



Submission by South Africa to the Paris Committee on Capacity-Building (PCCB), a Constituted Body of the UNFCCC, on the 2023 PCCB focus area on Capacity building support for adaptation with a focus on addressing gaps and needs related to formulating and implementing National Adaptation Plans.

31 January 2023

South Africa welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on the 2023 Paris Committee on Capacity-Building (PCCB) focus area: Capacity-building support for adaptation, with a focus on addressing gaps and needs related to formulating and implementing national adaptation plans (NAPs).

South Africa is already experiencing the negative effects of climate change and is expected to suffer significant consequences in the future, as such it is necessary to take measures to reduce human and economic vulnerability as well as to reduce the vulnerability of physical and ecological infrastructure to climate change, including building the adaptive capacity of individuals and society to respond to climate change impacts.

COP 21 established the PCCB 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 of capacity-building activities under the Convention¹.

In 2019, the COP refined the mandate of the PCCB to focus on the following three priority areas²: (i) enhancing coherence and coordination of capacity-building under the Convention; (ii) identifying capacity gaps and needs, both current and emerging, and recommending ways

¹ Decision 1/CP.21, para. 71.

² Decision 9/CP.25, para. 9.

to address them; and (iii), 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 South Africa welcomes the PCCB technical paper *Enhancing the ownership of developing countries of building and maintaining capacity for climate action*, and the annual technical progress reports of the Paris Committee on Capacity building between September 2021 and July 2022, and the taking note of the recommendations contained therein.

At the previous PCCB 6 meeting convened in conjunction with SB56, a discussion ensued an agreement to focus on capacity-building support for adaptation and NAPs, with a focus on addressing gaps and needs related to formulating and implementing NAPs as the focus area, to be implemented in close coordination with the AC, the LEG and other relevant bodies, given that adaptation seeks to reduce the risks posed by climate change, and to benefit from any associated opportunities where possible.

It is disappointing to note that there are still challenges, complexities and delays experienced by developing country Parties in accessing funding and support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for NAP formulation and implementation, particularly in relation to the submission and review of proposals for funding.

The Standing Committee on Finance, in the first report on the determination of the needs of developing country Parties related to implementing the Convention and the Paris Agreement, highlighted that capacity-building needs that have been expressed across the national reports typically cover areas such as research, training and education, awareness-raising, institutional strengthening and coordination, and policy development.

COP 27 aimed to affirm the importance of adaptation, being hailed as the 'Implementation COP'. However, in many countries NAPs are still in their early stages, with the following challenges that require solutions:

- Strengthening capacity in government (and particularly at sub-national levels of government) and in sectors and amongst stakeholders;

³ Decision 3/CMA.2, para 3.

- Supporting adaptation action with scientific information;
- Bridging the gap between adaptation planning and implementation.

Some of the ways to address the three central challenges to a successful NAP formulation and implementation process includes:

- *Strengthening institutional, sector and stakeholder capacity:* this in our view should involve strengthening institutional capacity at provincial, district, and municipality levels as well as in sectors, and stakeholders affected by climate variability and change to implement and monitor the NAP, which can be done through targeted capacity building programmes.
- *Continuous awareness raising:* this requires strengthening the abilities of countries to reach out to different types of stakeholders involved in the NAP process to improve their understanding of climate change and provide them with the required skills to integrate adaptation measures in their respective structures.
- *Building adaptation planning on reliable data:* in most countries, data availability and access, as well as the analysis and interpretation of data and communication from scientists to policy makers remain a challenge. Suggested solutions include the creation of working groups involving both data analysts and policymakers, improved expectations management (i.e. laying out the needs and what can be provided in response to these), and generally open and active communication channels.
- *Overcoming barriers to NAP implementation:* all countries face initial problems in coordinating NAP implementation between sectors and between national and local levels. This includes challenges caused by fragmented provision of financial resources as well as by shared competencies and ownership. Among the practical solutions are raising awareness and involvement of the private sector and local communities, and the creation of a coherent funding strategy that links initiatives at the national and subnational levels can help facilitate a seamless implementation and maximize the use of resources.⁴

⁴ <https://climateanalytics.org/blog/2016/challenges-in-climate-adaptation-planning/>

The key to success in the NAP process is extensive consultation and ownership by the stakeholders in the process, including the government, private sector, academia, NGOs, and other relevant groups. It is for this reason that, while South Africa appreciates the collaboration of the PCCB with other Constituted Bodies, and with non-Party stakeholders, including through the capacity-building hub and the use of social media tools, more still needs to be done.

Capacity building is essential to continue promoting steps that need to be taken at the local, national, global and fund levels to enhance access to funds for adaptation and low carbon development – i.e. effective adaptation and mitigation implementation in Africa countries and in other developing countries. Special attention should be focused on institutional strengthening and capacity building of local governments to be able to explore alternative mechanisms for mobilization and management of climate finance for effective adaptation to and building resilience to climate change.

The PCCB should also work closely with the Adaptation Committee and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group, in line with their mandates to continue formulating recommendations on ways to facilitate the mobilization of support for the formulation and implementation of national adaptation plans with a view to addressing the challenges mentioned above.