

Adapting Together, Thriving Tomorrow



The Ghana National Adaptation Plan

Lessons Learned



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INTRODUCTION

Ghana is increasingly experiencing the impacts of climate change through flooding, prolonged dry-spells, coastal erosion, sea-level rise, erratic rainfall and rising temperatures. These hazards affect key sectors including agriculture, water, health, biodiversity and ecosystems, infrastructures and cities and disaster risk reduction while disproportionately impacting vulnerable communities such as smallholder farmers, coastal populations, displaced persons, women, youth and persons with disabilities.

Recognizing these risks, Ghana initiated the National Adaptation Plan process under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) framework and aligned with the Paris Agreement to a provide long-term, coordinated approach to adaptation. Supported by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the National Adaptation Plan process sought to strengthen institutional coordination, enhance the evidence base and mainstream climate resilience into development planning at all levels.

As part of strengthening iterative adaptation planning, stakeholders were invited to reflect on the development process, identifying achievements, gaps and areas for improvement. This report documents the lessons learned from the development of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP). Stakeholders involved in development of the NAP included representatives from government institutions, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), academia, private sector actors, development partners and technical experts. The report reflects on both the content of the NAP and the institutional process through which it was developed.

Overall, the NAP process was widely regarded as inclusive and technically robust. It was strategically aligned with national policy frameworks. Stakeholders advocated for a shift from planning toward operationalization in future iterations, highlighting the need for securing robust financing institutional clarity and measurable resilience outcomes. Improving district-level capacity, establishing a strong monitoring system, engaging the private sector and ensuring inclusive participation will be key to the success of Ghana's next NAP cycle.

METHODOLOGY

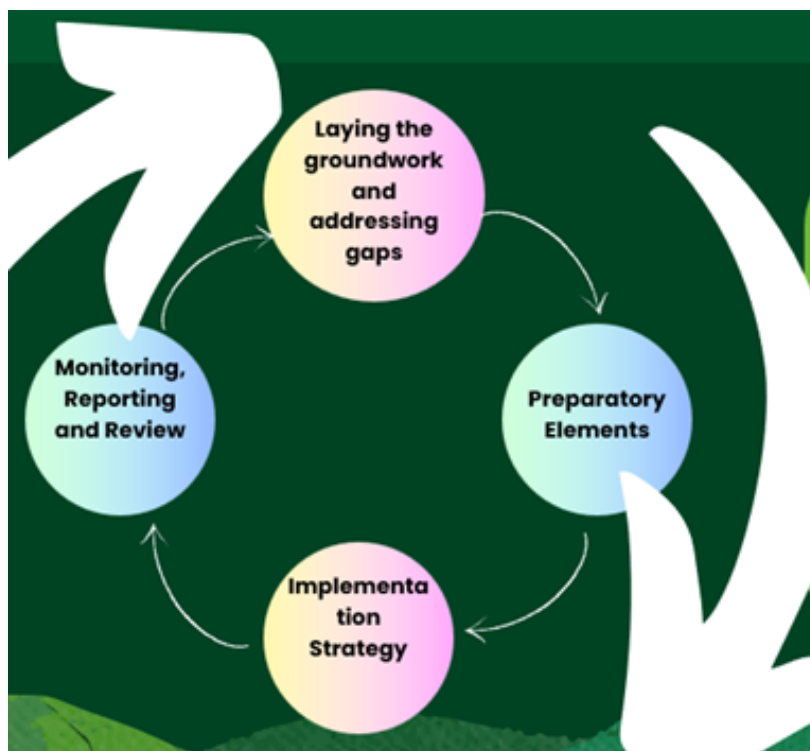
The lessons presented in this report were derived from a structured review process of NAP reports and consultations with NAP stakeholders. Lessons were grouped under eight core themes:

- a). Overview of the NAP Process
- b). Policy Alignment
- c). Risk Assessments and Evidence Base
- d). Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity
- e). Adaptation Prioritization
- f). Institutional Coordination and Governance
- g). Financing and Implementation Readiness
- h). Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.

The reflections captured here provide a critical assessment of the institutional, technical and participatory dimensions of the NAP process and are valuable in guiding future NAP iterations and implementation.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE NAP PROCESS

The development of Ghana's NAP was characterized by strong national ownership with the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) serving as the coordinating institution. The NAP process was undertaken in four phases.



- a). **Laying the groundwork and addressing gaps:** Initiation and launch of the NAP process, stocktaking, identifying weaknesses in undertaking the NAP process, assessing development needs and climate vulnerabilities.
- b). **Preparatory Elements:** Analysis of current climate and future climate change scenarios, assessment of climate vulnerabilities, identification and review of adaptation options, drafting of adaptation plans and integration into national, sub-national and sectoral planning.
- c). **Implementation Strategies:** Prioritization of climate change in national adaptation planning, development of a long-term implementation strategy, enhancement of capacity planning and implementation of adaptation. Ghana is currently at this critical stage.
- d). **Reporting, Monitoring and Review:** Monitoring and review of the NAP process to assess progress, effectiveness and gaps, iteratively updating the NAP and outreach on the NAP. -

The development process involved national workshops, sectoral risk and vulnerability assessments, district-level consultations, technical working group engagements, prioritization and costing of adaptation actions and multi-stakeholder validation sessions.

From the outset, the process emphasized cross-sector collaborations, recognizing that climate risks transcend institutional mandates. Sector ministries contributed to vulnerability assessments and adaptation priority setting, while district authorities provided local insights to ensure the plan reflects on-the-ground realities.

Lesson 1: Adopting a participatory approach in the design of the NAP process significantly enhances legitimacy and builds awareness and engagement among institutions involved.

Lesson 2: The NAP process serves not only as a planning exercise but also as a capacity-building opportunity that strengthens understanding of climate risk and adaptation pathways. By engaging diverse actors in climate risk and vulnerability assessments and adaptation planning, participants are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to identify and pursue effective adaptation pathways.

2. POLICY ALIGNMENT

One of the most important lessons from the NAP process relates to strong policy anchoring. The NAP was deliberately aligned with Ghana's broader development framework, including the National Climate change Policy, the Medium-Term Development Framework and sectoral strategies.

Lesson 1: Positioning adaptation as a development priority, rather than as a standalone environmental issue improves engagement across MDAs. Stakeholder feedback highlighted that ministries were more willing to participate when adaptation was framed in terms of economic growth, food security, infrastructure resilience, disaster risk reduction and social protection.

The enactment of The Environmental Protection Act, 2025 (Act 1124), further strengthened the legal framework for environmental protection in Ghana by providing a clear legal mandate for coordinated environmental governance and climate action. By reinforcing the authority and coordination role of the EPA, the ACT enhanced policy coherence and cross-sector collaboration in adaptation planning. This legal backing improved the Authority's capacity to convene sector ministries and guide technical processes while ensuring that adaptation priorities are systematically integrated into national and sub-national development frameworks.

Lesson 2: Good policy foundation reaffirms that environmental stewardship including climate change adaptation and mitigation is not merely an option, but a national duty. However, while policy alignment was strong, there are growing opportunities to better integrate adaptation objectives into sector budget frameworks, paving the way for enhanced resource allocation. Strengthening the link between strategic planning and resource allocation will be critical in the next NAP cycle.

3. TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS AND THE EVIDENCE BASE

The technical foundation of the NAP was widely regarded as a major strength. Sectoral climate risk and vulnerability assessments provided a strong analytical basis for prioritizing adaptation actions and ensuring they were grounded in scientific evidence. The integration of climate science with sectoral policy analysis enhanced credibility and alignment with national development objectives. Sector ministries provided contextual information that enhanced the accuracy of findings. Stakeholder consultations and validation improved relevance of risk assessments.

Development partners supported climate risk and vulnerability assessments in 39 MMDAs, providing localized evidence on exposure and adaptive capacity that significantly informed the prioritization of adaptation actions. Future NAP updates will be improved by widening the evidence base and replicating the CRVAs to all the 216 MMDAs, which will require substantial financial and technical resources. Planning for these needs in the early stages of the NAP implementation is essential. **Table 1** below spotlights findings from sample MMDAs, linking key risks to adaptation priorities.

Table 1: NAP District Spotlights

Spotlight	Key Risks	Adaptation Priorities
Coastal • Keta • Tema • Sekondi-Takoradi	Sea-level rise, storm surges and tidal waves. Flooding and saltwater intrusion affecting livelihoods and infrastructure.	Coastal protection and ecosystem-based adaptation (mangroves, wetlands). Climate-resilient urban planning and drainage systems. Livelihood diversification and support for fisher communities affected by climate change.
Northern Savannah • Tamale • West Mamprusi	Recurrent droughts, erratic rainfall and declining water resources. High food insecurity and climate-induced migration.	Climate-smart agriculture and drought-resilient livelihoods. Improved water harvesting, storage and management. Strengthened early warning systems and social protection for vulnerable households.
Forest and Transition Zones	Flooding, pests and diseases, deforestation and ecosystem degradation. Climate variability affecting agriculture and water availability.	Sustainable land forest management. Flood control and watershed protection. Support to climate-resilient agriculture and local value chains.

Source: Government of Ghana (2025), National Adaptation Plan

Stakeholders however highlighted some data gaps, particularly at the district level. Disaggregated socio-economic data and gender-sensitive vulnerability metrics were sometimes limited. It is expected that the Monitoring and Reporting Framework developed by the NAP process will address this issue given the robust reporting systems currently established at national and sub-national levels.

Lesson 1: This participatory validation process strengthened credibility and ownership. Incorporation of traditional and indigenous knowledge systems and their inclusion presented a valuable opportunity that further enriched contextual understanding for future planning efforts.

4. INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION AND GOVERNANCE

The institutional framework outlined in the NAP builds on Ghana's existing governance structures. The EPA's leadership was widely recognized as instrumental in maintaining coherence across ministries and sectors.

Lesson 1: The use of technical working groups enable structured engagement and facilitate cross-sector dialogue. The EPA serves as the coordinating body, while sector ministries retain responsibility for implementation.

Lesson 2: However, while coordination during development was relatively effective, stakeholders identified challenges related to long-term implementation governance. Roles and responsibilities for executing adaptation

actions should be better defined, particularly across sector ministries and at the district level. Some institutions reported uncertainty regarding their post-adoption responsibilities.

Lesson 3: Furthermore, capacity disparities across institutions influenced the extent to which some organizations could participate and contribute effectively, highlighting the need for targeted capacity-building measures to ensure more balanced engagement in future initiatives.

Lesson 4: The overarching lesson emerging from this experience is that coordination mechanisms must evolve from process-based collaboration to institutional governance structures with clear mandates, accountability frameworks and sustained resourcing.

5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVITY

The NAP process was broadly participatory, engaging national institutions, district authorities, CSOs, private sector, youth and technical experts. Stakeholders appreciated the opportunity to contribute to vulnerability assessments and prioritization of adaptation actions. District-level consultations were particularly valued, as they contextualized climate risks and grounded national strategies in local realities. These engagements improved the credibility of the NAP and strengthened alignment between national priorities and community concerns.

There is a growing awareness of the importance of engaging vulnerable groups and the development of the Gender and Youth Strategies were lauded as significant milestones in this regard. The engagement of youth through creative approaches such as skits and community performances proved a powerful tool for raising awareness and communicating complex climate change and adaptation concepts in accessible and culturally relevant ways. These participatory methods encouraged community dialogue and helped translate technical adaptation priorities into relatable messages that resonate with diverse audiences.

Lesson 1: Leveraging youth-led creative platforms in future NAP cycles can further strengthen community ownership of adaption planning. It particularly enhances behavioural change among the next generation of adaptation practitioners. Partnerships with youth groups, schools and community theatre groups will provide a scalable and cost-effective mechanism for sustaining public engagement in climate adaptation efforts.

Lesson 2: Private sector participation can be explored further as it presents significant potential to drive climate-resilient investments and innovations.

Lesson 3: While consultations referenced traditional leaders and vulnerable groups, further steps can be taken to establish structured mechanisms that actively and consistently involve women, youth, persons with disabilities and marginalized communities. The importance of considering and adopting indigenous knowledge and traditional practices is key to empowering communities thus ensuring long-term sustainability. By building on these positive developments, future iterations of the NAP can achieve even greater inclusivity.

6. MAINSTREAMING ADAPTATION INTO PLANNING AND BUDGETING

The NAP's alignment with the NCCP and the National Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) provided a strong basis for integration into development planning. Translating strategic priorities into operational sector and district plans was identified as a challenge. Climate budget tagging systems are not yet fully

institutionalized and many districts lack the technical capacity to incorporate adaptation priorities into Medium-Term Development Plans effectively.

Lesson 1: Mainstreaming adaptation requires practical tools, guidance notes, budget reforms and sustained technical support beyond policy alignment. Positively, the NAP Monitoring and Reporting Framework Guidelines including the District Monitoring and Reporting Template provide such basis.

7. FINANCING AND IMPLEMENTATION READINESS

The GCF readiness support was instrumental in enabling the NAP development process. It strengthened institutional capacity and supported technical analyses. Despite this progress, financing remains one of the key constraints to adaptation implementation. There are opportunities to improve domestic resource allocation for adaption and private sector engagement on climate-resilient investments.

Lesson 1: The NAP recognizes the need for, and outlines strategies to mobilize domestic resources, access international climate finance and engage private sector. Stakeholders stressed the need for a structured pipeline of bankable adaptation projects to facilitate access to international climate finance mechanisms such as the GCF and Adaptation Fund.

Lesson 2: Overall, financial sustainability should always be embedded at the design stage of future NAP cycles in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance.

8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

Reporting obligations under the UNFCCC are recognized and the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework acknowledges the iterative nature of adaptation planning. Continuous monitoring enables adjustment and improvement. The NAP Monitoring and Reporting Framework established sector-specific indicators for measuring adaptive capacity and resilience outcomes. Its implementation in the medium term will inform iterative adaptation planning and learning. Accordingly, it is essential to strengthen the capacity of adaptation stakeholders across all sectors to ensure optimal application.

Lesson 1: Institutions should prioritize periodic review processes to support adaptive learning.

ALIGNMENT OF LESSONS LEARNED WITH UNFCCC NAP OBJECTIVES

To further clarify how Ghana's NAP process advanced the objectives of the UNFCCC NAP framework, this section presents a structured mapping of key lessons learned against two global NAP objectives. The matrix illustrates how institutional, financial and participatory dimensions of the process contributed to;

Reducing vulnerability and strengthening adaptive capacity, and

Facilitating the integration adaptation into relevant policies, plans and programmes across sectors and levels of governance.

This mapping highlights areas of strong alignment, identifies gaps requiring further attention and provides a foundation for strengthening future NAP iterations in line with UNFCCC guidance and iterative adaptation planning principles.

Thematic Area	Key Lesson Learned	Contribution to Objective 1: Reducing Vulnerability and Building Adaptive Capacity	Contribution to Objective 2: Integration into Policies, Plans and Programmes
Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessments	A strong analytical foundation improved understanding of sectoral risks, district-level and disaggregated data can be improved on.	Strengthened evidence base for identifying vulnerable sectors and populations; improved targeting of resilience-building actions.	Provided technical inputs to inform sectoral planning and national policy alignment.
Institutional Capacity	Capacity disparities across ministries and districts could constrain effective implementation.	Enhanced awareness and institutional learning during NAP development; highlighted need for sustained technical strengthening.	Revealed need for clearer institutional mandates and operational guidance to embed adaptation in sector and district plans.
Stakeholder Engagement	Consultations were broad, can be strengthened further together with feedback mechanisms.	Increased adaptive capacity through participatory knowledge-sharing and awareness-building.	Improved legitimacy and ownership of adaptation priorities within national and sub-national planning processes.

Thematic Area	Key Lesson Learned	Contribution to Objective 1: Reducing Vulnerability and Building Adaptive Capacity	Contribution to Objective 2: Integration into Policies, Plans and Programmes
Inclusivity and Differential Vulnerability	While mechanisms for the systematic participation of vulnerable groups are still being strengthened, positive strides have been made in raising awareness through creative approaches. Notably, youth played a pivotal role in awareness creation by delivering engaging skits that highlight adaptation challenges and solutions.	Identified populations disproportionately affected by climate impacts; underscored need for equitable resilience-building measures.	Emphasized integration of gender and social inclusion considerations into development planning frameworks.
Sub-National Integration	District engagement enhanced contextual relevance	Improved local understanding of climate risks and adaptation options.	Highlighted need for tools and resources to embed adaptation in Medium-Term Development Plans and district budgets
Mainstreaming into National Frameworks	Strategic alignment with national policies was achieved, opportunities to improve operational integration exist.	Supported coherence in resilience-building strategies across sectors.	Advanced integration of adaptation into national development frameworks, including NDC and climate policy instruments.
Financing and Investment Readiness	Comprehensive adaptation financing strategy plays a key role in implementation.	Limited financing may constrain scaling of resilience-building measures and adaptive capacity investments.	Limited financing undermines systematic integration of adaptation priorities into budgeting and investment frameworks.

Thematic Area	Key Lesson Learned	Contribution to Objective 1: Reducing Vulnerability and Building Adaptive Capacity	Contribution to Objective 2: Integration into Policies, Plans and Programmes
Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)	Critical to roll-out the NAP Monitoring and Reporting Framework	Effective roll-out of M&R Framework enhances ability to measure resilience outcomes and adjust actions over time.	M&R Framework enhances tracking of integration across sectors and reporting under UNFCCC obligations.
Knowledge Systems and Data Integration	Traditional knowledge and cross-sector data integration enriched the NAP.	Enhanced inclusivity and contextual richness in resilience strategies.	Highlighted need for integrated information systems to support mainstreamed planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE NAP ITERATIONS

Moving forward, stakeholders recommend that Ghana's next NAP iteration focuses on five strategic priorities;

- a). Strengthened institutional clarity and accountability mechanisms to ensure implementation ownership across sectors and districts.
- b). Formalize inclusive engagement platforms to ensure sustained participation of private sector actors and vulnerable groups.
- c). Investments in climate data systems and district-level capacity should be scaled up to enhance evidence-based decision-making.
- d). A comprehensive adaptation finance strategy linking domestic resource mobilization, private sector engagement and international climate finance should be mainstreamed in planning.
- e). Institutionalization of the MEL system will enable iterative adaptation planning aligned with UNFCCC guidance and emerging Global Goal on Adaptation frameworks.