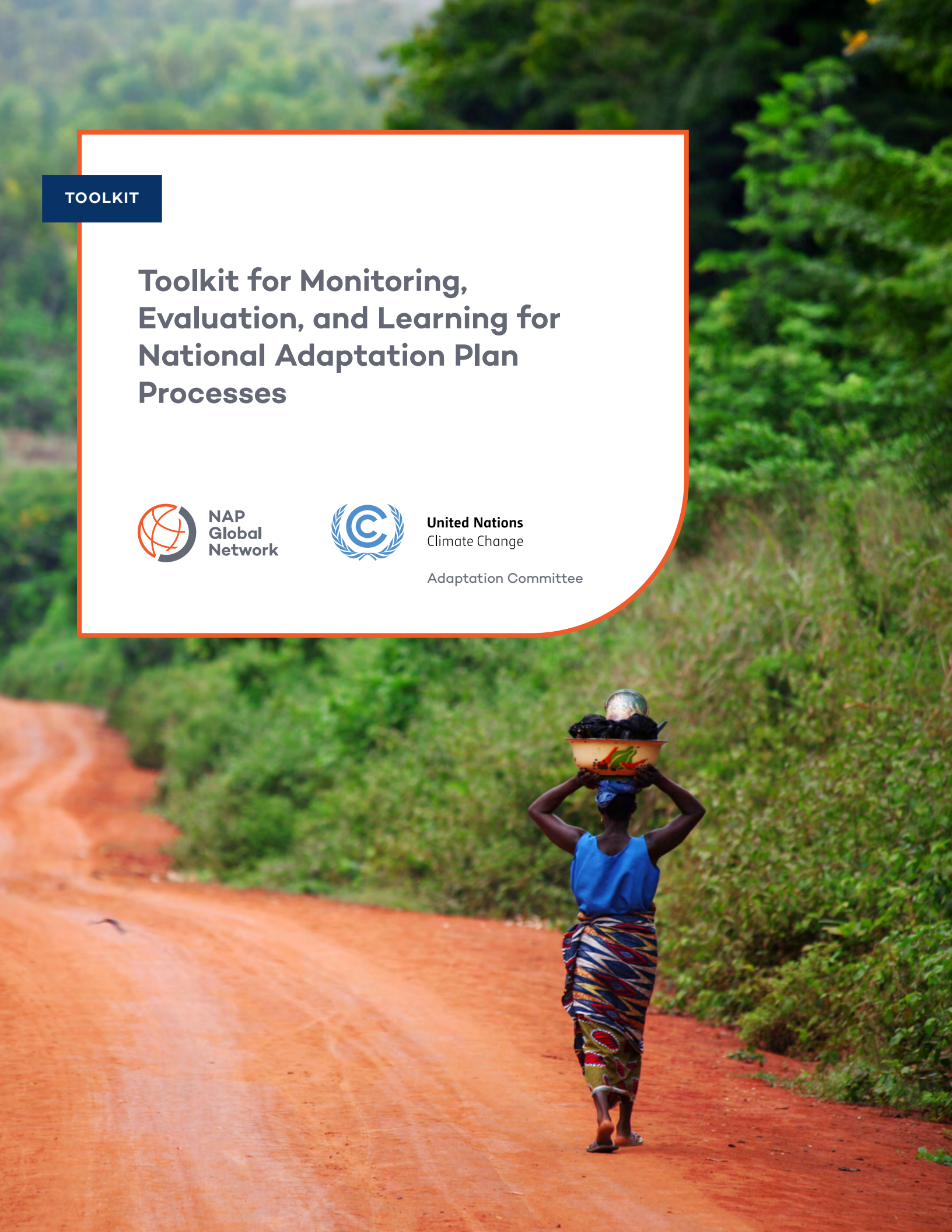
TOOLKIT

Toolkit for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning for National Adaptation Plan Processes

NAP Global Network

United Nations Climate Change

Adaptation Committee



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Toolkit for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning for National Adaptation Plan Processes

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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 www.napglobalnetwork.org.

Any opinions stated herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the policies or opinions of the NAP Global Network, funders or Network participants.

About the Adaptation Committee

The Adaptation Committee (AC) was established in 2010, as part of the Cancun Adaptation Framework, to promote the implementation of adaptation actions. The AC provides technical guidance and support to the Parties, and shares relevant information, knowledge, experience, and good practices. It has a role in promoting synergy and strengthening engagement with national, regional and international organizations, centres, and networks. It provides information and recommendations for consideration by Parties on enhancing the implementation of adaptation actions, including through engaging with the private sector. More information about the AC is available at https://unfccc.int/Adaptation-Committee.

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Acronyms

BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
COP	United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
CRA	climate risk assessment
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EEA	European Environment Agency
GESI	gender equality and social inclusion
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
IVA	integrated vulnerability assessment
IVRA	impact, vulnerability, and risk assessment
KIVA	Kiribati Integrated Vulnerability Assessment
LEG	Least Developed Countries Expert Group
CSO	civil society organization
logframe	logical framework
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MEL	monitoring, evaluation, and learning
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NCCAP	National Climate Change Action Plan
NDC	nationally determined contribution
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound
TAMD	Tracking Adaptation and Measuring Development
ToC	theory of change
UAE FGCR	United Arab Emirates Framework on Global Climate Resilience
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VNR	Voluntary National Review

Glossary

Evaluations

Occur at strategic points throughout the NAP process to determine the performance or success of implementation of NAP processes as per their stated goals. Whereas monitoring tracks implementation and looks at trend in performance, evaluation involves a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of specific performance-related criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, equity, and sustainability (see 7.1).

Impact

Impacts are the ultimate effects or longer-term changes resulting from an intervention. Impacts may be intended or unintended, and positive or negative (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023c). The impacts of adaptation actions may not be apparent until long after an intervention has ended (see 5.1). The term "impact" is distinct from the term "climate change impact," which describes the consequences of climate change, such as the occurrence of extreme weather events.

Indicators

These are quantitative or qualitative factors or variables related to an intervention and its results, or to the context in which it takes place (OECD, 2023c). Indicators can be quantitative (such as the number of households with improved access to water) or qualitative (such as the perceived effectiveness of an adaptation measure) (see 5.3).

Learning

In the context of MEL systems for NAP processes, learning is the collective and deliberate process of acquiring, assessing, and disseminating new knowledge that results in changed or reinforced knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to climate change adaptation (see 5.4).

Logic models

These define intended results and explain how the activities of an intervention are expected to contribute to short- and long-term change. Theories of change are a common type of a logical model (see Box 4). In the context of NAP processes, logic models outline how NAP processes are expected to achieve their objectives. A logic model provides an important reference for a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system. For example, a MEL system can examine the assumptions that underpin the logic model (see 5.1).

Monitoring

This involves the systematic tracking of implementation and performance that helps us to understand if progress is being made towards stated goals and to identify problems, and that consequently informs decision making. Monitoring involves continuous data collection, observation, and documentation to identify any deviations from the planned course and to take corrective action when necessary (see 2.2).

Monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework	This framework sets out the purpose, objectives, scope, and overall approach to MEL for adaptation in relation to the NAP process, including roles and responsibilities, data requirements, institutional arrangements, and available resources (see 5.2).
Monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems	As one of the key components of NAP processes, MEL systems offer a structured approach to monitor progress, evaluate results, and foster learning to ensure adaptation strategies are effectively achieving their intended outcomes. MEL systems help to check the assumptions that underpin intended outcomes, asking not only whether we are on track but whether we have chosen the right path (see 1).
Objective (of the MEL system)	The specific, concrete aims or targets that unpack the purpose(s) of a MEL system for NAP processes. Objectives will relate to how overarching purposes are implemented in the context of NAP processes or components of the NAP processes. These objectives shape subsequent MEL activities, influencing the choice of MEL approaches, indicators, data collection, and how adaptation progress is assessed (see 3.3).
Outcome	Outcomes are short- and medium-term changes resulting from an intervention's outputs, which include changes in institutional and behavioural capacities (OECD, 2023c). Outcomes can include changes in capacities and characteristics that make people and systems more or less able to anticipate, avoid, plan for, cope with, recover from, and adapt to climate change and other hazards (see 5.1).
Output	Outputs are products, goods, and services resulting from an intervention, and may also include short-term changes resulting from an intervention that contribute to its outcomes (OECD, 2023c). Outputs of NAP processes might include policy actions, projects, programs, stakeholder engagement and awareness campaigns, and institutional structures and coordination arrangements (see 5.1).
Purpose	The overarching motivations and goals that underpin the MEL system. They are important, as they have consequences for the development of specific objectives and the selection of methods across all stages of the MEL process. A MEL system will usually serve multiple purposes, for example understanding of policy effectiveness and efficiency, providing accountability and transparency, and enhancing learning to improve policy and practice (see 2.3 and 3.3).

CHAPTER 1

Introducing the Toolkit—Read Me First

As the impacts of climate change accelerate and intensify, there is an urgent need to increase adaptation ambition and action. Yet ambition alone is not enough: we must ensure climate change adaptation (from here on "adaptation") efforts are truly making a difference by reducing risks and vulnerabilities and increasing resilience, particularly for the most vulnerable communities, groups, and ecosystems. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) enables us to understand if adaptation policies, interventions, and actions work, how they work and for whom, and to improve actions based on the insights gained. Continuously learning from our actions and adjusting our strategies accordingly is crucial to improve the effectiveness of adaptation and to avoid negative unintended effects from policies and interventions.

Countries are using different approaches for identifying, planning, implementing, and assessing their national adaptation priorities, actions, and efforts. An increasing number of countries are preparing national adaptation plan (NAP) processes, such as National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), but are also using other types of adaptation planning processes and strategies to drive coordination, set policy priorities, mobilize resources, allocate support, and assess the progress of efforts to achieve their adaptation goals.

> This toolkit uses the framing of NAP processes to refer to the umbrella of all national adaptation planning processes. This includes the process to formulate and implement NAPs, as contained in UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16 and subsequent decisions, along with other processes such as national strategies for adaptation, sustainable development and green growth, and adaptation components under the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that countries can use to plan and implement adaptation actions. By referring to MEL for NAP processes, this toolkit recognizes that there are several national processes for adaptation for which this toolkit is relevant.

MEL systems, as one of the key components of NAP processes, offer a structured approach to monitor progress, evaluate results, and foster learning to ensure adaptation strategies are effectively achieving their intended outcomes. Moreover, they play an important role to improve transparency, gender responsiveness, and social inclusion throughout NAP processes. Given the dynamic nature of climate changes and impacts with development, MEL systems help to check the assumptions that underpin intended outcomes, asking not only whether we are on track but whether we have chosen the right path.

What Is the Aim of This Toolkit?

This toolkit provides practical guidance for the development and continuous improvement of MEL systems for NAP processes. It is informed by lessons learned from countries around the globe that either already implement or are developing MEL systems as part of their NAP

processes (see Section 2.3). Illustrative practical examples are embedded throughout the toolkit. By strengthening MEL systems and supporting assessments of progress in the implementation of NAP processes at both the national and sub-national levels, the toolkit also seeks to strengthen countries' contributions to communications and reporting under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, including as part of the global stocktake and the United Arab Emirates Framework for Global Climate Resilience (UAE FGCR).

Decision 2/CMA.5 on the UAE FGCR sets the voluntary target for all parties to "have designed, established and operationalized a system for monitoring, evaluation and learning for their national adaptation efforts and have built the required institutional capacity to fully implement the system by 2030" (Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement [CMA], 2024, p. 3). This toolkit aims to help countries develop and implement a MEL system for their NAP processes to support them in achieving this target.

Who Is the Toolkit for?

This toolkit is primarily designed for government teams in developing countries leading their country's NAP processes. It aims to support them in developing and operating a MEL system for NAP processes. It is also a resource for consultants, experts, multilateral organizations, and development partners involved in supporting government-led NAP processes. In addition to national-level government decision-makers, this toolkit is further intended as a resource for actors interested in learning more about MEL for NAP processes, including civil society, academia, government officials at sub-national levels, and the private sector. Engaging stakeholders is highlighted as crucial for ensuring the effectiveness and equity of NAP processes and their MEL systems (see Section 3.2).

What Is in This Toolkit?

Following this section introducing the toolkit, Section 2 provides an introduction to NAP processes and a description of key concepts in MEL for NAP processes. It also sets out the rationale for developing MEL systems for NAP processes.

Sections 3 to 7 provide guidance for developing and strengthening your MEL system for NAP processes. Section 3, "Getting Started," outlines key actions to initiate the development of your MEL system, emphasizing the need to take a phased approach, to establish the context, and to set the purpose of MEL systems for NAP processes. Sections 4 to 7 cover the MEL development actions that are commonly undertaken during each of the four phases of the Iterative Adaptation Cycle (see Figure 2).

Each section presents key foundational concepts, sets out important considerations for countries and practitioners, and describes practical actions for developing and strengthening national

MEL systems to support NAP processes. Practical examples are used to illustrate how different countries have approached the development and implementation of MEL systems. Each section begins with a summary of the content it contains. At the end of each subsection, there is a list of key resources for you to access more information on specific aspects of MEL for NAP processes. Throughout the toolkit, there are hyperlinks to resources and case studies, boxes of featured publications, and an extensive reference list to enable you to deepen your learning.

Approaches for integrating contextually appropriate gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) considerations are highlighted throughout the toolkit. Content relating to GESI and other important considerations is indicated by the following icons:

GESI Considerations

Integrating GESI considerations into MEL systems is critical for several reasons. First, it helps to ensure that differences in participation in adaptation decision making and in benefits from adaptation actions due to gender and social inequalities are recognized and addressed. Integrating GESI considerations into MEL systems also helps to track progress on GESI throughout NAP processes, while capturing any unintended negative impacts. It helps to strengthen the evidence base for gender-responsive and socially inclusive NAP processes, generating learning on both adaptation processes and outcomes. The Paris Agreement underlines the importance for countries to implement gender-responsive, participatory, and fully transparent approaches to adaptation, and to ensure intergenerational equity and social justice, aligning adaptation actions with human rights obligations. The integration of GESI considerations in MEL is therefore critical for transparency and reporting on NAP processes, both nationally and internationally. Finally, a focus on GESI can enhance ambition, helping to drive more gender-responsive and socially inclusive NAP processes.

Important Considerations

Throughout the toolkit, we highlight in bold and with this icon important considerations and fundamental messages that are critical for your understanding of specific conceptual and theoretical background, and within actions. These are points to look out for!

How Is This Toolkit Organized?

This toolkit provides flexible guidance on the planning, implementation, and revision of MEL systems, regardless of what stage you are at in your NAP processes or the development and implementation of your MEL system. In the organization of the toolkit, we aim to reflect the different yet highly aligned framings that countries and the UNFCCC use to refer to the main phases of NAP processes.

Figure 1. The alignment between the toolkit structure and the main framings of NAP processes

Toolkit on MEL for the NAP Process (2024)

Getting started on MEL	MEL during the IVRA phase	MEL during the Planning phase	MEL during the Implementation phase	MEL during the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning phase
Preparing, planning, implementing MEL				

LEG National Adaptation Plan Technical Guidelines (2012)

Element A. Lay the groundwork	Element B. Preparatory elements (including IVRAs)	Element C. Implementation strategies	Element D. Reporting, monitoring, review
Preparing, planning, implementing MEL			

NAP Global Network (as a simplified version of LEG 2012)

Planning	Implementation	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
Preparing, planning, implementing MEL		

Iterative adaptation cycle* (2023)

Impact, vulnerability and risk assessment	Planning	Implementation	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
Preparing, planning, implementing MEL			

* Iterative adaptation cycle – decision 2/CMA.5 on the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience
Source: Authors.

READ FIRST

Sections of the toolkit are organized to describe the MEL actions that countries commonly undertake during each of the phases of NAP processes. The toolkit follows the phases of the Iterative Adaptation Cycle, reflecting the recent decision establishing the UAE FGCR at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP) 28.

We have also included a Getting Started section, in line with the National Adaptation Plan Technical Guidelines of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) from 2012. While decision 2/CMA.5 taken at COP 28 requests the NAP Technical Guidelines to be updated, the 2012 guidelines currently remain the formal framing for the NAP process (Decision 1/CP.16).

The simplified NAP Global Network's conceptualization of the NAP process also aligns with the structure we have followed. Figure 1 illustrates how the three framings align with each other and the structure of the toolkit.

It is important to note that while all the framings portray MEL as the last phase of NAP processes, MEL actions should be undertaken at each phase of NAP processes. We expand on defining MEL as part of NAP processes in Section 2.

How to Use This Toolkit

We recognize that countries are at different stages in their NAP processes and in the development of their MEL system, and that MEL systems are rarely developed in a linear way. Most countries are already somewhere along the path of their NAP processes and the development of a supporting MEL system.

Nonetheless, some actions naturally will come before others. For example, establishing the purpose of a MEL system will ensure its relevance. You will need to identify monitoring requirements and the associated resources before data can be collected and analyzed.

Countries take different approaches to the development of MEL systems to support their NAP processes, depending on their development and risk contexts, the availability of resources, national priorities, and governance structures (Hammill et al., 2014a; UNFCCC, 2012).

Although a MEL system is fundamentally linked to the NAP processes it supports, it is also developed as a coherent system with respective steps to follow. Consequently, we encourage you to start working through the actions from the beginning of Section 3 to develop and/or strengthen your MEL system, no matter what stage of NAP processes your country is at.

We encourage you to refer to the sections that are most relevant to your national circumstances. To get started, you should first consider your national context and determine the purpose(s) of MEL, since these considerations influence what a suitable MEL system looks like.

Figure 2 illustrates the content of the toolkit. The boxes in Figure 2 contain links to navigate to the sections for the different phases of NAP processes and the related MEL actions: click on the boxes to go directly to each section. Each phase of NAP processes and the MEL actions have specific colours that carry through the guidance sections to help you situate yourself in the process as you move through the toolkit. At the bottom of each page of the toolkit, you can find a link that will bring you back to Figure 2 to facilitate navigation.

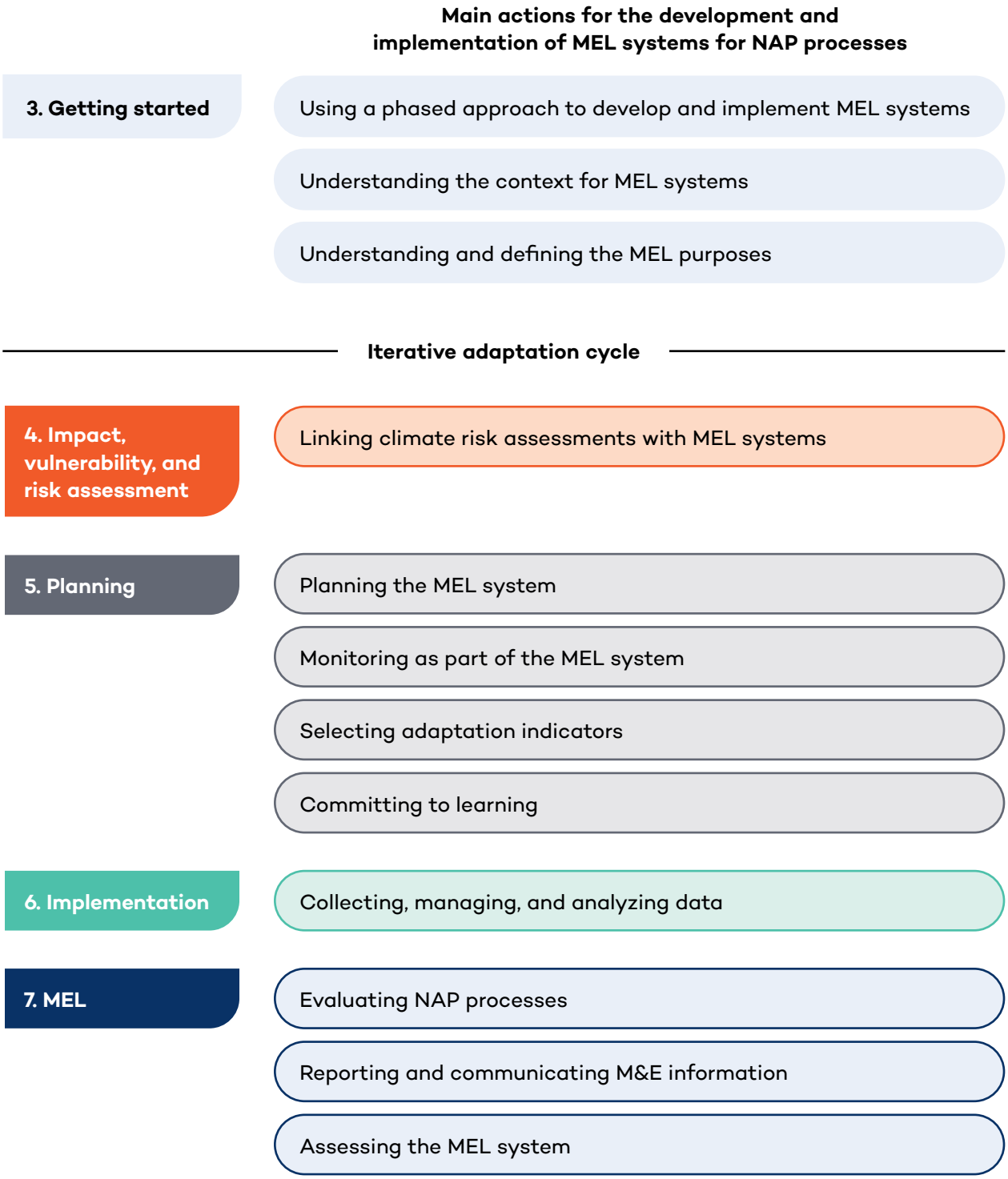
How Has This Toolkit Been Developed?

This toolkit has been developed by the NAP Global Network in collaboration with the Adaptation Committee to support individuals and organizations responsible for MEL for NAP processes (see Section 2). It builds and expands on the publication *Developing National Adaptation Monitoring and Evaluation Systems: A Guidebook* developed by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and IISD in collaboration with the Adaptation Committee and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group in 2015 (Price-Kelly et al., 2015). It also draws on recent publications from the Adaptation Committee, especially its technical paper *Monitoring and Evaluation of Adaptation at the National and Subnational Levels* (Adaptation Committee, 2023). This toolkit provides important added value through the insights derived from experiences of establishing MEL systems for NAP processes in diverse national contexts and from different starting points, including in over a dozen countries that have accessed support on MEL from the NAP Global Network.[1]

READ FIRST

[1] For further details of NGN's work on MEL, see https://napglobalnetwork.org/themes/monitoring-evaluation/

Figure 2. Navigating the toolkit



Source: Authors.

CHAPTER 2

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning in National Adaptation Plan Processes

2.1 The NAP Process

This section provides an introduction to the NAP process, given its importance for the development of national adaptation processes in countries. The NAP process is a strategic and ongoing process that help countries identify, plan, and address their medium- and long-term adaptation priorities (Hammill et al., 2019). Established initially under the UNFCCC's Cancun Adaptation Framework in 2010, the NAP process gained renewed emphasis and urgency under the Paris Agreement adopted in 2015.

Table 1. Six enabling factors essential to NAP processes

Enabling factor	Description
Leadership	The active involvement of high-level political leaders and recognized "champions" who are committed to addressing adaptation.
Institutional arrangements	The rules, regulations, and associated organizational structures that enable coordination on adaptation across actors at all levels, as well as the systematic integration of adaptation into development processes.
Engagement	Efforts that enable a range of diverse actors at all levels, including government authorities, civil society organizations, the private sector, communities, civil society organizations (CSOs), the media, and academia, to participate in and influence decision making in NAP processes.
Financing	The availability and accessibility of public and private financing for adaptation from domestic and international sources.
Skills and capacities	Investments in individuals and organizations at all levels to ensure they have the skills and capacities to enable effective and efficient NAP processes.
Data, knowledge, and communications	The generation and use of: (i) data and information, especially climate data; (ii) knowledge, including local knowledge and research; and (iii) key messages tailored to specific audiences to advance NAP processes.

Source: Authors.

NAP processes' core objectives are to make countries less vulnerable to climate change and to integrate adaptation into development planning, decision making, and budgeting at all levels—national, sectoral, and local (UNFCCC, 2012). Led by national governments, NAP processes should be tailored to each country's unique context and circumstances. NAP processes should also be participatory and inclusive, recognizing the needs of vulnerable populations, communities, and ecosystems and addressing gender considerations (Hammill et al., 2019). Figure 3 shows a NAP Global Network illustration of NAP processes, as defined by the LEG, and aligned with the Iterative Adaptation Cycle (see Figure 1 on alignment between framings).

NAP processes include developing overarching national adaptation strategies and sector-based plans, pulling these efforts together into a cohesive whole, and building on them in a coordinated approach. While the word "national" in "NAP" can lead you to believe that the processes are targeted solely at national-level actors, it is not strictly so (Hammill et al., 2020). Successful NAP processes should create intentional and strategic linkages between national and sub-national levels for vertical integration and between various policy areas, as well as among actors and sectors at for horizontal integration (Luna Rodriguez et al., 2023).

Additionally, effective and inclusive NAP processes require a strong enabling environment. Based on the LEG Guidelines, the NAP Global Network identifies six enabling factors, outlined in Table 1.

Featured Resources

NAP Global Network. (2019). *The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process: Frequently asked questions.* https://napglobalnetwork.org/2019/12/the-national-adaptation-plan-nap-process-frequently-asked-questions/

NAP Global Network. (2023). *NAP trends – A platform analyzing the latest information and trends in National Adaptation Plans.* https://trends.napglobalnetwork.org/

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2012). *National adaptation plans: Technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan process.* https://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/application/pdf/naptechguidelines_eng_high__res.pdf

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2023). *National Adaptation Plans 2023. Progress in the formulation and implementation of NAPs.* https://unfccc.int/documents/635394

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2024). *NAP central – the UNFCCC platform for the National Adaptation Plan process.* https://napcentral.org/

2.2 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning in NAP Processes

Adaptation is an ongoing process that requires learning to manage climate risks and to effectively adapt to impacts that intensify more rapidly and become harder to predict. Having a MEL system is critical for NAP processes to be adaptative and responsive to changes in contexts, intensifying climate risks, and new information and understanding. The following sections provide conceptualizations and definitions about MEL and its relevance for NAP processes.

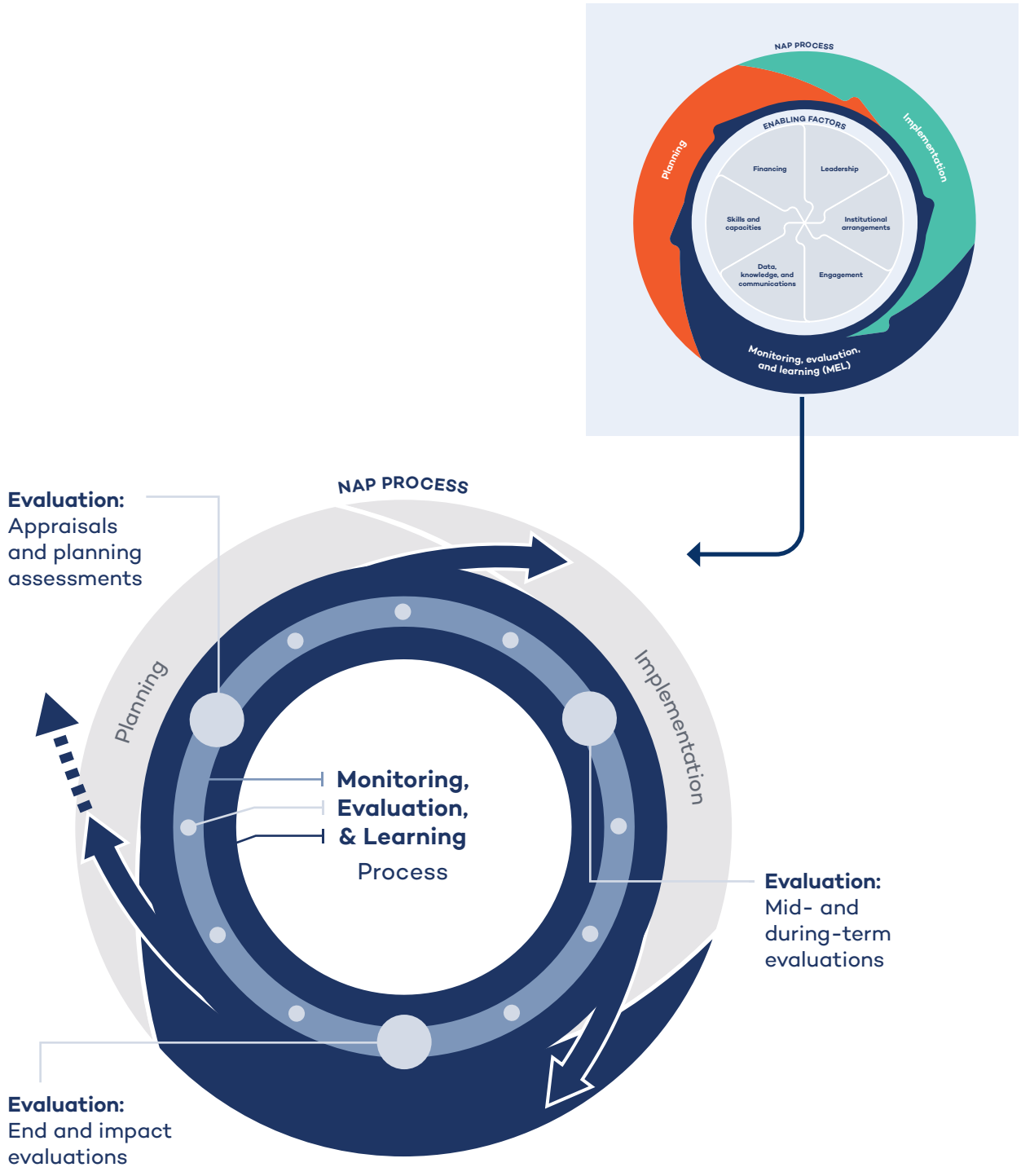
The Importance of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

The aim of a MEL system is to provide a structured approach to monitor progress, evaluate results, and facilitate learning for NAP processes and their activities to effectively achieve their intended results. The different activities that countries undertake under monitoring, evaluation, and learning are closely connected. It is critical to understand that MEL activities ideally should start at the beginning of NAP processes, so that appropriate MEL processes and mechanisms can be established, particularly for monitoring and learning.

> MEL activities and processes involve continuous feedback throughout NAP processes to help decision-makers assess and improve interventions based on what has worked, for whom, and how. As such, MEL is both a distinct phase of NAP processes and an ongoing set of activities that are carried on iteratively throughout the other phases of NAP processes.

Figure 3 illustrates how monitoring, evaluation, and learning take place throughout NAP processes. Monitoring takes place through the ongoing collection and analysis of information to track the progress of NAP processes; evaluations occur at strategic points throughout NAP processes; and learning is an ongoing process throughout the MEL cycle that informs planning and implementation.

Figure 3. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning in NAP processes



Source: Beauchamp, 2023.

Defining MEL as Part of NAP Processes

Monitoring is the systematic tracking of implementation and performance that helps us to understand if progress is being made and identify problems and that consequently informs decision making. Monitoring provides information to check if activities are being carried out as planned, resources are being utilized effectively, and progress is being made toward stated goals. Monitoring involves continuous data collection, observation, and documentation to identify any deviations from the planned course and to take corrective action when necessary. As part of NAP processes, monitoring involves tracking progress on national adaptation, including on the implementation of NAP processes and the results. It helps to answer questions such as "Is the implementation of NAP processes proceeding as intended?"

While monitoring is a continuous activity, **evaluation** goes beyond monitoring to assess performance in terms of outcomes and impacts of NAP processes at strategic points. Evaluations use both monitoring data and information from additional sources, such as research results and external evidence, to determine the performance or success of implementation of NAP processes as per their stated goals. Whereas monitoring tracks implementation and looks at trend in performance, evaluation involves a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of specific performance-related criteria, such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, equity, and sustainability (see Section 7.1).

Evaluations may be carried out for NAP processes as a whole, for aspects of NAP processes, or for specific initiatives, such as programs and projects linked with NAP processes. NAP processes may be evaluated, for example, to assess the implementation and results at regular intervals (e.g., 3–5 years). Evaluation helps answer questions such as "How effectively has implementation of NAP processes been to date?", "What could be improved?", "Has adaptation occurred and how sustainable is it under potential future changes in climatic and other conditions?", and "Have the benefits of adaptation actions been equitably distributed across different genders and social groups?"

Learning in the context of MEL for NAP processes is defined as the collective and deliberate process of acquiring, assessing, and disseminating new knowledge that results in changed or reinforced knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to climate change adaptation (adapted from Heikkila & Gerlak, 2013). This definition underscores that learning is both a process and an outcome. The process of learning, through dedicated activities involving acquiring, assessing, and sharing new knowledge, does not on its own constitute learning. For example, countries can do monitoring and evaluation (M&E) without learning and the inverse is also true; countries can learn about adaptation outside of M&E activities, for example through research and training (Dekens & Harvey, 2024). The learning process needs to lead, or contribute, to some form of outcome, such as a change in knowledge, attitudes, or behaviours within NAP processes.

Importantly, learning cannot be expected to happen automatically. Monitoring and evaluation must be actively oriented to support learning throughout NAP processes. Monitoring provides a

basis for learning by tracking how implementation of NAP processes is progressing. Evaluations support learning by considering the wider impacts of the implementation, and by interrogating in detail how and why changes have occurred, what has and has not worked, for whom, and why. This learning enables NAP processes to be adjusted to address gaps, inequities, and shortcomings, correct actions (e.g., due to assumptions that did not turn out to be correct), and exploit opportunities.

Learning is often left until the end of policy or project cycles, with a focus on informing the next cycle. In contrast, adaptive management is based on learning that is intentionally built into and occurs throughout NAP processes, to adapt the processes themselves to continuously evolving circumstances. While learning within NAP processes should be a continuous process, there will also be specific opportunities to consolidate learning, for example at the end of a particular phase of implementation, or during episodes of evaluation, progress reporting, or other forms of stocktaking (see Sections 5.4 and 7.1). Learning aims to tackle questions such as "What lessons can be drawn to improve the management of NAP processes to ensure they deliver actions in a timely, coordinated, and efficient manner, and prevent maladaptation?" and "Have we encountered success and failure from NAP processes? How should we review and improves NAP processes?"

Box 1. Status of MEL for NAP processes globally in 2024

Since 2015, 52 developing countries, including 23 least developed countries have submitted their NAP documents to the UNFCCC's NAP portal as of January 31, 2024 (UNFCCC, 2024). According to an analysis by the NAP Global Network, 52% of submitted NAP documents include a MEL framework. Additionally, 54% of NAP documents include indicators, while 73% of NAP documents include a commitment to reporting progress on their NAPs (NAP Global Network, 2024). This indicates a growing commitment to MEL by the majority of countries who are engaged in NAP processes. However, countries have faced challenges turning those commitments into practice. A 2021 study revealed that more than 60% of countries that have adopted NAPs are not actively tracking their implementation (Leiter, 2021). There is, therefore, still a clear gap in many countries to progress toward functioning MEL systems for NAP processes.

The Role of Enabling Factors in MEL for NAP Processes

A strong enabling environment is also critical for developing and strengthening MEL systems for NAP processes. Table 2 outlines how each factor affects MEL systems for NAP processes. Section 3.2 will further detail how countries can take stock and reinforce enabling factors for their MEL systems.

Table 2. The influence of the six enabling factors on MEL systems for NAP processes

Enabling factor	Why it is important in the development and implementation of MEL systems for NAP processes
Leadership	Leadership in MEL systems sets the tone for accountability and strategic alignment with national adaptation goals. It involves high-level commitment that can drive policy integration, coordination, resource allocation, and the prioritization of MEL activities within the broader NAP processes. Strong leadership can drive the successful implementation of MEL systems by ensuring clarity of purpose, alignment of resources, and engagement of actors.
Institutional arrangements	These are the structures and processes that enable effective coordination and collaboration among various stakeholders involved in MEL. Leadership also refers to existing laws, regulations, and mandates that frame NAP processes and their MEL system—along with other overlapping development and environmental policies. Well-defined roles and responsibilities, along with clear communications channels, are key to ensuring that MEL activities are coherent and aligned across different sectors and levels of governance. This can include coordination mechanisms such as inter-agency working groups, MEL focal points and units, the development of guidelines and standards, and data-sharing protocols.
Engagement	Engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including local communities, civil society, and the private sector, ensures that diverse perspectives and knowledge are incorporated into MEL systems. Engagement includes setting the mechanisms that are required for actors engaging across levels and areas of society to be involved in NAP processes. Effective engagement builds trust among actors, fostering ownership of the MEL process and findings, and ensures that the MEL system is responsive to the needs and contexts of various actors.
Finance	Securing and managing funds effectively is crucial for the sustainability of MEL activities. This involves not only the initial investment in setting up MEL systems but also the ongoing costs of data collection, analysis, and dissemination of findings. Sufficient and stable financial resources ensure that MEL systems can operate effectively and adapt to changing needs and contexts, beyond the span of individual projects or grants (see Box 2).

Enabling factor	Why it is important in the development and implementation of MEL systems for NAP processes
Skills and capacities	Developing and sustaining the necessary skills and capacities among MEL practitioners and stakeholders is essential for the effective implementation of MEL activities. This includes technical skills in data collection and analysis, as well as softer skills in stakeholder engagement and communication. Skills and capacities enhance the quality and credibility of MEL activities, foster innovation in MEL methods and tools, and ensure that the system can respond to evolving needs.
Data, knowledge, and communications	The foundation of effective MEL systems lies in the availability and quality of data and the management of knowledge. This entails the collection, analysis, and dissemination of relevant data, as well as the effective communication of insights and learnings to inform decision making and adaptation actions. Robust data, knowledge, and communications enhance the transparency, accountability, and impact of MEL activities. They enable actors to access and utilize MEL findings, facilitate learning and adaptation, and support evidence-based decision making.

Source: Authors.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in MEL Systems

Integrating GESI considerations into NAP processes is essential for the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of climate adaptation and sustainable development initiatives. Climate change affects people of different genders and social groups in different ways and can exacerbate existing inequalities. People who face discrimination tend to be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and have less access to decision-making spaces related to adaptation. At the same time, they can have essential knowledge to inform adaptation action and can act as critical agents of change in their communities and beyond. Effective NAP processes recognize and address these realities, facilitating meaningful participation by different social groups and fostering co-creation of knowledge and adaptation responses (see NAP Global Network & UNFCCC, 2019).

MEL systems for NAP processes should consider systematically integrating GESI considerations to ensure that adaptation actions address the root causes of inequality and aim for systemic change. This requires attention in the design of the system, ensuring that GESI is reflected in key elements such as the purpose, targets, and indicators, including use of disaggregated data (by gender, age, ability, etc.) wherever relevant. GESI considerations are also important for MEL-related processes, in terms of establishing diverse teams that reflect a range of perspectives, undertaking gender and social analysis, and incorporating participatory approaches and qualitative methods that can capture differentiated outcomes for different groups.

MEL systems for NAP processes can play a key role in ensuring equity in NAP processes by assessing the extent to which the process and its outcomes have been gender responsive and socially inclusive, taking into consideration insights from different geographies, socio-cultural groups, ages and genders—noting that the specific factors to be considered should be decided based on the context and in collaboration with organizations representing marginalized groups. MEL systems can also generate important learning on what works and what doesn't when it comes to integrating GESI in NAP processes, building the evidence base on GESI and adaptation and identifying areas for improvement.

We signal GESI considerations throughout the toolkit, for you to mainstream GESI across your MEL activities. You can ask the following questions to ensure your MEL system is continuously integrating GESI considerations (adapted from Dazé & Hunter, 2022).

- **Framing of GESI issues:** Are gender issues framed within the MEL system and considered as part of its purposes, including links to social inclusion and human rights? What are the assumptions about effectiveness and impact of NAP processes with regards to specific (vulnerable and marginalized) social groups?
- **Learning about GESI in NAP processes:** Are activities planned to deliberately learn from GESI in the MEL system and integrate lessons into NAP processes? Are mechanisms established to get regular feedback from diverse community members on the effectiveness and inclusivity of adaptation interventions, and to use this input to iteratively improve adaptation efforts?
- **Institutional arrangements and MEL governance:** Is the government authority responsible for gender involved in institutional arrangements for MEL for NAP processes? Do key gender-related non-governmental stakeholders have a voice in the development and implementation of the MEL system?
- **Gender-focused data and analyses:** Will specific GESI-related data be collected and analyzed under the MEL system? Will be the data be disaggregated by gender, age, disability, ethnicity, and other relevant social categories to understand the differentiated

impacts of adaptation measures and to tailor interventions accordingly? How can gender analysis be used to frame, understand, and communicate MEL information and learning?

- **Stakeholder engagement:** Who should be engaged to appropriately track and assess the progress of NAP processes? How is a diverse set of actors engaged? Have relevant resources been allocated to ensure their engagement at all steps of the MEL system? Can GESI champions be identified who can help ensure GESI is incorporated in practical and meaningful ways within MEL practices?
- **Capacity building:** Can the MEL system assess and build the capacities needed to support gender-responsive approaches to data collection and data analysis such as data disaggregation? Are trainings planned to build gender-sensitive and inclusive research methods, data collection and analysis techniques, and inclusive facilitation skills?

Featured Resources

Gumucio, T., Huyer, S., Hansen, J., Simelton, E., Partey, S., & Schwager, S. (2018). *Inclusion of gender equality in monitoring and evaluation of climate services.* CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security. https://gender.cgiar.org/publications/inclusion-gender-equality-monitoring-and-evaluation-climate-services

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Vertical and Horizonal Integration in MEL Systems for NAP Processes

Vertical integration in MEL systems for NAP processes requires coordination between actors at local, subnational, and national levels. A good understanding of institutional arrangements (formal and informal) and multilevel governance systems are key to facilitate information and data exchange across levels. Local authorities, subnational governments, and central government's agencies that operate across levels should be involved in the development of multilevel MEL systems to enhance ownership and to incorporate existing resources and information from subnational levels and diverse actors (Luna Rodriguez et al., 2023).

Building intentional links between a MEL system for NAP processes to local, sub-national, regional, and international systems and processes requires an understanding of the context and potential connection points between different spatial scales and levels of governance. MEL systems for NAP processes should draw from local insights, data, and experiences to provide a well-informed overview of adaptation progress. For example, Zambia's national government involved sub-national bodies in the review of NAP indicators, allowing the Zambian NAP team to tailor indicators to sub-national actors' local contexts, capacities, and resources (Masud et al., 2023). Such approaches ensure that the MEL system remains relevant and practical.

MEL systems for NAP processes can also provide information to other international frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Global Biodiversity Framework. Alignment in national MEL systems and international reporting requirements helps reduce burdens on already resource-limited governments (Leiter & Olivier, 2017).

As the impacts of climate change can generate both risks and opportunities irrespective of sovereign boundaries, effective MEL systems should also consider the transboundary nature of adaptation. This requires that MEL systems for NAP processes leverage opportunities to collaborate and share data, evidence, and lessons across geographies and policies (Terton et al., 2023).

Horizontal integration in MEL systems for NAP processes involves consolidating information across ministries, departments and agencies that operate in different policy areas and sectors, as well as with other non-governmental actors when relevant. Formal and informal institutional arrangements are important as they can enable (or prevent) the timely flow of information and data coherence. Good communication between government departments, sectoral organizations (including the private sector), and CSOs can pave the way for consistent metrics between national and sectoral MEL systems. Enhanced horizontal coordination also promotes intersectoral lesson sharing, which amplifies learning.

Box 2. Sources of finance to support MEL systems for NAP processes

The increasing emphasis on MEL systems for NAPs creates an imperative for identifying funding channels to assess intervention impacts. Funding can stem from national governments, multilateral cooperation, international funding mechanisms, and the private sector (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). National and sub-national governments can allocate budgets for MEL activities to assess the implementation progress and results of actions under NAPs. When governments set specific budgets for implementation of NAP processes, a proportion of these budgets can be set aside for MEL.

There are various external sources of finance countries can consider for MEL systems for NAP processes, yet countries and their delivery partners must ensure they build MEL activities into the strategies for financing NAP processes and into proposals to funders to secure appropriate funding for MEL systems.

A range of development partners, including the Green Climate Fund—notably providing funding for readiness projects for adaptation planning—the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank, multilateral development banks, and bilateral donors, are all potential sources of finance for national MEL-related activities. However, accessing financial support depends on the local capacities of governments and ministries and the political interest in investing funds to assess progress (OECD, 2020).

It may be necessary to explore a range of finance sources for MEL systems for NAP processes and to blend them to ensure resources are available that are commensurate to the scale and complexity of the MEL system (Parry et al., 2017).

Featured Resources

Leiter, T. (2015). Linking monitoring and evaluation of adaptation to climate change across scales: Avenues and practical approaches. *New Directions for Evaluation, 147,* 117–127. https://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ev.20135

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2.3 The Case for MEL of NAP Processes

The overarching aim of MEL systems is to inform policies and practices from the data and evidence generated by the iterative process of tracking, assessing, and learning throughout NAP processes. MEL systems for NAP processes can have multiple purposes and benefits:

1. **Understanding the effectiveness of NAP processes:** MEL systems for NAP processes can enhance policies and practices by leveraging insights from continuous tracking, assessment, and learning activities. They enable a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the implementation of NAP processes from various perspectives, helping to identify what works, why it works, and who benefits or is disadvantaged. As a result, MEL systems can facilitate both individual and collective learning, and create spaces for reflection on adaptation failures as well as successes. MEL systems can encourage learning between silos (geographic, sectoral, cultural), thereby facilitating informed decision making and strategy development.

2. **Supporting reporting and transparency:** MEL systems for NAP processes can help countries to report on progress across scales (see Section 7.2). Using data and evidence from MEL systems in reporting increases transparency by demonstrating progress to stakeholders. MEL systems also provide valuable information for international reporting requirements, including invitations to report under global frameworks such as the Paris Agreement (see Box 3), the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, thereby aligning national adaptation efforts with global climate and sustainability agendas.
3. **Mobilizing domestic, international, public, and private finance:** MEL systems for NAP processes can mobilize domestic and international finance by signalling financial efficiency and accountability. They can support the mobilization of international finance by tracking implementation progress, reporting results, and facilitating continual improvements. Evidence of the effectiveness of NAP processes can attract investments from different funders, including building the case for domestic fund allocation. By integrating theories of change (ToC), MEL systems provide a structured framework to demonstrate how adaptation actions lead to desired outcomes, thereby making a compelling case for international funding.
4. **Improving adaptive management and (mutual) accountability:** MEL systems for NAP processes can improve adaptive management and accountability by identifying challenges and documenting how they are addressed. This continuous feedback loop allows for the adjustment of NAP processes to avoid maladaptation and unintended consequences, ensuring that planning and implementation are responsive to emerging insights and stakeholder feedback. In turn, this fosters mutual accountability between actors. While accountability is often linked with reporting requirements, MEL systems for NAP processes should take a broader view of accountability and plan how the MEL system will ensure accountability to the citizens of the country, especially those who are most vulnerable to climate change.
5. **Enhancing efficiency:** MEL systems also improve efficiency in delivery by identifying areas where planning and implementation can be optimized, leading to cost savings, faster project completion, and improved outcomes. This not only ensures the efficient use of resources but also highlights opportunities for reallocating funds to areas with greater impact, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness and sustainability of national adaptation efforts.
6. **Strengthening equity:** The benefits from investments in adaptation may or may not be distributed equitably across different genders, social groups, or parts of the country. MEL systems can enable the assessment of equity in adaptation processes and outcomes, taking systemic inequalities into consideration. Inclusive processes and governance, including MEL systems for NAP processes, that prioritizes equity and justice in adaptation planning and implementation leads to more effective and sustainable adaptation outcomes (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2022).

Box 3. Reporting on adaptation under the Paris Agreement

MEL systems for NAP processes inform national planning and decision making while also generating information for international reporting. Indeed, they are a vital source of information for several processes under the Paris Agreement (Möhner et al., 2017). First, MEL for NAP processes is key to inform the global stocktake, which undertakes the assessment of countries' collective progress toward reaching the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement every 5 years (Qi, 2022). The global stocktake draws on multiple sources for which MEL systems provide much-needed evidence and information. Reporting and communication instruments under the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC include:

- **Biennial Transparency Report (BTR):** Countries are required to submit a BTR every 2 years (with discretion for LDCs and Small Island Developing States), submitting their first BTR at latest by December 31, 2024. BTRs consist of five sections, including a voluntary one on adaptation. For more information see Adaptation in Biennial Transparency Reports: Frequently Asked Questions (NAP Global Network, 2023).
- **Adaptation Communications:** Countries can use Adaptation Communications in addition to BTRs to synthesize and share their priorities, efforts, needs, and actions for adapting to climate change. They were established to enhance the visibility and profile of adaptation, and its balance with mitigation. For more information, see Adaptation Communications: Frequently Asked Questions and Leveraging the National Adaptation Plan Process for Adaptation Communications. Also see the AC's Draft supplementary guidance for Adcoms, the UNFCCC AdComs registry and the synthesis of AdComs submitted by 2023.
- **National Communications:** Countries are required to submit a National Communication every four years. See Möhner et al. (2017) for linkages between reporting instruments on adaptation.

Finally, decision 2/CMA.5 on the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience established in December 2023 further invites evidence and information from MEL systems for NAP processes. The aim of the UAE FGCR is to "guide and strengthen efforts, including long-term transformational and incremental adaptation, towards reducing vulnerability and enhancing adaptive capacity and resilience, as well as the collective well-being of all people, the protection of livelihoods and economies, and the preservation and regeneration of nature, for current and future generations, in the context of the temperature goal referred to in Article 2 of the Paris Agreement" (CMA, 2024, p. 2).

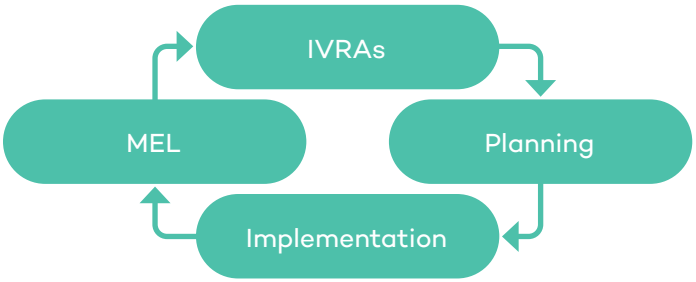
Figure 4. The UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience

Purpose of the UAE FGRC:
To guide the achievement of the global goal on adaptation and the review of overall progress in achieving it

Sectors

Water	Food & agriculture	Health
Biodiversity & ecosystems	Infrastructure & human settlements	
Poverty eradication & livelihoods	Cultural heritage	

Dimensions of the iterative adaptation cycle



Sources of information

Adcoms	Reports from UN and international organizations
NDCs	
NAPs	National communications
BTRs	Voluntary submissions
IPCC reports	Other sources

National MEL systems for NAP processes

Cross-cutting considerations

- Country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory, and fully transparent approaches
- Human rights approaches, intergenerational equity and social justice, taking into consideration vulnerable ecosystems, groups, and communities including children, youth, and persons with disabilities
- Guided by the best available science, including through use of science-based indicators, metrics and targets
- Traditional knowledge, Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, and local knowledge systems
- Ecosystem-based adaptation, nature-based solutions, locally led and community-based adaptation, disaster risk reduction
- Intersectional approaches, private sector engagement, maladaptation avoidance, recognition of adaptation co-benefits and sustainable development

Source: Authors.

★ Key Messages

- MEL systems enhance NAP processes by systematically tracking performance, assessing outcomes, and assimilating new knowledge. Through structured, ongoing feedback, they enable informed decision making and support equitable and sustainable adaptation efforts.
- MEL activities ideally should start at the beginning of NAP processes, so that appropriate MEL processes and mechanisms can be established.
- MEL systems promote transparency, accountability, and efficiency in adaptation efforts, which can facilitate stakeholder involvement and resource mobilization.

Featured Resources

Adaptation Committee. (2023). *Monitoring and evaluation of adaptation at the national and sub-national levels*. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/AC_TechnicalPaper_AdaptationMandE_2023.pdf

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CHAPTER 3

Getting Started With Your MEL System

Summary

What are countries doing in this phase of NAP processes?

At this time, countries are assessing their current systems and policy processes, and how NAP processes can complement those. As countries initiate and launch NAP processes, the government teams leading their country's NAP processes are concerned with identifying available information on climate change impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation. They are also taking stock of their context, by assessing the gaps, opportunities, and needs across different enabling factors for their NAP processes.

Why is this phase important for MEL systems for NAP processes?

MEL systems for NAP processes need to respond to national contexts. This includes relevant political mandates for NAP processes but also geographical, social, economic, and other factors that will influence how and for whom countries design their MEL system. It is important to fully consider this context and explore the outcomes you want to achieve by developing and implementing a MEL system (i.e., the purpose of your MEL system). Each country's NAP processes are unique, and each country faces a distinct set of adaptation circumstances and MEL needs. The MEL system therefore needs to be tailored to the specific circumstances and must be able to meet the intended MEL purpose.

In this section, we address:

- 3.1 Using a Phased Approach to Develop and Implement MEL Systems
  - Action: Reflect on phased approaches for developing and implementing your MEL system
- 3.2. Understanding the Context for MEL Systems for NAP Processes
  - Action: Undertake a stocktake of contextual factors and existing MEL systems
- 3.3. Understanding and Defining MEL Purposes
  - Action: Clarify the primary purposes and objectives of the MEL system

No matter what stage of NAP processes you are at, always start designing and revising your MEL system with this section!

3.1 Using a Phased Approach to Develop and Implement MEL Systems

As you get started, it is essential to understand that MEL systems are not built in one go. MEL systems for NAP processes are rarely developed in a linear way and can take years to develop and implement, and countries are working with limited resources and capacity constraints.

The length and content of this toolkit may seem intimidating and possibly even unrealistic. Yet a foundational consideration for developing MEL systems is to apply simplicity when designing the system and then use a phased approach. The best approach is to start small, learn lessons, and then enhance over time. Flexibility is important to ensure that MEL systems are relevant and responsive to the unique needs and challenges of different sectors, institutions, and socio-cultural contexts.

Countries will have different governance structures, geographies, and social, economic, and cultural structures; each country has differing capacities and resources to develop MEL systems. It will be crucial to keep in mind changing practical realities, such as resources, timelines, and capacities, when implementing a MEL system in all phases. In fact, simplicity and pragmatism are key for developing a MEL system that can be effective and evolve over of time.

Using a phased approach is also crucial to allow the ongoing integration and assessment of GESI considerations in MEL systems for NAP processes. As described in Section 2.2, MEL systems should consider systematically integrating GESI considerations to generate NAP processes that address systemic vulnerabilities. Phased approaches provide the flexibility to tailor GESI considerations to specific contexts, sectors, or regions, adjusting as new information becomes available and the integration of GESI issues in the NAP processes is deepened.

ACTION: Reflect on phased approaches for developing and implementing your MEL system

MEL systems will never be perfect, but they can be constantly improved over time. It is important that countries target feasible actions to establish a practical and sustainable MEL system for their NAP processes, rather than developing something complex that will be dropped later on. Keeping in mind practical realities across all stages of the MEL system development and implementation process enables the development of strategies to overcome barriers and exploit opportunities.

Countries have used phased approaches to advance their MEL systems in a pragmatic way, such as national to devolved approaches, regional approaches, sectoral approaches, and approaches with time-bound phases. We outline four examples of phased approaches that countries have used to build their MEL system over time. Each approach has its specificities and can be chosen based on the country's unique political, social, and economic context, as well as the existing institutional and MEL capacities. Often, hybrid or combined approaches may be most effective, leveraging the advantages of each strategy to build a robust, responsive, and inclusive MEL system for NAP processes.

1. Establishing a national MEL system before decentralizing.

Most countries will initially establish a MEL system for NAP processes at the national level: setting up overarching frameworks, standards, and guidelines. Once the national MEL system is operational, it gradually extends to sub-national levels, adapting to local contexts. Starting at the national level can ensure that the system aligns with national policies, strategies, and priorities. It can also facilitate the mobilization of resources and the establishment of standardized methodologies and indicators. However, it is crucial that the national-level MEL system is flexible enough to adapt to local needs and contexts as it decentralizes. Engagement with local stakeholders from the outset is essential to facilitate smooth decentralization (see Section 3.2).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 1: Vietnam's phased approach to setting up a MEL system engaging ministries, provinces, and localities

In 2022, Vietnam developed a comprehensive M&E system aimed at effectively measuring progress on adaptation activities, with a strong emphasis on regional coordination. The system strategically allocates responsibilities across different levels of governance, fostering collaboration between regional and national entities. At the national level, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment leads the assessment of implementation progress on national adaptation efforts. Simultaneously, at the ministerial and provincial levels, there is a concerted effort to evaluate the impacts of national policies and plans on respective ministries and provinces.

Vietnam's M&E system capitalizes on existing approaches used in previous programs. It has actively adopted the principle of starting small by establishing an initial set of M&E indicators to pilot the system, ensuring regional considerations are incorporated. This deliberate strategy avoids the complexity associated with immediately establishing aggregated indicators, allowing for greater flexibility. The phased approach involves refining existing M&E indicators, instituting an online reporting system, and building capacities in M&E to ensure that stakeholders are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to integrate the system into their workplans.

See Nguyen et al., 2023: Viet Nam's Approach to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the National Adaptation Plan.

2. Focusing on priority sectors and replicating.

Several countries have started to develop and pilot their MEL system by focusing on the priority sectors identified through their NAP processes. For example, countries such as Chile and Saint Lucia have published sectoral NAP documents. Countries can then build on the implementation and lessons from these key sectors to integrate and harmonize the systems across other sectors afterwards. Sector-specific MEL systems can be closely aligned with sectoral priorities, challenges, and data systems, enhancing their relevance and effectiveness. They allow for deep sectoral expertise to be developed. However, ensuring interoperability and coherence across sectoral MEL systems is essential. It is important to think about common standards a unifying framework, and platforms for data sharing and learning across sectors from the onset of the first sectors.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 2: Rwanda's sectoral approach to MEL system development

Rwanda has adopted a sectoral approach to developing its MEL system, starting with the agriculture sector. The primary objective of this MEL system is to report on the progress of adaptation actions outlined in the NDC. Setting up this MEL system involved identifying national-level sectoral indicators and assessing the necessary information and data. A significant focus of the process was placed on elaborating the institutional arrangements required for the implementation of MEL and recognizing resource needs. The government of Rwanda identified communication pathways to ensure that the information generated by the system reaches the intended audiences. They employed an inclusive process to gather inputs from a diverse range of stakeholders, including government institutions, international agencies, civil society, and the private sector. This process was then replicated in the human settlement and transport sectors.

See Tsinda et al., 2023: *Rwanda's climate adaptation monitoring, evaluation, and learning system in the agriculture sector: Aims, objectives, and needs*.

3. Targeting specific regions and expanding.

This strategy involves developing MEL systems within specific regions or localities. It is rarely used on its own, without some form of national MEL system to frame how the regional evidence and lessons on adaptation progress can be compiled and assessed nationally. The targeted regions could be chosen as they are considered "frontrunners" for establishing MEL systems for NAP processes, for example regions with strong leadership and capacities. Alternatively, they could be priority areas identified by their NAP processes. Countries can then scale up and transfer successful practices to other areas and the national level. Using a regional approach allows MEL systems to be tailored to specific local contexts and needs, fostering innovation, and learning from diverse experiences. It can also build local ownership and capacity. However, coordination and

knowledge sharing between regions is vital to ensure that successful practices are scaled up and that the MEL system remains cohesive at the national level.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 3: From local to national—using climate risk assessments (CRAs) to boost the development of Ghana's MEL system

Ghana is pioneering a bottom-up approach to the development of MEL systems for adaptation. The country has embarked on an ambitious journey by committing to district-level vulnerability assessments across its diverse ecological zones as an initial step. These assessments serve a crucial role in enabling localized planning for adaptation, ensuring that adaptation efforts are tailored to the specific needs and conditions of different regions within the country. Moreover, they lay the foundation for the development of adaptation plans for each ecological zone, which will be instrumental in guiding future adaptation actions. This strategic approach fosters integration between national and sub-national planning for adaptation.

In addition, these district-level assessments are not only aimed at identifying vulnerabilities but also at defining methodologies for conducting CRAs (see Section 4) and building capacity within governments to develop robust MEL systems for NAP processes. By integrating CRAs as baselines and tools for measuring progress, Ghana is laying the groundwork for a comprehensive MEL system that will enable continuous monitoring and evaluation of adaptation efforts at both the local and national levels.

Sources: Government of Ghana, 2024: *Climate Adaptation Plan for Bekwai Municipal Assembly: Ghana*; NAP Global Network, 2022: *Ghana begins a series of district-level vulnerability assessments to inform its NAP document*.

4. Planning the MEL system over dedicated stages.

This approach is generally shared and combined with the other three approaches above, yet deserves its own description. A gradual and time-framed approach focuses on building MEL systems incrementally over time, starting with basic structures and capabilities and progressively adding complexity and scope. Countries embracing this strategy will determine a plan for piloting, scaling up and expanding the development and implementation of their MEL system from the onset. An incremental approach allows for learning by doing, adjusting strategies based on early experiences. It is particularly effective in contexts with limited initial resources or MEL expertise, and to help secure financial resources over time by presenting a clear plan for expansion. As such, it is important to maintain a clear long-term vision and plan for the MEL system, to ensure that incremental steps contribute to a coherent and comprehensive system.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 4: Roadmap toward the operationalization of an M&E system for adaptation in Peru

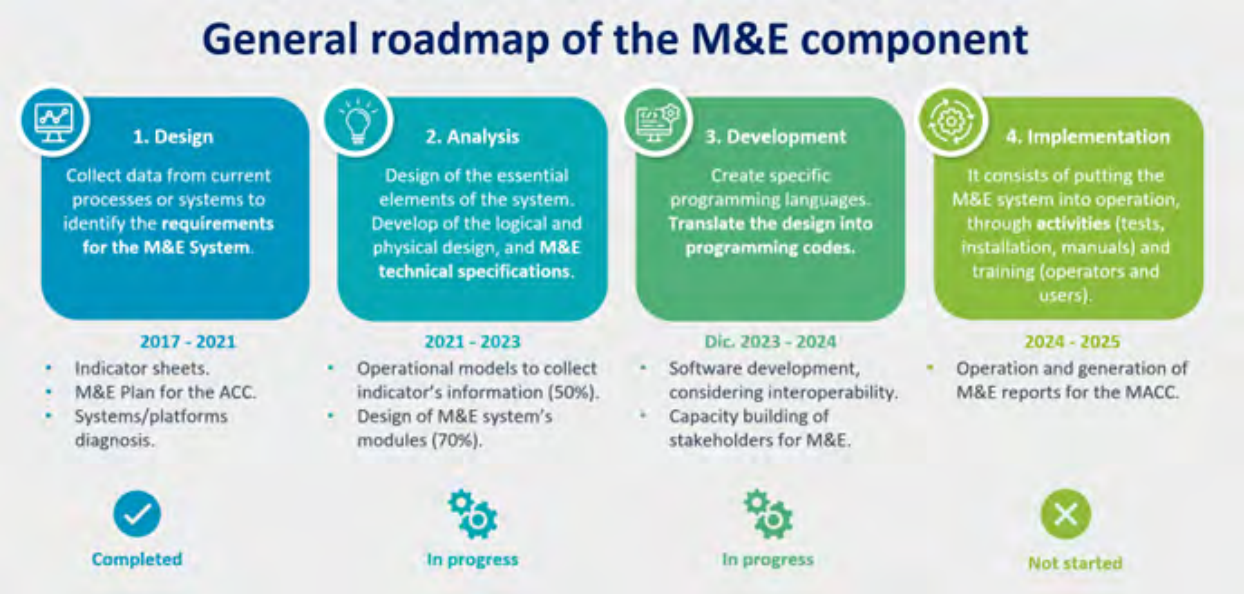
Peru released in 2021 its first NAP document, which contains 91 adaptation measures and 151 indicators. To track progress, the Ministry of Environment conceived a roadmap describing a multi-year process toward the operationalization of its M&E of Adaptation, which is made up of the four well-defined phases below:

- The **Analysis** phase is intended to identify the requirements for the M&E system of the adaptation measures.
- The **Design** phase is intended to develop the logical design, the physical design, and the specifications for the M&E system of the adaptation measures.
- The **Development** phase is intended to design inputs, outputs, databases, interface procedures, and interoperability with other systems.
- The **Implementation** phase has the purpose of putting into operation the M&E system of the adaptation measures, by carrying out tests, trainings, and audits.

Each phase is made up of a number of activities that are distributed across seven thematic areas (fishing and aquaculture, forestry, agriculture, health, water, transportation, and tourism) and have an implementation period through to 2025, at which point the M&E system will be fully operational.

Source: Ministry of Environment of Peru (internal document).

Figure 5. Roadmap for the adaptation component of the M&E system for adaptation and mitigation actions



Source: Ministry of Environment of Peru (internal document).

★ Key Messages

- Developing and implementing MEL systems should be done using a pragmatic, phased approach that is based on available resources and capacities. Starting small, learning, and then scaling up is the recommended way forward.
- A phased approach also helps in developing a MEL system that is relevant, effective, and that can evolve to meet changing needs and realities.

Featured Resources

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit. (2017). *National-level adaptation M&E: Examples of national M&E systems* (Factsheet). https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/monitoring-evaluation/national-level-adaptation/

European Environment Agency. (2020). *Monitoring and evaluation of national adaptation policies throughout the policy cycle* (European Environment Agency Report No 06/2020). https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/national-adaptation-policies

Hammill, A., Dekens, J., Olivier, J., Leiter, T., & Klockemann, L. (2014). *Monitoring and evaluating adaptation at aggregated levels: A comparative analysis of ten systems.* Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit & International Institute for Sustainable Development. https://www.iisd.org/publications/report/monitoring-and-evaluating-adaptation-aggregated-levels-comparative-analysis-ten

Sectoral and Regional Resources

Coger, T. (2021). *Reshaping monitoring, evaluation and learning for locally led adaptation.* World Resources Institute. https://www.wri.org/research/reshaping-monitoring-evaluation-and-learning-locally-led-adaptation

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre, & Friends of Ecosystem-based Adaptation. (2020). *Guidebook for monitoring and evaluating ecosystem-based adaptation interventions.* https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/download/ME-Guidebook_EbA.pdf

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2019). *Strengthening M&E for adaptation planning in the agriculture sector* (Guidance note). https://www.fao.org/in-action/naps/resources/learning/monitoring-and-evaluation-guide/es/

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations & United Nations Development Programme. (2023). *Progress in developing a national monitoring and evaluation system for adaptation in the agriculture sector: A multi-country case study.* https://www.fao.org/3/cc3916en/cc3916en.pdf

Leiter, T. (2016). Key considerations for monitoring and evaluation of community-based adaptation to climate change: lessons from experience. In J. Atela, S. Huq, C. Ochieng, V. Orindi, & T. Owiwo (Eds.), *Enhancing adaptation to climate change in developing countries through community-based adaptation.* African Centre for Technology Studies Press. http://www.adaptationcommunity.net/?wpfb_dl=381

Lucks, D., Burgass, M., Lynn, I., Piergallini, I., & Beauchamp, E. (2019). *MEL handbook for SDG 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.* International Institute for Environment and Development. https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/16644IIED.pdf

3.2 Understanding the Context for MEL Systems for NAP Processes

Considering national contexts and enabling factors when developing MEL systems for NAP processes is crucial due to the unique challenges, priorities, and resources of each country. National contexts encompass geographical, socio-economic, political, and cultural dimensions that significantly influence the design and implementation of MEL systems. For instance, a country with extensive coastal areas will prioritize adaptation strategies differently from a landlocked country, affecting the focus of MEL activities.

As countries are getting started with their NAP processes, they are identifying available information, existing systems, and arrangements. They are taking stock of the context in which their NAP is developed and implemented, and assessing gaps, opportunities, needs, and priorities for the development of their NAP—and they should also do so for their MEL systems. It is critical for the initial stocktake activities that are part of NAP processes to include information, gaps, and needs related to MEL systems as well.

For example, Uganda did a scoping study of existing climate processes and related MEL elements to identify possible MEL framework options and entry points to improve MEL for adaptation and risk reduction in 2015. The scoping study included: a review of existing climate policies; sectoral and regional vulnerabilities; current reporting systems, tools and data sources; existing elements in their MEL system; and main climate interventions (Kabesiime et al., 2015).

In turn, if the MEL system is being developed after the initial stocktake conducted for the launch NAP processes, it's essential for countries to undertake a separate, specific MEL stocktake.

Countries that have already taken stock of their NAP context will still need information about the context for their MEL system and should conduct an additional assessment of their MEL context to fill the information gaps. Failing to take this step can lead to duplication of MEL systems, inefficient use of resources, and, ultimately, ineffective MEL systems for NAP processes.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 5: Analyzing the existing MEL system for improvement in Cameroon

Cameroon's NAP, adopted in 2015, has been lacking an effective MEL system, leading to suboptimal implementation. This was one of the conclusions of a 2021 evaluation by the Global Water Partnership. To address this, Cameroon conducted a technical analysis of its MEL system with the objective of proposing a more appropriate, efficient, and operationalizable system.

The analysis, which included literature review, capacity-building sessions, and consultations with various stakeholders, seeks to clarify the goals, objectives, and needs of public authorities regarding the MEL system for national adaptation. It consisted of a review of existing MEL systems in Cameroon, including data collection methods, indicators, and capacities for MEL, to see how they can be integrated or harmonized with the MEL system for adaptation.

The proposed new MEL system covers various elements, including the institutional framework, roles and responsibilities, a review and revision process for the indicators (with gender considerations), a data collection and evaluation system, capacity-building needs, and considerations for making the MEL system both reliable and resource-efficient.

Source: Cameroon Ministry of the Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development, 2023: *Système de suivi, d'évaluation et d'apprentissage (SEA) de l'adaptation au Cameroun* (French only).

ACTION: Undertake a stocktake of contextual factors and existing MEL systems

Understanding national contexts and building on existing systems is essential when developing a MEL system or revising one. We consider the assessment of contextual factors through the lens of the six enabling factors to ensure that MEL systems are sustainable, effective, and capable of driving meaningful adaptation actions.

Table 3 suggests the type of information that is required before getting started on developing and planning your MEL system, or when revising it. The areas for questioning are indicative and need to be tailored according to the information countries already have and need; not all areas need to be assessed depending on country needs and capacities.

Table 3. Areas for stocktaking across the six enabling factors

Enabling factor	Areas for stocktaking
Leadership	• Map existing laws, regulations, and mandates that govern NAP processes (e.g., responsibilities under a Climate Change Act or ministerial policy) or that influence MEL (e.g., data-sharing protocols), and other overlapping development and sectoral policies (e.g., gender equality policies). This can guide the purpose of the MEL system (see Section 3.3). • Assess political, social, and cultural drivers that may increase demand for MEL outputs or change the way they should be communicated. • Assess current barriers and limitations for the development of MEL systems and their integration into national adaptation planning and actions.
Institutional arrangements	• Identify the key institutions and actors participating in MEL systems across ministries, agencies, and other national and sub-national entities, to assess how these MEL systems and institutions interact and identify areas of duplication, gaps, and efficiency. • Identify statutory requirements that might influence methodology, MEL system governance or types of outputs. Consider how deadlines and reporting obligations as part of national and international processes will influence the timing of MEL outputs for NAP processes. This can also identify implications for governance, data, and methods of the MEL system. • Assess which decision-making systems and structures can be utilized to support MEL systems for NAP processes to reduce the administrative burden on those involved in the implementation of the MEL systems. • Review opportunities for improved vertical and horizonal integration, and international alignment including the potential alignment between MEL systems for NAP processes and: i) climate-related regional and international reporting requirements; ii) other national, sectoral, and sub-national MEL systems, and their sources of information; and iii) existing adaptation program- and project-level MEL systems.

Enabling factor	Areas for stocktaking
Engagement	• Identify key actors that will be involved in the MEL system by reviewing evidence from previous IVRAs about the people and places that are most vulnerable to climate risks. • Review and determine the role of different actors in the MEL system. This includes assessing which actors have data, information, experiences, and knowledge that are relevant to MEL for NAP processes. Engagement should include governmental actors, from national to local authorities engaged in NAP activities, with actors that can contribute diverse and local perspectives such as communities, CSOs, businesses, academia, and development partners. • Map the mechanisms that exist or are needed for collaborating with key actors, including government and non-governmental actors. This can be done through stakeholder mapping (see the *Toolkit for a Gender-Responsive Process to Formulate and Implement National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)* for details).
Finance	• Map internally and externally available resources to establish what is possible to develop and implement your MEL system, and when new sources are needed. • Identify new opportunities for funding and timelines for accessing them. Compare current and future funding with the design and implementation of the MEL system to identify and plan to address expected needs. • Clarify expectations for what is feasible with existing resources to deliver your MEL system. This can be done in stages, starting small with the available resources, and then scaling up.
Skills and capacities	• Identify gaps in capacity and resources to design and deliver the MEL system. This could be used to leverage additional funding or can be revisited in future actions to strengthen the MEL system. • Assess the current level of expertise in MEL within relevant institutions as well as the availability of MEL expertise in potential collaborations with civil society organizations, academia, and consultants. • Explore training needs and opportunities to identify areas for improvement like data collection and analysis, report writing, facilitating participatory processes, gender analysis, and the use of software or tools relevant to MEL activities.

Enabling factor	Areas for stocktaking
Data, knowledge and communications	• Identify existing MEL systems and methodologies being used at the national, sectoral, and local levels, focusing on those of direct relevance to adaptation but also those which provide important context (e.g., socio-economic status, gender data, condition of housing stock). • Scope existing data sources, indicators, and baselines related to adaptation. This could include an assessment of the quality, reliability, and frequency of these data collection processes—including the extent to which gender and socially disaggregated data is available—and could offer insights into their potential integration into the MEL systems for NAP processes. • Identify existing tools, technologies, and platforms already being used for MEL and reporting so that they can be leveraged and potentially improved. • Map relevant international frameworks that national MEL systems should align with, including the SDGs, the Sendai Framework, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Source: Authors.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 6: Engaging local stakeholders in Senegal's NAP process in the fisheries sector

To address its vulnerabilities to climate change, Senegal's NAP process has set up institutional frameworks to link local and national adaptation strategies. Spearheaded by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and overseen by the National Committee on Climate Change, its NAP process involve a multisectoral approach with 14 regional committees facilitating sub-national coordination.

The fisheries and aquaculture sector was the first to proceed with this integrated approach. The sector is vital for Senegal's economy and food security, offering nearly 600,000 jobs and providing a significant portion of animal protein for the population. Local adaptation plans for fisheries, informed by community-level insights, were synthesized into a national plan within just over a year.

Key lessons from Senegal's experience include the importance of building on local plans to create national strategies, the crucial role of local organizations like the Local Artisanal Fishing Councils in capturing grassroots perspectives, and the need for functional links between various planning levels. These components helped Senegal accelerate its NAP process efficiently, thereby maintaining stakeholder engagement and overcoming potential barriers.

Source: Guerdat & Dazé, 2018: *sNAPshot: Linking sectoral adaptation planning processes at national and subnational levels: Lessons from Senegal*.

★ Key Messages

- Take your time to prepare the ground for your MEL system by taking stock and understanding the context in which your MEL system is developed and implemented across the six enabling factors. It is crucial to build on existing mandates, institutions, and MEL systems.
- Cultivate institutional synergy and stakeholder engagement for cohesive and efficient MEL system integration. This will also enhance the ownership of processes and activities as part of your MEL system across actors and, ultimately, sustainability.
- Build robust capacities and data infrastructures based on current systems, enabling adaptive MEL processes informed by comprehensive, reliable, and context-specific insights for effective and adequate adaptation planning.

Featured Resources

Dale, T. W. (2023). *Tracking progress on the ground: Guidance and good practices for integrating subnational and non-state actors into M&E systems for national adaptation policies.* Initiative for Climate Action Transparency. https://climateactiontransparency.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Integrating-subnational-and-non-state-actors-into-systems-for-monitoring-and-evaluating-national-climate-change-adaptation-policy-A-guidance-note.pdf

Initiative for Climate Action Transparency. (2018). *Stakeholder participation guide.* https://climateactiontransparency.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Draft-2018-version-of-the-Stakeholder-Participation-Guide.pdf

Price-Kelly, H., Leiter, T., Olivier, J., & Hammill, A. (2015). *Developing national adaptation monitoring and evaluation systems: A guidebook.* Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit & International Institute for Sustainable Development. https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/monitoring-evaluation/national-level-adaptation/

3.3 Understanding and Defining MEL Purposes

Agreeing on a clear definition of the purpose, and the intended end use of the MEL results, sits at the heart of developing a MEL system (Price-Kelly et al., 2015). Identifying the aims of a MEL system for NAP processes influences the way this can be achieved (methods), the people and communities that need to be involved (both in terms of MEL governance and participation), and how results are communicated (European Environment Agency [EEA], 2015).

Designing a MEL system before you have established its purpose(s) is like setting off on a journey without knowing your destination; only by understanding the purpose of the MEL system can you begin planning.

Section 2.3 outlines six overarching purposes of MEL systems for NAP processes, namely: understanding the effectiveness of NAP processes; supporting reporting and transparency; mobilizing domestic, international, public, and private finance; improving adaptive management and (mutual) accountability; enhancing efficiency and strengthening equity. This set of purposes is indicative and should be unpacked into more specific aims according to national and local circumstances.

In fact, it is important to frame the broad purposes of the MEL system for NAP processes in terms of more specific objectives that provide direction on development and operationalization of the MEL system. Clear objectives help all actors involved in the MEL system to understand their role and what they hope to achieve through it.

ACTION: Clarify the primary purposes and objectives of the MEL system

Identifying the primary purposes of a MEL system for NAP processes, such as learning and mutual accountability, can seem straightforward. However, it is vital to translate broad purposes into specific objectives for the MEL system. These objectives—which may already be articulated in the NAP itself, or in a related document like the NDC, legislation, or other national policies—shape subsequent MEL activities, influencing the choice of MEL approaches, indicators, data collection, and how adaptation progress is assessed.

Tensions may arise when MEL serves multiple, diverse purposes, especially when discussing the perspectives of different stakeholders. Recognizing and addressing these tensions early is crucial. Here we list activities that can help you clarify the purposes and objectives of your MEL system for NAP processes.

- **Collaboratively establish a shared vision for learning.** Exploring purposes through dialogue can reveal different perspectives between stakeholders and potential synergies. Holding discussions with the different stakeholders that will be involved in the NAP processes and establishing multistakeholder working groups will help you generate a clear and shared vision of what the MEL system is being developed to achieve. Emphasizing stakeholder conversations ensures feedback incorporation; the stakeholder mapping in Section 3.2 will guide engagement and offer insights into their priorities, further shaping the objectives. Theory of change exercises can help these discussions (see Section 5.1).
- **Clarify a set of objectives.** Understanding your context, especially in relation to existing objectives across national policies, legislation, and international requirements is a good

starting point for identifying the objectives of the MEL system. The objectives of the MEL system should be aligned with those of the NAP processes, with the former supporting and contributing to the achievement of the latter. However, the MEL system can also serve as a form of quality assessment of the NAP processes, for example, by interrogating the relevance and adequacy of the NAP processes in the context of wider development objectives and potential future climate risks.

- Whether you are designing or revising your MEL system, refining and adjusting these objectives is critical to ensure all other steps of the MEL system are relevant and useful. For instance, the broader purpose of "understanding effectiveness" may be supported by specific objectives such as "monitoring progress and evaluating the effectiveness of priority actions articulated through NAP processes at multiple levels." Objectives will also serve as a basis for the development of further targeted questions during the evaluation phase (see Section 7.1).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 7: The objectives for Saint Lucia's M&E system

The M&E system for Saint Lucia's NAP processes is geared toward efficient assessment of the progress and effectiveness of cross-sectoral and individual sector-based adaptation measures throughout the NAP processes. The system is designed to be simple and immediately operational, and doesn't require additional resources, thereby aiming for sustainable, long-term use. It also seeks to improve upon existing monitoring frameworks by integrating data and lessons learned from the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience, simplifying the process to make it less time-consuming. Saint Lucia published its first progress report of its NAP processes in 2022.

In functional terms, the objectives of the M&E system are to

- review progress in, and steer the implementation of, NAP processes, identifying gaps and solutions to address shortcomings
- monitor the implementation of cross-sectoral and sectoral measures included in the NAP and requisite Sectoral Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan
- become an instrument for the M&E of Saint Lucia's Climate Change Adaptation Policy
- make the activities conducted as part of the NAP processes more effective and efficient
- increase the visibility of the NAP processes throughout their implementation, by producing and communicating implementation reports once a year
- contribute to reporting to international development partners (e.g., multilateral environmental agreements, SDGs, and others, when relevant)

Source: Department of Sustainable Development, Ministry of Education, Sustainable Development, Innovation, Science, Technology and Vocational Training, 2022: *Saint Lucia's first National Adaptation Plan progress report*.

The process of defining the purpose of the MEL system presents an important opportunity to reflect on what equity in adaptation means in your context. Consider the factors that may lead to inequitable outcomes from adaptation investments and how this can be reflected in the purpose.

★ Key Messages

- Defining the purpose and objectives of a MEL system is foundational, guiding its methods, stakeholder involvement, and communication strategies.
- Align the objectives of your MEL system with your NAP goals, ensuring that the system supports effective adaptation and meets specific national and local needs.

Featured Resources

European Environment Agency. (2015). *National monitoring, reporting and evaluation of climate change adaptation in Europe*. http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/national-monitoring-reporting-and-evaluation

Pringle, P. (2011). *AdaptME toolkit. Adaptation monitoring & evaluation*. UK Climate Impacts Programme. https://www.ukcip.org.uk/creative-adaptation/monitoring-evaluation-reports/

Spearman, M., & McGray, H. (2011). *Making adaptation count*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit & World Resources Institute. https://www.wri.org/research/making-adaptation-count

CHAPTER 4

MEL During the Impact, Vulnerability, and Risk Assessment Phase

Summary

What are countries doing in this phase of NAP processes?

At the beginning of NAP processes, countries typically assess current and future climate impacts, vulnerabilities and risks, either by collecting and synthesizing existing information sources, or through national IVRAs. This section describes what countries can do in their IVRA development process to support later MEL activities, and how countries can utilize an existing IVRA to inform MEL.

Why is this phase important for MEL systems for NAP processes?

IVRAs are crucial for MEL systems in adaptation as they provide detailed insights into potential climate impacts, vulnerabilities, and the efficacy of adaptation strategies. Linking IVRAs with MEL systems ensures that adaptation measures are informed by current and projected climate risks, enabling targeted and effective responses. This integration facilitates continuous learning and improvement of adaptation efforts, making them more resilient to evolving climate scenarios.

In this section, we address:

- 4.1 Using IVRAs in MEL Systems for NAP Processes
    - Action: Establish linkages between MEL and IVRA

If you have not implemented the actions for the MEL system in previous sections, go back and do them even if you're at this stage of your NAP processes!

4.1 Using Impact, Vulnerability, and Risk Assessments in MEL Systems for NAP Processes

IVRAs are primarily designed to identify who and what (e.g., assets, infrastructure, people, natural systems) are most at risk from climate hazards under different scenarios and timescales and thus inform the development and revision of adaptation priorities and goals in the NAP processes (EEA, 2018). MEL systems for NAP processes play an important role in tracking whether NAP processes effectively address and reduce key climate risks. IVRAs also contribute to MEL systems in three ways:

1. **Providing baseline information:** IVRAs provide useful baseline information regarding current hazards, exposure, and vulnerability against which change can be assessed. This baseline can be used as a reference point for defining adaptation goals and indicators and for monitoring progress. It can also serve as a baseline for evaluations. For example, evaluations can assess to what extent the implementation of NAP processes has addressed climate risks by reducing exposure and/or vulnerability (see Section 7.1). (See Practical examples 3 and 8.)
2. **Tracking changes in climate risks over time:** If IVRAs are repeated over time in a standardized way, they can detect changes in risks and vulnerabilities that might be attributable to adaptation actions prioritized through NAP processes. They can also indicate how climate hazards are changing, providing contextual information against which adaptation performance can be assessed (Brooks et al., 2019). IVRAs could therefore also provide the basis for determining adaptation outcomes, even though this has so far rarely been done (Dekens, 2023).
3. **Informing intervention logic:** IVRAs generate information about who and what is at risk, which provides the basis for the development of adaptation priorities and measures. Reducing climate-related risks is often a foundational consideration when developing the intervention logic and theories of change (see Section 5.1). Monitoring and evaluating the logic and assumptions provides an important way of understanding if and how risks are being reduced or managed effectively.

Evidence from MEL systems can also be relevant for the design or revision of IVRAs, for example by evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of NAP processes and of adaptation actions that might mediate climate risks via reduced vulnerability. Information on the effectiveness of adaptation actions might also improve understanding of the feasibility and likely future impact of similar actions in relation to evolving climate hazards and risks, which can inform the assumptions used in IVRA.

ACTION: Establish linkages between MEL and IVRA

IVRA can contribute to MEL systems for NAP processes in different ways, yet these linkages are often still weak (Dekens, 2023). Ways of strengthening the connection differ depending on whether a country has already conducted a national IVRA or not.

For countries that have already conducted IVRAs and that are now developing their MEL system for NAP processes, consider:

- How can information from the IVRA provide evidence for use in theories of change, for example, to link adaptation goals and measures to specific climate risks?
- How might the IVRA point out areas for indicator formulation so that indicators can measure reductions in climate risks and vulnerabilities?
- How can findings from the IVRA inform evaluation questions, for example, to what extent have policies and measures addressed climate risk for key populations, systems, and locations (see Section 7.1)?

For countries that have not yet conducted an IVRA or that are revising their IVRA methodology, consider:

- How can the IVRA methodology and indicators be designed so that they can inform MEL?
- Which baseline information would be especially useful for tracking progress, and could the IVRA provide it?
- Countries can also explore whether IVRA can be used to assess adaptation outcomes by comparing their results over time. However, this requires a level of standardization, transparency and consistency in assessment methods that so far is the exception rather than the norm (EEA, 2022).

Ideally, IVRAs will include disaggregated analysis of risks and vulnerabilities for people of different genders and social groups. When this is the case, they can inform the design of MEL systems that address these considerations.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 8: Use of integrated vulnerability assessments to establish baselines in the

Pacific Island nations

Pacific Island nations like Kiribati, Tuvalu, and the Solomon Islands have adopted integrated vulnerability assessments (IVAs) with a multisectoral perspective. A key outcome of this approach is the creation of baseline data, organized into national databases, which play a pivotal role in the continuous MEL of NAP processes. What sets this approach apart is its adaptability, enabling periodic replication and the ongoing assessment of evolving vulnerabilities. The IVA framework systematically collects data from multiple sectors and scales, thereby creating a comprehensive baseline situation. This foundational data informs discussions on how best to address the shifting baselines in a dynamic environment effectively.

Furthermore, the IVA framework provides a national structure for vulnerability baseline development, offering a robust foundation for MEL of adaptation outcomes. This systematic approach ensures that vulnerability assessments and adaptation progress are consistent and efficient, thereby enabling these Pacific Island nations to navigate the complexities of changing environmental baselines and develop adaptive strategies. Both Kiribati and Tuvalu have national databases for the data collected through IVAs to inform decision making in NAP processes.

Source: NAP Global Network, 2019: *How integrated vulnerability assessments support NAP processes in the Pacific region*.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 9: Integrating climate risk in agriculture and food systems with the Climate Risk Planning & Managing Tool for Development Programmes in Agri-food Systems tool in Bolivia

The Bolivian Ministry for Rural Development and Land is currently integrating climate risks in agriculture and food systems across its National Agricultural Programmes as part of the implementation of the goals for the agricultural sector under the adaptation component of their NDC. To strengthen the climate change-related knowledge base for the program and better mainstream climate actions across the design of the outputs and activities, they applied the Climate Risk Planning & Managing Tool for Development Programmes in Agri-food Systems (CRISP) in the course of the project ProResiliente, which is supported by GIZ on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The project team found that the application of the CRISP tool was a useful first step in supporting the integration of climate risks in adaptation planning. A new project will support Bolivia to use CRISP as part of their NAP processes.

Source: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development et al., n.d.: *CRISP: Climate risk planning & managing tool for development programmes in agri-food systems*

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 10: Linking IVRA with MEL to inform national adaptation priorities in Germany

A climate impact and risk analysis is conducted in Germany every 6 years. The first one, published in 2015, focused primarily on identifying vulnerabilities. Its methodology was substantially expanded for the second analysis, which was published in 2021 (Kahlenborn et al., 2021). The 2021 analysis determines the climate risks of all 13 fields of action contained in the NAP document and presents the spatial patterns and the urgent needs for action. Climate risks are projected for a near-term, a mid-century and an end-of-century scenario. As a new feature, the 2021 analysis also integrates assumptions about the feasibility of adaptation and projects climate risks with and without adaptation, and it assesses the generic adaptive capacity of priority sectors based on socio-economic indicators. However, the 2021 analysis does not assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the NAP process and its measures.

The climate impact and risk analysis complements a report of climate change impacts and adaptation actions at the federal level and a 4-yearly report on implementation of the Action Plan of the German Adaptation Strategy. In 2023, Germany adopted a national climate change adaptation law.

Source: Kahlenborn et al., 2021: *Climate impact and risk assessment 2021 for Germany (summary)*.

★ Key Messages

- IVRAs play a crucial yet underutilized role in enhancing MEL systems.
- Countries with existing IVRAs can leverage these to strengthen theories of change, guide the development of indicators, and inform evaluation questions.
- Countries initiating or revising IVRAs should aim to align methodologies with MEL needs so that they may serve as a foundational tool for measuring progress on adaptation efforts.

Featured Resources

Dekens, J. (2023). *Using climate risk assessment to measure adaptation success at the national level: Preliminary lessons from 12 countries*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. https://napglobalnetwork.org/resource/climate-risk-assessment-measure-adaptation-success

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit. (2023). *Climate risk sourcebook*. https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/climate-risk-assessment-management/climate-risk-sourcebook/

European Environment Agency. (2018). *National climate change vulnerability and risk assessments in Europe* (European Environment Agency Report No.1/2018). https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b8c3e32f-4832-11e8-be1d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Alliance Biodiversity International, Eurac Research & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit. (n.d.). *Climate risk planning & managing tool for development programmes in agri-food systems*. https://crisp.cgiar.org/

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2023). *Adaptation measurement: Assessing municipal climate risks to inform adaptation policy in the Slovak Republic* (OECD Environment Policy paper no. 35). https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/environment/adaptation-measurement-assessing-municipal-climate-risks-to-inform-adaptation-policy-in-the-slovak-republic_dad34bb3-en

CHAPTER 5

MEL During the Planning Phase

Summary

What are countries doing in this phase of NAP processes?

During the planning phase of NAP processes, countries can either develop their MEL system together with their NAP processes or, if a specific NAP process or document has already been adopted, develop a MEL system on its basis. Having established a clear understanding of context and purpose (see Section 3), the planning stage of the MEL process considers how the objectives of the MEL system can be achieved in practice. This section of the toolkit will help you to systematically plan the development of the MEL system including a theory of change, the selection of quantitative or qualitative indicators, data collection, data management and analysis, and the facilitation of learning activities.

Why is this phase important for MEL systems for NAP processes?

The MEL system assesses whether the goals and actions prioritized through NAP processes are being implemented and achieving their intended results. As countries develop these goals and actions during the planning phase, they elaborate on the actions, strategies, and processes that the MEL system will need to track and assess. Ideally, MEL systems for NAP processes should be planned at the same time as NAP processes to streamline actions. This also allows countries to have a readily implementable MEL system when actions and processes planned for the NAP processes are being implemented.

In this section, we address:

- 5.1 Planning the MEL System
  - Action: Elaborate the logic model for NAP processes
- 5.2 Monitoring as Part of the MEL System
  - Action: Framing the MEL process
- 5.3 Selecting Adaptation Indicators
  - Action: Identify potential indicators
  - Action: Make indicators operational
  - Action: Validate, pilot, and review your indicators
- 5.4 Committing to Learning
  - Action: Embed learning in MEL systems for NAP processes

If you have not implemented the actions for the MEL system in previous sections, go back and do them even if you're at this stage of your NAP processes!

5.1 Planning the MEL System

Ideally, the process of planning the MEL system should be incorporated into the development of the NAP processes. By doing so, the stocktaking at the beginning of NAP processes can include information needed for the development of the MEL system (e.g., to create an inventory of relevant existing indicators), institutional processes, and responsibilities can be established jointly, and resources (time and money) for undertaking MEL activities can be reflected in budgets. Early planning of the MEL system can also support engagement. For example, stakeholders involved in the design of the NAP can potentially also make an active contribution to MEL.

Where possible, countries would launch, develop, and implement NAP processes and the MEL system simultaneously. However, this is often not possible due to practical realities such as political priorities or resources limitations.

A global stocktake of MEL and M&E systems for NAP processes showed that the majority of MEL systems were developed only after the NAP document had been adopted (Leiter, 2021). This section of the toolkit outlines how countries can benefit from considering MEL early on in the planning phase while also providing guidance for countries that are starting MEL development after completing the formulation of their NAP.

Logic Models

NAP processes aim to integrate adaptation at all levels and to reduce climate vulnerabilities (see Section 2.1). Planning for NAP processes, including through the development of a NAP document, should therefore outline how these two aims and the specific goals and objectives of the NAP processes will be achieved. This is often done implicitly when planning the structure and content of documents outlining specific NAP processes. Consequently, well-developed MEL systems for NAP processes should be based on that same clear understanding about what NAP processes intend to achieve. Logic models are among the most common tools used in the development sector to define results and explain how the activities of an intervention are expected to contribute to short- and long-term change. Although they are mostly planning tools that aim to elucidate the thinking of intervention designers, you can also use logic models to assess the design, performance, and progress toward targets (Lucks et al., 2019).

An important part of the development of NAP processes should, therefore, be setting out the logic of how they are expected to achieve their stated goals. If you have not done this during the development of your NAP processes, the development of your MEL system provides another opportunity.

Laying out the logic model of what a country's NAP processes are expected to achieve, and doing so in a participatory and inclusive process, can clarify roles, create more profound buy-in, and increase effectiveness. Importantly, it enables MEL to not only track the implementation and achievement of actions and goals but also to assess whether the change process unfolds as expected (this can also be done via evaluation; see Section 7.1). By understanding how NAP processes will create the intended changes in vulnerability and resilience, and the assumptions underlying these changes, the MEL system will

- be better able to collect data where it matters
- provide greater focus and direction, i.e., be better able to support adaptive management
- ensure relevance and utility of its outputs
- be more transparent

Box 4. The differences between theories of change and logical frameworks

A ToC articulates how change is expected to be achieved (Anderson, 2005; Pringle & Thomas, 2019). Developing a ToC is useful during the development stage of NAP processes since it helps to consider "how we can make change happen?" (Pringle & Thomas, 2019). Clarity about the intended change process can also help to reveal its underpinning assumptions, i.e., the assumptions under which actions lead to the stated goals. The MEL system can then assess whether change has taken place as intended and whether the assumptions turned out to be correct. It can also help to make the role of GESI explicit and to check whether equity is considered in the intended change process.

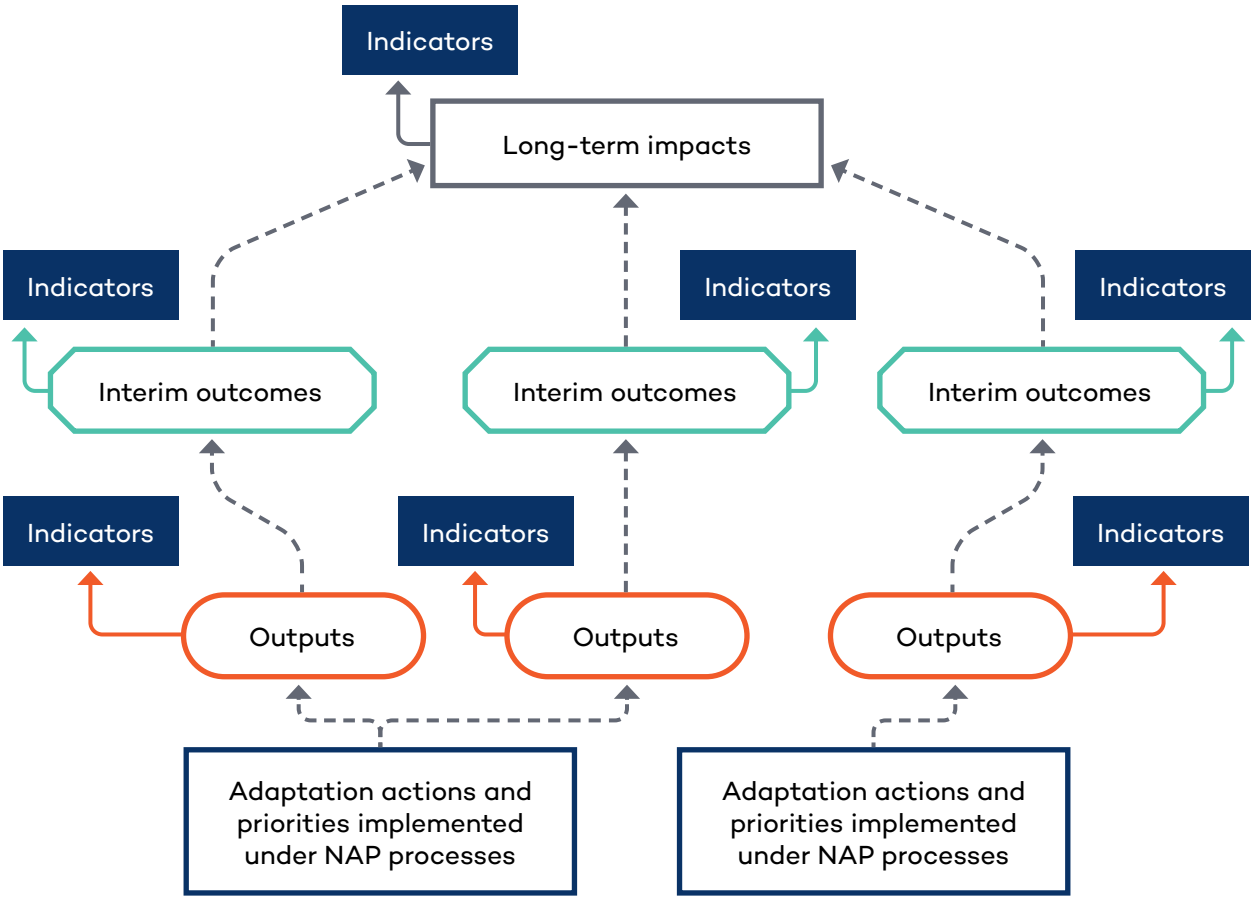
A logframe, also called a performance measurement framework, is a matrix that provides a structured summary of a project's objectives, activities, and expected results. It outlines what a project aims to achieve (objectives), how it will achieve it (activities and outputs), the indicators for measuring whether the objectives and outputs are achieved, and the assumptions or risks that might influence the success of the project.

A ToC is a more sophisticated version of a logframe, allowing for more dynamic interconnections rather than assuming a linear and static change process (Bours et al., 2014b). Whereas logframes are typically spelled out in a table where each output is connected to one outcome, ToCs are illustrated in diagrams where multiple connections can exist between outputs, outcomes, and goals (see Figure 6). ToCs also highlight the assumptions under which these connections are assumed to be realized. They give you a narrative or visual idea of how change is assumed to happen, which you can then at least partly test during an evaluation (see Section 7.1). This is useful in an evaluation because you can track progress against the anticipated outcomes and impacts identified in the ToC. Most importantly, ToCs help you to deepen thinking about the underlying assumptions on which the logic of change is based and whether these assumptions hold in practice.

At the level of individual actions and projects, common approaches to explicitly develop logic models include developing a ToC or a logical framework (logframe) (see Box 4). Since adaptation processes at the national level and across scales (from global to local) and across sectors are quite complex, NAP processes rarely include a single all-encompassing illustration of the change process. In fact, each priority area, goal, or action can have its own specific ToC. For example, the Philippines' National Climate Change Action Plan illustrates the intended change process for each of its eight priority areas, including expected outputs, outcomes, and how they lead to the stated goals (Climate Change Commission, 2011).

Using ToCs is not a prerequisite for a MEL system, but where it is feasible to develop one, it provides a systematic basis for MEL and for the selection of indicators (see Figure 6 and Section 5.3). Figure 6 shows what the structure of a theory of change looks like. It describes how actions under NAP processes are expected to lead to outputs and outcomes, and how these generate the intended long-term impacts (see Box 5).

Figure 6. Example of a theory of change structured along outputs, outcomes, and long-term outcomes (impacts)



Source: Rolfe, 2019, adapted from Anderson, 2005.

Box 5. Levels of results: outputs, outcomes, and impacts

Outputs are products, goods, and services resulting from an intervention, and may also include short-term changes resulting from an intervention that contribute to its outcomes (OECD, 2023c). Outputs of NAP processes might include policy actions, projects, programs, stakeholder engagement and awareness campaigns, and institutional structures and coordination arrangements.

Outcomes are short- and medium-term changes resulting from an intervention's outputs, which include changes in institutional and behavioural capacities (OECD, 2023c). Outcomes can include changes in capacities and characteristics that make people and systems more or less able to anticipate, avoid, plan for, cope with, recover from, and adapt to climate change and other hazards.

Impacts are the ultimate effects or longer-term changes resulting from an intervention. Impacts may be intended or unintended, and positive or negative (OECD, 2023c). The impacts of adaptation actions may not be apparent until long after an intervention has ended. Identifying impacts requires an understanding of the ultimate intended effects of an adaptation intervention. As the ultimate purpose of adaptation is to secure sustainable development and human and ecological well-being in the face of climate change and its effects, impacts need to be demonstrated as long-lasting positive effects of these variables.

ACTION: Elaborate the logic model for NAP processes

Due to the vast scope of NAP processes covering a broad range of sectors and contexts, multiple theories of change may be constructed that interact with each other. For instance, an overarching theory of change can show how the different goals and sectoral priorities connect with the overarching vision of the NAP processes. It can be supplemented by more specific theories of change for the different priority areas of the NAP processes. For example, the National Climate Change Action Plan of the Philippines includes a theory of change including outputs and immediate outcomes for each of its eight priority areas (Climate Change Commission, 2011). The United Kingdom's Climate Change Committee elaborated 13 theories of change (referred to as "monitoring maps") including the policy goal, expected outcomes, enablers, and contextual factors (UK Climate Change Committee, 2023).

If you did not develop a theory of change during the planning phase of your NAP processes, it will be useful to elaborate one during the development of the MEL system. Doing this exercise will not only provide the basis for your MEL system but can also bring greater clarity for the implementation of your NAP processes. Most NAP processes include a combination of a vision and/or mission, goals or objectives, guiding principles, key priorities, and intended actions. These

elements provide the basis for developing a theory of change. To develop your theory of change, you can take the following steps:

- Identify relevant stakeholders to be engaged in the development of the ToC and undertake a participatory process to develop a draft theory of change: these could be the same stakeholders that have already been engaged in the formulation of the NAP processes or a more targeted group (see Section 3.2) and the process should fully consider aspects of GESI.
- Decide whether to develop one or multiple theories of change: depending on the content of the NAP processes, you may elaborate a theory of change for the overall NAP processes and/or additional theories for each priority area as in the case of the Philippines.
- Articulate the assumptions underpinning the theory of change: identify the assumptions of the intended change process. A main task of MEL will be to check whether these assumptions hold true.
- Validate the theory of change with key stakeholders: ensure that the theory of change represents a common understanding and is accepted by key stakeholders.

Multiple guidebooks are available for the development of a theory of change for adaptation to climate change and for theories of change in general (see the featured resources for this section). They provide further guidance and examples that you can refer to when developing your own theory of change.

GESI considerations

Ideally, you will have conducted a gender analysis to inform NAP processes, and particularly vulnerable social groups will have been identified through the IVRA process. This analysis should provide insights into the adaptation needs and capacities of people of different genders and social groups, as well as imbalances in access to resources, opportunities and decision-making power that may inhibit some people from benefiting from adaptation actions. These insights should be reflected in the theory of change, which you should develop with participation of GESI experts and advocates for people that face discrimination. These actors can contribute knowledge to the process to fill evidence gaps, particularly when gender and social dimensions of adaptation have not yet been comprehensively analyzed. The theory of change can also help in surfacing assumptions about who will benefit from adaptation actions, enabling a more nuanced understanding of how change happens for different groups, as well as barriers and opportunities for equity in outcomes (Ceinos & Dazé, 2023: *Maximizing the impacts of targeted gender analyses for the National Adaptation Plan process*).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 11: Using a theory of change as part of a NAP document

Several countries have chosen to use a ToC as a tool for MEL for their NAP processes—some have included a ToC directly in the NAP document, while others have indicated that a ToC was used as part of the broader NAP process. For example, Benin's NAP document puts forward a ToC to frame its approach to its NAP process and MEL system, proposing the links between activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts, and outlining underlying assumptions while Fiji's NAP document refers to using a ToC approach to inform the NAP process, but it opted not to include the ToC in the NAP document itself. Other countries have identified ToC as an approach they will adopt in future. For example, Bangladesh's NAP document commits to developing a ToC in future to support its MEL for the NAP process, with a priority action to "operationalize the NAP monitoring, evaluation and learning framework based on a theory of change" (p. 177).

See: Pringle & Thomas, 2019: Climate adaptation and theory of change: Making it work for you. A practical guide for Small Island Developing States (SIDS); Ministère du Cadre de Vie et du Développement Durable Direction Générale de l'Environnement et du Climat, 2022: Plan National d'Adaptation aux changements climatiques du Bénin (in French); Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, 2022: National Adaptation Plan of Bangladesh (2023-2050); Government of the Republic of Fiji, 2018: Republic of Fiji National Adaptation Plan: A pathway towards climate resilience.

★ Key Messages

- Articulating the goals of your NAP processes through participatory methods such as a theory of change will enhance the effectiveness of your MEL system and stakeholder buy-in. It also offers a structured approach for MEL systems to develop indicators and focus data collection, support adaptive management, and validate underlying assumptions.
- To make the most of theories of change as a management tool, you will need an open culture where learning is supported, and assumptions and behaviours can be constructively challenged. MEL systems that are designed for learning can play a key role in creating this environment (see Section 5.4).

Featured Resources

Anderson, A. A. (2005). *The community builder's approach to Theory of Change*. The Aspen Institute.

Bours, D., McGinn, C., & Pringle, P. (2014). *Guidance note 3: The Theory of Change approach to climate change adaptation programming*. UK Climate Impacts Programme. https://www.ukcip.org.uk/wp-content/PDFs/MandE-Guidance-Note3.pdf

Conservation International. (2013). *Constructing theories of change models for ecosystem-based adaptation projects: A guidance document.* https://www.conservation.org/docs/default-source/publication-pdfs/constructing-theories-of-change-for-ecosystem-based-adaptation.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=1fd83348_3

Pringle, P. & Thomas, A. (2019). *Climate adaptation and theory of change: Making it work for you.* Climate Analytics. https://climateanalytics.org/publications/2019/climate-adaptation-and-theory-of-change-making-it-work-for-you/

United Kingdom Office for National Statistics. (2023). *The theory of change process – Guidance for outcome delivery plans.* https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/the-analysis-function-theory-of-change-toolkit/#resources-to-help-you-understand-the-relevance-of-toc

Van Es, M., Guijt, I., & Vogel, I. (2015). *Theory of change thinking in practice: A stepwise approach.* Hivos. https://hivos.org/document/hivos-theory-of-change/

5.2 Monitoring as Part of the MEL System

Within a MEL system, monitoring is an ongoing activity. It occurs throughout NAP processes, measuring and tracking progress in their implementation and achievements. It combines quantitative and qualitative data to assess different aspects of implementation and results on different timescales:

- **Implementation of NAP processes:** The ongoing tracking of inputs, activities, and outputs in NAP processes, including regular updates on what activities have been completed, are ongoing, or have yet to start. This is particularly relevant for adaptive management to make adjustments when needed.
- **Results of NAP processes at the outcome level:** The periodic assessment of changes resulting from outputs of NAP processes through the measurement of outcome indicators and the gathering of complementary qualitative information (see Section 5.3). This helps in assessing the short- to medium-term effectiveness of NAP processes and related interventions and is essential for learning and for the adaptive management within the implementation of NAP processes.
- **Results of NAP processes at the impact level (longer-term results):** The ongoing tracking of development performance, and aspects of human and ecological well-being that are sensitive to climate change and its effects and that adaptation seeks to enhance in the face of intensifying climate risks. In other words: whether the implementation of NAP processes supports the achievement of sustainable and climate-resilient development.

While each of these areas of monitoring can be undertaken independently, they are complementary (see Practical example 12). For outcome and impact monitoring, understanding the climate risk contexts is essential, i.e., the tracking of climate hazards, including trends and extreme weather events associated with losses, damages, and other adverse impacts on people and human and natural systems. Tracking of the risk context is typically done through national climate risk or vulnerability assessments (see Section 4).

Monitoring is only one part of MEL. Evaluation looks more closely into how and why change did or did not take place, what lessons were learned, and what can be improved (see Section 7.1). Learning needs to be facilitated through respective activities (see Section 5.4). Evaluation often uses data from monitoring and supplements it with additional information (see Section 7.1).

Monitoring should be a collaborative and multistakeholder activity. While monitoring the progress of NAP processes is generally conducted by the ministry overseeing NAP processes, other actors typically contribute to it as data providers. These include other sectoral ministries, technical government agencies, local authorities, academia, CSOs including women's groups and youth groups, and private sector actors (see Section 3.2 on stakeholder engagement).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 12: Assessing and reporting on progress on adaptation inputs, outcomes, and impacts in Fiji

Fiji's proposed M&E system focuses on tracking the implementation of actions, encompassing both processes and outputs. This helps gauge the extent to which planned activities are being carried out. It evaluates outcomes, assessing the tangible benefits and changes resulting from the NAP processes. Fiji's M&E system proposes a two-part approach. For tracking progress on implementation, traffic light colours are used to summarize progress. The traffic light system tracks whether an adaptation action is partially implemented, fully implemented, or not implemented. The second approach measures achievements in the NAP processes (outcomes and impacts).

Data is acquired from the stakeholders that implement an action and is compiled in the format of a table as shown in Figure 7. See Section 7.2 for more information on progress reporting.

Source: Ministry of Economy's Climate Change and International Cooperation Division, 2020: *Monitoring and evaluation framework for Fiji's National Adaptation Plan process*.

Figure 7. Reporting on progress on adaptation outputs, outcomes, and impacts in Fiji

Achievements in implementing adaptation actions (January 2020)					
Adaptation action	Input	Process-based measures		Results-based measures	
		Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
7.10: Establish standardised approach to collecting information on climate change interventions to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of outcomes relative to policy targets.....	National standardised guidelines developed by CCICD to collect information on climate change interventions.	Application of standardized guidelines by "x" Ministries and/ or Departments implementing "y" climate change interventions to achieve "z" policy targets.	Number of training programs delivered and number of participants trained.	Operational centralized data repository regularly updated with information captured in standardized format.	Easily accessible project implementation updates to inform reporting and decision-making processes.

Source: Ministry of Economy's Climate Change and International Cooperation Division, 2020: *Monitoring and evaluation framework for Fiji's National Adaptation Plan process*.

ACTION: Framing the MEL process

During the planning phase, you will need to outline how to track, assess and learn from the progress of your NAP processes. This will allow you to identify what MEL activities to focus on, what types of data are needed, who needs to be involved, and what resources are available.

- **Focus of MEL:** Following from the establishment of the purpose and objectives of the MEL system (Section 3.3), the next step is to identify the exact content to be monitored (Price-Kelly et al., 2015). A theory of change provides a useful basis to identify what should be monitored, which in turn will guide the identification of indicators.
- **Types and sources of data:** Based on the types and levels of results to be monitored (output, outcome, and/or impact), available resources, and the timescales over which monitoring is planned, you will need to identify appropriate quantitative and qualitative data and supporting information. Once you have identified appropriate data, it is important to ascertain whether these data are already being collected or whether new primary data collection is required. Section 6 provides details on data identification and collection.
- **Available resources:** To ensure feasibility and sustainable operation over time, you will need to estimate the available resources (financial and human). When developing the MEL system, including monitoring, you will need to consider the effort required compared to the likely available financial and human resources (see Section 3.2).

A full MEL framework should also include:

- Framing and planning evaluations: see Section 7.1
- Framing and planning for learning: see Sections 5.4 and 7.3
- Institutional arrangements and engagement: see Section 3.2

The framing of the MEL system interlinks closely with the steps for data collection, management, and analysis, which are outlined in Section 6.

When determining the framing of the MEL process, consider where GESI issues fit in, reflecting on what aspects of GESI will be monitored, what types of disaggregated data are needed—and where these might already be available—and how GESI experts and institutions (including the ministry responsible for gender) could be brought in to provide support on these aspects.

★ Key Messages

- Monitoring within a MEL system involves continuously using data and insights to track and assess the progress of different aspects and time horizons of NAP processes: ongoing implementation (processes and outputs), medium-term outcomes, and longer-term impacts.

Featured Resources

Brooks, N. & Fisher, S. (2014). *Tracking adaptation and measuring development: A step-by-step guide*. International Institute for Environment and Development. https://pubs.iied.org/10100IIED/

Price-Kelly, H., Leiter, T., Olivier, J., & Hammill, A. (2015). *Developing national adaptation monitoring and evaluation systems: A guidebook*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit & International Institute for Sustainable Development. https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/monitoring-evaluation/national-level-adaptation/

Rai, N., Brooks, N., & Fisher, S. (2015). *Tracking adaptation and measuring development: A manual for national governments*. International Institute for Environment and Development. https://www.iied.org/10134iied

5.3 Selecting Adaptation Indicators

Indicators are quantitative or qualitative factors or variables related to an intervention and its results, or to the context in which it takes place (OECD, 2023c). Indicators are frequently used to track the implementation and results of adaptation actions and to facilitate accountability (Flood et al., 2021; Hammill et al., 2014b).

> In contrast to climate change mitigation, there is no single, universal, or standard set of indicators for adaptation (Leiter & Pringle, 2018). Adaptation actions span an enormous range of contexts, varying across social, environmental, sectoral, and policy contexts, as well as across scales. In any given context, adaptation responses will also vary depending on planning horizons, available information and resources, uncertainty about future impacts, and social, cultural, and political priorities. Consequently, adaptation indicators must be tailored to both the context and purpose of MEL. In fact, the purposes and objectives of MEL define the areas for which indicators are needed.

This section explains what different types of indicators exist (and what characterizes a good indicator) and provides practical guidance on the selection of indicators. It also explains the limitations of indicators and how to overcome them by combining indicators with other types of information.

Types of Indicators

Quantitative indicators are based on measurable numerical metrics and are usually presented as percentages, ratios, or numerical values. Quantitative indicators are often favoured due to perceptions that they provide more tangible evidence of progress (for example toward agreed targets) than qualitative indicators. Examples of quantitative indicators are

- number of participants in training workshops supported by an activity
- number of people practising more resilient agriculture (based on sustained adoption of specific resilient practices)
- number of deaths, or people missing, injured, relocated, or evacuated due to disasters per 100,000 population (SDG indicator 13.1.1)

Qualitative indicators are narrative assessments that assess changes over time against specific, predetermined criteria (United States Agency for International Development, 2005). They can complement quantitative indicators, providing insights into processes and mechanisms of change that can support assessment of how a specific intervention did or did not contribute to observed changes. Qualitative indicators generally involve engagement with stakeholders and participatory

processes (United States Agency for International Development, 2010). Examples of qualitative indicators are

- perceived effectiveness of adaptation governance
- perceived level of preparedness for particular climate hazards

Such indicators are measured using techniques such as surveys, interviews, or focus group discussions, in which respondents are asked to rate effectiveness in categories (e.g., as low, medium, or high), on a scale (e.g., 1 to 10), or through visual methods using a line marked from "low" to "high." In practice, such indicators are often quantified by converting answers into scores or in terms of the numbers giving different responses. An example of this is the scorecard indicators used in the Tracking Adaptation and Measuring Development approach (see Practical example 13).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 13: Tracking adaptation and development using the Tracking Adaptation and Measuring Development framework

The Tracking Adaptation and Measuring Development (TAMD) framework links institutional outcomes relating to capacities for adaptation governance with vulnerability and resilience outcomes at multiple scales, which in turn have impacts on development performance and human well-being. TAMD includes guidance on indicator development in general (Brooks & Fisher, 2014), at the national level (Rai et al., 2015a), and at the local level (Karani et al., 2015). A key element of the TAMD framework is a set of eight scorecards that can be adapted to track institutional aspects of adaptation in different contexts (Brooks et al., 2013; Brooks & Fisher, 2014). TAMD has been operationalized at the national level in Cambodia (Rai et al., 2015b; see Practical example 14) and Ethiopia (Awraris et al., 2014), and has been used to explore aggregation from the local to the national level in Nepal (Fisher, 2014).

See IIED, n.d., *Tracking adaptation and measuring development (TAMD)*.

Indicators Representing Different Levels of Results

To provide a comprehensive picture of adaptation and to interrogate the links between the activities and results of NAP processes, adaptation should be measured at multiple levels.

- **Output indicators** track the delivery of outputs, i.e., the products and services resulting from an intervention (OECD, 2023a). Examples include the following: number of training events held; number of policies reviewed or updated as part of an intervention's activities; number of people receiving support (e.g., training, direct financial support, physical goods).

- **Outcome indicators** measure the short-term and medium-term effects resulting from outputs, including changes in climate risks, exposure, resilience, vulnerability, and adaptive capacity of people and systems (OECD, 2023a). Examples include yields from more resilient agricultural practices and new building permits in areas of high flood risk (a decrease on this indicator would mean lower exposure).
- **Impact indicators** track the longer-term changes resulting from the intervention (OECD, 2023a). They generally track changes in key aspects of human or ecological development/well-being to which individual interventions will contribute, rather than changes that can be attributed solely to a specific intervention. Impact indicators on adaptation overlap with conventional development and human well-being indicators. Examples of impact indicators include sustained improvements of livelihoods in drought-affected areas and reductions in climate-related losses and damages.

Outcomes and impacts can also be demonstrated through **reductions in climate risks**. However, if climate risks are monitored independently of a particular adaptation intervention, for example as part of a national risk assessment (see Section 4), a link between the changes in climate risks and the intervention will need to be demonstrated in order to claim a contribution. Using climate information to understand how climatic conditions and climate hazards are evolving can be critical in the interpretation of certain indicators to evaluate adaptation performance (Brooks, 2014a; Brooks et al., 2019). For example, the stabilization of yields in a more challenging climatic environment might be considered a successful outcome even if yields do not increase.

What Makes a Good Adaptation Indicator?

Indicators need to fulfill certain quality criteria in order to be used practically. A common set of criteria is referred to as SMART, i.e., that indicators are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound. Additionally, adaptation indicators must have a demonstrated connection to an adaptation process to be relevant and meet the SMART criteria (Bours et al., 2014a; Hammill et al., 2014a).

A SMART indicator might be "Number of households that receive climate information via SMS messaging on three or more occasions over the course of a year." This indicator is specific, based on a quantitative measure, can be measured (attained) using data from the provider of the information, and is relevant in the context of an intervention that seeks to promote the use of climate information, for example to support agricultural scheduling and provide early warnings of climate extremes. In contrast, an example of an indicator that is not SMART might be "Evidence of coordinated approach between ministries to address forest-related policy, planning, or practice issues" (McCarthy et al., 2012). This indicator is vague in its definition (e.g., what is a "coordinated approach"?) and requires further operationalization before it is measurable (e.g., what counts as "evidence"?).

To be relevant to adaptation, an indicator needs to have a clear connection to climate risks. For example, for the indicator "Drinking water quality standards are met in all municipalities" it is not apparent how it links to climate change, and therefore not clear whether it would indicate adaptation. If a theory of change is available (see Section 5.1), indicators can be selected on its basis since the theory of change outlines the expected adaptation process (see Figure 6) (Bours et al., 2014a). If a theory of change is not available, you need to validate how relevant to measuring adaptation. For example, if the indicator is "number of water user associations established," then it needs to be explained how far water user associations in that particular context help the target audience to adapt. Indicators can also be linked to the goals or theory of change of the NAP processes (see Practical examples 14 and 15).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 14: Cambodia's vulnerability indicators

Cambodia has adopted the TAMD approach to establish its national M&E system. This method was considered viable due to its adaptability in integrating indicators into national-level M&E systems, aiding in assessing the effectiveness of development initiatives for climate change adaptation.

Indicators of vulnerability and resilience are used in combination to help measure the adaptation impacts and outcomes. The list of indicators being used in the Cambodia M&E system is shown below. Track 1 indicators primarily concentrate on institutional readiness, while Track 2 indicators encompass measurements of resilience, loss and damage impacts, and hazard indicators.

Track 1 indicators:

- status of climate policy and strategies
- status of climate integration into development planning
- status of climate integration into financing

Track 2 indicators:

- % of communes vulnerable to climate change (based on a vulnerability index, an outcome-level/resilience indicator)
- %/# of families affected by storms, floods, and droughts

The vulnerability indicators focus on socio-economic, infrastructure, and population aspects, specifically measuring "indicators of exposure, poverty, and development-related indicators." These indicators aim to assess vulnerabilities to climate extremes and disasters, as well as the community's capacity to respond. Other indicators focus on "societally driven exposure; for example, more people or more assets mean more potential for loss and damage" (Rai et al., 2015b).

Source: Rai et al., 2015b: *Developing a national M&E framework for climate change: Tracking adaptation and measuring development (TAMD) in Cambodia*.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 15: Tracking progress in NAP processes with different types of indicators

Grenada's first NAP document (2017–2021) primarily included process-level indicators for each of its Programmes of Action. In 2019, a participatory workshop and interviews were conducted to assess the measurability of the indicators as part of the development of a MEL system. Areas for improvement for the indicators were identified along with recommendations for MEL.

Albania has adopted outcome-oriented indicators that partly draw on existing indicators from their National Strategy for Development and Integration (examples of the indicators are shown in Table 4). An iterative process is in place, involving an eight-year review cycle, to revisit and potentially modify these indicators in response to evolving needs.

Sources: Ministry of Climate Resilience, the Environment, Forestry, Fisheries, Disaster Management and Information (2017) *National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (NAP) for Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique 2017–2021*; Ministry of Climate Resilience, the Environment, Forestry, Fisheries, Disaster Management and Information of Grenada (2020) *Developing a climate adaptation monitoring and evaluation system for Grenada's National Adaptation Plan*; Republic of Albania (n.d.) *National Adaptation Planning (NAP) to climate change in Albania: Framework for the country process*; Ministry of Tourism and Environment (2023) *Albania's National Adaptation Plan: First progress report*.

Examples of Indicators Used in MEL Systems for NAP Processes

As part of the indicator identification stage, countries often undertake a stocktake of existing indicators and assess their relevance for adaptation (see Section 3.2 and the first action for this section: Identify potential indicators). Typically, indicators are connected to the goals and objectives and, where included, priority actions are listed in NAP processes and documents. Table 4 features examples from several countries.

Adaptation indicators can overlap with standard development indicators, especially at the outcome level. Development indicators can yield insights into adaptation in certain circumstances, for example when they are tracked over time and interpreted in the context of complementary climate information (Bahadur et al., 2015; Brooks, 2014a, 2014b). For this reason, countries should stocktake existing MEL systems for adaptation and sustainable development when getting started on their MEL system for NAP processes (see Section 3.2).

Table 4. Indicators used in MEL systems for NAP processes

Country	Goal/adaptation option	Indicator
Albania	Damages through floods are reduced	Average damages per flood event (calculated in ALL million) are reduced by 5% for each subsequent period of 5 years
	Agricultural resilience against droughts is enhanced	Average farm outputs in yields per hectare are stable also in years with drought events
Grenada	Climate change is systematically considered in new government projects	50% of new Public Sector Investment Programme projects that have ranked as "high climate change relevance" integrate adaptation considerations into the project design by 2021
	Strengthened institutional arrangements for the collection, analysis and provision of climate-related data for use in decision making	The establishment by the Meteorological Office of a central repository for climate-related data that is operational with information being shared among agencies by 2020
	An informed public that will demand and support public policies aimed at building national resilience to climate change	Compared to the 2016 Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States survey, results of a repeated Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices survey on Climate Change demonstrate improved results for Grenada by 2021
Sri Lanka	Improvement of farm water management	• % of reduction in irrigation water losses • Number of micro-irrigation initiatives • Number of water efficient farming methods developed

Sources: Ministry of Climate Resilience, the Environment, Forestry, Fisheries, Disaster Management and Information, 2017; *National climate change adaptation plan (NAP) for Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique 2017-2021*; Republic of Albania, n.d.: *National Adaptation Planning (NAP) to climate change in Albania: framework for the country process*; Sri Lanka Climate Change Secretariat, 2016: *National Adaptation Plan for climate change impacts in Sri Lanka 2016–2025*.

Limitations of Indicators

Indicators are often viewed as the primary way of tracking progress, but indicators have important limitations. Most importantly, indicators do not answer how or why change happened (Leiter & Pringle, 2018). To answer the how and the why in your MEL systems for NAP processes, you will need additional information or techniques such as evaluation (see Section 7.1).

Moreover, indicators can also be ill-suited or misleading. An example at the global level is the indicator "Number of countries with NAP processes." While close to half of all countries worldwide have adopted NAP processes or a similarly detailed national adaptation planning instrument, less than 40% of countries have systems in place to track their implementation (Leiter, 2021). The presence of a plan therefore has very little meaning as an indicator for implementation progress. It also says little about the quality of the NAP processes (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2023). In your MEL systems, it is important to reflect what the limitations are of any given indicator and if additional information sources can help to better interpret an indicator.

Adaptation indicators are often limited to the output level, such as numbers of people supported, production of reports, or adoption of new technologies or practices (Leiter et al., 2019). However, such indicators about delivery of outputs say little or nothing about whether interventions effectively build resilience or reduce vulnerability. An adaptation action that appears to have been effective based on output indicators might have had no real or no sustainable effect or may lead to unintended negative consequences. A combination of quantitative and qualitative information is therefore essential to assess the progress and effectiveness of an adaptation intervention. For example, while quantitative indicators might report the number of people supported by an intervention, qualitative information may be required to assess the relevance, utility, and level of approval of the intervention.

ACTION: Identify potential indicators

Indicators in a MEL system should be linked explicitly with the priorities and actions identified in NAP processes and related documents. In some countries, expected adaptation outputs, outcomes, and impacts are articulated in the document planning and outlines the NAP processes, and associated indicators may also be identified. In others, the identification of indicators, and perhaps of outputs, outcomes, and impacts themselves, may come after the planning documents for NAP processes have been finalized. While some countries measure many indicators (potentially into the hundreds), others only identify a small number of indicators at the national or sectoral level.

You can start your process of indicator identification by making a "long list" of potential indicators, which can be reduced based on their relevance to adaptation priorities, data availability, the feasibility of collecting additional data, and resources for data management and

analysis. If your MEL system covers multiple administrative levels (see Section 3.1), indicators gathered at the local level, e.g., by local governments, water associations, or other bodies, can be aggregated to the national level. You could also consider alignment of your MEL system with other reporting systems and international reporting regimes. For example, there may be overlap between NAP indicators and SDG indicators, making it possible to combine indicator management and reporting, which would make the process more efficient and less resource intensive (Leiter et al., 2019).

GESI considerations

As you identify indicators, it is essential to apply a GESI perspective to ensure that the data collected will enable tracking, both of participation of different genders and social groups in adaptation processes, and of equity in results from adaptation actions. It can be helpful to ask, "what will these indicators tell us about which gender and social groups are benefiting from investments in adaptation?" Involving GESI experts and advocates for underrepresented groups can help you to identify indicators that are relevant to the targeted groups and appropriate for the context.

Stakeholder Involvement

The selection of indicators should be a collective undertaking, engaging all relevant stakeholders, particularly those who will be responsible for data collection, management, and interpretation (see Section 3.2 on stakeholder engagement).

Data Sources

Adaptation indicators might be based on existing data, particularly where they overlap with indicators already used to track national development performance, performance in specific sectors, or performance toward the achievement of the SDGs. At the more local scale, data relating to key aspects of development might be available from sources such as national statistical databases, censuses, or development programs. Using existing data sources and data collection systems for adaptation indicators helps minimize additional burdens on those responsible for adaptation MEL and is likely to lead to more sustainable MEL systems for NAP processes. However, even where relevant data are already available, there are likely to be gaps, and additional data may be required to capture key aspects of adaptation. Too great a reliance on existing data may, therefore, limit the scope and effectiveness of MEL systems.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 16: Participatory indicator development at the national level in Austria

Austria's MEL system for NAP processes stands out for its adaptability and iterative nature, particularly in indicator development. The development of indicators to track the progress and implementation of NAP processes involved a comprehensive process, including a literature review, consultation workshops, and expert interviews. The MEL system predominantly utilizes indicators that were already in use for various policy implementation processes, ensuring readily available data that is statistically validated and measurable at the national level. Forty-five indicators were selected, which comprehensively describe the adaptation process, focusing on both outputs and outcomes across 13 sectors.

Source: European Environment Agency, 2015: *National monitoring, reporting and evaluation of climate change adaptation in Europe*.

ACTION: Make indicators operational

Where indicators are not already reported as part of another process (e.g., SDG reporting), you will need to identify data sources and/or collection methods and establish calculation methods. Even indicators that might seem easy to calculate (e.g., number of beneficiaries) require clarity about whom to count as a beneficiary (e.g., should only direct beneficiaries be counted or also indirect ones, and who can be counted as an indirect beneficiary?). Otherwise, indicator data will be unreliable and inconsistent, presenting problems for comparison and aggregation (Pauw et al., 2020).

You should also provide guidance on how to interpret indicators, especially for indicators that overlap with regular development and well-being indicators (Brooks, 2014a, 2014b). In these cases, you should pay careful attention to whether and what such indicators tell us about adaptation, and under what circumstances. You will need to develop methodologies for standardizing development and well-being indicators using climate information if these indicators are to be employed to measure adaptation progress (Brooks, 2014b; Brooks et al., 2019).

Some indicators will lend themselves to aggregation or depend on the aggregation of data measured at smaller spatial scales or in different institutional contexts. You will need to develop aggregation methodologies for these indicators, for example, standardizing results by converting them to scores or by weighting indicators based on factors such as the geographical area, population, or volume of a resource that they describe.

Factsheets or methodological guides for each indicator foster a common understanding of indicators and help to ensure consistency in their measurement and reporting. For example, Germany introduced detailed factsheets for each of the indicators used to monitor climate impacts and adaptation actions, detailing their focus, relevance, units, limitations, data needs and sources, and examples of their use (Schönthaler et al., 2010). Developing indicator factsheets has since become a good practice for MEL systems in general (see Box 6).

GESI considerations

It is essential to disaggregate data for any indicator that tracks results for individuals or particular groups. The relevant categories of disaggregation will be context specific but should at a minimum include gender and age. In some contexts, other identity factors such as Indigeneity, ethnicity, disability, and citizenship status may be important to track—you should determine which to include based on the gender analysis and IVRA and/or in consultation with GESI experts and advocates for underrepresented groups. How data is collected also matters for GESI—it is important to use participatory methods that engage different groups, ensure data collection teams are representative, and access the right expertise to analyze the data.

See the Pacific Women Lead Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2022) for examples of GESI-specific indicators across outcomes such as women's and girls' voices, feminist civil society, women's health and economic development, and gender mainstreaming.

Box 6. Examples of indicator factsheets from national MEL systems

Indicators should be contextualized to a country's specific circumstances and adaptation priorities. Nonetheless, examples from other similar geographies and sectors can help countries design their own indicators, along with indicator factsheets. The NAP Global Network's Repository of Adaptation Indicators shows examples from national MEL systems for different focus areas and sectors.

Source: Hammill et al., 2014b: *Repository of adaptation indicators*.

Figure 8. Examples of indicator factsheets focusing on climate impacts related to floods

Indicator	Number of people living in **flood prone areas**
Sectors	Building sector, Coastal zones
Focus of indicator	Climate impacts
Unit of measurement	Number
Adaptation relevance	A high number of people living in flood prone areas shows a high exposure to flood risks.
Potential limitations	This indicator could be completed with other indicators to assess the impacts of floods on people living in flood prone areas (in terms of socio-economic impacts).
Indicator example	Number of people living in flood prone areas (Mekong River Commission)
Reference for indicator example	Mekong River Commission: Lower Mekong basin-wide monitoring and reporting system on climate change and adaptation (draft, 2013)
Data needs	Total number of people living in flood prone areas in the country
Data sources, collection methods	National Bureau of Statistics; population census
Calculation of the indicator	Summation
Spatial scale	National and sub-national
Disaggregation	By sub-national unit, by socio-economic group

» list of indicators

Indicator	Number of **properties flooded per year**
Sectors	Building sector, Coastal zones, Trade & Industry, Water resources
Focus of indicator	Climate impacts
Unit of measurement	Number
Adaptation relevance	Climate change increases the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as floods. It can also change the location and timing of floods.
Potential limitations	Attribution issue: the number of properties flooded per year may be due to other non-climatic factors (e.g. deforestation, rapid population growth, wetland degradation) or a combination of climatic and non-climatic factors.
Indicator example	Number of properties flooded per year (UK)
Reference for indicator example	UK Adaptation Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (draft, 2013)
Data needs	Flood affected areas; Number of properties located within flood-affected areas
Data sources, collection methods	National land management agencies, private companies (e.g. insurance)
Calculation of the indicator	Summation
Spatial scale	National and sub-national
Disaggregation	By region, by types of properties

» list of indicators

Source: Hammill et al., 2014b: *Repository of adaptation indicators*.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 17: Integrating adaptation indicators into an existing framework in Morocco—a case of aggregation across scales

Morocco presents a good case example of integrating adaptation indicators into an already existing regional monitoring system. Morocco adopted an indicator-based system to assess changes in vulnerability and track adaptation measures, climate finance utilization, and governance. The process of selecting indicators was participatory. Each region developed its own vision of adaptation, which formed the basis for selecting indicators. Morocco opted for a simple approach to ensure vertical integration. It used a regional approach for building its MEL system for adaptation: leveraging existing regional information systems, Morocco piloted adaptation indicators in three regions and then synthesized and compiled the information in the national MEL system.

Morocco's experience demonstrates the significance of simplicity and adaptability in climate change adaptation planning. By emphasizing familiar systems and involving local stakeholders, countries can establish robust adaptation monitoring frameworks that align with their unique contexts. This approach serves as a valuable reference for nations looking to enhance their climate resilience through systematic monitoring and evaluation. It also shows that systems do not need to be overly complex—using existing data sources and indicators can be sufficient.

Source: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, 2017: *Morocco: Adaptation monitoring and evaluation as part of the regional information systems*.

Some indicators require the establishment of baselines to provide reference points against which future changes can be measured. Where indicators draw on existing data sources, baselines should be relatively straightforward to establish. In other cases, information may be available from sources such as impact, vulnerability, and risk assessments for constructing a baseline (see Section 4, and Practical examples 3 and 8). Where you have developed new indicators, you can determine baselines through activities such as surveys and/or stocktaking of existing policies (for example, to assess the extent to which they integrate climate change adaptation). If indicators refer to new actions that have not been previously undertaken (e.g., the requirement for public investments to screen for climate risks), the baseline might just be zero.

ACTION: Validate, pilot, and review your indicators

One way to test the feasibility of selected indicators is to pilot them with relevant stakeholders and review them to address any issues related to relevance, clarity, practicalities of data collection, and capacity needs for measurement and interpretation. Piloting of indicators may also highlight practicalities regarding the number of indicators to be measured and the resources required. You may decide to omit some indicators or develop new ones to fill gaps identified during the piloting

process. Piloting can also help you prioritize indicators based on their feasibility and utility: it is better to have a smaller number of actionable indicators than a large volume of data that is only partially used.

For indicators related to climate risks and vulnerability, the piloting of indicators in local or community contexts might reveal previously invisible aspects of vulnerability, resilience, or other pertinent factors that can be incorporated into indicators. For example, there may be specific factors that make women and girls more vulnerable to the impacts of climate hazards that are highly contextual and have been missed during indicator design. Piloting indicators in sample contexts before rolling them out on a larger scale can ensure that issues such as those discussed above are identified at an early stage, and can improve the efficiency of subsequent data collection, interpretation, and management (see Practical example 18).

Over time, you can validate outcome-level indicators of vulnerability and resilience by examining the extent to which they correlate with changes in impact indicators. If indicators of vulnerability and resilience are robust, they will reliably predict the relative distributions of impacts when a climate hazard occurs, for example, as reflected in losses and damages. By triangulating such outcome indicators against appropriate impact indicators, you can improve the evidence base for understanding vulnerability and resilience in specific contexts, enhancing the policy relevance of vulnerability and resilience indicators (Brooks & Fisher, 2014). This approach has been used by Cambodia to identify key vulnerability indicators for its national M&E system (Rai et al., 2015b; see Practical example 14).

Adaptation is a dynamic, iterative process, and indicators and their methodologies should be subject to constant review to ensure that they remain relevant in the face of changing climatic, environmental, social, and economic conditions. For example, as risks and our understanding of them evolve, new drivers of vulnerability and resilience may be identified that are desirable to capture using new or modified indicators.

Several countries are reviewing their indicators or developing new ones as part of the review of their NAP processes, including the NAP document. For example, the independent Climate Change Committee in the United Kingdom has been refining its assessment framework with every 5-year National Adaptation Programme (UK Climate Change Committee, 2023).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 18: Piloting and reviewing adaptation indicators in Rwanda

Rwanda initiated a pilot phase to track its NDC indicators for adaptation in the agriculture sector to assess progress on and the effectiveness of adaptation actions at the output and outcome levels. This initial MEL process employed a straightforward spreadsheet template to collect national-level data that had been collated based on inputs from sub-national governments. This analysis of the data assessed outputs and progress toward set targets, actively engaging agriculture-sector stakeholders. This tracking of indicators was complemented by case studies that explored progress on three indicators, using qualitative data to better understand actions and outcomes at the local level.

The Ministry of Environment worked collaboratively with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources and engaged key stakeholders to collect and input NDC indicator data into the template. Subsequently, the completed templates underwent a data validation process led by the Ministry of Environment and the Rwanda Environment Management Authority. The approved and validated data was uploaded into the NDC tracking feature within the Environment and Natural Resource Management Information System.

Valuable feedback was gathered through consultation sessions that helped the government assess the practicality of these indicators, highlight the need for specific steps and responsibilities in data verification, and establish an effective data-quality protocol. Additionally, the consultations revealed the challenge of tracking progress toward outcomes—for instance, the need to integrate gender in climate actions is well recognized by Rwanda national MEL guidelines but there is little evidence that gender considerations are being integrated into indicators for Rwanda's NDC.

Source: Tsinda et al., 2023: *Rwanda's climate adaptation monitoring, evaluation, and learning system in the agriculture sector: Data and information collection and management*.

★ Key Messages

- Adaptation is highly context specific, and indicators need to be tailored to these contexts in terms of relevance, purpose, and practicality, with the meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders, including those targeted by adaptation actions.
- Indicators have significant limitations when it comes to learning and understanding causal link between activities and results and should not be the sole means of assessing adaptation actions.
- Inappropriate indicators may lead to biased evidence, and too many indicators may prove too much to implement, thus generating little useful data.

- To provide a comprehensive picture of adaptation, indicators need to be measured at the output, outcome, and impact levels, and consist of a combination of quantitative and qualitative information linking institutional capacities and governance, local vulnerabilities, and national development outcomes.
- Indicators need to be piloted in sample contexts before they are rolled out on a larger scale.

Featured Resources

Bours, D., McGinn, C., & Pringle, P. (2014c). *Guidance note 2: Selecting indicators for climate change adaptation programming*. SEA Change CoP and UKCIP. https://www.ukcip.org.uk/wp-content/PDFs/MandE-Guidance-Note2.pdf

Brooks, N. (2014). *Using wellbeing indicators and climate information to assess adaptation effectiveness*. International Institute for Environment and Development. https://iied.org/17275iied

Brooks, N. & Fisher, S. (2014). *Indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of adaptation*. International Institute for Environment and Development. https://iied.org/17273iied

Donatti, C. et al. (2020). Indicators to measure the climate change adaptation outcomes of ecosystem-based adaptation. *Climatic Change, 158,* 413–433 https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-019-02565-9

Hammill, A., Dekens, J., Leiter, T., Olivier, J., Klockemann, L., & Stock, E. (2014). *Repository of adaptation indicators: Real case examples from national monitoring and evaluation systems*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and International Institute for Sustainable Development. https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/download/me/me-guides-manuals-reports/giz2014-en-climate-adaptation-indicator-repository.pdf

Leiter, T. & Pringle, P. (2018). Pitfalls and potential of measuring climate change adaptation through adaptation metrics. In L. Christiansen, G. Martinez, & P. Naswa (Eds.), *Adaptation metrics: Perspectives on measuring, aggregating and comparing adaptation results* (pp. 29–47). United Nations Environment Programme DTU Partnership. https://unepccc.org/publications/adaptation-metrics-perspectives-on-measuring-aggregating-and-comparing-adaptation-results/

Leiter, T., Olhoff, A., Al Azar, R., Barmby, V., Bours, D., Clement, V. W. C., Dale, T.W., Davies, C., & Jacobs, H. (2019). *Adaptation metrics: Current landscape and evolving practices*. Global Commission on Adaptation. https://gca.org/reports/adaptation-metrics-current-landscape-and-evolving-practices/

Mäkinen, K., Prutsch, A., Karali, E., Leitner, M., Völler, S., Lyytimäki, J., Pringle, P., & Vanneuville, W. (2018). *Indicators for adaptation to climate change at national level — Lessons from emerging practice in Europe* (Technical paper 2018/3). European Topic Centre on Climate Change impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation (ETC/CCA). https://adaptecca.es/sites/default/files/documentos/2018_etc_cca_national_indicators.pdf

5.4 Committing to Learning

What Is Learning in the Context of MEL Systems for NAP Processes?

Adaptation is in itself a process of learning; it involves ongoing analysis and adjustments of strategies to manage climate risks and adapt to changes that are becoming increasingly severe. As such, the effectiveness of NAP processes depends on the ability to create and share knowledge that supports learning across multiple actors, sectors, and scales of governance to accelerate the implementation of adaptation actions.

While the importance of learning for adaptation is widely recognized (Ensor & Harvey, 2015; Thi Hong Phuong et al., 2017), in practice, learning is often not systematically planned or managed in NAP processes.

> There is a common assumption that learning happens systematically following monitoring and evaluation and other learning-oriented activities, such as dialogues, trainings, and research. However, learning collectively for NAP processes needs to be deliberate and, therefore, requires planning (Dekens & Harvey, 2024). Learning in the context of MEL systems for NAP processes is defined as the collective and deliberate process of acquiring, assessing, and disseminating new knowledge that results in changed or reinforced knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to climate adaptation (adapted from Heikkila & Gerlak, 2013).

This definition underscores that learning is both a process and an outcome. The process of undertaking dedicated activities involving acquiring, assessing, and sharing new knowledge, therefore, does not on its own constitute learning. See Section 2.2 for more details on the framing of learning in NAP processes.

Learning enables adaptive changes throughout NAP processes, enabling policy-makers to modify their strategies when new evidence emerges or when contexts change. It is important to recognize that learning can occur from M&E but also from other practices in NAP processes. The focus of this toolkit is to provide guidance on how government institutions, policy-makers, and decision-makers can put in place the processes, activities, and structures that will enhance deliberate learning in NAP processes.

This section provides an overview to provide clear definitions and actions for learning under NAP processes. See Dekens and Harvey's (2024) *Integrating Learning Into the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process* for more details on this activity.

ACTION: Embed learning in MEL systems for NAP processes

It has become increasingly evident that learning must be deliberative and intentional and, therefore, planned. Yet even planning for it does not ensure that learning will take place. Learning requires openness to change and to recognizing failure and learning from it. It requires an attitude of accountability to learning and improvement as a process rather than to verify previous assumptions (Williams et al., 2017). MEL systems can help establish a learning culture from the evidence generated by monitoring and evaluation, with commitment to and routines for learning in NAP processes at the individual and collective levels. Shifting to or upholding a learning culture can be challenging when resources are limited, political pressures exist, and failure has implications for accessing and maintaining funding. However, paradoxically, these factors also make learning all the more vital.

While learning can take place at any time in NAP processes, it would be unrealistic to integrate learning into all activities of MEL for NAP processes. Instead, you should identify and plan critical opportunities or "learning moments" at each phase of your NAP processes. As noted earlier, the "MEL phases" visualized at the end of cycles under NAP processes provide a space for deeper reflections on NAP processes (see Figure 3). But to facilitate "deeper" learning moments, you should identify "lighter"—but critical—learning moments and activities to reflect on whether you are doing things right and to adjust activities as needed.

We outline below key actions and questions that will help you plan and facilitate learning at each phase of the development and implementation of a MEL system to support NAP processes (see Table 5).

Learning-Oriented Activities

You can deliberately plan a variety of learning-oriented activities to acquire, assess, and disseminate new knowledge from the MEL systems based on the questions in Table 5.

Learning-oriented activities and the questions addressed during these "learning moments" can take several forms. You should contextualize those questions according to the specific NAP processes questioned, and the different actors involved in the related MEL activities under those processes. You should also carefully link learning with your stakeholder engagement plan to ensure learning is gender equal and socially inclusive (Section 3.2).

Table 5. Fostering deliberate learning from MEL systems for NAP processes

Phases of NAP processes	Examples of learning-oriented MEL actions	Examples of learning-oriented MEL questions
Getting started	• Identifying knowledge and MEL capacity gaps from the stocktake • Recognizing and sharing lessons that can be drawn from the evidence and experience • Developing learning objectives as part of the MEL purpose	• What lessons can be drawn from the evidence and experience gathered and what are the key issues that the government needs to address in its adaptation efforts? • What are the learning objectives and how should learning be addressed in NAP processes?
Impact, vulnerability, and risk assessment phase	• Understanding and communicating impacts, risks, and vulnerabilities identified in the impact, vulnerability, and risk assessment process	• How will the impacts, risks, and vulnerabilities identified be tracked by the MEL system?
Planning	• Embedding learning in the theory of change approach • Enabling transformative adaptation	• What are the key assumptions for how to address adaptation to achieve climate-resilient development through NAP processes? • How and who will manage the new knowledge and information from MEL throughout NAP processes? • How will different social groups be involved in MEL activities for widespread learning?

Phases of NAP processes	Examples of learning-oriented MEL actions	Examples of learning-oriented MEL questions
Implementation	• Reviewing management of NAP processes for effectiveness and efficiency • Establishing realistic expectations for indicators • Learning as we go from monitoring and evaluations	• Are activities implemented in NAP processes on track (or not) and why? • What lessons can be drawn to improve the management of NAP processes to ensure they deliver actions in a timely, coordinated, and efficient manner, and prevent maladaptation? • How will we act upon the learning as we progress on implementation?
MEL	• Using evaluation approaches that support learning • Reporting on progress effectively • Communicating in useful and practical ways • Assessing the effectiveness of the MEL system	• Have activities implemented in NAP processes been delivered successfully? How, where, and for whom? Are there unintended impacts? • Have we encountered success and failure from the NAP processes? How should we review and improve NAP processes? • Do we need to review key assumptions for how to address adaptation to achieve climate-resilient development? • Has the MEL system effectively tracked, evaluated, and generated learning about NAP processes?

Source: Adapted from Dekens & Harvey, 2024.

We provide examples of common learning-oriented activities across three broad categories:

Capacity building and access to knowledge:

- **Capacity-building events, workshops, and training** enable different actors involved in the NAP processes to share learning from practice but also provide people with the skills to support individual and collective learning. This can also include mentorship programs and experiential training as continuous support beyond single events and workshops, ensuring the practical application of learned skills.
- **Knowledge brokers and champions** act as a bridge between knowledge producers and users across different disciplines, fields, and sectors (Bauer & Smith, 2015). Identifying individuals who can be knowledge brokers and champions in key sectors and communities can help to develop a two-way flow of learning that enhances MEL practice and helps learning to reach decision-makers. It is important to formally recognize knowledge brokers and champions to incentivize their efforts and establish a network of these individuals for better collaboration and sharing.
- **Online portals** allow practitioners to access data and learning in formats they can understand and use. Many countries have online portals and websites (e.g., South Africa's Let's Respond Toolkit; see Practical example 19), which can be repositories of knowledge and can enhance transparency by making information open to all. It is important to design user-friendly interfaces and to think about different modes of accessibility in remote areas, for low literacy, and for people with disabilities.
- **Curated resource libraries** enhance learning by dedicating finance and personnel to the curation of learning resources for materials relevant to NAP processes. They may include project documents, evaluations, reports, briefings, internal reviews, journal articles, data sets, training resources, and other materials.

Applied research and participatory evaluation:

- **Learning through applied research** can be a valuable input to MEL processes as it can provide an objective perspective on adaptation progress and performance. Creating partnerships with academic institutions to co-design research projects that are directly aligned with NAP priorities can ensure research is both practical and applicable.
- **Participatory monitoring and evaluation** requires that stakeholders are involved in ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities, and enhances ownership and continuous learning. Government actors and communities can work alongside evaluators to identify key issues, undertake analysis, and develop and validate results. Learning takes place through the process of participation itself and through the relationships that develop (Chouinard, 2013).

Learning and collaborative platforms:

- **Peer-to-peer learning events** have an emphasis on sharing national experiences of designing and implementing NAP processes and actions, particularly in contexts of rapidly escalating climate change impacts. Peer learning facilitates learning across conventional silos, whether sectoral, cultural, or geographic. South–South-specific peer learning events facilitate developing countries to share national experiences and lessons. In South–South peer learning events, peers are equal (all peers have knowledge and experience to share) and learning is reciprocal on NAP processes (see Practical example 20).
- **Multistakeholder platforms** gather representatives from diverse stakeholder groups to engage in regular meetings to reflect on progress on targeted topics at all levels and sectors. These platforms usually involve regular meetings on targeted topics, facilitating horizontal and vertical integration.
- **Reflection workshops and dialogues** go beyond one-directional dissemination to create safe spaces for exchange and reflection. Convening dialogues and workshops can help co-create realistic recommendations about the findings from MEL activities.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 19: Let's Respond Toolkit—empowering local governments in South Africa

South Africa launched an innovative online platform called Let's Respond Toolkit, aimed at enhancing the capacities of local governments in responding to the impacts of climate change. This platform offers an array of tools specifically designed to assist local authorities in navigating the challenges posed by climate change. By leveraging these tools, government officials can enhance their planning processes and develop interventions that foster both environmental sustainability and socio-economic resilience.

The toolkit provides practical guidance on conducting vulnerability assessments and engaging stakeholders in the planning process. This step-by-step approach ensures that local governments have the necessary tools and knowledge to develop robust climate change adaptation plans. The platform offers a wealth of resources, including maps and census data related to climate change. These resources empower local authorities with valuable information that can inform decision making and resource allocation. Moreover, the platform serves as a repository for draft climate change plans at the municipal level, allowing members of the public to provide feedback and input. This participatory approach not only promotes transparency but also fosters collaboration between government agencies and other stakeholders.

The Let's Respond Toolkit initiative represents a significant step forward in strengthening climate change resilience at the local level.

Sources: Dazé, 2017: *sNAPshot: Information sharing for adaptation planning at sub-national levels: South Africa's Let's Respond toolkit*.

When planning learning-oriented activities, you should think about how you can create "learning spaces" (Tschakert et al., 2016) and "safe spaces" (Simister et al., 2018) where people feel comfortable to share experiences, expose inequalities, and share alternative and contrasting views, and that support the exploration of both perceived successes and failures. Setting clear rules on anonymity and information sharing, removing formal protocols or introducing new ones, holding events outside the usual workplace, and careful selection of group size and composition can all support openness to learn.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 20: Virtual peer learning event for national adaptation in Pacific Small Island Developing States

The NAP Global Network and the Pacific Resilience Partnership organized a South–South peer learning event with the objective of providing a platform for Pacific Small Island Developing States to share their experiences in implementing M&E frameworks for national adaptation. Because of travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was held virtually. The event brought together 11 countries, including Kiribati, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, the Cook Islands, Niue, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu, along with several partner agencies.

Key discussions revolved around designing practical and user-friendly M&E systems at the national level, data, and information management for M&E, and standardizing vulnerability assessments at the community level to inform national adaptation efforts. Facilitated learning played a crucial role in the M&E of adaptation interventions, allowing government representatives and stakeholders to share experiences, lessons learned, and knowledge on M&E for adaptation. This process promoted the co-production of knowledge, reflection, and experience sharing among participants.

Source: NAP Global Network, 2020: *Virtual peer learning event: Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for national adaptation in Pacific Small Island Developing States*.

★ Key Messages

- Learning in MEL systems for NAP processes involves the intentional gathering, analysis, and sharing of knowledge to refine adaptation strategies. You will need to make deliberate efforts throughout the NAP processes to embed a culture of learning that uses MEL insights for continuous improvement.
- You can promote learning through activities including capacity-building initiatives, applied research, participatory methods, and collaborative learning platforms, such as peer-to-peer exchanges and multistakeholder dialogues.

Featured Resources

Bauer, F. & Smith, J. (2015). *The climate knowledge brokers manifesto* (1st ed). Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership. https://cdkn.org/sites/default/files/files/CKB-Manifesto.pdf

Bowman, K. (2016). *Evaluation for strategic learning and adaptive management in practice*. Oxfam GB.

United States Agency for International Development. (2018). *Learning questions checklist*. https://usaidlearninglab.org/system/files/resource/files/learning_questions_checklist_december_2018.pdf

CHAPTER 6

MEL During the Implementation Phase

Summary

What are countries doing in this phase of NAP processes?

Countries are implementing the priorities articulated in the NAP document, including policy measures and specific actions. They are also conducting stakeholder outreach and capacity building for adaptation.

Why is this phase important for MEL systems for NAP processes?

The implementation phase is where monitoring begins and where feedback from the MEL system is needed to continuously inform planning and implementation and course correct if necessary. The MEL system therefore needs to be operationalized.

In this section, we address:

- 6.1 Data Collection, Management, and Analysis
  - Action: Collect your data
  - Action: Manage your data
  - Action: Analyze your data

If you have not implemented the actions for the MEL system in previous sections, go back and do them even if you're at this stage of your NAP processes!

6.1 Data Collection, Management, and Analysis

This section directly builds on the theory of change (see Section 5.1) and on the framing of monitoring (see Section 5.2), both of which define what needs to be monitored. This section provides details on how the required data can be identified and collected, how it can be reliably managed, and how it can be analyzed. The decisions made on these questions can be part of a comprehensive monitoring plan as introduced in Section 5.2.

Types and Sources of Data

To effectively monitor and assess progress in climate change adaptation efforts, it is essential to combine different types of qualitative and quantitative data from multiple reliable sources. Gathering data from diverse sources makes the monitoring process more robust and provides a more comprehensive understanding of adaptation interventions and their results. The use of qualitative information to augment quantitative data means that a single indicator might be informed by multiple data types from multiple sources.

Data can be acquired from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data from stakeholders can be gathered through a range of participatory methods such as surveys, focus group discussions, scorecards, workshops, one-on-one interviews, and mobile phone surveys. Involving stakeholders and community members in the data collection process can increase buy-in and create a sense of ownership and collaboration. Secondary data are typically collected through the review and analysis of existing sources such as governmental reports, statistical databases, academic research, social media, think tanks and CSOs, or industry associations. Table 6 provides an overview of the various data sources commonly used as part of MEL systems for NAP processes, including examples and associated methods of collection.

Table 6. Examples of data sources commonly used for MEL systems for NAP processes

Data sources	Description	Examples of sources	Associated methods
Primary data collection: Stakeholders			
Interviews	One-on-one conversations to gather qualitative data	Stakeholder interviews, expert interviews	Interviews
Surveys/ questionnaires	Structured sets of questions to gather quantitative or qualitative data	Online surveys, mobile phone surveys, paper surveys	Surveys, questionnaires
Focus groups	Small group discussions to gather qualitative insights	Community focus groups, expert panels	Focus group discussions
Scorecards	A systematic criteria-based tool for evaluating the effectiveness of activities, projects, or entities (see Brooks & Fisher, 2014)	Evaluation scorecards, performance metrics	Scoring and ranking, qualitative and quantitative comparison
Stories of change	Narrative accounts capturing the effects of interventions	Interviews, video testimonials, written stories, blog posts	Qualitative content analysis, storytelling
Case studies	In-depth, contextually rich examination of a specific intervention	Interviews, observational data, archival records, surveys	Qualitative or quantitative analysis, content analysis
Workshops	Structured, interactive sessions for discussion, brainstorming, or problem solving	Facilitator-led discussions, participant presentations, group work activities	Facilitated discussion, real-time polling, thematic analysis

Data sources	Description	Examples of sources	Associated methods
Primary data collection: Environment and climate data			
Satellite and remote sensing	Technologies providing geographic and atmospheric data to collect data on land use, temperature, coastal erosion	Geospatial data, NASA, NOAA Satellites data, Google Earth	Remote sensing, drones, geographical information systems analysis
Weather stations	Localized data on weather patterns	Local meteorological stations	Meteorological data collection
Environmental sensors	Instruments deployed to measure specific environmental variables like water quality or soil moisture	Water quality sensors, soil sensors	Sensory analysis, data logging
Climate models	Mathematical representations of the climate system used for projections and simulations	IPCC models, national climate models	Simulation, statistical modelling
Secondary data collection: Government			
Administrative records	Data collected by government agencies	Census data, land-use records, health-related data, risk and vulnerability assessments, historical data, policy and legal documents	Document review, data mining
Official statistics	Nationally or internationally recognized statistical information	National statistical agencies, UN databases, World Bank databases, OECD data, economic data, population demographics, disaster statistics	Data mining, statistical analysis

Data sources	Description	Examples of sources	Associated methods
National, sectoral, local MEL reports	Reports that review adaptation interventions at various administrative levels	Ministry reports, local government assessments	Content analysis, case study
Secondary data collection: Academia			
Academic research	Studies conducted by research institutions providing insights into climate impacts, risks, and adaptation	Scientific journals, academic papers, policy reports	Literature review, meta-analysis
Global Assessment Reports	Assessment reports that analyze and synthesize information	IPCC reports, reports by UN agencies like UNEP, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Literature and document review, meta-analysis
Secondary data collection: Community input			
Public opinion polls	Surveys designed to gather data on public opinions	Polls, community opinion surveys	Surveys, questionnaires
Social media and crowdsourced	Real-time data gathered from public platforms or large groups of people	X feeds, mobile apps	Data mining, sentiment analysis
Community testimonials	First-hand accounts or stories shared by community members	Recorded or transcribed narratives	Interviews, storytelling
Traditional/ Indigenous knowledge	Information passed down through generations, often not documented formally	Oral history, traditional practices	Storytelling, participatory approaches, ethnographic research

Data sources	Description	Examples of sources	Associated methods
Secondary data collection: Development partners			
CSOs	Data collected by CSOs	Reports from CSOs	Content analysis, case studies, field reports
Private sector	Data related to supply chains, resource use, and companies' impacts on communities	Corporate sustainability reports	Business analytics, case studies

Source: Authors.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 21: Bringing underrepresented women's voices into planning for climate change adaptation in Ghana and Kenya

An example of a combination of different data sources is the Envisioning Resilience initiative, which "aims to elevate the voices of women from underrepresented groups and communities using visual storytelling." The pilot phase of this initiative was a collaboration between Lensational, a social enterprise that uses photography and storytelling for women's empowerment, the NAP Global Network, and the Governments of Kenya and Ghana. The initiative trains women in the development of visual storytelling to capture their lived experiences with climate change and their visions of resilience, aiming to incorporate these perspectives into NAPs.

The visual stories generated by this initiative facilitated meaningful dialogue between the women and policy-makers during workshops in Nairobi and Accra. These stories provided valuable insights into the local impacts of climate change and potential strategies for resilience, leading to a commitment from decision-makers to include more participatory and inclusive methods in future NAP processes. This initiative has been extended to other countries, notably Jamaica. Qualitative stories of change hold valuable potential to inform both IVRAs and perceptions of progress on NAP processes as part of the MEL system.

Source: Dazé et al., 2022: *Envisioning resilience: Bringing underrepresented women's voices into planning for climate change adaptation*.

ACTION: Collect your data

The specific content of the MEL system as defined during the planning of the MEL system (see Section 5.1) will influence the selection of methodologies and tools for data collection and analysis (see Table 6), on which the quality and reliability of the data collected will depend. When planning data collection and analysis, it is important to consider roles and responsibilities and availability of resources. Evaluation may use additional methods and data sources (see Section 7.1).

- **Roles and responsibilities:** Who will provide the M&E data? Who will collect it? Who will analyze it? Designating roles and responsibilities is crucial to support an effective and accountable monitoring process. Some of these responsibilities will be covered by the same people in some cases, but clarifying the roles early on helps in determining feasibility and ensuring that actions are taken as planned.
- **Resources:** What are the staff and budgetary needs? Successful data collection and analysis will depend on an adequate resource and budget allocation. You will need to assess the needs and associated costs in terms of staff, including trainings, and material assets like computers and software to support data collection, analysis, and management, and to support the long-term sustainability of MEL.

As described in Section 3.1, challenges and limitations in resources impede effective monitoring in many developing countries. These range from data-related issues, such as a lack of available, reliable, and accurate data, to structural problems that prevent data sharing between departments and organizations. Staff shortages and limited capacities on how to collect, analyze, and manage data further exacerbate the situation. Financial and resource constraints are always a pressing concern particularly for the operationalization and long-term sustainability of MEL. The use of digital platforms and online databases to collect and manage data remains limited, often due to these overlapping challenges (see Practical examples 20 and 24) (Fisher & Slaney, 2013; Manteaw et al., 2022).

Some countries have spelled out their data collection process in the form of a MEL framework that defines technical and logistical aspects of executing MEL and ensuring that the necessary resources are in place to effectively carry it out. Depending on a country's administrative system, a MEL framework may be a formally adopted document or an internal government document. Developing it in a participatory way and making it publicly available increases acceptance and transparency, which aids the effectiveness of the MEL system. See Section 3.1 to ensure you take a phased approach to developing and implementing your MEL system for NAP processes.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 22: Using drones to collect geospatial data in Haiti

The Republic of Haiti, a small island state, initiated its NAP processes in 2019 aiming to enhance the nation's resilience to climate-related adversities and integrate climate considerations into national development planning. There has been significant progress, including sectoral vulnerability studies and capacity-building initiatives. However, despite its priority status and the progress made, climate adaptation lacks visibility, impacting Haiti's ability to mobilize resources and secure national ownership, thereby hindering resilience-building efforts. To address this, Haiti is increasing awareness about NAP processes, emphasizing their role in national planning and the associated human, financial, and technological requirements. In line with this, drones have been procured for monitoring protected areas and evaluating forest cover. A training workshop on drone usage has been conducted, with the aim of improving the collection of geospatial data for NAP processes and sourcing real-time data to guide program and project developments. The photos and images collected using drones will be used for communications efforts under Haiti's NAP communications strategy.

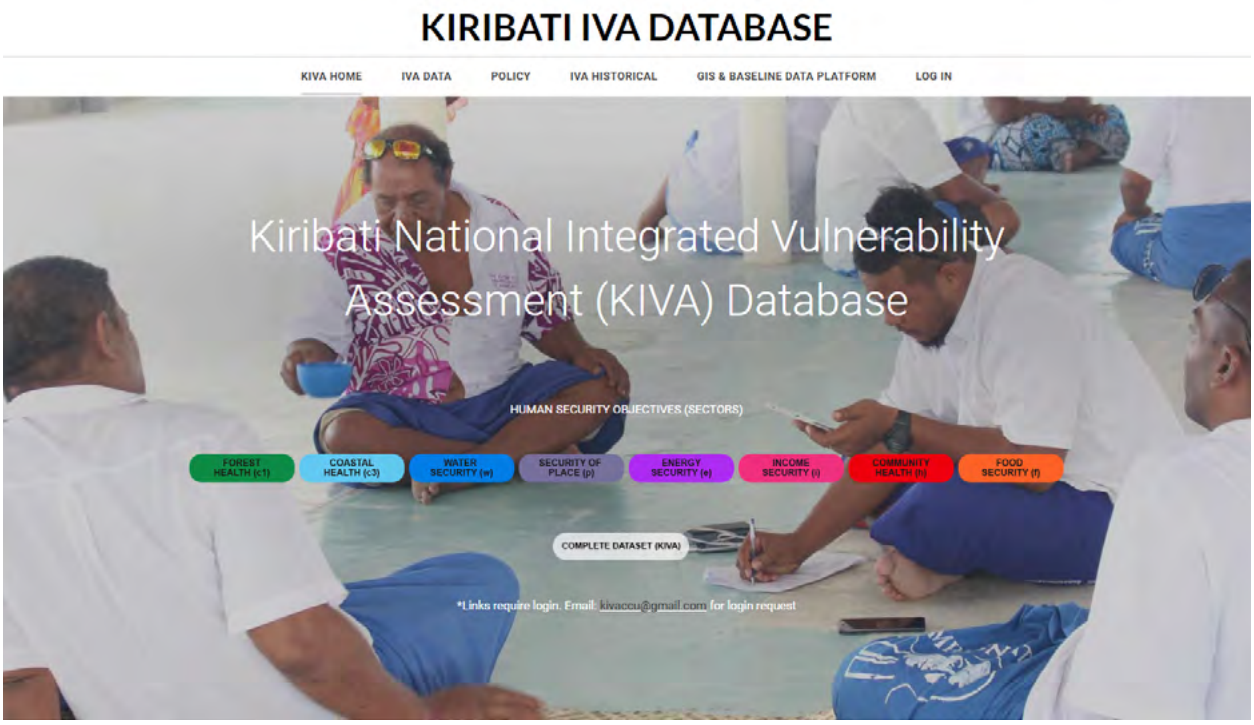
Source: Republic of Haiti Ministry of the Environment, 2023: *Toward a gender-responsive National Adaptation Plan process in Haiti*.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 23: An online database to assess local vulnerabilities in Kiribati

Kiribati developed an online platform called Kiribati Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (KIVA), initiated by the government to establish a standardized approach for measuring local vulnerabilities. This platform aims to enhance multisector coordination by evaluating the impacts of adaptation interventions. It hosts information on climate change vulnerabilities across various governance levels, spanning from national to village levels. To promote collaboration at the grassroots level, diverse participatory approaches, including household surveys and rural appraisal methods, are employed. Experienced and trained personnel collect data, with a specific emphasis on gathering sex- and age-disaggregated information to comprehensively understand local vulnerabilities. Subsequently, the collected data is uploaded to the platform via mobile phones. KIVA streamlines the measurement of local vulnerabilities, thus fostering climate change adaptation within the country.

Sources: Climate Change Unit, Government of Kiribati, n.d. KIVA database; Dekens & Hoffman, 2020. *Five new tools for coordinating climate change adaptation in Kiribati*.

Figure 9. The web interface of the Kiribati Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (KIVA) database



Source: Climate Change Unit, Government of Kiribati, n.d.

ACTION: Manage your data

Data management serves as a crucial bridge between data collection, analysis, and reporting. It involves the organization, storage, protection, and preparation of the data for the analysis. Data management should adhere to the FAIR principles—it should be findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable.

- **Findable:** Data repositories are essential tools for making data easily retrievable. Depending on needs and resources, these can range from simple Excel spreadsheets to complex databases and online data platforms, which are recommended for the management of data relating to key adaptation indicators. Data should be categorized by attributes such as sector, theme, or stakeholder and be tagged with unique identifiers for easy retrieval.
- **Accessible:** Access to the data should be carefully managed, with restricted permissions to safeguard it. Data protection measures should be implemented, including regular backups, to ensure data security. Nonetheless, it is desirable to make monitoring data relating to key adaptation/NAP indicators publicly available via an online data platform to ensure that the adaptation process is transparent.

- **Interoperable:** Data should be in formats compatible with other systems to facilitate the smooth flow of data between different platforms. This enables the integration of various data sources and is particularly important where there is overlap between reporting systems, for example adaptation reporting under the UNFCCC and SDG reporting.
- **Reusable:** Data should be formatted and stored in a manner that allows for its reuse in future applications or projects and for evaluation.

Quality assurance is important to ensure that data are relevant, reliable, and accurate. You will need to implement mechanisms to minimize potential biases, typos, errors, and inconsistencies. This is important to promote the integrity of the interpretation and analysis of the data that will follow. These mechanisms may include data validation checks by other staff members or specialized software, data cleaning, standardization of formats, cross verification with secondary sources, and a periodic review of the entire process. To manage data in practice, the following has proven to be useful:

- **Focal points:** A common approach is for countries to establish sectoral focal points that collate sectoral data and report them to a national or central agency that is responsible for managing the MEL system. This may be a cross-ministerial committee, an agency within a lead ministry, or an independent statutory body. Data management can be strengthened if it is mandated through legislation, which will also provide a basis for sustained financing of these activities.
- **Data flowchart:** A flowchart can help visualize and communicate to stakeholders involved with the MEL system the life cycle of data and how the data moves through the system from the point of collection to its analysis and reporting (see Cardoso, 2019). Such a chart can help demystify the often-complex process of data management, and enhance the coherence, comprehension, and transparency of the monitoring process for everyone (see Practical example 24).
- **Platforms:** Digital platforms linked to a country's MEL system for NAP processes offer great benefits to manage data and can be multifunctional. They can serve as simple centralized data repositories to store and organize the collected data relevant to NAP processes, such as stakeholder feedback or climate data. More advanced platforms can also integrate data analytics and collaborative workspaces to support interpretation of the data and facilitate communication and engagement between stakeholders. Others use a public interface to track indicators and to disseminate information. While they require technical expertise and funding to set up and maintain, they also contribute to bringing efficiency and security to data management and are easily scalable over time. Where applicable, geographic information systems, coupled with open data portals, can facilitate data sharing and access, contributing to enhanced information availability for climate change adaptation planning (Boulos & Wilson, 2023).

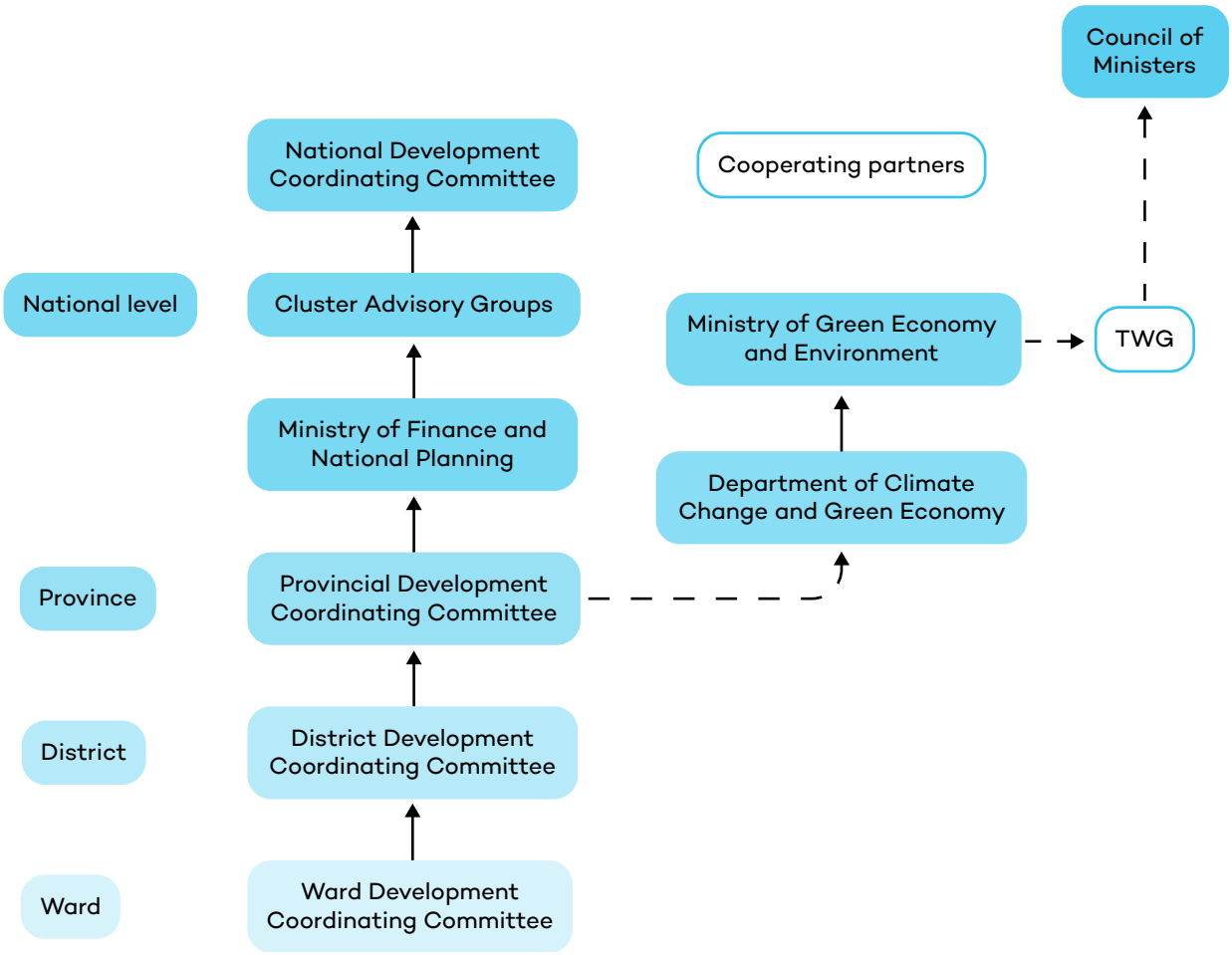
PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 24: A vertically integrated approach to data collection and reporting in Zambia

Zambia proposes a vertically integrated governance system for data collection and reporting, recognizing the importance of diverse information sources. Data collection spans from the municipal level, specifically through the Ward Development Coordination Committee, up to the national authorities. At the ward level, data is gathered and subsequently reviewed by the Provincial Development Coordination Committee. District and provincial levels handle data cleaning and quality assurance. The information is then shared nationally with the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, as well as with the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment through its Department of Climate Change.

In addition, the proposed reporting process includes the establishment of a Technical Working Group responsible for providing technical advice and reporting on climate change adaptation progress at the national level. Zambia's approach to data collection and reporting involves multiple levels of governance and coordination.

Source: Rhodwell, 2022, cited in Masud et al., 2023: *Zambia takes an inclusive approach to developing a monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework for its National Adaptation Plan*.

Figure 10. Data flow chart for the proposed reporting process in Zambia's MEL system for NAP processes



Source: NAP Global Network, 2023.

ACTION: Analyze your data

Qualitative information, for example from surveys, interviews, focus groups, and stories of change needs to be interrogated to identify key changes, issues, and lessons, particularly those identified by multiple respondents. These information sources might be examined to provide insights into issues that have already been identified as particularly pertinent, for example, the differential effects of an intervention's outputs on men and women, or the extent to which certain capacities have been enhanced by an intervention. Alternatively, analysis may seek to identify common experiences or perceptions, without any initial preconceptions. For MEL at the national level, qualitative information may come from key stakeholders within specific sectors of all local governments, or from representative samples of the general population, depending on the availability of resources for such data collection. See Practical example 25 on Eswatini.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 25: Enhancing climate adaptation through qualitative analysis: the development of Eswatini's NAP processes

Eswatini provides a good example of how qualitative data can enrich the development of NAP processes. The Eswatini government actively involved local communities in shaping adaptation priorities and programs for its NAP processes. This inclusive approach to data collection engaged a diverse range of stakeholders, including traditional authorities, women, youth representatives, and local healers.

Given that Eswatini's economy heavily relies on subsistence agriculture, understanding local perspectives and traditional knowledge is crucial. With agriculture predominantly dependent on rain-fed farming and strong ties between the community and their land, forecasting weather trends becomes paramount for the farming population. Recognizing this, integrating local knowledge into decision-making processes for adaptation can significantly enhance effectiveness.

Qualitative data collected through Indigenous and local knowledge played a pivotal role in analyzing weather forecasts, seasonal changes, and identifying viable adaptation options for communities. By systematically incorporating this knowledge into their planning processes, communities were better equipped to adapt to changing climatic conditions. These insights helped inform the development of strategies that were not only practical but also culturally relevant and sustainable.

Source: Tfwala et al., 2023: *Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge for climate change adaptation in Eswatini.*

Quantitative data will need to be analyzed to identify trends and changes in specific indicators relative to a baseline; establish progress toward targets or milestones relating to implementation or adaptation progress; and analyze changes in the circumstances of populations resulting from adaptation interventions. Simpler indicators can often be analyzed or presented using diagrams and descriptive statistics. In some cases, more complex quantitative methods may be applied, such as experimental or quasi-experimental methods (e.g., Khan et al., 2014). However, these approaches should be considered in light of their limitations for evaluating adaptation (see Box 7 in Section 7.1). Where data about climate impacts are available for periods before and after a specific intervention, they might inform evaluations of the effectiveness of that intervention. Quantitative data can also be employed to characterize the evolution of climate hazards to support the interpretation of impact indicators for adaptation or NAP processes (Brooks et al., 2019).

★ Key Messages

- Data collection, management, and analysis need to be carefully planned, including clear responsibilities while accounting for available resources to operate MEL over time.
- Qualitative and quantitative data require different types of analysis and different MEL capacities and resources.

Featured Resources

Brooks, N., & Fisher, S. (2014). *Tracking adaptation and measuring development: A step-by-step guide*. International Institute for Environment and Development. https://pubs.iied.org/10100IIED/

Cardoso, A. (2019). *A roadmap for establishing information systems for climate action and support*. Initiative for Climate Action Transparency. https://climateactiontransparency.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ICAT-data-management-system-publication.pdf

Climate Change Unit, Government of Kiribati. (n.d.). *Kiribati National Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (KIVA) Database*. https://www.kivadb.net/

Rhodwell, C. (2022). *Monitoring and evaluation framework*. Republic of Zambia.

CHAPTER 7

MEL during the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Phase

Summary

What are countries doing in this phase of NAP processes?

While implementation might still be ongoing, countries are analyzing the achievements of NAP processes and gathering lessons and experiences. They are reporting on progress made and results achieved and undertaking a review of NAP processes to inform the next iteration of NAP processes.

Why is this phase important for MEL systems for NAP processes?

In this phase, countries focus explicitly on MEL and report on results. Countries may also undertake or commission an evaluation of NAP processes. It is important to remember that MEL activities and processes involve continuous feedback and iteration throughout NAP processes. Activities included under this phase can be undertaken in earlier stages of NAP processes (see Section 2.1).

In this section, we address:

- 7.1 Evaluating NAP Processes
  - Action: Plan evaluation throughout your NAP processes
  - Action: Select evaluation criteria and principles
  - Action: Select the evaluation approaches
- 7.2 Communications and Reporting
  - Action: Report on your progress
  - Action: Communicate MEL findings effectively and creatively
- 7.3 Assessing Your MEL System
  - Action: Assess the quality of your MEL system

If you have not implemented the actions for the MEL system in previous sections, go back and do them even if you're at this stage of your NAP processes!

7.1 Evaluating NAP Processes

Evaluations play a crucial role in tracking the performance and results of NAP processes, and of actions implemented as part of those processes. They help countries assess the extent to which NAP processes are meeting their stated objectives (Better Evaluation, 2022). Evaluations offer depth beyond monitoring progress to critically assess multiple data sources together and provide comprehensive insights on the outcomes and impacts of NAP processes across scales, over different time periods, and for different actors. Evaluations might examine implementation of NAP processes, for example in a particular sector, and might be built into the NAP processes themselves.

In this section, we cover why and how countries should plan and design their evaluation across and throughout NAP processes.

There are multiple guides and resources on evaluations, several of which we include in the featured resources for this section. This toolkit therefore focused on the early steps of planning and key considerations, defining evaluation criteria and identifying evaluation approaches. These steps require special attention when evaluating NAP processes when compared to other fields of sustainable development or public policy. The featured resources at the end of the section provide further guidance on detailed steps for evaluations.

Types and Timing of Evaluations

While countries typically implement evaluations at the end of a cycle of specific NAP processes (e.g., at the end of a 5-year implementation time frame), before the review of a NAP document, or when specific projects under NAP processes end, evaluations can be done at any stage of NAP processes. Governments should plan evaluations of their NAP processes at strategic moments, considering that evaluations can take anything from around 2 months to well over a year.

There is a wide range of different evaluation types that countries can use at strategic points before and during their NAP processes. Two types of evaluations are the most common and relevant to NAP processes:

- **Mid-term and formative evaluations occur at the beginning of or during NAP processes to correct their course.** Such evaluations can be carried out part of the way through the implementation of a NAP process with a specified time frame—such as a NAP document, strategy, or project—e.g., within the first 3 years of a 5-year implementation time frame. They inform the management and implementation of ongoing initiatives by assessing progress toward goals and targets, identifying challenges and shortcomings, and

recommending adjustments (Rubin, 1995). See Practical example 27 for the mid-term evaluation of Finland's NAP.

- **End and impact evaluations are implemented at the end of or after NAP processes to assess their overall performance**. These evaluations will take place at the end of the implementation of a NAP process with a specified time frame, such as a NAP document, strategy, or project. These can also be called ex-post ("after the event") or summative evaluations. They allow stakeholders to retrospectively assess the performance of NAP processes in delivering their intended results and their wider effects, including unintended positive and negative impacts (Beauchamp et al., 2022). Lessons from summative evaluations inform policy decisions and funding allocations to enhance policy impacts.

A less common type of evaluation for NAP processes is the ex-ante ("before the event") evaluation, which includes proposal appraisals and prioritization assessments. Because this type of evaluation occurs before any implementation has started, it is less relevant for the development and implementation of the MEL system. We therefore do not cover these evaluations in this toolkit. However, the *UNFCCC NAP Technical Guidelines* (UNFCCC, 2012) provide examples of methods for ranking and prioritizing adaptation measures to be included in NAP documents.

ACTION: Plan evaluation throughout your NAP processes

Periodic evaluations are necessary to track progress in the implementation of NAP processes and to assess the extent to which outputs of NAP processes are delivering intended adaptation outcomes and impacts across the NAP processes and the theory of change (see Section 5.1) (Rubin, 1995). When planning an evaluation of NAP processes, you will need to tailor it to the context and purpose while addressing key considerations, namely the integration of climate risks and gender equity and social inclusion across all steps of the evaluation:

Engaging Your Evaluation Stakeholders

The different actors involved in your NAP processes also play a vital role in shaping evaluation design and driving its implementation and should be involved throughout the evaluation process, including in activities such as developing the evaluation plan, drafting terms of reference, selecting evaluator(s), reviewing evaluation reports, implementing the management responses, identifying key lessons, and disseminating learning. Throughout these steps, involving different actors is vital, as broad-based engagement increases transparency and ownership in the evaluation's findings (UNDP, 2009). Stakeholder mapping can help identify key stakeholders, their interests, needs, and relationships with each other. This process helps identify important players who should be involved in the evaluation (see Section 3.2 for more information and actions for engaging stakeholders).

When selecting evaluators, you can specify the need for GESI expertise and experience in the terms of reference. Evaluators should understand the distinct vulnerabilities experienced by groups that face discrimination on the basis of gender, age, and other factors in the context of climate change adaptation. Additionally, evaluators should recognize the diverse roles that people of different genders and social groups play as agents of change in the field of climate change adaptation (Ekambi, 2018).

Identifying, Securing, and Allocating Resources

Finance, skills, and capacities have been emphasized as enabling factors that shape every action of MEL systems (see Section 3.2). When allocating resources for an evaluation of NAP processes, the available budget will create trade-offs in the scope and scale of your evaluation. For example, the budget will affect how many people across different communities and stakeholder groups the evaluators can reach. When evaluating NAP processes, you should ensure there are sufficient funds to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized groups and ecosystems identified in your plan.

Incorporating GESI considerations into the budgeting process is essential. You should ensure there are adequate financial provisions—including for GESI expertise—to support the collection and analysis of gender and socially disaggregated data and to undertake participatory processes during program impact assessments. Evaluations can help assess how much of the budget is allocated to address the specific needs of women and men in enhancing their resilience to climate change (OECD, 2018). See this Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative brief for more information on gender and climate change budgeting and finance.

Selecting and Implementing Criteria and Approaches That Integrate Climate Risks

Evaluations of NAP processes need to assess not only whether actions and processes previously worked well, but also if they will continue to work under future climate scenarios and emerging climate risks. This will enable more informed, adaptive, and sustainable decision making in the face of increasing climate uncertainties. In Table 7 and the following two actions, we outline how to integrate climate risks in evaluation criteria and approach selection, underlining the need for mixed-methods approaches to data collection and analysis for robust and inclusive results (Kind et al., 2017). See Sections 5.2 and 5.3 for details on different types of information and indicators, and Section 6 for data collection and analysis methods. Piloting the data collection methods can help you to readjust the design if needed.

Validating, Reporting, and Communicating Lessons

NAP processes are a learning process in themselves. Finalizing the results of the evaluation therefore cannot be the last step of the evaluation process. It is critical for evaluation results and lessons to be validated by partners and by the actors who participated in the evaluation. This will allow biases and misinterpretations to be corrected. Importantly, you should share evaluation findings, through national or global reporting exercises and communications, to different stakeholders (see Section 7.2). Key actors include the various actors and social groups that have taken part in adaptation actions and the funders of NAP processes (who will often require you to commission the evaluation).

Turn to Section 7.2 to read about good practices in communications, and to learn more about different types of reporting. These actions are intrinsically linked to the implementation of evaluations, as evaluations are ultimately learning exercises that demand communication and reporting to share their findings and lessons.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 26: Implementing a qualitative evaluation of NAP processes through stakeholder engagement in Grenada

Grenada's approach to evaluating progress on its NAP processes focuses on stakeholder engagement to foster learning and improvements in adaptation activities. Utilizing a qualitative assessment method, Grenada actively involved a diverse group of stakeholders to gather insights and recommendations, showcasing how qualitative assessments can support informed decision making and learning in NAP processes. Grenada adopted a two-step approach to assess its progress in the implementation of NAP processes.

In the initial phase, responsible agencies were engaged to evaluate the extent of implementation, with a particular emphasis on soliciting stakeholder feedback. This feedback encompassed experiences in implementing activities and suggestions for enhancement, addressing factors such as role clarity, intersectoral coordination, technical capacities, and stakeholder involvement. This approach enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of the adaptation plan.

In the second stage, the government of Grenada organized an experience-sharing forum, welcoming a wider audience, including CSOs, to provide additional perspectives on the draft progress report. By inviting diverse stakeholders, Grenada tapped into a broader pool of expertise, enriching the quality of reflections and feedback received. This case illustrates how stakeholder engagement can be a powerful tool in the iterative process of implementation and reporting, fostering collaboration and continuous improvement.

Sources: Government Of Grenada, 2020: *Developing a climate adaptation monitoring and evaluation system for Grenada's National Adaptation Plan*; Roberts & Leiter, 2022: *The National Adaptation Plan for Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. First progress report* (internal document).

ACTION: Select evaluation criteria and principles

The purpose and scope of evaluations for NAP processes is to assess the extent to which adaptation actions under NAP processes are delivering, or have delivered, their intended results—if possible, when compared to their theory of change (see Section 5.1). A policy, program, or action is evaluated using a set of evaluation criteria and principles, which leads to defining specific evaluation questions.

> The criteria and principles for the evaluation should embody the context and the different normative views about what a successful outcome should be. They represent the standards and values by which the intervention will be judged. When evaluating NAP processes, a primary consideration is to ensure the criteria and questions address specific current and future climate risks, uncertainties related to these risks, dynamic drivers of vulnerability, and the potential for maladaptation.

The most commonly used evaluation criteria in climate change adaptation and development are the six OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria for assessing development interventions: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability (OECD, 2021a, p. 18). Table 7 outlines how the six OECD DAC criteria can be considered with a climate lens for the purposes of evaluating NAP processes.

Table 7. Contextualizing the six OECD DAC evaluation criteria to NAP processes and climate risks

Criteria	Application to NAP processes	Integration of climate risks for adaptation
Relevance	• Are NAP processes doing the right things? • Are the objectives, governance, and actions of the NAP processes responding to the needs and priorities of identified people, institutions, and ecosystems?	• Are NAP processes relevant to current and emerging climate risks, under different climate scenarios? • Are actions of the NAP processes relevant to those who are most vulnerable to climate risks?

Criteria	Application to NAP processes	Integration of climate risks for adaptation
Coherence	• How well do NAP processes fit and align with other interventions? What are synergies and trade-offs? • Are actions under NAP processes compatible with other actions driven by national and international development and environmental commitments?	• Are actions under NAP processes compatible with meeting commitments of countries under the Paris Agreement and other frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction?
Effectiveness	• Are NAP processes achieving their objectives? • Are actions under NAP processes producing the expected results? • Are the benefits equitably distributed across different gender and social groups?	• Are NAP processes reducing the climate risks or exposures identified in IVRA and the NAP document? • Are NAP processes achieving adaptation at the outcome level? • Will NAP processes be effective under different future climate scenarios[2]?
Efficiency	• How well are resources being used in NAP processes? • Are NAP processes delivering results in an economic and timely way?	• Will the resources and capacities invested in NAP processes produce long-term results? Will there be returns on any investment, in the light of future climate changes? • What is the ratio of investment to actual or anticipated reductions in losses and damages from climate change?

[2] The United Kingdom's International Climate Finance's Key Performance Indicator attempts to do so under its Key Performance Indicator 15, capturing the "Extent to which ICF intervention is likely to lead to Transformational Change."

Criteria	Application to NAP processes	Integration of climate risks for adaptation
Impact	• What difference do NAP processes make? • Are NAP processes leading to significant positive or negative impacts, both intended or unintended?	• Do NAP processes address long-term, structural drivers of vulnerability and inequality? • Are NAP processes delivering transformational changes? • Are NAP processes unintentionally leading to maladaptation?
Sustainability	• Will the benefits last? • Are NAP processes leading to sustainable processes that will continue?	• Are NAP processes adapted to deliver long-term results in different future climate scenarios?

Source: Authors.

While the criteria listed in Table 7 are the most common evaluation criteria, evaluations can incorporate other criteria and principles to assess NAP processes against. For example, countries may judge that further criteria focusing on equity, gender, wider inclusion, and climate justice should be added (see Practical example 27). This can help evaluations for NAP processes to deliver learning relating to the wider consequences of adaptation actions, intended or unintended, positive or negative (Eriksen et al., 2021; Simpson et al., 2023). For example, additional criteria and principles have been suggested and applied for climate and sustainable development interventions, including the following:

- **Equity:** Are adaptation actions contributing to broader objectives related to gender equality and social inclusion? Are vulnerable groups better able to realize their rights? Is equal consideration given to meeting the current generation's needs and the needs of future generations (intergenerational equity)? (adapted from D'Errico et al., 2020).
- **Country-drivenness:** Are adaptation plans, strategies, policies, actions, and processes led, designed, and developed by national stakeholders, such as governments and government agencies (rather than by external actors, such as multilateral agencies, CSOs and consultants) (from Brooks et al., 2019)? Country-drivenness is a key principle of NAP processes as described in the *2012 LEG Technical Guidelines* (UNFCCC, 2012).

The OECD DAC criteria can also be customized to specific contexts. For instance, applying the relevance criterion, evaluation questions may focus on how the intervention caters to gender-related needs and if it contributes to gender equality (OECD, 2021a).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 27: Adapting OECD guidelines—use of process criteria in Finland

Several countries have utilized the OECD criteria for assessment of their NAP processes. In specific instances, like Finland, supplementary evaluation inquiries were tailored to address the country's particular requirements. Finland employed OECD standards to gauge the effectiveness of adaptation plans, in addition to including other aspects, such as collaboration among stakeholders and unintended consequences in their evaluations. These criteria were supported by a set of questions endorsed by the government to ascertain their relevance and significance.

Finland conducted a mid-term evaluation of its National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) for the year 2022 tailoring the OECD guidelines to address the country's particular requirements. The primary objective of the mid-term evaluation was to assess the progress made in implementing the NCCAP and to gauge the level of practical adaptation work achieved. The evaluation aimed to foster climate change adaptation across various sectors, regions, and municipalities within the country. The evaluation primarily centred on process criteria due to the relatively short period over which the plan had been implemented, resulting in limited available resources and data availability. The Finnish government focused on effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and coherence of the NCCAP implementation:

- **Effectiveness:** How and in what ways has the Adaptation Plan implementation promoted Finnish society's capacity for managing climate risks and adapting to climate change?
- **Efficiency:** To what extent have the sectors discussed or assessed the perspective of efficiency in the context of Adaptation Plan implementation?
- **Relevance:** Are the objectives and actions of the Adaptation Plan correctly targeted considering up-to-date information on climate change risks and impacts?
- **Coherence:** Are the Adaptation Plan actions compatible with other policy objectives and associated measures?

These criteria were supported by a set of questions endorsed by the government to ascertain their relevance and significance.

Source: Mäkinen et al., 2020: *Implementation of Finland's National Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2022: A mid-term evaluation*.
Also see the Ministry of Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change, 2021: *Evaluation of Burkina Faso's National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2015–2020* for another example of an evaluation of NAP processes.

Table 8. Example of the evaluation criteria for the implementation process from Finland's mid-term evaluation of its NCCAP

Evaluation criteria	Description
Collaboration of actors	How has collaboration related to climate risk management and the promotion of adaptation work between different actors and sectors progressed? What types of questions/themes does the collaboration focus on and what methods are used?
Barriers	What types of barriers to implementing the Adaptation Plan related to legislation, information, cooperation or authority and similar issues have the sectors come across?
Additional criteria to the OECD standard criteria adopted by Finland	
Side effects	What types of (unanticipated) positive or negative side effects (economic, social, or environmental) have cropped up in the context of implementing the Adaptation Plan? Have the actions supported or undermined capabilities for climate change mitigation?

Source: Mäkinen et al., 2020.

To incorporate a GESI lens in evaluation you will need to consider power dynamics that shape the choices and outcomes within the affected population. The approach to integrating GESI will depend on the context and purpose of the evaluation. Generally, incorporating a GESI lens will involve consideration of whether and how NAP processes have reached vulnerable groups and how adaptation outcomes are distributed across different genders and social groups. A more nuanced evaluation could explore the role of power dynamics and social norms in determining opportunities and constraints related to adaptation. If a broader view is desired, the evaluation could incorporate the equity questions identified above. See *Applying a Human Rights and Gender Equality Lens to the OECD Evaluation Criteria* (OECD, 2023b).

ACTION: Select the evaluation approaches

Once the purpose and scope of an evaluation have been decided, you should select the evaluation approaches and methods. The choice of approach(es) and methods should aim to maximize the rigour and credibility of the evaluation given the questions it seeks to answer. Evaluation approaches are also often dictated by the type of data sources (who needs to provide the data?), data availability (do we have such data?), and accessibility (how can we get the data?). Different approaches and methods have their advantages and disadvantages and depend on resources and capacities. Using a combination of approaches and methods (mixed methods) can help provide the most complete and useful answers to evaluation questions.

Qualitative, theory-based approaches are the most used for evaluating progress of NAP processes. They can help answer some of the questions that experimental and quantitative approaches cannot answer—such as why and how changes have occurred. Theory-based impact evaluations seek evidence about the impact of NAP processes by testing whether the pathways of changes—or causal chains—are projected to bring about outcomes and impacts. Most qualitative evaluation approaches will use theories of change (see Section 5.1) as a starting point for their inquiries. Referred to as realist evaluations, they are based on a well-defined theory of change that is tested through various evidence sources. Other qualitative approaches aim primarily to support learning through developmental evaluations, participatory evaluations, and empowerment evaluations.

Quantitative evaluations can also be used to assess progress of adaptation actions yet can be less appropriate due to the resources required and the limited timelines for evaluating impacts (see Box 7). They involve approaches that rely on numerical data and statistical methods to assess and draw conclusions relating to evaluation questions. Quantitative evaluations are characterized by measurements and numerical outcomes that can be analyzed using various statistical tools, aiming to quantify the effects of an intervention. These can take several forms, the most common of which are experimental (randomized control trials[3]) and quasi-experimental[4] approaches (propensity score matching and difference in differences analyses).

These approaches focus on quantifying the net impact of a policy or program by statistically comparing one group or time period that has not been subjected to the policy or program with one that has. While quasi-experimental approaches have been advocated for impact evaluations,

[3] A randomized controlled trial is an experimental form of impact evaluation in which the population receiving the intervention is chosen at random from an eligible population. The control group is also chosen at random from the same pool (Rogers, 2014).

[4] Quasi-experimental designs identify a comparison group that is as similar as possible to the intervention group in terms of baseline (pre-intervention) characteristics. The comparison group captures what would have been the outcomes if the intervention had not been implemented (i.e., the counterfactual). The key difference between an experimental and quasi-experimental design is that the latter lacks random assignment (Rogers, 2014). For an example of a quasi-experimental approach based on the difference-in-difference method, see Khan et al. (2014).

there are several reasons why these approaches are not suitable for climate change adaptation and development policies or interventions (Stern et al., 2012; see Box 7). Other quantitative approaches involve cross-sectional evaluations (over one point in time) and time-series (multiple points in time, without control and treatments).

The above approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In fact, evaluation designs that integrate mixed approaches and methods can produce more robust, representative responses to the evaluation questions (Bamberger, 2012; Schwandt & Gates, 2021).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 28: Evaluating implementation of NAP processes in Albania—a mixed-method approach

Albania's approach to developing its inaugural progress report for its NAP processes involved a mixed-method strategy. The process began with an extensive literature review, drawing upon data from international sources such as the European Environment Information and Observation Network portal and OECD resources. In addition to the literature review, Albania actively engaged both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. This engagement encompassed research institutes, local experts, and development partners such as GIZ, UNDP, UNEP, the private sector, and CSOs. This collaborative approach enriched the analysis of the implementation of NAP processes.

NAP progress was assessed using a criteria-based system that categorized activities as either initiated, ongoing, or completed. Furthermore, each adaptation measure's completion status was evaluated based on criteria including complexity, required financial resources, and impact, resulting in classifications as Low, Medium, or High. Effectiveness was gauged using specific criteria, providing a structured framework for assessment and benchmarking. A percentage value representing progress was calculated, taking into account completion status, financial investments, resource utilization, impact on climate risk reduction, intervention complexity, and effectiveness.

Albania's mixed-method approach facilitated a comprehensive evaluation of implementation progress. It yielded a holistic understanding and valuable insights for future policy improvements and climate action planning.

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Environment, 2023: *Albania's National Adaptation Plan: First progress report*.

Box 7. Why quasi-experimental and experimental techniques are unsuitable for climate change adaptation policy

While randomized control trials and quasi-experimental techniques are often hailed as the pinnacle of evaluation methods, their adequacy for assessing sustainable development initiatives has been increasingly questioned in recent years. Factors that diminish their appropriateness for this context include the following:

1. They emphasize individual benefits rather than collective societal or public gains, such as climate adaptation outcomes. A complex set of factors and actors affect climate policy outcomes and impacts, making it difficult and often misguided to assess the attribution or contribution of a single policy or action (Hammer, 2017).
2. Because climate changes and shocks are unpredictable and non-linear, it is not always possible to maintain the assumption that treatments and controls will remain in the same conditions except for the intervention impact itself. This means the statistical design of these techniques can often become incorrect or biased.
3. The need to maintain consistent conditions between treatments and controls to avoid unpredictable changes to the design means they are often used to evaluate outcomes within short time frames. Consequently, they fail to capture adaptation outcomes and impacts that take time to unfold.
4. They are backward-looking, centring on net impacts rather than exploring the how and why of change. Simply gauging an intervention's efficacy without understanding its direct and indirect influences limits its utility for adaptable management in intricate systems (Ofir, 2018).
5. They have a significant financial burden and ethical considerations. Such methods necessitate repeated data collection, incurring considerable costs, especially for expansive samples. Additionally, introducing an intervention to only part of the intended audience can erode trust, prompt disputes among communities, and skew findings (Baele, 2013; Deaton & Cartwright, 2017).

While the validity and contribution of these methods are undeniable, they are better suited for specific situations and inquiries rather than being universally ideal, especially in the realm of climate adaptation and sustainable development.

For more information about quantitative approaches in development, see Baele, 2013; Deaton & Cartwright, 2018; Hammer, 2017; Ofir, 2018.

★ Key Messages

- Evaluations are periodic assessments that can be undertaken at strategic points of NAP processes, most commonly during or around the mid-term of the NAP processes, and at the end of an iterative cycle of the NAP processes to inform the following one.
- Evaluations of NAP processes distinguish themselves from sustainable development evaluations by explicitly integrating climate risks and hazards. This is necessary so they can assess the ability of NAP processes to reduce vulnerability and build resilience. They can be done primarily through defining appropriate evaluation criteria and evaluation questions.
- While the OECD DAC criteria are commonly used, these should be contextualized. Evaluations of NAP processes should also consider using additional/alternative criteria or principles to reflect what success means to them and other stakeholders.
- There are different approaches to evaluations: not all evaluations should be quantitative, nor have the purpose of assessing effectiveness. Evaluations can use qualitative, theory-based, and participatory approaches, among others, to explain how and why changes are occurring, and even to focus on capacity building.

Featured Resources

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Patton, M. Q. (2021). Evaluation criteria for evaluating transformation: Implications for the coronavirus pandemic and the global climate emergency. *American Journal of Evaluation, 42*(1), 53–89. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1098214020933689

Preskill, H. & Jones, N. 2009. *A practical guide for engaging stakeholders in developing evaluation questions*. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/Preskill_A_Practical_Guide.pdf

Rogers, P. (2014). *Overview of impact evaluation*. UNICEF. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/746-overview-of-impact-evaluation-methodological-briefs-impact-evaluation-no-1.html

United Nations Evaluation Group. (2011). *Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation: Towards UNEG guidance*. http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980

UN Women. (2015). *Evaluation handbook: How to manage gender-responsive evaluation*. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation

7.2 Reporting and Communications

Reporting and communications are critical activities for translating knowledge and information generated by monitoring and evaluation activities into effective learning for iterative improvements in NAP processes. The activities should be part of the wider NAP processes, such as a NAP communication strategy, and not considered in silo for the MEL system. However, given the importance of reporting and communicating evidence from M&E activities for intentional learning, we include this section for you to consider as part of the planning and implementation of your MEL system.

Both reporting and communications are critical for transparency and accountability but also act as mechanisms for knowledge dissemination and acquisition. They enable practitioners, policy-makers, and other actors involved in adaptation efforts to share their experiences, successes, and challenges. This exchange of information is crucial for identifying best practices and lessons learned, which can be applied to enhance future efforts in similar contexts. While key for learning from M&E evidence, reporting and communicating MEL information should be aligned with the wider communication strategy of your NAP processes.

Reporting as Learning-Oriented Activities

Reporting is most often done via written reports, but also includes verbal reporting and reporting via online platforms through which stakeholders can track the progress of implementation and results of NAP processes. Reporting refers to the systematic presentation and provision of information from MEL activities relating to NAP processes, their progress, results, and lessons to stakeholders during and/or after the implementation of the NAP (Guerdat et al., 2023). Reporting draws on both quantitative and qualitative data and information from a variety of sources, including data routinely collected as part of monitoring activities, and information generated during evaluations. It typically seeks to develop narratives to highlight progress, identify lessons and challenges, and help stakeholders understand how NAP processes are affecting resilience and vulnerability, thus informing future actions.

Reporting is not just about creating a document or presentation, but about ensuring that findings and lessons generated through MEL activities are disseminated to key target audiences and relevant stakeholders. These may include other government agencies, funders, the communities involved in adaptation actions, the private sector, the wider public, and specific interest groups such as women's and youth groups.

Reporting from MEL systems can serve multiple purposes and take different forms, depending on its objectives and scope. It can be done across sectors and scales to share learning, supporting horizontal and vertical integration. It can help report on progress (see the first action in this section: Report on progress) by incorporating data sources (e.g., from regular monitoring) and synthesizing information across multiple sources to track the status of activities in NAP processes. An important role of reporting is to present outcomes and lessons from the implementation of NAP processes, to inform subsequent activities and reviews of the processes. Reporting on NAP processes can fulfill:

- **National requirements:** including MEL and reporting mandates set out in national legislation such as climate change laws and acts, national policies and strategies such as NAPs, NDCs, and other sectoral policies and strategies.
- **Nationally mandated reporting requirements under global frameworks and conventions** such as the SDGs, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. Harmonizing reporting across these areas can improve efficiency and support MEL for adaptation, for example through the use of common indicators.
- **International reporting requirements:** such as those under the Paris Agreement. Reporting guidelines have been established under the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework, outlining the areas on which countries should aim to report (see Section 2.3). These processes aim to improve global accountability and evidence on adaptation, grounded in the information and evidence generated by NAP MEL systems. Reporting and communications on adaptation under the Paris Agreement include Adaptation Communications, adaptation sections of the Biennial Transparency Reports, Nationally Determined Contributions and under the UNFCCC also National Communications (also see Section 2.3 for information on global reporting).

Regular reporting using monitoring data might take place on an annual basis, focusing on the status of key indicators and reasons for changes in these indicators, the latter often deduced from additional sources such as stakeholder feedback. Reporting based on strategic evaluations of NAP processes or components of it will provide a deeper analysis of changes at both the outcome and impact levels. These reports explain how and why these changes have occurred, using more in-depth information gathered through mechanisms such as stakeholder surveys and interviews. Globally, more than 30 countries have published a NAP monitoring and/or evaluation report (Leiter, 2021).

Reporting is a form of communication, and communications activities can also support reporting, ensuring that reports clearly articulate key findings and messages, and that they reach the right audiences.

Strategic Communications as Learning-Oriented Activities

Strategic communications play a critical role in MEL that goes far beyond supporting reporting processes. Effective, inclusive communication is vital for the transparency of both MEL and NAP processes more broadly, for the building of trust and the engagement and participation of stakeholders, and for the effectiveness and sustainability of MEL activities.

> It is important that communication continues across all phases of development and implementation of the MEL system and is not restricted to just supporting reporting activities. Communication needs to be structured around communications objectives and tailored carefully to the intended audience(s), considering factors such as language and culture (including local languages in countries with significant linguistic and cultural diversity), messaging, literacy, and the most appropriate medium, style, and channels of communication. Critically, communication needs to be relevant for its intended audience, recognizing their concerns, speaking to their values, reflecting their identifies, and shared by trusted peer messengers (Ledwell et al., 2023; Table 9).

Direct interactions with stakeholders to discuss emerging monitoring and evaluation results is another form of communication that can also allow for direct feedback. Sharing knowledge and fostering learning through participation helps to increase the acceptance of results and generate responses by stakeholders (EEA, 2015). Communication strategies may include peer-to-peer learning both within and between countries, as well as targeted outreach to actors such as women's organizations and representatives of marginalized groups to inform them about progress, lessons learned, and opportunities for future engagement, and to elicit feedback that ensures these actors have a voice in NAP processes (NAP Global Network & UNFCCC, 2019).

Communication via print and broadcast media has the potential to reach large and diverse audiences. Active engagement with the media in the Netherlands before and at the launch of its NAP evaluation report improved the reach of the findings and the clarity of messaging (EEA, 2015). Social media and video are other potential avenues for communicating MEL findings. These require concise messaging and may require technical input to agree core messages, coupled with communications expertise to tailor these messages for the intended audiences. Countries have also used photo essays to show progress in implementation of NAP processes. See Practical example 29 for more information on Kenya, Granada, and Saint Lucia.

In Section 3, you should have identified priority audiences for communicating MEL for NAP processes to achieve communications objectives related to MEL.

Table 9. Examples of types of communications targeted to different key actors in NAP processes

Audience	Factors to consider	Types of communication channels
Local communities	Variable literacy rates, limited internet access, cultural and linguistic diversity	Radio, pamphlets, community updates, local workshops and dialogues, field exchanges
Indigenous people	Cultural sensitivity, language, compatibility with Indigenous Knowledge	Storytelling, local workshops and dialogues, field exchanges
General population	Targeting, engagement, high level of socio-economic heterogeneity	Radio, television, podcasts, social media
Sub-national government	Limited capacity and resources, particularly staff and finance	Briefings, one-to-one meetings, knowledge brokers
Sectoral agencies	Relevance to technical specialisms	Technical reports, briefings, one-to-one meetings
Ministries	Limited time, other (political) priorities	Policy briefs, one-to-one meetings, champions and knowledge brokers, conferences
Private sector	Prioritization of profits	Business briefings, one-to-one meetings, champions and knowledge brokers, conferences, social media
Civil Society Organizations	Compatibility with community priorities and immediate needs	Community updates, local workshops and dialogues, one-to-one meetings
Academia	Relevance to technical specialisms	Technical reports, workshops, conferences

Source: Authors.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 29: Use of photo essays for communicating progress on implementation of NAP processes

With NAP Global Network support several countries have used photo essays to show progress made in the implementation of NAP processes. These compelling stories of change complement traditional methods of communication, such as reporting. These narratives not only demonstrate how the country's NAP processes are being implemented but also highlight the progress achieved.

Photos capturing tangible changes on the ground serve as powerful illustrations of the impacts of adaptation actions implemented under NAP processes. In these stories, local communities identify climate change impacts on their lands, covering a range of topics, from canal restoration and livelihood diversification in small-scale subsistence farming, as seen in Kenya, to coral gardening initiatives, exemplified by Saint Lucia, and the restoration of mangroves and improved access to water at higher elevations, as observed in Grenada.

Sources:
Grenada: NAP Global Network, 2023a: *Climate resilience from mountaintop to seafloor: How three communities in Grenada are implementing the national climate change adaptation plan.*
Saint Lucia: NAP Global Network, 2023b: *The coral gardeners of Saint Lucia: Local heroes against coral bleaching*.
Kenya: NAP Global Network, 2023c: *Thriving in dry times*.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 30: Examples of progress reporting in NAP processes

The scope of progress reporting across countries varies based on the structure of a country's NAP processes and their reporting objectives. For example, Brazil's progress report of its NAP processes focuses on implementation progress in priority sectors such as water and agriculture, which have a central role in its NAP processes.

Some countries have a separate report for their NAP processes, while others combine reporting on NAP processes with other domestic reports. For instance, South Africa has a national climate change response report that covers both adaptation and mitigation, whereas Tonga and Kiribati report on their Joint Implementation Plan, which incorporates disaster risk management and adaptation.

In summary, progress reports on NAP processes offer valuable insights into a country's adaptation progress, benefiting stakeholders at national and international levels. They enhance accountability and can facilitate learning and inform ongoing planning and implementation.

Source: Guerdat et al., 2023: *Reporting on progress in National Adaptation Plan Processes: An analysis*.

ACTION: Report on progress

Progress reporting is a key component in NAP processes, serving as a dynamic and flexible approach for tracking and enhancing climate change adaptation planning and implementation (Guerdat et al., 2023). It is essential in determining whether a country is effectively adapting to climate change and reducing its vulnerability to climate change impacts. Progress reporting consolidates information from various MEL activities and enables a "learn-by-doing" approach that can be particularly useful when a fully functioning MEL system is not yet in place or operational. Progress reporting may both draw on and inform evaluations, depending on the sequencing of evaluation and progress reporting activities.

You can report on progress at any stage of NAP processes, but it is most effective when it is aligned with the end of a cycle of specific NAP processes, when there is a review and revision of goals and activities. Typically, progress reporting takes anywhere from 2 months to a year and is carried out in the middle or at the end of the implementation period for NAP processes (Guerdat et al., 2023). However, some countries conduct early progress reporting exercises within the first year of implementation. Early reporting can identify problems early in implementation, ensure implementation stays on track, and improve implementation efficiency, but there will be limited data at this stage.

At the global level, government reporting may follow specific guidelines and requirements relating to the format and content of reports. For example, there are guidelines on which topics to include in your biennial transparency reports (see Section 2.3). Notably, the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience (see Section 2.3) established at COP 28 mandates the Adaptation Committee, in collaboration with the Consultative Group of Experts and the LDC Expert Group "to develop recommendations on how to improve reporting on adaptation action and progress." These recommendations may provide further guidance to countries while in turn being informed by a range of country experiences reflecting a variety of approaches to progress reporting on national adaptation efforts.

While approaches to progress reporting vary across countries, it can be broken down into the following four key steps (Guerdat et al., 2023; see Figure 11):

1. **Define the objectives of the progress report**, considering any national mandates for such reporting. Identify who should be engaged in progress reporting activities, where information should be collected, and how and by whom the reporting process should be coordinated. Examples of progress reporting objectives include:
    - tracking the implementation status of climate change adaptation activities
    - evaluating implementation of NAP processes and the enabling environment
    - evaluating the integration of climate change adaptation in development planning and budgeting

- building capacity, stakeholder awareness raising, and engagement for climate action
- identifying opportunities, challenges, gaps, and lessons learned from implementation of NAP processes
- making recommendations for updates and implementation of NAP processes

2. **Identify available capacities, resources, and needs** before launching the reporting process. Clarify roles and responsibilities, including who will lead the process, and clarify the status of the MEL system for NAP processes as a foundation for identifying the scope of MEL information for inclusion in the report (see Introduction and Figure 1 in this toolkit).
3. **Identify and apply MEL tools** to be used in progress reporting, aligning with the objectives and available resources identified in Steps 1 and 2.
4. **Develop a clear communication strategy** for the dissemination of the results of the progress reporting exercise, specifying what results to communicate, in what form, to whom, and how to increase accessibility and use of the information (see next action: Communicate MEL findings effectively and creatively).

Figure 11. Progress reporting process for NAP processes

Source: Guerdat et al., 2023.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 31: Kenya's progress report on the National Climate Change Action Plan implementation

Kenya's efforts to tackle climate change are outlined in its National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 2018–2022, which supports the goals of its 2015–2030 NAP. The NCCAP's progress report from July 2019 to June 2020 shows a united approach, involving various stakeholders, including the private sector through the Kenya Private Sector Alliance and civil society through organizations like the Kenya Climate Change Working Group and the Kenya Platform for Climate Governance.

The report highlights advancements in seven key areas critical to climate action: disaster risk management, food security, water, forestry, health, manufacturing, and energy. Beyond these priority areas, the report examines the foundational enablers that underpin effective climate action. These include robust policy and regulatory frameworks, advancements in technology and innovation, strides in capacity development and knowledge management, as well as critical aspects of climate finance and resource mobilization. The report also emphasizes the importance of transparency in measurement, reporting, and verification, which are essential for tracking progress and ensuring accountability.

Source: Republic of Kenya, 2021: *National Climate Change Action Plan 2018-2022. Second implementation status report for the FY 2019/2020*.

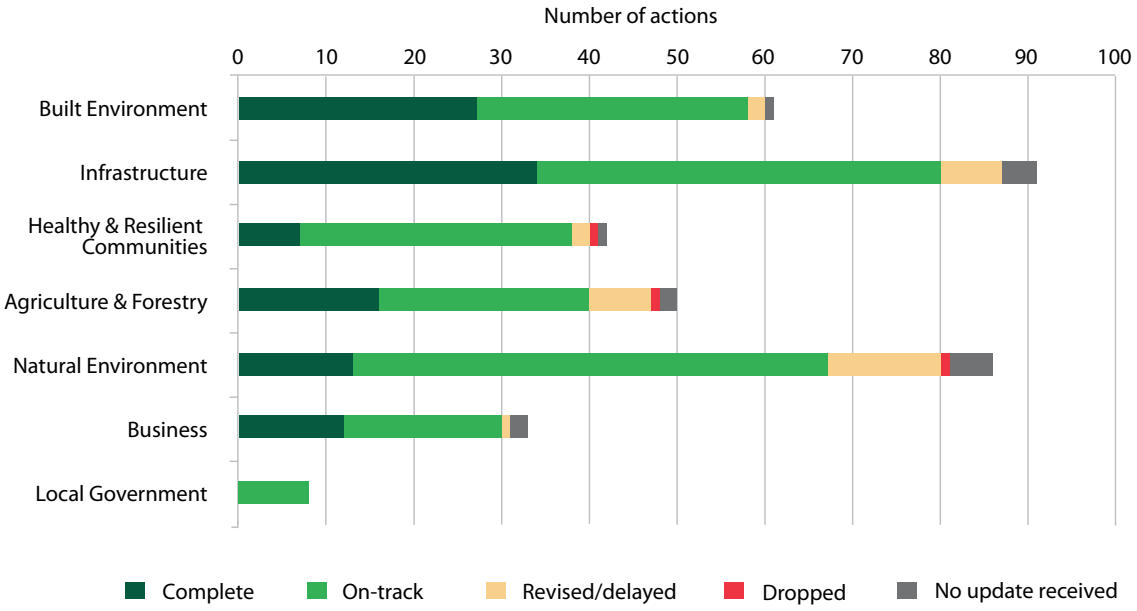
ACTION: Communicate MEL findings effectively and creatively

Written reports are the primary means through which countries communicate MEL results and outcomes (Guerdat et al., 2023; Leiter, 2021). However, such reports are not effective or appropriate communications mechanisms for all target audiences, and you will need to complement them with other types of communications as detailed in Table 9. Communication within reports should be clear and accessible.

Within reports, progress in the implementation of NAP processes and the delivery of adaptation results can be communicated using simple rating systems such as traffic light systems (green, red, amber) that highlight areas of progress and concern (Figure 12). Another example of a tracking system is the United Kingdom's simple scheme for characterizing policies and plans (as insufficient, limited, partial, or credible) and delivery and implementation (as insufficient, mixed, or good) (UK Climate Change Committee, 2023). Other options for communicating results include simple checklists to track whether activities have started, more nuanced completion criteria, or percentages,[5] indicators, and the categorization of activities based on the level of effort and funding required.

[5] See Burkina Faso's NAP Evaluation for an example of the use of completion criteria (Government of Burkina Faso, 2021).

Figure 12. Use of traffic light colours in the United Kingdom's NAP progress report



Source: Committee on Climate Change, 2015: *Progress in preparing for climate change: 2015 Report to Parliament*.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE 32: Belgium's traffic light system

Belgium uses a traffic light system similar to the United Kingdom, where green indicates that an adaptation intervention is complete, amber indicates that the activity is ongoing, and red means that the activity is either incomplete or has not yet started. Grey means that not enough information was available to assess the action. This approach has proven to be very helpful in communicating the status of adaptation implementation.

Source: Commission Nationale Climat, 2019: *Evaluation à mi-parcours du Plan National Adaptation (2017-2018)*.

Figure 13. Belgium's traffic light system to visualize and communicate progress of its NAP processes

Tableau synthétique d'évaluation

Actions du plan	Degré de mise en œuvre	Délai respecté	Budget respecté	Objectif atteint	Commentaires
1.Élaboration de scénarios climatiques détaillés pour la Belgique					Le projet Cordex.be a fourni ses résultats. De nouveaux scénarios climatiques belges sont disponibles depuis 2017 et servent à présent de référence.
2.Élaboration d'une feuille de route pour un Centre d'excellence belge sur le climat			NA		La feuille de route n'a pas été réalisée et l'action n'a pas été reprise dans les notes de politique générale de la secrétaire d'Etat à la politique scientifique.
3.Création d'une plate-forme en ligne nationale pour l'adaptation au changement climatique					Différentes pistes ont été réfléchies pour la mise en place de la plateforme entraînant un retard de mise en œuvre (également lié à un manque de disponibilité des experts). Un appel d'offre a finalement été lancé fin 2018. La mesure devrait être mise en œuvre en 2019. Un budget a été prévu par la CNC.
4.Renforcement de la coordination sectorielle au niveau national	Action récurrente				En 2017 un événement de lancement a été organisé, initiant un cycle de tables rondes dont la 1ere a été organisée avec succès en 2018. Les initiatives devront se poursuivre dans les années à venir pour d'autres thématiques (encore à déterminer). On ne peut pas encore considérer qu'une structure de coordination verticale et horizontale totalement intégrée soit en place mais des progrès ont été réalisés.
5.Prise en compte du changement climatique dans l'analyse des risques concernant les espèces exotiques envahissantes			NA		Le calendrier a été révisé pour refléter les délais de mise en œuvre du projet, plus large, TrIAS. Le projet TrIAS a débuté en 2017 et doit se terminer en 2021. Les travaux ont donc permis d'avancer. Les modèles d'évaluation des capacités d'établissement des espèces dans un contexte de changements climatiques sont en cours de développement, ils seront ensuite intégrés dans les procédures d'analyse de risque.

Source: Commission Nationale Climat, 2019: *Evaluation à mi-parcours du Plan National Adaptation (2017-2018).*

Effective communication of MEL findings plays a pivotal role in meeting the agreed MEL objectives (see Section 3.3). The following guiding questions can be used to support the development of inclusive communication strategies that ensure information is accessible to all relevant audiences, considering their communication needs based on factors including gender, age, literacy, and access to technology:

- **Objective: What does the communication aim to achieve?** Setting objectives helps you to identify the target audience and choose suitable formats.
- **Target audience: Who are the primary and secondary target audiences?** For example, decision-makers in line ministries, officials involved in planning and implementing adaptation, or local community groups.
- **Format and communications channel: What is the best way to reach target audiences?** Will a written report be suitable, or are shorter formats needed, for example policy briefs, blog posts, social media, or more creative channels such as photo essays, videos, and infographics?

- **Timing: When is the best time to reach the target audience(s)?** For example, are there key events, episodes or activities in planning or decision making that the MEL findings are meant to inform?

Your communications strategy to share the evidence from your MEL system, in line with the communication strategy for your NAP processes, should be GESI responsive. Where communications are aimed at communities and the public, they should be accessible to people of all genders and social groups, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, and groups that are often excluded from decision-making processes, for example due to their socio-economic status or geographical remoteness (NAP Global Network & UNFCCC, 2019).

You should develop platforms for sharing MEL information to address accessibility for the above groups. You could do this by communicating MEL findings in multiple languages and formats, including through written information, audiovisual information, and direct interactions with target groups. A variety of methods may be required to reach these groups, including community radio, local dialogues, and mobile phones. Impact stories and digital communication methods are highly effective in reaching target audiences (Guerdat, 2021). You should identify and address barriers to information access, including gender-specific barriers, to ensure equitable access to information (NAP Global Network & UNFCCC, 2019).

★ Key Messages

- Embed reporting and communication within your NAP strategy to ensure MEL insights effectively inform ongoing adaptation efforts and stakeholder engagement.
- Tailor reporting and communication methods to cater to varied audiences, facilitating widespread knowledge sharing and collaborative learning in adaptation practices.
- Harmonize MEL reporting with existing national and global commitments to optimize resource use and reinforce the global adaptation narrative through shared learnings and accountability.

Featured Resources

Commission Nationale Climat. (2019). *Evaluation à mi-parcours du Plan National Adaptation (2017-2018)*. https://climat.be/doc/Plan-national-adaptation_Evaluation-mi-parcours_2017-2018.pdf

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7.3 Assessing Your MEL System

All aspects of NAP processes can benefit from MEL, and the MEL system itself is no exception. You should track and assess progress on the development and implementation of your MEL system to determine whether it is supporting the continuous improvement of your NAP processes.

Continuous monitoring of MEL performance can include developing milestones and indicators based on the objectives you defined for the establishment of your MEL system for NAP processes. Any formal evaluation of the MEL system should be led by an independent evaluator who is external to the MEL team, to ensure transparency and to be consistent with global good practice. Learning associated with assessment of the MEL system might include regional knowledge exchange meetings and peer-to-peer learning activities for MEL staff. In short, the steps for doing MEL of your MEL system are no different than those for other activities of NAP processes!

ACTION: Assess the performance of your MEL system for NAP processes

You should periodically assess the performance of your MEL system to ensure it has been designed and implemented to achieve its intended objectives, and to ensure it is leading to learning from and about NAP processes. This might be done through "light-touch" reviews of the MEL system in terms of its relevance and adequacy annually or at some other frequency, for example to coincide with cycles of monitoring and reporting. More in-depth assessments might be carried out at the end of each implementation cycle, aligned with evaluations of implementation and adaptation performance.

Additionally, you can voluntarily report on the status of your MEL system to inform the understanding of progress toward the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience. One of the targets of the UAE FGCR adopted in 2023 is for "countries to have designed, established and operationalized a system for monitoring, evaluation and learning for their national adaptation efforts and have built the required institutional capacity to fully implement the system [by 2030]" (see Box 3) (CMA, 2023). The decision 2/CMA.5 adopting the UAE FGCR "invites Parties to voluntarily include in their adaptation communications, biennial transparency reports, national adaptation plans, national communications and nationally determined contributions quantitative and/or qualitative information related to the targets" and "encourages Parties to report on progress, good practices, experience and lessons learned in relation to implementing the framework in their communication and reporting." We highlight three key areas for you to consider when assessing your MEL system for NAP processes.

1. Is the MEL system functioning as intended?

A key theme for the assessment of MEL systems is the extent to which the coordination and institutional mechanisms of the MEL system are in place and working as intended, and the extent and quality of coordination and engagement. MEL systems require a significant amount of coordination between institutional stakeholders responsible for data collection, management, and reporting, as well as extensive engagement between a wide range of institutional and non-institutional stakeholders including communities and representatives of specific social groups. The timely and effective collection, analysis, and reporting of monitoring data depends on the existence of effective mechanisms for such coordination and engagement.

You can:

- Establish mechanisms for assessing your MEL system through regular scrutiny and/or periodic evaluations, depending on the resources available.
- Establish a body (e.g., steering committee) or use an existing body (e.g., adaptation technical working group or climate change coordination group) to oversee these mechanisms, preferably a multistakeholder entity that includes representatives of communities and highly vulnerable and historically excluded groups, with a good gender and social balance.

Assessments of engagement should examine the extent to which communities and stakeholders can see how their contributions to MEL have informed policies and practices; too often research and evaluation processes extract information from communities "for the greater good" but then fail to share the lessons with those who informed the process. You can help improve engagement by establishing multistakeholder groups or committees to oversee or inform MEL processes and activities, including representatives of communities and other groups whose voices otherwise might be excluded from MEL planning, design, and implementation.

2. Are M&E activities yielding relevant information?

Monitoring and evaluation activities will yield quantitative and qualitative data and information, some of which will be in the form of indicators. Evaluations of the MEL system should assess how well these indicators and any related information capture implementation progress, and how relevant and useful they are for tracking changes in adaptive capacity, resilience, and vulnerability, given the global goal on adaptation of "enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change" (UNFCCC, 2016).

For example, do indicators capture medium- and longer-term outcomes and impacts as well as short-term outputs? Is the logic linking output, outcome, and impact indicators sound? Are the indicators readily measurable and are they being reported adequately? Have any attempts been made to validate indicators, for example by assessing the extent to which capacity-based outcome-level indicators of resilience and vulnerability predict changes in impact-level indicators related to losses, damages and other climate change effects across populations experiencing similar climate hazards?

You can:

- Develop a review process and, when possible, a set of indicators, for assessing the quality and performance of your MEL system. These may include an internal review or an evaluation of the MEL systems.
- Discuss how to develop indicators and quantitative elements to monitor, report, and assess collective progress on adaptation in line with the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience. These could include:
    - Quantitative indicators such as the number of women and civil society representatives actively engaged in MEL processes; binary indicators such as the existence of multistakeholder oversight bodies.
    - Qualitative indicators based on subjective assessments of the quality of coordination, learning, and stakeholder engagement/satisfaction. We include examples of indicators in Box 8.

Box 8. Examples of indicators to track and assess MEL systems for NAP processes

Below are examples of qualitative indicators that countries can use to assess the performance of their national MEL systems for NAP processes:

- Quality of institutional coordination for stakeholder mobilization and engagement, data collection, and management and reporting.
- Diversity of stakeholders participating in MEL processes, including women, and the most vulnerable and historically excluded groups.
- Existence and attendance of a multistakeholder MEL oversight body (e.g., steering committee).
- Relevance of indicators for assessing vulnerability, resilience, and adaptive capacity.
- Coherence of indicators across output, outcome, and impact levels.
- Existence of recognized mechanisms for capturing and disseminating learning.
- Evidence that learning from MEL has informed NAP processes.

3. Are MEL activities systematically resulting in learning?

Assessments of MEL systems should address the extent to which MEL activities are genuinely fostering learning that feeds back into NAP processes and adaptation action more broadly (see Section 5.4). Embracing deliberate learning requires flexibility within processes, including investment decisions, strategies and program/project designs, and tactics (Williams et al., 2017). MEL should evaluate the agility of NAP processes to cope with and facilitate change in response to new information and ideas, as this is a measure of learning in action.

For example, has MEL resulted in changes to NAP processes and adaptation strategies and actions under the NAP by identifying maladaptation risks, highlighting the exclusion of certain groups, or flagging the failure of adaptation actions to deliver intended results? Has MEL resulted in the establishment of a culture of learning within NAP processes? Are those responsible for NAP processes comfortable with discussing and learning from failure? Is innovation supported and encouraged? If so, (how) have development partners and donors supported this?

You can:

- Establish protocols for feedback and reporting on your MEL system, including mechanisms for and frequency of reporting.
- Implement assessments or evaluations of the medium- and long-term learning outcomes after learning-oriented activities.

★ Key Messages

- To ensure your MEL system is both effective and relevant, regularly assess not only its alignment with the intended MEL purposes and objectives but also its practical capability to facilitate learning to improve your NAP processes.
- Ensure your M&E activities provide relevant, actionable information, leveraging both quantitative and qualitative data to track adaptation progress and inform your NAP processes.
- Foster a learning-oriented culture through your MEL activities, encouraging adaptability and innovation in NAP processes to really benefit from MEL insights.

Final Checklist

Status	To do list	Section
Getting started		
	Reflect on phased approach for developing and implementing your MEL system	3.1
	Address gender considerations at each phase of the MEL system	3.1
	Undertake a stocktake of contextual factors and existing MEL systems	3.2
	Clarify primary purposes and objectives of the MEL systems	3.3
MEL during the impact, vulnerability, and risk phase		
	Establish linkages between MEL and IVRA	4.1
MEL during the planning phase		
	Elaborate the logic model for NAP processes	5.1
	Framing the MEL process	5.2
	Identify potential indicators	5.3
	Make indicators operational	5.3
	Validate, pilot, and review your indicators	5.3
	Embed learning in MEL systems for NAP processes	5.4
MEL during the implementation phase		
	Collect your data	6.1
	Manage your data	6.1
	Analyze your data	6.1
MEL during the monitoring, evaluation, and learning phase		
	Plan evaluation throughout your NAP processes	7.1
	Select evaluation criteria and principles	7.1
	Select the evaluation approaches	7.1
	Report on your progress	7.2
	Communicate MEL findings effectively and creatively	7.2
	Assess the quality of your MEL system	7.3

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