



National Adaptation Plan process in focus: Lessons from Benin



The Republic of Benin in the Gulf of Guinea, West Africa, covers an area of 114,763 km². It has a population of 10.9 million people, with an average annual population growth of 3.5 percent.⁽¹⁾ Benin's tertiary sector (mostly services and import-export activities) accounts for approximately 50 percent of GDP. Benin also relies heavily on agricultural production, which accounts for 25 percent of GDP, and between 45 percent and 55 percent of the country's employment. In contrast, the industry sector is only just emerging. Benin has undertaken many important economic and structural reforms, including the move to a decentralised system in 1999.⁽²⁾ However, the level of poverty remains high, and Benin ranks 167 out of 187 countries in terms of its Human Development Index (2016).⁽³⁾ Two types of climate can be found: a subequatorial climate in the south, and a tropical continental climate in the north. The country is vulnerable to adverse weather conditions and trade volatility – particularly regarding cotton and oil prices. Forty-four per cent of the population currently live in urban areas,⁽⁴⁾ and by 2025 this number will rise to 60 percent. The majority of urban dwellers will be located in coastal areas, which constitute less than 10 percent of the country's territory.⁽⁵⁾

Climate change risks

Drought, floods and heavy rains are considered to be the three major climate risks. Winds and excessive heat are also hazards in some regions. Sea level rise poses a threat for only a small portion of the territory, but it can have severe socio-economic impacts. Future climate scenarios indicate, amongst other aspects, a continuous rise in sea level up to about 0.81m by 2100, which will lead to coastal flooding and the intrusion of saline waters. Rainfall is predicted to decrease in the north of the country, leading to a decline in the yields of corn in agroecological areas and in the productivity of fish stocks.⁽⁶⁾ The most vulnerable sectors are agriculture (including livestock and fishing), forestry, water resources, the coastal zones, human health, and energy. Smallholder farmers, small stockbreeders, fishermen, coastal zone dwellers (including in urban areas), are particularly at risk.⁽⁷⁾

Groundwork for supporting the process to formulate and implement NAPs

Policy, planning and budgeting:

The Action Plan of the Government of Benin (PAG) for 2016-2021, adopted in October 2016, is the key operational planning instrument at the national level. It takes into consideration the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, and places sustainable development at the heart of its action to improve living conditions. Six priority adaptation options were identified in the NAPA related to climate information, agriculture, energy, water resources, health and coastal protection. The NDC reviewed and updated these priority adaptation projects in the agriculture, water resources, forestry, and coastal zones sectors

for the 2020, 2025 and 2030 time horizons.

Several other planning documents exist to frame government climate change actions, including:

- National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) submitted to the UNFCCC in 2008;
- Low-Emission Climate-Resilient Development Strategy (LECRDS) approved in 2016;
- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) submitted to the UNFCCC in 2017.

Adaptation objectives (NDC, 2017)

Cross-sectoral adaptation objectives to be achieved by 2020/2030, as identified in the NDC (2017)

Become proficient in the use of vulnerability assessment and decision support tools for the integration of climate change adaptation into national and regional planning and management instruments

Strengthen the capacity to adapt to climate change in all socio-economic sectors (job creation, income generation, etc.)

Mobilise required financial resources to finance climate change adaptation

Steps have been taken to integrate climate change adaptation into sectoral planning, in particular for agriculture, water resources, and urban settlements. In the energy sector, a NAPA-related project entitled 'Strengthening the resilience of the energy sector in Benin to the impacts of climate change' was launched in 2016, to support the integration of climate change into relevant energy policies and strategies.

Territorial integration has also been promoted through the first NAPA projects. These included the introduction of LOCAL, a mechanism established by the UN Capital Development Fund to support the integration of climate change into local governments' planning and budgeting processes. In addition, there is a project dedicated to adaptation in cities, and another focusing on greening the city of Porto Novo. The Guide for the preparation of the Local Development Plan, validated in 2016, integrates climate change adaptation.

In 2011, the National Environment Fund (FNE), which is sustained by ecotaxes and public investment funds, was accredited by the Adaptation Fund (direct access) and is being re-accredited. In 2013, the mandate of this fund was extended and it became the National Environment and Climate Fund (FNEC). The FNEC accreditation process to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is in progress.

Environment Units have been placed within the monitoring and evaluation unit of the Planning and Prospective Directorate of each ministry but are not fully operational yet. As part of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (disaster risk reduction - DRR), a National Platform for DRR and Adaptation to Climate Change was established in 2011, followed a year later by the establishment of a National Civil Protection Agency.

Preparing for adaptation planning

Preliminary climate change scenarios were carried out as part of the First and Second National Communications (SNC) to the UNFCCC (2002, 2011). Vulnerability assessments in the regions at most risk were conducted during the formulation of the NAPA. The priority sectors identified are agriculture, water resources, biological diversity, and human settlements. In 2008, after the completion of the NAPA, a National Capacity Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management was conducted. It revealed the needs for priority sectors and actors.

It also found that capacity building actions are limited by administrative, technical, financial and socio-cultural constraints, including lack of cross-sectoral coordination, lack of observation networks and inaccessibility of existing data, low capacity in analysing climatic, biophysics and socio-economic models.

Implementation of adaptation actions

Several adaptation projects have been implemented in Benin in the past decade, including:

- Four NAPA projects funded by the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) of the GEF: The integration of adaptation to protect agricultural production and food security (2010), Strengthening of climate information and early warning systems (2012), Flood control and climate resilience infrastructures in the Ouémé Valley (2013), and Strengthening the resilience of the energy sector (2013).
- As part of the African Climate Change Adaptation Programme (2006-2011) supported jointly by the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Benin implemented the following, amongst other projects:
 - Capacity building of Beninese rural stakeholders for adapting to climate change, (dissemination of climate information in 35 municipalities and establishment of 60 field schools);
 - Protection of the Urban Community of the metropolitan area of Cotonou against climate change to strengthen local capacities to manage and reduce risk of flooding.
- Strengthening of economic knowledge and adaptive capacity (2011-2014) supported by IDRC (rural experimentation and capacity building of local stakeholders on integration of climate change and disaster risk management).
- Readiness and Preparatory Support (2016-2017) through the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme of the GCF to strengthen the capacity of the National Designated Authority.

Additional projects are also in the process of being formulated or implemented, such as the project on Strengthening the resilience of the rural livelihoods and the local government system to climate risks and variability in Benin funded by the LDCF. A national directory of projects on climate change is available online: <http://bit.ly/2yBG2oX>



The process to formulate and implement NAPs in Benin

Institutional arrangements

A National Committee on Adaptation for the NAP is being established, pending the approval of a Presidential Decree. Meanwhile, the leading institution for the NAP process is the Commission for Climate Change (CNCC), established by decree in 2003. This multi-disciplinary body comprises representatives of ministries, the private sector and the civil society.

The main operational arm for the implementation of climate action is the newly formed Directorate-General of the Environment and Climate under the Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development.

In addition, a Committee for the economic modelling of impacts and integration of climate change in the general State budget (CMEICB) was established in 2014 by Presidential Decree to develop tools and methods. It is entrusted with developing a national economic model for integrating the assessment of climate impact by sector.

Successes

Benin has a long history of demonstrating strong political will to address climate change adaptation.

The opportunities offered by the NAP process to comprehensively reduce vulnerability and integrate adaptation into development planning at all levels are increasingly being internalised through a series of consultations with representatives of line Ministries and government agencies, NGOs, universities, research centres, private sector, and media.

NAP process timeline

March-June 2013 –

Building on the NAPA and other activities, the Ministry of Environment, Housing and the Urbanisation (now Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development) together with the CNCC, initiated consultations with various national-level stakeholders to scale up efforts to reduce vulnerability and integrate adaptation into development planning.

2014 –

Benin started to prepare to access the GCF through a Green Climate Fund Readiness Programme managed by UN Environment/UNDP/WRI with financial support from the Government of Germany, BMUB.

March 2017 –

Benin became one of the two beneficiaries of a three-year programme managed by GIZ for Francophone African LDCs: Science-based support of (a) national adaptation plan(s). The programme will support the development of in-depth vulnerability assessments by national institutions and the integration of climate change adaptation at all levels in particular at the sub-national and local levels. Twenty-six of the 77 local authorities and three sectors (agriculture, health and water resources) are targeted.

Challenges

Some of the challenges that Benin faces include a lack of effective and systemic coordination that could help generate a sustained sharing of information and lead to the development of an integrated climate change information system. There is also a need to build technical expertise (e.g. climate risk management in sectors can be improved), address the lack or inaccessibility of data, and improve access to appropriate technologies. The infrastructure sector will also need to be given full consideration given its vulnerability to climate change and the volume of investment planned by the government by 2021. In addition, the gap in financial resources needs to be filled. Resource allocations are made in the national budget for the agriculture, urban, water, energy and health sectors. Between 2014 and 2015, the budget of the Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development, in charge of climate change management, increased from 12.3 billion to 19.15 billion CFA (Financial Community of Africa) (approx. US\$ 22m to 35m). However, the low mobilisation of complementary resources for projects funded by donors remains a challenge.

NAP support

The NAP process to date has been supported by a range of partners, including UNDP and UN Environment – particularly through the joint UNDP / UN Environment National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP), GIZ, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the preparatory programme to the GCF (UNDP, UN Environment, World Resources Institute - WRI, and GIZ in collaboration with the GCF).



August 2013 –

Following the regional training workshop organised by the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) for Francophone LDCs, which included training on NAPs, participants from Benin introduced the NAP process and highlighted the opportunities this can offer to the CNCC. The NAP process was then launched during a multi-stakeholder workshop, and an initial road map was developed after a series of consultations.

October 2013 –

A draft Presidential Decree was validated through a technical workshop. It contains a mandate and institutional arrangements for the NAP process. It also establishes a national commission on adaptation, a steering committee and a management team. It was prepared by an ad hoc technical group composed of lawyers and technical officers from key ministries.

2015 –

The draft Presidential Decree was submitted to the Government.

What is 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 NAP are to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and to integrate 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.



'In Benin there are many important institutions working hard to fight climate change. We are harnessing our collective power to strengthen our response.'

José Tonato, Minister of Living Environment and Sustainable Development, Republic of Benin

Opportunities

Arrangements for the NAP process can build on an advanced decentralised system and budget allocation, including to subnational governments. Some concrete entry points to integrate climate change adaptation include:

- In-depth vulnerability analysis: This can be extended for the rest of the country (all sectors and communes) to assist in planning for adaptation at the national level.
- Risk-informed local planning: The revised Methodological Guide for integrating climate change in planning and budgeting documents at the national and local levels (2017) can offer an excellent opportunity to systematise the integration process into local planning and budgeting.
- Multi-year risk informed financial planning: The multi-annual expenditure programming document could play a key role as political anchorage, as it outlines the methodology for the development of sectoral policies and programmes.
- Financing: The existence of a National Environment and Climate Fund can assist in ensuring coordination and coherence of domestic and external investments on adaptation.

Some of the immediate next steps towards the formulation of the NAP include: adopting the Presidential decree, which mandates the NAP process; reinforcing capacity building in a tailored approach to harness various expertise (for e.g. sectoral and territorial long-term vulnerability assessments, economic and climate modelling, monitoring and evaluation, integration of adaptation in budget processes, etc.); and initiating the process to set-up an integrated information management system on climate risks and services, building on existing efforts.

Notes

- (1) [Republic of Benin \(2017\). First Nationally Determined Contribution \(French\).](#)
- (2) [The World Bank. The World Bank in Benin.](#) (Accessed April 2017)
- (3) [United Nations Development Programme \(2016\). Human Development Report 2016.](#)
- (4) [The World Bank. The World Bank in Benin.](#) (Accessed April 2017)
- (5) [Republic of Benin \(2011\). Second National Communication on Climate Change to the UNFCCC.](#)
- (6) [Republic of Benin \(2011\).](#)
- (7) [United Nations Development Programme \(2017\). Draft Stocktaking Report for the NAP Process in Benin; Republic of Benin \(2008\). Programme D'action National D'adaptation Aux Changements Climatiques Du Benin](#)

Key documents

- [The Action Plan of the Government of Benin \(PAG\) for 2016-2021](#)
- [Low-Emission Climate-Resilient Development Strategy \(LECRDS\), 2016](#)
- [Second National Communication \(SNC\), 2011](#)
- [Nationally Determined Contribution \(NDC\), 2017](#)

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NAPA projects

0.81m

projected sea level rise by 2100

14

adaptation goals to be achieved by 2020 as per the NDC

US\$ 5.6bn

cost of adaptation as estimated in NDC

15

Government depts./agencies engaged in NAP process

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 provides opportunities for knowledge exchange on NAPs.

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NAP-GSP
NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLAN GLOBAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME