



One of five summary briefs for decision-makers, produced from the outcomes of the Lessons for Future Action conference: access to key insights, lessons learned, good practice and the gaps and needs for future action

Lessons for Future Action: Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

Capacity Development



Introduction

Generally capacity building is understood to encompass knowledge / information capacity, human / social capacity and institutional capacity. Capacity may also refer to financial resources.

Within the scope of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, adequate capacity in each of its forms is particularly important in order to ensure that decisions are taken based on an adequate knowledge base and to enhance coordination between different communities of practice involved.

Due to its diverse nature, capacity development must be implemented at different scales, from local to national to regional, and address different needs. In Small Island Developing States (SIDS) there is a strong rationale for regional capacity building. Such capacity development at a regional scale allows for those issues that are best addressed at the regional level, such as building regional climate scenarios, to be adequately covered.

Understanding the baseline capacity, as well as priorities, in SIDS requires consideration of the particular circumstances throughout the design, implementation and monitoring phases.

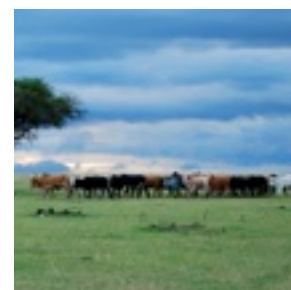
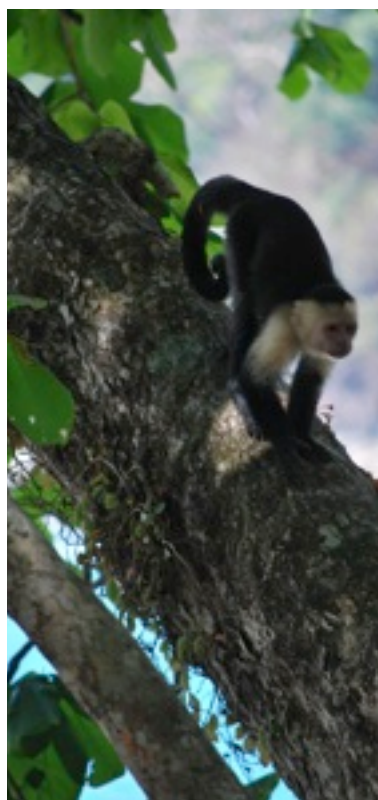
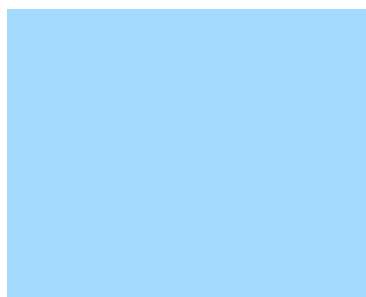
Benefits

The main objective of capacity development is to allow countries to cope with challenges through their own organization and actions. As such, if implemented successfully, capacity development increases the independence of SIDS in responding to climate change and natural disasters. For example, building the capacity of scientists based in SIDS, will allow SIDS to better direct the research agenda to respond to local needs.

Sufficient capacity also improves the planning and implementation of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction activities. When such activities are based on good scientific knowledge and adequate information concerning risks and circumstances they are better able to address needs. Likewise having strong institutions and organizations to implement activities can increase transparency, good governance and lead to effective and efficient project management.

Beginning capacity building efforts with a thorough capacity needs assessments, or stocktaking, not only allows limited resources to be targeted to the greatest needs but also identifies existing capacity strengths. Capacity stocktaking can also identify ongoing capacity development initiatives in order to allow new efforts to build on past achievements.

“SIDS economies and livelihoods are dependent on very limited number of economic activities and are considered to be the most economically vulnerable of any groups of countries. This vulnerability is being further aggravated by the impacts, changes in weather, changes in marine ecosystem and sea level rise.” Albert Binger, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)



Benefits from a Regional Approach

Many countries have carried out National Capacity Self Assessments (NCSA's) to assess baseline capacities and identify priority capacity development needs. In the Pacific and Caribbean, NCSA's have been aggregated as regional assessments. These NCSA's can be divided into five steps:

1. Inception;
2. Stocktaking;
3. Thematic Assessments;
4. Cross-cutting Assessments; and
5. Action Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation.

In the Pacific, a review of the regional assessment identified common vulnerabilities and challenges. The Pacific review developed two strategies for addressing common capacity needs at the regional level: (1) a set of questions to help stakeholders prioritize among various environmental problems; and (2) guidelines for designing better environmental policies. Finally, the regional review proposes five specific tasks:

- Identify *no regret* policies that generate non-environmental co-benefits while also fostering environmental progress;
- Develop *citizen science* programs to simultaneously collect and organize data, promote education, raise awareness, and prompt more environmentally-friendly behavior;
- Further develop *regional expert networks* to promote *learning exchanges* among Pacific Island countries;
- Develop new and enhance existing *traditional knowledge and the environment* programs; and
- Enhance SPREP's policy coordination and facilitation among member states.



Challenges

Climate change and natural disasters place additional stress on existing sustainable development challenges. These stresses extend to capacity and capacity development needs. As such, it is important to understand baseline capacities and identify those additional stresses as people and economies are forced to adapt to climate change.

"Tonga, Cook islands, Kiribati and some other small island countries have only two languages, English and their own language and its very easy for communication and understanding while it's harder in countries (Melanesia) with numerous different dialects." Roger Mclean, Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Author

Policy challenges

Capacity development is most effective when implemented through a programmatic approach with adequate financial resources. Such an approach requires supporting policies that recognize that business as usual is not sufficient to address immediate and long-term capacity needs.

Furthermore, climate change and natural disasters will place an increasing burden on planning and policy development processes as a result of the rapid pace of change and the need for adapting policies and plans. Recognizing this need and responding through proactive capacity development will allow for plans and policies to be adapted in timely manner.

Implementation challenges

Perhaps one of the greatest implementation challenges associated with capacity development for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is identifying who requires capacity development. Climate change and natural disasters are cross-sectoral issues with impacts ranging from the local to the international level. Adaptation and risk reduction activities therefore involve a very broad range of stakeholders.

A further challenge with regards to capacity development involves measuring outcomes and sustained donor support. Capacity development requires long-term funding and countries identifying and addressing internal drivers of capacity constraints, as outcomes are difficult to monitor and evaluate. Adding to the financing challenge, the true cost of capacity development is often hard to assess and co-funding is difficult to mobilize.

"We keep talking about capacity building, but what becomes of these assessments that have been undertaken? Quite a number of issues have been raised in these assessments and capacity gaps identified. The identified capacity gaps should be addressed and I think that is where the missing link is." - Frank Wickham, Solomon Islands



Good Practice Examples

Jamaica – National Capacity Development Efforts

In recognition of the needs to address climate change and risks from natural disasters, Jamaica has developed a comprehensive approach to capacity development. The approach began with an assessment of needs, which identified the need for:

- An appropriate legal regulatory and institutional framework;
- Improved technology;
- Efforts to address gaps in research; and
- Enhanced Information and knowledge management.

The assessment of needs resulted in an aggressive international effort to mobilize funding for capacity building from large grant facilities. Supported by a plan of action on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction integrated into national development plans, capacity development elements are being increasingly included in related programs.

Africa - Climate Change Resilience Alliance (ACCRA)

In sub-Saharan Africa, ACCRA supports capacity building and coordination amongst local partners and other stakeholders. Thus far ACCRA has conducted research on disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and social protection programs in Ethiopia, Uganda and Mozambique however there is scope for the lessons learned and methodology to be adapted to SIDS at the regional level.

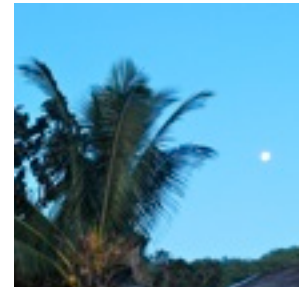
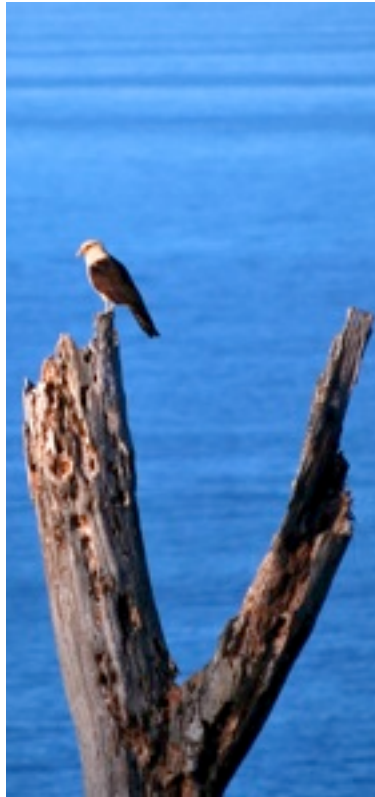
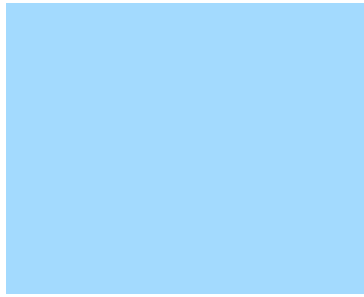
Examples of actions supported through ACCRA include:

- In-country scoping studies;
- Country-specific reports on climate change vulnerability and local adaptive capacity;
- Thematic report on adaptive capacity; and
- The exchange of lessons learned and good practices between and among participating countries.

Lessons Learned

In order to ensure that capacity development can address real needs, policy-makers and practitioners may wish to:

- Assess capacity needs at all levels considering sector specific needs;
- Identify stakeholders;
- Create leadership and ownership of capacity development activities;
- Build on existing networks for capacity development;
- Link knowledge and capacity building; and
- Implement a programmatic approach.



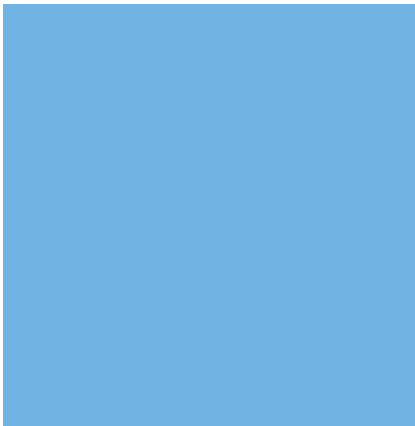
Areas for Further Investment

Investments in capacity development for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction should target the greatest needs at regional, national and local levels. Furthermore, sector specific capacity building can deliver targeted improvements. In order to ensure that capacity development is targeted and effective, consider investments in capacity assessments, convene ongoing dialogues to communicate needs and support the delivery of capacity building.

All of the above should be based on a long-term programmatic approach integrating strategic fore-sighting in anticipation of increased capacity needs as a result of climate change and natural disasters. Efforts to promote sustainability through the training of mentors and the placement of institutional structures close to the activity they are implementing should also be supported. To capture efficiencies, a regional framework for capacity building should be considered along with the integration of capacity building into national level plans. Furthermore, private sector capacity development should be explored.

With regards to specific capacity needs, capacity gaps exist in: research, provision of information, access to technology, institutional and regulatory frameworks and expertise.

Finally, ensuring that there is an appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the outcomes from capacity development will improve long-term funding and allow for feedback and lessons learned to enhance future capacity development initiatives. Such monitoring and evaluation must be framed within a clear understanding of baseline capacities and, as such, can also help inform evolving needs and priorities.

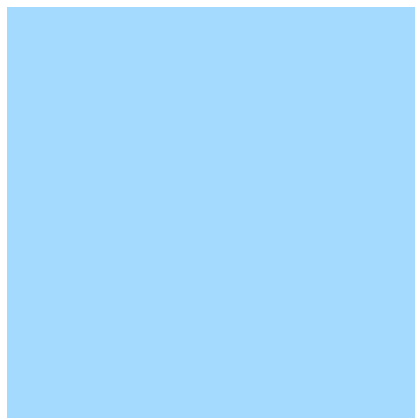


The Lessons for Future Action Conference discussed broad needs related to capacity development for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. These discussions focused on the need for capacity building at all levels, especially in light of additional pressures placed on existing programs, plans and policies as a result of climate change and the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters.

In light of the above, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which includes, as priority activities:

- Strengthen existing regional frameworks, and develop new frameworks and mechanisms where necessary, to support nationally-driven capacity building in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, that spans institutional, programmatic and individual elements;
- Establish collaborative research networks to examine common challenges and needs initially focusing on coral reefs, coastal processes and coastal modeling;
- Develop exchange programmes and learning networks within and between regions in order to share lessons learned and best practices; and
- Explore means to provide better climate change information to stakeholders that enable countries and communities to access (and contribute) information that is pertinent to their circumstances and in a form that is readily understood.

Building a better understanding of the emerging capacity development needs allowed the Conference to identify key needs for SIDS that cut across regions. Proactive capacity building can increase the capacity of SIDS to implement their own effective response activities to increase resilience and promote sustainable development.





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