Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework for Liberia's National Adaptation Plan

Briefing Note   December 2022

Introduction

This briefing note provides a summary of the main points of a technical report that proposes the framework of a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system for Liberia's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2020–2030. The purposes of the technical report are to

- Provide an overview of an appropriate MEL framework for Liberia's NAP process, including clarifying aims and objectives; institutional arrangements, including roles and responsibilities; a process to review and revise indicators; and a system to assess and collect data.
- Elaborate on how national government ministries and agencies, county governments, and other stakeholders can support the development of the national MEL system for Liberia's NAP.
- Set out a phased work plan to establish the MEL system.

The MEL system will be aligned with Liberia's NAP process and will help to track the progress of implementation on prioritised actions set in the NAP. The proposed framework was informed by best practices and input gained through consultations with stakeholders from national and county governments, civil society organisations, and the private sector.

The full technical report is available on request from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia.

Context

Liberia has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing adaptation, including by preparing policies, plans, and strategies that not only outline adaptation actions in various priority sectors but also mandate the establishment of MEL frameworks. In addition, the proposed MEL framework for Liberia is guided by international policies and frameworks, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its 2015 Paris Agreement. The latter states that parties shall engage in MEL of their adaptation plans and report on adaptation actions and outcomes, including through Adaptation Communications (AdComs). Liberia submitted its NAP, AdCom, and nationally determined contribution (NDC) to the UNFCCC Secretariat in 2021. The updated NDC sets out Liberia's contribution to the achievement of the Paris Agreement goals. It calls for a climate change measurement and reporting system that builds on existing structures and includes adaptation through tracking climate finance, climate impacts, and climate change actions.

At the national level, several policies and plans provide guidance to inform the development of a MEL system for adaptation in Liberia. Liberia's NAP (2020–2030), for which this MEL system is proposed, calls for an effective MEL system to facilitate implementation and includes as a goal the deployment of a NAP MEL system (see Table 1). The 2018 National Policy and Response Strategy on Climate Change mandates the EPA, which is the government organisation spearheading its implementation, to monitor programme activities, evaluate the success of the policy, and ensure MEL systems are put in place.

Table 1. NAP 2020–2030: Goal 2.2: Deployment of a NAP MEL system[1]

Initiatives	1. Integrate a MEL system for adaptation into the monitoring system. 2. Assess progress on adaptation actions implemented by the Government of Liberia and partners.
Indicator	Progress in the development and implementation of the monitoring system.
Outcomes	1. Updated information on the progress and performance of the NAP and its sectoral strategies. 2. Increased transparency about the deployment of adaptation policies and actions and sharing of information among government bodies and civil society organisations.
Responsibility	EPA, civil society organisations, and partners.

The MEL system is expected to build on and complement efforts to monitor and evaluate progress and results in the implementation of actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2017 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and the 2008 Food and

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[1] Source: Adapted from Government of Liberia. (2021). *Liberia National Adaptation Plan 2020-2030,* p. 27. https://unfccc.int/documents/424116

Agriculture Policy and Strategy. Work is needed to align the MEL system for adaptation with the processes of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MoFDP), which is responsible for monitoring and evaluating government programmes and donor projects. In addition, significant capacity development will be required at the county level, where governments and partners lack uniform MEL systems and have limited skills to collect data and monitor adaptation actions.

Content

Liberia's NAP outlines a four-step approach to MEL of the NAP (see Table 2).

Table 2. MEL of the NAP: Four steps[2]

Steps	Indicative activities—to be led by the EPA
1. Monitoring the NAP	• Identify areas of the NAP that will be monitored through qualitative and quantitative performance measures to determine progress made toward the NAP's objectives. • Define metrics for documenting progress for the areas identified for monitoring. Concerning evaluation, determine the means for measuring and communicating levels of effectiveness and assessing gaps. • Collect information on the metrics throughout the NAP process.
2. Reviewing the NAP process to assess progress, effectiveness, and gaps – Evaluation	• Compile and synthesise information from new assessments and emerging science, as well as the results and outcomes from adaptation activities being implemented, to support the review and updating of the NAP. • Revise the NAP using evaluation information and metrics.
3. Iteratively updating the NAP – Learning	• Update the NAP based on the information collected. • Work toward aligning the NAP updates with relevant national development plans.
4. Reporting on progress and effectiveness, and carrying out outreach on the NAP	• Disseminate the NAP document. • Provide information in national communications on the progress and effectiveness of the NAP.

The MEL system for adaptation will be designed to monitor and evaluate the priority adaptation measures identified in Liberia's NAP document. The NAP sets out adaptation indicators and outcomes for the priority sectors of coastal zones, energy, fisheries, forestry, and waste management. Indicators were included for the agricultural sector, but continued work is required to identify the expected outcomes of adaptation action. Additional work is also needed to review the indicators and available baseline data to ensure that this information is available for tracking progress on adaptation action in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

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[2] Source: Adapted from Government of Liberia. (2021). *Liberia National Adaptation Plan 2020-2030,* p. 101. https://unfccc.int/documents/424116

Operationalisation

The institutional arrangements for the MEL system should build on the coordination and management structures set out in Liberia's NAP and NDC. The EPA will lead the establishment and operationalisation of the MEL system for adaptation, which is consistent with the EPA being the government agency designated to manage environmental and climate change issues in the country, in addition to being responsible for the NAP process. To fulfil its role, the EPA could consider establishing a MEL Coordination Unit responsible for overseeing and managing the MEL system. This will require adequate resources, estimated to be USD 1.5 million over 3 years. First, an adaptation MEL coordinator should be appointed to lead the coordination of work across sectors and levels of government.

The EPA will need to work with both sector ministries responsible for coordinating the monitoring of progress on adaptation actions and with the MoFDP, which is responsible for tracking the flows of finance for adaptation. Collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection will help to ensure that the needs of women, children, and other vulnerable groups are considered when assessing progress on adaptation action. The Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services (LISGIS), which is responsible for the collection, processing, analysis, and dissemination of statistical data, will provide advisory services for the adaptation MEL system.

At the sub-national level, the EPA will work with county authorities and local organisations responsible for adaptation planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation to operationalise the MEL system for adaptation. The County Development Steering Committee, youth groups, women's groups, and grassroots organisations undertaking climate change adaptation projects will report on progress and lessons learnt from implementing adaptation actions through yearly progress reports submitted to the EPA.

The MEL system for adaptation could be aligned with the EPA-specific management information system that is currently in the planning stages. The work to develop the management information system could include the identification of needed data for decision making, the identification of sources of data and information, procedures for collecting data, and requirements for storage and access.

Communications and Reporting

Communication of adaptation progress, results, and lessons learnt will form an integral part of the MEL system. The EPA will need to establish processes to analyse the adaptation data and prepare the required national and international reports, including those required under the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, such as the AdCom and assessments of progress toward the Global Goal on Adaptation. In addition, data and information will be used to update Liberia's NDC and NAP and provide input to the annual reports on the environment and climate change that the EPA is required to submit to the National Legislature of Liberia.

Learning products will explore how and why adaptation has or has not worked and how communities and systems are building resilience to climate impacts, with the goal of improving policy development, planning, and decision making. A communications strategy will be

developed to explore how the EPA can use the MEL system to provide input to and improve reporting on adaptation, both at the domestic and international levels.

Recommendations

Moving forward, the EPA will require financial support from both the national government and international organisations to operationalise the MEL system. The main recommendations to move forward to establish the MEL system are to

- Establish a single, coordinated system for MEL and reporting on climate change adaptation.
- Establish methods for tracking progress, identifying achievements, and evaluating the results of the adaptation process, and make any changes that might be necessary. Establish mechanisms to facilitate the review and analysis of adaptation data.
- Provide adequate human resources and build MEL capacity in the coordinating and implementing agencies to enable the MEL system for adaptation to operate effectively.
- Encourage dialogue and debate among stakeholders to create a common understanding of the significance of a MEL system for climate change adaptation and the need for effective coordination of the system at the sectoral, national, and sub-national levels.
- Scale up efforts to integrate learning from the MEL system for adaptation into government policies, strategies, and plans in order to facilitate implementation of the NAP process and add value to ongoing development initiatives.

Next Steps

The proposal is for Liberia's adaptation MEL system to be established over 3 years. MEL of adaptation is complex and multifaceted, and the initial steps to establish the system in Liberia will focus on monitoring the implementation progress of priority NAP actions. Evaluation of the results of action will initially be qualitative assessments comprised of case studies and stories of change, which will engage stakeholders at the county level.

The suggested next steps to be implemented over the next 3 years include the following:

Institutional arrangements

- Review the EPA's human and financial resource needs.
- Set up an adaptation MEL Coordination Unit at the EPA and appoint a MEL coordinator.
- Appoint adaptation MEL leads in sector ministries.
- Establish linkages with the LISGIS and the MoFDP, both of which have mandated roles in relation to the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.
- Ensure that the processes established for the measurement of the NAP (adaptation) and NDC (mitigation) are aligned and complementary.

Data collection, management, and review

- Review indicators and identify needed data to track progress on adaptation. Revise indicators if needed to deliver on stated MEL aims and objectives.

- Examine data that is collected by other agencies and processes that could inform the MEL system for adaptation.

- Compile an inventory of climate vulnerability and risk assessments that will inform the evaluation of adaptation actions and help to determine if these actions have been effective in reducing climate vulnerability.

- Develop a data collection template, factsheet, and guidance document for each agreed adaptation indicator to guide sector ministries and other stakeholders that will report on adaptation actions.

- Establish a digital portal under an Open Data Initiative through which LISGIS, as a mandated repository, will manage and provide adaptation data.

- Establish processes, such as focus and expert groups, to verify and validate data.

- Monitor the mainstreaming of adaptation into development planning and policies.

- Build capacity on MEL, including how to use the tools and systems developed for data collection, management, and analysis.

Communications and reporting

- Prepare a communications strategy.

- Review reporting requirements and timelines and compile a list of domestic and international reports that the MEL system will inform and feed into.

- Identify who will use the data (such as decision-makers, development partners, civil society, the private sector, and interested citizens) and the types of information and reports needed.

- Develop approaches and methods to analyse the adaptation data and information.

- Develop learning products that inform subsequent iterations of the MEL system, the updating of the NAP and NDC, and the sharing of information between different stakeholders within and across sectors and at national and sub-national levels.

Initial work will include the preparation of a detailed MEL plan for a pilot phase in the agriculture sector. This pilot phase will assist the EPA in clarifying the processes needed to review and update indicators and baselines, test data collection methods and data management systems, determine the timing of data collection and reporting, and confirm the processes to verify and validate data. In addition, the EPA will be able to assess and confirm the roles and responsibilities of institutions and stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, MoFDP, LISGIS, county governments, and civil society organisations.

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