



BRIEFING NOTE

March 2018

Institutional capacity assessment approach for national adaptation planning in the agriculture sectors

Overview

The briefing note highlights the need to apply a country-driven institutional capacity development approach for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) for more impactful and sustainable climate adaptation action. More specifically, this brief provides guidance on how to identify country strengths and needs for NAP through a participatory institutional capacity needs assessment process to improve cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination mechanisms between ministries and relevant stakeholders. Illustrated with case examples and practical tools that focus on the agriculture sectors, the brief introduces an institutional capacity assessment approach outlined according to key capacities for initiating and operationalizing NAP, in particular to address agricultural sector challenges. The rapid institutional capacity assessment approach is in line with and complements the *Addressing Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in National Adaptation Plans – Supplementary Guidelines* (FAO, 2017) aiming to inform, enable and inspire country stakeholders to apply a more effective capacity development approach for integrating the agriculture sectors in NAPs.

Key messages

1. Effective institutionalⁱ capacity to identify and integrate climate change adaptation actions within sectoral planning and budgeting processes is a key step towards formulating, implementing and monitoring NAPs.
2. The institutional capacity assessment is a participatory process to foster country ownership and commitment that benefits from facilitation by a neutral trusted convener to jointly with relevant stakeholders:
 - (i) identify and define existing country technical and functional capacities (see **Table 1**) for NAP, including in the agriculture sectors;
 - (ii) locate these at different capacity development levels, including individual, organizational and enabling environment;
 - (iii) identify the strengths and gaps where capacity enhancement is required; and
 - (iv) validate findings and develop a capacity development strategy with an action plan including targeted results to monitor progress.



Key messages (continued)

The latter (iv) is not specifically covered under this brief, but reference can be made to the FAO learning module (FAO, 2015b), NAP-Ag Webinar on Effective individual and institutional capacity development approaches to address the agriculture sectors in NAPs.ⁱⁱ

3. The focus is on jointly assessing five key technical and functional capacities necessary for adaptation planning at national, sectoral and subnational levels: (i) climate information and risks assessment; (ii) long-term vision and mandate; (iii) planning and implementation; (iv) coordination and partnering; and (v) monitoring and evaluation.
4. The qualitative and quantitative findings from the institutional capacity assessment will contribute to achieve a common understanding of key opportunities and areas to strengthen

the capacities for NAP. The ultimate objectives will be: (i) the definition of measures to enhance capacity strengths and address capacity gaps and (ii) the compilation of a capacity development plan for strengthening national institutional adaptive capacity.

5. The proposed rapid institutional capacity assessment option complements a more comprehensive capacity development process for addressing agriculture, forestry and fisheries in NAP.
6. Based on identified capacity needs and strengths and the capacity development strategy, capacities for NAP can be enhanced through, and results monitored for, a range of interventions beyond training such as strengthening multi-stakeholder platforms, horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms and policy alignment.

2

Why conduct an institutional capacity assessment for NAP?

The proposed institutional capacity assessment is shaped to gain a sound understanding of a country's needs to enhance their adaptive capacity through contextualized interventions such as targeted training or institutional strengthening for NAP, in particular at sectoral level. The aim of the institutional capacity assessment is to identify the strengths and needs for NAP in order to design, implement and track results of contextualized interventions. The process is highly participatory and inclusive as it must be driven and owned by national stakeholders to maximize sustainability (FAO 2015a and Kalas *et al.* 2017).

The institutional capacity assessment is a means to address key steps of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) NAP Technical Guidelines as well as the NAP-Ag Guidelines (FAO, 2017). It fits, in particular, under Element A, step 2 "Assess gaps and weaknesses in undertaking the NAP process" and under Element C, step 3 "Enhancing capacity for planning and implementation of adaptation, in the agriculture sectors". Examples of key institutions that may be considered for an institutional capacity assessment for NAP in the agriculture sectors are: agricultural sector development and planning ministries and departments, and climate change related units (e.g. National CC Secretariat, DRM Unit, and Meteorological Service). An assessment of other stakeholders, such as producer organizations, universities, research institutes, and community-based organizations may also be considered.

Box 1

Kenya national drought management authority capacity needs assessment for NAP

As part of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-FAO *Integrating Agriculture in NAP Programme* (NAP-Ag), a comprehensive assessment was undertaken of the Kenya National Drought Management Authority (NDMA)'s capacity to support the planning and implementation of adaptation and priority adaptation actions relevant to the agriculture sectors. The NDMA's mission is to provide leadership and coordination of Kenya's effort in the management of drought risks and enhancing adaptation. Its role, functions, management structure and institutional arrangements for climate change were screened in order to refine the scope of the capacity assessment. It focused on NDMA's capacity for normative and policy function, knowledge, partnering and implementation capacity to support the short-, medium- and long-term adaptation actions outlined in the Kenya Climate Change Action Plan and NAP. The assessment for each functional capacity addressed the enabling environment, the organization and individual capacities. A score from 1 to 5 was assigned (1=None; 2=Low; 3= Moderate; 4=High; and 5 = Full Capacity).

A snapshot of the findings from the quantitative assessments are presented below in **Figure 1**. Responses were collected from key staff through a combined use of staff interviews and a participatory self-assessment questionnaire to enhance ownership of the findings. It was concluded that NDMA has: (i) moderate-to-high levels of functional capacities, despite some specific limitations with respect to institutional arrangements to address the adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) priorities and implement NDMA's mandate and (ii) gaps in the organizational and individual capacity to enhance the Authority's functions and effectiveness. The establishment of a Climate Change Unit within the Ministry of Devolution and Planning (MoDP) was one of the key recommendations from the study. The findings informed the compilation of a capacity development strategy and action plan for NDMA.

Figure 1

Summary analysis of capacity needs assessment within the Kenya National Drought Management Authority



What are the main institutional capacities to assess?

The institutional capacity assessment approach covers the five technical and functional capacities for adaptation planning defined in **Table 1** below. These technical and functional capacities should be assessed across three dimensions in order to identify strengths and weaknesses of individuals, organizations and enabling environment for national adaptation planning in the agriculture sectors. In line with FAO's capacity development guidelines (FAO, 2015b), the assessment would focus on three, interdependent capacity dimensions:

- **at the individual level** – on awareness, knowledge, skills and competences;
- **at the level of organizations** – on performance, current roles and responsibilities for adaptation planning; mandate for adaptation in the agriculture sectors and vision; coordination among ministries and other stakeholders, namely non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, and the private sector; national budget allocation to adaptation and capacity to mobilize resources, sectoral monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for adaptation, including existence of multi-stakeholder platforms; and
- **at the enabling environment level** – on alignment among sectoral policies with regard to adaptation; integration of adaptation into key sector strategies and plans; institutional political economy; political commitment to address climate-related challenges, as well as existing national adaptation planning processes.

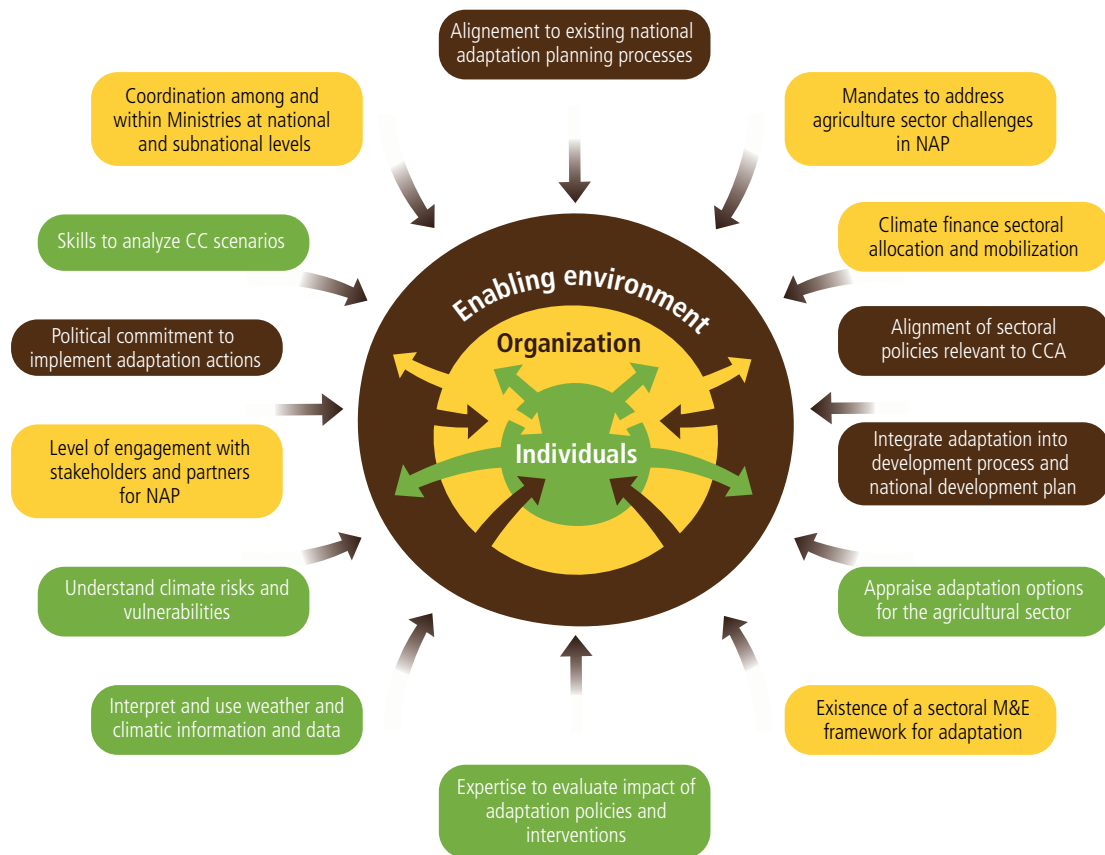
Table 1

Technical and functional capacities for NAP

Relevant NAP Element	Technical and functional capacity	Example of key capacities across the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels
Element A: Lay the groundwork and address gaps	Climate information and risk assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyse climate scenarios for agricultural production and sustainability • analyse climate impacts, risks and vulnerabilities for decision-making on adaptation responses
Element B: Preparatory Elements	Long-term vision and mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define long-term adaptation strategy and mandate • ensure appropriate priorities for the agriculture sectors • integrate adaptation into development processes at all planning levels, including national, subnational and sectoral policies, strategies and programmes
Element C: Developing Implementation Strategies	Planning and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address climate change risks and opportunities • appraise and identify adaptation options for the agricultural sector • implement adaptation actions on the ground to enhance resilience in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors • leverage climate finance
	Coordination and partnering/networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage stakeholders and partners • promote coordination and synergies at the national and subnational levels
Element D: Monitoring, Reporting and Reviewing	M&E of NAP process and enhanced climate resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the national planning process • monitor financial resources allocated to adaptation • investigate impact of adaptation policies and interventions • report on the NAP/NAP-Ag alignment • report on adaptation performance through a sectoral M&E framework for adaptation

Figure 2

Main elements of the NAP institutional capacity assessmentⁱⁱⁱ



Source: Adapted from FAO 2015a

How to perform an institutional capacity assessment for integrating agriculture in NAPS

The institutional capacity assessment is designed to foster dialogue and allow for the identification of targeted interventions as well as a baseline to monitor capacity enhancement progress. The proposed option of a rapid institutional capacity assessment is in line with, and complements, a more comprehensive approach proposed in the NAP-Ag Guidelines.

Rapid institutional capacity assessment

The rapid institutional capacity assessment includes the following phases (See **Figure 3**): (i) literature review and identification of key institutions and target audience; (ii) contextualization of the institutional capacity

assessment questionnaire (see **Annex 1**) and dissemination of questionnaire and consultations; and (iii) data analysis and preparation of capacity assessment report and capacity development plan with participatory validation of findings and action planning. These phases are presented below. As proposed by a more comprehensive capacity assessment approach in the NAP-Ag Guidelines and resources permitting, broader consultations beyond national level will include subnational levels as well as other stakeholders beyond government ministries.

Phase 1 entails the review of existing relevant national climate change adaptation plans, strategies and policies to identify national objectives and priorities for adaptation in the agricultural sector. Key government officials of the institutions will be involved in the development and implementation of plans as well as the strategies and policies on adaptation. For an effective institutional capacity assessment, the target audience needs to: (i) be carefully identified to be

representative of the organization's staff or membership (e.g. including people from different teams, services and levels of responsibility in the organization); and (ii) ultimately ensure objectivity of the assessment. Participants are appointed or nominated among those supporting agriculture-based livelihood adaptation within the institutions.

Phase 2. The scope and focus for the quantitative capacity assessment is shaped by the identification of priority adaptation actions for the agricultural sector. This is an important step for refining the institutional capacity assessment questionnaire according to the institution's mandate (See example in **Table 1, Annex 1**). The format of the questionnaire (see **Annex 1**) compares existing capacities with those needed for NAP formulation, implementation and monitoring. It helps establish a baseline and is guided by identifying the present state (*Where are we now?*), the desired future state (*Where do we want to go?*) and actionable recommendations (*What is the best way to get there?*). The questionnaire also addresses the three capacity development

dimensions: individuals, organizations and enabling environment. Prior to the circulation of the questionnaire and focus group discussion, the target audience will be guided on how to fill in the questionnaire.

Phase 3. The analysis of data collected is performed according to five technical and functional and three capacity development dimensions, to allow identification of key institutional capacity development areas for national adaptation planning in the agriculture sectors. The results of the questionnaires are validated with a representative sample of the staff to deepen understanding of the rationale behind the responses, clarify and elaborate on the scores, consolidate and provide further insights on key challenges for adaptation planning, as well as lay out potential opportunities and gaps for capacity development. It is crucial that the quantitative assessment is complemented with face-to-face interviews and/or focus group discussions, not only to confirm the results, but also to ensure objectivity of the analysis and enhance country ownership and commitment.

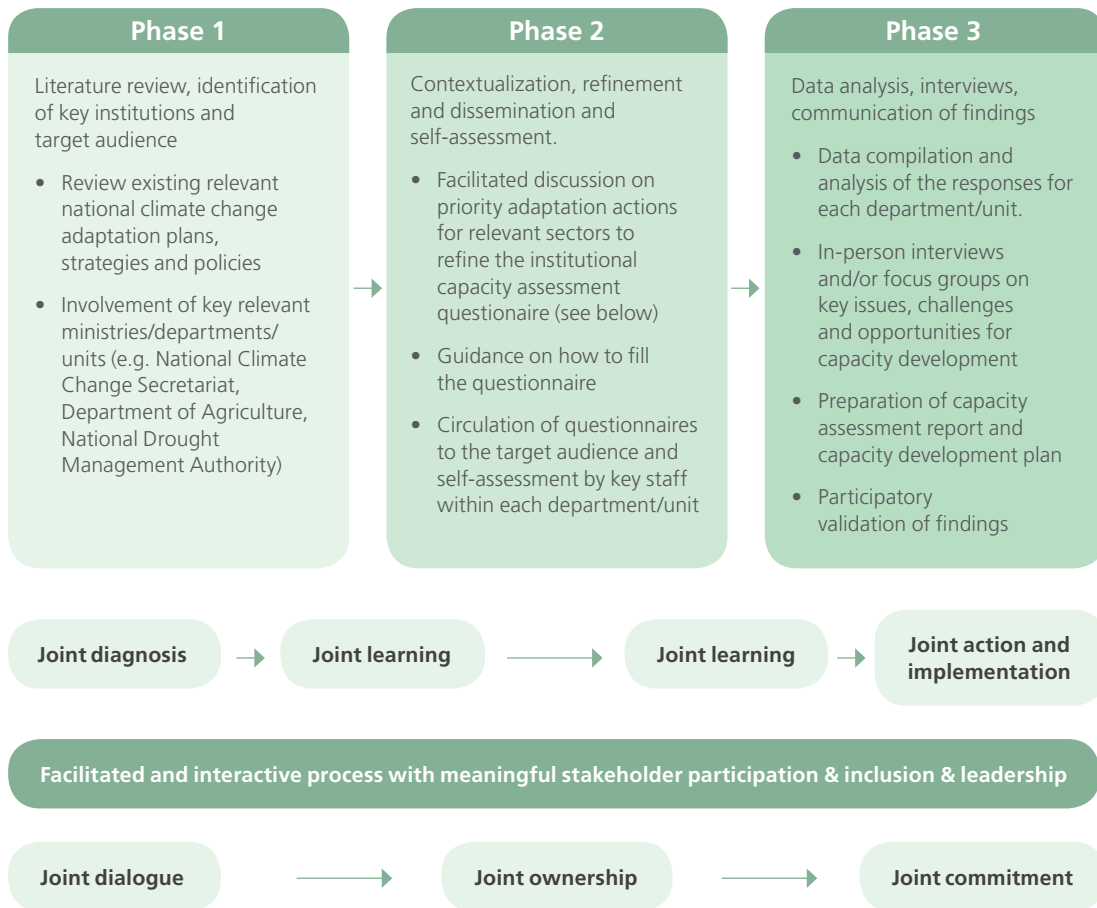
Recommended guidance for a rapid institutional capacity assessment

1. Identify a national team of experts to facilitate the process to enhance country capacities during institutional assessment. The terms of reference include facilitation skills in accordance with the participatory nature of the process. As indicated in the NAP-Ag Guidelines, training and coaching to prepare the team on capacity assessment approaches can be considered (FAO, 2017a).
2. Customize the proposed assessment methodology and questionnaire. Institutional and technical capacities are customized according to the national context and the institution appraised.
3. An individual leads the protocol on systematic data collection procedure and organization to ensure full and consistent data collection and allow aggregation of responses.
4. Visualization of collected and analysed data through presentations to facilitate summary of findings.

Source: Adapted from United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), UNDP, Global Environment Facility (GEF), NAP–Global Support Programme (GSP). 2015. Skills Assessment for NAP and FAO's 2017 Guidelines "Addressing Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Fisheries in National Adaptation Plans".

Figure 3

Rapid institutional capacity assessment phases



Conclusions and recommendations

A country-driven institutional capacity development approach to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration and institutional effectiveness is critical for addressing and integrating agricultural challenges into national adaptation planning for more impactful and sustainable climate adaptation action. To foster a national dialogue, the assessment of the technical and functional capacities for

NAP across the three capacity development dimensions (individuals, organizations and enabling environment) needs to ensure a participatory stakeholder process. The findings are to be jointly validated and to inform the contextualized capacity development strategy and action plan, including how to track results. Countries may consider integrating the proposed institutional capacity development assessment to complement the more comprehensive approach for NAP formulation, implementation and monitoring as proposed by the NAP-Ag Guidelines.

Box 2

Definitions

Capacity development: Capacity development is the process whereby individuals, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity to set and achieve their own development objectives (OECD 2006). Effective capacity development: (a) deepens country ownership; (b) addresses technical and functional capacities; and (c) enhances capacities interdependently across individual capacities (e.g. skills and knowledge), organizational capacities (e.g. coordination, mandates, multi-stakeholder processes) and an enabling environment (e.g. governance, policies and legal frameworks) based on jointly assessed needs, joint context-specific interventions identification and joint tracking of results (FAO, 2011 and Kalas *et al.* 2017).

Climate information and risks assessment: Refers to data about understanding of climate science, collect and package meteorological and climate data, related hazards, risks, impacts and vulnerabilities. It provides the basis for robust decision-making about adaptation (GIZ, 2016).

Long-term vision and mandate: Refers to a common understanding on long-term objectives and responsibilities for NAP (GIZ, 2016).

Planning and implementation: Refers to the definition of policies, programmes and budgets that result in on-the-ground measures and practices to enhance resilience. It can entail the integration of adaptation responses into development planning and budgeting at national, sectoral and subnational levels (GIZ, 2016).

Coordination and partnering: Refers to the involvement of representatives from government, research institutions and private entities, as well as civil society, NGOs, and local community groups for NAP across national and subnational levels (GIZ, 2016).

Monitoring and evaluation: Refers to appraisal of climate change impacts, financial resources and adaptation performance, to foster learning on adaptation, ensure effective resource allocation, improve accountability, steering adaptation plans and activities, and foster institutional adaptive capacity (GIZ, 2016).

8

Annex 1

Sample questionnaire for institutional capacity assessment for NAP in the agriculture sectors (score on a scale of 1-5)¹

Scoring system to assess the institutional capacity (scale of 1-5) <i>1 - Very low capacity or none 2 - Low capacity 3 - Moderate capacity, with less than 50% compliances 4 - High capacity, 75% compliance 5 - Full capacity, 100% compliance</i>						Recommendations for improvement
	1	2	3	4	5	
CLIMATE INFORMATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT						
Dimension 1: Enabling Environment						
Does the ministry/department/unit have a mandate to manage and provide information on climate vulnerability, hazards and impacts to support decision-making on adaptation?						
Dimension 2: Organisation / Institution						
To what extent can the ministry/department/unit access, manage and provide information on climate vulnerability, hazards and impacts to support decision-making on adaptation?						
Does the ministry/department/unit have the staff capacity and operational procedures to provide information on climate vulnerability, hazards and impacts to support decision-making on adaptation?						

¹ Moderate to high capacity (> 3), Low to moderate capacity (2-3), Very low capacity (< 2)

Scoring system to assess the institutional capacity (scale of 1-5) 1 - Very low capacity or none 2 - Low capacity 3 - Moderate capacity, with less than 50% compliances 4 - High capacity, 75% compliance 5 - Full capacity, 100% compliance						Recommendations for improvement
	1	2	3	4	5	
Dimension 3: Individual						
To what extent is the staff knowledgeable, adequately qualified and competent in analysis of climate scenarios, climate vulnerability assessments, provision of information on hazards and impacts to support decision-making on adaptation?						
What additional skills will be needed to perform effectively? What are the capacity strengths and gaps?						
LONG-TERM VISION AND MANDATE						
Dimension 1: Enabling Environment						
Is the ministry/department/unit supported by robust policy frameworks (climate change strategies and policies at national or sectoral level, NAP) to address adaptation planning?						
Is there alignment among the short-, medium- and long-term objectives and actions of the existing adaptation policy frameworks (climate change strategies, policies, NAP, National Development Plan)?						
Dimension 2: Organisation / Institution						
Is there clarity of mandate, vision and mission within the ministry/department/unit with regard to adaptation planning?						
Does the ministry/department/unit have the staff capacity and operational procedures to ensure appropriate priorities for the agricultural sector, as well as integrate agriculture into the NAP process?						
Dimension 3: Individual						
To what extent is the staff knowledgeable, adequately qualified and competent in prioritizing adaptation for agriculture sectors in national and sectoral policy frameworks (climate change strategies, policies, NAP)?						
What additional skills will be needed to perform effectively? What are the capacity strengths and gaps?						
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION						
Dimension 1: Enabling Environment						
Are financial resources available and managed in such a way that planned adaptation objectives can be met?						
Dimension 2: Organisation / Institution						
Is there adequate thematic specialization in the ministry/department/unit to support implementation of the adaptation policy frameworks (climate change strategies, policies, NAP)?						
Does the ministry/department/unit have the staff capacity and operational procedures to support national and subnational adaptation planning and implementation to respond to the challenges faced by the country?						
Is there sufficient and appropriate expertise on community based adaptation approaches and gender mainstreaming in the Ministry/ Department/Unit?						
Dimension 3: Individual						
To what extent is the staff knowledgeable, adequately qualified and competent in planning and implementing adaptation and disaster risk reduction responses, leveraging climate finance, addressing climate risks and opportunities, and appraising and identifying adaptation options?						
What additional skills will be needed to perform effectively? What are the capacity strengths and gaps?						

Scoring system to assess the institutional capacity (scale of 1-5) 1 - Very low capacity or none 2 - Low capacity 3 - Moderate capacity, with less than 50% compliances 4 - High capacity, 75% compliance 5 - Full capacity, 100% compliance						Recommendations for improvement
	1	2	3	4	5	
COORDINATION AND PARTNERING						
Dimension 1: Enabling Environment						
To what extent do the policy frameworks (climate change strategies, policies, NAP) and existing institutional arrangements support the ministry/department/unit role in engagement with stakeholders on climate change adaptation?						
Is there political commitment to ensure that partners and stakeholders have adequate access to the Ministry/ Department/Unit's information and knowledge necessary to support the implementation of the national adaptation priorities?						
Is the ministry/department/unit part of a national coordination body, network or partnership to support climate change adaptation?						
Dimension 2: Organisation / Institution						
To what extent does the ministry/department/unit coordinate and collaborate with actors and stakeholders at national and subnational levels for adaptation planning and implementation?						
To what extent is stakeholder engagement and partnership building a priority for the ministry/department/unit in supporting implementation of the national adaptation priorities?						
Does the ministry/department/unit have the staff capacity and operational procedures for mobilizing and engaging stakeholders and partners?						
Dimension 3: Individual						
To what extent is the staff knowledgeable, adequately qualified and competent in coordinating and partnering with stakeholders at national and subnational levels on adaptation?						
What additional skills will be needed to perform effectively? What are the capacity strengths and gaps?						
MONITORING AND EVALUATION						
Dimension 1: Enabling Environment						
Does the ministry/department/unit have a mandate for M&E of adaptation?						
Is there an existing M&E system/framework/procedures for adaptation?						
Dimension 2: Institution						
Is there adequate thematic specialization in the ministry/ department/unit to perform M&E of adaptation?						
To what extent does the Ministry/ Department/ Unit use its M&E system/framework/procedures to assess its performance on adaptation?						
Are there institutional arrangements to report on adaptation performance?						
Dimension 3: Individual						
To what extent is the staff knowledgeable, adequately qualified and competent in M&E of programmes and projects, monitoring of financial resources allocated to adaptation and investigation of impact of adaptation policies?						
What additional skills will be needed to perform effectively? What are the capacity strengths and gaps?						

Source: Adapted from GIZ. 2016. SNAP: Stocktaking for National Adaptation Planning. Assessing Capacity for implementing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

References and further reading

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Presentations

Organizational and Institutional Capacity Enhancement to Integrate Agriculture into National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) to address Climate Change (Webinar) 2017. Presentation: <http://bit.ly/2u8cddd>
 Webinar Recording: <http://bit.ly/2p2FRNO>

Relevant country examples

Strengthening individual and institutional capacities to adapt to climate change in Lao PDR <http://bit.ly/2qEZrws>

Notes

ⁱ In the context of UNFCCC and the NAP-Ag programme an institutional capacity assessment is primarily targeted at the Government Institutions.

ⁱⁱ Effective individual and institutional capacity development approaches to address the agriculture sectors in NAPs2017. www.fao.org/in-action/naps/resources/webinars/capacity-development

ⁱⁱⁱ The elements relevant to individuals are in green; those relevant to organizations are in yellow, and elements relevant to creating an enabling environment are in brown.

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*See: www.fao.org/in-action/naps/resources/webinars/capacity-development



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