



Australian Government

Submission on the operationalisation of the Santiago Network for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.

March 2022

Australia welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the Santiago Network for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change. Australia is a strong supporter of practical action related the Paris Agreement global goals, including adaptation, mitigation and means of implementation. We see great value in the Santiago Network as a vital part of implementing the Paris Agreement.

Australia has a long history of supporting partner countries in our region to address climate impacts, build resilience and reduce emissions, in line with Paris Agreement commitments. Australia has significantly increased the ambition of our climate finance commitments to help countries in our region transition to low emission, climate resilient economies, and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Given the Indo-Pacific is at an increased risk of slow onset and acute disaster from climate change, over 70 per cent of Australia's bilateral and regional climate finance has focused on adaptation and resilience programs. This includes helping countries in our region to avert, minimise and address loss and damage. Australia is a key contributor to Indo-Pacific science including providing critical meteorological data, early warning systems, sea floor mapping, and other data needed to avert, minimise and address loss and damage in the region. We work closely with our regional allies to respond quickly in the face of climate-related disasters in our region.

Further information on this is highlighted in Australia's first Adaptation Communication, which showcases our adaptation action at home and abroad and our Climate Change Action Strategy which articulates our approach to effective and socially inclusive climate action internationally. Australia continues to be constructively engaged in the UNFCCC loss and damage negotiations and we have been an active member of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage since the beginning.

Turning now to the Operationalisation of the Santiago Network.

Operational modalities

According to [Decision 2/CMA.2, para 43](#), the Santiago Network is established to:

catalyze the technical assistance of relevant organizations, bodies, networks and experts, for the implementation of approaches [to address loss and damage] at the local, national, and regional level in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

Using this decision text as a basis, like other commentators Australia agrees that the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) offers a useful precedent to the establishment of the operationalisation of the Santiago Network. Guided by this example, we see the Santiago Network could be embedded in the UNFCCC structure, consisting of a network, an advisory board and a national focal point or coordinating entity for each Party.

In its initial phase, Australia considers that the Santiago Network could be most usefully operationalised to concentrate on the following core functions:

- Provide technical assistance to help least developed countries develop 'Addressing Loss and Damage Action Plans' based on requests from these countries.
- Provide a broker or matchmaker service for pairing developing countries with experts, service providers and funding entities capable of delivering on the developing country needs as articulated in their Action Plans.
- Be the prominent global forum, clearing house and community-of-practice for information and knowledge exchange on averting, minimizing, and addressing loss and damage.
- Deliver targeted regionally focused capacity building through presentations and workshops delivered to government officials, experts and other developing country stakeholders.

In undertaking these core functions Australia would like to see the Santiago Network operationalised with consideration of the following important attributes.

Maintain a broad membership base - Australia would like to ensure that the membership base for the Santiago Network is broad. The challenge of averting, addressing and minimising loss and damage require strong action at all levels of society: national and sub-national governments, business, institutions, non-government organisations, academia, community groups and individuals. We particularly encourage fulsome engagement of the private sector - we consider that their investment, entrepreneurialism, and multisector partnerships will allow the Santiago Network to access more capital and achieve more permanent and lasting outcomes.

Target the most vulnerable - Australia would like to see technical assistance and support from the Santiago Network focused on assisting least developed countries, Small Island Developing States, and vulnerable groups and communities facing the most severe and ongoing impacts of climate change. We would like to see strong identifiable goals around social inclusion and gender equality, with a clear focus on the most vulnerable communities, especially women and girls, people with disability and indigenous peoples.

Incorporate multiple knowledge systems - Australia considers that support should be informed by countries' specific circumstances, needs, priorities, and national capacities. Where possible, any decisions around needs and prioritisation should be based on the best available empirical evidence with recognition of all knowledge systems including scientific, traditional, and local. Efforts should be made to ensure that countries are able to access the Santiago Network's support in an equitable manner and where necessary initial support should be given to assist with the application process.

Begin soon, start small and grow over time - Given the increasing climate change impacts as articulated in the recent IPCC AR6 WG 2 Report, Australia recognises the need for rapid operationalization of the Santiago Network. Australia considers that it would be practical to develop the Santiago Network in a proactive but iterative way beginning with a focus on the core functions identified above and potentially increasing to cover all agreed functions in time in response to needs. We further acknowledge the latest IPCC AR6 data shows that losses and damages are

projected to increase in line with global warming levels and note that there may be a need for the Santiago Network to expand in time.

Achieve multiple humanitarian and development outcomes – Australia would like to see the Santiago Network operationalised within the broader frame of achieving multiple humanitarian and development outcomes – including consideration of efforts made through the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Consider transformative adaptation options to minimize and avert loss and damage – Australia recognises the growing body of literature concerning the need for transformative adaptation options that can help avert and minimize losses and damages from the impacts of climate change. The Santiago Network could bring experts together to develop innovative approaches and projects that provide new, transformative and scalable initiatives, including piloting new ideas. We would like to see the Santiago Network operationalised in a way that encourages, considers and develops these transformative options.

The role of the ExCom and its expert groups, task force and technical expert group;

Australia sees the WIM Ex Com as being the ‘policy arm’ of the Santiago Network, consisting of approximately 20 experts representing both developing and developed countries. The group would meet several times a year and hold events that would support efforts to examine and address key loss and damage policy issues – in particular: providing an overview of countries’ and regions’ needs with regard to loss and damage, look at policy and technical issues, and make recommendations to promote and facilitate coordination with key agencies and stakeholders.

The WIM ExCom has established thematic expert groups for each of its five workstreams:

- Expert group on slow onset events;
- Expert group on non-economic losses;
- Technical Expert Group on Comprehensive Risk Management;
- Task Force on Displacement; and
- Expert group on action and support.

Having been a strong supporter in the initialisation and operation of these groups from the outset, Australia would like to ensure that they are effectively maintained and enhanced within any proposed structure of the Santiago Network. Each of the groups has a wealth of expertise and resources to advance progress on averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage and we consider that they should be positioned to advance progress and contribute in a coordinated way.

The role of L&D contact points and other relevant stakeholders

Australia would like to see each country Party represented by a Santiago Network National Designated Contact Point. These focal points could be published on an easy-to-updated website. Developing country Contact Points would be responsible for preparing and bringing forward country requests for assistance or support from the Santiago Network, while donor country Contact Points would be responsible for mobilising expertise and assistance where possible from within their in-country networks (both public and private).

Thank you.