

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLAN GLOBAL NETWORK

Final Report

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Executive Summary

The National Adaptation Plan Global Network (NAP GN) was established in 2014 at the 20th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Lima, Peru, by adaptation practitioners from 11 countries (Brazil, Germany, Jamaica, Japan, Malawi, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Togo, the United Kingdom, and the United States). It supports the Cancun Adaptation Framework (COP 16), the establishment of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) processes (COP 17) and Article 7 of the Paris Agreement. Its Secretariat is the Resilience Team of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). The Network has three objectives, delivered through main areas of work with the following expected outcomes:

Objective	Areas of work	Expected outcome
Facilitate sustained peer learning and exchange	Targeted Topic Forum (TTFs), Peer Learning Summits (PLSs), South–South Peer Exchanges	Active community of practice to share and learn on advancing NAP processes
Support national-level action	Country Support Hub (CSH), in-country support program	Increased in-country capacity for more effective NAP processes
Enhancing bilateral support through donor coordination		Better coordinated NAP support from bilateral development partners
<i>Cross-cutting activities: analysis, communications and the development of knowledge products, and outreach and engagement.</i>		

The United States Department of State (USDS), as one of the initial funders of the NAP GN, supports it with a grant that runs from September 22, 2015, through September 30, 2020, for a total amount of USD 9,940,000. It is the Network’s single largest source of funds.

The Evaluation

As the USDS grant comes to an end, IISD commissioned an independent evaluation of the NAP GN’s performance, focusing solely on the activities that were financed through the USDS grant¹. This evaluation contributes both to accountability and learning for USDS and the NAP GN. On the one hand, it assesses the effectiveness of the NAP GN in achieving the objectives and expected results in the USDS grant. On the other hand, it provides evidence-based insights for the design of future NAP GN’s activities. The evaluation covers the period between September 22, 2015 and June 30, 2020. It was conducted between May and September 2020. The methodologies used involved document review, interviews, an online survey of the entire network and activity participants, and four case studies in countries where the Network has been particularly active (Colombia, Ethiopia, Fiji, and St. Lucia).

Key evaluation criteria and questions

- Relevance:** Is the NAP GN doing the right activities?
- Coherence:** How well does it fit in to the climate change adaptation architecture?
- Effectiveness:** To what extent is it achieving its outputs and outcomes?
- Efficiency:** How well are U.S. resources being used?
- Impact:** What difference is it making beyond the Network’s influence?
- Sustainability:** Will the benefits last?

¹ Activities financed solely by the governments of Canada, Germany and/or Austria were not evaluated although considered when relevant.

Evaluation Conclusions

Overall conclusion

The NAP GN has been a valuable contributor to the NAP process. It has brought participating countries knowledge and exchange opportunities to support the development of favourable enabling environments for NAPs and adaptation. The countries that received country-level support have been able to clearly advance in their processes, and the quality of their NAP processes and documents has been improved. The Network has been an active contributor to the global discussion on NAPs, bringing knowledge, experiences, and lessons from countries. Its knowledge products have improved practical knowledge on several topics such as gender, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), private sector engagement, and alignment between NAPs and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Its singularity arises from IISD's expertise that has resulted in high-quality support, discussions at global and national levels, and knowledge products. Its flexible implementation modalities have contributed to the relevance of its support and limited overlaps with other initiatives providing similar types of support. The Network is considered an "honest knowledge broker" and established a space that is considered "safe" or "neutral" outside of the political UNFCCC context where government representatives can discuss without the pressure and postures of negotiations. In some of the countries where the support has been more focused and granted over a longer period, the Network has started to contribute to the implementation of the NAPs along with investments in adaptation. IISD has exceeded its targets in delivering what was agreed in the USDS grant and has used the resources as planned. There are, of course, areas in which the program can improve going forward, particularly when it comes to coordination or collaboration with other global support programs, assessing and measuring results of its capacity development activities and its impacts, and strengthening the sustainability of its benefits.

Relevance

Evaluation question 1: To what extent are the NAP GN objectives and design responding to stakeholders' and shareholders' needs and priorities with regards to advancing the NAP processes?

Conclusion 1. The approaches selected and activities implemented are relevant to stakeholders' needs and priorities.

- The support focuses on the integration of NAPs in development planning; it is responsive to changing needs and designed with stakeholders.
- The approach actively sought to implement activities that encourage inclusive processes, thus increasing ownership and relevance to local contexts.

Conclusion 2. The work has influenced and is influenced by the global discussion on NAPs.

- The NAP GN actively participates in and influences global discussions, responding rapidly to requests on knowledge gaps.

Coherence

Evaluation question 2: What are the synergies, coordination, and complementarities between the NAP GN and other relevant interventions at country and global levels?

Conclusion 3. The Network is not seen as a competitor nor as undermining the work of others.

- The work has provided clear value added to and alignment with the work of other initiatives, particularly at the country level.
- The NAP GN fills a void in global and national support for adaptation planning.
- The evaluation did not identify significant overlaps between other initiatives and the Network at the country level.

Conclusion 4. At the global level, progress has been made regarding coordination among bilateral entities, but room for improvement remains with multilateral entities.

- The value added and alignment with other initiatives is supported by its key principles: flexibility, complementarity/coordination, thinking creatively, political neutrality, knowledge brokering, and a country-driven nature. However:
 - The roles and complementarities of NAP global support programs are not fully clear among and between them.
 - Building coordination, complementarity, and coherence among global and country initiatives is not easy and requires attention. It has improved over time and is now more systematic.

Effectiveness

Evaluation question 3: To what extent has the NAP GN achieved its outputs?

Conclusion 5. NAP GN is delivering what was promised by exceeding the targets in the USDS grant agreement.

Indicator	Target (as of 2019 amendment)	Achievement as of June 2020
Number of people trained in climate change adaptation supported by U.S. grant assistance	2,069 people trained	3,303
Number of institutions with improved capacity to assess or address climate change risks supported by U.S. grant assistance	129 institutions	222
Number of laws, policies, regulations, or standards addressing climate change adaptation formally proposed, adopted, or implemented as supported by U.S. grant assistance	42 in at least eight countries	79 in 19 countries

Conclusion 6. The implementation approach of linking training to real-time follow-up, particularly through CSH and knowledge generation, is highly effective.

Activities	Findings on outputs
Country-level support	The approach used enhanced ownership and relevance. It focused on national governments responsible for the NAP processes. It emphasized a few countries whose selection was driven by the USDS priority countries.
Peer learning activities	Learning activities tested learning approaches, established relationships with countries and between them and identified needs for country support.
Engagement and coordination	Different modalities of engagement with funders were used: financial support; engagement in the management team and/or Steering Committee; supporting specific events; sharing information; and coordinating.
Knowledge products	The NAP GN has become a go-to knowledge hub on NAP processes and on specific themes related to these processes—especially gender, the private sector, alignment between NDCs and NAPs, and M&E.

Conclusion 7. IISD's experience was brought into the NAP GN by providing effective modalities to deliver capacity and communicate on climate change adaptation.

- The approach links different activities, which is a good practice for the effectiveness and efficiency of this type of support program.
- The capacity of IISD researchers is reflected in the quality of the products.

Evaluation question 4: To what extent has the NAP GN achieved its medium-term (2–3 years) and longer-term (4–5 years) outcomes?

Conclusion 8. The quality of NAP processes and products has improved in the following ways where the NAP GN provided in-depth support:

- They are more dynamic and faster; integrated as part of the broader landscape of climate change adaptation and sustainable development; recognized at the political level; based on sound methodologies and validation of data; incorporate critical topics; promote full engagement and consultation; and improve capacities and awareness.

Conclusion 9. The no “one-size-fits-all” approach has paid off and has proven to be effective.

- The tailoring of support to the country's needs and circumstances has been appreciated.

Conclusion 10. The Network has partially realized the longer-term outcomes expected.

- The capacity of several institutions has been improved, and policies/laws/regulations have been influenced, proposed, adopted, and implemented.
- Participants in capacity-building events are beginning to apply the knowledge and information acquired.
- Neutral advocacy and awareness raising about climate change adaptation have been provided
- The Network has not taken full advantage of participants' expertise.
- Formal and longer-term evaluations to assess capacity have not been conducted.

Efficiency

Evaluation question 5: To what extent has the NAP GN delivered results in a timely and cost-effective way, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context?

Conclusion 11. The Network has spent according to the arrangement of the grant agreement in terms of types of costs but has required a one-year extension.

- There have been no major changes in the allocation of funding per type of support.
- The NAP GN will be able to execute 100% of all funding received, although disbursement was low in the early years.

Conclusion 12. Management costs are within the limits agreed to with USDS although slightly higher than in comparable programs

- Management costs were estimated to represent at least 12% of the actual budget.

Conclusion 13. The Network has adopted efficient approaches.

- Continuity of funding; direct financial execution; coordination and collaboration with others; economies of scale; and direct implementation have contributed to efficiency.

Conclusion 14. IISD succeeded in becoming the Secretariat of the Network.

- There are clear allocation and implementation of roles and responsibilities.

Impact

Evaluation question 6: What is the extent of higher-level effects that the NAP GN has generated or is expected to generate?

Conclusion 15. The focus of the Network has been on improving the enabling environment for NAPs, but some countries have greater climate-resilient investments as a result of the program.

- Although necessary, securing the enabling environment for NAP processes is not sufficient to secure on-the-ground financial investments.
- However, 10 countries receiving USDS funding have benefited from activities with medium or high contribution to greater climate-resilient investments.

Conclusion 16. As expected, there is no evidence yet of long-term impacts.

- Most activities are just being completed and there are many other actors that would influence improvements in resilience. The impact of COVID-19 will be negatively affecting any achievements.
- NAP GN will likely make a medium-high or high contribution to reducing vulnerability of communities to climate change in eight countries supported with USDS funds. NAP GN's contribution to putting countries in a better position to achieve the SDGs in the long term is considered medium in four countries supported with USDS funds.

Conclusion 17. Currently, the Network does not have a robust structure and tools to assess or measure its impacts beyond the M&E activities undertaken as part of donor reporting.

- The Network has not fully developed its capacity on M&E of its activities beyond quantitative indicators and success stories per country. The current Theory of Change is a first step, but will not be able to support impact assessment.

Sustainability

Evaluation question 7: To what extent are the NAP processes supported by NAP GN likely to be sustained in institutional, financial, and social terms after NAP GN's support ends?

Conclusion 18. The likelihood of sustainability of the Network's benefits is higher at the country level than globally.

- In particular, sustainability is likely in countries that received support on resource mobilization and securing resources for climate change-resilient investments.
- The likelihood is lower in countries that received only a one-time support for improving the enabling environment without a clear strategy on how this support was going to be followed up.

Conclusion 19. At the global level, ending the support to the NAP GN would end the benefits generated by the Network's work.

- Given the extensive need for knowledge and capacity regarding adaptation and its processes, there will be a continued need for further support from global programs.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the evaluation team proposes the following recommendations, organized according to three dimensions: (I) management of the Network; (II) design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its activities and (III) strategic directions.

I. Recommendations to the Secretariat Regarding the Management of the Network

- I.1. Revise the Theory of Change, with an accompanied strategic plan and a robust M&E system that provides reporting on progress more regularly and effectively.
- I.2. Continue its fundraising efforts.
- I.3. Continue to favour a direct execution modality, managed by IISD, rather than through intermediaries.

II. Recommendations Regarding the Types of Support That the Network Should Provide

- II.1. Change the third objective with an objective on knowledge production.
- II.2. Continue with the peer learning events and exchanges.
- II.3. Continue the generation of knowledge products.
- II.4. Continue direct support to countries.
- II.5. Strengthen the initial diagnosis phase of its country-level activities. The no-one-size-fits-all approach supported by the Network has worked well and should be continued.
- II.6. Ensure follow-up when supporting the early stages of the NAP process.
- II.7. Move to implementation.
- II.8. Continue advocacy efforts.

III. Recommendations Regarding Strategic Directions

- III.1. Explore increasing the number of countries supported.
- III.2. Revise the implementation approach of minimal in-country presence to match the type of support to be provided.
- III.3. Further reflect on the benefits and costs of becoming a Green Climate Fund (GCF) Delivery Partner for the GCF Readiness Program.
- III. 4. Further utilize the expertise created within the Network members.
- III.5. Enhance complementarity and collaboration with other initiatives at both the global and the country levels.

III.6. Further support the following topics: engagement of the private sector; health/COVID-19; vertical integration; and integration of adaptation into NDCs.