



# Adaptation and the NDCs



## KEY MESSAGES

- Countries are undertaking comprehensive processes to lay the groundwork for effective adaptation action, by assessing, prioritizing, planning, and tracking.
- To move the needle from planning to implementation, countries are lining up adaptation projects for investment in a wide range of transformative areas, including food security, water management, nature-based solutions, and climate resilient infrastructure.
- Countries plan to expand the sectoral scope of their adaptation actions in their enhanced NDCs, with three quarters of Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP) engaged countries requesting adaptation focused support.

## INTRODUCTION

**Climate change could push more than 100 million people in developing countries under the poverty line by 2030<sup>1</sup>. In 2020, the year that countries are expected to increase their climate ambition through updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the COVID-19 pandemic is severely impacting countries' economic and political capacities, highlighting the importance of stronger alignment between climate resilience and public health<sup>2</sup>.**

Countries are increasingly bringing adaptation to the forefront of their national agendas through NDCs accompanying their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). Both processes play a crucial role in helping countries identify priority adaptation actions to be mainstreamed into development plans and budgets, as well as mobilizing adaptation finance. Implemented effectively, adaptation actions outlined in NDCs present ample opportunity to drive socioeconomic benefits through reduced risk, mitigated costs, and increased innovation, thus providing benefits like higher agricultural yields, efficient water usage, increased job creation, and improved water and air quality<sup>3</sup>.

The NDC Partnership is uniquely positioned to assess member countries' requests for support for NDC implementation and enhancement<sup>4</sup> and deliver the technical and financial support needed. Working with more than 180 countries, the Partnership delivers NDC-related adaptation support within three key interconnected stages of adaptation action: planning, implementation, and ambition-raising. Figure 1 outlines these three stages as well as the cross-cutting areas present throughout: capacity building, finance, and monitoring & evaluation (M&E). This brief provides insights based on adaptation requests from 64 countries<sup>5</sup> along these stages, while highlighting concrete actions being undertaken, gaps in support<sup>6</sup>, and key inputs required to accelerate adaptation action.

1 [Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience](#). 2019. Global Commission on Adaptation.

2 In response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Partnership has also established the [Economic Advisory Initiative](#) which will deliver economic planning and financial advisory services to 30 developing countries to support countries on green recovery. Identifying alignment opportunities in the areas of public health and climate resiliency will be central to this year-long initiative

3 Global Commission on Adaptation.

4 The NDC Partnership receives two types of requests from member countries seeking to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement: i) Implementation requests aimed at implementing domestic mitigation, adaptation, or cross-cutting measures; and ii) Enhancement requests aimed at raising NDC ambition, as part of the Paris Agreement's 2020 NDC update process.

5 Analysis was derived from adaptation-related requests for support submitted to the NDC Partnership between 2018 and May 2020. This includes NDC implementation requests from 35 countries made through Requests for Support Letters and Partnership Plans and NDC enhancement activities from 49 countries outlined through the [Climate Action Enhancement Package \(CAEP\)](#). For more information on country requests, visit [ndcpartnership.org](https://ndcpartnership.org).

6 Unsupported requests were included to highlight areas that need further support from partners. For more detail into these requests, please reach out to [Ralien.Bekkers@ndcpartnership.org](mailto:Ralien.Bekkers@ndcpartnership.org).

**FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE THREE KEY STAGES IN ADAPTATION ACTION**



## ADAPTATION PLANNING

**The initial planning phase of NDC implementation is a crucial first step to mobilizing financial and political support. For adaptation, developing countries often lack the data and technical capacity to inform planning processes and thus struggle to craft an economic argument for investing in adaptation projects. Thirty-two member countries seek adaptation planning support and make up a quarter of total adaptation requests, spread across three thematic planning subthemes: Data and Assessment; Prioritization and Strategies; and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting.**

### DATA AND ASSESSMENT

Countries are seeking improved data and information systems to assess adaptation challenges more comprehensively, identify key areas for intervention, and thus inform government planning processes. Countries are requesting technical assistance to study climate risks (including modeling and scenarios), assess vulnerabilities, and increase data accessibility. Adaptation data and assessment requests come from 21 countries, and 42 percent of these requests remain unsupported.

Of these countries, 14 seek support for vulnerability assessments. Although the majority (52 percent) of vulnerability-related requests are multi-sectoral, 25 percent are dedicated to assessments in the AFOLU sector, 21 percent in the water sector, and fewer (less than 10 percent) were requested within the buildings, transport, energy, and oceans and coasts sectors. The focus of these vulnerability assessments varies widely depending on the country. For instance, São Tomé and Príncipe seeks community-level vulnerability assessments, Jordan for ecological hotspots, and Morocco for land degradation.

Furthermore, 14 countries are making requests related to establishing robust data collection systems. These systems play an important role in facilitating access to climate information at the national and sub-national levels; for example, through an information-sharing platform or centralized climate database (Viet Nam). In fact, insights from the NDC Partnership suggest that two major barriers to transforming adaptation planning into project implementation include fragmented datasets and systems, as well as a general lack of interoperability across different sectors and national planning levels.

## PRIORITIZATION AND STRATEGIES

Building upon assessment needs, countries are seeking support to prioritize areas for adaptation intervention, develop plans and strategies, and build capacities within planning and implementing entities. This is a key stage in the road towards implementation, for which 30 countries have requested support. Thirty-five percent of these requests remain unsupported. Requests generally seek technical assistance to identify priority actions, conduct feasibility studies and cost-benefit analyses, draft policies, and align various climate-related strategies like NAPs, NDCs, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Most of these requests directly allude to policy and strategy development, as countries recognize the need to strengthen policy frameworks in order to make NDC implementation more feasible.

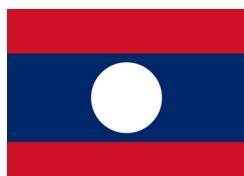
Moreover, eight countries have requested support regarding National Adaptation Plans (NAP): Burkina Faso, Grenada, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Uganda, and Viet Nam. Out of these eight, only two have already submitted a NAP. This highlights the NDC process as an important entry point for countries to undertake NAP development. According to the NAP Global Network<sup>7</sup>, for countries that do not have a NAP process underway, or where it is not significantly advanced, NDCs can be leveraged as a national mandate to advance NAPs. Moreover, the inclusion of NAPs in requests to the NDC Partnership offers an opportunity to leverage partner support to develop comprehensive adaptation plans from the start. Eighty percent of all countries that have submitted NAPs to the UNFCCC are also members of the NDC Partnership, pointing to broader institutional collaboration and synergy across country adaptation planning. For example, Nigeria has requested support to align and mainstream NDC, SDGs, and NAP targets—as well as gender—into their next Economic Recovery and Growth Plan. Overall, NAP requests received by the Partnership demonstrate a desire to improve coordination between NDCs, NAPs, national development plans, and other key planning instruments.

7 Partnership Briefing on Adaptation. 2 March 2020. NDC Partnership and NAP Global Network (Virtual Event).

## MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

Once countries have built the capacity to collect the relevant data and information to inform decision-making, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) allows countries to quantify progress in NDC implementation. It enables decision-makers to assess whether adaptation measures are working and can prompt the necessary adjustments. Where relevant, it provides evidence of social benefits and economic returns to potential investors in adaptation.

However, M&E also comes with a host of methodological issues, including a lack of common metrics to measure the success of adaptation action, unavailability of data, uncertainty around the impacts of interventions, intervening socio-economic variables, and the long timescale over which climate impacts unfold<sup>8</sup>. Nineteen countries aim to address these limitations by establishing M&E or Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems; developing indicators and metrics; and/or creating data-sharing mechanisms. Only 10 percent of these requests remain unsupported, suggesting that MRV and M&E systems are also considered an important focus area by partners. More than half of countries within each region are requesting support for M&E or MRV related to adaptation, flagging an opportunity for inter-regional collaboration and lesson-sharing<sup>9</sup>.



### CASE STUDY: FROM PLANNING TO PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN LAOS

**Through its activities under the Partnership's Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP), Laos is taking calculated steps to produce disaster risk reduction plans for eight provinces, 45 cities and 160 villages—a target which will require careful planning and ministerial capacity building.** Thus, Laos outlines four ambitious planning activities. First, preparedness and prevention policies and strategies on Natural Disaster Risk Reduction will be developed at provincial and District levels. Second, trainings will be conducted to enhance capacity for national, provincial, and district staff to apply Geographic Information System (GIS) technology for hazard identification, risk assessments, and climate model projections. Third, these technical trainings will be supplemented with MRV trainings to identify, select, and implement climate risk measurements. And lastly, the country will create a natural hazard map of vulnerable areas to natural disasters. With technical and financial support from the NDC Partnership through FAO, these preparational activities will enable the transition from planning to implementation of Laos's National Strategic Plan for Disaster Risk Management.

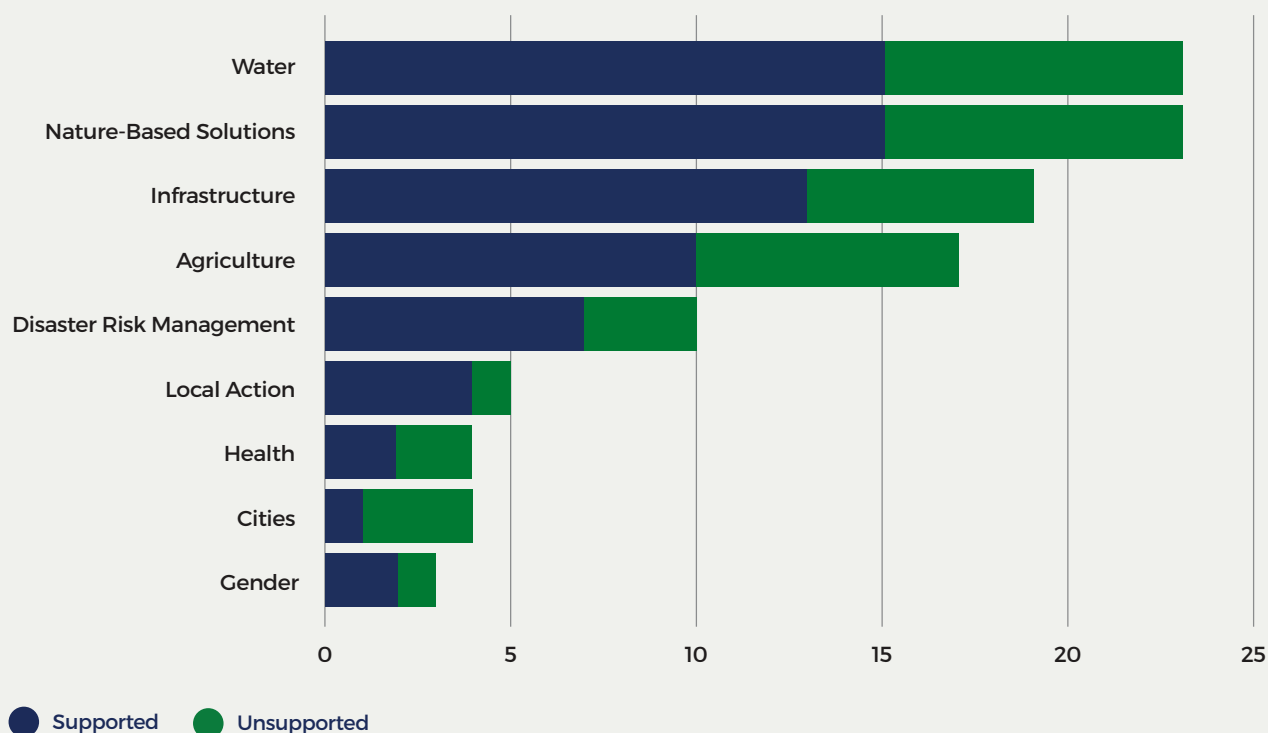
8 [Developing National Adaptation Monitoring and Evaluation Systems: A Guidebook](#). 2015. NAP Global Network.

9 The NDC Partnership engages with [member countries](#) within six regions based on the World Bank region classification: East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa.

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND FINANCING

In moving from planning to implementation, countries are requesting partner support to accelerate the implementation of prioritized adaptation actions through investment projects. Fifteen percent of analyzed adaptation requests are devoted to financing and implementing adaptation projects, translating into 78 projects from 18 countries. These adaptation projects span across the adaptation action tracks identified by the Global Commission on Adaptation<sup>10</sup>, as well as gender and health—two additional focus areas the Partnership has identified within transformative adaptation action (Figure 2)<sup>11</sup>.

**FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF PROJECTS PER ADAPTATION ACTION TRACK AND DISTRIBUTION OF PARTNER SUPPORT**



Most requests related to project implementation focus on progressing adaptation actions in the areas of water, nature-based solutions, infrastructure, and agriculture. **Water** projects are typically multi-sector in scope or have explicit linkages with AFOLU, waste, energy, or industry. Examples include projects to implement energy efficient water pumping and the construction

<sup>10</sup> The framework for the analysis is based on eight Global Commission for Adaptation Action Tracks.

<sup>11</sup> In the assessment of adaptation projects data per action track, a project can be relevant to and listed under multiple action tracks, hence the total count exceeding the 78 unique projects.

of wastewater networks. **Nature-based solutions** projects lie almost exclusively within the AFOLU sector, while several countries also seek to implement innovative solutions in waste management or in coastal-marine areas prone to climate risks. **Infrastructure** projects in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) largely focus on building the foundation for a resilient transportation sector, such as the construction of EV-compatible and disaster-prone roads along with pedestrian and cyclist-friendly roadways. **Agriculture** projects are largely incorporated in multi-sectoral projects and programs, though some share explicit linkages with the water, energy, or waste sectors. These include projects to address agricultural land degradation, implement efficient water harvesting systems, and cultivate drought-tolerant crops.

Based on an assessment of adaptation finance requests, the identification, assessment, preparation, and development of bankable adaptation projects and project pipelines remains a top priority across all countries, encompassing 43 percent of requests. Technical support in the financing stage will play a crucial role in unlocking investment and funding opportunities, from economic and financial feasibility assessments to compiling investable project portfolios or climate resiliency interventions. For example, Uganda is seeking capacity building support for project proposal development within the National Climate Change Project Development Committee, civil society, and private sector.

See [Adaptation Finance in NDCs](#) for more detailed insights on countries' adaptation finance needs and how the NDC Partnership is responding.

## ADAPTATION IN NDC ENHANCEMENT

**As countries prepare for NDC enhancement and ambition-raising, including adaptation in sector-specific climate goals is of increasing importance. Approximately 50 countries submitted adaptation focused NDC enhancement requests to the Partnership.** These requests primarily center on three common activities as part of the NDC updating process: 1) defining adaptation targets; 2) broadening the scope of NDCs to include adaptation components; and 3) improving data and accompanying MRV systems.

NDC enhancement requests to the Partnership through the Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP) suggest a strong interest from countries to expand the scope and sectoral coverage of adaptation in the second round of NDCs. A comparison of member countries' first round of NDCs and their enhancement requests provides indications of what to expect from countries in their updated NDCs<sup>12</sup>. Through CAEP, 21 countries have mentioned adaptation

12 Sectoral coverage was quantified by assessing 1) a country's inclusion of adaptation action in one or more sectors in their First Round NDC as compared to 2) a country's inclusion of adaptation action in one or more sectors in their CAEP activity requests (as a proxy indicator). Sectoral coverage in First Round NDCs was assessed using the [ClimateWatch](#) database. All CAEP activity data is referenced from the NDC Partnership's internal knowledge management platform.

components in sectors that did not explicitly reference adaptation in their first round of NDCs—particularly in energy and infrastructure. Additionally, member countries are leveraging CAEP as an opportunity to make adaptation and risk finance commitments for the first time, centering their activities around mobilizing, budgeting, and tracking finance. Guatemala, for example, plans to implement Climate Budget Tagging systems to monitor and track public expenditure in adaptation in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food. Furthermore, 12 countries are enhancing their NDCs by making linkages to NAPs through their enhancement activities. The inclusion of NAPs in updated climate targets is a promising indication that countries are taking advantage of the NDC revision process as a means of increasing their climate ambition in adaptation.



## CASE STUDY: ADAPTATION IN NDC ENHANCEMENT

**Jamaica's recently updated NDC outlines bold new commitments to combat climate change and reduce the island's vulnerability to climate impacts.** In line with ambitious goals in emissions mitigation, the country anticipates adaptation co-benefits by cutting air pollution to improve health, pursuing energy efficiency solutions to reduce water consumption, and implement climate smart agricultural techniques and watershed restoration. Moreover, as Jamaica prepares to robustly implement its more ambitious and sophisticated NDC, the World Bank will continue to provide direct support to Jamaica's Climate Resilient Strategy initiatives. These initiatives will be complemented by actions through CAEP between 2020 and 2021.

## CONCLUSION

For adaptation action to reach the necessary scale and speed, an ambitious approach is needed. This approach includes cross-sectoral collaboration matched with technical and financial resources across the spectrum of planning and implementation, including financing, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation, enabling countries to realize adaptation action and raise ambition. While the analysis of adaptation requests to the Partnership shows that these are clear country priorities, gaps remain in providing technical planning support



and access to adaptation finance to accelerate implementation. The NDC Partnership is committed to aligning country needs with partner support, while advancing cooperation at all levels, in order to tackle the adaptation challenges ahead.

Please see *Adaptation and the NDCs: From Analysis and Planning to Action and Ambition Raising* for a more in-depth analysis on this topic.

## CREDITS

*This Insight Brief was written by Ralien Bekkers, Ariege Besson, Talia Chorover, Sam Morton, and Ivana Valdez of the NDC Partnership Support Unit, with valuable inputs from several other members of the Support Unit.*



## NDC PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT UNIT

### WASHINGTON, DC, USA OFFICE

World Resources Institute  
10 G Street NE Suite 800, Washington, DC 20002, USA

Phone: +1 (202) 729-7600

Email: [supportunit@ndcpartnership.org](mailto:supportunit@ndcpartnership.org)

[ndcpartnership.org](http://ndcpartnership.org)

### BONN, GERMANY OFFICE

P.O. Box 260124, D-53153  
Bonn, Germany

Phone: (49-228) 815-1000

Email: [supportunit@ndcpartnership.org](mailto:supportunit@ndcpartnership.org)