

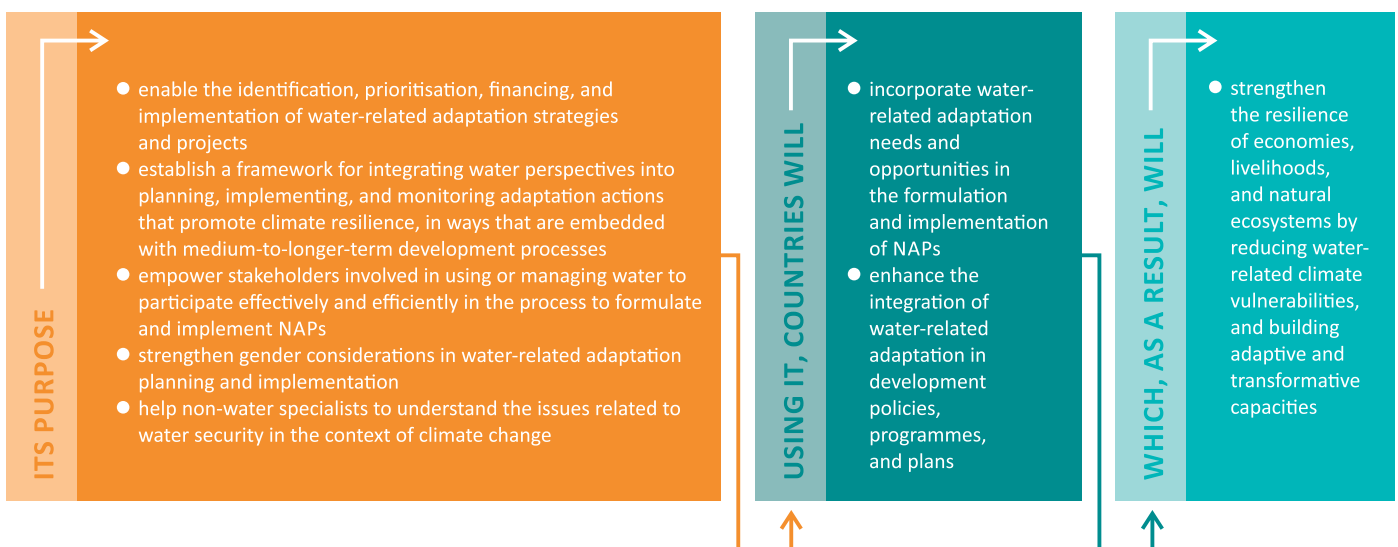


Addressing Water in National Adaptation Plans

Water Supplement to the UNFCCC NAP Technical Guidelines

Water is the most-cited pathway through which countries experience climate impacts, and also the most-often prioritised sector through which countries seek to build resilience in their economies, their populations' livelihoods, and their natural ecosystems.¹

Acknowledging that well-planned climate-responsive water management strategies and actions provide significant opportunity to build resilience, this NAP Water Supplement offers guidance for integrating water perspectives in countries' NAP processes.



KEY MESSAGES

1. Water is the common thread connecting global and national ambitions and commitments: NDCs, NAPs, SDGs, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and national development plans.

- *SDG indicator 6.5.1 establishes the need for action at four levels: enabling environment; institutions and participation; management instruments; and financing. Under a changing climate, governments seeking to achieve the SDGs in concert are realising that water-related adaptation becomes part of overall adaptation planning, and that integrated approaches to water management maximise benefits while mitigating chances of unintended maladaptation.*

2. Adaptation in water is crucial for strengthening the resilience of economies, livelihoods, and natural ecosystems by reducing water-related vulnerabilities and building adaptive and transformative capacities. A risk-based approach is essential to define responses.

- *Assessments of climate impacts, vulnerabilities, and associated risks are powerful tools for providing evidence to decision-makers.*
- *Target adaptation of the most vulnerable. Ensure that evidence for climate risk is generated from the bottom-up (e.g., community vulnerability assessments, stakeholder engagement) as well as top-down (e.g., climate impact studies).*
- *Climate change exacerbates gender inequalities that stem from socio-economic barriers limiting women's participation in decision-making. Gender analysis must be conducted to inform interventions.*

¹ As indicated in a 2016 UNFCCC study of 162 Nationally Determined Contributions.

3. The economic cost of inaction to adaptation of climate impacts on water could be high, and governments should protect their development goals and ambitions from being derailed by climate change by investing in water governance.

- Estimates of global economic losses related to water insecurity are astounding: US\$260 billion per year from inadequate water supply and sanitation, US\$120 billion per year from urban property flood damages, and US\$94 billion per year from water insecurity for existing irrigators.²
- Balance political, technical, and financial feasibility. Options must be supported by data and analysis. Simple screening tools, existing impact and vulnerability assessments, stakeholder engagement, and expert input can offer rapid insights without the need for time-consuming studies.
- Lack of funding for water-related projects is often not a shortage of finance. Unlocking finance for water can be done by understanding the requirements of climate funds, development finance, and private sector interests – and improving coordination to access these sources.

4. Success depends on stakeholder ownership. A well-argued economic case for water helps ensure buy-in from decision-makers. Communications around these economic arguments must address real-world problems, advocate practical solutions, and persuade stakeholders.

- Stakeholder engagement at the early stage of developing a national vision for integrating water in the NAP is essential to ensure ownership.

5. Build embedded in-country capacity, knowledge, and strengthen data and information systems.

- While the tendency to address capacity limitations is to tap external technical experts, the NAP process will only be effective if capacity is built within mandated institutions and local implementing agencies.
- Often the root behind the data and knowledge gaps is a coordination gap. Identify the existing information, in and outside a country, and the mechanisms that can be mobilised to act on such information.

6. Regional and transboundary dimensions of shared waters calls for an integrated approach transcending national boundaries.

- Although the NAP process is anchored at national level, transboundary considerations can expand the range of benefits.
- Take a nexus approach to identify co-benefits. Climate resilience and water projects are traditionally designed to harness adaptation benefits; however, integrated approaches shed light on mitigation co-benefits of water projects, which expands the range of funding sources.

7. Learn by doing. Water management is context specific and so are interventions to improve climate resilience through better water management.

- Inadequate data, finance, and capacity are not reasons to delay action. Building time for learning will identify what needs strengthening.
- Incremental and well-planned climate-responsive water management strategies and actions builds resilience. The NAP Water Supplement offers guidance for integrating such water adaptation measures.

² OECD (2018) *Financing Water: Investing in Sustainable Growth*. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, France. <https://www.oecd.org/water/Policy-Paper-Financing-Water-Investing-in-Sustainable-Growth.pdf>

WHY INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO MANAGING WATER ARE SO CRITICAL FOR ADAPTATION

Integrated approaches, recommended in the NAP Water Supplement, are critical to be able to manage successfully the multiple overlaying dynamics involved in water-related climate action:

- the need for infrastructure, information, and institutions
- actions at project, community, national, river basin, transboundary and global levels
- the challenge of balancing and sequencing institutional and infrastructure investments
- trade-offs in balancing equity, environmental, and economic priorities
- opportunities to synergise between adaptation and mitigation benefits.

At the same time, stakeholders need to be flexible, inclusive, to take on leadership and be accountable, and to collaborate – in the context of increasing variability and decreasing predictability that climate change brings.

The NAP Water Supplement recognises that countries follow the UNFCCC NAP Technical Guidelines while engaging in the NAP process. It is designed to be used in concert with the Technical Guidelines, specifically along the four elements in the Technical Guidelines:

- **Element A.** Laying the groundwork and addressing gaps
- **Element B.** Preparatory elements
- **Element C.** Implementation strategies
- **Element D.** Reporting, monitoring, and review