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FACT SHEET

NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANNING

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES CAN BECOME MORE RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE BY INTEGRATING ADAPTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Photo by: USAID

By addressing climate threats in the context of their development goals, developing countries can build resilience to climate change while growing their economies. Developing countries are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change because of their natural resource-based economies and location in areas already prone to climatic extremes. Yet many developing countries lack the resources and capacity needed to build their resilience to future impacts. Recognizing this challenge, the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed in 2010 to establish the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process as a way to facilitate medium-to-long-term adaptation planning in developing countries.

HOW THE NAP PROCESS WORKS

Through the NAP process, developing countries identify climate risks, adaptation needs, and capacity gaps, and then begin to integrate adaptation into their national and subnational development plans, policies, and programs. The NAP is intended to ensure that climate change impacts are considered as part of development and sectoral decision-making. This approach helps countries protect development gains despite a changing climate.

The UNFCCC Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) developed NAP guidance in 2012. It presents a flexible, stepwise approach to carrying out adaptation planning that includes assessing climate risks and vulnerabilities, identifying and prioritizing adaptation options, developing adaptation plans and implementation strategies, enhancing capacity, and creating systems to monitor and report on progress.

HOW USAID SUPPORTS THE NAP PROCESS

USAID is working with developing countries to support their NAP processes through a "development first" approach that addresses climate threats in the context of broader development goals. USAID's approach is consistent with the guidelines developed by the LEG, but emphasizes the idea that adaptation efforts must be rooted in and support development. USAID recommends starting with development priorities in order to narrow the scope and appropriate timescale of climate information that is needed.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

USAID supports national adaptation planning processes in Jamaica, Tanzania, and 11 countries in West Africa.

- Workshops in Jamaica and Tanzania used a USAID-developed process to help identify key climate risks and begin developing adaptation plans.
- USAID encouraged and facilitated a regionally coordinated approach to adaptation planning in West Africa.

"The NAP process is essential to the development of our countries. What is at stake here is not just the environment or climate change, but the whole process of development. One country cannot truly develop itself when climate change affects and jeopardizes national efforts in the path of development. Hence, climate change issues should be included in development programming and plans."

Participant in USAID's West Africa Coastal Climate Change National Adaptation Planning Workshop, Accra, Ghana, July 18–20, 2013.

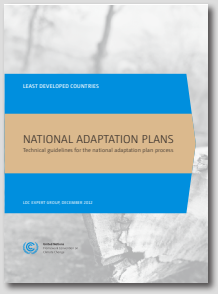
INTEGRATING ADAPTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

An integrated approach to development planning ensures that attention to climate change impacts becomes a part of the process – avoiding decisions that increase vulnerability and encouraging decisions that build resilience.

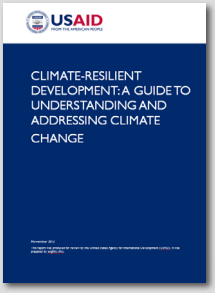
NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANNING GUIDANCE

LEG and USAID have developed the following guidance on how to integrate climate resilience into development planning:



LEG's National Adaptation Plans: Technical Guidelines for the National Adaptation Plan Process

USAID's Climate-Resilient Development: A Guide to Understanding and Addressing Climate Change (DRAFT)



The USAID approach begins with a workshop attended by a wide range of stakeholders from government agencies and non-governmental organizations. Through this workshop, participants set out an approach, build ownership and momentum, and establish agreement on the priorities that will guide next steps and action.

Jamaica launched its NAP process in 2012 with the aim of creating a new policy framework that builds support for adaptation across the economy. The process of developing that framework began with a USAID-supported stakeholder workshop in July 2012. The workshop was attended by more than 150 people, including representatives from the Government of Jamaica, NGOs, academia, the private sector, and international development partners. The participants worked together to identify key inputs (such as water, energy, labor, and infrastructure) necessary to achieve Jamaica's development objectives. They identified climate and non-climate stresses (such as drought, pollution, and weak governance) on those inputs. Then they began to identify interventions that would alleviate these stresses so the country can achieve its development objectives in the face of climate change. Jamaica is now developing a national policy framework on climate change, and establishing a Climate Change Department to coordinate relevant activities across the government and with the private sector.

In Tanzania, the Vice President's Office and USAID organized a NAP workshop in March 2013. The workshop focused on coastal areas, identifying environmental and social threats, institutional capacities and constraints, and adaptation actions to support development objectives in key economic sectors. It also assisted with developing criteria and tools to prioritize action. Tanzania has made progress on developing its NAP since the workshop, including formulating a roadmap and technical guidelines that will direct the sequence of activities and resources needed to complete the plan.

In West Africa, USAID is helping the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to work with 11 countries to facilitate regional coordination on coastal adaptation planning and to support countries with their NAP processes. A regional workshop was organized in Accra, Ghana, in June 2013, which followed a similar process as that used in Tanzania. It led to a road map of activities and next steps to move ahead with the NAP process in each country and to continue regional cooperation.

Through their collaboration with USAID, more than a dozen developing countries have taken initial steps forward with the NAP process. A number of other least-developed countries are also getting involved, partnering internationally with agencies and organizations to develop NAPs through the UNFCCC. These efforts to integrate adaptation into development plans and policies will help developing countries reduce the vulnerability of their people and economies to climate change, both now and in the future.

Blue Mountain coffee is an important part of Jamaica's culture and economy. Growers want to protect this crop from rising temperatures and changes in rainfall.

In West Africa, drought can reduce water availability, resulting in inadequate water supply for fish farming.

In coastal Tanzania, climate change is resulting in economic impacts, including farmed seaweed die-offs and reduced predictability for fishermen and agriculture.