

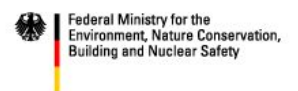


# Local Ownership and Engagement for NDC Implementation

Concept idea by the NDC Support Cluster



On behalf of:



of the Federal Republic of Germany

## Introduction to the approach

The approach proposes a holistic multi-level process for the development of an NDC action plan, which strengthens local-level engagement to connect high-level policy commitments and concrete project implementation. The underlying aim of the local ownership and engagement approach is to provide a way for incorporating community concerns, knowledge, expertise and capacity into the national climate policy formulation and implementation processes.

The approach consists of three sequential pillars: consultation; project piloting; and monitoring, reporting, verification, evaluation and learning (MRV-EL). Each pillar maintains a specific contribution – communication, experimentation and continuous improvement – to the value chain of developing and implementing an effective NDC action plan (see Figure 1). Jointly, they form a virtuous circle creating a smart, sustainable climate action plan with strong ownership by local actors.

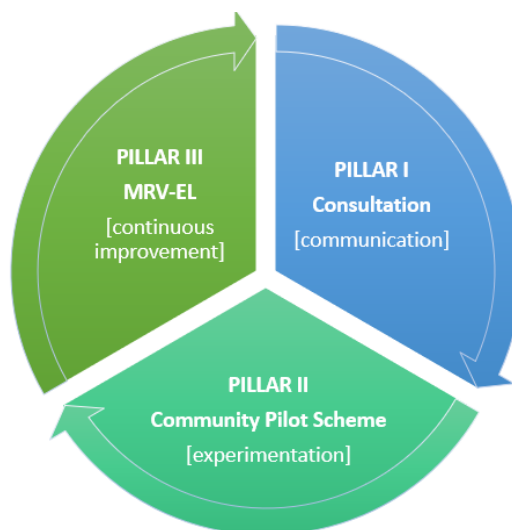
The first pillar represents a multi-stakeholder consultation, which takes the national climate commitments to the county/regional and municipality levels. A broad range of actors, including local governments, community representatives, CSOs/NGOs, as well as private sector representatives, should be involved in discussing policy implementation at the local level.

The process should start with a consideration of community development needs. During the consultation process, community representatives are invited to communicate the key issues their citizens face related to the policy in question. Given limited resources, a prioritisation of challenges and solutions is required. Community representatives are then asked to outline expected outcomes of envisioned solutions. During this process, climate mitigation and adaptation as well as broader development priorities are identified to steer a discussion about which specific climate actions can help achieve community gains. The conversation is geared toward exploring the solutions that can deliver most effectively on climate goals while creating substantial sustainable development benefits.

The outcomes of the local consultation are fed into the national project development process to build community pilot schemes (the second pillar). Pilot projects allow for the testing of innovative approaches and for the adjustment of broader climate strategies to specific local circumstances and needs - before they are rolled out at larger scale where they have proven successful.

The **third pillar puts a strong focus on continuous learning and raising ambition**. The approach suggests that a specific MRV-EL system is put in place. The key aim is to monitor the implementation of pilot projects, capturing information on the ground and developing it into lessons learned which would be fed back to the action plan development cycle and the formulation of new climate commitments. The two-tier system should ensure that the monitoring of climate progress is done in line with the UNFCCC reporting requirements while capturing lessons from the implementation of pilot projects for the development of an advanced national climate change action plan. This allows to analyse the extent to which each pilot project is contributing to both the achievement of climate commitments as well as broader socio-economic development goals, including those captured within the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Beyond the implementation of the

Figure 1. The three pillars of the approach forming a virtuous circle



current NDC, an effective MRV-EL system can ultimately be used as a tool to critically assess, based on evidence on the ground, the scope at which the ambition of climate commitments can be increased. This way the on-the-ground knowledge can contribute to formulation of the next NDC (to be submitted by 2020) ensuring that the Paris Agreement commitments remain within reach.

## Challenges and barriers tackled

### Lack of community ownership and involvement of local stakeholders

Ensuring that high-level NDC commitments are successfully met requires effective engagement and leadership at the local level. Climate action designed at the national level can easily ignore the specific circumstances present in different regions of the country – and sometimes even between neighbouring communities (see box 1). Recognition of these local peculiarities is relevant for climate action in all economic and policy sectors and concerns both mitigation and adaptation action.

Local communities often understand best the climate vulnerabilities in their geographic areas as well as the potential solutions for both mitigation and adaptation. This contextual knowledge should drive the formulation and implementation of individual projects and feed back into the drafting of new or modification of existing climate action plans. Acknowledgement of local concerns and latent capacities can empower communities, as well as create positive spill-over effects on broader nation-building efforts.

Planning at the local level can also help override ‘politics’ – the tendency of political actors to focus on the low-hanging fruits (policies that are easily achievable) rather than on those that may have the highest impact to the communities affected by climate change<sup>1:2</sup>.

#### Box 1. Kenya: Tailoring climate action to local needs<sup>1</sup>

Kenya with its enormous geographic, social and cultural diversity presents a good example for the broad range of climate mitigation and adaptation challenges local communities face – and for how this variety could manifest during the local identification of priority projects.

For example, the highest priority for communities living in the drylands may be the building of water storage facilities which can be filled during the rainy season and used during the drought period. Dryland people may also prioritise the acquisition of solar water pumps and solar water heating systems. In contrast, communities living in the generally humid climate of the highlands may decide to prioritise reforestation efforts, possibly enabling them to get access to international climate finance. They may also focus their efforts on expanding access to biogas digesters to make use of the methane gas from their zero grazing units. In the urban centres, the prioritised projects may revolve around street lighting, energy efficiency in buildings, and cooking.

Kenya has been applying a highly participatory process to the design of its National Climate Change Action Plan. This approach allows to capture the diverse needs and priorities of local communities from across the country. Kenya’s experiences can be very valuable for the design of a local NDC ownership and engagement approach elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup> Dewi S, Ekadinata A, Galudra G, Agung P and Johana F. 2011. LUWES: Land use planning for Low Emission Development Strategy, Bogor, Indonesia. World Agroforestry Centre - ICRAF, SE Regional Office.

<sup>2</sup> Broto, V.C., et al. 2015. Participation and planning for climate change: Lessons from an experimental project in Maputo, Mozambique. Available from: [https://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CDKN\\_Maputo-Mozambique\\_BP.pdf](https://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CDKN_Maputo-Mozambique_BP.pdf).

## The challenge of defining the ‘right’ level of ambition

There is often a mismatch between the ambition of national climate commitments and their perception at sectoral, subnational and local levels<sup>3</sup>. Stakeholders at these levels are often doubtful whether national goals are realistic and affordable. Involving them early on can bring everyone on board. Vice versa, if climate strategy-building includes a bottom-up process driven by the analysis of local governments and community leaders of what is realistic, this can significantly raise the ambition of national climate commitments.

## Lack of national-subnational coordination and local capacity limitations

Climate policy can be a challenging process given the number of actors involved. Often, mandates for climate action are shared between different ministries and agencies as well as levels of government without clear lines of responsibility and coordination, which limits the efficiency and coherence of policy and planning efforts. Even when coordination between local and national governments is established, their effective collaboration may be challenged by the lack of resources and capacity at the local level. This challenge can become even more pertinent when local communities are involved. To fully tap into the benefits of multi-level collaboration, these constraints should be acknowledged, assessed and addressed as part of the institutionalised policy making process.

## Target group / beneficiaries

The main target group are local communities, and amongst them those heavily impacted by climate change. These can include small-scale farmers and pastoralist communities who depend on their traditional habitats for survival. Subnational governments, as both actors in their own right and facilitators of engagement at the community level, should also be considered as a target group and beneficiaries of the approach. National authorities are also among the key beneficiaries through the development of an effective action plan, which ensures the delivery of national climate commitments.

## Putting the concept into practice - success factors and challenges

The section describes the process of implementing the local ownership and engagement approach in greater detail, focusing on key prerequisites, challenges and success factors that can ensure that the anticipated benefits are delivered.

### Consultation

#### a. Defining the local area

Multi-stakeholder consultation workshops with a cross-section of relevant groups should be held. The first step in designing the approach is to identify the size of this local ‘unit’. This should consider

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<sup>3</sup> Lütkehermöller K., Roeser F., Van Tilburg X., Rawlins J., Day T. and Luijten J.; with contributions from Halstead M., Boule M. and Gonzales Zuñiga S., November 2017. NDC Update Report: The long and steep climb towards a 1.5°C world. Available from: <https://newclimate.org/2017/11/13/ndc-update-report-the-long-and-steep-climb-towards-a-1-5-c-world-nov-2017/>.

existing administrative boundaries, landscapes, livelihood systems, agro-climatic or agro-ecological zones<sup>4</sup>, considering their similarities and differences.

b. Selection of participants

The invitation of different stakeholders should be managed at the sub-national/county level or directly at the local administration level. Consider how to form an effective working group, while considering political economy considerations: ensuring that key local government decision makers are at the table; considering which local agencies, NGOs/CSOs, the academia, private sector organisations should be represented. Ensuring diverse representation of local communities should be at the centre of the approach.

c. Local capacity building

To ensure effective engagement of all levels of government (with a particular focus on community representatives), local capacities need to be considered. An early stage capacity assessment of various actors should be conducted, taking into account the unique climate change adaptation and mitigation challenges they need to tackle (e.g. in some cases, a basic understanding of climate forecasting and ability to read climate mapping may be required). This information can be used to design a capacity building plan (if required) to be included into the planning of the local ownership and engagement approach.

d. Communications and outreach

Different communication tools (flyers, emails, direct phone calls, barazas (public meetings), etc.) should be used, tailored to a specific audience, to ensure effective outreach and diverse representation in the consultation groups. Establishment of a communication platform could also be considered, which would establish an open-access, transparent management approach.

e. Knowledge management

A uniform template and system should be designed to ensure that knowledge is captured and stored in a consistent manner. This applies both to communications coming from the top-down, effectively informing all relevant participating stakeholders at the subnational and local levels, as well as broader public of the national level climate policy commitments and the implementation process; as well as to capture the local knowledge.

## Community pilot scheme

The main outcome of the consultation stage is the list of priority issues and expected outcomes for different counties/districts, which informs the design of the community pilot scheme. The design of the specific projects can take place either at the national or local levels; while their implementation is strongly embedded in the local communities participating in the action plan design process.

It is crucial to allow enough time for the piloting phase. Often lack of resources leads to shorter time allocated between carrying out the consultations, providing feedback and piloting of a given project. This can have several negative consequences, such as insufficient data being gathered, and lower quality of assessment and evaluation documents produced, which could in turn challenge the design of the action plan. Ideally, the pilot phase should allow time for iteration – adjusting the project focus/implementation approaches based on monitoring data which is fed directly back to the pilot

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<sup>4</sup> CARE International 2017. Practical guide to PSP: Participatory Scenario Planning using seasonal forecasts. Available from: <https://careclimatechange.org/publications/practical-guide-to-participatory-scenario-planning-seasonal-climate-information-for-resilient-decision-making/>.

projects. Scalability and replicability are the two main challenges to a successful shift from the pilot stage to full scale roll out. An iterative pilot phase, supported by an effective MRV-EL process, would allow for different modalities to be tested thus providing additional information to inform these questions.

Availability of resources could become a challenge to ensuring effective implementation of the approach. This is particularly pertinent to the piloting phase. Depending on the project being implemented, this should account for short/medium/long-term engagement as required to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of an intervention. Financing needs and potential sources should be considered during the early design and planning phase.

### Monitoring, reporting, verification, evaluation and learning (MRV-EL)

The MRV-EL component is an integral part of the local ownership and engagement approach. Presented in this paper as a distinct third pillar of the approach, in practice it would overlap with the second – project piloting – stage<sup>5</sup>.

The MRV-EL process should start with designing the composition of the monitoring team. The team may have representatives from all levels involved during the project formulation stage, as well as experts in monitoring and evaluation with an understanding of UNFCCC reporting requirements. The adequate size of the team should be determined by considering the size of the area covered by the pilot projects and can be revised at a later stage as required. The team should be trained – while members of the team may have a good understanding of the issues, they may lack experience of designing and conducting monitoring and evaluation activities.

Appropriate methodologies should be selected to ensure learning with and from target beneficiaries<sup>6</sup>. Discuss and agree on indicators that will capture the information and lessons learned effectively at the output, outcome and impact levels. The process should be informed by the desired outcomes identified during the consultation phase. Some indicators may not be entirely new – considering existing monitoring and evaluation systems, where appropriate, could save time and resources. To ensure that the information and lessons learned are captured effectively, standard templates and reporting procedures should be designed and communicated to the monitoring team at an early stage.

## Key stakeholders / potential collaboration partners

- The public sector: it is important to develop a strong working relationship between the national government and local actors, so that the policy formation side ‘speaks’ to the implementing actors (who are mostly at the sub-national level). The proposed approach ensures that effective communication channels are established at an early stage of implementation planning. National governments should strike the right balance – facilitating local ownership while providing enough support for the process (both through political backing and securing of financial resources).
- Marginalised groups are usually left out in decision making processes. The approach allows for them to have their voices heard.

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<sup>5</sup> While the MRV-EL pillar is specifically concerned with the evaluation of pilot projects, an assessment of the overall action plan design process is equally important.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

- Civil society organisations/NGOs can not only provide expertise, but also act as facilitating agents between the government and the marginalised groups, as they often have long-standing direct relationship with local communities. The engagement of these actors should therefore be planned at an early stage, with clearly defined entry points and responsibilities.
- The academia and experts on the topic and public mediation
- Private sector/businesses can be important implementation partners and should hence be included in the process.
- Financial institutions/banks are likely going to play an important role in providing financing for the projects either through loans or grants. It is therefore important to engage them in designing the modalities of pilot project interventions and subsequently their implementation.

## Box 2. Kenya: stakeholder engagement

In Kenya, local level participation and multi-stakeholder engagement is mandated by the Climate Change Act of 2016. The law provides a basis for the government's ongoing efforts to institutionalise the coordination of climate change action, providing support through the establishment of climate change coordination units in federal ministries, departments and agencies, as well as county governments. The Climate Change Directorate (CCD) in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources is the lead agency of the government for designing national climate change plans and implementing concrete actions. Its mandate includes the development of a framework for private-sector engagement in the implementation of the National Climate Change Action Plan as well as oversight for knowledge and information management through the National Climate Change Resource Centre.

## Conclusion / next steps

There is a growing recognition that locally-driven participatory approaches can strengthen the design of climate policy and measures as well as their implementation. A policy, action plan or a project that is designed through the collaboration at all levels of government and that takes the perspectives, knowledge and capacities from local communities into consideration during the formulation stage is more likely to succeed and have a higher impact than traditional approaches that know only one way: top-down. The local ownership and engagement approach outlined in this concept paper offers a promising way towards achieving this goal. Its application in a particular country needs to be well thought through and adjusted to the local circumstances and capacities. It is important to ensure that lessons from pioneer countries such as Kenya are captured and fed back into the global pool of knowledge.

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