

ADAPTATION POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE: DEVELOPING STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND MEASURES

Adaptation is a process by which individuals, communities and countries seek to cope with the consequences of climate change. The process of adaptation is not new; the idea of incorporating future climate risk into policy-making is. While our understanding of climate change and its potential impacts has become clearer, the availability of practical guidance on adaptation has not kept pace. The development of the Adaptation Policy Framework (APF) is intended to help provide the rapidly evolving process of adaptation policy-making with a much-needed roadmap. Ultimately, the purpose of the APF is to support adaptation processes to protect – and enhance – human well-being in the face of climate change.

The Adaptation Policy Framework is built around four major principles that provide a basis from which integrated actions to adapt to climate change can be developed:

- Adaptation to short-term climate variability and extreme events serves as a starting point for reducing vulnerability to longer-term climate change;
- Adaptation occurs at different levels in society, including the local level;
- Adaptation policy and measures should be assessed in a development context; and
- The adaptation strategy and the stakeholder process by which it is implemented are equally important.

The APF can be used by countries to both evaluate and complement existing planning processes to address climate change adaptation. As an assessment, planning and implementation framework, it lays out an approach to climate change adaptation that supports sustainable development, rather than the other way around. The APF is about practice rather than theory; it starts with the information that developing countries already possess concerning vulnerable systems such as agriculture, water resources, public health, and disaster management, and aims to exploit existing synergies and intersecting themes in order to enable better informed policy-making.

This volume will be invaluable for everyone working on climate change adaptation and policy-making.

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Adaptation Policy Frameworks for Climate Change: Developing Strategies, Policies and Measures

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Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	vii
<i>Executive Summary</i>	1
Section I User’s Guidebook	5
Section II Technical Papers	29
Preface	31
1. Scoping and Designing an Adaptation Project	33
2. Engaging Stakeholders in the Adaptation Process	47
3. Assessing Vulnerability for Climate Adaptation	67
4. Assessing Current Climate Risks	91
5. Assessing Future Climate Risks	119
6. Assessing Current and Changing Socio-Economic Conditions	145
7. Assessing and Enhancing Adaptive Capacity	165
8. Formulating an Adaptation Strategy	183
9. Continuing the Adaptation Process	205
Section III Case Studies	225
Preface	227
Case Studies	229
Annexes	245
A. Glossary of Terms	247
B. List of Reviewers	253

Foreword

A key issue, especially for non-Annex I Parties, is how to develop national strategies for adaptation to climate change that are easy to integrate into sustainable development plans. Most national vulnerability and adaptation studies to date have focused on the selection of climate change scenarios and impact studies – an approach that has not always resulted in policy-relevant options for adaptation responses.

Through Swiss, Canadian and Dutch funding, the National Communications Support Unit of the United Nations Development Programme has developed *Adaptation Policy Frameworks for Climate Change: Developing Strategies, Policies and Measures*, hereafter referred to as the Adaptation Policy Framework (APF), that consists of a User's Guidebook and nine Technical Papers. This Framework provides a flexible approach that can be modified to meet the specific needs of countries in any region of the world. The main objective of the Guidebook and the Technical Papers is to assist and provide guidance to developing countries in identifying, prioritising, and shaping potential adaptation options into a coherent strategy that is consistent with their sustainable development and other national priorities. The Framework may also support the preparation of the National Communications of both Annex I and non-Annex I Parties.

The APF builds on several methods, including the 1994 *IPCC Technical Guidelines for Assessing Climate Change Impacts and Adaptations*. A key innovation is that it will work from *current* climate variability and extremes, and assess recent climate experiences. In other words, it is firmly grounded in the present, and it links the near-term to the medium- and longer-terms. Other innovations include developing an adaptation baseline and situating adaptation in the current policy context. The Framework will focus on adaptations and best practices that are known to reduce vulnerability in the most effective way.

The APF will assist Parties in mainstreaming the development of national strategies for adaptation in the sustainable development policy context. Other features include the involvement of stakeholders and public participation at the community level, and the integration of adaptation measures with natural hazard reduction and disaster prevention programmes. All of these elements are being developed in the dual contexts of capacity building and the need to strengthen adaptive capacity.

The APF has been developed for implementation of Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other initiatives, including regional projects and national efforts to respond to the challenge of climate change.

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