

Good Practices for Developing Lebanon's National Adaptation Plan

Briefing Note

December 2023



The United Nations reports that almost all developing countries under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have a national adaptation plan (NAP) process underway as a subsequent crucial step to enhance their strategy and policy-making for climate change adaptation. Of these, 47 developing countries have officially submitted their country's NAP to the UN so far (Hammill et al., 2019; UNFCCC, n.d.).

Many NAP teams in charge of steering, informing, and directing this process need to tackle foundational questions early in the process, such as “How and where to start? and What should be the key focus of our NAP process?” Decisions about the potential scale and scope of a NAP process are difficult and complex, and hence, it is advisable to learn from peer countries that have already collected valuable experiences and insights through advancing their NAP processes.

The Government of Lebanon is in the early stages of its NAP process. In preparing to launch work through a Green Climate Fund (GCF) Readiness Program grant with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Ministry of Environment requested support from the NAP Global Network to prepare a review of good practices and lessons from 12 peer countries' NAP processes. This briefing note shares highlights from that analysis.

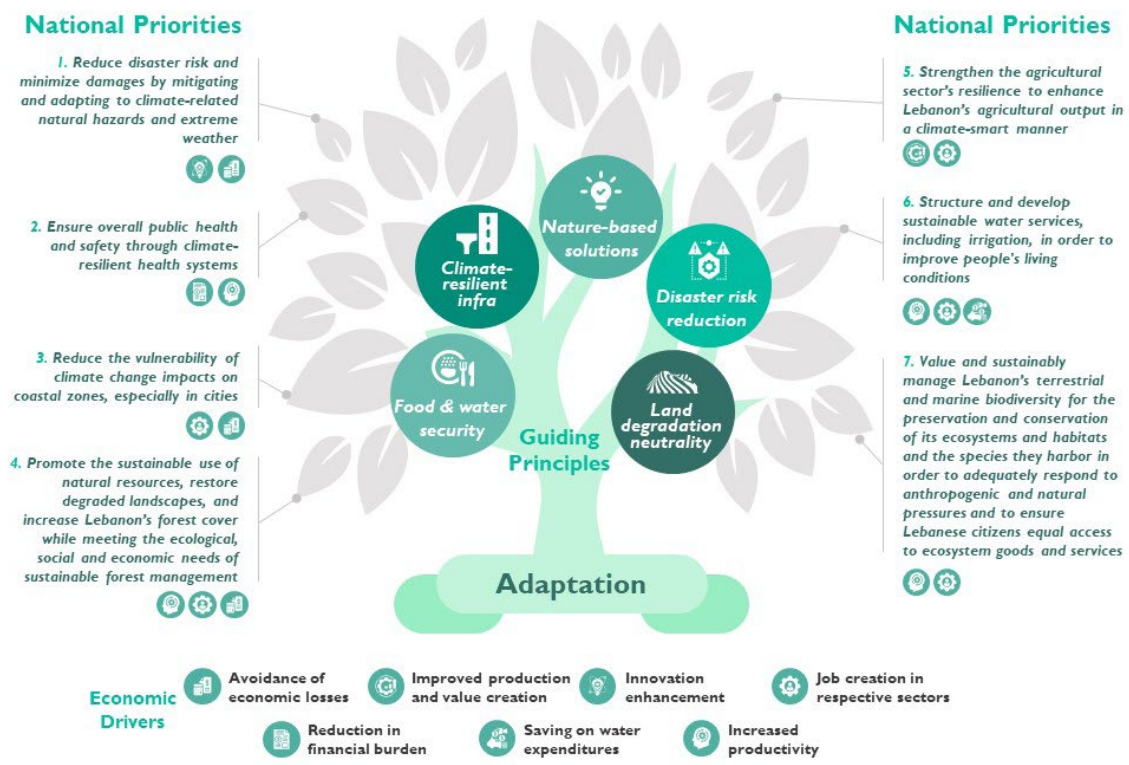
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Lebanon—Climate impacts compounded by other crises

A coastal and mountainous country, Lebanon is located in the Eastern basin of the Mediterranean and is increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Key sectors like agriculture, water resources, terrestrial and marine biodiversity, cities and coastal society, and health care are particularly vulnerable due to dwindling water and land resources, fragmentation of forests, pest outbreaks, forest fires, and urbanization pressures (Ministry of the Environment [MoE] et al., 2022).

This vulnerability is exacerbated by regional turmoil and Lebanon’s political instability, heightened by unprecedented economic, financial, monetary, and banking crises amid the global COVID-19 pandemic. In parallel to these crises is the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis, which places an additional humanitarian burden on Lebanon, stretching an already fragile public infrastructure, compounding the country’s vulnerability and challenging its capacity to cope with climate change.

Figure 1. Lebanon’s national priorities in climate adaptation as stated in Lebanon’s NDC (see also MoE et al., 2022)



Source: MoE et al., 2022.

There currently is no overarching national climate change adaptation policy, strategy, or action plan,¹ although the Ministry of Environment (MoE) began a national dialogue for the development of Lebanon’s NAP to address adaptation in a comprehensive, coherent, and strategic manner in 2017. Different avenues to finance climate actions have been explored, including accessing the GCF’s Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme modality (MoE et al., 2022). In 2022, a NAP Readiness proposal titled *Increased Climate Resilience Planning for Municipal Water Resources in Lebanon* was submitted to the GCF with UNDP’s support, and it was approved in 2023 (MoE et al., 2023).

Most recently, Lebanon submitted its Fourth National Communication (FNC) to the UNFCCC (MoE et al., 2022). In addition to developing a national greenhouse gas inventory for 1994–2019, the FNC reports on Lebanon’s climate change risks, vulnerability, and adaptation status based on the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s 6th Assessment Report (IPCC, 2023). Setting out Lebanon’s progress toward its national climate action ambitions, the FNC is an important resource feeding into the development of the NAP process.

Methodology—How were relevant lessons and insights identified and selected?

The review used a funnelling approach focused on identifying lessons and insights, beginning with a rapid landscape review of documents from 12 countries chosen for their geographical and socio-economic similarities to Lebanon, such as their Mediterranean location, mountainous terrains, climate hazards, political and economic instability, development status, and cultural diversity. These countries included Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, Kuwait, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, and Turkey.

From the initial review, several NAP learning areas were identified (see Table 1). Based on these, the Lebanese MoE prioritized certain areas, leading to an in-depth examination of six relevant countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Moldova, and Turkey. This in-depth review was supplemented by a peer exchange with Albania’s NAP team.

Table 1. Learning areas

Learning Areas			
1	Institutional Arrangements/Coordination	5	Financing Adaptation Actions
2	Implementability	6	Climate Information
3	Sector Integration	7	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
4	Vertical Integration	8	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

¹ The adaptation chapter of Lebanon’s 2020 nationally determined contribution, which serves as the country’s Adaptation Communication to the UNFCCC, presents a set of adaptation priorities highlighting the adaptation activities undertaken by several sectors.

NAP Learning Areas and Spotlights

The following section presents learning areas prioritized by Lebanese stakeholders, highlighting aspects of good practice and shining a “spotlight” on the experience of a particular country.

1. Institutional Arrangements—Who could and should be involved in the NAP process? Who takes the lead in the process and its convening?

Lebanon was keen to explore potential institutional arrangement options for its NAP process, one of the major outcomes of its NAP Readiness grant. A multistakeholder coordination mechanism will be developed to guide the NAP process and prepare Lebanon’s first climate change adaptation strategy and NAP roadmap (MoE et al., 2023). The NAP process is led by national governments, but there is a range of different institutional models, governance structures, and coordination mechanisms. In most instances, countries have formalized institutional arrangements; some of them are also stipulated in legislative frameworks, while others are less formal (see Nachmany et al., 2019). NAP processes are usually led by a designated government ministry, department, or institution or jointly coordinated by several government ministries, with Lebanon seeking to understand what may work best for it.

Aspects of Good Practice

- Build on existing institutional arrangements and identify relevant and timely entry points for the NAP process. Many sectors already have policies and regulations in place aimed at risk mitigation, risk transfer and risk reduction, including ways of dealing with damage and loss caused by weather-related (rapid-onset) disasters. Climate risks constitute an additional (often long-term) risk despite not being separately considered. Hence, NAP teams should identify these aspects so that—especially during Element A of the NAP process, “Laying the groundwork”—they can use them as a starting point, even though the themes are not considered exclusively as climate change adaptation.
- Ensure leadership and authority within the NAP process with a lead institution/ministry with authority, capacity, and convening power.
- Involve key sectors and decision-makers through high-level coordination, which can be helpful for policy integration, leveraging financing for adaptation actions, and preventing conflict between sectors. Prioritize sectors that have or perceive a high urgency for adaptation.
- Develop country ownership by prioritizing institutional capacity-development activities. Consider innovative ways of institutional capacity development for adaptation planning and implementation after identifying specific knowledge gaps and needs (see Rokitzki & Hofemeier, 2021).
- Design and embed knowledge capture and transfer mechanisms to ensure dissemination of the latest information, enhance institutional capacities, and counter disruption caused by staff turnover.

Spotlight: Albania's Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Climate Change

In 2014, the Albanian government established the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Climate Change (IMWGCC) to coordinate institutions to integrate climate action into new and existing policies (Republic of Albania, 2021). The IMWGCC includes 15 members representing key ministries and is chaired by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, which holds the lead function for NAP development (Republic of Albania, 2021). There was a valuable moment for peer exchange between Lebanon and Albania where representatives from Albania shared challenges for institutional arrangements and how they were overcoming them:

- The IMWGCC is a temporary structure created only for the preparation of documents without any administrative authority for policy approval supervising or monitoring.
- The core group is at the level of experts and not decision-makers.
- IMWGCC is not subject to internal and external auditing, making ensuring effective functioning and accountability difficult.

In work being conducted to revise their NAP document, supported by UNDP, reinforcing institutional arrangements is a key priority. Key tasks include revising the executive order of the Prime Minister to create two working groups instead of one. One working group will focus on climate change mitigation and one on climate change adaptation. The Albanian NAP team envisions that the same individuals will be working in both inter-ministerial working groups, but in this setup, both policy areas will be given equal status.

2. Implementability—How to consider aspects that will influence and facilitate NAP implementation?

There are aspects that accelerate the implementation of activities and strategies incorporated in a NAP, such as agreed and well-defined roles and responsibilities for implementation, as well as public and political acceptability of implementation needs and consequences. These include aspects like budget availability, costs involved, need for support, and the equality of process and outcomes. The main outputs related to implementation are the development of a NAP implementation strategy, concrete activities to implement identified priorities, and plans for ensuring and promoting synergy with other relevant programs at the regional and national levels (UNFCCC, 2021). Lebanon was seeking to learn how peer countries had moved from planning to implementation, including insights on how to prioritize adaptation actions and what factors facilitate implementation.

Aspects of Good Practice

- Prioritize a discrete set of adaptation actions based on consultations with stakeholders and by using both economic and non-economic criteria (perhaps through multicriteria analysis).
- Adopt catalytic measures. Priority should be given to those actions that can stimulate other actions, usually those that are soft “no-cost” or “low-cost” actions.
- Assign responsibilities and implementation roles by determining institutions involved in implementation and what role they will play.

- As priority actions are articulated, recognize the importance of a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system. It ensures the evolving identification and prioritization of adaptation priorities with changing climate risks while ensuring accountability.
- Design gender-responsive stakeholder engagement processes. Care should be taken to design processes that enhance marginalized groups' representation, including women, in NAP development and implementation.

Spotlight: Bulgaria's Setting of Priority Actions

Bulgaria's National Adaptation Strategy (NAS) states that a majority of the prioritized actions across various sectors involve non-intensive measures—categorized as either no-cost or low-cost. These measures are critical in supporting strategic and operational objectives that focus on a) enhancing institutional capacity, which includes addressing knowledge gaps, b) integrating climate change adaptation into national and sectoral plans and programs, and c) elevating public awareness.

These will provide the foundation for medium- and longer-term practical actions for building climate change resilience, including through the management of infrastructure and assets and the protection and enhancement of natural resources. Moreover, the strategy needs a number of general coordinating and facilitating activities to ensure the achievement of overarching strategic objectives. This particularly involves establishing a robust process for monitoring and reporting on the progress of implementing the actions detailed in the Action Plan (Republic of Bulgaria, 2019). While the NAP implementation phase is typically more costly than the planning phase, it has been useful to share with Lebanon that many priority actions of other countries are low-cost while also having high impact and catalyzing further actions.

3. Financing Instruments for Climate Change Adaptation Actions—How can private and public financial resources be smartly blended to enable the implementation of the NAP?

One of the primary goals of the NAP process is to close the gap between the existing funding for climate change adaptation and the actual financial requirements necessary for such adaptation efforts. The NAP process offers the opportunity to delve deep into the multitude of sources of finance that extend beyond traditional options, such as grants and concessional loans. This includes innovative financial instruments and mechanisms designed to leverage private investment (see International Institute for Sustainable Development & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, 2017, 2022). Such instruments are becoming recognized as effective ways to amplify the level of investment that countries need to meet their climate adaptation goals (see UNDP, 2022). Lebanon sought to explore how other countries have financed their NAPs, both looking at how best to use (already stretched) public finances and at other complementary sources of finance. Lebanon has been proactive in securing finance for its NAP, highlighted by the approval of its NAP Readiness grant by the GCF.

The NAP process should consider mechanisms and approaches that can be used to acquire, structure, govern, and allocate financial resources toward adaptation priorities. They can enable

access to financial resources from financial institutions, private investors, institutional investors (such as pension funds), impact investors, foundations, and other philanthropists, and may be blended with traditional sources of financing.

The NAP process needs to explore methods and strategies for securing, organizing, managing, and directing funds toward priority adaptation initiatives. These methods should facilitate the procurement of financial support from a variety of sources, including banks, private investors, institutional investors like pension funds, impact investors, foundations, and philanthropic entities. Moreover, these funds may be combined with conventional financing avenues.

Aspects of Good Practice

- Engage stakeholders early in the process. Key ministries (e.g., Ministries of Finance, Planning and/or National Development, and priority sectors should be engaged early and throughout the NAP process). Involving these ministries and sectors at various administrative levels (including municipalities, local, and provincial levels) and early on would ensure the mainstreaming and integration of adaptation considerations into regular planning, fiscal, and budgetary frameworks and cycles, which is advisable as opposed to extra-budgetary approaches.
- Develop a NAP financing strategy that comprises considerations of a multitude of sources of finance—public and private, international and domestic.
- Consider mechanisms that allow for an effective response to climate change at the local level, such as the UN Capital Development Fund's Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (United Nations LDC Portal, n.d.).
- Establish budget codes for climate change adaptation in the public expenditures that will also facilitate adaptation finance tracking and monitoring.

Spotlight: Bosnia and Herzegovina's Innovative Municipal Financing Instruments

A project supported by the UNDP provided assistance to the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to advance the NAP process. The project's focus was on "sectoral approaches, upgrading the knowledge base for adaptation, prioritizing adaptation interventions for the medium term, building institutional capacities for integrating climate change adaptation, and **demonstrating innovative ways of financing adaptation at sub-national and local government levels.**" The government created investment financing tools at the municipal level that involved both public and private sectors. It also enhanced the abilities at national, sub-national, and sectoral levels to incorporate risk-aware planning and budgeting into mainstream processes (UNDP, 2019).

In four municipalities—Laktasi, Zenica, Sanski Most, and Trebinje—new strategies and instruments for funding adaptation measures were established to boost investment at the local level (UNDP, 2019). Each municipality created and approved its own strategy for financing climate adaptation, along with investment plans. Furthermore, they developed project concepts and received training on the mechanisms for financing adaptation efforts (UNDP, 2019).

4. Climate Information and Science—How to ensure that adaptation-related policies and strategies are science- and fact-based?

Access to up-to-date, relevant, and downscaled climate information is vital to help policy-makers make informed decisions to develop adaptation policies and measures that address the impacts of climate change. There is a huge volume of potentially relevant data available, so it is essential to define which data is appropriate to use, where to find it and how to process, make sense of, and visualize it to support decision making. Exploring the types of data that have been collected by peer countries, particularly those that are exposed to similar climate hazards, was of value to Lebanon, as was learning which stakeholders are being engaged in this process. As part of the NAP Readiness grant, Lebanon will seek to generate new climate information related to long-term projections to provide a more robust climate rationale for addressing the impacts and implications of climate change, particularly on water resource management, highlighting the importance of developing a strong evidence base to prioritize climate actions to support priority climate change programs/projects (MoE et al., 2023).

Climate information includes climate data (e.g., surface temperature, precipitation), socio-economic data (e.g., for climate-sensitive sectors), and high-impact events data (e.g., heatwaves, floods etc.). Many countries also use climate information derived from a variety of climate change scenarios to anticipate future climate risks.

Aspects of Good Practice

- Use the most relevant climate information available for the context, for example, adopting definitions for key adaptation-related terms from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s reports; using downscaled climate (impact) models where available.
- Incorporate multiple knowledge types, including co-production of climate information using local, Traditional, and Indigenous sources.
- Engage with knowledge brokers to bridge stakeholders’ gaps in collecting, interpreting, making sense of and visualizing climate information to inform decision-makers.
- Develop an information-sharing network, platform, or database to enhance access to climate information, tools, and resources.
- Create and deliver a capacity-development program to upskill stakeholders (notably decision-makers) on understanding and interpreting different forms of climate information.

Additional NAP Learning Areas

Sector Integration: How can climate impacts be coherently addressed across sectors?

Mainstreaming and sector integration help governments move from an incremental and disjointed approach to adaptation toward a system where climate risks and opportunities for adaptation are incorporated into every phase of policy development. Pressure for the development of adaptation measures will come from across different sectors, ministries, departments, and agencies of

governments. The review sheds light on which sectors are key to engaging in the NAP process, information that can help Lebanon ensure that the appropriate decision-makers are engaged in the NAP process. Ensuring alignment between sectoral development strategies can safeguard investments and reduce the likelihood that strategies negatively impact adaptation measures.

Selected Aspects of Good Practice

- Develop “adaptation champions” or representatives within different sectors. This supports a cross-sectoral network that can help to enhance sector integration and mainstream adaptation efforts.
- Provide capacity-development opportunities for relevant sectors by anticipating that there will be significant knowledge gaps.
- Ensure access to climate information, existing and previous studies, assessments, and projections for all sectors involved through adequate knowledge capture and transfer mechanisms.
- Undertake sector-specific climate risk and vulnerability assessments, where appropriate. The alternative would be a multi-sector and multi-hazard risk assessment.

Vertical Integration—How to coordinate, plan, and steer across administrative levels?

Vertical integration refers to the process of creating strategic linkages into the NAP process with a range of sub-national actors at provincial, regional, and local- and city-level actors, including both governmental and non-governmental actors (such as civil society and local business actors). This has many shared benefits, including increasing local ownership of adaptation ambitions and actions, providing national-level stakeholders with access to local knowledge, and increasing trust and transparency across scales (Morchain, 2021). This is particularly important in a diverse country like Lebanon, which has diverse ethnic, religious, and kinship groups, as well as a growing refugee population. Vertical integration measures can use existing multilevel governance structures, new multilevel climate change coordination mechanisms, or ad hoc processes as ways to support the coordination, steering, and decision making in support of the NAP process.

Selected Aspects of Good Practice

- Share tools and methods, such as standard operating procedures and training for sub-national stakeholders, to ensure a common approach.
- Include stakeholders at the lowest accountable level to support active engagement and promote local ownership of adaptation measures.
- Empower marginalized groups by designing stakeholder engagement processes to empower women, youth, marginalized people, and refugees.
- Take advantage of scientific expertise and local knowledge by developing relationships and opportunities for exchange between policy-makers, scientists, and civil society (through non-governmental organizations and higher education institutions).

MEL of NAP Processes: How to ensure that goals are achieved, implementation is monitored, and lessons are learned?

National MEL systems for adaptation seek to measure the progress in the implementation of adaptation-related policies, projects, and investments and the impacts and changes resulting from this progress. It creates a knowledge and evidence base that countries can draw upon to modify their approach for future iterations of NAPs. MEL systems should focus on three overarching objectives—monitoring, evaluation, and learning. There is no “one-size-fits-all approach” to designing a MEL system, and countries can determine the relative importance they place on each factor. For countries with limited capacities, it can be easier to place the focus on monitoring before developing capacity to be able to evaluate and learn from NAP outcomes (see Dekens, 2022). Additionally, countries need to define what to monitor, evaluate, and learn from, as well as for whom and why.

Selected Aspects of Good Practice

- Set a mandate for MEL. This means that ministries and relevant institutions are compelled to prioritize developing a robust MEL system for the NAP process.
- Define the purpose and objectives of the MEL system and clarify which factor is the most important (monitoring, evaluation, or learning).
- Avoid overburdening ministries with reporting requirements for different agendas (e.g., sectoral, national) and purposes (e.g., NDCs, Sustainable Development Goals, NAPs) and align different reporting instruments.
- Identify a suite of tools for regular data and information collection and analysis (e.g., surveys, interviews, vulnerability and risk assessments, questionnaires, and cost-benefit analyses).

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion: How to ensure consideration of how climate change impacts hit certain groups harder than others

The impacts of climate change are experienced differently by individuals and can amplify existing inequalities, depending on their gender, race, sexual orientation, and a range of other socio-economic factors (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, 2021). NAP processes that work to integrate gender equality and social inclusion from the outset are better placed to tackle the inequalities that exacerbate vulnerability to climate change, develop strategies that can deliver equitable adaptation outcomes for people of all gender identities and social groups, help overcome historical gender biases in policies, and support countries to achieve their gender equality goals (see Dekens & Dazé, 2019). Lebanon has already worked to improve the gender responsiveness of its climate policies by conducting a gender analysis of climate change under the Nationally Determined Contribution Support Programme, where one outcome included holding capacity-development sessions for gender focal points on climate change (MoE et al., 2022). Exploring how other countries are incorporating principles of gender equality and social inclusion provided several ideas that will filter into Lebanon’s approach to NAP.

Selected Aspects of Good Practice

- Consider gender in institutional arrangements for adaptation; for example, gender ministry, gender focal points in ministries should be invited to be part of the coordination mechanism for NAP and its related processes.
- Integrate gender considerations into NAP MEL by establishing appropriate indicators and improving the collection of data to allow for assessment of gender equity in benefits from adaptation, as well as progress on gender equality within adaptation efforts.
- Design vertical stakeholder engagement processes that enable meaningful and equitable participation by women and other marginalized communities.
- Allocate budget for NAP gender-related activities.
- Conduct a context-specific gender analysis to integrate gender considerations in policies, programs, and institutions related to NAP.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Combined with the recent approval of Lebanon's NAP Readiness grant by the GCF, this briefing note (along with the report it is based on and Lebanon's preparatory work for the NAP process) positions the country well to design a NAP process that aligns with its climate action ambitions.

The NAP process represents a crucial pathway for countries to achieve resilient societies and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Candidly sharing NAP experiences and lessons among countries is invaluable, as it helps avoid costly mistakes and identify enabling factors that can be adapted to suit specific contexts. The importance of peer learning between countries that are at different stages of the process cannot be overstated, as it facilitates knowledge exchange and mutual support among countries facing similar challenges. Forums and learning spaces such as the UNFCCC NAP Expo, the NAP Global Network peer learning events, and many others provide support mechanisms to ensure the necessary learning.

Having identified and shared good practices from Lebanon's peer countries, the next crucial step is to shape this knowledge into actionable steps that Lebanon can adopt and implement. As Lebanon stands at a pivotal moment in its NAP development, the forthcoming decisions taken will be vital in shaping the country's response and adaptation to climate change in the future.

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Acknowledgements

This briefing note was commissioned by the NAP Global Network. It is a synthesized version of a report prepared by Martin Rokitzki (Managing Director of PlanAdapt and Senior Expert in Climate Adaptation, Knowledge, and Innovation Brokering) and Carys Richards (Research Analyst at PlanAdapt). The report benefited from guidance and inputs provided by Patrick Guerdat (NAP Global Network), Lea Kai (UNDP), and Leya Zgheib (UNDP), and was supported by interviews with representatives responsible for national adaptation planning in their respective countries.

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This project is undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Secretariat hosted by:
Secrétariat hébergé par :

