



National Adaptation Plans in focus: Lessons from Tajikistan



The Republic of Tajikistan, is a landlocked country in Central Asia, and with a total surface area of 143,100 square kilometres, it is the smallest country in the region. It is surrounded by Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to its north and west, Afghanistan to its south, and China to its east. It is located in the mountainous part of Central Asia, and mountains account for around 93 percent of its terrain, with almost half of it situated 3,000 meters above sea level. Tajikistan's topography is dominated by deserts and semi-deserts in the west and the major mountain belts of the Tibetan plateau, Hindu Kush, and Tian Shan in the east of the country. It is also known as the glacial centre of the region, with glaciers occupying around 6 percent of the country. This topographic diversity is responsible for the significant climate and environmental variability in the country, with extreme climatic conditions ranging from -63°C to 47°C in its most mountainous parts.¹

With more than two-thirds of Tajikistan's 8.92 million residents² living below the poverty line of US\$2.15 a day, the country is currently classified as a low-income economy. As a result of the civil war between 1992 and 1997, Tajikistan's economy experienced significant losses but is now slowly recovering.³ Within two decades, its gross national income (GNI) per capita increased from one of the lowest globally of US\$170 in 1997 to US\$990 in 2017. Since 1998, around 73 percent of its population live in rural areas with more than half (51.62 percent) employed in the agricultural sector, constituting the largest source of income for the poorest rural households. Agriculture accounts for 20.38 percent of the overall GDP,⁴ with cotton being the main export crop contributing 90 percent of agricultural exports.⁵

Climate change risks

According to recent estimates, Tajikistan is identified as the country most vulnerable to climate risks among all European and Central Asian countries. The country's mountainous topography is prone to risks such as glacial melting, temperature fluctuations, and changing precipitation patterns which alter the ecosystems on which the population and the economy rely. In the long term, the decrease in glacier volume will likely increase the risk of droughts and the resulting degradation of aquatic ecosystems.⁶ Access to and supply of irrigation and potable water will become more variable with adverse impacts on the rural population and the agricultural sector. The effects on

Tajikistan's highlands and rain-fed farmland areas are likely to include diminishing crop and rangeland yields, which are expected to fall by up to 30 percent by 2100. Hydropower, dependent on glacial meltwater and snowmelt, accounts for around 98 percent of the total electricity supply. However, warming climatic conditions are expected to significantly alter the country's hydrodynamic parameters. About 85 percent of the country is exposed to risks of mudslides, with an estimated 50,000 landslides occurring in the 1990s. In addition, within the past 60 years, the country has been hit by eight major droughts, with the expected frequency forecasted to increase.



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Groundwork for supporting the NAPs



Policy, planning and budgeting

In 2008, the Government appointed a special committee responsible for environmental protection, which has positively contributed to raising the profile of environmental issues in its political agenda. Important legislation and recent policy developments have built the foundation for Tajikistan's efforts to integrate low-carbon and climate-resilient options into its sustainable development agenda. Notably, the *National Development Strategy until 2030* sets the country's strategic priorities for the mid-term and stipulates the goal to intensify climate change-related research and increase adaptation activities as a means to strengthen Tajikistan's development path. However, while multiple key strategies, policies, concepts, and related action plans outline strategic directions for national action on mitigation, climate change adaptation has received less focus. The most relevant policy addressing climate change is the country's *National Action Plan for Climate Change Mitigation* that came into effect in 2003. The plan includes an extensive section outlining adaptation, prevention, and minimisation options for the country. It is amongst the first climate change documents in Central Asia that strategically identifies issues, outlines priorities, and indicates measures as a means to successfully tackle climate change.

The Government is currently in the process of finalising its *National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS)* that focuses on the following six areas: health, education, gender, migration, environment, and vulnerable groups. It intends to provide a guiding framework on the coordination and implementation of adaptation initiatives that is coherent with its overarching national development strategies and programmes. The country's 2015 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) is of additional importance, particularly outlining adaptation measures for agriculture, irrigation and water systems, power supply, transport, as well as housing and industrial development. It further elaborates on the need to increase the country's resilience to hydro-meteorological hazards and climate change, plan disaster risk reduction measures, improve biodiversity protection and monitoring, and preserve national glaciers. The NDC, however, is not yet officially recognised by national policies and laws.

Preparing for adaptation planning

As part of the development of Tajikistan's First (2002), Second (2008), and Third (2014) National Communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), extensive climate-related information has been generated through a variety of activities. These include the development of a national inventory of greenhouse gas emissions and removals by sinks, assessment of vulnerabilities in ecosystems and the economy, presentation of preliminary recommendations for adaptation, and the analysis of potential mitigation measures for various sectors of the economy. The documents further outline sector-specific climate change impacts expected until 2100 and prioritise existing policies and actions in a number of sectors. However, these are mostly related to mitigation and do not consider adaptation to climate change.

Despite numerous activities and various international partners providing technical support related to climate change adaptation, Tajikistan lacks a systemic inventory of adaptation projects, studies, or actions, and does not follow a structured approach of capturing lessons-learned from successful adaptation interventions.

Implementation of adaptation actions

In collaboration with national entities and international development partners, a number of bilateral and multilateral adaptation projects are being implemented in sectors defined as climate-sensitive. These include:

- **GEF Small Grants Programme (2010-2019, UNDP/GEF):** grants to local communities for projects in biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, land degradation and sustainable forest management, international waters, and chemicals.

- **Strengthening of livelihoods through climate change adaptation in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (2014-2018, BMZ/GIZ):** adaptation measures in agriculture, while enhancing people's resilience in the face of severe natural events;
- **Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for the Aral Sea Basin (2016-2021, IBRD/World Bank/GCF):** climate-smart rural production and landscape management investments through a regional climate investment facility;
- **Strengthening Critical Infrastructure against Natural Hazards (2017-2023, World Bank):** increasing disaster risk management capacities and enhancing the resilience of critical infrastructure;
- **Scaling Up Hydropower Sector Climate Resilience (2018-2023, EBRD/GCF/Ministry of Finance):** protecting major hydropower facilities against future climate conditions;
- **Building climate resilience of vulnerable and food insecure communities through capacity strengthening and livelihood diversification in mountainous regions of Tajikistan (2019-2023, WFP/GCF):** providing climate information services, sustainable water management and resilient agriculture and forestry;

Institutional arrangements

The institutional framework for addressing climate change in Tajikistan includes a number of ministries and agencies, each focusing on different aspects. The Committee for Environmental Protection is responsible for adhering to environmental commitments under the UNFCCC and is the lead executive body for the implementation of state policies on hydrometeorology, efficient use of natural resources, and control and protection of the environment. It also develops proposals for legal and regulatory frameworks in environmental protection.

The State Administration for Hydrometeorology under the Committee for Environmental Protection is responsible for developing, managing, and coordinating environmental and climate change-related policies. It is the national UNFCCC focal point and, in coordination with key ministries and agencies, oversees the preparation of National Communications to the UNFCCC. It further houses the Climate Change Centre, which manages climate-related research and reporting related to adaptation and mitigation.



The process to formulate and implement NAPs in Tajikistan

Support programmes

The advancement of the NAP process is backed by intensive support from both national and international stakeholders, notably the Committee for Environmental Protection as the NAP focal point, the Ministries of Energy and Water, Emergency Situations, Finance, and Economy, the GEF-funded joint UNDP-UN Environment NAP-GSP, and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

March 2017

The Government of Tajikistan requested support for the development of its NAP process, and is one of the first countries requesting (GCF) readiness financing for this purpose

July 2017

A Stocktaking Report and a preliminary roadmap for advancing the NAP Process were developed and shared with different stakeholders for review and comment

September 2018

Tajikistan hosted the GCF Structured Dialogue with Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Dushanbe, where 14 countries exchanged knowledge and experiences in accessing GCF

Challenges

Tajikistan still lacks an efficient climate-related policy and a legal framework that could incentivise authorities to pursue climate adaptation-related initiatives.⁷ In addition, as part of the development of the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, a capacity assessment was conducted, which identified the following challenges: i) limited awareness on adaptation benefits among the public and experts; ii) insufficient institutional flexibility and technical capacity of sector experts to implement innovative adaptation projects and programmes; iii) limited sectoral access and institutional capacity to collect, process and disseminate hydrological and meteorological data and information; iv) limited knowledge and skills of government employees who work on climate change issues; and v) limited national funding to implement and monitor adaptation projects and programmes.

June 2017

With support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded joint UNDP-UN Environment National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP), a capacity assessment mission was undertaken to identify Tajikistan's NAP-related priorities, and gaps and needs

August 2018

The National Designated Authority (NDA) submitted the NAP proposal to the GCF for review

Successes

While Tajikistan was long lacking a standalone policy targeting the adaptation side of climate change, the government is in the process of closing this gap and is currently about to finalise its National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. The document proposes a strategic shift away from project- and sector-based interventions to more coherent and better-coordinated approaches to adaptation. This will provide opportunities to be more impactful combined with better-aligned development synergies, reduce transaction costs, and increase cost-effectiveness during implementation.



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

The application of the national strategy on adaptation along with the design and development of the NAP process will present new opportunities for interventions in adaptation. Tajikistan's NAP process will be driven by the upcoming National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy that outlines some of the main challenges facing the increased uptake of adaptation. Adaptation to climate change will be considered at the national level with sector-specific planning as well as at the sub-national, i.e., territorial and local levels.

The review of current adaptation actions in Tajikistan indicates that there is a vital need to increase the capacity of central and local governmental and other relevant institutions to generate, analyse, assess, and disseminate climate-related information. This will benefit both decision-making and risk management processes. However, successful application of increased capacities will largely depend on the awareness of critical decision-makers about the importance of adaptation for sustainable development.

Key documents

- [First National Communication to the UNFCCC](#) (October 2002)
- [National Action Plan for Climate Change Mitigation](#) (June 2003)
- [Second National Communication to the UNFCCC](#) (December 2008)

- [Third National Communication to the UNFCCC](#) (December 2014)
- [National Development Strategy until 2030](#) (February 2016)
- [First Nationally Determined Contributions](#) (March 2017)

Notes

- ¹ Government of Tajikistan (2014). Third National Communication to the UNFCCC. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/tjnc3_eng.pdf (Accessed July 2018)
- ² World Bank (n.d.). The World Bank Data. URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=TJ> (Accessed July 2018)
- ³ United Nations Development Programme (n.d.). Tajikistan. <http://adaptation-undp.org/explore/central-asia/tajikistan> (Accessed July 2018)
- ⁴ World Bank (n.d.). The World Bank Data. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=TJ> (Accessed July 2018)
- ⁵ Government of Tajikistan (2007). New Opportunities for the International Cotton Trade. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTTAJIKISTAN/Resources/MB_300407_E.pdf (Accessed September 2018)
- ^{6,7} United Nations Development Programme (2017). Stocktaking Report and Preliminary Roadmap / Concept for Advancing the NAP Process in Tajikistan

85%

of the country is exposed to the risk of mudslides

50,000

landslides in the 1990s

US\$100m

economic costs due to climate-related hazards yearly

8

significant droughts in the past 60 years

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.

NAP-GSP
NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLAN GLOBAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Email:

Rohini.Kohli@undp.org
Mozaharul.Alam@unep.org

For media enquiries / dissemination:

Esther.Lake@un.org

Website:

<http://globalsupportprogramme.org/nap-gsp>