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Owning adaptation

Country-level governance of climate adaptation finance

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The safe water and sanitation for communities in south-west Bangladesh project. Golam Rabban/Oxfam.

As financing for climate change adaptation in developing countries begins to flow, it is essential that the governance of funding at the global and country level be shaped so that the needs of the most vulnerable can be met. The core issue is country-level ownership of adaptation finance. Providers of adaptation finance must put developing countries in the driver's seat, while the countries themselves must exercise leadership and respond to the needs of those most affected by climate change. Most importantly, civil society and vulnerable communities must be able to steer and hold accountable the way in which adaptation finance is used.

Summary

Vulnerable communities across the world are already feeling the effects of a changing climate. These communities are urgently in need of assistance aimed at building resilience and at undertaking climate change adaptation efforts as a matter of survival and in order to maintain livelihoods.

However, even as financing for climate change adaptation begins to flow to developing countries, it is not yet clear if the funding will respond to those immediate and pressing needs; and whether these funds can succeed in reaching the most vulnerable remains a critical unanswered question.

This represents a new and different challenge from past development issues; climate change adaptation finance should not be considered aid in the traditional sense. However, many lessons learned regarding development and aid effectiveness are relevant.

In order for adaptation funding to be effective and reach those who need it most, developing countries themselves need to own and be invested in the process, with a focus on developing country-led adaptation strategies.

Country ownership in the context of climate change adaptation finance entails a strong role for governments in developing countries. However, governments also have an obligation to create the necessary national governance structures and ensure accountability to civil society and to its citizens, especially the most vulnerable.

Climate change adaptation finance is still at a formative stage and can be shaped such that developing countries and, above all, vulnerable communities, can guide the ways in which it is used. This represents a significant window of opportunity.

There are currently a number of channels of adaptation finance for which this is critical, while the new global Green Climate Fund, in particular, has the potential to build a new approach for managing climate finance at the global and national levels.

This is not a simple or easy task. Oxfam has looked at the ways in which adaptation finance has begun to be implemented in a number of countries. It is clear that both international providers of finance and national governments will need to undertake significant course corrections.

- Adaptation finance is often channelled around governments, through multiple and uncoordinated channels, and without alignment with national adaptation or development plans or investment aimed at enhancing national capacity;
- At the national level, while governments are beginning to put in place structures and initial strategies to handle adaptation finance,

there is often still a lack of clearly identified leadership or adequate coordination and coherence across governments. Added to this, the lack of capacity in many developing countries hampers these efforts;

- Most importantly, the participation and accountability of civil society and vulnerable communities, particularly of women, have yet to be achieved in most countries.

Despite these initial shortcomings, there is an opportunity to create an approach to adaptation finance that is genuinely owned by developing countries.

What is needed is for providers of adaptation finance, particularly within the framework of the Green Climate Fund, to make countries the drivers for the use of funding. Country governments must then step up to lead and create national processes that are responsive to the needs of their most vulnerable communities.

Providers of adaptation finance must put developing countries in the driver's seat

- Adaptation finance should be channeled through a national entity chosen by the government and on the basis of a national adaptation strategy designed through a participatory, country-driven process;
- Adaptation finance should be harmonized and provided through a coherent channel; the major part of international adaptation resources should come through the new global Green Climate Fund;
- Countries must be provided with the necessary resources and capacity in order both to develop and to implement national adaptation strategies.

Developing countries should exercise leadership

- Effective government leadership should be established for adaptation planning and use of finance, and led by a clearly identified ministry or agency;
- An effective multi-ministerial and agency coordination process must be created to develop and oversee a national adaptation strategy that is coherent with the country's development strategy.

Adaptation plans and funds must be accountable to the most vulnerable

- Adaptation strategies and the use of funding must be developed and implemented by countries with the full participation of vulnerable communities and civil society, and be transparent and accountable to them;
- Providers of finance, particularly through the Green Climate Fund, should help to ensure that country strategies are participatory and accountable, including providing the resources needed to fulfill that goal;
- Gender equality and women's leadership should be central to the development and implementation of national strategies.

1 Governing adaptation finance – seizing the opportunity now

A changing climate is a reality for sixty-three year old Nasima Begum of Azgar Munshir Khandi under Shariatpur District in Bangladesh. Flooding is a worsening annual phenomenon in her area, and the Meghna River has twice devoured her land. As a result, the land has become sandy and the crop it produces inadequate to provide for her six-member family. Cyclones add to the stress she faces. Yet Nasima's region does not yet have a governance structure in place for the planning and implementation of climate adaptation programs to address the impacts she faces.[1]

Nasima's experience is not unique. Across the world communities that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change look to their governments to provide support. They may wonder if funding for climate change adaptation will be delivered in a way that meets their needs.

Adaptation – and adaptation finance – represents a different challenge from those faced in the past. Climate change is a new and growing reality facing developing countries, adding to other, already existing, development challenges. Moreover, the impacts of climate change are felt across a range of arenas from agriculture to infrastructure and health, thereby requiring a wide-ranging and multi-sectoral response.

Climate change adaptation demands a unique set of tools to address the impact of a global driver on highly-local contexts. Developing countries must understand the risk factors and potential responses across multiple locations, communities, and populations. That is why there is a more urgent need than ever before to involve communities and civil society.

All of this presents an opportunity for providers of finance and developing countries alike to create systems for governing adaptation funds that are both innovative and responsive to those on the frontlines of climate change. For those people, it is imperative that both providers of finance and developing countries fulfil their responsibilities.

The ghosts of development finance

At its heart, climate change adaptation finance should not be considered traditional development aid. The motivation for financing climate change adaptation stems from the obligations of industrialized countries that are responsible for the large majority of greenhouse emissions.

Adaptation finance addresses climate change impacts that did not yet exist when commitments to development assistance were made in earlier decades. However, experiences with development finance can provide important lessons for adaptation finance, including, first and foremost, that countries themselves must own and be invested in the process of governing and funding climate change adaptation. Other relevant experiences from development finance include:

- Donor-imposed priorities are often not aligned with a country's circumstances and could undermine national ownership and implementation;
- Complex and diverse funding processes, along with a lack of transparency and information sharing, are serious burdens for under-resourced and under-staffed governments in developing countries;[2]
- There are constraints to meaningful participation by and accountability to civil society and vulnerable groups.[3]

Against this background, the vital importance of a country-led approach to development assistance has become widely acknowledged and has been enshrined by the international community in the principles of the Accra Agenda for Action and its precursor, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. In 2005, the Paris Declaration committed more than 100 governments and agencies to allowing developing countries to set their own strategies and improve their own institutions, and to ensuring that donor countries aligned their approaches with local systems.

The Accra meeting enhanced this platform in 2008 with an acknowledgement that active participation of civil-society organizations was necessary for strengthening country ownership, and that citizen engagement was a central component of government accountability.[4]

Experience has demonstrated the value of putting developing countries in a lead role. While doing so may not be workable in some contexts, as in fragile states, country leadership has proven to be highly effective in many cases. A 2005 independent review commissioned by the OECD showed that in seven developing countries where financing was provided as support through countries' national budgets, the countries had stepped-up pro-poor spending and scaled-up social service delivery.[5]

Experience has also shown the importance of pairing leadership by country governments with accountability to civil society and vulnerable groups. A key finding of consultations on the Hyogo Framework for Action, the international agreement on building resilience to disasters, was that disaster strategies needed to be reoriented in order to support a 'proactive and systematic deepening of engagement with at-risk communities, including participation of most vulnerable groups.'[6]

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria embodies a similar view. It has gone further than most other global funding bodies in recognizing that 'only through a country-driven, coordinated, and multi-sector approach involving all relevant partners will additional resources have a significant impact'.[7] (See Box 4.)

Emerging questions

As the basis for this briefing paper, Oxfam examined how a number of developing countries were grappling with the governance of adaptation finance.[8] Oxfam conducted research and interviews in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Nepal, the Philippines, Tajikistan, and Viet Nam, supplemented by analysis in additional African and Latin American countries.

While the provision of adaptation finance is still at an early stage, key questions have already surfaced with regard to country ownership. In many countries, adaptation planning and finance is linked institutionally with climate change mitigation, but adaptation efforts – and hence the emerging issues involving country ownership and adaptation – must stand on their own.

Country ownership in the context of climate change adaptation involves several interconnected elements, namely: the role of governments in channelling finance; the role of effective governments in developing and implementing successful strategies for the use of adaptation finance; and the role of civil society and communities in holding governments accountable for whether the most pressing climate change adaptation needs are met.

These key questions emerge:

- Are providers of finance putting developing countries in the driver's seat?
- Are developing countries prepared to lead?
- Is adaptation funding accountable to those most in need?

These elements of adaptation finance are inherently linked; and the ultimate goal must be to enable those who are most vulnerable to climate change, together with their governments, to drive the way in which adaptation finance is used, and to ensure it meets their needs.

2 Enabling country ownership

Are providers of finance putting developing countries in the driver's seat?

If adaptation finance is channelled in a way that circumvents, rather than strengthens, existing government structures and strategies, it can impede the development of government capacity and the critical task of building stronger engagement between citizens and their governments. Effective and participatory governance of adaptation finance depends in part on whether international finance promotes or impedes the development and implementation of country-led strategies.

Providers of finance often hesitate to cede too much control to country-led processes. This may be due to a lack of confidence in a government's capability to administer funds efficiently or to address key accountability issues, and may be especially so in fragile states. However, in most countries, failing to take steps to build country ownership will only maintain the status quo and fail to build the capacity needed.

The evidence from a number of countries suggests that finance providers will only succeed in shifting this dynamic by developing new ways of funding and engaging with countries.

Box 1: The capacity-ownership trade-off

The question of country ownership, including government leadership, goes back to the age-old question of the chicken and the egg. Which comes first: ensuring government leadership or having a capable government?

Frequently, governments are not yet fully equipped to handle the task of developing national strategies, coordinating funding streams, and delivering finance where climate change adaptation is most needed. In many cases, ministries of environment are charged with playing the central leadership role on climate change adaptation. However, these ministries are often under-resourced and politically weak. As a result, many bilateral and multilateral providers of finance seek to provide funding in ways that work around these weak government institutions or ministries.

In some cases, there may need to be support that doesn't flow through governments, for example in fragile states. However, in most cases, channelling funds around government structures will mean missing an opportunity to build the capacity of line ministries and effectively develop the government's engagement with communities and civil society. The challenge is to avoid side-stepping the capacity and governance constraints of developing countries and, rather, to tackle them head-on.

Channelling adaptation finance through national governments and aligning with country priorities

Country ownership is closely tied to the level of government control in how funds are spent. At one end of the spectrum, adaptation finance providers may earmark the funds according to their own priorities or bypass existing government structures altogether. At the other end, the allocation of incoming funds are given as budget support for a country and spent according to its priorities.

In a number of cases, adaptation funding has bypassed government structures or strategies.

- In Cambodia, many providers of finance have chosen to bypass the government completely, instead providing funding for climate change adaptation initiatives directly to international and national NGOs;[9]
- In Ethiopia, while none of the projects as originally conceived in the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) (see Appendix) were implemented, the Global Environment Facility along with Japan, Spain, Denmark, and the European Union stepped in to support specific climate change adaptation projects outside of those in the NAPA;[10]
- In Nepal, in order to improve coordination and alignment with the government, 14 international providers of finance signed a compact in 2009 with the Ministry of Environment. Despite this step, a lack of faith in the public financial management system resulted in a large proportion of funding being provided in the form of bilateral projects outside of the central budget.[11]

The role of international financial institutions, especially development banks, in providing climate finance has also frequently been at issue. These institutions have often operated in ways that were inconsistent with country-led leadership.

- In Nepal, the World Bank, within the framework of the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR) (see Appendix), rejected a request to channel PPCR funds through a trust fund that civil society believed could be an accessible and transparent arrangement. The PPCR initiated a process with little government input or alignment with Nepal's NAPA, though it may end up funding some of the activities it spelled out;[12]
- In Bangladesh, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank worked to create a multi-donor trust fund led by the World Bank rather than by the national government. Public pressure ultimately led to a shift in the structure with the Government of Bangladesh taking over control of the fund (see Box 2).[13]

In some cases, the way in which climate funding is provided may undermine a country's ability to assert its leadership and priorities.

- In Ethiopia, international deadlines for developing the country's forestry mitigation programme initially drew away limited human resources from completion of the country's adaptation plan;[14]

- In Nepal, the PPCR has offered loans for adaptation programmes, which has led to strong opposition from civil society. Civil society groups expressed concern that vulnerable countries affected by climate change should not be put in a position of having to repay adaptation costs that should be borne by developed countries.[15]

Box 2: The Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund

When, in 2008, DFID pledged to fund for adaptation efforts in Bangladesh, it also played a central role in efforts to create a multi-donor trust fund for the country. Plans for the fund originally provided a central role for the World Bank, which would have served as co-chair of the management committee, facilitated daily operations of the fund, and monitored implementation.

Bangladesh's civil society was deeply concerned about the World Bank's role, which many groups saw as inappropriately interfering with country-led control of finances. In 2010, the government announced that the new Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund would be managed by the government and would also include civil society representation. The World Bank would serve mainly as a technical advisor to the Fund.

The Resilience Fund is intended to carry out the country's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, which was revised and adopted in 2009. However, the Resilience Fund, with its international financing, will not be consolidated with Bangladesh's own Climate Change Trust Fund, which is funded entirely with domestic Bangladesh financing. It remains to be seen if coherence can be achieved in this parallel structure.[16]

Enhancing capacity

A country's progress in ensuring ownership and delivery of adaptation programmes to vulnerable groups can depend on the capacity of its government, its civil-society groups, and its communities to engage effectively with adaptation finance processes. In addition to the technical and financial knowledge of climate finance, governments are most in need of institutional and leadership development.

In many cases, however, adaptation finance processes have been carried out with external technical support arranged by providers of finance, rather than by national governments themselves. While these decisions by finance providers often reflect their own concerns about existing local capacity, this represents a missed opportunity to create greater capacity within country governments.

- In Tajikistan, representatives of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank indicated that their international staff had to lead the national PPCR process, owing to the limited capacity of government institutions and to the fact that the country's climate change lead post remained vacant for several months at a critical time in the PPCR process;[17]
- In Nepal, the Ministry of Environment is mandated to serve as the lead agency and to channel funds, which could translate into an opportunity for building the capacity and enhancing the role of the staff at the Ministry in terms of handling such processes. However, DFID opted instead to support external consultants and to pilot the

Local Adaptation Programme of Action outside central government structures by using a private consultancy firm and seven NGO partners.[18]

Box 3: Direct access to the Adaptation Fund

When the Adaptation Fund was created under the Kyoto Protocol, developing countries insisted that it needed to provide 'direct access' for developing countries, given the concerns about the lack of country-led approaches as well as the proliferation of multiple funding streams and intermediary financial institutions in existing structures. Direct access has been viewed by developing countries as an extremely important shift in the way in which adaptation finance has been provided. To date, however, only three national implementing entities (NIEs) have been accredited by the Adaptation Fund Board as having the fiduciary and adaptation programming capacity to channel financing directly at the country level. While the Adaptation Fund model has been a critical step forward, the limited progress with NIEs points to the need to bolster the capacity of governments and institutions in developing countries.[19]

Harmonizing the priorities and processes of finance providers

In many developing countries, the array of funding streams can increase the burden on governments in terms of accessing and managing adaptation finance. Moreover, it can impede efforts aimed at coordinating national strategies and at implementing plans. This raises important questions about the ways in which multilateral and bilateral providers of finance organise themselves.

At times, bilateral and multilateral providers of finance set up and lead coordination processes in developing countries. This can facilitate exchanges of information on the priorities and approaches of various finance providers and, in the long term, can improve the coordination of funding streams and minimize the burden on governments in developing countries.

For example, in a move to increase coordination among providers of finance in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund was created to bring bilateral and multilateral finance providers together with the national government and civil society (see Box 2). Importantly, the Resilience Fund will be led by the national government after a protracted debate over its management. However, it remains separate nonetheless from that country's own Climate Change Trust Fund, which is funded with domestic resources.[20]

While coordination efforts among finance providers can be helpful, they also have clear limitations. It is essential that such coordination does not replace efforts to put countries in the driver's seat and to establish coordination mechanisms that are country-led.

3 Building country leadership

Are developing countries ready to lead?

In order to ensure that adaptation finance actually responds to the needs of those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, developing countries must act assertively and establish ways to channel resources effectively.

This requires having a clear national strategy and implementation plan in place for climate change adaptation and resilience-building activities, as well as systems that can undertake adaptation programmes and handle financial procedures. Moreover, developing countries need to put in place processes that ensure full accountability to civil society and vulnerable communities.

Tackling the challenges of adaptation planning and implementation is an essential task for country governments to undertake in order to be responsive to those in their countries who are hit hardest by climate change. This will require a high degree of country-driven engagement on adaptation that overlaps with, but is not identical to, a country's process for handling adaptation finance.

While developed countries must provide the resources to help make these efforts possible, developing country governments need to be ready to translate potential into reality.

Leadership

Identifying and bolstering leadership at the national level constitutes a critical task for governments. Success in this can improve their ability to engage with providers of finance and to develop and oversee an effective adaptation strategy.

The specific institutions and structures within the government that play a leadership role vary according to each country's circumstances (see Table 1). In many countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, and Viet Nam, environment ministries have inherited significant responsibility for climate change adaptation planning and implementation of finance.[21]

However, there are other ministries and agencies that can play leadership roles. For example, in Colombia, the lead candidate for managing climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is the Risk Management Directorate under the Ministry of Interior and Justice, rather than the Ministry of Environment.[22]

Table 1: Government institutions leading on climate change	
Bangladesh	The Ministry of Environment and Forests leads implementation of the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan[23]
Cambodia	The Ministry of Environment is in charge of climate change[24]
Ethiopia	The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is an independent regulatory and monitoring body charged with coordinating the Ethiopian government activities on climate change and reporting directly to the Prime Minister[25]
Nepal	The Ministry of Environment serves as the Secretary of the Climate Change Council (CCC) formed under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister[26]
The Philippines	The Climate Change Commission is charged with effecting policy integration and coordination across agencies[27]
Tajikistan	The Deputy Prime Minister is the lead for the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR). The PPCR focal point is the Deputy Head of the Environment Department under the Office of the President[28]
Viet Nam	The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is the lead agency of the National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change[29]

Choosing an institution to act as the lead agency can raise important issues of political profile and capacity. At times, the lack of institutional capacity within a country's lead climate change agency, often an environment ministry, may stem from the central government's lack of political will to delegate decision making authority effectively.

For example, in Ethiopia, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) was only assigned to coordinate implementation of the country's NAPA after the plan was already developed.[30] The EPA was concerned that the NAPA's project-focused approach was not the most appropriate way to strengthen resilience in the country and has since started development of a new National Adaptation Programme, which is meant to incorporate plans by ministries and regional states.

In many countries, the environment ministry is not ready to handle the tremendous task of managing adaptation finance processes without considerable capacity-building support and institutional development.

This is the case in Viet Nam, where the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) has limited coordination powers across the government;[31] and in Nepal, where the National Capacity Self-Assessment, which was prepared for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, indicated that the Ministry of Environment lacked adequate technical and operational capacity.[32]

When ministries and agencies other than the environment ministry play a leading fiduciary, planning, or coordination role within government, the ministry of environment may often be best placed to handle monitoring and evaluation activities, or other complementary functions.

However, allowing funds to circumvent existing government structures or default to coordination by powerful, ministries, such as the ministry of finance or planning, could skew the ways in which funds are spent. Even with a robust coordination process across the government, there is a risk that funds could subsequently be diverted by the distinct priorities of individual agencies.

Coordination

Climate change adaptation is a complex multi-sectoral challenge that requires the attention of several arms of the government working on issues from poverty to agriculture and health. While clear leadership is important, a range of agencies are needed to fully develop and then implement a comprehensive adaptation strategy.

As a result, governments face coordination challenges in terms of developing and approving national strategies, budget allocation among implementing ministries, and linking decision-making with the needs of local government.

In order to address these coordination challenges, some countries have established national coordination bodies, each tailored to the particular government structure. However, these efforts have not always solved the coordination quandary.

- In Bangladesh, the Climate Change Trust Fund oversees domestically-generated resources for adaptation and other climate programmes. The Trust Fund brings together the President's office with key elements of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, other ministries, and civil society;[33]
- In Viet Nam, the National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change, led by MONRE, has worked to establish effective coordination. However, the national coordination process provides few opportunities for lower levels of government to provide input. In contrast, the country's national development plans are more decentralized than the climate planning process;[34]
- The coordination challenge is often evident when multiple agencies do not adequately act. In both Cambodia and Tajikistan, ministries outside of the lead agency were required to establish climate change units or focal points in order to implement a national process; however, their failure to do so created bottlenecks.[35]

Box 4: Lessons from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria

The model for designing and overseeing finance at the country level was developed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and provides some key lessons for climate adaptation finance. While they are far from perfect, the Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs) are nonetheless an important model for carrying out country-led coordination with participation from civil society and affected communities.[36]

CCMs act as the primary in-country decision-making bodies for the Fund, identifying national priorities and coordinating the submission of a single 'Coordinated Country Proposal'. CCMs include representatives from a broad range of stakeholders, taken from government, multilateral and bilateral funds, NGOs and community-based organizations, people living with the diseases covered by the Fund, and the private sector.

The inclusion of civil society, both within and outside of CCMs, has played an important role in increasing the capacity and effectiveness of the coordinating mechanisms.[37] A recent review by the Global Fund itself found that average civil society representation was just over 40 per cent, which is the representation target set by the Global Fund.[38]

However, there are still key weaknesses with CCMs in many countries. Only half of the CCMs that were reviewed by the Global Fund met the target of 40 per cent for civil society representation. Representation ranged from as low as 17 per cent in Tajikistan, and was below 40 per cent in countries such as Cambodia and Ethiopia.[39]

Disparities within civil society have also been noted. In some countries, civil society participation has been dominated by networks and umbrella organizations headquartered in the capital.[40] Participation by people living with HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria has historically been weak, though it has now reached 8 per cent of representatives. While a third of participants in CCMs are women,[41] only 22 per cent of CCM chairs are women.

Other challenges have also risen to the surface, including the potential for conflicts of interest, with lead implementing government ministries often chairing CCMs, and civil society representatives often dependent on government funding.

The Global Fund and the CCMs themselves have attempted to address some of these shortcomings in the following ways:

– Expanding capacity through the creation of full-time, dedicated secretariats in government ministries to support the work of CCMs, thereby improving their effectiveness;[42]

– Improving links between government and civil society by developing a system of 'dual track financing' through which at least one government and one non-government principal recipient are nominated to lead programme implementation;[43]

– Engaging affected populations, especially women. The Global Fund has adopted strategies aimed at promoting gender equality in its programmes.[44]

A Global Fund committee has also proposed new CCM guidelines that would explicitly require a transparent and documented process for review of funding applications, including engagement of key affected population groups and a transparent and documented process for the selection of non-government members through their own constituencies.

Coherence

The ideal coordination tool used by governments is a national policy or strategy that articulates adaptation priorities and projects in response to the particular climate change impacts in that country. While a number of developing countries have built strategies, most continue to face difficulties in updating and implementing them, owing to a lack of capacity and coordination, and other constraints.

The effectiveness of a national climate change adaptation policy or strategy can often be measured by how well it is integrated with national development planning. When they are a central part of a country's development plans, climate change issues are less likely to be sidelined by the country's broader goals. Unfortunately, it is common for national disaster risk reduction strategies to be out of sync with national development plans.

Coherence between climate change and development planning has moved forward moderately in Bangladesh. The government requested that the Ministry of Planning integrate a chapter on climate change into its sixth Five-Year Plan, though adaptation is not mainstreamed throughout the plan.[45]

Viet Nam and Nepal have made progress in integrating adaptation into their national development strategies. While Viet Nam's draft development plans include a focus on climate change adaptation, it is largely characterized as an environmental challenge.[46] Nepal has integrated climate change and development planning through the government's Three Year Plan, which also provides the mandate for the Ministry of Environment to coordinate all climate change activities.[47]

Some countries struggle to implement integration between climate change and development activities. Ethiopia's government has articulated a clear vision that climate finance should align with its national strategy, the Five Year Plan, which is managed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and which represents Ethiopia's preferred framework for development assistance. However, previous commitments by line ministries to implement work in their sectors and the lack of a clear monitoring framework for the ways in which climate finance is used for adaptation could lead to missed opportunities to integrate adaptation with the development plan.[48]

Other countries have yet to develop a national strategy. For example, Cambodia does not have a national climate change policy beyond its NAPA, thereby making it difficult to achieve coherence with the country's National Strategic Development Plan.[49]

4 Ensuring accountability

Is adaptation funding accountable to those who are most in need?

In order to achieve a truly country-led strategy, decision-making on adaptation finance must ultimately be accountable to those populations that are in greatest need of support. Indeed, those who are most affected by a changing climate have the right to be centrally involved in directing the use of adaptation funding.

If highly vulnerable communities and the broader civil society are not included as full participants in the development and implementation of national adaptation plans, there is a genuine risk that funds will be spent in ways that are misaligned with realities on the ground. Governments must play a central role in ensuring that processes are participatory and accountable, while international providers of finance must support this and not impede it.

Meaningful participation

Participation by vulnerable communities and civil society can be designed to enhance and deepen a country-led adaptation strategy, or it can occur as an afterthought or token gesture. Truly meaningful participation will result in inputs that are visible in the final outcome. Civil society and community-level participation in national climate finance decisions varies greatly from country to country. In a number of countries, civil society engagement has remained quite limited.

- In Cambodia, civil society groups that were consulted on the development of Cambodia's NAPA were asked to react to a nearly-finalized project document, rather than invited to offer their input in at an earlier stage;[50]
- In Tajikistan, civil society participants were only invited to late consultation stages on the country's NAPA and did not have advance access to relevant documentation;[51]
- In Bangladesh, the Ministry of Environment and Forests issued a request for project proposals without identifying or disclosing project criteria, which resulted in 3,700 projects being submitted. Subsequently, the media reported that 20 projects had been selected for implementation by the Climate Change Trust Fund, but this information was not made public by the government.[52]

In some cases, important steps have been taken towards meaningful participation, including the creation of formalized processes. What remains to be seen is how these efforts to promote civil society participation will fare, and how well they will incorporate the needs of vulnerable populations into adaptation planning and implementation.

- In Nepal, the NAPA process included wide consultations with vulnerable communities. Thematic working groups were led by government ministries and included a wide range of civil society representation, including NGOs and academics. These thematic working groups met with vulnerable communities throughout the country and incorporated their perspectives;[53]

- Civil society in Bangladesh holds two out of 17 membership seats on the board of the Climate Change Trust Fund. However, these two civil society representatives have a three-year term limit, while other members do not have a set term;[54]
- In Bangladesh, civil society organizations actively lobbied the government to revise the first draft of the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP). The first plan was subsequently rejected by a high-level government panel and replaced with a new strategy that incorporated some civil society perspectives;[55]
- In Ethiopia, a climate change forum outside the government has brought together representatives from government ministries with those from civil society (see Box 5). Although this is not a formal national planning or implementing body, it can help increase coordination and participation among different actors.[56]

Box 5: Climate Change Forum-Ethiopia (CCF-E)

The Climate Change Forum-Ethiopia (CCF-E) is a gathering of representatives acting in their individual capacity from government, civil society organizations, UN agencies, embassies, bilalateral and multilateral finance agencies, research and academic institutions, and the business community, which meets regularly to discuss national responses to climate change. When it was established, CCF-E was chaired by a state minister from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and hosted by Oxfam America. Currently an independent organization with a secretariat, CCF-E intends to support policy coordination among all stakeholders with national consultation, policy development, and as a clearing-house of climate change information and data.[57] While not a formal body for national planning and implementation, the CCF-E may serve as a model for bringing together stakeholders to help steer adaptation efforts.

Reaching vulnerable communities

A critical question in engaging civil society is who exactly the participants are. Civil society in developing countries —such as international and national NGOs, community-based organizations, the private sector, trade unions, women's organizations, and academia—are by no means homogenous in their perspectives.

Moreover, while many civil-society organizations can provide a connection to and perspective on vulnerable groups, as well as links between governments and local communities, those based in capitals do not always adequately represent the interests of vulnerable local communities, especially those in rural areas, such as smallholder farmers. Indeed, the engagement of vulnerable communities and groups such as these has often been limited.

- In Bangladesh, while women and men who work in fisheries are among the most vulnerable groups, they have not been included in the national climate change adaptation policy or in the country's PPCR;[58]
- Official project documents for climate change adaptation plans in Cambodia have noted that there is a need to communicate with rural communities in order to gather information on their perceptions of the potential impacts and their suggestions on how to respond. However, there is no evidence of this level of consultation in practice.[59]
- By contrast, in Nepal, the NAPA process has been carried out in ways that incorporated local community viewpoints through a number of thematic working groups. The Local Adaptation Plan of Action initiative in Nepal may also provide important opportunities for vulnerable communities to shape adaptation plans in the country. However, it has not been linked so far to national processes.[60]

Participation models in other sectors, including for disaster risk reduction and AIDS, can provide important lessons for adaptation finance (see Box 6).

Box 6: A model for participation in El Salvador

In El Salvador, hands-on disaster reduction practices are combined with advocacy training to ensure that communities can raise their concerns with decision makers. This approach has allowed for more rapid and effective evacuations during emergencies; successful advocacy to local government for the construction of mitigation projects; as well as raised awareness at the local, municipal and national levels about the vulnerability of marginalized rural and urban communities.

More than 100 community civil protection committees have been formed that work at the local and municipal levels for disaster risk reduction. Each community has an emergency plan and risk map. Meanwhile, municipal committees, headed by the Mayor and with the participation of government bodies, NGOs, and community leaders, receive training and support. Community civil protection committees are linked with the municipal committee, thereby providing a mechanism for NGO partners and community leaders to work together with local government and also to advocate to these leaders. In turn, the municipal process is connected to the national civil protection system.[61]

Gender equality and women's leadership

Vulnerability is determined not only by the physical impacts of a changing climate, but also by underlying social, economic, ethnic, and other circumstances that shape climate-related risks.[62] Among the groups that are most vulnerable to climate change impacts, women have largely been ignored by climate finance processes, though they are often best placed to contribute to community resilience-building and climate change adaptation.[63]

In all of the countries studied, climate change impacts were found to fall disproportionately on women and girls. In responding to this, some governments have identified women as a vulnerable group, while others have taken this one step further by recognizing the important leadership role played by women. However, this initial recognition has not yet translated into concrete gains for women.

- While Ethiopia's NAPA notes that a gender approach needs to be integrated into all development activities, there are no specific recommendations in the plan;[64]
- In Bangladesh, BCCSAP includes women and children as the most vulnerable group in terms of food security, social protection, and health. However, the plan fails to address the root causes of these challenges through specifically gender-responsive measures;[65]
- The first joint PPCR mission to Tajikistan considered the needs and participation of vulnerable groups, including women. However, there was insufficient gender analysis in the resulting climate change adaptation planning, and the projects selected were not based on gender-differentiated needs.[66]

While gender-specific objectives, indicators, and data can be used to measure and ensure the delivery of finance to women and men, these are largely missing from national climate change strategies.

Ministries that handle women's or gender affairs are often missing from the climate change decision-making process for various reasons, including a failure to invite them, limited operational scope and capacity, or a mandate that does not incorporate climate change. These institutions require support aimed at building their capacity to engage in climate change decision-making.

- In Nepal, the Women's Ministry and the Women's Commission have recently joined the multi-stakeholder framework that was formed as part of the development of Nepal's NAPA, known as the Multi-stakeholder Climate Change Initiatives Coordination Committee;[67]
- While the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Ethiopia plays a limited role on climate change, owing to their lack of capacity, the EPA has now started to include the Ministry in national climate change discussions; and it could play an important role in bringing forward climate change adaptation practices that are spearheaded by women.[68]

5 Recommendations

As international mechanisms for climate change adaptation funding, particularly the Green Climate Fund, gather pace, the flow of funds to developing countries poses both a real challenge and a significant opportunity. If seized, this can be the moment when adaptation finance is directed to countries in ways that respond to the needs of those who are hardest hit by a changing climate.

In order to leverage this opportunity, however, it is clear that important course corrections must be made both by providers of finance and by national governments.

- Adaptation finance often bypasses governments through multiple and uncoordinated channels, and without alignment with national adaptation or development plans, or investment in enhancing national capacity;
- At the national level, while governments are beginning to put in place structures and initial strategies to handle adaptation finance, there remains a lack of clearly identified leadership or adequate coordination and coherence across governments. The lack of capacity in many developing country contexts often undermines their efforts;
- Most importantly, real participation and accountability, involving civil society and vulnerable communities, has yet to be achieved in many developing countries. This is especially true for women.

The situation faced by those who are hardest hit by a changing climate demands a better course. A key milestone on that new course that must be reached urgently is the development and implementation of country-driven adaptation strategies, with plans that respond to the needs of those who are most vulnerable. Providers of adaptation finance and national governments can act now to make that a reality by taking action on the recommendations set forth below.

International providers of adaptation finance must put developing countries in the driver's seat

Adaptation finance should be provided predictably, in line with a country-driven adaptation strategy or plan

In order to enable country leadership, international finance for climate change adaptation needs to be provided to fund a country's priorities on the basis of a country-driven adaptation strategy or plan.

The development and implementation of a national adaptation strategy or plan must be led by the national government and must be based on a participatory and accountable process that ensures the needs of women are met.

Financing should be provided on a predictable, consistent basis to countries in order to enable effective planning and budgeting for the implementation of the adaptation strategy or plan. Specific details for all funding provided should be made transparent and public.

In order to minimize transaction costs and ensure coherence with a country's adaptation strategy, finance should be harmonized and should come through a coherent, consolidated channel, with the Green Climate Fund providing the majority of adaptation finance.

International adaptation finance should be provided to a national entity

Funding should be provided to a national-level entity formed or led by the national government, such as a lead ministry or other institution chosen by the government. The Green Climate Fund should provide direct access to finance for such a national-level entity.

Whenever possible, adaptation funding should be provided as budget support to implement the national adaptation strategy.[69]

In some cases, there may need to be project-based or programme support until governments are able to channel funding through budget support, for example in fragile states or countries with inadequate mechanisms to tackle corruption.

Dedicated resources for capacity-building must be provided so countries can both develop and implement a national adaptation strategy or plan

In order to help ensure country ownership, providers of finance, particularly the Green Climate Fund, must deliver substantial resources aimed at building the capacity of both the government and civil society of developing countries.

Capacity-building will need to span technical and scientific competencies; 'softer' capacities, such as civil society and community engagement; and relevant infrastructure, including weather-monitoring capability.

Resources for capacity-building need to be provided in a rapid, up-front, and sustained manner, with a minimum level of support provided for developing and updating national strategies.

A separate pool of funds should be made available for civil society and community capacity-building. This support can be targeted at building skills to engage in developing national adaptation strategies, participating in program implementation, and undertaking monitoring and evaluation.

Developing countries should exercise leadership

Effective government leadership should be established for adaptation planning and use of finance, led by a clearly identified national entity

While governments must have flexibility in designing their own approaches, a lead national entity, such as a ministry, should be designated to coordinate adaptation finance.

This agency should have the authority and functionality to act as the primary channel of international finance for adaptation and oversee implementation of the national strategic framework on adaptation.

While countries may decide to consolidate adaptation and mitigation funding oversight in a single entity, a clearly designated level of resources and capacity should be established for adaptation finance.

An effective coordination process must be created to develop and oversee a national adaptation strategy

The lead entity for adaptation finance should form a consortium with all other relevant ministries and agencies to develop the national strategic framework, with citizen and stakeholder participation.

The national climate change adaptation strategy should be integrated with national development and poverty strategies; and the priorities need to be put forward by local government, civil society, local communities, and marginalized groups.

The strategy should be developed and overseen through a fully participatory and accountable process involving civil society and vulnerable communities. National parliaments should also be fully consulted and have a clear role in the development of a national adaptation strategy.

Adaptation plans and funds must be accountable to the most vulnerable

Strategies for adaptation and the use of funding must be developed and implemented by countries with the full participation of vulnerable communities and civil society, and must be transparent and accountable to them

Climate funding should prioritize and clearly provide resource allocations for those areas and populations most affected by climate-related risks and with the greatest need for building adaptive capacity due to vulnerability.

From the initial planning to the final evaluation, participation by civil society and vulnerable communities in the national adaptation strategy and in the use of funding should be transformative, rather than cosmetic, thereby resulting in inputs that are visible in the final outcome.

In order to help to achieve this, civil society and vulnerable communities must be fully represented in the process of designing a national adaptation strategy and in overseeing its implementation. This should include a transparent, participatory, and inclusive process for monitoring and evaluation.

Civil society organizations and direct representatives of local communities and marginalized groups should be actively supported such that they are able to hold their governments to account over adaptation planning and spending. This should include support to establish – or assist, if such already exists - a national civil society network or coalition that liaises with and facilitates full participation in the government-led process.

Governments and finance providers should uphold the public right of access to information, through disclosure all relevant documents and the publication of regular and accessible public reports, which outline how funds are allocated and any other pertinent information.

Providers of finance should ensure that country strategies are developed with full participation and accountability, while also providing resources to enable that process

Arrangements for participation by civil society and vulnerable communities should be designed by governments and should reflect national circumstances. However, international finance providers, particularly the Green Climate Fund, should ensure that each country can meet a global set of principles for participation and accountability.

These principles would require stakeholder views to be reflected in strategy formulation and implementation. In order to make this participation possible, finance providers must cultivate substantial capacity in governments aimed at engaging stakeholders, through sustained financial and technical support to build the capacity of local and regional government offices leading on adaptation planning and priorities.

Gender equality and women's leadership should be central to the development and implementation of national strategies

Women should be prioritized in climate funding, particularly given their greater vulnerability to climate-related risks and untapped potential in leading climate-related solutions. Gender-specific objectives and indicators should be core components of the national climate strategy. Women's ministries and gender units within all ministries need to play a more central role in climate funding processes, and should establish climate change as a core element of their mandate. A systematic capacity-building process should be available to these departments and units, as well as to national women's organizations and gender experts.

Appendix

National Adaptation Programmes of Action

Between 2004 and 2010, forty-five countries prepared and submitted National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) to the Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF) managed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). In line with a 2001 decision made by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), NAPAs are meant to identify priority activities that respond to a country's urgent and immediate needs to adapt to climate change – those for which further delay would increase vulnerability and/or costs at a later stage. In December 2010, parties to the UNFCCC agreed on a new Adaptation Framework and a process to enable LDCs to formulate 'national adaptation plans', building on the NAPA process.
http://unfccc.int/national_reports/napa/items/2719.php

The Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience

The World Bank's Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) is part of the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF), a multi-donor trust fund within the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs). The objective of the PPCR is to build resilience to climate change by integrating adaptation into national development planning and policy. The program has invited nine countries and two regions (Caribbean and Pacific) to participate, and is intended to build on the NAPAs. The first design phase of funding supports capacity building, awareness raising, coordination and planning, and the second implementation phase provides technical assistance and a combination of grants and highly concessional loans to support investments in priority sectors.
http://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/ppcr

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[69] Providing budget support to fulfil a national plan that involves a particular area of work is often characterized as 'sectoral budget support'. It can also be 'general budget support', with an agreement to achieve certain benchmarks or objectives.

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