a country. We need to look at the full ecosystem before developing specific capacity-building interventions."

Mallé Fofana, GGGI

GOOD PRACTICE

TAKING A LONG-TERM APPROACH TO CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR MRV

MRV Burkina Faso is a national climate change-related measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) platform that serves as the framework for enhanced transparency in the country. Its functionalities include the mapping of existing capacity-building projects across the country to allow for a coordinated and coherent approach to building capacity for adaptation and mitigation in different sectors at the national, sub-national and local levels. The platform is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, GGGI and the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (Interview 10).

→ https://www.mrv-burkina.bf

The design and planning of capacity-building strategies, programmes and projects also needs to be **based on national climate change policies and actions plans** as well as on **existing in-country expertise, experience, ability and indigenous knowledge**, to the extent possible, **consider gender-balance and be gender-responsive** as well as reflect on how to best **utilize existing capacity-building mechanisms, institutions, and processes** to ensure coherence, efficiency and effectiveness and avoid duplication of efforts. In this regard both domestic stakeholders as well as international capacity-building support providers need to coordinate among themselves before jointly designing a capacity-building intervention. For domestic stakeholders this should include the identification of domestic expertise to inform requirements for international experts, if any. For capacity-building support providers this should include sharing information and working with their peers on coordinating capacity-building support within any given country (UNFCCC 2021; Interviews 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14 and 16; Submissions 8, 12, 15 and 16).

To achieve country ownership of capacity-building it is important to apply a holistic approach to capacity-building that includes **capacity-building at the individual level that is complemented by building capacity at the institutional and systemic levels.** Such a holistic approach is key for enhancing institutional arrangements that support the design and implementation of long-term and self-sustaining capacity-building (Interviews 4, 9 and 15; Submissions 5, 10, 15 and 16).

> **"Capacity-building interventions must be developed based on national policies, strategies and action plans in order to take into account actions that are already underway."**
>
> **Emmanuella Ngenzebuhoro, Burundi**

GOOD PRACTICE

GENDER-SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IN SLUM COMMUNITIES

The Mahila Housing Trust has been embedded within the city of Ahmedabad's (India) informal settlements for many years, focusing on developing the capacities of slum communities to cope with adverse impacts of climate change. The Trust has focused particularly on supporting women to conduct their own vulnerability assessments, considering them to be experts of their own situation, and empowering them to develop resilience action plans and gender-sensitive climate solutions. As problem identification is based on the women's self-defined needs, solutions are demand- driven, and experiential, tacit and indigenous knowledges are valued and incorporated (Submission 14).

→ https://www.mahilahousingtrust.org

Capacity-building for effective climate action is a comprehensive and long-term process, which requires interventions to take **long-term approaches** rather than delivering ad-hoc and once-off engagements. This requires the design and planning of capacity-building interventions to also focus on giving people the possibility to implement on the ground what they learned as well as on the engagement of stakeholders who can ensure the continuation of these efforts after the end of the intervention (Interviews 9 and 14; Submissions 5 and 15).

"It is important to facilitate the transfer of knowledge within institutions. For example, we supported the Ministry of Environment of Mauritius to pass on the knowledge gained at one of our global workshops by providing them with training tools and materials that they were able to use for internal workshops back home."

Sara Trærup, UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre

GOOD PRACTICE

BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR CLIMATE FINANCE THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

The Community of Practice of Direct Access Entities (CPDAE) is a global network of the Adaptation Fund's National Implementing Entities and the Green Climate Fund's Direct Access Entities that are involved in the programming of climate change adaptation and mitigation finance through the direct access modality. CPDAE facilitates knowledge exchange, learning and experience sharing, collaboration and peer-to-peer support between global network members, including through South-South cooperation, with the aim of increasing members' capacities at the institutional level to access resources, programme those resources and implement adaptation and mitigation projects and programmes (Submission 1).

→ https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Community-of-Practice-for-Direct-Access-Entities.pdf.

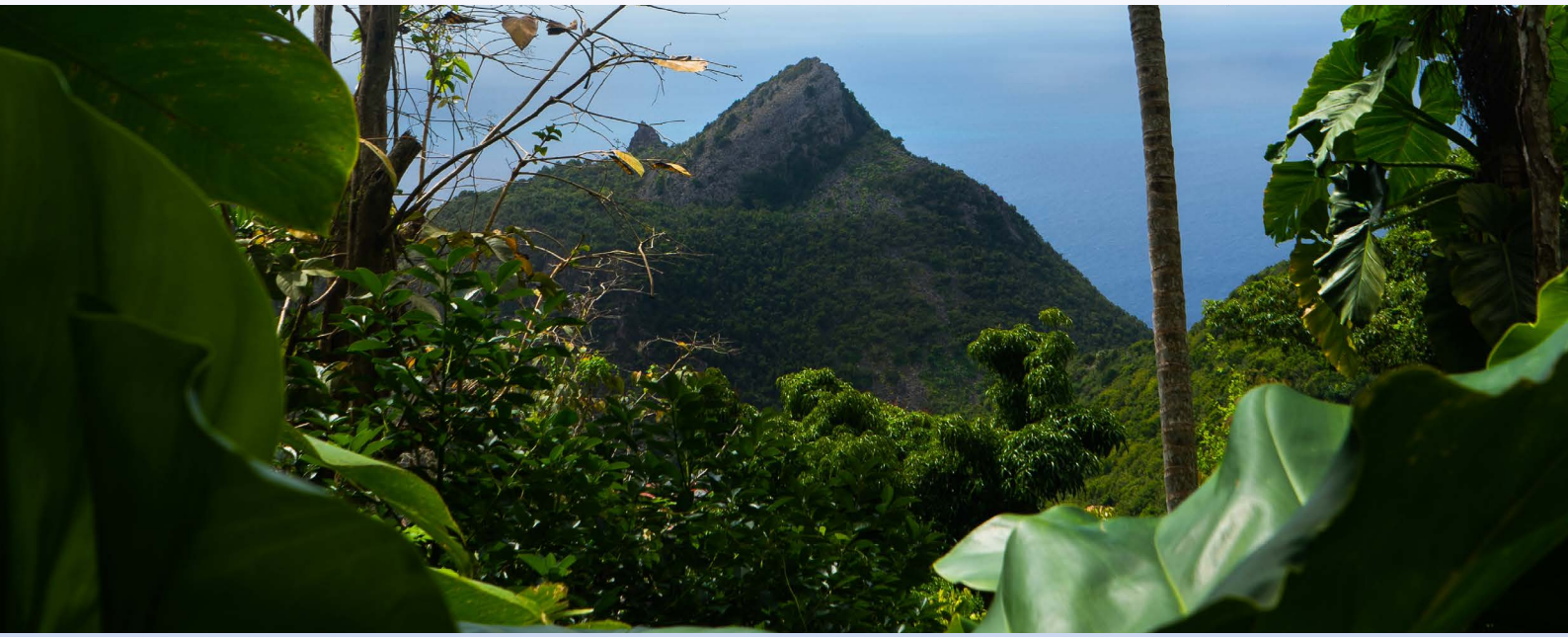
Country-ownership of capacity-building can also be enhanced by changing budgetary requirements for capacity-building efforts to enable a **flexible and adaptative management** that allows for the readjustment of the type and scope of activities, if needed. Ideally, **outcomes and results should not be designed and planned too narrowly**, but open to changes if more effective ways for achieving the objectives of the capacity-building intervention are found during its implementation stage (Interview 5; Submission 5, 10, 13, 14).

GOOD PRACTICE

FOSTERING REGIONAL COOPERATION ON CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR MRV

The Caribbean Cooperative MRV Hub is a permanent regional institution and country-driven partnership that enables countries to cooperate on technical challenges underlying climate change mitigation. The hub fosters regional technical excellence and generates stronger policy-relevant carbon accounting by facilitating a learning and mentoring cooperative between country experts. The hub continually assesses member country capacity needs and priorities to identify synergies in producing cooperative work efficiently and effectively. In doing so it aims to grow the human capacity of Caribbean technical MRV and mitigation experts and develop and disseminate regionally-specific tools and guidance (Submission 5).

→ www.mrvhub.org



2.3 Implementation of capacity-building

The holistic, multi-level, participatory and collaborative approach adopted for the identification of capacity needs and the design and planning of capacity-building interventions, also needs to be reflected in the way that capacity-building activities are implemented.

GOOD PRACTICE

BUILDING RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE EXTREMES AND DISASTERS (BRACED)

The BRACED project combined investment in ongoing learning by and between implementing partners generating case studies and stories, with a realist evaluation approach. It sought to explore "What works and why in implementing and achieving outcomes in adaptation and resilience-building projects?" The evaluation of the programme found that there is value in applying a 'realist' way of thinking throughout the programme, and that, as part of a broader theory of change approach, applying a realist lens forces to ask important questions of how and why a project arrived at its outcomes. Evaluation results stressed the need to be flexible and iterative, acknowledging that the growing understanding of what matters for building resilience means that some important elements may not be captured in project log frames (Submission 14).

→ http://www.braced.org

Capacity-building **activities and materials need to be developed for or tailored to the national, sub-national and local contexts** and **accessible in local languages**. The type of language used and the level of technical details should be adjusted in line with the role, focus and background of the respective stakeholder groups. In addition, **information and expertise needs to be offered in a way that connects to the intended audience**, for example showcasing relevance to their particular priorities, challenges and needs (Interviews 5, 6, 11 and 16; Submissions 2, 5, 8, 9, 13, 15 and 16).

To enhance country ownership of capacity-building, it is important that capacity-building efforts are **delivered by domestic experts and stakeholders as much as possible**. If there is a lack of domestic expertise, experts from neighbouring countries or from within the respective geographic regions should be considered before engaging international experts from other geographic regions. If international experts are engaged, their role should be to facilitate or advise on capacity-building processes that are directed by domestic experts and stakeholders. At the project level some positive trends have been observed towards an increased reliance on domestic experts and a more strategic use of international expertise through working arrangements where international experts work as peers or in a supporting role with their local counterparts (PCCB 2019, PCCB 2022, Interviews 3, 4, 9, 10 and 14, Submission 2, 5, 12 and 15).

> **"We built a national roster of climate experts, but often we still need to look abroad. It would be very useful to have a regional climate expert roaster to have better access to expertise from our neighbouring countries."**
>
> **Yamikani Idriss, Malawi**

GOOD PRACTICE

BUILDING A ROSTER OF REGIONAL EXPERTS IN THE PACIFIC

Tomai Pacifique is a registered network of pre-approved experts that respond to requests for assistance to serve the priorities and needs of Pacific island countries and territories. Experts provide advice on appropriate resource opportunities, strategic approaches and technical assistance. They also provide where necessary, support in developing project concepts and proposals, preparing reporting requirements and implementing and monitoring projects. The network was established to fill gaps of experts leaving their governments (Interview 1).

→ https://tomai.sprep.org

Country ownership of capacity-building also depends on how flexible access criteria for climate finance are designed to ensure that nationally identified capacity-building needs meet set criteria and avoid that those needs require readjustment to fit stringent access modalities. Furthermore, it depends on how climate finance for capacity-building interventions can be accessed and who can access finance for this purpose. Currently climate finance is focused on the national level. To enhance country-ownership of capacity-building **more climate finance for capacity-building interventions needs to become available for stakeholders at the sub-national and local levels** (Interviews 14 and 15; Submissions 2, 14 and 15).

GOOD PRACTICE

PROVIDING CLIMATE FINANCE FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Under the decentralising climate funds projects there were six devolved Climate Adaptation Funds (CAFs) established within local municipalities in Mali and Senegal that enable communities to decide how funding is allocated. Through inclusive planning processes embedded in local government structures, the community can prioritise how CAFs are allocated to fund investments in public goods. This ensures that decision-making and access to funding is in the hands of those most directly affected, and most able to identify strategies for building local resilience. Climate adaptation finance has become locally responsive through this process (Submission 14).

→ https://www.iied.org/decentralising-climate-funds-mali-senegal

South-South cooperation is an effective modality for capacity-building for climate action that fosters country ownership, including at the national and local levels with the participation of Party and non-Party stakeholders (Interviews 1, 8 and 11; Submission 5).

"We had very good knowledge exchanges between SIDS from the Caribbean and the Pacific. Our partners from the Caribbean are more advanced in data collection and management, for example on hurricanes compared to us on cyclones. But we have more traditional knowledge of which they were able to benefit a lot."

Espen Ronneberg, SPC

GOOD PRACTICE

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION ON CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Impulsouth is an alliance of organizations working collaboratively to increase knowledge and capacities on climate action in developing countries. The initiative aims to promote South-South cooperation to strengthen the southern engagements with the Paris Agreement in a way that is reflected at the 2023 Global Stocktake. Impulsouth focuses its action in six countries – Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Madagascar, Niger, Uganda and Zambia – and pursues to strengthen the role played by young climate leaders through research, training and innovation. Therefore, Impulsouth is supporting country research around climate change, is building capacity through a virtual training course for young climate professionals and is launching a solutions lab to tackle key climate challenges in each of the countries (Interview 8).

→ https://impulsouth.org

2.4
Monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building

Country ownership of capacity-building needs to be fostered throughout programmes or project cycles, from the design stage through the implementation stage to monitoring and evaluation. This requires to keeping different stakeholder groups at different levels engaged, including in monitoring and evaluation activities. Working with a broad range of stakeholders can greatly facilitate data gathering and indicator-based evaluation approaches that may be impossible for government stakeholders.

> **"Monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building is crucial. We include an ex-post evaluation in order to assess the effectiveness of the project with particular attention to the benefits as outlined in the project itself and to derive lessons learned."**
>
> **Silvia Massimi, Italy**

Monitoring and evaluation needs to be part of the design of any capacity-building intervention. It should be included with a focus on impacts, rather than on process, and requires provisions for evaluation efforts to take place about six to twelve months after the intervention has ended (Rokitzki 2021; Interviews 11 and 14).

GOOD PRACTICE

COLLABORATIVE ADAPTATION RESEARCH INITIATIVE IN AFRICA AND ASIA (CARIAA)

This long-term project sought to build the resilience of vulnerable populations in climate change hotspots by supporting collaborative adaptation research through four consortia. Project monitoring systems tend to focus on measurable outcomes and outputs, like papers and policy briefs, meaning that capturing capacity development outcomes, which are often intangible is challenging. CARIAA used enhanced monitoring and evaluation processes to better understand the impact of their activities, including developing 'stories of change', supported by evidence, as an experimental way to understand capacity development outcomes. Evaluating capacity development outcomes requires a monitoring and evaluation approach that is creative and presents an overview of all relevant outcomes, not only those that can fit neatly into a template (Submission 14).

→ https://www.cariaa.net

Monitoring and evaluation is key to determine the effectiveness of capacity-building interventions, which is the basis for being able to learn lessons and adjust modalities for capacity-building delivery by both support providers and beneficiaries. In this sense, monitoring and evaluation needs to be an iterative process at all stages involving all stakeholders to also allow to adjust how capacity-building interventions are implemented, to ensure maximum effectiveness. Indicators for determining the effectiveness of capacity-building interventions need to be developed locally in line with local circumstances (Rokitzki 2021; Interviews 3 and 14).

2.5 Retention of capacity

Country ownership is key to maintaining capacity for climate action. As described above, this is strongly linked to how capacity-building interventions are designed, planned and implemented. **Building or involving institutions that do not rely on support received through respective capacity-building interventions** is needed to ensure that stakeholders are continuously supported in maintaining or enhancing their capacities (Interviews 3 and 15; Submission 10).

International capacity-building support providers need to focus more on **supporting non-Party stakeholders in addition to governmental institutions**, including academia, civil society, women and youth organizations, that work with governments towards the achievement of national climate change policies and actions plans. This can help ensure continuation beyond election cycles, which often result in a change of government and personnel changes in climate change teams within Ministries and other relevant entities (Interviews 2 and 11; Submission 2, 3, 4, and 5).

GOOD PRACTICE

INTEGRATING SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE INTO CLIMATE CHANGE DECISIONS AT THE CITY AND REGIONAL SCALE

The Future Resilience for African Cities and Lands (FRACTAL) sought to understand climate processes driving the regional climate variability and response to climate change within southern Africa. Working through the University of Cape Town, the project aimed to build strong relationships between researchers, city government officials and decision-makers within six cities in southern Africa to integrate scientific knowledge into climate decisions at the city-regional scale. The project developed a Learning Lab approach to co-production that generated contextualized solutions and demonstrated a collaborative approach to decision-making, strengthening functional capacity to address climate challenges. Relationships between FRACTAL research consortium members and city partners have endured beyond the project end date in 2020, ensuring that capacity development is long-term and retained (Submission 14).

→ https://www.fractal.org.za

Partnerships between different Party stakeholders at the national, sub-national and local levels as well as between Party and non-Party stakeholders at all levels are key for maintaining capacity. **Universities can play an important role as knowledge institutions that can retain capacity**, facilitate mainstreaming of climate change education in tertiary education, including in industry, and serve as providers of capacity-building at the local, sub-national and national levels (Khan 2018; Interview 1; Submissions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 12).

GOOD PRACTICE

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY THROUGH AN LDC UNIVERSITY NETWORK

In addition to government institutions, academic and civil society entities are well-placed to develop and retain long-term institutional capacity. A successful example of building and retaining institutional capacity by academic entities is the Least Developed Countries Universities Consortium on Climate Change (LUCCC). LUCCC which works to capacitate LDCs to become able to adapt effectively to the adverse impacts of climate change through common research and training programmes and by enabling LDC universities and research institutions to serve as repository of knowledge and providers of capacity-building. LUCCC is a network of LDC universities. Each of the member universities has a different thematic focus area on climate change adaptation and builds on a national university network that it establishes in its respective country (Submission 12).

→ www.luccc.org

Putting in place knowledge management systems, including hand-over procedures for staff leaving a position within government can greatly contribute to the retention of capacity. Requirements of some international support providers to introduce knowledge management approaches as part of capacity-building interventions have led to the continuation of such approaches beyond the end of a capacity-building intervention (Interviews 8, 11 and 15).

International support is needed to maintain and retain capacity, including through building capacity more broadly, rather than only training one or two experts, supporting train-the-trainer approaches and the sharing of built capacity at the national level and between the national, sub-national and local levels. In addition, domestic and international exchange of knowledge and expertise needs to be supported continuously to stay up-to-date with latest developments. Furthermore, budgetary support is needed to retain capacity within government institutions, in particular in LDCs (Interviews 4, 5, 7, 13 and 15; Submissions 4, 5, 9, 10).

GOOD PRACTICE

AOSIS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

For almost a decade, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Fellowship has been training the next generation of AOSIS leaders and environmental experts. This SIDS-designed program brings early career professionals from AOSIS member countries to New York for one year to participate in environmental diplomacy with their country's delegation at the United Nations Headquarters and at international negotiations. The program provides Fellows with the unique opportunity to gain real-world UN experience while participating in a world-class training program. Since 2018, the Fellowship has been made possible by the support of the Italian Ministry of Ecological Transition (Interview 16).

→ https://www.aosis.org/fellowship

3 CHALLENGES TO ENHANCING THE OWNERSHIP OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF BUILDING AND MAINTAINING CAPACITY FOR CLIMATE ACTION

In their submissions and responses to interview questions, Party and non-Party stakeholders also highlighted a variety of challenges with regard to enhancing the ownership of developing countries of building and maintaining capacity for climate action. Challenges were mostly identified at two levels, the level of the capacity-building support provider (Chapter 3.1) and the level of the developing country (Chapter 3.2), which is why the challenges are summarized in the following according to these categories.

3.1 Challenges at the international capacity-building provider level

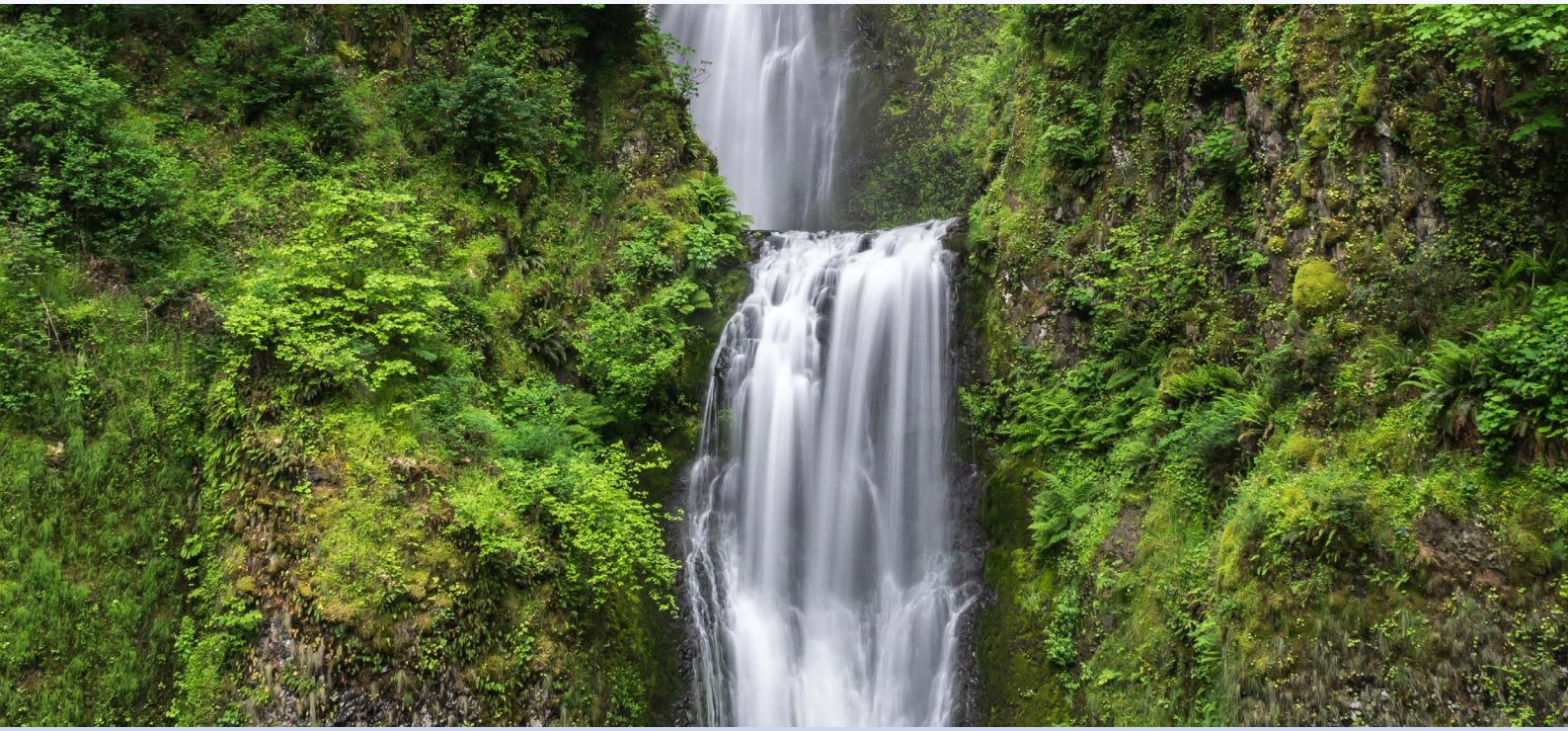
Some capacity-building providers continue to carry out capacity-building interventions that are not based on domestic priorities and needs or continue to be guided by a one-size-fits-all approach with little adjustment to local contexts or the assumption of the validity and applicability of developed country knowledge to all contexts and situations. In some cases, capacity-building providers do not have sufficient capacity or insights to accurately identify domestic capacity-building priorities and needs (Interviews 2, 9 and 14; Submissions 15 and 16).

Many capacity-building interventions remain limited to short-term approaches, which in some cases also prevents the required buy-in from participating stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness of interventions (Khan 2018; Interview 2; Submissions 9 and 12).

> **"Capacity-building is essentially a national exercise that needs to be carried out from the country's perspective. Capacities cannot be implanted from beyond, they need time to grow domestically."**
>
> **Orlando Rey, Cuba**

Many capacity-building providers continue to have in place onerous requirements for applying capacity-building support, which many developing country stakeholders cannot meet due to a lack of human, technical and financial resources. And opportunities for capacity-building support available for developing countries continue to not always be widely known (Interview 4, 5 and 15; Submission 15).

With regard to monitoring and evaluation a key challenge to country ownership lies in the design of indicators that often only focus on quantitative outputs, such as number of workshops, number of participants, knowledge tools and products. Effective measures that would foster country ownership would be geared more towards a focus on better ways of understanding positive effects of networks, relationships and changed attitudes and behaviour. However, such approaches require a long-term commitment and a larger budget to implement. Examples of such qualitative ways of measuring and evaluation include approaches such as "outcome harvesting"[7], "most significant change"[8] and "realist evaluation"[9] among others (Rokitzki 2021, Leavy 2017; Interviews 5 and 11; Submission 14).



3.2 Challenges at the domestic level

Developing country Parties often have limited human resources and technical capacity to apply for capacity-building support and comply with respective reporting requirements. Overall access to climate finance remains a challenge, in particular for LDCs (Interviews 3 and 4; Submission 14).

Coordination between government entities at and between the national, sub-national and local levels as well as with different stakeholder groups can be difficult to achieve and thus prevent the effective implementation of capacity-building interventions. This is often due to a lack of political buy-in by some entities, a lack of institutional arrangements and resources (Interviews 5 and 11; Submissions 2, 4, 13 and 15).

Non-Party stakeholders often face inadequate infrastructure and modalities to exchange with their peers domestically. Another challenge is the lack financial resources to engage in capacity-building interventions, if not provided externally (Interview 14; Submissions 2, 9 and 15).

> **"Small investments, such as seed funds, for implementing actions that resulted from capacity-building efforts can make a big difference at the local level."**
>
> **Maria Jose Pacha, Impulsouth**

In some cases, a lack of basic knowledge about climate change and environmental protection prevents stakeholder groups to engage in capacity-building interventions for climate action (Interview 7; Submission 7).

Maintaining capacity at the individual level can be challenging as individuals, in particular at the sub-national level, often move to different jobs within their country or internationally, some due to political changes in their country. In academia, for example, limited research career support inhibits career progression and results in early career researchers leaving the field and therefore in a loss of capacity (Interviews 3 and 6; Submissions 9 and 10).

Uneven power dynamics between capacity-building providers and developing countries and between institutions within developing countries can result in goals and objectives that are not in line with local needs (Interview 9; Submissions 10 and 15).

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations on enhancing the ownership of developing countries of building and maintaining capacity for climate action are derived from submissions and responses to interviews provided by Party and non-Party stakeholders:

I **Increase support for holistic capacity-building assessments** at national, sub-national and local levels, building on successful approaches used for technology needs assessments and the development of technology action plans. Such capacity-building needs assessments should contribute to developing an understanding of the overall domestic needs for capacity-building to implement the country's NDC as well as to developing strategies to address such needs.

II **Apply a multi-stakeholder approach** by engaging a broad range of Party and non-Party stakeholders across national, sub-national and local levels, including academia, civil society, indigenous peoples, youth and the private sector, when undertaking capacity needs assessments and when designing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating capacity-building interventions based on identified needs.

III **Foster political support by highlighting co-benefits of capacity-building for climate action**, including financial benefits, for example through increased resilience, cost savings through more resource-efficient approaches, and income generation, for example through the ability to benefit from international carbon markets.

IV **Develop long-term capacity-building interventions**, moving away from project-based to programmatic approaches that aim to become self-sufficient. Ensure that capacity-building at the individual level is complemented by capacity-building at the institutional and systemic levels with a focus on enabling the implementation of the country's NDC and NAP.

V **Strengthen international, regional and domestic knowledge networks,** platforms, communities of practices, and peer-to-peer support. Ensure availability of adequate resources and replicate successful networks and platforms in regions or on topics for which they do not yet exist, including through the use of South-South cooperation.

VI **Build on local capacity and indigenous knowledge** and develop national and regional rosters of experts on relevant issues to access available expertise more easily. The development of such roster should be done in collaboration with local academic institutions, who could also serve as host of such expert rosters.

VII Develop **incentive schemes and mechanisms to maintain capacity** in developing countries, in particular in LDCs and SIDS, including through improved working conditions for domestic experts.

VIII Developed countries to **ensure that more climate finance is available for stand-alone capacity-building programmes at the national, sub-national and local levels** and that such funding can be accessed by both Party and non-Party stakeholders.

IX Developed countries to **increase coordination among capacity-building providers from developed and developing country entities to ensure more informed, coherent and transformative capacity-building approaches**, better dissemination of information on available capacity-building support, and less onerous application and reporting processes.

X Developed countries and multilateral institutions to provide **dedicated and predictable long-term support for the strengthening of institutional arrangements** in developing countries that can facilitate capacity-building across the different areas of adaptation and mitigation action. Such institutional arrangements could include national level structures to support the work of the PCCB and to ensure that the policy recommendations and knowledge products prepared by the PCCB are disseminated at the national, sub-national and local levels in developing countries.

References

A. **Submissions to the PCCB by entity**

- Submission 1: Adaptation Fund
- Submission 2: Africa Climate Action Initiative
- Submission 3: Centre for International Sustainable Development Law
- Submission 4: Climate Group, Secretariat of the Under2 Coalition
- Submission 5: COP26 Catalyst
- Submission 6: Independent Consultant
- Submission 7: Environmental Volunteer Network of Afghanistan
- Submission 8: Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage
- Submission 9: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- Submission 10: Future Climate for Africa programme
- Submission 11: Green Climate Fund
- Submission 12: International Centre for Climate Change and Development
- Submission 13: Monitoring and Evaluating Climate Communication and Education Project
- Submission 14: PlanAdapt
- Submission 15: SLYCAN Trust
- Submission 16: SouthSouthNorth

B. **List of interviews**

- Interview 1: Online, 17 August 2022
- Interview 2: Online, 18 August 2022
- Interview 3: Online, 18 August 2022
- Interview 4: Online, 22 August 2022
- Interview 5: Online, 22 August 2022
- Interview 6: Online, 23 August 2022
- Interview 7: Online, 24 August 2022
- Interview 8: Online, 25 August 2022
- Interview 9: Online, 25 August 2022
- Interview 10: Online, 25 August 2022
- Interview 11: Online, 25 August 2022
- Interview 12: Online, 30 August 2022
- Interview 13: Online, 30 August 2022
- Interview 14: Online, 31 August 2022
- Interview 15: Online, 31 August 2022
- Interview 16: Online, 12 September 2022

C. **Other information sources**

- **Khan, Mizan R. et al (2018):** The Paris Framework for Climate Change Capacity Building. Routledge. New York. United States. 2018.
- **Leavy, J. et al (2017):** Evaluating complex programmes: Reflections on realism and resilience. Available at: https://itad.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/BRCJ5623-Realism-and-Resilience-170830-WEB-1.pdf
- **PCCB (2019):** National-level pilot exercise on capacity gaps and needs related to the implementation of nationally determined contributions. Technical Paper. Available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/PCCB_TP_capacity%20gaps%20and%20needs_NDCs_final.pdf.
- **PCCB (2021):** PCCB Toolkit to Access Capacity-building Gaps and Needs to Implement the Paris Agreement. Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/constituted-bodies/paris-committee-on-capacity-building-pccb/areas-of-work/capacity-building-portal/pccb-toolkit-to-assess-capacity-building-gaps-and-needs.
- **PCCB (2022):** Synthesis of submissions on the 2022 focus area of the Paris Committee on Capacity-building: "Building capacity to facilitate the coherent implementation of nationally determined contributions in the context of national development plans and sustainable recovery". Available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Synthesis_FA_2022.pdf.
- **Rokitzki, M. and Hofemeier, A. (2021):** Unleashing the Potential of Capacity Development for Climate Action - Fixing a Broken Link on the Pathway to Transformational Change. Available at: https://www.plan-adapt.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/210831_Discussion-Paper_Unleashing-the-Potential-of-Capacity-Development-for-Climate-Action.pdf.
- **UNFCCC (2021):** 2nd UNFCCC Capacity-building Talk. Attuning capacity-building efforts to developing countries' needs and priorities. Available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/2nd%20CB%20Talk%20summary%20report.pdf.

Endnotes

1 Decision 1/CP.21, para. 71.

2 Decision 9/CP.25, para. 9.

3 Decision 3/CMA.2, para 3.

4 Workplan of the Paris Committee on Capacity-building for 2021–2024. Available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Workplan%20of%20the%20Paris%20Committee%20on%20Capacity%202021-4.pdf.

5 The call for submissions and all submissions received are available on the UNFCCC website at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/constituted-bodies/paris-committee-on-capacity-building-pccb/submissions/call-for-submissions-from-parties-and-non-party-stakeholders-on-experience-good-practices-and.

6 See also the UNFCCC website on capacity-building at: https://unfccc.int/topics/capacity-building/the-big-pictu re/capacity-in-the-unfccc-process.

7 See https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/outcome_harvesting.

8 See https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/most_significant_change.

9 See https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/approach/realist_evaluation.

ANNEX I:
GUIDING QUESTIONS OF THE CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

- What are good examples of lessons learned and best practices in enhancing country ownership of capacity-building efforts?

- What are good examples of tools and methodologies used by different actors for implementing capacity-building activities that enable countries to achieve the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement?

- In your experience, how can country ownership of capacity-building efforts best be ensured and enhanced?

- What are key challenges (incl. e.g. knowledge and institutional barriers and capacity gaps) with regard to effectively enhancing country ownership of capacity-building efforts?

- Which types of tools and methodologies for capacity building have proven to be the most effective and why?

- Which (types of) tools and methodologies to support the efficient design, implementation, and monitoring/evaluation of meaningful capacity-building interventions are currently lacking?

- In which thematic area(s) of the Paris Agreement are new tools and methodologies for capacity-building most required in order to achieve the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement?

ANNEX II:
GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED EXPERT INTERVIEWS

1. How does capacity-building for climate action need to be designed, implemented and monitored to ensure country ownership? Please include information on specific modalities of capacity-building and delivery of support in your responses.

1.1 What elements have to be integrated in projects/programmes to ensure long-term sustainability and country ownership after the project/programme completion?

1.2 What are your experiences and lessons learned in this regard?

1.3 Are there any good practices that you can share?

1.4 Are there any negative practices you would recommend to avoid?

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2. How do you maintain capacity for climate action within your government and key stakeholder groups?

2.1 What are your experiences and lessons learned in this regard?

2.2 Are there any good practices that you can share?

2.3 How do you monitor or evaluate results of capacity-building efforts over time?

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