

INSIGHT BRIEF



# ADAPTATION

WHERE DEVELOPING  
COUNTRIES ARE REQUESTING  
PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

JULY 2023

**NDC**   
PARTNERSHIP

# INTRODUCTION

A growing number of countries are including adaptation targets and actions in their NDCs, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat reports that enhanced nationally determined contributions (NDCs) have had “**increased focus on national adaptation planning, in particular on the process to formulate and implement NAPs.**” This Insight Brief analyzes requests for support the NDC Partnership has received from developing country members that are related to adaptation. It identifies trends related to country requests and support offerings, informing how the Partnership can refine and scale up support for adaptation.

## KEY MESSAGES

- › NDC Partnership developing country members have submitted a high volume of requests for support focused on adaptation planning, implementation, and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and the Partnership has helped leverage significant support to countries on these topics.
- › Yet approximately half of the adaptation-focused requests still remain unsupported. There is an opportunity to crowd in greater financial and technical assistance for adaptation from NDC Partnership institutional and associate members.
- › NDCs and NAP processes should be approached as mutually beneficial processes, contributing to coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness. Countries — and partners providing adaptation support — should look to build on progress made on national adaptation planning under different processes to enhance coordination and avoid duplication. This is especially the case in addressing important themes for effective, inclusive adaptation planning, including MEL, gender and the transition from planning to implementation.

### ABOUT INSIGHT BRIEFS

Insight Briefs are analyses developed by the NDC Partnership Support Unit, members or partner institutions to share insights into thematic issues based on requests received by countries and the support provided by the Partnership. The following Insight Brief, developed by the NAP Global Network based on NDC Partnership data, addresses requests related to adaptation and provides recommendations on how to strengthen support to countries.

## OVERVIEW: ADAPTATION IN THE NDCS

Alongside the urgent need for raising ambition on mitigation efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, there is a critical need to scale up adaptation efforts to reduce vulnerability and exposure to climate risks and build the climate resilience of communities, ecosystems and economies. Many adaptation actions are already being implemented globally, including climate-smart agriculture practices, like growing drought-resilient crops; water conservation measures, such as rainwater harvesting; and nature-based infrastructure, like green roofs. But as [adaptation finance flows are being outpaced by adaptation needs](#), scaling up national approaches that drive effective, inclusive adaptation planning will be critical for achieving climate-resilient development.

The 2015 Paris Agreement set out the expectation that “Parties shall, as appropriate, engage in adaptation planning processes and the implementation of actions.” Though voluntary, many countries have chosen to include adaptation information in their NDCs. [A recent analysis of 139 new or updated NDCs found 86% included an adaptation component](#).

While important efforts exist to increase adaptation financing flows, including for instance the UN Secretary General’s Adaptation Pipeline Accelerator and the [Sharm-El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda](#), there is significant space for the Partnership to better match countries with critical adaptation support

## TRENDS IN ADAPTATION SUPPORT REQUESTS TO THE NDC PARTNERSHIP

This brief presents analysis of requests for support to the NDC Partnership with adaptation as their primary focus. It reviews requests for support received from countries through Partnership Plans (programmatic multi-year NDC implementation requests)<sup>1</sup>, Request for Support Letters (individual, urgent, country requests)<sup>2</sup> and the Climate Action Enhancement Package (requests related to the NDC update process)<sup>3</sup> using data and information from the NDC Partnership’s knowledge management system, the Knowledge Nook (kNook). As of February 2023, 63 countries had submitted a total of 1,281 adaptation-focused requests to the NDC Partnership, of which 612 (47%) went unsupported, compared to 5,540 requests from 85 countries on all topics.<sup>4</sup>

The following make up the most frequent types of requests that went unsupported:

- › Preparing bankable projects and pipelines: 180 requests (14% of all 1,281 adaptation requests)

1. NDC Partnership Plans are multiyear, results-based plans that set out priority actions to guide the implementation of mitigation, adaptation and crosscutting initiatives to enable the achievement of NDCs.

2. RSLs are a formal communication indicating the need for support from that Partnership that reflects a country’s priority needs for NDC implementation.

3. The CAEP was an NDC Partnership initiative that supported countries in their efforts to enhance their NDCs and in fast-tracking the implementation of these as part of the 2020-21 update process.

4. 47 percent of requests are cross-cutting, focusing on both mitigation and adaptation, (e.g. policy or legal frameworks or data collection), however these are excluded from the adaptation requests analysed in this Insight Brief to narrow in on the key characteristics of adaptation requests.



- › Developing capacity: 133 requests (10%)
- › Developing studies and analysis: 106 requests (8%)
- › Developing or updating MRV/M&E systems and collecting data: 97 requests (8%)
- › Enacting and revising national strategies and plans: 75 requests (6%)

This brief builds on past observations on adaptation shared via the Partnership's Insight Brief series:

- › A 2022 Insight Brief on [Disaster Risk Reduction \(DRR\)](#) noted strong links between adaptation and DRR in requests received by the NDC Partnership, finding that “most DRR-related requests focus on adaptation activities rather than cross-cutting or mitigation efforts” such as measures to strengthen early warning systems and efforts to make health systems more resilient to climate shocks. The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre authors recommend the Partnership work to strengthen these adaptation-DRR links to take advantage of “greater efficiencies with regard to the use of human, technical and financial resources.”
- › A 2022 Insight Brief on [Small Island Developing States \(SIDS\)](#) highlighted that SIDS members of the NDC Partnership submitted the largest number of adaptation- and resilience-related requests, with “close to one-third of DRR requests and 40% of Oceans and Coasts requests submitted to the Partnership” from SIDS.

## Building links between NDCs and NAP processes

A range of technical organizations have highlighted the opportunity for NDC and NAP processes to be mutually supportive because of complementarities and differences in their level of detail and purpose, increasing coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of adaptation planning.<sup>5</sup>

The [UNFCCC has reported](#) that 139 developing countries have launched a NAP process, including 100% of least-developed countries (LDCs) and most SIDS. Of these, 46 developing countries have submitted a NAP document to the UNFCCC, and 69 developing countries have accessed Green Climate Fund readiness program funding for adaptation planning. Despite this growing momentum on NAP processes, only a small percentage of adaptation-themed requests to the NDC Partnership include a “National Adaptation Plan” tag (61 of the 1,281 adaptation requests [4.7%]). However, just because there is not a NAP tag does not necessarily follow that the request is not related to a country's National Adaptation Plan. In many instances the NAP is complementary and builds off the NDC, which does not necessarily translate into specific adaptation actions being explicitly listed in the NDC. The two processes are often separate but interconnected. It is nevertheless important to strengthen links between adaptation-related support under the NDC Partnership with developing countries' NAP processes.

5. Shared Learning Can Align NDCs, NAPs SDGs Climate Resiliency ([ndcpartnership.org](https://ndcpartnership.org))  
 NDCP\_Expert\_Perspectives\_NDC\_NAP-SDG\_full.pdf ([ndcpartnership.org](https://ndcpartnership.org))  
 Enhancing NDCs: A Guide to Strengthening National Climate Plans | World Resources Institute ([wri.org](https://wri.org))  
 Adaptation Actions in NDC Partnership Plans - Opportunities for Alignment with NAP Processes.pdf  
 The Role of the NAP Process in Translating NDC Adaptation Goals into Action - Linking NAP processes and NDCs.pdf ([adaptationcommunity.net](https://adaptationcommunity.net))  
 napgn-en-2019-alignment-to-advance-climate-resilient-development-overview-brief-3.pdf ([napglobalnetwork.org](https://napglobalnetwork.org))  
 Extended\_Report-Adaptation\_and\_NDCs\_From\_Analysis\_and\_Planning\_to\_Action\_and\_Ambition\_Raising\_October-2020.pdf ([ndcpartnership.org](https://ndcpartnership.org))

## **BOX 1. How Seychelles is aligning adaptation planning support under NDC and NAP processes**

The East African nation Seychelles' 2021 updated NDC emphasizes adaptation and climate resilience as priorities due to the vulnerabilities and risks the country faces as a SIDS, with the country made up of 115 islands. The NDC includes commitments and targets for adaptation, prioritizing Blue Economy approaches, protecting ecosystems and emphasizing nature-based solutions for climate resilience.

Seychelles' NDC enhancement was supported through the NDC Partnership's CAEP with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the European Commission, GIZ, The Nature Conservancy and Pew Research Center. Seychelles' CAEP requests on adaptation identified needs for additional analysis — especially on how the country's blue economy work can contribute toward adaptation goals — assessing vulnerability and identifying priorities for reducing vulnerabilities in key sectors, including the tourism sector.

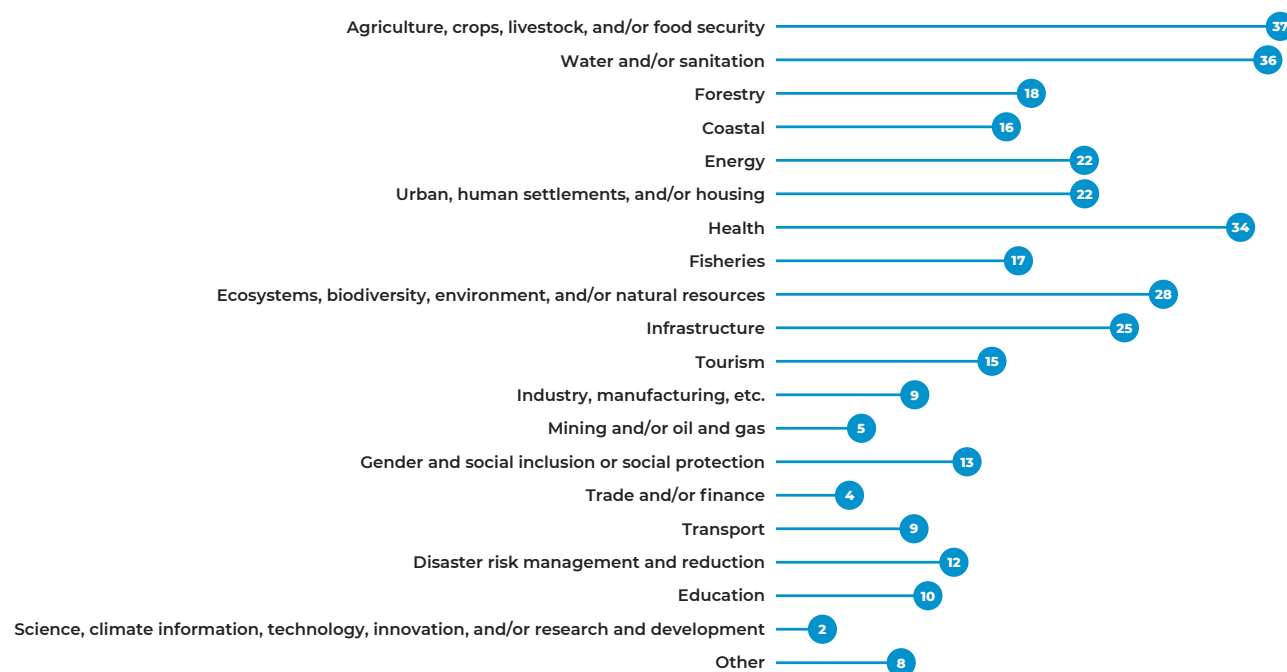
The World Bank is now supporting Seychelles to prepare the country's first national adaptation plan, which will implement the adaptation objectives and targets articulated in the NDC adaptation component. By mainstreaming adaptation across government and articulating national priorities, the national adaptation planning process can advance progress toward the achievement of the adaptation commitments and targets put forward in the NDC.

## **Sectoral priorities in adaptation support requests**

The integration of climate adaptation into climate-sensitive sectors' development planning and budgeting is an important objective of national adaptation planning processes.<sup>6</sup>

Many of the adaptation requests to the NDC Partnership are not specific to a single sector (marked as "sector not defined"), suggesting much of the demand is for cross-cutting support on enabling factors and governance-strengthening activities.

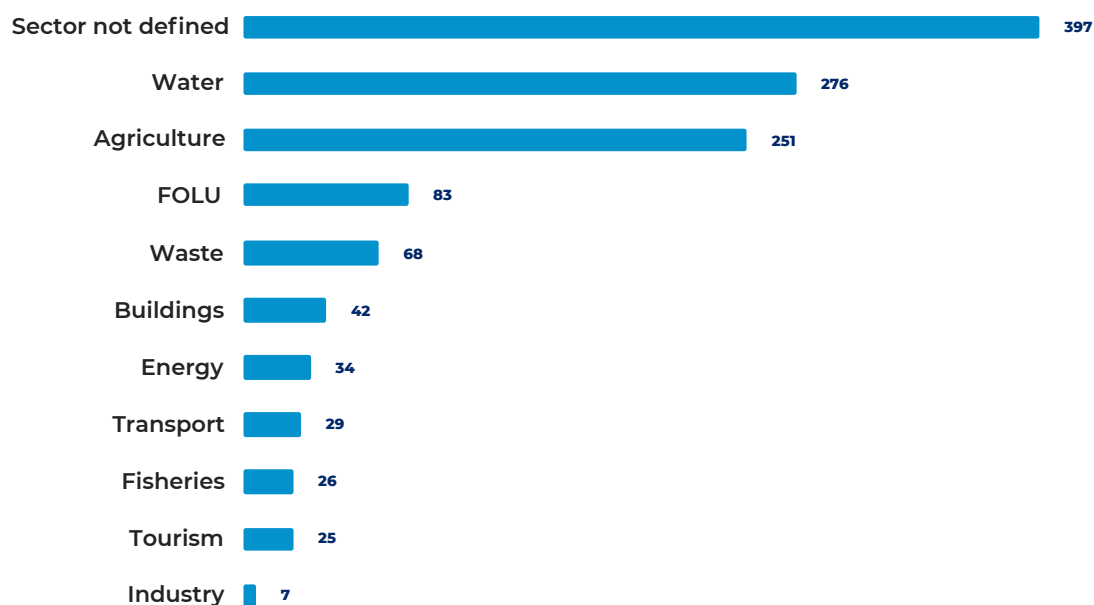
6. [publication\\_ldc\\_nap\\_techguidelines.pdf \(unfccc.int\)](#)  
sNAPshot | Initiating sector integration of adaptation considerations - NAP Global Network



**FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF MULTISECTOR NAPS (37) THAT IDENTIFY SPECIFIC SECTORS AS PRIORITIES (AS OF FEBRUARY 2023)**

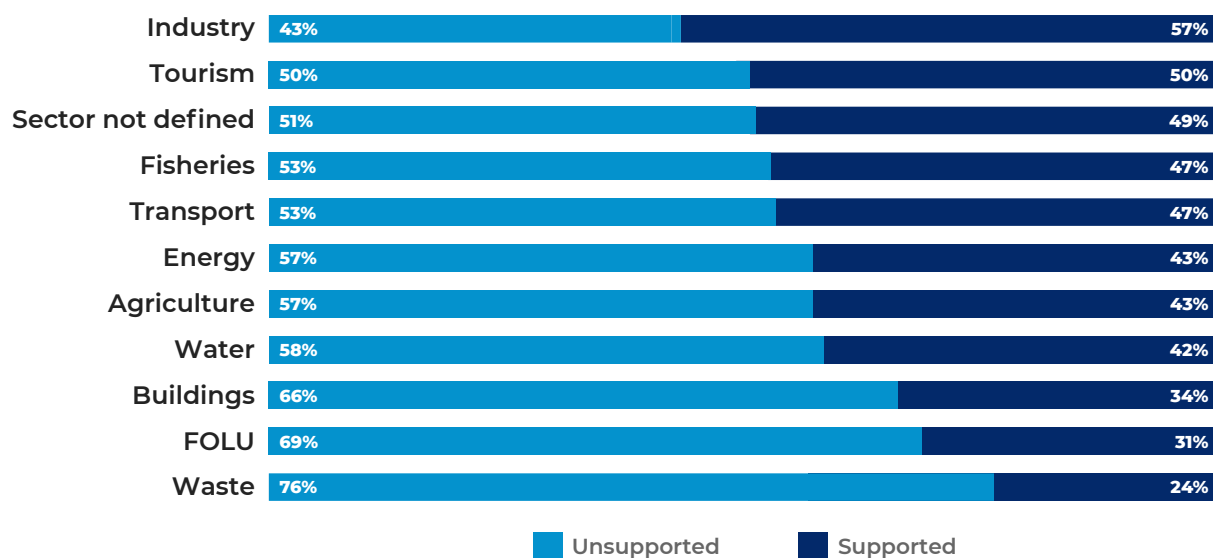
Among requests that are linked to a specific sector, the most common priority sectors for adaptation support are water, agriculture and forestry and other land use (FOLU). This is consistent with the priority sectors being identified in developing countries' NAP documents. Looking specifically at the 37 multisector NAPs submitted to the UNFCCC as of February 28, 2023, [Figure 1](#) above shows the breakdown of sector priorities reflected, with agriculture and water sectors being those most commonly prioritized in NAPs.

The most popular sectors for NDC Partnership requests are also broadly consistent with the sectors prioritized in countries' NAP documents. As shown below in [Figure 2](#), many adaptation-focused requests to the NDC Partnership are being submitted by sectors often associated with mitigation efforts (e.g., FOLU, waste, energy, transport), suggesting that there may be entry points for climate support that helps advance both mitigation and adaptation goals simultaneously.



**FIGURE 2. SECTORAL FOCUS OF ADAPTATION-RELATED REQUESTS**

In addition, the figure below displays the response rate by sector. Note that response rates do not correspond necessarily to the frequency of request. For instance, the response rates are relatively low in agriculture and water, the two most frequently requested sectors, but the rate is also low in waste, which is one of the least frequently requested sectors.



**FIGURE 3. SUPPORT STATUS OF ADAPTATION REQUESTS BY SECTOR**

## CROSS-CUTTING THEMES IN ADAPTATION GOVERNANCE

Alongside sectoral integration, the NDC Partnership receives requests for cross-cutting themes in adaptation governance. The following sections explore trends in three cross-cutting themes: MEL; gender-responsive adaptation planning; and the transition from planning to implementation.

### MEL approaches for national adaptation

Effective MEL approaches to national adaptation allow countries to track progress toward the achievement of their national adaptation goals. Though critical, adaptation MEL can pose many technical challenges. Leiter (2021) found that over 60% of all countries that adopted a NAP are not tracking the NAP's implementation.<sup>7</sup>



**FIGURE 4. ADAPTATION-RELATED REQUESTS SUBMITTED**

The NDC Partnership is well-positioned to help crowd in greater support for adaptation MEL. A 2019 review of adaptation actions in NDC Partnership Plans identified adaptation M&E systems [among the most frequent adaptation-themed requests in Partnership Plans](#). Similarly, the NDC Partnership Support Unit's analysis identified M&E of adaptation as an important theme for knowledge exchange among NDC Partnership members, especially because the data and information collected through [MEL is important for updating NDCs](#).

A significant proportion of adaptation-focused requests focus on MEL, as seen in Figure 4. But of the 160 requests on this activity type, 74 (46%) remain unsupported to date.

7. Leiter, T. (2021). Do governments track the implementation of national climate change adaptation plans? An evidence-based global stocktake of monitoring and evaluation systems. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 125, 179-188





**FIGURE 5. ADAPTATION-RELATED REQUESTED SUBMITTED**

There was also strong interest in technical support on this theme under shorter-term CAEP, with approximately a third of adaptation requests (36 of 116 requests, or 31%) focused on developing or updating MRV/M&E systems and collecting data. This volume of requests demonstrates that ongoing support via the NDC Partnership to countries to help them integrate MEL of national adaptation with their efforts on MRV of mitigation is a priority for technical assistance and peer learning support via NDC Partnership members.

NDC Partnership members providing support on MEL of adaptation should look to build on progress made under a country's NAP process on MEL. Analysis by the NAP Global Network has found that:

- › 46% of NAP documents include MEL frameworks.
- › **51% of NAP documents include MEL indicators**

Adaptation MEL approaches often have significant differences from MRV approaches for greenhouse gas mitigation — requiring different timescales and expertise and often being coordinated by different parts of government. For countries reporting progress toward their NDC ambitions, strong coordination of MEL of adaptation and MRV of mitigation is needed for cohesive NDC reporting. As many countries are preparing MEL approaches and progress reports under their NAP processes, these efforts can be built upon for NDC progress.

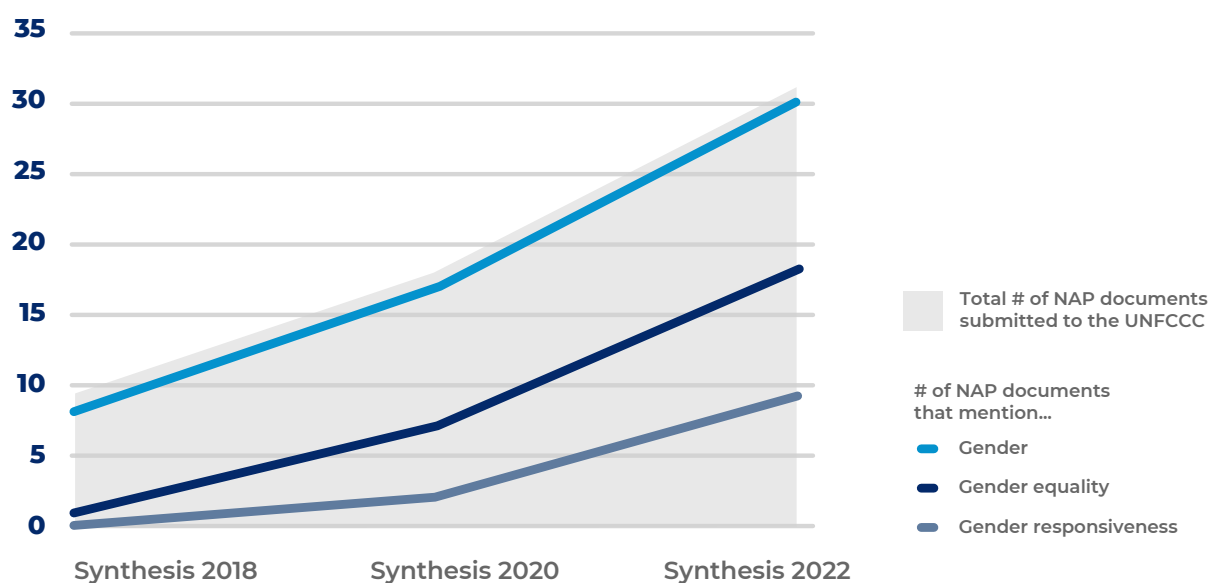
## **BOX 2. Aligning M&E of adaptation and MRV of mitigation approaches in Cambodia**

As an LDC that is highly vulnerable to climate change, Cambodia's Climate Change Strategic Plan 2014-2023 (CCCSP) serves as the country's NAP, which guides the country's efforts to integrate adaptation into planning and budgeting. Cambodia updated its NDC in 2020 with support from the NDC Partnership through the CAEP, including support from FAO, Germany, GGGI, IRENA, SNV and UNDP.

Notably, Cambodia received CAEP support from FAO to improve and align the MRV and M&E approaches for mitigation and adaptation actions within their AFOLU sector that are a primary focus of the NDC. FAO is building on this experience to continue providing support to countries on enhancing MRV and M&E systems through the Scaling up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture through Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans (SCALA) program it jointly delivers with the UNDP.

## **Gender-responsive adaptation planning**

The Paris Agreement calls on countries to take a gender-responsive approach in adaptation action, recognizing that adaptation planning and implementation are important opportunities to address gender inequalities. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (2021) noted an upward trend in recognition of gender issues in NDCs — in 2016, only 40% (65 out of 162 Intended NDCs) reviewed referenced gender, but a 2021 review of enhanced and updated NDCs found 78% (69 of the 89 NDCs reviewed) included at least one mention of gender. [Dazé and Hunter](#) note that an increasing proportion of NAPs communicated to the UNFCCC explicitly reference gender equality and gender-responsive adaptation planning.



**FIGURE 6. FRAMING OF GENDER ISSUES IN NAP DOCUMENTS**

The NDC Partnership has committed to advancing gender equality and set a course of action for doing so in its 2019 Gender Strategy, mainstreaming of gender across its work and supporting the development and implementation of gender-responsive NDCs. Among adaptation-focused requests, 78 of the 1,281 adaptation requests (6.1%) in Partnership Plans and RSLs had a focus on gender equality as the key topic covered.

- › As with MEL, where countries have NAP processes underway, building on results of gender-responsive adaptation planning taking place under the NAP process — e.g., analyses, strategies, institutional arrangements, sex-disaggregated data collection — can be mutually beneficial for advancing the integration of gender considerations in the implementation of adaptation actions identified in NDCs.

### **BOX 3. Linking gender-responsive approaches to adaptation in NDC and the NAP processes in the Republic of Marshall Islands**

The Republic of Marshall Islands, a Pacific SIDS, was the first country in the world to submit an updated NDC in 2018 and is developing a NAP document in close alignment with the NDC process. Representatives of Marshall Islands have regularly called the NAP the country's "survival plan" in international forums. In 2020, the Government of the Marshall Islands, through the NDC Partnership Cross-cutting Working Group, accessed technical support from the NAP Global Network to integrate gender and human rights considerations in the development of the NAP. Based on a targeted analysis, actions were proposed to advance the country's gender equality and human rights objectives through its efforts on climate change adaptation, such as: using climate risk assessment methodologies that address gender and human rights, using gender equality and human rights considerations in the criteria for prioritizing adaptation measures in the NAP and strengthening the role of institutional actors that support gender equality and human rights in climate governance (Government of the Republic of Marshall Islands, 2021).

### **Supporting the shift from planning to implementation**

Implementing adaptation is urgent, but there are many intermediate steps in making the transition from planning to implementation. After a country has articulated priority measures for adaptation through a planning process, it is critical that momentum not be lost, as a lack of implementation can threaten to undermine the credibility of an adaptation planning process. Governments undertaking adaptation planning need to anticipate this transition from planning to implementation, recognizing **new actors may need to be engaged and new skills may be needed to implement national adaptation priorities**.

Adaptation-related requests to the NDC Partnership indicate that governments are anticipating this transition. Shown in Figure 4, the most common type of adaptation-related activity type in Partnership Plans and RSLs is requests for preparing bankable projects and pipelines. The NDC Partnership's suite of support activities should continue to support this critical area. Promising examples to date include:

- › The NDC Partnership's Economic Advisory Initiative, launched in 2020, which supported developing countries' ability to access climate finance and develop project concepts and pipelines. The initiative also was important in supporting engagement of ministries of finance and planning in [developing financing strategies for adaptation](#).
- › Through the CAEP, the NDC Partnership received nine requests on developing bankable projects and pipeline development, six of which were supported. For example, the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub provided support to Belize and Zambia to develop climate financing strategies that covered adaptation priorities.<sup>8</sup>

At the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26), high-income countries committed to doubling adaptation finance by 2025 against a baseline of 2019 levels. As adaptation finance flows increase, continued support on bankable projects, pipeline development and financing of adaptation measures prioritized in NDCs and NAPs are likely become increasingly in demand. For adaptation to achieve the intended results of reducing vulnerability and building climate resilience, it will be vital that increased finance be grounded in effective, inclusive planning processes.

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8. [Adaptation Actions in NDC Partnership Plans - Opportunities for Alignment with NAP Processes.pdf](#)  
[Climate Finance Mapping for NDC Implementation in Zambia \(production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](#)  
[The Landscape of Financing Strategies for Adaptation in Developing Countries \(iisd.org\)](#)



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- › **Make strategic and intentional links between adaptation in NDCs and NAP processes.** Member countries submitting adaptation support requests to the NDC Partnership should be encouraged to identify linkages with support needs identified and articulated through their NAPs and other national plans and policies (e.g., adaptation communications) for well-coordinated adaptation planning, implementation and MEL.
- › **Encourage countries to crowd in a greater number of sectoral adaptation requests for support.** As there are still somewhat limited adaptation-focused requests linked to specific sectors, member countries submitting support requests to the NDC Partnership should consider including a greater number of sectoral adaptation priorities. This will lend greater visibility and profile for these sectoral priorities that require international funding to be implemented.
- › **Build on the CAEP's success for directing shorter-term support to adaptation — especially in supporting MEL, gender and pipeline development requests.** The CAEP played an effective matchmaking role in identifying technical support for adaptation-related requests. Ongoing shorter-term support for adaptation, like that being supported under the NDC Partnership's Global Call for NDCs 3.0 & LT-LEDs, can play a key role in building on the CAEP's success in driving adaptation support.
- › **Survey donor members of the NDC Partnership on how best to support requests on adaptation.** As there are still many unsupported adaptation-focused requests in Partnership Plans and RSLs, it would be valuable to survey the institutional and associate members who provide bilateral and multilateral funding to support adaptation to understand how well the support needs shared by developing country members match their adaptation finance offer in terms of the preferred scale of funding, thematic focus, geographic focus and other criteria.

## FURTHER READING

Beauchamp, E., da Silva Bernardo, C. & Bueno, M. (2021). Progressing the Global Goal on Adaptation — key issues. (International Institute for Environment and Development) IIED. <https://pubs.iied.org/17773iied>

Morton, S., & Bee, S. (2020). Adaptation and Risk Finance in NDCs. NDC Partnership. [https://ndcpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Insight\\_Brief-Adaptation\\_and\\_Risk\\_Finance\\_in\\_NDCs\\_October-2020.pdf](https://ndcpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Insight_Brief-Adaptation_and_Risk_Finance_in_NDCs_October-2020.pdf)

### About the NAP Global Network

The NAP Global Network was created in 2014 to support developing countries in advancing their NAP processes and help accelerate adaptation efforts around the world. To achieve this, the Network facilitates South-South peer learning and exchange, supports national-level action on NAP formulation and implementation, and generates, synthesizes, and shares knowledge. The Network's members include individual participants from more than 155 countries involved in developing and implementing National Adaptation Plans. Financial support for the Network has been provided by Austria, Canada, Germany, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Secretariat is hosted by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).

For more information, visit <https://napglobalnetwork.org/>

*This Insight Brief was developed by Christian Ledwell, Knowledge Manager, Resilience, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Secretariat for the NAP Global Network.*