



Adaptation Communications:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Many countries are preparing their first [adaptation communication \(ADCOM\)](#) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) this year. The NAP Global Network Secretariat is currently supporting 19 country partners with this work and has seen a number of common questions emerge on ADCOMs and how they can link to National Adaptation Plan (NAP) processes. Below, we look at some of these questions.

This FAQ benefitted from contributions by Matti Goldberg from the UNFCCC Secretariat.

The Basics

What is an adaptation communication (ADCOM)?

An ADCOM is a report prepared by countries that synthesizes and shares their priorities, efforts, needs, and lessons around adapting to climate change.

When was the ADCOM established?

The ADCOM was established under Article 7, paragraphs 10, 11, and 12 of the 2015 [Paris Agreement](#). Paragraph 10 reads:

“Each Party should, as appropriate, submit and update periodically an adaptation communication, which may include its priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions, without creating any additional burden for developing country Parties.”

Paragraphs 11 and 12 point to how an ADCOM can be submitted (see below) and that it will be recorded in a public registry maintained by the UNFCCC secretariat.

Where are ADCOMs currently captured?

ADCOMs are currently presented on a [provisional webpage by the UNFCCC secretariat](#). In the future, they will be recorded in a public registry. Countries are currently working on the design of the registry. At the moment, parties interested in posting their ADCOMs on the UNFCCC website can contact adaptation-communications@unfccc.int.

What is the purpose of an ADCOM?

The ADCOM has four main purposes (identified in [decision 9/CMA.1](#), which provides the guidance for the ADCOM):

- **“Enhance visibility and profile of adaptation, and balance with mitigation”:** This can mean countries can use ADCOMs to show the rest of the world what they are doing on adaptation, highlight the importance of these efforts to domestic audiences by using an international report, and ensure that adaptation is not eclipsed by mitigation or other global priorities. The latter speaks to the Paris Agreement's goal of achieving balance in terms of support for mitigation and adaptation.
- **“Strengthen adaptation action and support for developing countries”:** By articulating a compelling message around the importance of adaptation for both global and domestic audiences, ADCOMs can rally or mobilize further action. By highlighting progress and needs on adaptation, an ADCOM can boost donor understanding and support.
- **“Provide inputs to the global stocktake”:** The global stocktake will review collective progress toward achieving the purpose of the Paris Agreement and its long-term goals, including the global goal on adaptation. ADCOMs will be one key source of information that is used to synthesize the state of adaptation efforts, experiences, and priorities to assist in this review.
- **“Enhance learning and understanding of adaptation needs and actions”:** ADCOMs will be an important source of information on what countries are doing to adapt, what they need to do to scale up and improve their efforts, and what lessons and results are being observed.

Are countries required to submit an ADCOM under the Paris Agreement?

No. The preparation and submission of an ADCOM are completely voluntary.

What is the deadline for submitting an ADCOM?

Countries that wish to prepare and submit an ADCOM are encouraged to “submit their first ADCOM as soon as possible, ... to provide timely input to the first global stocktake” ([1/CMA.2, para 12](#)).

The first global stocktake will take place in 2023, with the information collection and technical assessment stages taking place in 2022. The stocktake will be informed by a series of synthesis reports, including several on adaptation. One will be prepared by the UNFCCC secretariat and several others by constituted bodies, including the Least Developed Countries Expert Group and Adaptation Committee. These synthesis reports are to be completed in early 2022.

In order for a country’s ADCOM to be included in these synthesis reports on adaptation, it has to be communicated to the UNFCCC secretariat by the end of January 2022 at the very latest—but ideally by the end of December 2021.

How can a country submit an ADCOM?

A country has three main options for [submitting an adaptation communication](#):

1. **As a standalone document:** A separate document directly uploaded to a public registry.
 - i. Examples of standalone ADCOMs so far include those from the [United Kingdom](#), the [Republic of Marshall Islands](#), [Switzerland](#), and [Norway](#).
2. **In conjunction with another document:** A separate document submitted together with another document (see below for examples of other documents). While separate, the documents are linked—for example, through cross-referencing, joint cover letters, etc. The public registry will enable countries to link their documents.
 - i. [Canada’s adaptation communication](#) notes that it “is being submitted in conjunction with Canada’s latest Nationally Determined Contribution.”
3. **As a component of another document:** Integrated into another document (see below for [examples of other documents](#)). The ADCOM can be an existing section of the other document, a new section, or an annex; countries can choose the best structure to suit their needs. For example, as of August 2021:
 - i. 11 countries (Angola, Lebanon, Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Kenya, Panama, Paraguay, the Russian Federation, and Uruguay) have used the adaptation chapter of their nationally determined contribution (NDC) as their ADCOM.
 - ii. One country (New Zealand) has used their National Communication (NC) as their ADCOM.
 - iii. One country (Timor Leste) has used their National Adaptation Plan (NAP) as their ADCOM.

As in the above examples, if countries choose to submit their ADCOM “in conjunction” or “as a component of” another document, the other document can be their NAP, their NDC, their NC, or their Biennial Transparency Report (BTR).¹

These multiple options exist to maximize flexibility, serve the strategic need(s) of a country, and minimize burdens—particularly for developing countries—in preparing and submitting an ADCOM. For example, a country that has recently completed or is completing an NC may decide that it captures much of the latest information that could be included in an ADCOM, but they may want to submit a separate document that focuses on the country’s implementation and support needs as their ADCOM. The country can then refer to relevant sections of their NC in their ADCOM but keep the document focused on needs. This would be an example of submitting an ADCOM in conjunction with an NC.

Principles

What are the main principles of an ADCOM?

Recognizing the four main purposes of an ADCOM, it is important to emphasize that they:

- **Are country-driven and flexible**, including in the choice of whether they are developed as a standalone communication or not.
- **Do not pose any additional burden on developing countries.** Recognizing the capacity and financial constraints of developing countries and the already significant efforts that are involved in preparing other reports and communications under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, an ADCOM is voluntary—with flexibility in approaches—in order to reduce the amount of effort involved in preparing one.
- **Are not a basis for comparison between parties.** Countries’ ADCOMs are not intended to be used to directly compare adaptation efforts to one another, as different countries will take different approaches to both adapting to the impacts of climate change and preparing and submitting their ADCOMs. Recognizing that the ADCOM is voluntary, it is also “not subject to review.”

¹ BTR submissions will start in 2024.

Content

What information should be included in an ADCOM?

All of the content included in an ADCOM is optional. The possible “elements” that a country might choose to include were decided in [Decision 9/CMA.1](#) in 2018.

Countries are invited to provide information in the categories a–d, and, as appropriate, the additional information described in elements e–i.

Countries are also encouraged to include “ex-ante” information (that is, forward-looking information), and they may tailor the information in light of the guidelines of the “vehicle” document (with the aim of ensuring coherence and reducing reporting burdens).

In addition to the guidelines in 9/CMA.1, the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee is preparing supplementary guidance to help countries prepare their ADCOMs. That guidance will be finalized in 2022, and the latest draft is [available here](#).

Invited to provide this information

- a) National circumstances, institutional arrangements, and legal frameworks
- b) Impacts, risks, and vulnerabilities, as appropriate
- c) National adaptation priorities, strategies, policies, plans, goals, and actions
- d) Implementation and support needs of, and provision of support to, developing country parties

Invited to provide this additional information, as appropriate

- e) Implementation of adaptation actions and plans, including:
 - i. Progress and results achieved
 - ii. Adaptation efforts of developing countries for recognition
 - iii. Cooperation on enhancing adaptation at the national, regional, and international levels, as appropriate
 - iv. Barriers, challenges, and gaps related to the implementation of adaptation
 - v. Good practices, lessons learned, and information-sharing
 - vi. Monitoring and evaluation
 - f) Adaptation actions and/or economic diversification plans, including those that result in mitigation co-benefits
 - g) How adaptation actions contribute to other international frameworks and/or conventions
 - h) Gender-responsive adaptation action and Traditional Knowledge, knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, and local knowledge systems related to adaptation, where appropriate
 - i) Any other information related to adaptation
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How much of the information in an ADCOM is new, and how much is a synthesis of existing information?

This is a country's choice.

Much of this information may be already available in documents countries already have (such as NCs, draft or published NAPs, or the adaptation component of an NDC).

Synthesizing existing information may help reduce the burden of developing an ADCOM and may help align the ADCOM with different existing documents.

Countries that wish to include new information are free to do so.

Can countries cross-reference to other documents?

Yes. For example, in Element A (National circumstances) of its ADCOM, Canada writes: "Canada's national circumstances are described in detail in its Seventh National Communication. This includes details on its governance structures, as well as Canada's unique population, geographic, economic and climate profiles."

Cross-referencing other documents may be a useful strategy to avoid duplication of effort and reduce any additional burden.

Links to the NAP Process

Can the NAP document be used as an ADCOM?

Yes. As described above, countries have two options:

- They can communicate to the UNFCCC secretariat that they want to use part of their NAP document as their ADCOM—that is, their ADCOM is "a component" of the NAP.
- They can submit an ADCOM "in conjunction" with their NAP. In this case, the ADCOM might be a synthesis or excerpt of their NAP and/or it may include additional information that is not yet included in the NAP.

Which sections of the NAP document can be used to develop an ADCOM?

NAP documents are likely to contain information that is relevant to most, if not all, of the elements of an ADCOM. Yet NAPs can be lengthy, technical, and detailed documents—understandably, as they are vehicles for the implementation of adaptation actions. The information contained within a NAP can be distilled into a shorter, more focused ADCOM that draws attention to the main aspirations, plans, and needs of a country, thereby enhancing the visibility of adaptation. Reviewing the draft or final version of a NAP could be a useful starting point for country climate teams looking to develop an ADCOM.

For a country that has not completed a NAP document but that has a NAP process underway, what can be done?

Many countries have invested significant time and resources in national adaptation planning, but for a variety of reasons, may not yet have a NAP document completed and formally submitted to the UNFCCC. The UNFCCC [reported](#) last year that 125 developing countries have NAP processes underway.

For countries in this situation, developing an ADCOM can be a way to boost the profile of adaptation and increase momentum in the NAP process. Drawing on what they have done so far in their NAP process—whether it is a NAP Framework,² roadmap, risk assessments, or other milestones along the way—countries can use and synthesize whatever information they have available from the NAP process in their ADCOM and submit as soon as possible to ensure that the most up-to-date information on their adaptation efforts is reflected in the first global stocktake.

² A NAP Framework is a strategic document that outlines the vision and structure for the NAP process, articulating why it is essential and how it complements other elements of the climate and development policy landscape in the country. The NAP Global Network has supported several countries in developing NAP Frameworks, including [Botswana](#), [Fiji](#), [Malawi](#), [Nigeria](#), Peru, and Sierra Leone.



**NAP
Global
Network**

Coordinating Climate-Resilient Development

www.napglobalnetwork.org

info@napglobalnetwork.org

 [@NAP_Network](https://twitter.com/NAP_Network)

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