

Climate change adaptation in Africa

UNDP synthesis of experiences and recommendations

United Nations Development Programme



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Overview

Africa is at a tipping point. While efforts to achieve the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Paris Agreement could drive positive changes following nearly a decade of economic growth across Africa, climate change threatens to derail these gains. Given that temperatures in Africa are rising, and are set to rise faster than the global average during the 21st Century, it is time to mainstream, scale-up and accelerate support for climate change adaptation across the continent. Recent studies indicate it is likely that the true costs of adaptation will be substantially higher than originally projected and will require creative financial mechanisms and substantial engagement with the private sector to meet. While initial climate change adaptation initiatives show good potential for economic viability, livelihood enhancement and vulnerability reduction, long-term sustainability will depend on the prevailing levels of poverty, the wider context of policies and regulations, access to markets and financial services, as well as government capacity to provide continuous technical support to communities. This indicates that baseline development is still required to reach targets for poverty reduction and climate action in Africa. Building on the lessons learned from over a decade pioneering adaptation in Africa, a new generation of climate change adaptation initiatives are coming on board. To be successful, these projects will need to enhance adaptive capacity, improve decision making, facilitate access to markets, support policy mainstreaming and strengthen evidence-based decision making.

At a glance

Countries supported*

45 countries, 216 active projects

Total Current Funding

US\$828 million

Primary Funders



*UNDP-GEF Annual Performance Report



Key Report Findings

Tipping points may be reached if temperatures rise above 2 degrees and communities do not develop the adaptive capacities required for long-term resilience. This could trigger an increase in eco-migrants, a rise in food insecurity, more catastrophic disease outbreaks, and increased instability in the region.

Climate change is one of the largest risk multipliers for the people, environment and stability of the continent.

First generation adaptation projects in Africa were small-scale and mostly focused on investing and diversifying assets largely through agricultural technologies and practices with a mixed level of support for adaptive decision-making.

Recent programming efforts have focused on larger and more programmatic efforts that address multiple sectoral entry points and make better use of partnerships.

While initial climate change adaptation initiatives show good potential for economic viability, livelihood enhancement and vulnerability reduction in Africa, long-term sustainability will depend on the prevailing levels of poverty, the wider context of policies and regulations, access to markets and financial services, as well as government capacity to provide continuous technical support to communities.

Baseline development is key to reduce the drivers of climate change, build adaptive capacity and support the transformational change required to create true climate resilience in Africa.

The time for adaptation is now. Africa has achieved impressive economic, political and social growth in recent decades. Climate change, droughts, floods, changing rainfall patterns and conflict have the potential to unravel efforts to reduce hunger and achieve the goals outlined in the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Climate change adaptation in Africa

UNDP synthesis of experiences and recommendations

United Nations Development Programme



UN
DP

Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Success Stories

A number of successful initiatives on climate change adaptation were supported by UNDP in sub-Saharan Africa from 2000 to 2015. Notable successes to address the impacts of climate change were made at different levels (farmer, community and national levels). These and other signposts detailed in the report lay the groundwork needed to tap Africa's vast resources and human talents to transform the continent and ensure a brighter future for generations to come.

Food security improved in places like Benin, Mali, Niger and Sudan, where UNDP-supported projects were implemented.

Farmers across the continent acquired climate resilient seeds and farming techniques to improve productivity and protect against changing climate conditions.

National governments improved climate information and early warning systems to save lives from fast-acting storms and improve evidence-based decision making.

Communities built new protections from natural disasters such as wildfires and sea-level rise.

Projects empowered women to be more effective agents of climate actions.

Salaries increased, productivity jumped and new jobs were created on and off the farm.

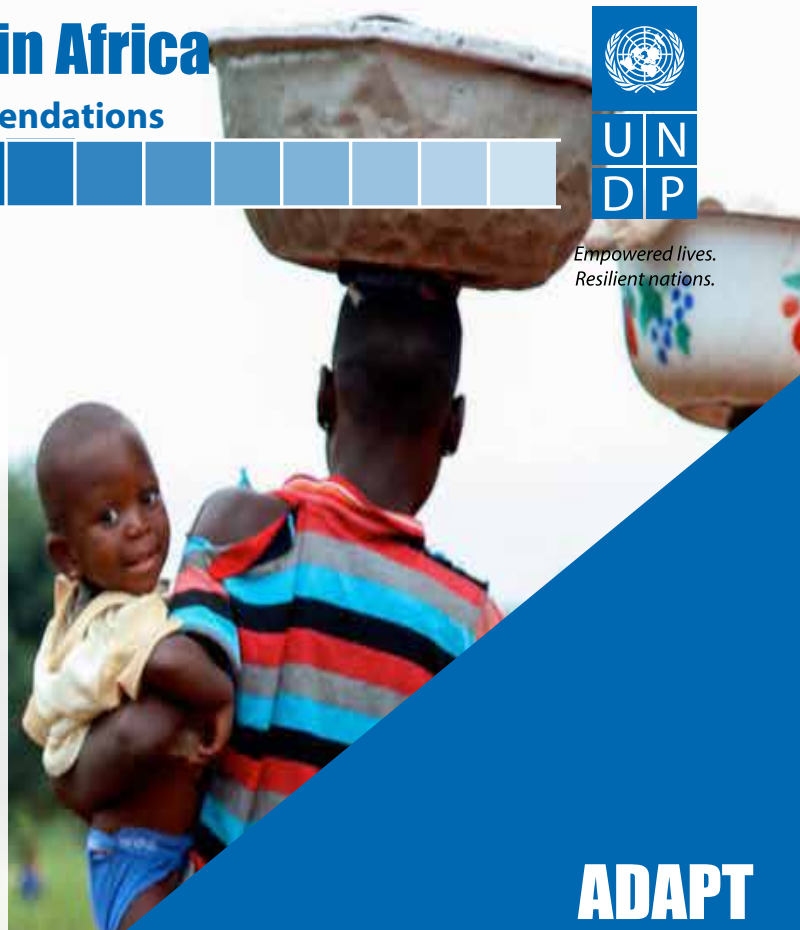
Local and national governments created unique measures to set the enabling environments needed to achieve Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement with specialized support to build medium- and long-term plans for climate change through joint programmes with FAO and UN Environment.

Mainstreaming and Acceleration

Now is the time to take these measures to scale. New projects funded by the Green Climate Fund in Africa and a new-generation of GEF and Adaptation Fund-financed initiatives hold great promise in mainstreaming and accelerating earlier initiatives. GCF-financed climate change adaptation projects supported through the UNDP are now underway in the sub-Saharan African region in Malawi, Uganda and Zambia. GCF-financed National Adaptation Plans projects were recently approved for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Niger.

Based on the experiences outlined in this report, some important factors have emerged to guide and inform future project design and implementation across the continent. These main factors fall into a simple acronym, **ADAPT**, that provides a holistic framework for the nations of Africa to adapt to climate change.

Read the full publication at adaptation-undp.org/CCA-Africa



ADAPT

Adaptive capacity is essential for the sustainability, mainstreaming and acceleration of climate change adaptation initiatives. Our climate system is inherently variable and because it is impossible to predict the weather with certainty, it requires analytical skills and technical information for iterative climate change planning and policy making.

Decision-making that is shared across governments, and with communities and other stakeholder groups on the 'what' and the 'how' of adaptation projects, is critical to the success and sustainability of such initiatives.

Access to markets to enable scale-up, encompassing market linkages, value chain development and business planning is critical to enable and sustain adaptation benefits. Similarly, a transformation within the private sector is required to fund adaptation initiatives and protect business and various economic sectors from the impacts of climate change.

Policy mainstreaming is necessary to embed climate change adaptation considerations into policy and institutional frameworks, and facilitate its acceleration. Pilot projects should be set up along with robust monitoring frameworks so that evidence of what works and why – the causal pathways between the investment and the result – is fed into policy processes. In this way countries can begin to build up a knowledge bank of the costs of adaptation, the transferability of experience and the factors that would enable successful adaptation.

Technical information to support evidence-based decision-making is important for policy making and planning. This includes economic information on the returns from investments in hard and soft adaptation options, and the performance of adaptation investments over time.