

Third meeting of the Adaptation Committee Bonn, Germany, 18–20 June 2013

Report on a review of existing guidelines for national adaptation plans

1. Introduction and scope of the report

Following requests by Parties at COPs 17¹ and 18², the Adaptation Committee (AC), in its three-year work plan, agreed to establish an ad hoc group, in collaboration with relevant organizations and experts, to work on modalities and guidelines for NAPs for non-LDC developing countries to plan, prioritize, and implement national adaptation planning measures, in accordance with decision 5/CP.17. The AC at its second meeting created as a first step an ad hoc group of three AC members and one member of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), to review the existing LDC guidelines to determine their adequacy and gaps. The ad hoc group was tasked with preparing a report for consideration by AC3 on the result of the review. The report is also to contain recommendations, including additional work within the AC in collaboration with other experts.

The following report is the result of the work of the ad hoc group. It begins with the review of the NAP technical guidelines for LDCs by identifying elements that are applicable and not applicable to non-LDCs developing countries as well as gaps in, and limitations of, the guidelines. The report then reviews support for non-LDC developing countries that seek to plan, prioritize and implement long-term national adaptation actions. Based on the review of the guidelines and support, the report provides recommendations for follow-up work. It concludes with next steps the AC may wish to take.

2. Review of the NAP technical guidelines

The ad hoc group reviewed the technical guidelines for the NAP process,³ which were developed by the LEG based on the initial guidelines for the formulation of NAPs developed at COP 17. The review considered the different elements of the NAP technical guidelines and identified aspects that are applicable and not applicable for non-LDC developing countries in developing NAPs (see table below). The ad hoc group considers non-LDC NAPs to be plans and strategies that a country will develop and use to minimize the impact of the adverse effects of climate change. Their main purpose is to provide governments with a means for adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change. These plans should be prepared for 5 years and updated at five years intervals.

¹ Decision 5/CP.17, paragraph 30.

² Decision 12/CP.18, preamble 7.

³ Least Developed Countries Expert Group. 2012. National Adaptation Plans. Technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan process. Bonn: UNFCCC secretariat. Bonn, Germany. December 2012. Available at <<http://unfccc.int/NAP>>.

Table. Elements of the NAP guidelines and their applicability to non-LDC developing countries

NAP guidance	Applicable for non-LDCs	Not-applicable for non-LDCs
1.1 Developing a common understanding of the National Adaptation Plans and the National Adaptation Plan process	Objectives, framing and content of the NAPs and the NAP process are fully applicable to non-LDCs. It is important to acknowledge that many non-LDCs developing countries have some forms of NAP processes already in place and it is important to complement and built onto those.	LEG support only available to LDCs.
1.2 Building upon NAPAs in the NAP process: lessons learned and guiding elements		While not applicable, it is widely recognized that other non-LDCs have undertaken exercises that draw from similar approaches. Some of the lessons and challenges in creating synergies and coherence between existing and/or previous processes are essentially the same in all developing countries.
3. Steps and key questions for the NAP process	According to the LEG, "the NAP process is designed to be flexible and non-prescriptive; hence countries may apply the suggested steps based on their circumstances, choosing those steps that add value to their planning process and sequencing NAP activities based on their needs to support their decision-making on adaptation."	
4. Element A. Lay the groundwork and address gaps 5. Element B. Preparatory Elements 6. Element C. Implementation Strategies 7. Element D. Reporting, Monitoring and Review	Key questions and indicative activities may be equally insightful and/or many highlight the same gaps for non-LDCs as for LDCs. This depends to a great extent on national circumstances therefore Parties would need to determine whether they need to improve their national institutional arrangements.	
Annexes		While the support needs of LDCs identified by the LEG in 2012 may be applicable, it would be important to undertake a similar assessment for non-LDCs

The review also revealed a number of gaps in, and limitations of, the NAP guidelines, which stem from the boundaries set by the initial COP guidelines. For example, the approach of the LEG technical guidelines for the NAP process is to outline a process but to not provide in-depth guidance on how to undertake specific steps such as V&A assessments or appraising adaptation measures. Although in-depth and step-by-step guidelines are available for the specific steps elsewhere, there may be a need for additional guiding materials for some steps within the process, which can be further discussed. The LEG used a similar approach at its 23rd meeting (see LEG report UNFCCC/SBI/2013/8).

Another limitation relates to structure, reporting and consideration of NAPs by the COP. The structure of the NAPs is not defined in the guidelines (the technical guidelines note that the structure and form of the NAPs would be left to the countries to decide); is that something to be left as part of a country driven process? Is a common structure or format, or at the very least

elements that each NAP should contain needed, to facilitate comparability of NAPs and to capture experiences and best practices from different NAPs in future? This would be important if one is to use the NAPs to analyse how interested Parties are doing in terms of their adaptation through the NAP process, and it would be fair to say, that many NAPs will be formulated. The National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) for LDCs, the National Communications (NCs), and Technology Needs Assessments (TNAs) all had a certain structure for the documents. It may be worth considering whether the NAPs should have one as well.

Since the main channel of reporting progress on NAPs is the NCs, there is a need to harmonize any specific reporting guidelines with any revisions of the NC guidelines. Note that the initial guidelines also referred to “other channels” that could be used for reporting. In terms of formulation, the question remains whether the NAPs should become the V&A part of the NC process or whether they should be stand-alone. There will be some advantages for NAPs to become the adaptation component of the NC process. While this may not work with the initial NAP and the current NC process, it could be done with any NAP update every 5 years or so. This would require aligning the two processes in subsequent steps.

Also in terms of gaining support for implementation, it may be worthwhile for the COP to consider the NAPs. Given the flexibility included in the guidelines, the biggest challenge of the NAPs may actually be in ensuring that the same degree of flexibility and understanding of the adaptation continuum is upheld by climate finance institutions and various organisations offering assistance to developing countries in the development of NAPs, and this may require follow up. The ad hoc group sees a need to strike a balance between flexibility on the one side and prescription on the other so as to ensure that requirements of financial institutions are met and finance can flow. Given that the guidelines cover only the formulation of NAPs, it is yet to be seen how implementation would be addressed. Does the COP need to take another decision before implementation guidelines and modalities can be developed? What is the status, appropriateness, coherence with respect to GEF guidance, work of the financial mechanism, including GCF, and other bilateral channels?

Having reviewed the NAP guidelines, the ad hoc group concludes that these guidelines are broad and non-prescriptive and therefore flexible enough to be applied to non-LDCs. As noted by the LEG, the technical guidelines are indeed designed to support any country in its planning and implementation of adaptation at the national level. In light of the lack of specific guidance for the different elements, one could refer to numerous other existing guides and resource materials for different levels and decision units, and it is assumed that parts of them will be applicable to the development of NAPs. If the guidelines are to be applied, it is important to note that the NAP process should build on the experience of previous adaptation activities and seek to create coherence. While the LEG technical guidelines could serve as a basis – either directly or with supplements –for formulating NAPs in non-LDCs, the question of enabling support for non-LDCs to start the process needs further consideration, such as more explicit guidance to the GEF for the SCCF, as a follow up to the initial request to the GEF in decision 12/CP.18 to consider how the SCCF may be used.

3. Specific comments from the review of support for non-LDC developing countries

Support for formulating the NAPs relates to two aspects: technical support and capacity-building to apply the guidelines and financial support to undertake the process. For example, Element A ‘Laying the groundwork’ calls for identifying and addressing gaps. However, what happens if a country does not have the necessary structure, knowledge or technical capacity to identify and address gaps? Non-LDCs do not have a LEG, and there could be a gap in the possible guidance and support that non-LDCs can access as they try to implement adaptation action. While a few countries may already have local capacity, others may feel that in the process of formulating

NAPs, using international support as foreseen by the COP decision is the quickest or most feasible way to produce a NAP and move towards implementing adaptation action at the earliest. The balance between building capacity to fill gaps identified in the NAP process and moving towards implementing adaptation priorities coming out the process would need to be decided by the countries in the early stages of their NAP process, through their framework and strategy.

In terms of funding, COP 17⁴ invited the operating entities of the financial mechanism, as well as other bilateral and multilateral organizations, to provide financial and technical support to other developing countries to plan, prioritize and implement their national adaptation planning measures, consistent with decision 1/CP.16 and relevant provisions of the Convention. Possible current avenues under the Convention for financial support for preparing NAPs for non-LDCs include the adaptation window under the GEF's Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) and the GEF Trust Fund's window for enabling activities if NAPs are to be part of NC process. As the Adaptation Fund is for concrete projects and programmes only and the Green Climate Fund is not operational yet, these will only be relevant for implementation of NAPs. In addition, other multilateral organizations, for example from the PPCR, and bilateral organizations, such as USAID and GIZ, provide important financial and technical support.

COP 18⁵ requested the GEF through the SCCF, to consider how to enable activities for the preparation of the national adaptation plan process for interested developing country Parties that are not LDC Parties. However, the GEF, in its report to COP 18, pointed out that „additional contributions to the SCCF would be necessary to allow the GEF to support the NAP process in non-LDCs”. With regard to modalities of such support, the GEF secretariat at the 13th LDCF/SCCF GEF Council meeting on 15 November 2012 proposed the establishment of a global support program (GSP) for national adaptation plans for LDCs and other interested non-LDCs. Such a GSP would support the launch of the NAP process through regional workshops that bring together key stakeholders from each eligible country for the purpose of training and stocktaking.⁶ According to the GEF:

“The GSP could serve as a vehicle for introducing and disseminating the technical guidelines for the NAP process, as well as other relevant guidance, methodologies, tools and resources that assist developing countries in carrying out the subsequent stages of the NAP process in an effective and timely manner. For other, non-LDC developing countries, recognizing their diverse needs and capacities in the area of adaptation planning and implementation, the GSP would place considerable emphasis on taking stock of prior and ongoing initiatives; carried out by national governments, multi-lateral or bilateral agencies, NGOs or other institutions; to strengthen technical and institutional capacities for medium and long-term adaptation planning. Moreover, in non-LDCs, the GSP would focus more on laying the foundation for effective, private sector involvement in climate change adaptation. Any training provided under the GSP would recognize that the technical guidelines for the NAP process [...], while relevant for any developing country, are developed with the specific needs and context of LDCs in mind.”

The GEF Council requested the GEF Secretariat to prepare a paper for the next Council meeting on 20 June 2013 on how the GEF will operationalize support to enable activities for the

⁴ Decision 5/CP.17, paragraph 31.

⁵ Decision 12/CP.18, paragraph 4.

⁶ Additional information on the proposed GSP is contained in document “Support for National Adaptation Plans” available at <http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/Support%20for%20National%20Adaptation%20Plans%20Nov%2012th_0.pdf>.

preparation of the national adaptation planning process. The paper prepared in response to this request⁷ defines the objectives, principles, scope and modalities for GEF support, through the LDCF and the SCCF, for the preparation of the NAP process in eligible developing countries.

In the paper, the GEF highlights that its ability to support the NAP process through the LDCF and the SCCF will remain contingent on the availability of resources. Note that according to the latest status report⁸ the SCCF adaptation window has currently USD 8.6 million available. The LDCF, according to its latest status report⁹, has currently USD 130.6 million available. The GEF further states that under the SCCF, and especially given that non-LDC developing countries have not accessed resources for the preparation of NAPAs, different levels of efforts and, accordingly, support may be needed in order to take stock of existing support, on-going processes and initiatives, information and capacities; as well as relevant gaps and needs; as a basis for pursuing the NAP process in an effective, efficient and coordinated manner. Moreover, decision 5/CP.9 provides that the SCCF “should serve as a catalyst to leverage additional resources from bilateral and other multilateral sources” (paragraph 1). Accordingly, for any request for SCCF financing towards the NAP process, efforts will be made to maximize co-financing from other sources.

4. Recommendations, including additional work within the AC in collaboration with other experts

Taking into account sections 2 and 3 above, the ad hoc group recommends three types of follow-up activities needed at this point to get the NAP process for non-LDCs started.

A. Follow-up on limitations in guidance on NAPs to date

The LEG is currently considering developing supplements to the technical guidelines to offer more step-by-step guidance. The AC could collaborate with the LEG, to address the needs for both LDCs and non-LDCs. For example, the LEG and the AC could assemble information, possibly through the NAP Central Information System, on how different planning activities have used other tools and methodologies such as UNDP’s Adaptation Policy Framework or the PPCR guidance, and to share this information with all developing countries as examples/case studies.

AC together with LEG to consider developing a structure and format for reporting the outcomes of the NAPs so as to ensure that the results could be easily communicated.

B. Follow-up on technical support

The ad hoc group suggests to enhance the AC-LEG collaboration on NAPs to ensure broad based support to both LDCs and non-LDCs, overcoming the limitation that the LEG can only support LDCs. Early action in this regard would give momentum to the NAP process. For this purpose, the matter of “strengthening national institutional arrangements” should be considered more carefully, for example, the AC could define what constitutes good institutional arrangements and provide templates that countries could use to identify their various needs bearing in mind that one size does not fit all. This requires some more in-depth thinking and should address several

⁷ The document „Operationalizing Support to the Preparation of the National Adaptation Plan Process in Response to Guidance from the UNFCCC COP“ is available at <http://www.thegef.org/gef/council_document/operationalizing-supopprt-preparation-national-adaptation-plan-process-response-guid>.

⁸ Status report on the SCCF. As of 31 March 2013 available at <http://www.thegef.org/gef/council_document/status-report-special-climate-change-fund-0>. These numbers are “dynamic” and subject to change according to funds delivered and contributions received.

⁹ Status report on the LDCF. As of 31 March 2013 available at <http://www.thegef.org/gef/council_document/status-report-least-developed-countries-fund-1>. These numbers are “dynamic” and subject to change according to funds delivered and contributions received.

areas such as capacity building, education and training requirements. The AC could also engage in the GEF's planned GSP on NAPs and facilitate bilateral (north-south, south-south) technical cooperation initiatives.

C. Follow-up on financial support

As the LEG only considered support needs of LDCs as per its mandate, the AC could consider identifying the support needs of non-LDCs. Those needs could then be transmitted as part of its annual report to the COP so as to invite All Parties, the GEF and other relevant agencies to increase their financial support to the SCCF. At a later stage, the AC could also monitor how the GEF supports non-LDCs in pursuing NAPs with a view to identifying any problems regarding access. This work could also be done as part of AC activities on means of implementation. The question of modalities for financial support for non-LDCs, in particular for implementation, will need to be revisited, including in the context of the larger financial architecture, i.e. once the GCF is operational. The current guidelines stemming from COP decisions are for formulating NAPs only regardless whether it is NAPs by LDCs or non-LDCs. Implementation will require additional COP decisions to guide the financial mechanism; the AC may wish to guide the COP in this regard.

5. Next steps

The AC may wish to use the information provided in this note:

- To consider the recommendations and agree on any follow-up work as outlined in section 4;
- To engage the LEG in discussing the possible next steps in the creation of additional support materials to complement the technical guidelines, such as additional materials through NAP central, and the preparation of supplementary materials;
- To explore means for identifying those non-LDCs that would require technical support, the types of support needs, and how these needs could be addressed by the AC and others, such as through survey of non-LDCs to establish their readiness. In such a survey, the AC could also solicit information on relevant on-going activities that could contribute towards the NAP process. This information could then be used to document the progress in the NAP process for non-LDCs;
- To consider progress made by the GEF in responding to COP guidance on support to non-LDCs, as well as progress under the GSP for LDCs, with a view to making recommendations on support to non-LDCs during the AC meeting following the publication of the GEF report to COP 19;
- To agree on the ToRs for an ad hoc group, in collaboration with relevant organizations and experts, including from the LEG, to work on modalities and guidelines for NAPs for non-LDC developing countries.