

Status of Adaptation Planning in the Asia-Pacific

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Executive Summary

It has been more than a decade since the “NAP process” was established as part of the Cancun Adaptation Framework in 2010. However, there are few surveys providing an overview of the status of adaptation planning focusing in the Asia-Pacific. This factsheet provides an overview of adaptation plan documents submitted to the UNFCCC by Asia-Pacific countries, and the in-depth analysis of these documents. While some countries have updated their NDCs and NCs multiple times, no countries have updated their adaptation-specific documents such as NAPs, so only the latest documents from each country are included in this analysis. The key findings include the followings:

- ✧ While most of the countries in the 39 Asia-Pacific have submitted their NCs, NDCs and NAPAs, less than 10 countries have submitted their NAPs and ACs.
- ✧ More than half of countries in the Asia-Pacific included basic climate assessment information and identified priority sectors in their adaptation plan documents.
- ✧ On the other hand, less than half of the countries in the Asia-Pacific mentioned the Implementation and M&E strategies in their adaptation plan documents.
- ✧ Enhancing regional efforts would be the key to facilitating adaptation plan development, implementation and its updates, through sharing information and and experience as well as mutual support.

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Background

Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Cancun Adaptation Framework, adopted at the COP 16 in 2010, invites each Parties to enhance action on adaptation by planning, prioritising and implementing adaptation actions. To facilitate the least developed countries' formulation and implementation of their national adaptation plans (NAPs), the Cancun Adaptation Framework established 'NAP process' as a means of identifying medium- and long-term adaptation needs and developing and implementing strategies and programmes to address those needs. Other developing country Parties were also invited to employ the modalities formulated to support NAPs.

The Paris Agreement, adopted at COP21 is a critical milestone in terms of facilitating adaptation actions and support on a global scale. It also raises the importance of adaptation along with mitigation by stating that "increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience" as one of its objectives. In fact, the whole of Article 7 of the Agreement is devoted to climate change adaptation, with the first paragraph establishing the global goal on adaptation aiming for "enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change". The progress of the global goal on adaptation is supposed to be reviewed through the Global Stock Take (GST), a five-year cycle for taking stock of the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Article 7 paragraph 9 indicates that "each Party shall, as appropriate, engage in adaptation planning processes and the implementation of actions, including the development or enhancement of relevant plans, policies and/or contributions". In addition, the following two paragraphs 10 and 11 encourage countries to submit and update 'adaptation communications' that include adaptation priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions. Adaptation communications can be developed as a component of or in conjunction with other communications including NAPs, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National

Communications (NCs).

The NAP process is a valuable mechanism to meet the objective of the Paris Agreement as it assists countries in developing adaptation plans in the form of NAPs or others. Engagement in the NAP process also provides countries with an opportunity to identify comprehensive adaptation needs and necessary actions, informed by the latest climate science, enabling better access and more effective use of finance for adaptation.

Individual efforts to promote adaptation actions are also critical for achieving the collective global goal. Under the UNFCCC, progress has been made on aggregating efforts through discussion at the Glasgow Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation (2022-2023) and considering how to better link the GST and global efforts on adaptation. Developing adaptation plans including policies, programmes and actions is the first and critical step to take stock of each country's efforts and progress. The Least Development Countries Expert Group (LEG) has been supporting LDC Parties to proceed with the NAP process. The LEG Technical Brief (February 2021) identified gaps and needs related to the formulation and implementation of NAPs.

However, there are few surveys providing an overview of the status of adaptation planning focusing in the Asia-Pacific. Therefore, this study was conducted with the objective to take a snapshot of the current status of adaptation plan formulation in the Asia-Pacific, by analysing not only the NAP documents but also other documents submitted to the UNFCCC including adaptation plans, to grasp a full picture of adaptation planning in the region. This study aims to take a snapshot of the current status of adaptation plan formulation in the Asia-Pacific, by analysing not only the NAP documents but also other documents submitted to the UNFCCC including adaptation plans, to grasp a full picture of adaptation planning in the region.

Methodology

For the purpose of taking a snapshot of the regional progress of adaptation planning, we analysed adaptation plan documents submitted by the countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Table 1 shows the profile of the Asia-Pacific region that consists of four sub-regions, breaking down the number of the Kyoto Protocol Non-Annex I Parties, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing State (SIDS).

Table 1. Profile in the Asia-Pacific region.

Sub-region	TOTAL (countries)	Non-Annex I Parties	LDCs	SIDs
		(countries)		
East Asia	5	4	0	0
Pacific	16	14	3	12
South Asia	7	7	3	1
South East Asia	11	11	4	2
TOTAL	39	36	10	15

Countries have submitted their adaptation plan documents to the UNFCCC in one of the five different forms as below. Documents employed in the analysis can be downloaded from the UNFCCC website.

NC (National Communication)

NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution)

NAP (National Adaptation Plan)

AC (Adaptation Communication)

NAPA (National Adaptation Programme of Action)

Table 2 indicates the documents employed in our analysis. We first checked if a country has submitted an adaptation plan document, namely NAPs or ACs and extracted the latest submitted one. In case they have yet to submit either document, we employ either NDCs or NCs that contain devoted sections for adaptation. The analysis took a quantitative approach for examining the components of adaptation plan documents, dividing into four elements; (1) assessment of the current and future climate, (2) priority sectors, (3) implementation strategy, and (4) monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The next section will discuss the results of the analysis by element.

Table2. Documents used in the analysis

Analyzed documents	TOTAL (countries)	East Asia	Pacific	South Asia	South East Asia	Non-Annex I Parties	LDCs	SIDs
		(countries)				(countries)		
NC	7	2	4	0	1	7	1	3
NDC	21	1	7	5	8	21	5	8
NAP	7	0	3	2	2	6	4	3
AC	4	2	2	0	0	2	0	1
TOTAL	39	5	16	7	11	36	10	15

Results

Overview of Adaptation Planning in the Asia-Pacific region

As of 30 September 2022, all countries in the Asia-Pacific region have submitted their NDCs at least for 1 to 4 times over the past decade. All LDCs have submitted their NAPAs. Meanwhile, all SIDs have submitted their NCs. On the other hand, the

progress of submitting adaptation-focused documents seems to be slow. Only six countries out of 36 Non-Annex I countries have submitted their NAPs, while seven countries out of 39 countries have submitted their ACs.

Table 3. Status of the submitted documents to the UNFCCC

Status of the submitted documents to the UNFCCC				
All countries in the Asia-Pacific				
Documents	TOTAL (countries)	Oldest (year)	Latest (year)	
NC	37 / 39	2012	2022	
NDC	39 / 39	2016	2022	
NAPA	13* / 10	2005	2013	
NAP	6 / 36**	2016	2021	
AC	7 / 39	2017	2021	

All countries in the Asia-Pacific by sub-region				
Documents	East Asia	Pacific	South Asia	South East Asia
	(countries)			
NC	5 / 5	16 / 16	7 / 7	9 / 11
NDC	5 / 5	16 / 16	7 / 7	11 / 11
NAPA	0 / 5	5 / 16	4 / 7	4 / 11
NAP	0 / 5	2 / 16	2 / 7	2 / 11
AC	2 / 5	3 / 16	1 / 7	1 / 11

Countries in the Asia-Pacific by categories			
Documents	Non-Annex I Parties	LDCs	SIDs
	(countries)		
NC	34 / 36	9 / 10	15 / 15
NDC	36 / 36	10 / 10	15 / 15
NAPA	13 / 36	10 / 10	7 / 15
NAP	6 / 36	4 / 10	3 / 15
AC	4 / 36	2 / 10	2 / 15

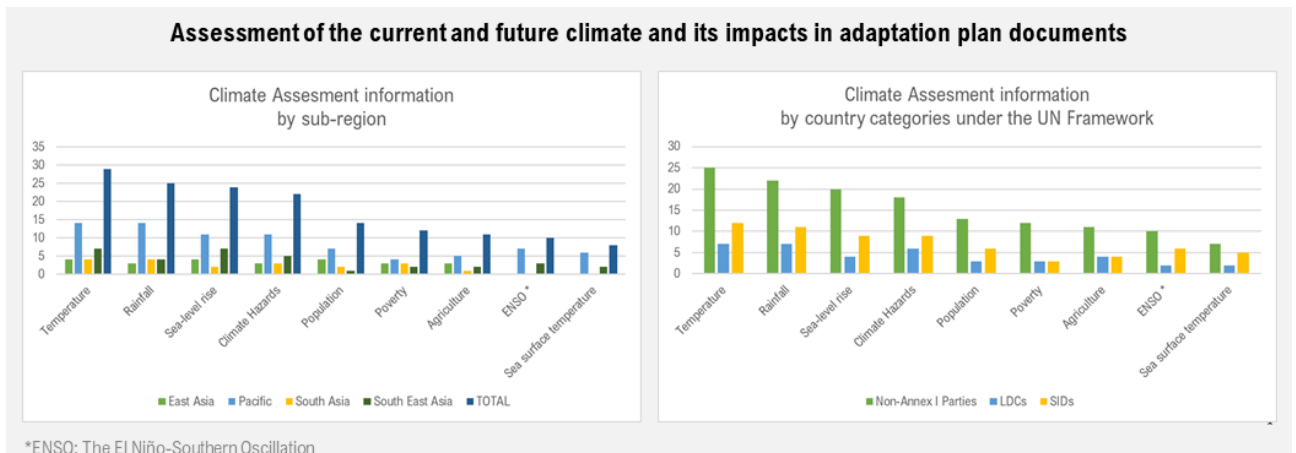
Assessment of the current and future climate and its impacts in adaptation plan documents

Figure 1 shows the analysis of the current and future climate and its socioeconomic impacts in adaptation plan documents. The graphs show the number of countries including such assessment information in their adaptation plan documents, by sub-region and category under the UN framework.

The analysis of climate change impacts is widely acknowledged as a crucial element, with the majority, 29 countries examining its impacts on

temperature fluctuations. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that it means 10 countries among those analysed still do not provide current and future assessment of temperature fluctuation. Regarding other elements, rainfall, sea level rise, and climate hazards are also widely addressed. Conversely, fewer countries address the impacts of climate change across social dimensions, such as population, poverty, and agriculture.

Figure 1. Assessment of the current and future climate and its impacts in adaptation plan documents

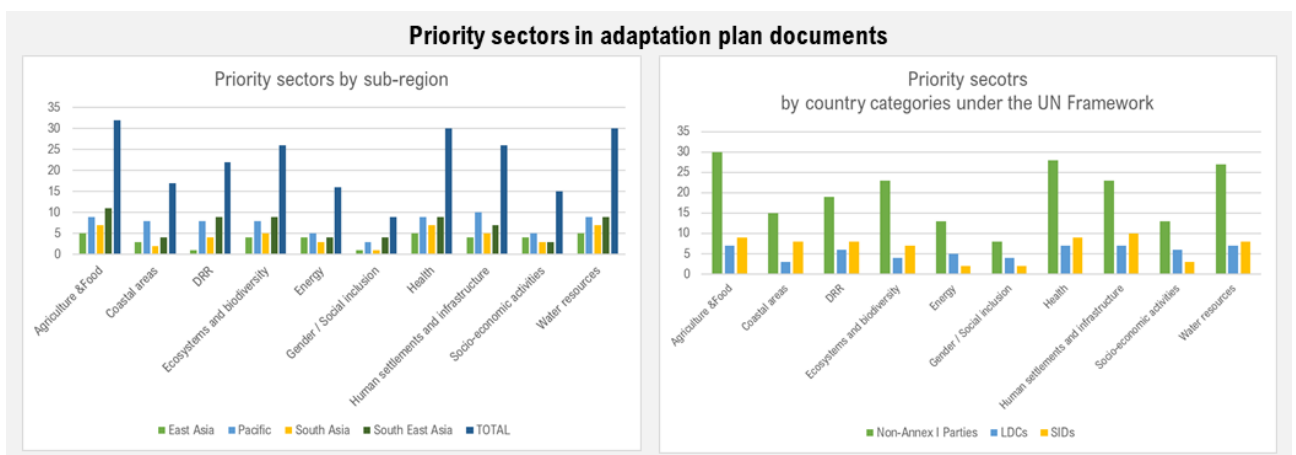


Priority sectors in adaptation plan documents

The adaptation plan documents' contents indicating the priority sectors were analysed. The graphs show the number of countries including each priority sectors' information in their adaptation plan documents, by sub-region and category under the UN framework. The classification categories of priority sectors were created based on UNFCCC (2015). As a priority sector, agriculture and food

concerns are the most frequently addressed in the majority of countries, followed by health and water resource issues. In contrast, gender and social inclusion, socio-economic activities, and energy concerns are less frequently addressed. Furthermore, Disaster Risk Reduction tends to be handled less frequently in the East Asia sub-region than in other sub-regions.

Figure 2. Priority sectors in adaptation plan documents



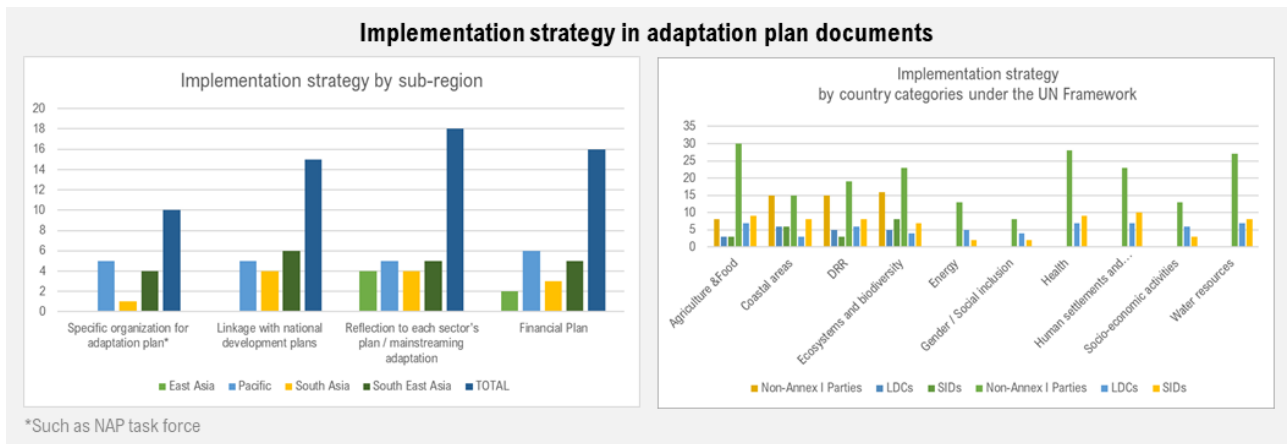
Implementation strategy in adaptation plan documents

The adaptation plan documents show the specific institutional arrangement for implementing adaptation plans. Figure 3 shows the number of countries including implementation strategy in their adaptation plan documents, by sub-region and category under the UN framework.

When it comes to implementation strategies, sector-specific strategies are more frequently discussed than general implementation strategies. Among general implementation strategies, the most recurrent reference was to mainstreaming

adaptation, while only 10 countries described the organisational strategies for implementing adaptation plans. In terms of sector-specific implementation strategies, sectors such as agriculture and food, health, and water resources are noteworthy with a considerable number of countries having specific implementation strategies. With regard to the sectoral implementation plans, it can be seen that they generally correspond to the analysis in the priority sectors described above.

Figure 3. Implementation strategy in adaptation plan documents



Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) component in adaptation plan documents

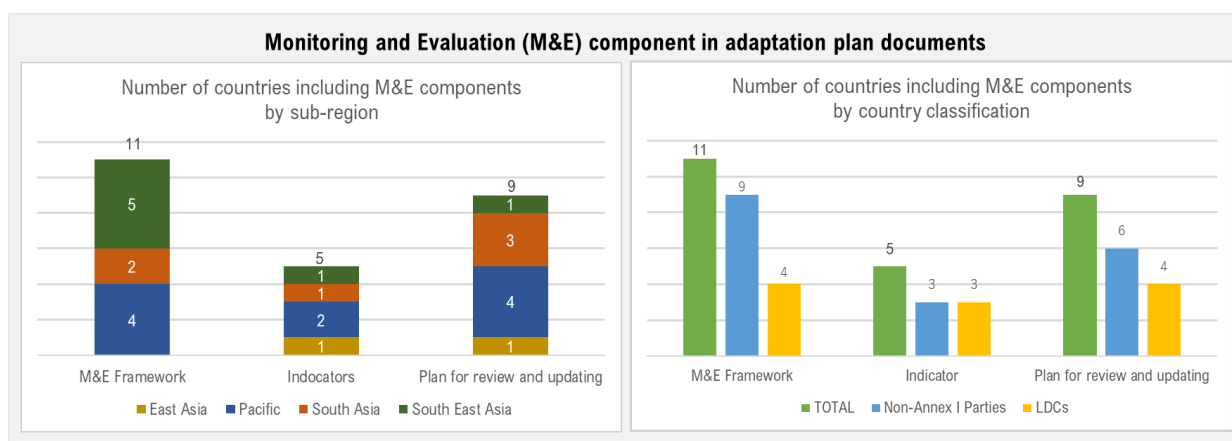
As a result of analysis, we found that 13 out of 39 countries in the Asia-Pacific included more than one M&E component in their adaptation plans. They include three Annex-I Parties (Japan, NZ, and Australia) and 10 Non-Annex Parties including four LDCs (Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Fiji, Cambodia, Laos, Timor-Leste, Nepal, Kiribati).

Figure 4 shows the number of countries that include each M&E component in their adaptation plan documents by sub-region and country classification. The right graph illustrates that 11 out of 39 countries in total mention the M&E framework, including nine Non-Annex Parties. Note they have not necessarily already set up the framework, and this number includes the countries

that only state they will establish a framework in the foreseeable future. Out of 10 LDCs in the Asia-Pacific, only four countries included a statement on the M&E framework. Additionally, three and four LDCs express their intention on setting indicators and plan for review and updating of the documents, respectively.

The left graph represents the breakdown by sub-region. It is evident that South East Asia accounts for around half of the countries including the M&E framework in their plans. Four Pacific countries include both the M&E framework and a plan for review and update. No East Asian countries mention a framework, whereas one country touches on indicators and future review plans.

Figure 4. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Component in Adaptation Plan Documents



Financial support for adaptation plan development and its implementation

We deep-dive into financial support for adaptation planning. Table 4 counts the number of countries with financial support as well as ones without external assistance by types of adaptation plan documents. Overall, 33 countries out of 39 have gained external financial support. It can also be seen that all the submitted NCs were supported by at least one donor. Except for three countries (South Korea, Brunei, and Singapore), most developing countries received support to develop their adaptation plans as a form of NDCs. The only country that developed the NAP without support is New Zealand, which implies that no Non-Annex I Parties have successfully submitted their NAP without financial support. Likewise, countries other than Japan and Australia who have submitted their ACs are supported by more than two donors.

We also identified the number of countries in the Asia-Pacific with financial support by donors. Information was collected on the website of either the UNFCCC financial mechanism or outside of the UNFCCC (bilateral donors or multilateral institutions) as well as in adaptation plan

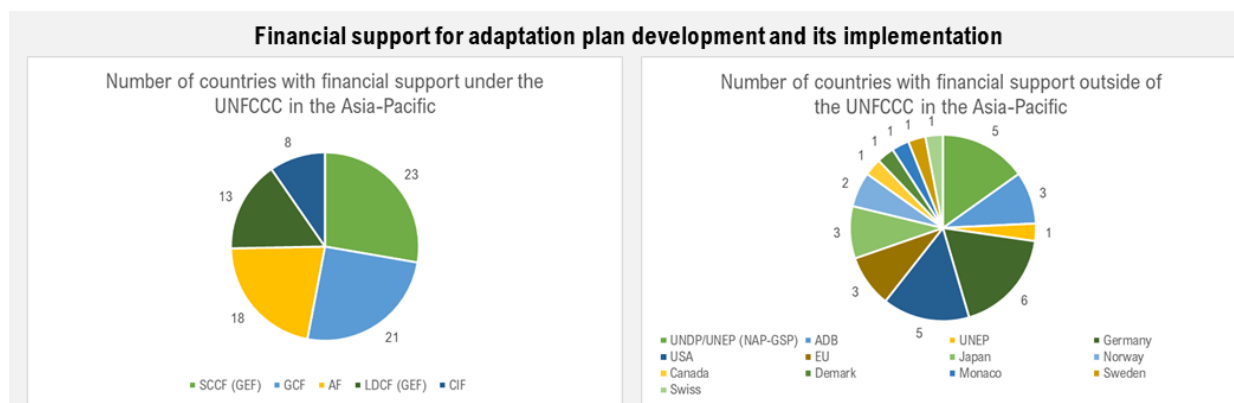
documents of the respective countries to identify bilateral donor agencies. If a country receives at least one project or programme, it is counted as one donor.

Figure 5 shows the composition of donors that provide countries with financial support to formulate their adaptation plan documents. The right chart indicates the most prominent donor outside of the UNFCCC is Germany, who supported six national adaptation plans. This is followed by the NAP-GSP operated by the UNDP and UNEP and the United States. Asia Development Bank, EU, and Japan assisted three countries, respectively. Other donors include UNEP, Norway, Canada, Denmark, Monaco, Sweden and Switzerland. In the left chart, it is noteworthy that the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) supported more than 20 nations. The Adaptation Fund (AF) provided 18 countries with financial assistance, and the Least Developed Countries Fund supported 13 countries. The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) also contributed to adaptation planning, assisting eight countries.

Table 4. Financial Support for Adaptation Plan Documents by Types of Documents

Number of Countries with financial support for developing adaptation plan documents by types of documents							
Item	No donor	1 donor	2 donors	3 donors	4 donors	5+ donors	Sub-total
NC	0	1	2	3	0	1	7
NDC	3	2	4	6	2	4	18
NAP	1	1	0	2	0	3	6
AC	2	0	1	0	1	0	2
Total							33

Figure 5. Breakdown of Financial Support for Adaptation Plan Development



Key Findings

Our findings can be summarized as below;

- All countries have submitted their NDCs at least once to four times. All LDCs have submitted their NAPAs, and all SIDs have submitted their NCs. On the other hand, only six countries out of 36 Non-Annex I countries have submitted their NAPs. Only seven countries out of 39 countries have submitted their ACs.
- The analysis of climate change impacts is widely acknowledged as a crucial element, with the majority of countries examining its impacts on temperature, rainfall, sea level rise, and climate hazards.
- As a priority sector, agriculture and food concerns are the most frequently addressed, followed by health and water resource issues. In contrast, gender and social inclusion, socio-economic activities, and energy concerns are less frequently addressed.
- When it comes to implementation strategies, sector-specific strategies are more frequently discussed than general implementation strategies. Among general implementation strategies, the most recurrent reference was to mainstreaming adaptation, while only a limited number, 10, described the organisational strategies for implementing adaptation plans.
- One-third countries in the Asia-Pacific region included more than one M&E component in their adaptation plan documents. However, most of them leave the establishment of an M&E framework as a future step. While some have identified responsible bodies to carry out M&E and a path to setting indicators, few have implemented them.
- Out of 39 countries, 33 have received financial support from at least one donor (bilateral and multilateral donors or financial mechanism under the UNFCCC). The most dominant donor in the region is the SCCF who have supported 23 nations to formulate their adaptation plan documents.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Examining the tendencies in the formation of adaptation policies in this factsheet, the following conclusions and recommendations can be discerned for the future. First, in terms of impact assessment, this analysis shows that, overall, countries are considering temperature, rainfall, sea level rise, and climate hazards relatively well. Nonetheless, there can be an underappreciation of the influence of climate change on socio-economic activities, for instance, the evaluation of the impact on agriculture is insufficient. Second, with regards to a priority sector, it appears that the social aspect, gender and social inclusion, and socio-economic activities are not accorded adequate attention. The significance of fostering adaptations that consider the most vulnerable segments of society could be further accentuated. Third, with regard to M&E systems, most Non-Annex I Parties have not established the system, while some of them included the devoted sections for M&E and indicated their plans to adopt a framework or indicators. It is evident that at this point establishing M&E systems has been a considerable challenge for the Asia-Pacific countries. This should be a critical issue, considering the fact that promoting M&E systems could be the important agenda to effectively implement the GST and to assess the global progress toward achieving the global goal on adaptation. Fourth, financial support plays a vital role in formulating adaptation plan documents as no developing countries have successfully submitted their NAPs or ACs without any external support.

In conclusion, although all the countries in the Asia-Pacific have submitted their NDCs, the progress of

developing adaptation plan documents such as NAPs and ACs seems relatively slow-paced. This result illustrates that developing stand-alone policies and plans for climate adaptation remains a challenge in the region, which could be attributed to lack of extra human and financial resources as submission of NAPs or ACs are not mandatory unlike NDCs.

As a way forward, we suggest that enhancing regional efforts would be the key to facilitating adaptation planning. Since effective adaptation measures are highly context-dependent, building greater coherence among policy-makers, data providers, and experts could enable countries in the region that share the similar geographical, economic, or climatic characteristics to share useful information and experience for formulating adaptation strategies. It is also worthwhile to consider establishing a regional meta-assessment system for sharing the progress of adaptation implementation, given the situation that most developing states in the region have yet to establish their own M&E system. In this regard, it should be noted that few countries in the Asia-Pacific region mention the “learning” aspect as a part of their M&E components. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) perspective might provide valuable insights into potential mutual sharing of information, knowledge and experience on climate adaptation within the region. Regional platforms such as the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Information Platform (AP-PLAT) could have a significant role to play for strengthening regional partnership and mutual learning for further advancing adaptation planning and implementation.

Acknowledgement

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