

# **NDC Partnership Experience with Multi-Stakeholder Engagement: Key Lessons Learned\***

Insight Brief, August 2019

## **INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

For countries to successfully implement their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), they need inclusive planning processes that involve those responsible for NDC financing and implementation in vision-setting and prioritization, planning, and coordination. Multi-stakeholder engagement has many benefits, including:

- Improved mainstreaming of climate action into national and sectoral plans and budgets;
- Consideration of the priorities of diverse stakeholders to increase buy-in and maximize benefits;
- Identification and commitment of domestic, international, and private finance;
- Increased ownership of climate plans by the national government and local actors; and
- Alignment between the climate agenda, national development agendas, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The NDC Partnership – a coalition of more than 140 countries, institutions, and non-state actors – works to implement the Paris Agreement by strengthening government ownership of their NDCs. To this end, the Partnership, as part of its in-country engagement and Partnership Plan<sup>1</sup> development, supports governments in bringing together a wide range of national and sub-national government stakeholders, non-governmental actors, and implementing and development partners<sup>2</sup> to share information and forge a collaborative approach to scaled-up climate action.

This Insight Brief gives an overview of lessons learned by the Support Unit of the NDC Partnership during the multi-stakeholder engagement process. Insights draw on experiences in more than 40 countries and are organized according to the aim of each consultation:

- I. Engagement across ministries, sectors, and civil society;
- II. Strengthening participation of ministries of finance and planning; and
- III. Involving implementing and development partners throughout the process.

Finally, we highlight key challenges to successful multi-stakeholder engagement that we have encountered and suggest solutions.

---

\* This paper captures insights from the NDC Partnership stakeholder engagement process as seen by the Partnership's Support Unit. It does not represent the views of the NDC Partnership members.

<sup>1</sup> A plan that outlines common objectives and outputs, set by the government to achieve country NDC goals. The Partnership Plan reflects priorities and may not necessarily encompass the whole of the NDC. Although the plan can be used to mobilize resources, its primary function is to improve planning, streamline coordination, and track NDC implementation progress.

<sup>2</sup> Implementing partners are country, institutional, and/or NGO partners that provide access to finance, technical assistance, and/or capacity building in response to a member country's requests to the Partnership. Development partners are governments and donor agencies that support NDC Partnership work on the ground.

## I. ENGAGEMENT ACROSS MINISTRIES, SECTORS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The NDC Partnership supports governments to engage stakeholders across ministries, sectors, and civil society. Inclusive development of NDC implementation plans (e.g., Partnership Plans) ensures that Plans reflect all key stakeholders' priorities and that these stakeholders will be prepared to implement the Plans. While each country's approach to increase participation of all arms of government and society is unique, some common lessons are as follows:

- 1. Partnership Plans must align as much as possible with existing national, sub-national, and sectoral sustainable development goals and strategies.** When governments recognize the added value of a Partnership Plan and its complementarity with existing environment and development policies, they are more likely to champion the process. Partnership Plans should be a vehicle to support the implementation of climate and development priorities and not a parallel process that generates extra burden for the government. In Morocco, for example, the government, instead of starting yet another planning cycle, has built on existing processes and strategies to draft its Partnership Plan, converging several existing climate and sustainable development strategies. In Mozambique, the Government has used the Partnership Plan to catalyze the 2020-2025 NDC Operationalization Plan and will use it to mainstream climate change in the next Five Year Development Plan.
- 2. Build on existing processes and coordination bodies, adapting them when necessary** to include all relevant players for NDC implementation. In many countries, there are well-established channels of communication and coordination among stakeholder groups, often tied to pre-existing climate and development processes. For instance, Rwanda's Sector Working Group (SWG) has enabled successful environmental coordination and governance. Rather than duplicating the mechanism, the Partnership's coordination is anchored to the SWG.
- 3. Engage civil society and offer mechanisms for follow-up.** Inclusive dialogues are always important but are most usefully paired with clear communication channels that bring non-governmental stakeholders' messages forward in the planning process. In Colombia, line ministries identify key non-state actors in their sectors, engage them in dialogue, and synthesize these discussions into policy-relevant outcomes for national NDC planning. In Peru, the government has conducted a participatory dialogue, *Dialoguemos NDC*, across a range of sectors and with both national and local stakeholders, including the private sector, indigenous peoples, and civil society. Conclusions from Peru's dialogues feed directly into adaptation and mitigation sectoral roadmaps at the national, regional, and local levels, as well as help identify and prioritize measures for Peru's current and future NDCs.
- 4. Inclusive and extensive preparatory consultations are key.** Successful preparation has included scoping calls and missions, kick-off workshops, and small meetings led by focal ministries that bring together key stakeholders such as major spending ministries and civil society organizations. These meetings allow sectoral or interest groups to explore their specific priorities in greater depth and come to national-level discussions with comparable levels of understanding. For instance, Honduras held six sectoral discussions prior to its Partnership Plan workshop that contributed to smoother engagement. In the lead-up to its Partnership Plan Workshop, the Presidential Council for Climate Change of the Dominican Republic brought working groups from government sectors and civil society on board.
- 5. High-level endorsement of Partnership Plans increases ownership and facilitates cooperation within governments.** In Saint Lucia, the Partnership Plan was endorsed by the Minister of Sustainable Development, the Minister of Energy, and the Minister of Finance before the Cabinet approved it. The Cabinet noted that the Plan is a living document and subject to amendments as opportunities rise, emphasizing the flexibility of the process and the value of continued cross-ministerial discussion. In the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), high-level buy-in, including from the President, has helped motivate all of society to participate in climate dialogue and action.



*President Hilda C. Heine Speaks at RMI's 2nd National Climate Change Dialogue, Majuro*

- 6. Creating platforms for governments to present Partnership Plans regionally or internationally can reinforce political support.** The opportunity to announce plans or actions internationally can help drive progress by setting effective deadlines or by attracting political attention domestically. Partnership members have taken regular advantage of such opportunities. For example, Rwanda unveiled its Partnership Plan at the 2018 Africa Green Growth Forum. At the UN Climate Conference COP24, six countries launched their Partnership Plans: Guatemala, Kenya, the Dominican Republic, Mali, The Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Viet Nam. These events helped bring political profile to Partnership Plans and enabled countries to showcase their achievements.

## **II. STRENGTHENING PARTICIPATION OF MINISTRIES OF FINANCE AND PLANNING**

When ministries of finance and planning are invested in NDC implementation, national plans are more likely to include mitigation and adaptation projects and national budgets are more likely to set aside funding for these initiatives. By linking climate action to development priorities, ministries of finance and planning feel compelled to include climate action in plans and budgets. Because these ministries are so critical to national climate action, the Partnership requests that countries nominate a representative from finance or planning as a national focal point<sup>3</sup>. Getting full buy-in from these ministries can be challenging because they have a wide array of existing priorities and because they typically have not been involved in formulating NDCs. However, the Partnership has learned some valuable lessons to encourage participation:

---

<sup>3</sup> Focal points are government representatives to the NDC Partnership, who serve as the point of contact between the country and the Partnership. To be accepted as a member of the NDC Partnership, governments must nominate one focal point from the ministry responsible for climate change (often, the Ministry of Environment) and one from the ministry responsible for spending (usually, the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Planning).

- 1. Strong engagement with the ministry of finance or planning is important for successful NDC implementation and NDC actions should be framed in line with these ministries' agendas.** To engage finance and planning ministries in conversations on climate change, it is essential to demonstrate that implementing climate actions will make development in other areas, particularly the economy and public welfare, more effective. Uganda is a good example: The Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development is fully engaged in the Partnership's planning processes and involved in key decisions. In Mali, recommendations from the Ministry of Finance and Planning have been crucial to Partnership Plan development. In Grenada, leadership from the Ministry of Finance has strengthened the role of the GCF in the country's Partnership Plan Process. In several countries, when the finance ministry has championed Partnership Plans, it has proven easier to engage other government agencies and sectoral ministries.
- 2. It is useful to assign responsibility for specific Partnership Plan deliverables and commitments to the ministry of finance or planning.** For instance, the Ministry of Finance in the Republic of the Marshall Islands oversees the section of the Partnership Plan focused on whole-of-government policy coordination and effective climate finance management. This includes the potential setup of a pooled climate finance mechanism. Likewise, the Ministries of Economy and Finance from Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe lead Partnership Plan initiatives to track national and international climate finance flows, mainstream climate change into planning and budgeting processes, and implement mechanisms to mobilize financial resources. In some countries, the Partnership Plan includes commitments of budgetary resources by the Ministry of Finance, in addition to deliverables dependent on international support.
- 3. Peer-to-peer exchanges can help pique Ministry of Finance interest in NDC implementation.** This was seen in the peer exchange between Honduras and the Dominican Republic, organized by the Support Unit. The Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Development of the Dominican Republic had already been strongly involved in NDC implementation, and this convening helped Honduran representatives realize the financial opportunities for NDC implementation. Similarly, a peer convening on national climate funds at Africa Climate Week supported ministry of finance engagement in the topic. Some initiatives also seek to engage finance ministries at a higher level on climate issues. The Climate Action Peer Exchange ([CAPE](#)), which convenes the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, is one such initiative.

### III. INVOLVING IMPLEMENTING AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS

The NDC Partnership brings together its members and other relevant stakeholders to work together in supporting needs identified by countries. A challenge for these partners is to integrate engaging with stakeholders through the NDC Partnership with ongoing activities in-country, regionally, and globally. Including implementing and development partners early in the Partnership Plan process gives them insight into potential project synergies and opportunities for collaboration, as well as time to coordinate between headquarter and country offices. Best practices for early and successful engagement include:

- 1. Coordination calls and face-to-face meetings with implementing and development partners throughout the country engagement process are extremely valuable.** Initial calls with partners from the first country request for support received by the Partnership allow partners to engage early and pool their knowledge and resources. Later calls ensure that partners have a chance to weigh in and fine-tune Partnership Plans. Moreover, continuous on-the-ground consultations with NDC Partnership members and non-members help to coordinate, build relationships, and may even bring in additional resources. For example, in Namibia, the EU Delegation was involved from the start of the engagement process. As a result, the EU delegation saw an opportunity to bring global programs to national climate action by using Namibia's Partnership Plan as a basis to apply for funding from the European Commission's Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) grant program.



- 2. Linking bilateral support with Partnership Plans is a win-win.** Early conversations with bilateral development partners can help put a country's self-determined priorities first. For example, the United Kingdom's Technical Assistance Program (PACT) incorporated work areas, gaps, and needs identified during Colombia's Partnership Plan preparation. The French Development Agency (AFD) Adapt'Action Facility is programming country support relying on requests to the Partnership from Cote d'Ivoire. Similarly, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands are deploying technical assistance in Jordan, Mali, Rwanda, and Uganda based on requests received by the Partnership.
- 3. Government-led development partner groups and meetings can enhance the NDC planning and implementation process.** In Kenya, for example, the government organized development partner coordination meetings around its National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) to receive partner feedback during the revision process and encourage funding alignment with emerging government priorities. Mali has similarly engaged donors in a coordinated way, including organizing a donor roundtable during the Partnership Plan workshop. Viet Nam has expanded its existing donor climate change coordination group to create a more inclusive, open, and strategic NDC Implementation Platform.



*Jordan Partnership Plan Workshop, Amman*

## CHALLENGES TO ONGOING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND WAYS FORWARD

While the Partnership has had increasing success in supporting multi-stakeholder engagement in its Partnership Plan process, there are challenges to sustaining engagement and buy-in. A few common challenges are as follows:

- **Government and personnel changes can put a pause on Partnership planning activities.** Political transitions and staff turnover in country governments are natural, but they can pose a challenge for continuous engagement. Adjusting consultation processes to political cycles helps ensure that staff can dedicate time and attention to Partnership engagement and coordination. In addition, embedding climate action into medium- and long-term national and sectoral plans can help to moderate or stall disruptions from changing government administrations. Finally, it is important to focus on building institutional capacity for NDC implementation rather than relying on individual champions.
- **Conflicting planning/budgeting cycles and NDC processes can create missed opportunities.** NDC planning and revision cycles are often not synchronized with domestic planning and budgeting cycles (long-term, national, sectoral, municipal, and district plans). Adding a separate process can lead to planning fatigue and discourage sectoral officials from full participation in the NDC process. When countries put in place long-term mandates and plans for climate action, they can more easily integrate mitigation and adaptation into new planning and budgeting cycles and deploy resources effectively.
- **Lack of sectoral engagement or inter-sectoral coordination can hinder effective planning and implementation.** When sectoral ministries do not take part in the Partnership Plan process or do not understand the relevance of an NDC to their sector, it is unlikely that climate policies will be mainstreamed or budgets allocated. Furthermore, a lack of communication or transparency between sectors or agencies inhibits cross-government implementation. Countries are exploring solutions to this challenge, including proposals for sectoral focal point(s) or multi-sector coordination bodies. Another potential solution is to leverage high-level commitments by the office of the President or Prime Minister or the ministry of finance or planning to encourage sectoral participation.
- **Engaging the private sector is difficult without clear investment returns or policy signals.** The private sector is one of the largest stakeholder groups that will drive a country's climate goals. Yet, because of the real and/or perceived risks of low-carbon, climate-resilient investments in developing countries and the lack of quantified returns on investment, the private sector is often slow to engage. The Partnership can work with governments to create regulations and incentives that encourage sustainable, low-carbon business practices.
- **Securing participation from ministers and heads of state requires additional effort.** Getting buy-in from decision-makers can be key to ensuring that momentum is sustained and national priorities include low-carbon, climate-resilient growth. However, comprehensive multi-stakeholder processes may be too time-consuming for high-level officials to participate. While high-level attention mainly depends on the scale of resources in play and the alignment with their core priorities, targeted engagement can help. The Partnership is trying various approaches, including short debriefing meetings after events or regular meetings with high-level leaders' trusted advisors.
- **Many countries lack the personnel and funding to organize multi-stakeholder consultations.** Some countries' climate change teams have only a few team members who do not have the time or budget to facilitate large consultation and planning processes. To lend support, the Partnership can fund embedded advisors to these teams early in the process.

*This insight brief was written by Talia Calnek-Sugin of the NDC Partnership Support Unit, with valuable input from many members of the Support Unit. Thank you to Rebecca Carman, Susanne Olbrisch and Alexandra Soezer (UNDP), Taryn Fransen (WRI), and Marius Kaiser (World Bank) for their peer review.*