

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION



Over the past decade-and-a-half, the GEF has been a leader in supporting climate change adaptation in the developing world – by investing over US\$1.3 billion to help communities, notably through the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The GEF has been an “early mover” in climate change adaptation. This base of past experience is not only a rich source of insights and learning, it also places the GEF in a unique position to scale-up and mainstream adaptation in the future.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plays an essential role in understanding where to focus investments, what is working and what is not (and why), and learning from experience to maximize impact. Yet a number of methodological challenges remain, primarily with defining “success” in climate change adaptation (CCA) given the long-term nature of climate change and changing baseline conditions. This brief presents key STAP recommendations for strengthening CCA M&E, and for leveraging effective learning, planning, and implementation of adaptation strategies and investments in future.

Orienting M&E and Project Design to Support Learning

Adaptation is a process of iterative risk management with a central role for learning, given the many uncertainties with climate change, contested values and objectives, and unclear cause-effect relationships. Learning often requires different approaches that emphasize emergent outcomes; extensive stakeholder engagement from concept through design, implementation and evaluation; as well as risk-taking

and experimentation. Moving beyond a narrow accountability-based focus to a learning orientation will require significant rethinking and commitment from donors, recipients, and implementers.

Recommendation 1: Start as simply as possible, learn by doing, and plan for change

CCA M&E is likely to be most effective if it is designed and implemented iteratively, starting with modest ambition and testing, and then developing over time. Such an approach resonates with Theory of Change and systems-level design approaches.

Recommendation 2: Encourage projects that support experimentation and are designed in a way that supports monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL)

CCA M&E will require learning by doing; there are no ‘silver bullets.’ Expectations for CCA M&E should be realistic.

Recommendation 3: Allocate sufficient resources for M&E

A general ‘rule of thumb’ for budgeting for M&E is to plan sufficient resources into the project budget such that both basic or preferably, more ambitious stakeholder engagement and robust evidence-based learning can occur on a routine basis.

New Developments in Indicators and Methodological Approaches Hold Promise for Strengthening MEL and CCA Programming

Adaptation is increasingly seen as a process of mainstreaming, requiring long-term systemic and institutional changes. Given the local and heterogeneous nature of adaptation interventions and outcomes, indicator selection needs to strike an appropriate balance between the need for comparability and aggregation, and the need to preserve contextual richness and detail.

Recommendation 4: Be flexible with indicator selection, including qualitative and quantitative indicators and process and outcome indicators

Simple indicators, popular for development work, may not work as well in adaptation investments. Future climate

STAP

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL
ADVISORY PANEL

*An independent group of scientists that advises
the Global Environment Facility*





uncertainties compound other risks and information gaps that development projects face.

Recommendation 5: Be prepared to constructively address tensions and trade-offs

Several tensions and trade-offs within the M&E process are to be expected, and doing enough research to be aware of the tensions, being comfortable with the trade-offs that committing to particular strategies and methods entail, and being able to explain these to others, is critical.

Recommendation 6: Consider mixed method M&E approaches

This applies broadly to results frameworks indicator selection (e.g., testing both quantitative and qualitative indicators), and selecting suitable evaluation and learning approaches and methods.

Mainstream M&E Measures to Systems Integrated with Development

Countries are investing in measuring and tracking progress in a wide variety of development sectors that are also targets for interventions for climate change adaptation. A primary goal of mainstreaming is to ensure consideration of current and future climate risks in climate sensitive sectors, in light of context-specific development needs and objectives.

Recommendation 7: Explore complementarities and synergies between CCA M&E and development M&E

Monitoring & evaluation for climate change adaptation will need to connect with, and leverage national and sectoral monitoring and measuring systems to ensure that data and indicators relevant for CCA are reflected in these systems including tracking progress on the SDGs.

Recommendation 8: Design M&E for and with stakeholders

Engaging with stakeholders from all relevant sectors early on, and often, is essential, starting with the development of a results framework and continuing throughout all stages of M&E.

Create Environments that Enable Learning and Knowledge Management

An important requirement for learning is the ability to document practices, extract lessons, and share and exchange knowledge. The conversion of tacit to explicit knowledge and vice-versa is integral to learning and often requires engagement between different communities – including the practitioner and academic communities.

Recommendation 9: Create and support communities of practice (CoPs) and learning environments

Climate change adaptation M&E will benefit from formal and informal communities of practice, and individual peer-to-peer exchanges. The GEF could enhance existing CoPs and engage more deeply with the academic community to analyze the GEF experiences with CCA.



Recommendation 10: Invest in capacity-building for M&E, especially in local institutions

It is important to invest in capacity building around CCA in each context or sector to identify what M&E entails in each situation. Increased capacity building, resource investments (e.g., for data collection), and training for M&E practitioners is beneficial.

This policy brief is based upon STAP Document GEF/STAP/C.51/Inf.03 "Monitoring and Evaluation of Climate Change Adaptation", prepared for GEF/STAP by Williams, A, Covlin, J., Ebi, K., Patwardhan, A., Lebel, S. (in press). For more information about this study, or to access the full report, please contact: stap.secretariat@unep.org

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) comprises seven expert advisors supported by a Secretariat, who are together responsible for connecting the Global Environment Facility to the most up to date, authoritative and globally representative science. <http://www.stapgef.org>