

REPORT

Public Engagement on Climate Change Adaptation

A briefing for developing country
National Adaptation Plan teams



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Climate Outreach is passionate about widening and deepening public engagement with climate change. Through our audience research, practical guides and consultancy services, we help organizations engage diverse audiences beyond the usual suspects. We focus on building and sustaining cross-societal support for climate action, overcoming political polarization, and turning concern into action. We have nearly two decades of experience working with a range of global partners including government, international bodies, media and NGOs. For more information, visit www.climateoutreach.org.

About the NAP Global Network

The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Global Network was created in 2014 at the 20th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 20) to support developing countries in advancing their NAP processes, and help accelerate adaptation efforts around the world. To achieve this, the Network facilitates South-South peer learning and exchange, supports national-level action on NAP formulation and implementation, and generates, synthesizes, and shares knowledge. The Network's members include individual participants from more than 155 countries involved in developing and implementing National Adaptation Plans. Financial support for the Network has been provided by Austria, Canada, Germany, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Secretariat is hosted by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). For more information, visit www.napglobalnetwork.org.

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Women planting mangrove saplings along the riverbanks of the Matla river in Sundarbans, India.

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Introduction

This report provides an introduction to public engagement on climate change adaptation; its primary intended audience is decision-makers involved in leading National Adaptation Plan (NAP) processes (referred to in this report as “NAP teams”) in developing countries.

Section 1 presents a case for why effective public engagement on climate change matters, why countries must build a social mandate for action on climate change, what this means for public engagement on climate change adaptation, and the role that the NAP process can play.

Section 2 provides an introduction to how NAP teams can approach public engagement on adaptation by making links to the Action for Climate Empowerment agenda under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Paris Agreement to guide their efforts.

Section 3 presents key considerations for how to make public engagement inclusive and effective, including guidance on using impactful visuals based on evidence and experience from Climate Outreach’s Climate Visuals initiative.

Section 4 explores four case studies of public engagement on adaptation led by governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Kenya, and Saint Lucia.

Section 5 summarizes the report’s conclusions and recommendations for NAP teams on approaching public engagement with climate change adaptation.

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Definitions

Adaptation to climate change	Adaptation to climate change is the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. Human intervention may facilitate adjustment to the expected effects of climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] Working Group 2 [WG2], 2018a).
Behaviour change	Individual-level action (e.g., buying a low-carbon product, recycling, eating less meat), including personal and household climate change adaptation behaviours (e.g., adding and/or upgrading insulation, installing water tanks, using window coverings) by members of communities, members of organizations, and citizens who can influence policies. Behaviour change is better thought of as a methodology rather than a solution to a given challenge (Whitmarsh et al., 2021; Carman & Zint, 2020).
Climate change mitigation	Climate change mitigation is achieved by “limiting or preventing greenhouse gas emissions and by enhancing activities that remove these gases from the atmosphere” (IPCC WG3, 2023).
Climate engagement	The various ways that encourage, promote, and facilitate public dialogue about climate change that engages members of the public and encourages reflection on lifestyles within the parameters of targets for carbon reduction, and needs for building climate resilience (Corner & Clarke, 2016; Whitmarsh et al., 2013).
Just transition	Easing the burden that decarbonization poses by assessing where injustices will emerge and how they should be tackled when transitioning to renewable forms of energy. Developing an interdisciplinary, transition-sensitive approach to exploring and promoting distributional, procedural, and restorative justice (Eisenberg, 2018; McCauley & Heffron, 2018). An analogous concept in climate change adaptation, “just resilience,” refers to a fair, equitable, and inclusive approach to managing climate change adaptation and the transition to a climate-resilient society (Breil et al., 2021).

Nudge	In behavioural theory, a “nudge” refers to “any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people’s behaviour in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives. To count as a nudge, the intervention must be easy and cheap to avoid. Nudges are not mandates” (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008, p. 6).
Public engagement	A two-way process of listening to members of the public, interacting with them, and informing them on a topic. This includes knowledge sharing through research and education. The goal is to generate mutual benefit and understanding and to increase public confidence in science governance and processes (National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, 2020; Spedding, 2005a, 2005b, as cited in Featherstone et al., 2009).
Social change	The “way human interactions and relationships transform cultural and social institutions over time, having a profound impact on society ... [Climate change is linked to social change] as climate change indirectly disrupts life’s intangible aspects, including social systems, cultural knowledge, and the practices of daily life, by modifying the material conditions that support them” (Dunfey, 2019; Thomas et al., 2019).
Social mandate	Social mandate refers to “a situation where society offers support to another actor (e.g., government) to take action to protect our collective well-being, with the processes and the outcomes of this action being broadly accepted as being legitimate” (Howarth et al., 2020, p. 1108).
Social norms	Collective awareness about the preferred behaviours of individuals among social groups (e.g., people’s perceptions about what others in their social milieu do or want them to do) that elicit conformity. This awareness is built by looking to others, consciously or unconsciously, as guides for how to act (Yanovitzky & Rimal, 2006, as cited in Chung & Rimal, 2016; Bicchieri & Mercier, 2014, as cited in Chung & Rimal, 2016; Chung & Rimal, 2016; Shulman et al., 2017).

SECTION 1

**Case for Effective
Public Engagement
on Climate
Change**

Countries cannot achieve their climate ambitions without bringing citizens into the policy-making processes and discussions. Without this political mandate, governments have struggled to act decisively on climate issues. Advancing climate-focused priorities in a meaningful way requires effective communication and the active engagement of the public. Without the consent and full participation of people, no meaningful societal shift will be possible, let alone be sustained over the long term. People are at the heart of addressing climate change—it is vital that they be meaningfully engaged.

Connecting with people, their values, and their lived experiences is at the heart of developing meaningful engagement strategies. The conversation itself has to be two-way, and people must be provided with the evidence they need to make informed decisions. Collective and personal action, including behaviour change, can only come from informed and fully engaged citizens. Not doing public engagement—or not doing it well—increases the risk that people will ignore or oppose strong policies on climate change.

Effective engagement therefore requires a two-way process that builds a narrative of shared values. A large evidence base asserts that traditional forms of top-down, one-way government communication do not work for climate change (see, among others, Corner et al., 2018; Fenton, 2022; Padmanabhan & Rose, 2021; and Steentjes et al., 2020). Social science shows that people require tailored narratives that recognize their concerns, embody their values, reflect their identity, and are transmitted through trusted peer messengers (Corner et al., 2018, p. 3).

Government and state institutions have an essential role to play. As with other issues that affect their citizens, governments have the responsibility to develop national engagement strategies that can reach all audiences. Climate change engagement has often been left to the news media and advocacy organizations alone. Their work is important but insufficient: these actors have limited resources and are rarely able to reach beyond their own constituencies. Most governments lack climate change communications skills and experience—a gap they urgently need to address.

Year after year, we draw closer to tipping points that will dramatically exacerbate the injustices and inequalities amplified by climate change (as well as reverse development gains) and push hundreds of millions of people further into poverty, disaster vulnerability, and, potentially, conflict and fragility (Carrington, 2022). There has never been a more critical time to take concrete, inclusive, and sustainable steps toward meaningful public engagement on the full spectrum of climate change issues and actions.

Why Public Engagement on Climate Change Matters

Citizens want to participate in decision making about major threats to their lives and livelihoods. Representative survey evidence from a number of countries shows us that people want more information about threats and, consequently, want to be included in policy and decision-making processes (Gellatly et al., 2022; Leiserowitz et al., 2022). In turn, governments, institutions, and communities have a key role to play in gathering and sharing timely information on climate

change. The way to link these two dynamics is through participatory mechanisms that encourage dialogue and co-creation of policies and strategies.

Despite the importance of public engagement for action on climate change, it is not happening at either the scale or pace at which it is needed. Although most people in the world are aware that the climate is changing, surveys find that many still do not understand its causes or the severity of its impacts. Governments are not yet implementing public awareness programs on the scale that they routinely adopt for major health or security issues, like awareness programs for the COVID-19 pandemic.

People's identities matter. So does power. Powerful public engagement on climate change requires the active participation and leadership of people who have so far been excluded from decision making because of race, gender, or class. If their voices, lived experiences, values, and identities are not reflected in policy solutions, these initiatives are unlikely to succeed. Therefore, those in positions of power must actively work to amplify the voices and solutions of excluded communities to ensure that public engagement initiatives succeed.

Most government and state institutions lack effective public engagement infrastructure. Too few countries have developed national engagement strategies on climate change, and even fewer have built in two-way consultations and spread ownership and agency across all audiences. Governments must address this gap. To do so effectively requires sufficient financial resources, political will, a meaningful mandate, and adequate human expertise and capacity. Expertise in the special challenges related to climate communications is poorly coordinated and still concentrated in a handful of countries. Very few government communications staff or external creative agencies have adequate experience or training in climate communications, and fewer still have explored the inclusion of communicators, such as facilitators and cultural interpreters, into their national engagement processes (German et al., 2012).

As part of this process, governments must uphold their duty to enhance public awareness about climate change and to invest in climate change education. However, there is limited evidence of such public engagement happening. This is counterintuitive: people cause climate change, people suffer from its consequences, and people must be the ones to tackle it.

It is also important to recognize that policy formation in many countries remains vulnerable to shifts in political ideology. In many countries, attitudes toward climate change and positions on its solutions have become defining marks of political identity. This polarization has been exacerbated by the lack of a coherent approach to public engagement that would aim to build a broad-based public mandate on climate action.

Public engagement should not be an afterthought for governments. The Paris Agreement makes it clear through Article 12 on Action for Empowerment (ACE) that Parties to the UNFCCC have an obligation to ensure meaningful action on education, training, public awareness, public access to information, public participation, and international cooperation (United Nations, 2015). Whereas some elements of the Paris Agreement are legally binding, the strategies agreed

by governments to implement these six elements of ACE are voluntary. However, there are a number of international legal obligations on public engagement and public participation¹ that commit governments to carry out public engagement activities (Magniez-Pouget et al., 2022). In undertaking public engagement on climate change, countries can fulfill such obligations while building the foundation for effective, inclusive climate change action.

Creating a Social Mandate for Action on Climate Change

The social science evidence base shows that members of the public do not form their attitudes and behaviours based directly on expert information; that is, people do not automatically make rational cost-benefit decisions based on evidence. Instead, they are influenced by a variety of factors, including ideas and concepts that “feel right” or indeed narratives that align with and reinforce the values, identities, and social norms that surround them (McLoughlin et al., 2019). Moreover, people tend to connect to stories and analyses that are presented and/or championed by people and messengers they trust.

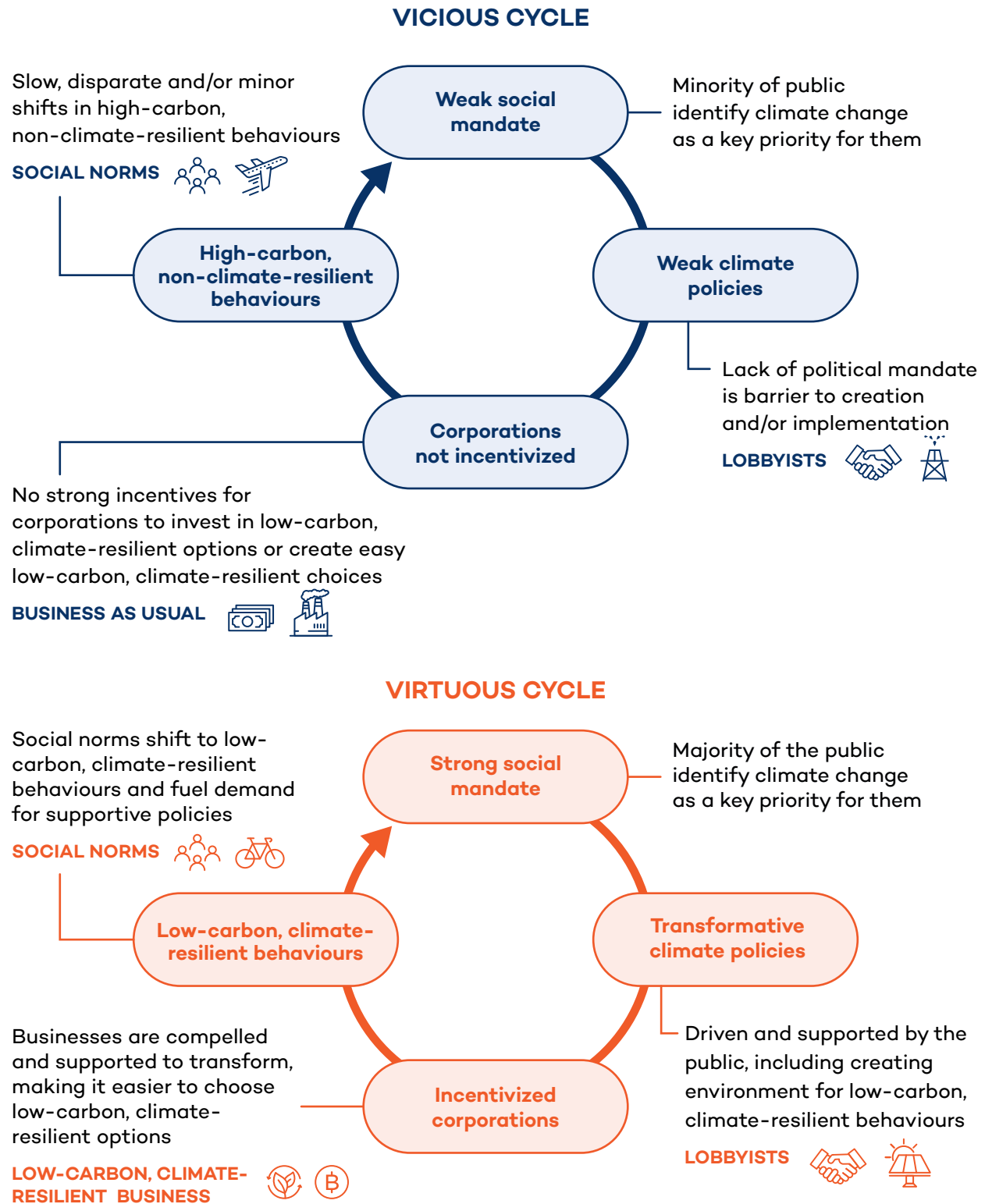
The evidence base also suggests that people are more likely to take action when their values, beliefs, and concerns are aligned with the reasons for taking action. It is this deep level of ownership and commitment to action that will be required—across society and at scale—for the deep and wide levels of socio-economic and societal transformation that will be required to tackle climate change. Change will also emerge from the interaction between individuals and wider society, in that social norms play a significant role in dictating what actions individuals see as acceptable. This fact underscores the importance of how we communicate with our peers. It also links back to the need to ensure there is two-way dialogue (particularly for decision-makers) given the need for dialogue and connecting with people and communities on issues at their level.

The challenge for governments and other actors is to identify specific points in the policy- and decision-making process to have two-way dialogues and to establish meaningful spaces and structures for people to participate in climate discussions. This can only be done by enabling a broad range of audiences to

- see their values, identity, and concerns in the climate change story;
- see that trusted messengers who they identify with are acting on climate change in a way that appears authentic; and
- be empowered to take actions that are consistent with their concerns, their socio-economic and political circumstances, and their community norms.

¹ “The right to public participation in environmental decision-making is well established in international law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognise the rights of everyone to take part in the conduct of public affairs. Principle 9 of the Framework on Human Rights and the Environment emphasises that States should provide for and facilitate public participation in decision-making related to the environment and take the views of the public into account in the decision-making process. The obligation to ensure public participation is widely established in international environmental treaties, including, *inter alia*, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the Aarhus Convention” (Magniez-Pouget et al., 2022, p. 14).

Figure 1. The vicious and virtuous cycles of developing a social mandate for climate change



Source: Adapted from Climate Outreach, 2021.

Making the Case for Public Engagement on Adaptation

The impacts of climate change are already affecting people’s livelihoods, health, and decisions about where to live and work. As with climate change mitigation, public engagement has a key role to play in advancing action on adaptation.

The science is clear that adapting to climate change is urgent. The 2018 IPCC special report issued stark warnings on the consequences of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and the significant impacts on ecosystems and communities—including possible sea level rise of 1 metre by the end of the century and severe biodiversity loss (IPCC, 2018b). The IPCC’s sixth assessment report on impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability reiterated the urgency of action to address the “unprecedented impacts” of climate change by building resilience in vulnerable communities and ecosystems (IPCC, 2022, p. 2488).

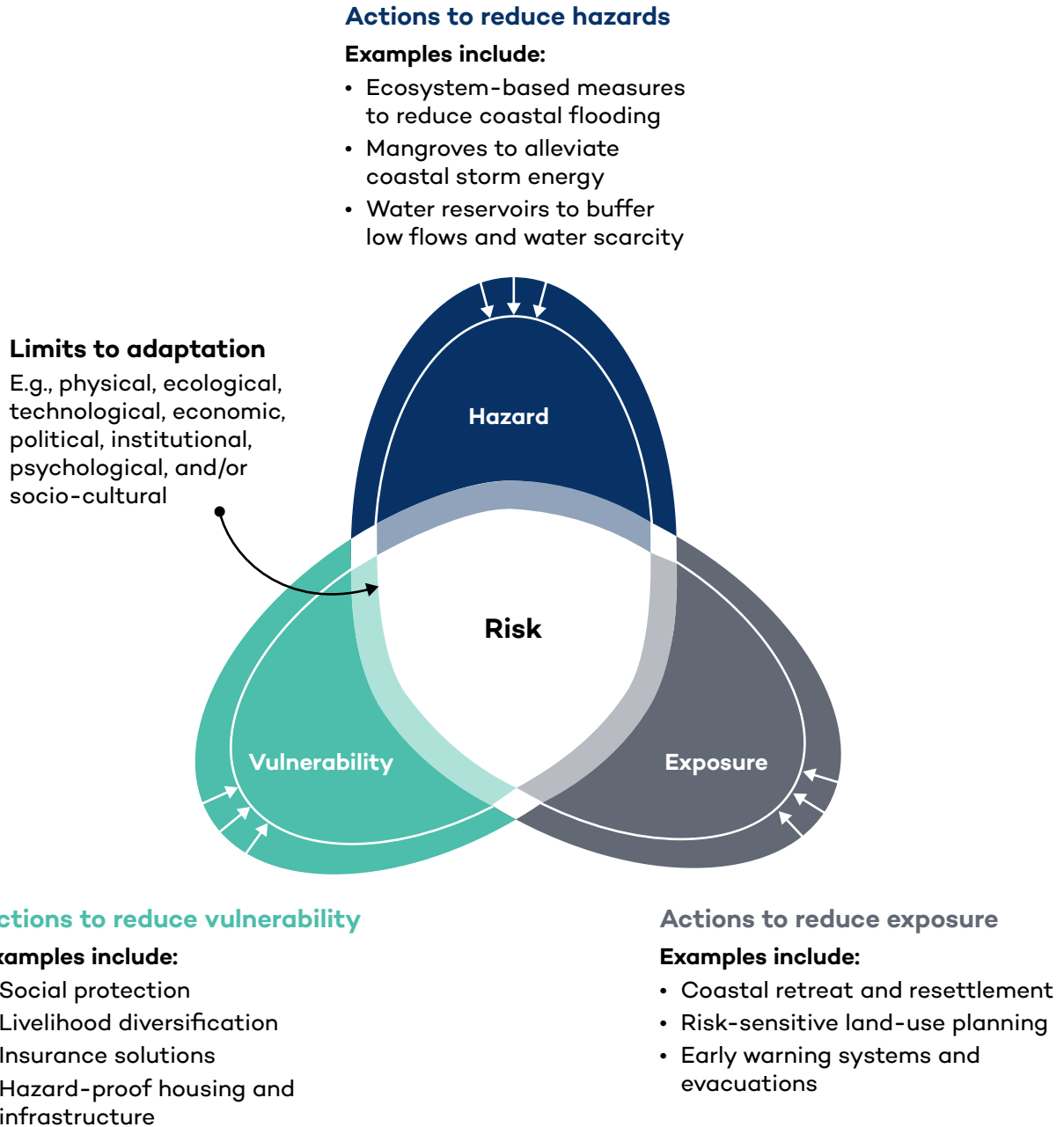
Climate change impacts are already being felt, and adaptation is necessary to deal with the impacts of climate change that are now unavoidable. Adaptation aims to reduce climate change risk resulting from how three factors interact: **hazards** (i.e., potentially damaging physical events or trends that may cause the loss or harm); **exposure** (i.e., presence of people and their physical assets in places that could be adversely affected by an event); and **vulnerability** (i.e., a predisposition to be adversely affected). As hazards increase in frequency and intensity, adaptation efforts aim to reduce exposure (for example, through land-use planning, early warning systems that enable evacuation, or the managed retreat of communities from exposed areas) and reduce vulnerability (for example, by diversifying livelihoods, building climate-resilient infrastructure, or introducing social protection systems). Adaptation requires integrated solutions—there is rarely a “silver bullet” or single intervention that will build climate resilience. Achieving lasting adaptation outcomes will often require changing practices and addressing structural causes of vulnerability, such as poverty and inequality.

Adaptation policies and plans will need a social mandate to be implemented at scale. Efforts to adapt to climate change impacts will not succeed unless they are based on an understanding of public attitudes around climate risks and strategies for reducing the vulnerability of communities and ecosystems to these risks. Building public support and obtaining a social mandate will be crucial for the adaptation actions prioritized through the NAP process to be implemented.

A social mandate on adaptation is achievable: growing evidence suggests that public concern about climate impacts is increasing and that adaptation policies are less politically divisive than mitigation policies. Climate Outreach’s work on climate change impacts and adaptation has shown that

climate change concern is surging as climate impacts become more salient and visible. This opens up important new fronts for engaging the public, but efforts must be done sensitively and with empathy and compassion ... There is growing evidence [based so far on research undertaken in the United Kingdom] that adaptation policies are supported across the political spectrum—practical steps to build resilience are not polarising or controversial in the way that some mitigation policies are. (Climate Outreach, n.d.)

Figure 2. Options for risk reduction through adaptation



Source: Adapted from IPCC, 2019.

Public engagement on adaptation can complement and reinforce public engagement on mitigation. Climate change communicators should not avoid adaptation messaging out of concern that it will undermine mitigation messaging; there is no evidence that this happens. Instead, public engagement can highlight how mitigation and adaptation are two sides of the same coin (de Laigue, 2021).

The Role of the NAP Process in Scaling Up Public Engagement on Adaptation

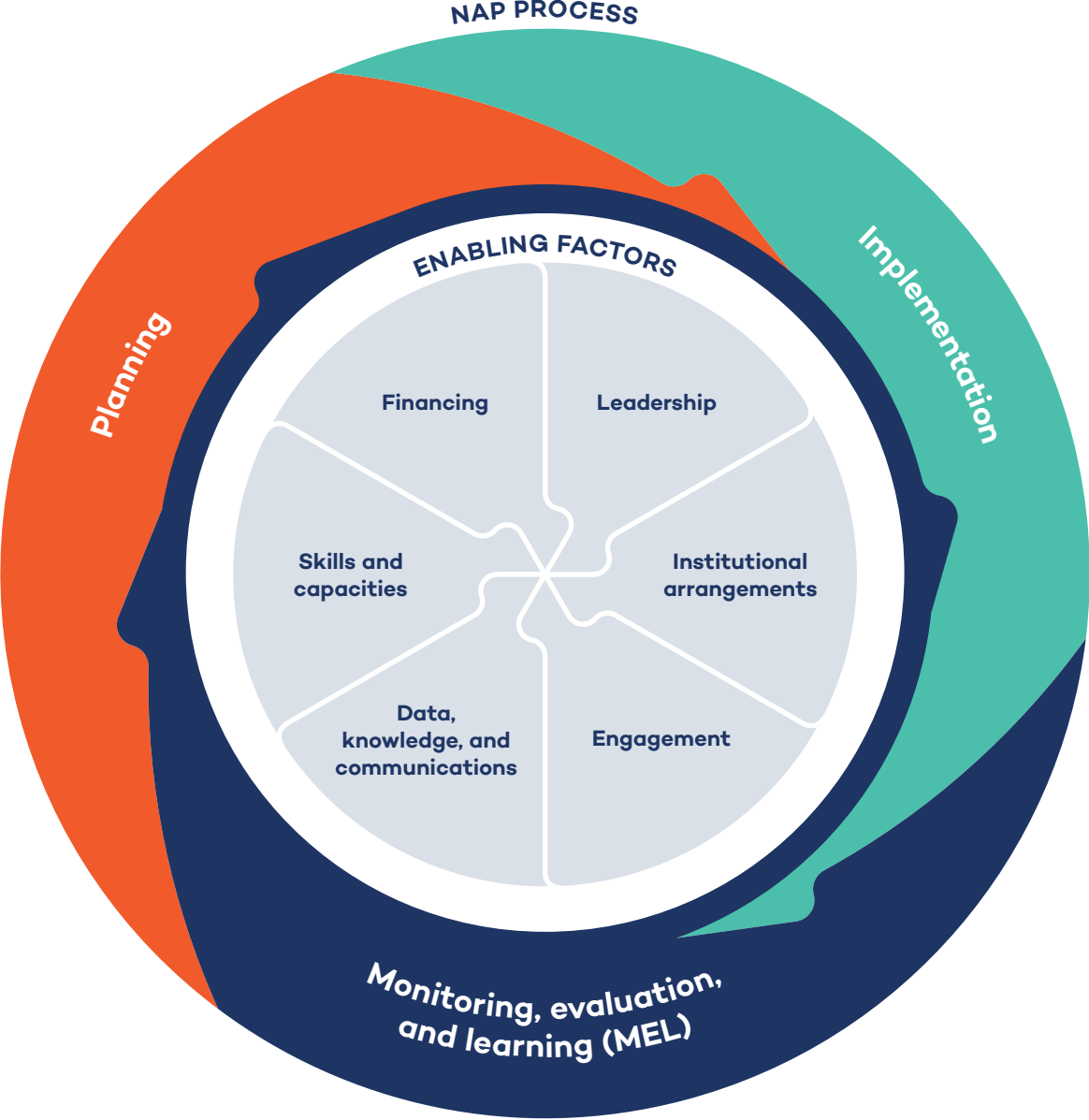
The NAP process aims to put adaptation at the heart of decision making. Established in 2010 by the Cancun Adaptation Framework under the UNFCCC, the NAP process is designed for countries to identify and address medium- and long-term priorities for adapting to climate change. The official definition, objectives, and guidelines of the NAP process are available from the UNFCCC (Least Developed Countries Expert Group, 2012), but in simple terms, NAP processes seek to help countries scale up adaptation by assessing risk; identifying, prioritizing, and implementing adaptation actions; and tracking, measuring, and learning from progress. NAP processes also aim to put in place the systems and capacities to make this a part of regular development planning and budgeting (Hammill et al., 2020).

Almost all developing countries have NAP processes underway, and many are already committing to public engagement as part of the NAP process. To date, 139 of the 154 countries that are classified as “developing countries” under the UNFCCC have NAP processes underway (UNFCCC, 2022). Among the countries that have submitted a NAP document to the UNFCCC, all acknowledge the importance of “communication and information sharing,” and almost half have explicitly recognized the need for public engagement (NAP Global Network, 2023a).

Public engagement can help achieve effective, inclusive NAP processes. Public engagement can and should happen throughout the NAP process, which can be thought of as being composed of the three overlapping, broad phases shown in Figure 3: (i) planning, (ii) implementation, and (iii) monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL). Public engagement is especially important for two enabling factors of the NAP process:

- engagement of actors at all levels—including civil society organizations, the private sector, communities, the media, and academia—to enable their participation in and influence on decision making about adaptation.
- data, information, and communications to enable actors at all levels to access evidence relevant to adaptation and create two-way communication between audiences and decision-makers to advance the NAP process (NAP Global Network, 2023b).

Figure 3. Simplified figure of the NAP process



Source: NAP Global Network, 2023b.

SECTION 2

How to Approach Public Engagement on Adaptation

Leveraging the Action for
Climate Empowerment
(ACE) agenda



In the Mutsamudu River Basin, Comoros, a water management plan was developed through comprehensive consultations with stakeholders. (Implementing Integrated Water Resources Management in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Small Island Developing States (IWRM AIO SIDS))

Many countries' NAP teams have already shown an interest in (and commitment to) public engagement on adaptation. The key question is how to act on this commitment.

Box 1. ACE under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement

Article 6 of the UNFCCC recognizes the importance of “education, training and public awareness” to enable global climate action (UNFCCC, 1992). These activities are collectively called Action for Climate Empowerment, abbreviated as ACE.

At the 2012 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 18) in Doha, the 8-year Doha work program on Article 6 of the Convention was developed to strengthen the implementation of ACE (UNFCCC, Subsidiary Body for Implementation, 2012). It identified six interlinked elements:

1. education,
2. training,
3. public awareness,
4. public participation,
5. public access to information, and
6. international cooperation on these issues.

At the 2014 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 20) in Lima, countries reaffirmed the importance of ACE through the Lima Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising, which called for stronger integration of climate change education into national educational curriculums and the further strengthening of efforts to increase public participation and awareness raising (Collado, 2017). And in 2015, parties recognized the elements identified in the Doha work program and integrated ACE as Article 12 of the Paris Agreement.

In 2021, at COP 26, the “Glasgow Work Programme on ACE” was agreed, with four key priority areas: i) policy coherence; ii) coordinated action; iii) tools and support; and iv) monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (UNFCCC, 2021).

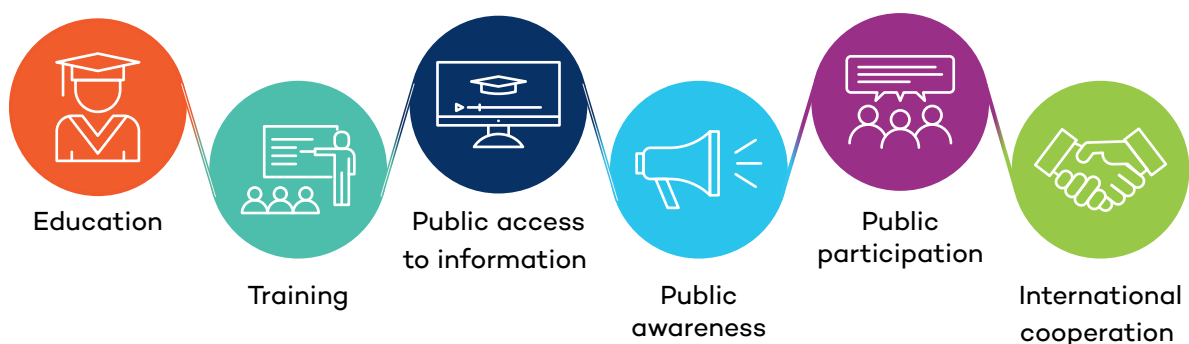
As of November 2022, parties to the convention are expected to develop national strategies on ACE, which not only cover the six areas but also work in a coordinated way across themes and sectors and carefully consider issues around equity and inclusion to ensure the plans amplify engagement as well as broader climate justice.

To date, 133 countries have named ACE National Focal Points, though there are significant capacity and resource constraints across most countries, which have not consistently reported on ACE activities (UNFCCC, 2023). A number of resources have been developed to guide countries on implementing ACE (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2016, 2020).

NAP teams looking to get started on public engagement on adaptation or to ramp up existing efforts can look to the ACE agenda under the UNFCCC. Joining up efforts under the NAP process and ACE can help guide and frame public engagement on climate change, while also helping countries fulfill their commitments under the Paris Agreement.

The following section outlines the six broad ACE elements accompanied by examples of how NAP teams are already employing public engagement as part of NAP processes in line with these elements.

Figure 4. Six interlinked elements of ACE



Source: Adapted from UNESCO, 2016.

Education

Including climate change science and impacts in education curriculums at all levels (primary through to in-career learning) can play a vital role in empowering people to be better able to adapt to climate change. Integrating adaptation into curriculum development is already a priority in many NAP processes—over a third of the NAPs that have been submitted to the UNFCCC² mention “education or curriculum development” (NAP Global Network, 2023a).



Education in Saint Lucia’s NAP Process

Saint Lucia’s first NAP progress report highlights the Education Quality Improvement Project that has supported students in developing a Climate Vulnerability Assessment for their schools (Government of Saint Lucia, 2022). For more on Saint Lucia’s approach to public engagement on adaptation, see Section 4 of this report.

² Based on analysis of the 44 multi-sector NAP documents submitted to the UNFCCC’s NAP Central as of May 31, 2023.

Training

Building a core base of critical technical skills and capacities through training is an essential part of any NAP process. NAP teams can collaborate with partners to prepare targeted training programming focused on the skills and knowledge needed for adaptation and climate resilience, as well as training on how to design and implement public engagement strategies on adaptation.



Training in Grenada's NAP Process

Under the Integrated Climate Change Adaptation Strategies program, the Grenadian government, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and partners implemented a range of public engagement activities (e.g., organizing a Climate Change Walk and developing public service announcements, a climate change music video, school debates, and a game show for secondary school students). Integrated Climate Change Adaptation Strategies offered trainings for technical agriculture officers to integrate advice on climate-smart agriculture methods as part of their advisory services for farmers, as well as a series of training for community group members, government officials, and staff focused on climate change education and awareness (Geiss, 2017).

Public Awareness

NAP processes, like many other government-led processes, can seem overly technical—if not impenetrable—for non-experts to engage with. Public awareness initiatives can become a critical link to make plans and planning activities accessible and relatable to the general public. This enables people to situate themselves in relation to the NAP's priority actions and helps them understand the impacts of climate change on their daily lives. This, in turn, can significantly impact the sense of ownership of these strategies and plans, especially if citizens have an opportunity to participate in NAP processes and advocate for the prioritization of adaptation measures that matter to them. If people do not feel that they are part of a solution, they will be less inclined to engage with the activities.



Public Awareness in Peru's NAP Process

For the launch of Peru's first NAP in 2021, the Peruvian Ministry of Environment launched a public awareness campaign using the hashtag “#CambiaElClimaCambioYo” (in English, “As the Climate Changes, So Do I”) through social media reaching over 2.6 million people (NAP Global Network, 2021). The campaign highlighted how adaptation actions are already part of daily life across Peru as part of fisheries and agriculture and in Indigenous communities.

Public Participation

Involving citizens throughout the NAP process is perhaps the most impactful way to ensure that the adaptation priorities will be acted upon. If citizens and communities are included in the development of adaptation actions and strategies and see their concerns (and, equally, their solutions) reflected in the policy or strategy, there is a greater chance they will get involved in implementation. NAP teams should consider public engagement and public participation activities as a core element of their workplans.



Public Participation in Costa Rica’s NAP Process

As part of the Costa Rican government’s process to develop the country’s first NAP, the Ministry of Environment and Energy held more than 40 assemblies and 30 bilateral meetings across the country, engaging over 150 institutions, including civil society actors, and publishing an advanced draft of the NAP for public comment (Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía, 2022).

Public Access to Information

Access to information is a key element of facilitating public engagement. For NAP teams, this can include using formats that make complex information easier to understand (e.g., briefing notes, infographics, and digital visualization tools), translating communications materials and documents into local languages, and designating points of contact to enable direct queries from the public. NAP teams should focus on communications channels already being used by target audiences (radio, television, social media, traditional media, etc.) so that the right messages reach the intended audiences. It is also important to consider the legal and legislative frameworks that facilitate—or prevent—open and transparent communication.



Public Access to Information in Tuvalu’s NAP Process

Tuvalu is carrying out integrated vulnerability and adaptation assessments as part of its NAP process to identify and prepare the nation and its people for the risks posed by climate change and disasters. The government has made vulnerability assessment data available to citizens through its publicly available Tuvalu National Integrated Vulnerability Assessment Database.

International Cooperation

International cooperation and exchange can play a vital role in strengthening efforts on public engagement on adaptation under the NAP and ACE processes. NAP teams can look to access financial and technical resources from development partners—the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s 2016 [ACE guidelines](#) provide a detailed list of potential funding sources for public engagement, and NAP teams should also consider including public engagement activities when accessing international funding for the NAP process through

bilateral and multilateral funding sources, such as the Green Climate Fund Readiness program for adaptation planning. Countries can also learn what works and what doesn't for public engagement on adaptation from engaging in South–South peer learning opportunities.



International Cooperation in Tonga's NAP Process

The Tongan government accessed funding support from the NAP Global Network and NDC Partnership to organize a series of workshops to engage journalists, media professionals, and communicators on the nation's priorities under the Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management. These workshops drew inspiration from similar workshops held in Saint Lucia and Peru (Takau, 2021).

Throughout public engagement efforts on adaptation, NAP teams should engage and work closely with their ACE National Focal Point counterparts where possible to achieve meaningful synergies in the delivery of their joint work under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement and to coordinate efforts on monitoring, evaluation, and learning of the NAP process with monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on public engagement activities under ACE.

MEL of the NAP process provides many opportunities for two-way public engagement as NAP teams track and report on progress, results, and lessons learned. For example, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Solomon Islands engaged communities in national consultations—with materials translated into local languages—to prepare comprehensive lists of vulnerabilities as baseline information for MEL of adaptation. These participatory methods of community engagement provide important information on community perceptions about local climate change vulnerabilities to inform national adaptation decision making, as well as providing important information on how people of different genders and youth view climate change—which is vital information for a gender-responsive and socially inclusive NAP process (Dumar, 2019).

SECTION 3

**Key Considerations
for Effective Public
Engagement and
Communication in
the NAP Process**

Amazonian women in Quito, Ecuador, during the mobilization for International Women's Day, March 8, 2020.
(Karen Toro/Climate Visuals Countdown)

As NAP teams develop public engagement and communications strategies on adaptation, the following key considerations can help enhance the effectiveness and inclusiveness of these efforts. These reflections are not a checklist but rather a set of overlapping and intersecting considerations. This section also highlights a detailed set of lessons and principles for using powerful visual imagery.

Lifestyle and Behaviour Change Through Values-Led Engagement

For climate change adaptation measures to succeed, human and economic behaviours must shift. As such, adaptation measures need to be conceived through a values-led approach in order to increase the chances that the shift in behaviour will be sustained.

Values-led engagement strategies are more likely to result in sustained behavioural changes because people are more motivated to take the required actions when they are perceived to be linked to their convictions (i.e., “I want to do this”) compared to when they feel forced to take an action (i.e., “I am being coerced into doing this”) (Clarke et al., 2020).

For example, if a country has prioritized encouraging farmers to adopt water-efficient irrigation practices through their NAP process, such practices are more likely to be adopted at scale if farmers are able to

- visualize drought situations in their own geographies;
- see the benefits of adopting water-efficient practices (by using side-by-side fields with and without water-efficient irrigation practices); and
- be publicly recognized for adopting new technologies (United States Agency for International Development, 2019, p. 41).

Working With Trusted Messengers

NAP teams should consider how, where, and from whom people are accessing information. This includes identifying and working closely with “trusted messengers”—individuals and/or institutions who are trusted by different communities and who are perceived as sharing common characteristics, such as values, politics, and/or beliefs (Sawas, 2021; Corner, Roberts, et al. 2015, p. 528). Trusted messengers have the ability to amplify messaging within communities and groups and thus have a potentially transformative role to play in the uptake of policy initiatives.

NAP teams also need to identify the communications channels and mediums through which these messengers can best connect with the public. In practice, this means considering a wide range of products and outputs—from traditional spaces such as government websites through to social media, community radio, citizens’ advice initiatives and further, to non-traditional institutions.

The success of public health messaging through messengers such as scientists and health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic offers some lessons for NAP teams. For example, surveys in Canada at the outset of the pandemic in March 2020 showed public health

officials were highly trusted messengers for accurate and credible information about the risks of COVID-19 (Carleton University, 2020). Canadian provincial governments recognized these officials' role as important messengers for public engagement, and put them forward as spokespersons in regular press conferences and other public outreach activities as part of the pandemic response. For further examples, see Clemence & Boyon (2022); Edelman Trust (2023), p. 11; and Webster et al. (2020), p. 19.

Understanding and Segmenting Audiences

People's lived experiences and values are determined by their contextual, social, economic, cultural, and other identities. Therefore, a singular narrative, story, or message is unlikely to resonate with everyone.

For NAP teams, it is critically important to ensure that messaging is nuanced, customized, and targeted. One way to do this effectively is to explore ways to segment the target audience based on multiple criteria, including their values, experiences, languages, socio-political and economic circumstances, and histories. Doing so can facilitate the process of developing targeted messaging on climate change and adaptation for a range of audiences.

In the United Kingdom, Climate Outreach and More In Common have developed a bespoke segmentation methodology through their "Britain Talks Climate" project, which is based on people's values and everyday concerns (Wang et al., 2020). This methodology has also been replicated in Germany through the "Ubers Klima Reden" (Germany Talks Climate) project (Melloh et al., 2022).

Several countries—including Haiti, Saint Lucia, and Sierra Leone—have developed NAP communications strategies with initial audience segmentation, preparing key messages tailored for priority audiences to be engaged through the NAP process (Government of Haiti, 2021; Environment Protection Agency of Sierra Leone, 2020; Government of Saint Lucia, 2018a). This type of audience segmentation can be strengthened by researching and understanding those audiences' values; for examples of how this can be done, see the Climate Outreach report *Communicating Climate Change in Tunisia, Egypt and Mauritania* (Webster et al., 2021).

Using a Gender and Social Inclusion Lens

Adaptation action will not be effective unless it integrates a gender and social inclusion (GESI) lens. For public engagement under NAP processes, a GESI lens is critical for outreach and communications strategies and can be integrated throughout—for example, by using audience segmentation for different target groups based on gender, Indigenous identity, age, literacy, and access to technology, among other factors. GESI considerations should also be integrated into the content of public engagement, for example, through gender-equitable representation, by profiling gender-differentiated results from adaptation investments, and by documenting progress on gender equality, women's empowerment, and social inclusion through NAP processes (NAP Global Network & UNFCCC, 2019). One practical, concise resource for communications that

promotes gender awareness, minimizes bias, and celebrates diversity is the *Communications & Gender Checklist* developed by Value for Women (Santillan, 2019). Another useful, practical resource is Oxfam’s Handbook on Inclusive Language (Oxfam International, 2023).

Promoting a Just Transition and Just Resilience Framing

The concept of “just transition” was first proposed by affected communities and the trade union movement and is rooted in the belief that the people most impacted by the move toward low-carbon economies must be involved in decisions about decarbonization transitions and treated fairly (African Development Bank Group, 2023; Andersen, 2019; IISD, 2023; Just Transition Centre, International Trade Union Congress, n.d.; Smith, 2017). A related concept in adaptation planning is “just resilience” which seeks to ensure that adaptation actions “do not increase vulnerabilities for others and avoid maladaptation” (Bouwman, 2023) and recognizes the labour aspects of longer-term economic diversification needed for adaptation, accompanied by supports for education, training, reskilling, and requalification of workers and measures to address the health and safety risks for workers from climate impacts (European Commission, 2020; Hammill et al., 2021; Lager et al., 2023).

Research has shown that people will be more inclined to support progressive policies and behaviour shifts if they can see their own lived experiences and values reflected in the way the problems are conceptualized (Corner et al., 2020). For people to accept lifestyle and livelihood changes and these associated costs, people need to see the problem and solution resonate with their own lived experiences. It is also critical that there is conscious and sustained engagement with segments of the population who feel threatened by, or are unrepresented in, the necessary policy shifts. If these sentiments are not tackled head on, it could fuel further political polarization (Marshall et al., 2018).

Just transition and just resilience serve as useful frameworks for embedding inclusive approaches to public engagement. The lens of just resilience can help NAP teams embed people-centred approaches to policy-making, and ensure that the concerns and voices of systematically disenfranchised peoples and communities are part of climate change decision making.

Understanding Power Asymmetries

Addressing the power asymmetries that are present within countries and across regions is a key challenge in public engagement. Cross-cutting issues, such as social, economic, cultural, and political vulnerability, exclusion, marginalization, and identity politics, are all potentially divisive issues—and require careful calibration in policy formulation processes. In order to establish meaningful two-way public participation in adaptation planning and action, NAP teams will have to develop (or have the ability to access support to navigate) processes and methodologies that are inclusive and safe.

To do this effectively, NAP teams will first need to understand marginalization and social inequities within the various segments of their population. It will be important to create structures

and processes that facilitate the active participation and sharing of a diversity of opinions. This should include both traditionally marginalized groups (such as women’s or Indigenous groups) as well as those who may choose to not engage with such processes because of a lack of trust (e.g., ethnic minorities, migrants, or disengaged working-class communities). This way, power is not unknowingly ceded or monopolized in decision-making spaces. Failing to address such power asymmetries may lead to maladaptation that reinforces existing vulnerabilities (Taylor et al., 2022).

Applying the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation

NAP teams should put the communities that are at the front lines of climate change at the core of engagement strategies. This can be done by applying the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation that were developed through collaborative research and dialogue led by the World Resources Institute, International Institute for Environment and Development, and more than 50 partners under the Global Commission on Adaptation (Soanes et al., 2021). One of the partners that led this effort, the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, defines locally led adaptation as the process through which “local communities, community-based organizations, small businesses, community members, citizen groups, local government, and local private sector entities at the lowest administrative level are consulted and included as decision-makers in the climate change adaptation interventions that affect them” (International Centre for Climate Change and Development, 2023). The principle that adaptation efforts should “build a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty, ensure transparency and accountability” and lead to collaborative action and investment is especially relevant for public engagement. Embedding these principles in engagement strategies will ensure that NAP teams can channel funding and support to the people and places that need adaptation support the most.

Guidelines for Effective Visual Communications on Climate Change Adaptation



Imagery can be a powerful tool to connect with and move an audience. Climate change imagery has typically been dominated by depictions of the causes of climate change, which often do not capture the human story (such as commonly used images of smokestacks, Arctic sea ice, and polar bears) (Corner, Webster, & Teriete, 2015, p. 6). When people are the focus of the climate change images, the subjects are too often politicians and diplomats or climate change protesters. Thus, climate change communicators are faced with the challenge of how to convey the urgency of the climate crisis without overwhelming the audience; how to share a human experience of an

individual or community without creating a disconnect between the subject and the audience; and how to remain sensitive to the agency of the subject of the image without getting trapped in polarized political debates (Corner, Webster, & Teriete, 2015, p. 7).

To address these challenges, Climate Outreach’s Climate Visuals project has developed a series of guiding principles for climate imagery. The Climate Visuals evidence base was developed based on structured discussion groups with 32 citizens from the United Kingdom and Germany, as well as an international online survey of over 3,000 people from Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Corner, Webster, & Teriete, 2015).

These principles are relevant to NAP teams as they consider how to use impactful imagery to enhance public engagement on adaptation. Following Climate Visuals’ evidence-based approach, NAP teams can successfully incorporate people-centred visual narratives that their audiences can connect with in ways that resonate with the values and identities of their audiences.

The following six of the seven core principles³ of Climate Visuals are most relevant to NAP teams.

1. Show “Real People,” not Staged Photo-ops

A person expressing an identifiable emotion is powerful. However, Climate Visuals’ evidence base also suggests that “authentic” images find greater resonance than staged photographs (which can come across as inauthentic or even manipulative). The Envisioning Resilience case study in Section 4 illustrates the importance—and by extension, the impact—of authentic stories, particularly those told by people with lived experiences.

Fishers on the island of Funafuti, Tuvalu, report that increased temperature, storms, coral bleaching and overfishing are causing a reduction in fish stocks. (Rodney Dekker/Climate Visuals)



³ The seventh principle focuses on caution when using protest imagery. This is not necessarily relevant to NAP processes.

2. Tell New Stories

Evidence shows that images that people could quickly and easily understand—such as smokestacks, deforestation, and polar bears on melting ice—tend to be positively received. Familiar, “classic” images may be especially useful for audiences with limited knowledge or interest in climate change but can also generate cynicism if not meaningfully calibrated. They are a tried-and-tested means of communicating to an audience that “this story is about climate change.” But is it a story they want to hear? Less familiar (and more thought-provoking) images can help tell a new story about climate change and remake the visual representation of climate change in the public mind. For example, this can include visuals of climate-resilient livelihoods, such as flood-resilient floating gardens developed by farmers in Bangladesh (Sunder, 2020).

The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center in Zimbabwe (CIMMYT) breeds a heat- and drought-tolerant maize variety that can grow in extreme temperatures. CIMMYT maize breeders used climate models from the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security to inform breeding decisions. (L. Sharma/Marchmont Communications)



3. Show Climate Causes at Scale

The Climate Visuals evidence base finds people do not necessarily understand the links between climate change and their daily lives.

Evidence from reviews of visual imagery depicting the changing climate (and, indeed, how people and communities are dealing with these changes) has shown that there is a mismatch between visual imagery in the media and the reality experienced by people (O’Neill et al.,

2022). For example, the headlines and stories during the 2022 heatwave in Europe reporting on unprecedented heat, vulnerable people, and even deaths were accompanied by images depicting people enjoying the hot weather at the beach or at swimming pools. It is therefore important to ensure that visual imagery shows how people and communities are adapting to their changing climate, including when the changes are uncomfortable or difficult to absorb, or necessitate individual behaviour change.

If communicating the links between individual behaviours and climate change, it is best to show these behaviours at scale—e.g., a congested highway rather than a single driver. High-carbon behaviours that generate emissions that cause climate change (e.g., greenhouse gas emissions related to eating meat, especially meat produced via factory farming in the Global North) may not be recognized as harmful; portraying them as such may provoke defensive reactions. Moreover, individual sources of emissions may well pale in comparison to structural and systemic sources of emissions.

For communicators focused on climate change adaptation, implementing this principle might mean focusing visual communication on the effects of drought on a community or a dried-up local body of water rather than focusing the image on an individual water consumer.

An aerial view of a deforested zone in “Ñembi Guasu” conservation area in Bolivia. (Marcelo Perez del Carpio/ Climate Visuals Countdown)



4. Climate Impacts Are Emotionally Powerful

The Climate Visuals evidence base shows that people are moved more by the imagery of impacts—e.g., floods and the destruction wrought by extreme weather—than by “causes” or “solutions.” This holds true beyond just imagery illustrating climate change. Images of humanitarian need resulting from climate impacts can prompt a desire to respond, but because they are emotionally powerful, they can also be overwhelming. Coupling images of climate impacts with a concrete behavioural “action” for people to take can help overcome this, including people taking action to adapt.

Impacts of Tropical Cyclone Winston on Taveuni Island, Fiji. (Vlad Sokhin/Climate Visuals)



5. Understand Your Audience

Levels of concern/skepticism about climate change clearly determine how people react to the images presented to them. A number of other factors also affect people’s reaction to imagery—in particular, their political leaning, their values, faith, class, and other identities that they hold. Climate Visuals’ research also found that regardless of political leanings, images depicting “solutions” to climate change generated mostly positive emotions. NAP teams must be aware of this dynamic in all their work.

6. Show Local (but Serious) Climate Impacts

When images of localized climate impacts show an individual person or group of people with identifiable emotions, they are likely to be most powerful. But there is a balance to be struck (as in verbal and written communication) between localizing climate change (so that people realize the issue is relevant to them) and trivializing the issue (by not making clear enough links to the bigger picture). As most adaptation is local, this principle is especially important to consider in using local imagery for public engagement in national adaptation planning processes.

A person cycles across a path that is inundated by tidal flooding due to rising sea levels as a result of climate change after returning home from work as a factory worker in Demak, Central Java, Indonesia, June 18, 2020. (Dhana Kencana/Climate Visuals)



These principles are intended to provide initial guidance for NAP teams as they collate and share visual content as part of their approach to public engagement. In addition to these principles for generating and curating new content, it is worth noting that the Climate Visuals project also offers users like NAP teams a free-to-use image library of climate and ocean visuals that all adhere to these principles.⁴

⁴ To access the Climate Visuals image library, please visit: <https://climatevisuals.org/>.

SECTION 4

**Case Studies on
Effective Public
Engagement on
Climate Change
Adaptation**



Women from Kumbong-Kukuo, Ghana, have formed a group that supports each other during harvests.
(Belinda Alhassan, Envisioning Resilience, Ghana)

NAP teams can take inspiration from emerging examples of effective public engagement on adaptation. This section presents four case studies—two led by governments and two led by NGOs—from diverse geographies facing different yet severe climate change-induced disasters, in countries at different stages of the NAP process.

1.5 to Stay Alive: Public engagement on climate change adaptation in Saint Lucia

Background

In 2018, the Government of Saint Lucia launched the country's first NAP, which includes a strong commitment to public engagement. The NAP includes multiple strategic objectives dedicated to raising public awareness of climate change, has the education sector among its eight priority sectors, and notes that “public education and sensitisation measures [are] proposed for every sector and area in this NAP” (Government of Saint Lucia, 2018b). Saint Lucia launched a climate change communications strategy in 2017 that was developed under the NAP process.

The communications strategy's objectives include

- building broad-based public awareness of the NAP;
- making the case to the public for the need for investment in climate change adaptation;
- demonstrating the practical steps at the individual level to tackle climate change; and
- supporting initiatives around climate change education and civic action by providing tools, resources, and opportunities.

Examples of Public Engagement on Adaptation

Saint Lucia's communications strategy drew on a number of lessons from the popular “1.5 To Stay Alive” campaign in the lead-up to the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 21) in Paris. This campaign aimed to raise awareness among citizens across the Caribbean about the impacts of climate change on livelihoods in the region and advocated for urgent action on mitigation to keep global greenhouse gas emissions below 350 parts per million. In Saint Lucia, this campaign involved media, artists, and politicians as trusted messengers for sharing information about climate change action.

Saint Lucia's climate change communications strategy looks to engage a wide range of champions for climate change, emphasizing the importance of political will and leadership, the development of structures to facilitate inter-agency coordination, storytelling, and focusing on specific sectors (Government of Saint Lucia, 2018a, pp. 20–21).

The communications strategy uses segmentation to better understand the nuances of the target audiences' priorities, accompanied by tailored messages to suit target audiences. Key segments

include farmers, homeowners, residents of coastal areas, fishers and dive operators, and youth (Government of Saint Lucia, 2018a, pp. 17–18). The strategy emphasizes the importance of media engagement, including situating people’s own stories and experiences within media coverage, and developing content that reaches across all the relevant platforms where citizens access information (Government of Saint Lucia, 2018, p. 22).

The Government of Saint Lucia put this strategy into action, developing appealing and compelling communications materials on adaptation, including educational videos, public service announcements, a music video (“ACT NOW Saint Lucia” by local group The Calypsonians), posters, and a NAP process logo developed by a local artist (Ledwell, 2018). The NAP launch event was attended by ministers, permanent secretaries, and heads of department from across government, demonstrating strong political support for adaptation, and included a session led by local artists and creatives preparing art that responded to the adaptation priorities set out in the NAP (NAP Global Network, 2018).

In 2022, Saint Lucia’s first NAP progress report highlighted public awareness happening around adaptation projects being implemented across the country. These include, for example, public education and awareness in the water sector under the Vieux Fort Water Rehabilitation Project; public awareness about conservation under the Integrated Ecosystem Management and Restoration of Forests on the Southeast Coast of Saint Lucia project; and public awareness and outreach on health and climate change under the Enhancing Climate Change Resilience of Health Systems in Seven CARICOM States initiative (Government of Saint Lucia, 2022).

Coral gardeners involved in a coral restoration program in Soufriere, highlighted in Saint Lucia’s NAP progress report as a flagship example of how the NAP is being implemented. (Lucius Doxerie/IISD, NAP Global Network)



Next Steps

Based on the important strides that the Government of Saint Lucia has taken on public engagement, a key next step will be to monitor and evaluate the progress being made to raise awareness and change attitudes and behaviours toward climate-resilient practices. Saint Lucia has undertaken multiple knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) surveys on climate change in 2005, 2007, 2011, 2013, and 2016 to understand public awareness of climate change, including aspects of adaptation. These KAP surveys provide valuable baseline data against which to measure how effective the government's awareness efforts are and to encourage behavioural change for adaptation. Future KAP surveys linked to the NAP process could shed light on how knowledge, attitudes, and practices are changing over time and whether public engagement on adaptation is showing results.

The Saint Lucia communications strategy's audience segmentation is also an important first step. To continue building on this, the Government of Saint Lucia could further explore the values and priorities of each audience segment related to adaptation to refine a values-led approach to shifting lifestyles and behaviours in line with priorities set out in the NAP (e.g., water conservation).

Finally, as many of the approaches in the communications strategy are one-way information sharing, future iterations of the strategy can make more explicit links to Saint Lucia's highly participatory and consultative approach to adaptation planning, linking the communications strategy's objectives to sustained dialogue and co-creating communications materials on adaptation with citizens.

Lessons for Peer Countries

Saint Lucia is an international leader in public engagement on adaptation. Through committing to public engagement in the country's NAP and developing and implementing a climate change strategy under the NAP process, the small island state's experience provides examples of multiple good practices for peer countries to follow. The enduring success of the 1.5 to Stay Alive campaign also serves as a leading example of regional collaboration to educate and sensitize citizens on adaptation.

Building a Mandate for Public Engagement in the Republic of Fiji’s NAP Process

Background

The Government of Fiji has been a longstanding advocate and champion for climate change action in the Pacific region. Fiji launched its NAP process during its Presidency of the 2017 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 23) and became the first Pacific country to submit a NAP document—a key milestone in the NAP process—to the UNFCCC in 2018.

Fiji’s NAP committed to developing a communications strategy to raise awareness among all interested parties and actors, support the NAP’s implementation “at all levels and by all relevant stakeholders,” and foster a “two-way flow of views, top-down and bottom-up” (Government of the Republic of Fiji, 2018).

Fiji’s Climate Change Act 2021 established a legal mandate for public participation and transparency in climate change action, including adaptation. The Act requires publicly accessible “data, information and government policies related to climate change” and grants a mandate to “develop, review and update a national climate change communications strategy to guide the dissemination of climate change related information through a variety of formats” with the goal of improving public awareness while promoting risk reduction and preparedness (Government of the Republic of Fiji, 2021).

Mangrove seedlings growing in a southern bay on Fiji’s main island, Viti Levu. Fiji’s government is supporting several mangrove reforestation initiatives throughout the country to combat eroding coastlines and restore mangrove forests. (Tom Vierus/Climate Visuals)



Examples of Actions for Engaging the Public in Adaptation

Following through on its commitment in the NAP, the Climate Change Division—responsible for overseeing and coordinating climate change efforts at the national level—prepared its first iteration of a NAP communications strategy in 2019 to build awareness of the NAP and its priorities, and to engage actors from across the country to engage in NAP implementation.

The government put many priorities from the communications strategy into action. This included re-establishing the NAP Steering Committee to strengthen cross-government communications and coordination; organizing a series of trainings and awareness workshops targeting different actors (e.g., communications officers from government ministries and sub-national representatives) (Pacific Environment Journalists Network, 2019); developing an explainer video about the NAP process aimed at government staff (Government of the Republic of Fiji, 2020); organizing youth forums in the lead-up to UNFCCC COPs (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, 2021); and partnering with civil society partners on outreach programs, such as the Women’s Weather Watch initiative, which provides climate information to rural women leaders via Short Messaging Services. This initiative is implemented by the NGO femLINKpacific in partnership with the Fiji Meteorological Service and the National Disaster Management Office (femLINKpacific, 2020).

Communications efforts have also already supported the transition from planning to implementation of some priority measures in Fiji’s NAP. For example, the Ministry of Fisheries used a communications campaign as part of efforts to encourage climate-vulnerable fishing communities to shift from fishing in overharvested waters to instead adopt freshwater aquaculture, constructing fishponds on their land. Accompanied by consultations and in-person participatory engagement, the Ministry’s campaign included outreach through newspapers, radio, and online, sharing stories of farmers taking the risk of shifting their practices and selling fish they had farmed (Government of the Republic of Fiji, in press).

As NAP implementation is scaled up, a complex issue requiring strong public engagement is planned relocation (often also referred to “managed” or “strategic” retreat) of communities that are especially vulnerable to climate change impacts. Six communities have already taken the difficult decision to undertake planned relocation, and over 40 additional communities have been identified to be relocated. It is currently considered an option of last resort to be undertaken only after all other adaptation measures have failed. The Government of Fiji has developed Planned Relocation Guidelines as well as Standard Operating Procedures for Planned Relocation that guide how to approach the rigorous consultation needed. The Climate Change Act notes that relocation of communities should only be with “the full free and prior informed consent of the communities, following inclusive and gender responsive consultation and participatory processes” (Government of the Republic of Fiji, 2021, p. 64).

To share information on the planned relocation policy framework, the Government of Fiji has launched the briefing note *Introduction to the Climate Relocation of Communities Trust Fund for Communities and the Public* (Government of the Republic of Fiji, 2023) to support public

communications and advocacy. The briefing is designed to be used by community leaders, government and non-government community liaison officers, local and national NGOs, civil society organizations and groups, and other stakeholders involved with the direct support of communities, informal settlements, and groups (Republic of Fiji, 2023).

Next Steps

Identifying Champions for Adaptation

Adaptation in Fiji has been championed by political leaders (e.g., high-level support from the prime minister and ministers responsible for climate change, health, youth, and labour; local-level leadership among village leaders) and youth leaders like advocate Timoci Naulusala, who called on world leaders at COP 23 and the UN Youth Climate Summit to take action on climate change. As NAP implementation must be accelerated, further champions are needed—for example within the scientific community and among climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture, fisheries, water, and health—who can act as trusted messengers to advocate for adaptation.

Using Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, and Behaviour Surveys

Such surveys will help the government understand barriers to public engagement in adaptation and accelerate the implementation and scaling up of national adaptation priorities: such surveys will help clarify which adaptation priorities resonate with Fijians' lifestyle and values toward building a social mandate for adaptation.

Establishing Sustained, Two-Way Dialogue With Vulnerable Communities

This will help build on outreach and engagement activities on adaptation that have already taken place under the NAP process to continue raising awareness of adaptation and reflecting these communities' priorities in national decision making.

Expanding and Strengthening Partnerships and Collaboration With Civil Society and Research Institutions

Through joint campaigns and workshops, as well as using popular communications channels, including social media, government will be able to leverage the reach, credibility, and resources these organizations offer.

Lessons and Reflections

Fiji's commitment to public engagement in the NAP and Climate Change Act has allowed the government to take important steps to enhance communication and information sharing on adaptation while engaging the public. Effective two-way communication will continue to be an essential factor in supporting the implementation of Fiji's adaptation priorities articulated in the country's NAP, making it crucial to build on the initial progress achieved so far.

Farm Radio International's On Air Dialogues: Listening to rural people 2022 in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia

Background

Small-scale farmers in developing countries are often particularly vulnerable to climate change despite being among the least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions. Their voices are often underrepresented in policy discussions.

Farm Radio International is a non-profit organization that focuses on using radio in tandem with information and communication technologies to empower African farming communities. In 2022, Farm Radio International launched the On Air Dialogue project to gather the views, perspectives, and experiences of rural people in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia. Organized in the lead-up to the 2022 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 27), the On Air Dialogues aimed to amplify the voices of women, men, and youth engaged in small-scale farming in rural Africa in the global conversation about climate change.

Farm Radio International worked with seven radio stations on developing and broadcasting 21 episodes of radio programming in local languages, complemented by mobile phone-based polling to gather views on climate change adaptation. Financial support for the On Air Dialogues project was provided by the International Fund for Agricultural Development and Global Affairs Canada.

Examples of Public Engagement on Adaptation

The On Air Dialogues built on Farm Radio International's many years of experience using radio to reach rural African farming communities—the campaign engaged remote, rural, and vulnerable communities in sub-Saharan Africa on climate change adaptation. The radio programming was combined with Farm Radio International's Uliza suite of digital services, which allowed listeners to communicate and share information with their radio station free of charge through their mobile phones.

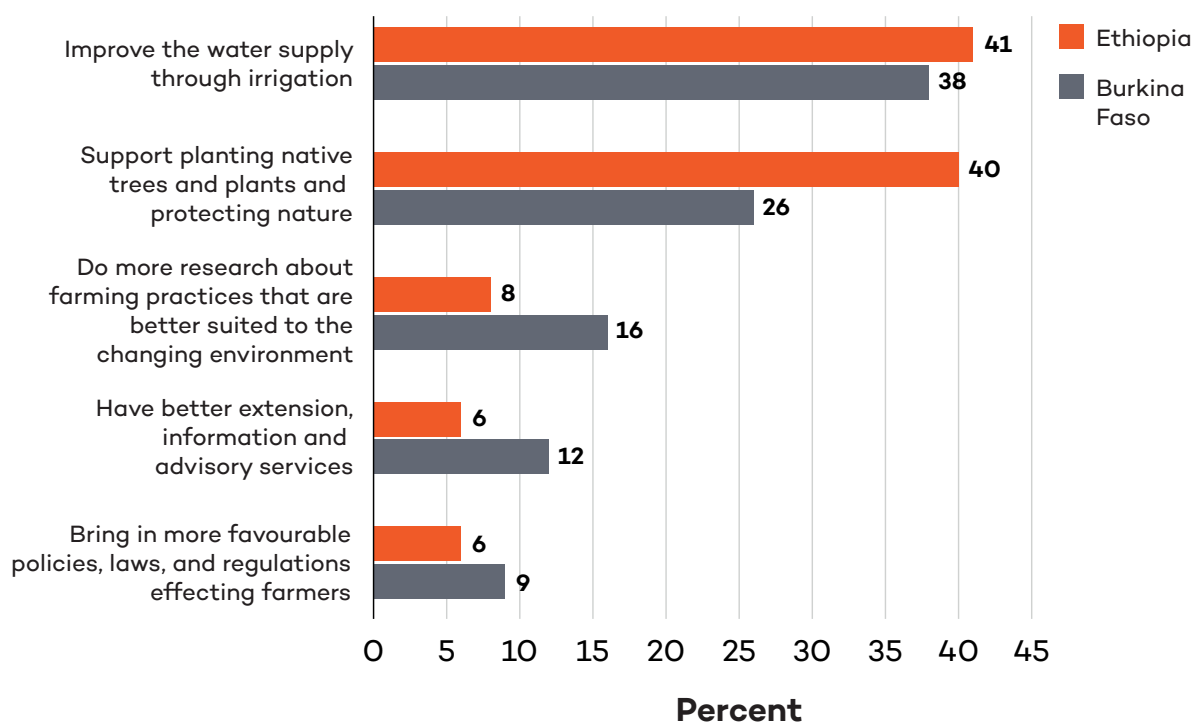
The On Air Dialogues achieved impressive reach, with more than 14,000 respondents in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia providing over 120,000 poll responses and over 9,000 audio comments. The results provide evidence that



climate change’s effects are already widely recognized among rural farming communities in the two countries, with almost 90% of respondents identifying as being affected by changes due to climate change. Over 90% of respondents also reported having already taken steps to adapt to the effects of climate change, and a strong majority of respondents (96%) agreed with the importance of protecting biodiversity.

The campaign also directly collected rural farmers’ priorities for the support they need on adaptation from governments—with the top two priorities including support to improve water supply through irrigation, plant native trees and plants, and protect nature.

Figure 5. Responses to the question “What can the government do to help farmers like you adapt to these changes?” as part of a series of questions posed to audiences in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia



Source: Farm Radio International, 2022.

Next Steps

Farm Radio International reports that it was a goal for the dialogues to “encourage and promote the participation of women” and that the dialogues received a “higher rate of engagement [of women] than is typical for self-initiated surveys” (Farm Radio International, 2022). However, women still represented only 30% of respondents, highlighting the need for continued efforts to encourage women’s participation in such public engagement campaigns.

Low participation rates by women are likely the result of a number of interconnected factors. The short timeframe for developing and deploying the dialogues (approximately 2 months)

limited the team’s ability to actively apply a gender-responsive approach. Lower levels of mobile phone ownership and usage by women may have also played a role—one recent study has reported an estimated 37% gender gap in mobile Internet use in sub-Saharan African countries (Groupe Spéciale Mobile Association, 2021). Gendered roles and responsibilities, including women’s unpaid care burden, also likely played a role. Follow-up analysis would be needed to better understand the relative importance of these different factors, as well as other barriers to participation. Qualitative data collected through the dialogues may provide insights on gender roles and dynamics in relation to adaptation; however, the volume of this data poses challenges for analysis, as inputs were received in multiple languages, and transcription and detailed analysis of the data would be time-consuming. Farm Radio is exploring Artificial Intelligence and other technological solutions to overcome this.

Although the approach of pairing radio programming and the Uliza suite gives respondents time to consider their responses (as opposed to conventional opinion poll responses that encourage “fast thinking” and intuitive responses rather than considered opinions), the survey did not hear from a random sample because survey respondents were self-selected. This means it is difficult to generalize the responses to the whole population. And so, while On Air Dialogues are powerful methods of quickly gathering input, feedback, and the impressions and concerns of a large number of people who are often not consulted or considered, they don’t replace the need for statistically robust surveys.

Lessons for Peer Countries

The success of Farm Radio International’s On Air Dialogues shows that there is a strong basis for building a social mandate for adaptation—rural farming communities engaged in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso are already seeing climate change impacts and taking steps to adapt to these impacts. To continue strengthening the programming to ensure that public engagement efforts are inclusive and gender responsive, future dialogues designed with gender experts can account for the barriers to engagement and develop targeted strategies to lift underrepresented voices.

This experience shows the importance of collecting evidence of knowledge, attitudes, and practices, and of building intentional links between this type of public engagement campaign with national policy processes on climate change adaptation. Notably, Figure 5 indicates respondents had a low level of interest in policies, laws, and regulations—but NAP processes present an opportunity for governments to plan, finance, implement, and track progress on adaptation measures that participants called for, such as climate-resilient irrigation. Both Burkina Faso and Ethiopia have published NAP documents that include agriculture and water as priority sectors (NAP Global Network, 2023). Demonstrating the impact and results of NAP processes will be important in order to build trust and buy-in among farming communities in the countries’ respective NAP processes.

The experience of the On Air Dialogues’ also demonstrates how governments should look to achieve their communication objectives by reaching stakeholders through the right channels — using popular existing technology being used by their priority audiences, like radio and mobile phones—in building two-way dialogue.

Envisioning Resilience: Bringing underrepresented women’s voices into planning for climate change adaptation in Kenya and Ghana

Background

Meaningful participation by women from communities on the front lines of climate change is essential for gender-responsive, locally led adaptation. Too often, women are underrepresented in decision making—from the local to national levels—on climate change adaptation.

NAP processes should be participatory, gender responsive, and inclusive of the most vulnerable groups and communities. Women and girls’ perspectives and priorities are critically important for inclusive, effective NAP processes. Public engagement is a key means for these perspectives and priorities to be part of the adaptation planning process.

The Envisioning Resilience project is a collaboration between the NAP Global Network and Lensational, a non-profit social enterprise that aims to elevate the voices of women from underrepresented groups and communities using visual storytelling.

Market trader Kawusada, a student, helps her mother trade at the market. Kawusada’s family are small-scale farmers originally from Yepalsi in the Northern region of Ghana. Following heavy drought, the family’s tomato and pepper crops dried up this year, causing them to move from their hometown to Navrongo, where they now purchase produce from other farmers to sell. (Dorcas Abban, Envisioning Resilience, Ghana)



Envisioning Resilience was piloted in Ghana and Kenya, with participants undertaking training in photography and storytelling while learning from experts who helped them link their observations to climate science. The program supported trainees to develop visual stories that documented their experiences with climate change and their visions of resilience. The photos prepared are licensed for a fee through Lensational's website, providing income to the trainees as a means of economic empowerment.

Envisioning Resilience was piloted in close collaboration with NAP teams from Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency and Kenya's Climate Change Directorate with financial support from Global Affairs Canada (Dazé et al., 2022).

Examples of Public Engagement on Adaptation

Over several months, the Lensational team and professional photographers mentored trainees to develop personal visual stories and a collective story for the group.

The visual stories were then used as the basis for national policy dialogues with adaptation decision-makers and other stakeholders at workshops in Nairobi and Accra. These dialogues provided an innovative approach to participatory stakeholder engagement, with women from grassroots communities setting the agenda and tone for the dialogues based on their striking images and personal stories. The overall objective was to have the communities' priorities influence national-level decision making on adaptation.

The trainees reported that the process provided an opportunity to both inform the priorities of climate change adaptation planning and also empower their communities to better prepare for resilience. Policy-makers in Kenya and Ghana welcomed the process, reporting that it helped them see direct links between the adaptation actions, strategies, and policies they work on and what is happening at the grassroots level in communities.

The photos and stories have been shared widely at the national level and attracted international attention, including being profiled by the BBC, Nation (Kenya), the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, and featured at multiple events at COP 27 (Mbutia, 2022). Photos from trainees have been featured in the Kenyan government's [*Review of the Implementation of Kenya's National Adaptation Plan 2015–2030 in the Agriculture Sector*](#) and first Adaptation Communication to the UNFCCC.

Next Steps

Sustainability of the Envisioning Resilience pilot will be the key challenge, with the need to find new opportunities for the program's trainees to continue developing visual stories of climate change adaptation and participating in their countries' NAP processes.

Sustained engagement in the NAP process from civil society also requires individuals and organizations to have funding and capacity to stay engaged—and the trainees from the pilot programs were not yet formally part of a climate-focused civil society organization engaging

in the NAP processes. This barrier is being addressed in the next phase of the Envisioning Resilience program in Jamaica, where the trainees will be linked to GirlsCARE, a feminist climate activist organization.

Lessons for Peer Countries

The Envisioning Resilience pilot in Ghana and Kenya shows the immense potential of dialogue between frontline communities and national policy-makers for advancing NAP processes—and the importance of empowering women on the front lines of climate change to tell their own stories.

Visual storytelling can help address power asymmetries in NAP processes, providing a common language for discussing climate change and adaptation priorities. Such creative communications approaches can also put principles for effective visual communications on climate change adaptation into practice, showing real people, telling new stories, and sharing emotionally powerful narratives.

SECTION 5

Conclusions and Recommendations



Students at a state primary school in Gabura, Bangladesh, that is threatened by erosion from the Kholpetua river. (Moniruzzaman Sazal/Climate Visuals)

1. Public engagement is critical to the long-term success of efforts to build climate resilience through NAP processes. As climate change impacts escalate, transitioning to low-carbon, climate-resilient economies and societies will require public engagement, accompanied by a robust understanding of people’s behaviours and what motivates them to take meaningful action.

NAP teams must place people—their values and identities—at the centre of decision making on adaptation. It is crucial to build a social mandate for adaptation to transform our societies in meaningful and sustained ways, understanding public attitudes around climate risks, reducing people’s vulnerabilities and exposure to climate risk, tapping into cross-societal concerns, addressing political polarization, and effectively converting concern into climate action.

2. NAP teams should look to the ACE elements to guide how they approach public engagement on adaptation. ACE provides areas for NAP teams to focus their efforts and is an important source of the legal obligation on climate change public engagement. Building strategic links between NAP and ACE processes can amplify adaptation efforts if the required political will and resources are channelled to support public engagement while fulfilling commitments under the Paris Agreement.

3. A collection of intersecting and overlapping considerations and elements can unlock the potential of adaptation actions prioritized through NAP processes. From gender to power asymmetries, behaviour change to audience segmentation, each of these elements offers a different entry point into trying to understand people’s motivations and behaviours. Taken together—and in a non-prescriptive way—NAP teams are encouraged to take stock of how each of these elements can help target interventions for wide-reaching and inclusive approaches to public engagement on adaptation.

4. Imagery matters. NAP teams should reflect on climate visual imagery and follow the evidence on what constitutes impactful and compelling climate change visual media. Miscalibrating this aspect marginalizes the experiences of vulnerable people, which in turn can polarize attitudes.

5. Creative and innovative approaches to public engagement on adaptation are being implemented around the world. Learning from the successes of international peers, NAP teams can draw on a rich set of experiences to pilot and apply in their own contexts. They include government-led and civil society-led initiatives, which are also a reflection of the power of partnerships and the added value of multistakeholder approaches.

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