

Zambia Takes an Inclusive Approach to Developing a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework for its National Adaptation Plan



July 2023

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Key Messages

- To ensure coherence and effectiveness, adaptation actions in different national processes must synchronize their performance indicators. The Zambian government kickstarted this process by aligning key indicators in the National Development Plan, nationally determined contributions, and National Adaptation Plan (NAP) through a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework.
- Inclusive stakeholder consultations are vital for successful outcomes, demanding careful planning regarding time, participant availability, and resources. Zambia's forthcoming consultation processes should set realistic timelines to maximize engagement.
- For a multi-sectoral NAP, a strong institutional coordination mechanism is essential for seamless vertical and horizontal collaboration. An effective MEL framework should be anchored in this coordination.
- Zambia's government involved sub-national bodies in the review of NAP indicators, allowing them to tailor indicators to their local contexts, capacities, and resources. This empowerment enabled stakeholders to independently select performance indicators for integration into their development plans.

Introduction

Zambia is classified as a least developed country and is recognized as one of the most vulnerable nations in the world to climate change risks (Eckstein et al., 2017). It faces significant climate change impacts, such as floods, extreme heat, and droughts, which have severely affected livelihoods (Urquhart & Lotz-Sisitka, 2014). In response to these challenges, Zambia initiated its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process in 2020, with readiness grant support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Water Partnership as a delivery partner (Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, 2021). The NAP process officially launched in April 2021. The Zambian NAP process aims to establish medium- to long-term priorities for building the country's climate resilience across nine priority sectors (see Box 1).

To ensure effective decision making, Zambia places significant emphasis on monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) as part of its overall performance optimization efforts. In 2022, the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment (MGEE) initiated MEL system development consultations that led to adjustments documented in a report on the prioritization of adaptation measures (MGEE, n.d.). The revised approach includes sub-national involvement, aligning with the 8th National Development Plan's (8NDP's) focus on environmental and sustainability issues. Consequently, the draft MEL framework developed in June 2022 needed revision to align with NAP reporting requirements and the aspirations outlined in the 8NDP.

This sNAPshot highlights some of the key components in the 2023 revised framework and draws on important lessons learned.

Zambia's Approach to MEL in the NAP Process

The NAP process in Zambia serves as a vehicle for achieving coherent national adaptation actions. In 2020, the Zambian government¹ identified the absence of indicators as a key barrier to establishing an effective MEL system for national adaptation (GCF, 2020). The revised 2023 MEL framework, therefore, is intended to set clear sector-specific indicators and articulate how these indicators will be monitored to ensure steady performance.

In summary, the framework is intended to serve multiple purposes:

Box 1. Zambia's NAP at a glance

Time horizon: 2023–2032

Lead Ministry: MGEE

Priority Sectors: Agriculture (livestock, crop, fisheries); tourism, wildlife, and forestry; health; water, infrastructure, mining, and energy

Number of identified priority adaptation actions: Approximately 90 actions

¹ The Zambian government's proposal for GCF Readiness Programme support for adaptation was approved in 2020. The grant provides USD 2.2 million for national adaptation planning activities, with the Global Water Partnership as the grant delivery partner.

1. It aims to demonstrate performance through evidence-based reporting that informs government and other decision-makers.
2. It promotes accountability and compliance by assessing whether program activities are carried out as agreed and in compliance with established standards.
3. It emphasizes the importance of stakeholder feedback and seeks especially to include diverse voices.

Sub-National Engagement for Effective MEL Implementation

The MEL framework proposed in Zambia aimed to address gaps identified in the National Adaptation Planning for Climate Resilience project. Key challenges included the lack of indicator-based reporting for higher outcome-level indicators and the need for a clear coordination and reporting structure for tracking key performance indicators in climate change adaptation.

To overcome these challenges, the development of the revised MEL framework involved an inclusive consultation process that engaged government and non-government stakeholders at all levels of governance. The Technical Committee on Climate Change and the Department of Climate Change and Green Economy led the process. The consultation process also engaged sub-national and district-level entities, such as the Provincial Planning Units and District Planning Officers.

By including participants from the provinces, the framework aimed to improve coordination

and reporting of climate change adaptation issues at the sub-national level.

Through workshops and consultations, the indicators were reviewed and adjusted by different sectors and provinces. This process helped to develop a common understanding of the performance measurement criteria and better integration of policy mandates across the NAP, the nationally determined contribution (NDC), and the National Development Plan (NDP). This process also ensured that climate change impacts were aligned with the selected adaptation measures, thus establishing harmony between the effects of climate change and the adaptation efforts in each sector.

An Inclusive Institutional Arrangement for Reporting

Monitoring adaptation actions requires appropriate institutional arrangements that enable the flow of information across different tiers of governance, both vertically and horizontally. In the revised framework, a key emphasis of the system is the engagement of provincial bodies in coordinating information from local- to national-level entities on MEL for reporting on progress.

Zambia's Data Flow Process

Zambia's revised MEL framework recognizes the need for diverse data sources and highlights the importance of engaging provincial bodies in overseeing MEL functions. It should be noted that the revised MEL framework proposes a re-arrangement of the existing reporting structures to ensure that all relevant bodies are involved in data collection and reporting.

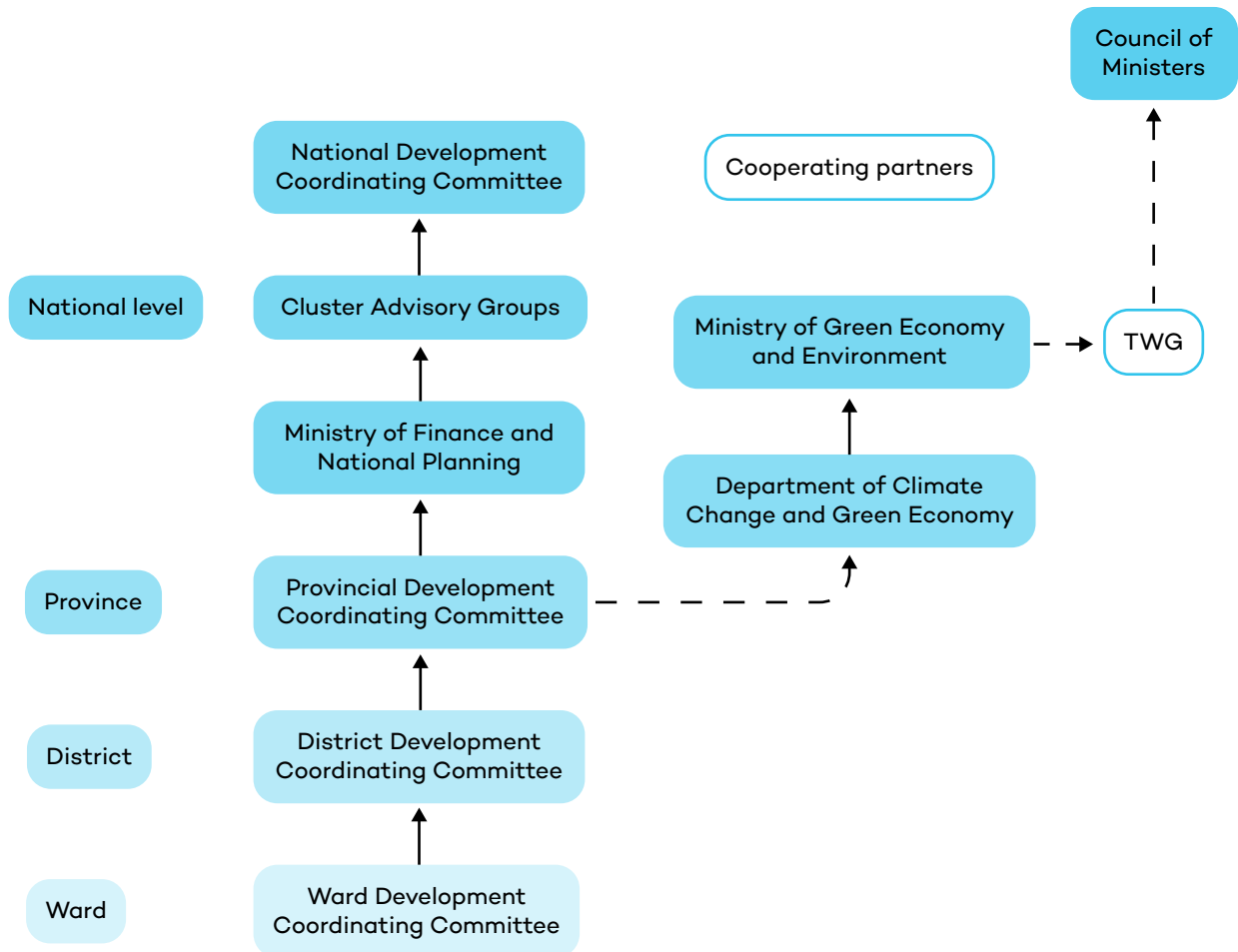
The proposed data flow process involves collecting data on adaptation indicators at the district/ward level. The data will then be reviewed by the Provincial Development Coordinating Committees (PDCCs). The District Development Coordinating Committees, along with the PDCCs, will be responsible for data cleaning and data quality assurance.

At the national level, the information is shared with the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, which reports to the Cluster Advisory Groups.

Since the MGEE has limited provincial presence, except for the forestry and meteorology departments, the proposed reporting framework (see Figure 1) establishes that the PDCC should be providing information to the MGEE. The MGEE, through the Department of Climate Change, should be responsible for coordinating all climate change-related activities and facilitating the M&E of climate change implementation plans and projects.

Further changes to the proposed reporting framework, also presented in the figure, have been tentatively suggested as part of the revision of the 2016 National Climate Change Policy. The proposed reporting structure suggests the creation of a Technical Working Group (TWG) that is comprised of Permanent Secretaries who will report to a body called the Council of Ministries, chaired by the vice-president of the Republic of Zambia. The TWG would be responsible for providing technical advice and reporting progress on climate change adaptation, as well as all other climate change matters.

Figure 1. The proposed reporting process in the NAP MEL framework



Note: This figure is a recommendation presented to the Zambian government by the consultant. Source: Rhodwell, 2022.

A Gender-Responsive MEL Framework

The MEL framework for adaptation in Zambia acknowledges the need to integrate gender into all aspects of the framework. It enlists the Climate Change Gender Action Plan (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2018) as one of the key reference documents to identify climate change adaptation activities under the NAP.

Incorporating and mainstreaming gender in adaptation actions in Zambia has been

achieved through several avenues during the development of the revised MEL framework. These efforts include engaging the Gender Division, a government entity, to ensure inclusivity, hiring a gender expert to guide the process, establishing gender-centred criteria for prioritizing and selecting adaptation options, and engaging local gender-focused networks, such as the Non-Governmental Gender Organisations’ Coordinating Council—a local organization that works toward improving the lives of women and children in Zambia.

Gender mainstreaming in the NAP process is new to Zambia, so this process will help in developing gender-responsive adaptation

measures and indicators and will lead to improved reporting on gender-responsive actions.

Lessons Learned and Ways Forward

Lessons learned from the development of the MEL framework highlight four important ways forward:

1. A MEL framework for a multi-sectoral NAP requires effective coordination mechanisms:

For Zambia, nine priority sectors require cross-sectoral and cross-scale coordination (i.e., from national to sub-national levels all the way to the lowest unit of governance). This requires a strong institutional framework to enable vertical and horizontal integration. As a way forward, it is necessary for Zambia to continue to work on identifying institutional arrangements that define clear roles and responsibilities to prevent coordination challenges.

2. The need to harmonize key performance indicators across different policy mandates:

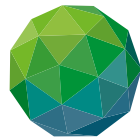
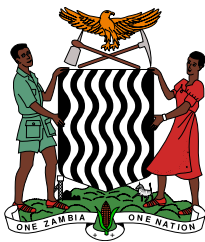
Zambia's NAP is closely aligned with the current 8NDP and the NDC's adaptation component. The 8NDP has its own MEL framework, overseen by the Monitoring

and Evaluation Department in the Ministry of Finance and National Development Planning. The approach above has helped in the alignment of indicators in the NDP, the NDC, and the NAP. As a way forward, Zambia should continue to align performance measures in the NAP's MEL framework, consistent with the 8NDP, to avoid additional responsibilities for the respective sectors.

3. Sex-disaggregated baselines: One challenge in maintaining gender inclusion in adaptation actions is the absence of baselines for sex-disaggregated indicators. Although data on adaptation actions existed, the data was not disaggregated to allow for gender analysis. This highlights a lack of gender consciousness in planning, research, and reporting processes, as well as potential capacity gaps in collecting and analyzing gender-related data and applying it in decision making. Moving forward, it is crucial to include sex-disaggregated data from the beginning when establishing baselines to address this issue effectively.

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GREEN
CLIMATE
FUND



Global Water
Partnership

Financial support provided by:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs



Secretariat hosted by:
Secrétariat hébergé par :



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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. sNAPshots highlight examples of how countries are currently approaching different aspects of the NAP process. If interested in participating the NAP Global Network, please [sign up online](#).

The opinions, findings, and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Network's funders.



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