

Regional briefing on  
National Adaptation Plans:

# ASIA-PACIFIC IN FOCUS



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## In brief

- Many countries in Asia-Pacific have **institutional arrangements** in place for climate change adaptation, providing high-level support and institutional coordination.
- Local decision-makers, communities and the private sector need to still be better engaged in adaptation planning, whilst **capacities need to be enhanced**.
- Adaptation has been **integrated into national level planning to some extent**, both in terms of development planning and of specific climate change and/or adaptation plans and policies.
- Further work is needed to ensure that adaptation is **integrated across all sectors and scales** of development planning.
- Approximately half of the middle-income, developing countries in the region are developing medium-to long-term, cross-sectoral and cross-scale processes to formulate and implement their **National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)**.
- Given the number of existing development and climate change plans, NDCs and NAPs in countries of the region, the **actual implementation** and actioning of these frameworks provide clear opportunities.
- **Long-term financial sustainability** is needed for such implementation, alongside capacity building and technical assistance. Potential sources for long-term financial sustainability include the use of national funds and climate finance coding, integration into budget cycles and engagement of the private sector, alongside more traditional source of international climate finance.
- Catalytic activities include the **appraisal and prioritisation of adaptation options** to enhance implementation and target finance, and the development of M&E systems as part of iterative NAP processes.

# Regional overview and introduction

Climate change is anticipated to have an increasing impact on human health, security, livelihoods, and poverty levels in Asia and the Pacific. Warming trends and temperature extremes have been observed throughout the region, whilst water scarcity is expected to become a major challenge. Food productivity and human security is projected to decline in many Asian countries. Sea level rise is likely to lead to further coastal erosion. For the low-lying islands of the Pacific, sea level rise is a significant climate change threat, impacting livelihoods, infrastructure, agriculture and water resources. Outbreaks of malaria and dengue are increasing in frequency. Both

climatic and non-climatic drivers are affecting the extreme vulnerability of the Pacific region.

This Regional Briefing is based on the consultations and discussions of the *Asia-Pacific National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Training Workshop*, which was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 20-21 October 2016. It aims to provide a brief overview of the NAP experiences of middle-income countries in the Asia and Pacific region (excluding Central Asia), and highlight emerging issues, challenges and opportunities. This Regional Briefing focuses in particular on the countries that participated in this workshop.

## Emerging issues for NAP processes

### Preparatory elements

Climate change information and projections are available in varying degrees to many countries in Asia-Pacific, which can provide a basis for adaptation planning. **Global climate scenarios have been downscaled** to the national and local level for Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Philippines and Tonga, amongst other countries. Various sectors and geographical locations require specific, detailed information, which provides an ongoing challenge. Decision makers also require climate information which is practical and comprehensible, to facilitate medium- to long-term adaptation planning.

Most countries in the region have carried out **vulnerability and impact assessments**, including at sectoral level, which inform adaptation planning. However, the interpretation and application of these assessments remains a challenge, particularly at the local level. Stocktaking exercises have been carried out, often under the National Communications. In some countries – for example, Marshall Islands, Thailand and Viet Nam – the **stocktaking** exercise itself has strengthened the capacities of Ministries and enhanced planning processes.

### Institutional arrangements

Many countries in Asia and the Pacific have institutional arrangements in place for climate change adaptation and mitigation, which provide needed high-level support, direction for adaptation planning and institutional coordination. For example, Malaysia, Niue, Philippines and Samoa have high-level, intersectoral government bodies coordinating climate change planning. As countries move towards the implementation of their adaptation planning processes, multi-stakeholder collaboration is key to ensure implementation across sectors and scales.

In addition to engaging all the relevant government players across sectors in adaptation planning, it is necessary to ensure that local level decision-makers and communities are involved. Incorporating the private sector requires consolidated effort in many countries in the region, but this is also essential to the successful implementation of adaptation.

## Integrating adaptation into planning

Climate change adaptation has been integrated into national level planning in many countries in Asia and the Pacific, both in terms of general development planning, and specific climate change and/or adaptation plans and policies.

Some of the countries which integrate adaptation into their **National Development Plans** (or equivalent documents), include Malaysia, Mongolia, Niue, Philippines, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Tonga.

Comprehensive medium- to long-term **climate change policies**, which encompass adaptation, have also been developed – in China, Maldives, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand for example – whilst supportive legislation has been adopted in Micronesia and PNG.

Policy frameworks may need harmonising for some countries in the region. For example, in Thailand, whilst there is a comprehensive National Climate Change Master Plan, adaptation could be more comprehensively integrated into the National Development Plan and it will be comprehensively integrated into the upcoming National Adaptation Plan. In Malaysia, the National Development Plan includes a focus on adaptation, but the climate change policy mainly considers mitigation aspects.

**Sectoral level** adaptation strategies have been developed in some countries, such as Thailand, whilst other countries such as Samoa have embedded adaptation into existing sectoral development plans. For example, with regards to the water sector, countries in the region have a wide range of existing water laws, decrees, plans and policies. Moving forward, adaptation can be better integrated into the delivery of these frameworks, institutional coordination can be enhanced, and NAPs and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) can be harmonised with existing processes.

In some countries, such as China, India, Pakistan, Philippines, PNG and Viet Nam, **provincial, local or city level adaptation plans have** been developed, or are in process.

The **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** and Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs, for Iran and Philippines – who are yet to submit an NDC) all integrate adaptation, with the only exception of Palau, whose NDC is focused on mitigation. Several NDCs also mention the intention to advance NAPs.

Many countries in Asia and the Pacific are starting to move from integration of adaptation into development planning processes, towards medium- to long-term implementation of adaptation actions and mainstreaming into national budgeting processes. However, implementation of existing plans and policies remains a challenge.

## NAPs

Several countries are developing medium- to long-term, cross-sectoral and cross-scale NAP processes. This may include updating or harmonising existing planning processes and policies (including those mentioned above), without creating a new planning document; or in some cases, developing a new, more comprehensive NAP roadmap and framework.

Philippines already has a National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 2011-2028, which provides a comprehensive, cross-sectoral policy framework. As such, the country is not looking to develop a separate NAP. China has a National Strategy for Climate Adaptation in place. Samoa is considering reinforcing the implementation of existing policy frameworks, rather than developing a new framework, whilst Indonesia is working to update its existing National Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation (RAN-API). Under a NAP process, Sri Lanka is working to revise and implement its National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change 2016-2025.

The process to formulate and implement a new NAP framework has been initiated in Maldives, Mongolia,

Pakistan, PNG, Thailand and Viet Nam. The linkages between climate change adaptation and disaster risk management (DRM) have been considered in alignment with the NAP, particularly in the Pacific. The Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue and Tonga have developed Joint National Action Plans on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management (JNAPs). In Tonga, next steps include the integration of DRM and adaptation into community and district plans, and the development of an updated JNAP-2.

## Integrating gender

Some countries in the region are working to integrate gender into adaptation planning and into their NAP processes. For example, gender-sensitive planning has been initiated in Philippines through the development of Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines, which are approaching the implementation phase, alongside the implementation of the NCCAP. Maldives and Papua New Guinea are coordinating their NAPs together with government authorities which oversee gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Mongolia will coordinate their adaptation planning with a Gender Equality Policy. In Niue, the JNAP was developed to be gender sensitive.

# Moving forward on NAP processes

## Challenges

Whilst there are emerging experiences in integrating adaptation into sectoral and local level planning, further work is needed to **ensure this integration covers all sectors and scales**. In some countries, the lack of coordination between stakeholders, Ministries and sectors leads to weak cross-sectoral integration, whilst down-scaling to the local level is hampered by capacity constraints.

Technical expertise on adaptation may in some cases be excellent, but there are **limits to human resource capacity** in many countries. Frequently, government staff cover multiple issues in addition to adaptation.

Climate information exists, however there are issues around **ensuring on-going climate information collection, storage, analysis and sharing of data**, and using climate information for decision-making. There are exceptions, for example Fiji has a centralised database for climate change information.

Lack of **finance** for the implementation of adaptation strategies and action plans remains a challenge. However, there are emerging experiences in using various funds and national budgeting systems. Another trend is the increasing engagement of the private sector.

In terms of **gender integration**, many countries lack adequate awareness. Coordination and capacity need strengthening, particularly for local authorities and sectors. In addition, many countries have not involved Women's Ministries or the equivalent in their adaptation planning. It remains a challenge to be inclusive of issues related to gender throughout the entire adaptation planning process, beyond community consultations and vulnerability assessments.

## Opportunities

Given the number of NAPs that have been or are being developed in the region, **implementation of these NAPs**, as well as of climate change and development plans and policies which integrate adaptation, provides a clear opportunity moving forward. This also includes the implementation of the recently developed NDCs, which also prioritise adaptation in many instances.

Most countries in the region have not carried out comprehensive **appraisal and prioritisation of adaptation options**, but this provides a future opportunity to strengthen the adaptation planning process. Many countries have experiences of implementing short-term adaptation actions, and of including medium-term adaptation actions in their development and climate change strategies and action plans. In both Maldives and Samoa, cost-benefit analysis (CbA) has been used to prioritise sector-specific adaptation options, whilst CbA is currently being piloted in sectoral adaptation planning in Thailand.

Prioritisation can help to enhance implementation and help **target finance**, in addition to providing an opportunity to **scale-up effective adaptation options**.

Implementation requires **long-term financial sustainability**. Some examples of local solutions that move beyond project-based approaches to financing adaptation include: the National Adaptation Fund in India; integration of adaptation into national budgeting and the People's Survival Fund in the Philippines; and the establishment of a Trust Fund for community level actions in Tonga.

**Climate finance coding** and tagging initiatives have been initiated, in the Philippines and Thailand for example. There are further opportunities in the region to integrate climate change and adaptation into national, sectoral and local budget planning cycles, to both target and access climate finance.

To date, many countries have relied on project level monitoring and review processes, and do not have a national-level system for adaptation **monitoring and evaluation (M&E)**. The Philippines has a Results Based M&E system for its NCCAP, which also acts as the country's NAP. In Thailand, work has been initiated to develop an M&E Framework for the upcoming NAP. Marshall Islands is looking to link M&E of the JNAP to the M&E of the National Strategic Plan. There are challenges in terms of access to data, the need for more technical expertise, and maintaining stakeholder engagement in the monitoring process. However, countries have a strong interest in developing M&E systems as part of the iterative planning process for their NAPs.

## What is the process to formulate and implement a NAP?

The Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process in 2010, to enhance country-led planning and preparedness for climate change adaptation (CCA) in the medium and long-term. The objectives of the NAP are to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and to integrate adaptation into all levels of development planning. The NAP process is multi-sectoral, involving Ministries of Environment as well as Planning and Finance, in addition to other key Ministries. By bringing greater institutional integration and coordination to adaptation planning, NAPs can enhance ongoing national development planning processes, safeguard development gains, and build resilience.

### NAP-GSP Regional Trainings

The joint UNDP-UN Environment NAP Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP) is convening a global series of NAP Regional Training Workshops, to build capacities and exchange experiences on NAPs.

The NAP Regional Training Workshop for the Asia-Pacific, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 20-21 October 2016, convened government representatives from 18 countries (China, Fiji, Iran, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Nauru, Niue, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, PNG, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga and Viet Nam) together with representatives of the NAP-GSP (UN Environment and UNDP), and partner organisations (FAO, PROVIA, WMO and UN-Habitat).

The objectives of the workshop were to increase countries' understanding of the NAPs process, as a means to accelerate adaptation planning and implementation; to take stock of what countries are doing on NAPs, exchange lessons learned and experiences, and identify where additional support is required. The workshop used an interactive format, with a combination of brief presentations, panel discussions and participatory group exercises. Each country also developed a NAP workplan. The full workshop report, including the agenda and materials, is available at [http://globalsupportprogramme.org/AP\\_workshop](http://globalsupportprogramme.org/AP_workshop).

A further targeted training workshop on Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation into Water Resources was held from 13-16 September 2017 in Seoul, Korea and was attended by 19 countries. Workshop materials are available at [http://globalsupportprogramme.org/NAP\\_Water](http://globalsupportprogramme.org/NAP_Water).

### About the NAP-GSP

The joint UNDP-UN Environment National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP) was launched in June 2013, following a decision at COP17 in Durban, requesting UN organisations to support the National Adaptation Plan process. The programme is financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The NAP-GSP, together with partners, is assisting developing countries to identify technical, institutional and financial needs to integrate climate change adaptation into medium- and long-term national planning and financing. The NAP-GSP provides technical expertise and guidance on country NAP processes, and provides opportunities for knowledge exchange on NAPs.