



National Adaptation Plans in focus: Lessons from Albania

Albania is a middle-income country in the Western Balkans and home to 2.8 million inhabitants.² Despite steady economic growth since the end of communist rule in 1991, and progress towards European Union (EU) integration, Albania remains poor. The domestic poverty rate in 2017 was around 32.8 percent (with a poverty line of US\$ 5 per day) and most of the country remains dependent on small-scale agriculture in rural areas.^{3,4}

Albania has a Mediterranean climate with a dry, hot summer and a mild, wet winter. The terrain is 77 percent mountainous. Mountains dominate the inland landscape while a narrow coastal plain embraces the Adriatic and Ionian seas to the west.⁵ Rural to urban migration

from inland mountain zones to coastal regions is steady, and a third of the population resides along the coast. However, the majority of the population remains rural. Rural populations are poorer and increasingly vulnerable, as a greater proportion of those remaining behind in rural areas are elderly. In addition to agriculture and fisheries, which comprises around 22 percent of GDP and employ 41 percent of the population, Albania has growing energy and tourism sectors.⁶ Over 90 percent of the country's electricity is produced domestically from hydropower plants. However, energy security is a concern as the dams are vulnerable to flash flooding and fluctuations in supply during drought events.⁷

Climate change risks

Current projections indicate the average temperature in Albania is likely to increase up to 1.6°C by 2050, 2.8°C by 2080 and 3.5°C by 2100. Temperature increases in summer could be as high as 5.3°C by 2100. In addition, annual precipitation is predicted to decrease by 8.5 percent by 2050 and by 18.1 percent by 2100.⁸ These decreases in precipitation and increases in temperatures will affect hydrological systems, threatening both quantity and quality of freshwater. This will impact hydropower production, agricultural productivity, rural livelihoods, public health and economic growth. The resulting changes in coastal ecosystems are already evident, as are water level shifts along major rivers and in protected coastal lagoons.

Though precipitation will decrease overall, when rains occur they are expected to be more intense. The high variability in terrain relief means that soil degradation, erosive river flows, and flash flooding in coastal regions are already common. By 2030, it is predicted that approximately 32 percent of the coastal areas will experience regular flooding, and large amounts of arable lands will be lost due to inundation and increased salinity.⁹

Rural communities are particularly vulnerable to these impacts. Domestic rural-to-urban migration trends have also placed more people at risk in urban areas, which are highly susceptible to coastal flooding and the impacts of sea level rise.



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Groundwork for supporting the NAPs



Policy, planning and budgeting

In 2006 Albania established an Integrated Planning System (IPS) to combine policy, planning and budgeting processes for national and sectoral strategies. The National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2014–2020 is integral to the IPS and represents the government's vision for national social and economic development, containing sector specific plans to achieve this vision. Albania has directly integrated the Sustainable Development Goal indicators into the NSDI.¹⁰

Albania has ratified the Paris Agreement, however, adaptation priorities are not featured in the country's 2016 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). Despite this, adaptation indicators and a discussion of climate change risks have been included in sectoral plans under the NSDI for several climate-sensitive areas, such as agriculture, energy, tourism, and health. In 2017 the Ministry of Finance piloted the integration of climate change adaptation measures into the Medium-Term Budget Process (2018–2020) with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) – the development arm of the Government of Germany.¹¹

Overseeing this process is the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Climate Change (IMWGCC), established in 2014. This body, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Environment with representation from 12 ministries, has the mandate to draft policies related to climate change, promote institutional coordination across ministries, and contribute to UNFCCC processes.

Preparing for adaptation planning

Climate change impacts and vulnerabilities in Albania are articulated in the First (2002), Second (2009) and Third National Communications (2016) to the UNFCCC. In addition, sector specific and regional studies and projects provide important information on climate modelling, impact analysis, vulnerabilities and potential adaptation measures. However, these studies and associated data collection processes remain fragmented, limited and uncoordinated at the national level.

The country's Fourth National Communication to the UNFCCC is currently in early stages of development and is expected to be finalised in 2020. UN Environment is implementing the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Readiness Support Facility, assisting Albania to develop a coordinated climate change GCF investment programme. The country is coordinating these efforts with the ongoing NAP process.

Implementation of adaptation actions

Albania is addressing its vulnerabilities to climate change through a variety of ongoing adaptation actions. These include:

- **Building Resilience to Disasters in the Western Balkans and Turkey (2012–2014, UNISDR/WMO/IPA):** Worked to reduce vulnerability to disasters and increase climate resilience regionally.
- **South Eastern Europe and Caucasus Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (SEEC CRIF) (2013, World Bank/GEF):** Helped enable reinsurer Europa Re develop new weather insurance products and increase awareness of climate risks.
- **Identification and Implementation of Adaptation Response Measures in the Drini-Mati River Deltas (2008–2013, UNDP/GEF):** Established mechanism to moderate and cope with consequences of climate change in the country's largest catchment.



The process to formulate and implement NAPs in Albania

Support programmes

The NAP process in Albania is being supported by GIZ under the overarching regional project 'Climate Change Adaptation in the Western Balkans', undertaken on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In addition, the NAP Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP) has assisted the Government undertake a rapid needs assessment and a stocktaking. In addition, UNDP is assisting Albania in accessing financing from the GCF. UN Environment also provides support for the capacity

development of the National Designated Authority of the GCF, and with identifying a country work programme for long-term adaptation. Albania is also part of a regional project called the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN) under the EU's IPA which offers a platform for regional information and experience exchange, coordination in adaptation planning, and capacity development to enhance environmental protection and climate action policies and practices.¹³

February 2015

The Prime Minister officially initiated the NAP process. The 'Stocktaking for National Adaptation Planning (SNAP)¹², developed by GIZ was applied to identify gaps and needs and became the basis for the NAP Framework Document that has informed the NAP process.

June 2015

A participatory workshop on tasks, timelines, and responsibilities for the NAP process was conducted.

September 2015

NAP process and goals were clarified at the IMWGCC meeting. A draft table of contents for the NAP document was agreed upon.

April 2017

A rapid capacity assessment was undertaken as part of the stocktaking to inform the Readiness proposal outlining the funds needed to support the NAP process.

May 2018

A NAP Readiness proposal was submitted to GCF for review.

Challenges

Albania has made strides to incorporate adaptation priorities into a number of NSDI sector plans but there is no comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to addressing climate vulnerabilities throughout the country. Technical capacity gaps exist at national and local levels leading to challenges in adaptation planning and budgeting. In addition, climate vulnerability data is not collected in a coordinated manner, nor is it easily available to all relevant stakeholders. Monitoring and evaluation protocols currently do not track climate change adaptation investments and, as a result, overall progress is difficult to understand. And although some parts of the NSDI account for climate risk in planning, in most sectors they are not acknowledged in policy and planning.

Successes and lessons learned

Through support from the NAP-GSP and its partners, Albania has established a strong basis of preparatory inventories and studies to inform adaptation planning and has engaged a wide number of stakeholders throughout the process. It is active in regional adaptation efforts, collaborating across the Western Balkans to address climate change and is setting an example in mainstreaming efforts by integrating the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators into its National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI).

The process to formulate and implement NAPs

The Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process in 2010, to enhance country-led planning and preparedness for climate change adaptation (CCA) in the medium and long-term. The objectives of the NAPs are to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and to facilitate the integration of adaptation into all levels of development planning. The NAP process is multi-sectoral, involving Ministries of Environment as well as Planning and Finance, in addition to other key ministries. By bringing greater institutional integration and coordination to adaptation planning, NAPs can enhance ongoing national development planning processes, safeguard development gains, and build resilience.



Opportunities and next steps

Recent local government restructuring – through which local government jurisdictions were consolidated and the number of administrative units was decreased from 373 to 61 – presents an opportunity for the integration of adaptation into new and revised subnational planning strategies. Under the NAP, vulnerable municipalities will receive specific assistance in developing local climate adaptation plans. In addition, the NAP will identify a financing strategy for adaptation, through private sector engagement, inter alia, specifically considering the significance of the tourism and hydropower sectors.

Through the NAP process, a formal strategy will be developed that identifies country-wide adaptation priorities and corresponding funding opportunities that are linked with national planning. By moving away from prior ad-hoc, project-based adaptation approaches towards a more coherent, multi-sector, and strategic approach, Albania aims to realise a long-term paradigm shift towards climate resilience.

The NAP process will inform the ongoing development of the Fourth National Communication to UNFCCC and support improved congruency with the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda. As such, the NAP is a mechanism through which adaptation can be included in the next NDC iteration, currently planned through EU assistance to start in late 2018 or beginning 2019.

In addition, the NAP is influenced by Albania's status as an EU pre-accession country. Albania was granted EU candidate status in 2014, and the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change will be considered as an important reference framework for the NAP process.

Key documents

- Third National Communication to UNFCCC, 2016
- Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), 2016
- National Strategy for Development and Integration 2014-2020
- The Prime Minister's Order No. 155 from 2014 and the Decision of the Council of Ministers (No. 762) from 2015 – Established the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Climate Change and began the NAP process

Notes

- ² Statistical Service of the Republic of Albania (www.instat.gov.al)
- ³ Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Consumer Protection. 2011. Albanian Agriculture 2011. Republic of Albania, Tirana
- ⁴ The World Bank. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/albania/overview>
- ⁵ The World Bank. Climate Change and Agriculture, Albania Country Note. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ECAEXT/Resources/258598-1277305872360/7190152-1277305896435/pdf1.pdf>
- ⁶ Figures as of 2017. CIA World Factbook. Albania. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/al.html>
- ⁷ Ebinger, Jane. 2010. Albania's Energy Sector : Vulnerable to Climate Change. Europe and Central Asia Knowledge Brief, Volume No. 29. World Bank, Washington, DC. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/10161>
- ⁸ Third National Communication of the Republic of Albania under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, June 2016.
- ⁹ Third National Communication of the Republic of Albania under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, June 2016.
- ¹⁰ https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/icpd/UNFPA-UNECE_meeting_2016/Session_4.1_Albania_ENG.pdf
- ¹¹ <http://napglobalnetwork.org/2017/08/albania-integrating-climate-change-adaptation-medium-term-budget/>
- ¹² GIZ: Guidance on applying the Stocktaking for National Adaptation Planning (SNAP) tool. Eschborn 2014.
- ¹³ <http://www.ecranetwork.org/Climate/Adaptation>

2.8°C

average temperature increase by 2080

18%

decrease in annual precipitation expected by 2100

32 percent

of the coastal areas will experience flooding by 2050

Over 90%

of electricity produced by climate vulnerable hydropower dams

5

priority sectors integrating adaptation considerations

About the NAP-GSP

The joint UNDP-UN Environment National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP) was launched in June 2013, financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The NAP-GSP, together with partners, are assisting developing countries to identify technical, institutional and financial needs to integrate climate change adaptation into medium and long-term national planning and financing. The NAP-GSP provides technical expertise and guidance on country NAP processes, and opportunities for knowledge exchange on NAPs.



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