



Response to Independent Final Evaluation of the United States Department of State Support for the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Global Network



March 2021

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 sustained South–South peer learning and exchange, supports national-level action on NAP development and implementation, and enhances bilateral support for adaptation and climate-sensitive sectors through donor coordination. Financial support for the Network has been provided by Austria, Canada, Germany, 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.

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1. Introduction

The National Adaptation Plan Global Network (NAP Global Network) commissioned an external review of its 2015–2020 Work Program funded by the U.S. Department of State. The review took place from May to September 2020 and was led by Baastel, an independent consultancy based in Belgium, engaged through a competitive procurement process.

The evaluation covers the Network's progress and achievements in enhancing adaptation planning and action in developing countries, identifies key challenges in meeting the Network's goals and objectives, and outlines recommendations for the Network going forward. The evaluation team gathered data and information through a review of Network documents, an online member survey, semi-structured interviews with partner countries and institutions, as well as interviews with members of the Steering Committee, Management Team, and Secretariat staff. This document outlines the Network's official intent to address the recommendations presented in the evaluation.

The NAP Global Network was established at COP 20 in December 2014 to enhance national adaptation planning and action in developing countries. It is comprised of individuals and institutions who are working on adaptation in developing countries, including government actors involved in their country's NAP process, representatives from bilateral agencies that support developing countries in adaptation, members of civil society and the private sector interested in or engaged with adaptation, and researchers and academics who seek to inform and help stakeholders learn from adaptation action.

The Network's **vision** is a world where communities and countries—particularly the poorest and most vulnerable—can articulate, work toward, and realize their development aspirations in a changing climate. This is enabled by national adaptation planning processes that are aligned with development priorities and effectively channel resources to people, places, and systems that need it most. The Network's mission is to harness the collective knowledge and resources of governments, practitioners, donors, and civil society to build capacities and accelerate the formulation and implementation of NAP processes. The Network's **role** is to support countries in advancing their NAP processes through access to short- or long-term technical support, peer-learning opportunities, more coordinated and aligned bilateral support, or guidance, tools, and lessons related to the NAP process.

Since its establishment, the Network has grown in size and scope, reaching over 40 countries with direct technical support, over 350 people from over 50 countries with peer-learning opportunities, and thousands of adaptation stakeholders with a wide range of knowledge products on adaptation planning. But there is much more to do. Given the growing urgency of adaptation and the limited availability of support for its implementation, the need has never been greater for more and higher-quality NAPs as a means of accelerating strategic investments in climate-resilient development. As we look toward 2025 with the goal of reaching more countries and adaptation stakeholders, we know it is important to take stock of what is working, what is missing, and what needs to be adjusted, and then seize all opportunities to maximize our impact.

2. Addressing the Evaluation's Recommendations

The NAP Global Network Secretariat welcomes the evaluation's findings.

The evaluation found that the NAP Global Network has been a valuable contributor to the NAP process, providing participating countries with the knowledge and exchange opportunities to support the development of enabling environments for adaptation. Countries that have received in-country support have clearly progressed in and improved the quality of their NAP processes' outputs. The Network has been an active contributor to the global discussion on NAPs, and its knowledge products have improved practical knowledge on key topics.

As a multi-donor initiative, the NAP Global Network will address the recommendations of the evaluation in the following ways through its 2021–2025 Strategy.

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

1.1 Revise the Theory of Change, with an accompanying strategic plan and a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that provides reporting on progress more regularly and effectively.

The Network Secretariat is currently reviewing its Theory of Change to ensure it reflects the latest developments and needs in the adaptation planning space. The Theory of Change will be accompanied by a concise narrative and set of quantitative and qualitative indicators that will allow for a more comprehensive tracking of progress and impact beyond donor reporting requirements.

1.2 Continue its fundraising efforts.

The Network Secretariat and senior management at IISD are currently engaged in a variety of fundraising efforts to not only sustain but scale up Network activities. Indeed, fundraising for the NAP Global Network from a range of sources has become a priority of IISD's CEO and fundraising team. IISD's strategic framework for 2020–2025 includes the priority "increase the resilience of developing countries to climate shocks and stresses, including by growing the NAP Global Network" and fundraising efforts include exploring philanthropic support—a first for the Network.

1.3 Continue to favour a direct execution modality, managed by IISD, rather than through intermediaries.

The Network's modality of support will continue to be driven by two parameters: 1) country needs and/or preferences, and 2) collaborative capacity strengthening. The direct execution modality that emerged during the first five years of the Network's activities was in response to what partner countries felt was manageable and appropriate given the amount of resourcing and type of support being provided; the modality also turned into an important opportunity to strengthen capacities of in-country actors—from national consultants to civil society actors—through technical backstopping and knowledge brokering. The direct execution modality will be replicated where appropriate, but the Network Secretariat also acknowledges that circumstances and preferences may require new types of modalities to be explored.

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

2.1 Change the third objective with an objective of knowledge production.

The Network Steering Committee approved this change in its June 2020 meeting and it is being reflected in the Network's updated Theory of Change and 2021–2025 Strategy.

2.2 Continue with the peer-learning events and exchanges.

South–South peer-learning events and exchanges continue to be an important part of the Network's offerings. The modalities for providing such opportunities will combine existing and updated approaches, considering lessons and feedback received to date, as well as the need to shift to virtual convenings in light of COVID-19 restrictions. The Network will continue to track the results of peer-learning events and exchanges to document how lessons learned through these activities are being put into practice.

2.3 Continue the generation of knowledge products.

The production and sharing of high-quality knowledge products have become an important part of the Network's value-add and reputation. As such, the Network Secretariat will continue to invest in efficient and impactful ways of producing guidance to advance adaptation planning, sharing country experiences that inspire and inform action in other parts of the world, providing timely analysis and reflections on the latest developments or trends in NAP-related policy discussions, and telling stories of progress and impact that demonstrate the critical role of NAP processes in enabling adaptation action.

2.4 Continue direct support to countries.

Direct support to countries is also a core offering of the Network that will be central to the 2021–2025 strategy. The Network Secretariat continues to feel that offering both longer-term in-country programs and shorter-term assistance through the Country Support Hub is a well- rounded and effective approach to providing direct support to countries.

2.5 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. There is an opportunity to improve the initial diagnosis to also be helpful for countries reporting on the global stocktaking required by the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, and relevant to the current pandemic situation, this diagnosis should assess how the NAP process has been affected and identify opportunities to implement the planned COVID-19 recovery actions in a way that is climate smart.

Detailed programs of support have been designed with partner countries and informed by country needs, opportunities (for collaboration, coordination, and innovation), and available resourcing. The Network Secretariat can explore ways to make this phase of work more relevant to the preparation of inputs for the Global Stocktake, recognizing that NAP processes are themselves vehicles for providing such input (including indirectly by providing content for nationally determined contributions [NDCs], Adaptation Communications, and Biennial Transparency Reports). Given the range of COVID-19's impacts on societies, economies, governance institutions, and environments, the Network Secretariat expects that direct support to countries' NAP processes will intersect with recovery efforts. Indeed, opportunities to support country efforts to simultaneously advance adaptation action and pandemic recovery will be regularly explored.

2.6 Ensure follow-up when supporting the early stages of the NAP process. The Network should clarify pathways for accessing additional support and foster engagement with other funders to that end since the sustainability (and outcome and impacts) of these stages would otherwise be hindered.

The Network continues to ensure its activities are coordinated with those of other NAP support providers and includes seeking opportunities for translating its targeted contributions to advancing a country's NAP process into enhanced and sustained overall support—from a variety of sources—for a country's NAP process. The Network's resources are, after all, relatively limited and unable to address all of a country's needs. Working with countries to, for example, receive funding from the Green Climate Fund to ensure it is quickly and effectively deployed has become an increasingly important Network role. Coordinating with other funders and initiatives—such as the NDC Partnership or Least Developed Country [LDC] Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR)—so that they can build on the Network's support in their own activities going forward will continue to be part of our *modus operandi*.

2.7 Move to implementation ... moving countries from “paper NAPs” to the implementation of the priorities and measures identified and build high-level political support. This can include further work in a) integrating adaptation planning into national development plans, budgeting, and climate change planning; b) working with the private sector; c) working on vertical integration; d) supporting the identification and mobilization of external resources; e) ensuring that the enabling environment at national and subnational levels is favourable for implementation; f) supporting permanent adaptation coordination structures in some countries; g) promoting M&E systems for adaptation.

The Network welcomes requests from governments to support activities that facilitate the implementation of adaptation actions prioritized through NAPs. The Network will continue to invest in the systems and capacities that help countries identify and articulate their adaptation priorities, as well as ensure a smoother transition from planning to implementation—including through further work in the areas mentioned in the evaluation. Indeed, private sector engagement, vertical integration, institutional arrangements, and the development of robust, country-owned M&E systems have been ongoing and growing priorities for the Network, and these will continue to be so going forward. Supporting countries in their efforts to mainstream adaptation into sectoral and central development efforts—as well as to navigate the financing landscape successfully—will become even more important moving forward.

2.8 Continue advocacy efforts by emphasizing the benefits of NAPs, clearly conveying the message that they are not just about planning and assessments but also about action on the ground.

The Network’s approach to supporting countries has always recognized the entire NAP process—i.e., planning, implementation, and M&E. Central to our communications and advocacy efforts has been the message that the signature achievement of a NAP process is not the publishing of a plan itself, but the action and results that come from its implementation. The Network will continue to play a leading role as educator, translator, and advocate for NAP processes, reminding different stakeholders of what NAP processes are and why they are important for protecting and/or making the right investments in development and building resilience at scale.

3. Recommendations Regarding Strategic Directions

3.1 Explore increasing the number of countries supported.

The Network Secretariat has set a goal to reach an additional 30 new countries by the end of 2025, with at least 30% of all support going to Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

3.2 Revise the implementation approach of minimal in-country presence to match the type of support to be provided ... In countries receiving long-term support, more frequent in-country missions or national offices may be convenient, combined with a sort of an external coordinator.

The Network will continue to prioritize the engagement of national consultants (or regional ones where national consultants are not available) in the implementation of longer-term in-country programs of work. Where the scale and duration of support require more Network presence and backstopping, options for engaging a nationally or regionally based coordinator will be explored. The Network Secretariat will also make in-country missions a central part of establishing in-country programs. The aim will always be to balance the goals of country ownership, sustained capacity strengthening, minimizing the burden on partner governments, and limiting greenhouse gas emissions associated with Network Secretariat travel to partner countries.

3.3 Further reflect on the benefits and costs of becoming a Green Climate Fund (GCF) Delivery Partner for the GCF Readiness Program.

While the Network is open to the possibility of becoming a Delivery Partner for the GCF's Readiness Program, it will not be the defining modality of engagement with developing country partners. The Network will remain a neutral knowledge broker in the NAP space, trying to avoid competing against national actors in accessing GCF Readiness resources. The Network Secretariat will only consider a Delivery Partner arrangement in a relatively limited number of cases where country ownership is indisputable, relationships with in-country partners are very strong, and the Network's approach to providing support—i.e., country- driven collaborative capacity building—is deemed appropriate and desirable.

3.4 Further utilize the expertise created within the Network members.

Linked to recommendation II.1. (“Change the third objective with an objective on knowledge production”), the Network will seek to more actively amplify the expertise of adaptation experts who have signed up to be Network participants, including adaptation experts at the national level and those working at the global level engaging with United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) constituted bodies and other advisory groups (e.g., the Least Developed Countries Expert Group [LEG], Adaptation Committee, and Technical Expert Group on Comprehensive Risk Management [TEG CRM]). The Network will seek contributions from these experts who join the Network to build dialogue, rather than using the Network participant list primarily to disseminate and share information on knowledge products and events. Broader opportunities for engagement and profile-raising will be created, where Network members will be invited to submit stories for blogs and other knowledge products, share expertise at Network and other NAP events, and generally play a greater role in Network storytelling and advocacy efforts around NAPs.

3.5 Enhance complementarity and collaboration with other initiatives at both the global and the country levels.

Complementarity and collaboration with other climate support initiatives—and especially NAP support actors—at the global and country levels are essential for achieving the Network’s goal to enhance coordination of climate-resilient development. The Network has established initial partnerships and collaborations with many—if not most—NAP support actors and contributes to the NAP Technical Working Group. It also regularly shares information and knowledge products that other NAP actors produce through Network communication channels and jointly organizes events with partner initiatives. The Network will seek to continue enhancing coordination mechanisms with other initiatives to better understand specific ways in which it can best support other adaptation- and NAP-focused initiatives. It will also seek to create the role of Partnerships Coordinator within the Secretariat if resources can be secured.

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

The Network Secretariat is currently exploring a next phase of support to countries on private sector engagement, building on the Study and Toolkit that were launched in 2019 and 2020, respectively. This includes fundraising to support more countries in developing private sector engagement strategies, as well as supporting those countries that have already developed such strategies to actually implement them. The Network has started advocating for the use of NAP processes in designing COVID-19 recovery programs and is similarly exploring opportunities to engage in COVID-19 recovery efforts in partner countries, where appropriate. The Network Secretariat has also undertaken some preliminary analysis on how health issues are addressed in NAP processes (in partnership with new organizations) and will pursue opportunities to build on these activities based on country responses and feedback. Vertical integration will continue to be a priority of the Network’s, with greater focus placed on civil society engagement in the NAP process. In addition, as greater attention is paid to updating or enhancing NDCs in the lead-up to COP 26, the Network will share stories of how NAP processes can contribute to such efforts and, if resources are available, provide technical support to countries that request it.

3. Conclusion

With a horizon to 2025, we are committed to leveraging the Network's successes and lessons to date to help more countries bridge the gap from adaptation planning to implementation; to accelerate adaptation action at scale through South–South peer learning; to advocate for NAP processes in global policy discussions in order to elevate their role in driving meaningful adaptation action; and to broaden our Network by working with country governments that have not yet benefited from the NAP Global Network's offer, among other goals.

As countries' needs and the global climate action landscape change, support initiatives like the NAP Global Network need to respond to that evolving context. This evaluation has provided the NAP Global Network with valuable lessons and recommendations that will inform its next phase of work to ensure it is fit for purpose and able to maximize its impact. We look forward to supporting partner countries in their efforts to prepare for and thrive in a changing climate.



Coordinating Climate-Resilient Development

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