

Enhanced information in national policies can accelerate Africa's efforts to track climate adaptation

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New analysis of African national adaptation policy documents finds that most fail to provide comprehensive and consistent information. But the authors also uncover compelling examples of robust plans which hold lessons for upcoming climate talks. Credit: AICCRA

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Adapting to impacts of [climate change](#) is an urgent policy priority for African nations, especially for key sectors like agriculture. According to the African Development Bank, the continent receives just \$30 billion per year for [climate adaptation](#). It needs \$277 billion.

Inadequate [information](#) in national adaptation policies limits the ability to channel adaptation investments where they are needed most and to track national adaptation progress in Africa. Enhancing the coverage, consistency and robustness of policies offers a clear path to establishing an effective, nationally led adaptation-tracking infrastructure.

These are the findings of new research led by The Alliance of Bioversity and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, Wageningen University and Research and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), [published](#) today by *Nature Climate Change*.

The authors reviewed 53 African Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and 15 National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) to determine their adequacy for providing a basis for national level adaptation tracking. They evaluated them against three criteria: The coverage of key information on adaptation; the consistency between the information being tracked; and the robustness or quality of the indicators.

They found that most African NAPs and NDCs provide only a fraction of the information fundamental for adaptation tracking. For instance, only eight NAPs and four NDCs covered information on all key aspects of adaptation, namely risk and impact assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring, evaluation and learning.

But the authors noted some notable efforts to provide adequate information. For example, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia,

Liberia, Madagascar, Togo, and South Africa all prepared relatively strong NAPs, while Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, and Uganda had prepared strong NDCs. The adequacy of adaptation policies varies a lot between countries and different types of policies—either NDCs or NAPs.

The 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) agreed the United Arab Emirates (UAE)–Belém Work Program to develop indicators for the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), which is expected to guide national assessments and build adaptation-tracking capacities.

In an accompanying [policy brief](#), also published today by *Nature Climate Change*, the same authors argue that previous technical dialogues—including the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work program on the global goal on adaptation—have placed too much emphasis on developing globally relevant indicators, starkly overlooking the role of existing national policy processes for tracking adaptation progress, especially for African nations. The recent decision of the 60th UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies (SB60) paves the way to build on national priorities by drawing on information highlighted in NDCs and NAPs.

The authors provide [policy recommendations](#) for the ongoing UAE–Belém work program which should champion robust indicators that reflect climate risks, adaptation needs, and the priorities outlined in national policies. The Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) plays an important role in accelerating the development of effective tracking systems, through their mandate to review the NAP technical guidelines.

Speaking on the launch of the *Nature Climate Change* article, Andreea Nowak, Research Team Lead on Climate Action at The Alliance of Bioversity and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, said,

"Our study shows that existing adaptation policies can provide important groundwork for developing meaningful, context-fit national adaptation tracking systems. But to do so, they must deliver comprehensive, consistent and robust information on the why, what, how and so what of adaptation. The new NDCs—due in 2025—and NAPs—due by 2030—provide a strong momentum for ensuring that the content of these policies provide sufficient groundwork for effective adaptation tracking systems.

"Country-driven approaches to tracking are critical for meaningful assessment of progress towards the Global Goal on Adaptation. Our research shows that we don't need to reinvent the wheel when it comes to tracking climate adaptation in Africa.

"There are very compelling examples of effective NDCs for some African nations and others can build on those achievements with support from continental partners such as the African Group of Negotiators Expert Support and global partners through UNFCCC processes.

"As scientists committed to create societal impact, it is our role to continue to support governments in their efforts to develop and implement robust, science-informed policy processes, which can pave the way towards effective adaptation."

More information: Andreea C. Nowak et al, Opportunities to strengthen Africa's efforts to track national-level climate adaptation, *Nature Climate Change* (2024). [DOI: 10.1038/s41558-024-02054-7](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-024-02054-7)

Andreea C. Nowak et al, Enhanced policy adequacy facilitates national climate adaptation tracking across Africa, *Nature Climate Change* (2024). [DOI: 10.1038/s41558-024-02055-6](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-024-02055-6)

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