

## SOUTHERN VOICES ON ADAPTATION

# CIVIL SOCIETY GUIDE TO THE LEG/NAP TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

### Introduction

Governments around the world are in the process of developing plans for climate change adaptation. The UNFCCC established National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) as a formal process for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), with an option for other developing countries to adopt them also. To support this process, the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) has developed Technical Guidelines<sup>1</sup> for governments. The LEG Technical Guidelines are generic and do not only apply to LDCs, though only LDCs would be able to have access to the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) to help finance a NAP development process.

The full document is 150 pages, and is accompanied by supporting materials in the form of

- A presentation “Introducing the NAP Process”, (29 slides)
- A booklet “The national Adaptation Planning Process- A Brief Overview” (24 pages)
- A poster - table of the NAP elements, building blocks and sample outputs on one sheet (small print!).

Further supplements to the Guidelines are in preparation by the LEG.

This short guide explains the Technical Guidelines for a civil society audience. The main purpose is to help civil society actors understand the processes that governments may be following, in order to be able to engage with them constructively and influence the outcome. The format is to use plain black text for descriptive or explanatory material about the Technical Guidelines; *and green bold italics for additional comments and observations.* The guide is a version 1.0 and will be updated based on developments from LEG/NAP and learning by civil society networks in the Southern Voices on Adaptation Project.

### NAPs and NAPAs

Many LDCs have experience of developing NAPAs, (National Adaptation Programme of Action) which are the predecessor to the NAP. The key distinction is that the NAPAs revolved around projects for immediate implementation, whereas the NAPs are looking to achieve longer term transformational change in the capacity to address adaptation. Where relevant, the NAPs can build on the experience of developing the NAPAs, and the Technical Guidelines contain a summary of the lessons learned. On the positive side, these include the importance of:

- A country-driven approach
- Raising awareness across government sectors and the public
- Multi-stakeholder involvement

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<sup>1</sup> Technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan process, LDC Expert Group, December 2012 and other materials can be found on the NAP Central information system of the UNFCCC website [http://unfccc.int/nap/guidelines\\_main.html](http://unfccc.int/nap/guidelines_main.html)

- External support, particularly from the LEG
- Dialogue with the Global Environment Facility to overcome bottlenecks in accessing funds

Negative lessons included:

- Available finance was too limited
- Lack of timely guidance for accessing funds
- Cumbersome internal procedures of development partners
- Raised and frustrated expectations, particularly with the long time lag between developing NAPAs and implanting projects on the ground,

The NAP Technical Guidelines expressly note these lessons and state that they have been used to inform the suggested NAP process.

*Some civil society actors have cited bad experience of NAPAs as a reason to not to engage in the NAP process. From the Guidelines it appears that the lessons from NAPAs have at least been acknowledged, if not yet necessarily fully acted upon, and at this stage it would not be fair to dismiss the NAPAs as simply replay of the NAPAs.*

#### **The NAP Technical Guidelines in brief**

The guidelines, in the spirit of the UNFCCC decision at COP 17 on NAPs<sup>2</sup>, are not prescriptive and are intended to facilitate a process owned and led by countries themselves.

*The term “country-owned” is usually used to imply national government, but it also provides an opening for civil*

*society, as each country can implement and interpret the guidelines as it sees fit. The adaptation planning process is supposed to be “gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent”.*

“ The NAPs, as strategic national plans, would provide guidance to processes at the national level and beyond. These processes would encompass not only government agencies and ministries, but also communities, the private sector, local municipalities, non-governmental organizations, and other relevant stakeholders.” Technical Guidelines, p. 9

Again taking their cue from the UNFCCC decision, the Technical Guidelines are structured around four “elements” – though they stress that implementation does not necessarily have to be in this order. *The boundaries between these four elements are fuzzy, partly because*

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<sup>2</sup> From 5/CP17 : “3. Further agrees that enhanced action on adaptation should be undertaken in accordance with the Convention, should follow a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional and indigenous knowledge, and by gender-sensitive approaches, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate;”

*the wording of the original COP decision is not that clear, so don't worry too much about what "stage" your country is at.*<sup>3</sup>

1. **Laying the groundwork and addressing gaps:** a "readiness" phase to assess available climate information, identify capacity gaps for implementation, and take stock of development needs and climate vulnerabilities.
2. **Preparatory steps:** establishing more detail about future climate scenarios and options for adaptation at different levels, and actually compiling the NAP. This is when "participatory stakeholder consultations" and "awareness-raising" are deemed to take place.
3. **Implementation strategies:** prioritising adaptation actions and developing the strategy for implementing them, including public dissemination.
4. **Reporting Monitoring and Review:** deciding what to monitor and how this is used to revise the NAP.

*You can see from this that a NAP is as much a process as an actual document. Civil society can have a role in all these elements.*

The Technical Guidelines divide these elements into a total of 17 steps (Table 1 of the Guidelines), and for each step provide key questions (Table 2) and indicative activities (Table 3). *The last of these tables is perhaps the most useful as it lists the practical things that need to happen – again, as ideas, not requirements – and therefore allows civil society organisations to consider if they have a role. Part of this table is reproduced later in this guide.*

The Guidelines conclude with a brief section on how to use the elements and steps to create "workstreams" for different working groups to take forward different aspects of the NAP process. *It will be important for civil society organisations to understand how their government is organising these workstreams.*

The activities and steps of the NAP process can be clustered into workstreams that would be managed by different stakeholders. Together, the workstreams would build a national programme that would be "the NAP process." (Page 119)

## How the Technical Guidelines consider civil society

The UNFCCC and therefore the LEG consider adaptation planning to be a government-driven process, and so there is little specific guidance on how to involve civil society. Civil society is considered to be one of a long list of other stakeholders including the media, academia, business and international bodies. The Guidelines also note that one of the lessons learned

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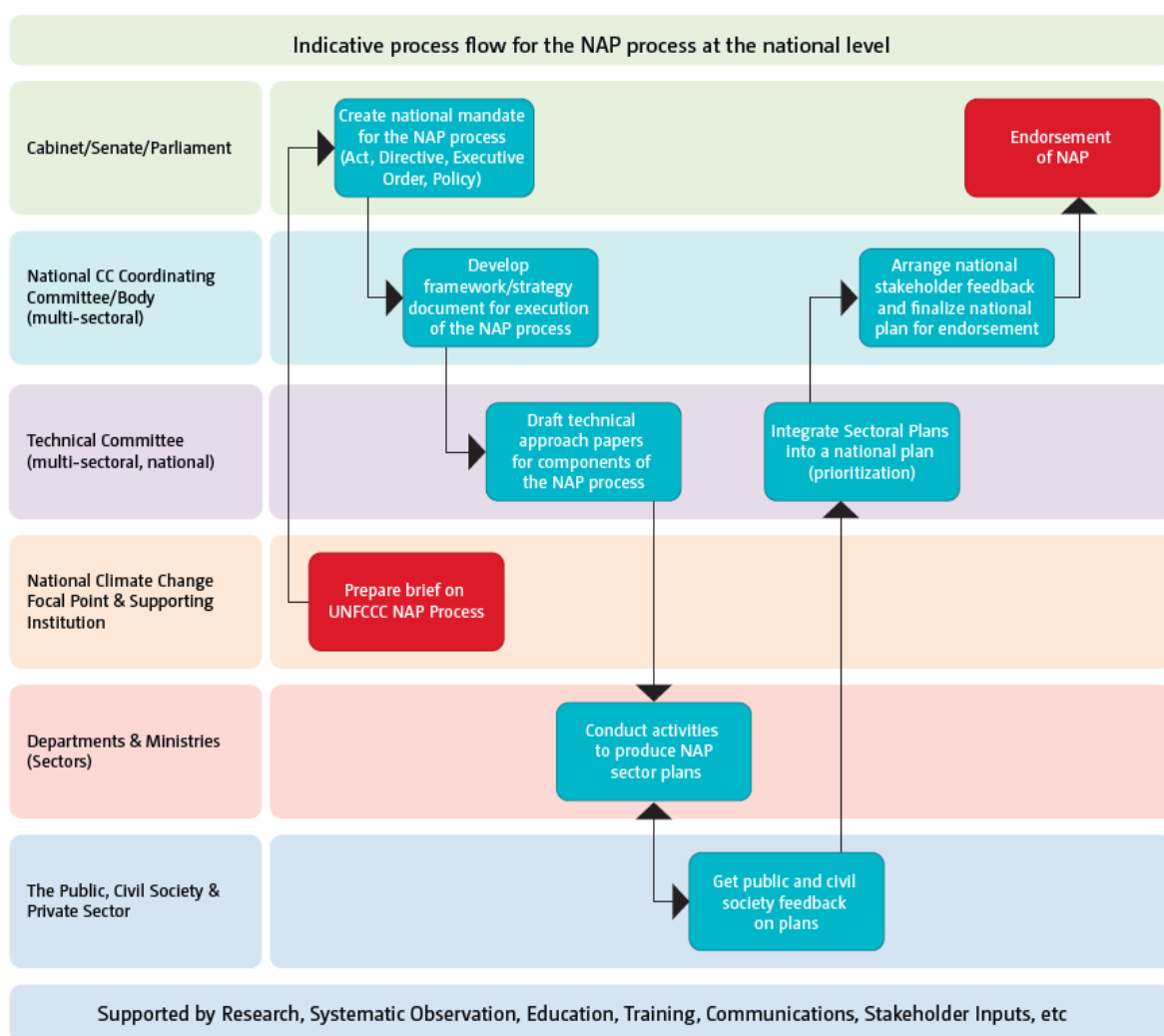
<sup>3</sup> For example, Element one contains "comprehensively and iteratively assessing development needs and climate vulnerabilities". Element B includes "assessing climate vulnerabilities and identifying adaptation options". Clearly there is a big overlap between these two activities.

from the development of NAPAs is that multidisciplinary teams, including with experts from civil society, where an asset.

The Technical Guidelines contain a diagram<sup>4</sup> that summarizes the overall NAP process, reproduced below, which indicates two areas where civil society engagement is recognized:

1. getting public and civil society feedback on plans
2. supported by ... stakeholder inputs

*National civil society organisations may make use of these potential entry points by proactively engaging with government and making suggestions of how they could be more involved, even before they have not been specifically invited to do so.*



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In the analysis of stakeholders contained in the Technical Guidelines, the opportunities and challenges of civil society organisations are presented as follows:

<sup>4</sup> Lblled as Figure 1 in the Guidalines, and as Figure 2 in the Overview.

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make use of their expertise, including in addressing gender issues related to climate change adaptation</li> <li>• Help reflect local realities and bring voices from the community level</li> <li>• Foster their role in information collection, information-sharing and awareness-raising (from policymakers to local communities)</li> <li>• Encourage them in their watchdog role (i.e. in promoting transparency and accountability)</li> <li>• Turn them into champions for climate change adaptation integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacities may be weak especially with respect to engagement in national development planning</li> <li>• Often not involved in all stages of national development planning</li> </ul>

*The specific mention of gender as an area of expertise of civil society provides another potential entry point for engagement. The importance of gender as an issue in adaptation is highlighted in the introduction to the Guidelines, and indeed has a dedicated text box<sup>5</sup> which contains a list of activities. Some of these could be of specific interest to CSOs:*

- Assessing what information is available regarding particularly vulnerable groups including women, and further researching on this topic in the country;
- Harnessing the potential of women as agents of change within their communities, and investing in this potential as part of the NAP process;
- Tailoring and implementing the NAP activities based on an understanding of gender dynamics and the potentially disproportionate impacts of climate change on women;
- Ensuring the participation of the most vulnerable groups, including women, in the NAP process. This includes integrating the perspectives of women and drawing on their unique adaptation knowledge and local coping strategies when formulating the NAP;
- Undertaking outreach to ensure that different stakeholders understand the gender dynamics of climate change;
- Using sex-disaggregated data in vulnerability and adaptation assessments;
- Monitoring and reporting on the integration of gender considerations into the NAP process;

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<sup>5</sup> Box 2 page 17

- Evaluating the integration of gender considerations into adaptation and making improvements if necessary.

### Dealing with Vulnerability

The Technical Guidelines have an open-ended approach to the analysis of vulnerability and leave it to governments to select the methods they wish to use. In the glossary of terms, the definition of vulnerability which the Guidelines choose to use comes from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change IPCC :

**“Vulnerability:** The degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. Vulnerability is a function of the character, magnitude and rate of climate variation to which a system is exposed, its sensitivity and its adaptive capacity. Therefore adaptation would also include any efforts to address these components (IPCC AR4, 2007).”

*This technical definition of vulnerability is very generic and leaves it to the expertise or imagination of the reader to interpret what comprises a “system”. On the one hand this is an opportunity for civil society to emphasise the range of human and social factors which define the vulnerability of particular groups of people. On the other hand there is a risk that any interest group can use a definition of vulnerability that might give priority to their favoured target for adaptation funding. Throughout the Guidelines the terms vulnerable regions, vulnerable sectors, vulnerable areas, vulnerable groups, vulnerable communities, vulnerable populations, vulnerable ecosystems, and vulnerable systems are all used, without explicit recognition that the term “vulnerable” means something different for each of those terms.*

The Technical Guidelines provide an introduction to different approaches to analysing vulnerability, classified broadly into top-down and bottom-up methods. The top-down approach starts with the question : *“What if climate extremes change according to certain scenarios?”* , whereas the bottom-up approach asks *“Where are the sensitivities considering climate variability and what can communities cope with?”* They advise using a combination of approaches and ensuring that the final outcomes are well understood by all stakeholders.

Specific approaches to assessing vulnerability, which are not mutually exclusive, are listed as<sup>6</sup>:

1. *Hazards approach* - closely linked to disaster risk management, especially in case of fast onset events such as floods and storm surges along coastal zones;
2. *Risk management approach* -besides assessing the hazard, it includes concepts such as uncertainty and perceptions of the risks;

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<sup>6</sup> Section 5.2, page 64

3. *Vulnerability approach* – focusing on the social factors that determine the ability to deal with climate impacts;
4. *Resilience approach* - widely in ecology, and now also being applied to human systems, calling for flexibility in response to changing conditions and “adaptive management”;
5. *Ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation* – focusing on adaptation activities that rely on goods and services provided by ecosystems, such as food and water;
6. *Expert-based approach* - based on prioritizing adaptation options through a qualitative assessment based on stakeholder analysis and expert judgement, thus combining top-down (hazard-based) and bottom-up (vulnerability-based) approaches.

*One potential are for civil society advocacy, or if the capacity exists, technical support to the process, is to ensure that sufficient attention is given to bottom-up and community-based perspectives on vulnerability and that they feature strongly in the NAP analysis.*

### Choosing the moment to engage in NAPs

*(Simple one word answer: Now!)*

As explained above, the Technical Guidelines divide the NAP process into four elements, each in turn described as a number of steps. Although this gives the impression of being a sequence, it would be wrong to treat it this way and the Guidelines explicitly warn against doing so. Each country has to design its own process and own series of steps that suits its circumstances in terms of capacity, availability of data, and institutional environment. Nevertheless, there is a broad logic that determines that Elements A (groundwork) and B (preparation) must precede C (implementation) and D (monitoring).

The Guidelines first refer to civil society involvement (as part of wider stakeholders) under step B.4 “Compiling and communicating national adaptation plans”. *However, this does not mean that civil society organisations have to wait until then, unless they have chosen to play a relatively passive role in the process. Alternatively, civil society organisations can seek to influence the earlier steps, by engaging with government as it defines how the NAP process will unfold in their country.*

*One way to do this is to understand the potential steps that need to be taken, and identify opportunities where they can add value early in the process. There are clear opportunities for civil society well before the point where they are invited as part of general public consultation.*

Below is the indicative list of activities for Elements A and B provided in the Technical Guidelines<sup>7</sup>. For what is contemplated for the later elements, please refer directly to the Guidelines or the Overview document.

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<sup>7</sup> Tables 3A, page 27, and 3B, page 55

## INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR ELEMENT A - GROUNDWORK

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|---|---|
| <p>1. Initiating and launching the NAP process</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Conduct briefings to policymakers about climate change adaptation challenges and opportunities, and the NAP process in particular</li> <li>b. Designate the spearheading or coordinating mechanism</li> <li>c. Create or enhance a national vision and mandate for the NAP process</li> <li>d. Operationalize the NAP process through access to support</li> <li>e. Define a NAP framework and strategy as well as a road map, including sequencing of various NAPs and a monitoring and evaluation plan for the NAP process</li> </ul> |
| <p>2. Stocktaking: identifying available information on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation and assessing gaps and needs of the enabling environment for the NAP process</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Conduct a stocktaking of ongoing and past adaptation activities</li> <li>b. Synthesize available analyses of the current and future climate at the broad national and/or regional level</li> <li>c. Conduct a gap analysis to assess strengths and weaknesses regarding the capacity, data and information, and resources required to effectively engage in the NAP process</li> <li>d. Assess potential barriers to the planning, design and implementation of adaptation activities</li> </ul>  |
| <p>3. Addressing capacity gaps and weaknesses in undertaking the NAP process</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop and enhance enabling institutional and technical capacity for the formulation of the NAP</li> <li>b. Identify and enhance awareness of potential opportunities for integrating climate change adaptation into development planning at different levels</li> <li>c. Design and implement programmes on climate change communication, public awareness-raising and education</li> </ul>   |
| <p>4. Comprehensively and iteratively assessing development needs and climate vulnerabilities</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Compile information on main development objectives, policies, plans and programmes</li> <li>b. Identify synergies between development and adaptation objectives, policies, plans and programmes with a view to identifying risks to investment and opportunities for collaboration and realizing co-benefits (start with climate-proofing), including economic benefits</li> </ul>  |



## INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR ELEMENT B - PREPARATION

<p>1. Analysing current climate and future climate change scenarios</p>	<p>a. Analyse the current climate to identify trends in variables and indices that could be used to support planning and decision-making</p> <p>b. Characterize broad future climate risks and levels of uncertainty using scenario analysis at the national level or as part of a regional analysis including through climate and socioeconomic scenarios</p> <p>c. Communicate projected climate change information to all stakeholders and the public</p>
<p>2. Assessing climate vulnerabilities and identifying adaptation options at sector, subnational, national and other appropriate levels</p>	<p>a. Assess vulnerability to climate change at sector, subnational, national or appropriate levels (by applying applicable frameworks)</p> <p>b. Rank climate change risks and vulnerabilities</p> <p>c. Identify and categorize adaptation options at multiple scales to address priority vulnerabilities</p>
<p>3. Reviewing and appraising adaptation options</p>	<p>a. Appraise individual adaptation options, including economic, ecosystem and social costs and benefits, and possibilities for unintended (positive and negative) impacts of adaptation measures</p>
<p>4. Compiling and communicating national adaptation plans</p>	<p>a. Aggregate sectoral and subnational adaptation priorities into national adaptation plans through stakeholder ranking processes and make the drafts available for review</p> <p>b. Integrate review comments into the national adaptation plans and process endorsement at the national level as defined in the mandate for the NAP process</p> <p>c. Communicate and disseminate the national adaptation plans widely to all stakeholders in the country</p>
<p>5. Integrating climate change adaptation into national and subnational development and sectoral planning</p>	<p>a. Identify opportunities and constraints for integrating climate change into planning</p> <p>b. Build and enhance capacity for integrating climate change into planning</p> <p>c. Facilitate the integration of climate change adaptation into existing national and subnational planning processes</p>

## Conclusion

*The Technical Guidelines for national adaptation planning are a useful sourcebook for governments as they embark on their adaptation plan process. While they deal with different aspects with different depth, overall they are comprehensive and have something to say on most areas where civil society would have an interest. The principles enshrined in that document, including participation, transparency and flexibility, are a good starting point for civil society engagement in the process.*

*Nevertheless the Guidelines are modest in their expectations of how much civil society will be involved in an essentially government-driven process. It is quite possible for civil society views to be marginalized unless organisations are proactive in providing inputs and suggesting to governments where they can add value.*

*Civil society will need to identify their potential role in each national context. The Guidelines themselves offer at least three immediate entry points for substantive civil society input: gender; analysis of vulnerability; and the quality of participation and public consultation.*

*Without doubt civil society organisations will identify other opportunities in their own countries. As a first step, they need to engage with governments understand how the NAP process will be organised so they can identify how to use their strengths most strategically.*

## Further developments and the Joint Principles for Adaptation

To further inspire and guide civil society involvement in the NAP processes, the Southern Voices on Adaptation Project has launched the [“Joint Principles for Adaptation”](#) - a statement by civil society organisations from across the world of what they consider to be a benchmark for good adaptation planning. The JPA includes seven principles with accompanying criteria, which can be used by civil society for advocacy, dialogue with government or capacity-building to promote pro-poor adaptation policies.

This civil society guide will be updated in the second semester of 2014 to link the NAP/LEG guidelines with the Joint Principles for Adaptation.

For further information see:

<http://www.southernvoices.net/en/home/sv-on-adaptation/669-joint-principles-for-adaptation.html>