How FAO supports developing countries in their National Adaptation Plans

Climate change adaptation in agrifood systems

National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) serve as vital policy instruments for guiding countries’ efforts to reduce vulnerability and build adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change impacts. NAPs were introduced as an instrument under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through the Cancun Adaptation Framework in 2010. NAPs identify climate risks and vulnerabilities, set medium- to long-term adaptation objectives, and help in implementing measures to enhance resilience across sectors and at different scales. Given the importance and vulnerability of agrifood systems, NAPs are a vital tool in promoting sustainable agricultural practices and fostering innovation to ensure food security and safeguard livelihoods for all in a changing climate.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) plays a central role in supporting adaptation efforts and advancing NAPs globally. With its mandate to eradicate hunger, achieve food security, and promote sustainable agriculture, FAO offers technical expertise, policy guidance, and capacity-development initiatives to assist countries in integrating agrifood systems into their adaptation planning. Guided by its Strategy on Climate Change (2021–2031) and Action Plan (2022–2025), and following the objectives set out in the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), FAO supports developing countries in the formulation and implementation of NAPs that increase resilience in agrifood systems across FAO mandate areas (agriculture, forestry and fisheries).

<table>
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<th>FAO’s NAP support in numbers</th>
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<td><strong>16</strong> GCF NAP readiness projects</td>
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<td><strong>Over USD 300 million in GEF adaptation portfolio</strong></td>
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<td><strong>63</strong> NAP-related projects in 2023</td>
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<td><strong>78</strong> countries received NAP support in 2023</td>
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<td><strong>4</strong> supplementary sectoral guidelines</td>
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FAO’s Green Climate Fund (GCF) portfolio thus far includes 93 readiness projects valued at USD 20.6 million, with 16 readiness projects explicitly aimed at enhancing NAPs and/or adaptation planning.

FAO has thus far supported 48 countries in NAP implementation and scaling up of climate action through the Least Developed Countries and the Special Climate Change Fund of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

FAO’s ongoing projects in 2023 supported NAP formulation and implementation in 60 countries, spanning a wide range of agricultural subsectors and elements of agrifood systems.

FAO’s Country Offices provided support for formulating and implementing NAPs in 78 countries, of which 28 were least developed countries and 13 Small Island Developing States.

FAO has published 4 supplementary technical guidelines on how to best address agrifood systems in NAPs as well as additional guidance and training material.

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1 Agrifood systems comprise the entire range of actors and interlinked activities that add value in agricultural production and related off-farm activities such as food storage, aggregation, post-harvest handling, transportation, processing, distribution, marketing, disposal and consumption.
FAO’s support stream 1: Technical support

FAO has developed a wide range of tools and services aimed at enhancing countries’ technical capacities for evidence-based adaptation planning in agrifood systems (see FAO’s support stream 4). For example, FAO assists in better access to and interpretation and use of climate risk information. FAO promotes an integrated approach to adaptation planning that is based on the latest available science and information derived from a variety of sources, such as climate models, risk and vulnerability assessments, and socioeconomic analyses, including local and indigenous knowledge. This approach considers the differential impacts of climate change on different groups and their varying capacities, vulnerabilities and needs for adaptation. Improving access to climate information services and early warning systems to enable anticipatory action, as well as participatory and longer-term planning, is key. FAO also supports countries to strengthen monitoring, evaluating, and learning (MEL) systems to track adaptation in agrifood systems and iteratively learn throughout the NAP process.

FAO’s support stream 2: Institutional support

FAO supports countries to strengthen national and local institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms that are essential for steering NAP planning and implementation processes and enabling adaptation in agrifood systems. This includes establishing mandates and a vision for integrating agrifood systems into NAP processes. FAO supports the mainstreaming of NAPs and adaptation in agrifood systems into other sectoral policies and budgets to ensure policy coherence across different sectors and levels of government. This involves inclusive planning and budgeting processes that acknowledge and address the insights, needs and capacities of multiple stakeholder groups in agrifood system adaptation solutions, particularly of the most vulnerable, including women, youth and Indigenous Peoples. FAO also supports aligning NAPs and adaptation in agrifood systems with other sustainable development goals and policy processes, such as disaster risk management plans, nationally determined contributions (NDCs), Long-term Low-Emission Development Pathways (LTS), national food system transformation pathways and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

FAO’s support stream 3: Access to finance

FAO is strongly committed to assisting countries in securing climate finance for agrifood systems through funding channels such as the GCF, the GEF and bilateral funding. The new GCF readiness strategy 2024–2027 presents one opportunity for FAO to continue its support to NAP processes, leveraging its expertise in sustainable agrifood systems and climate resilience. Through this window, FAO aims to facilitate the implementation of robust adaptation strategies, further advancing global efforts to combat climate change and bolster food security. The current gap in climate finance for agrifood systems is alarming, with a sevenfold increase needed to meet the needs. FAO has been operationalizing the Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation (FAST) Partnership – launched in 2023 – which aims to increase the quality and quantity of climate finance for agrifood systems. FAO also assists countries in leveraging private sector engagement and public and private sector collaboration on climate action.

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3 Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation (FAST) Partnership.
Supplementary sectoral NAP guidelines

- Addressing agriculture, forestry and fisheries in National Adaptation Plans.
- Addressing forestry and agroforestry in National Adaptation Plans.
- Addressing fisheries and aquaculture in National Adaptation Plans.
- Voluntary guidelines to support the integration of genetic diversity into national climate change adaptation planning.

Guidance and training materials on agrifood system integration into NAPs

- Promoting gender-responsive adaptation in the agriculture sectors: Entry points within National Adaptation Plans.
- Institutional capacity assessment approach for national adaptation planning in the agriculture sectors.
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation for adaptation planning in the agriculture sectors.
- Private sector mapping, outreach, and engagement in climate-responsive agrifood systems.
- Addressing agriculture in National Adaptation Plans: Training materials.
- FAO AgroAdapt Simulation Game.

Recent publication highlights

- Using metrics to assess progress towards the Paris Agreement's Global Goal on Adaptation.
- Catalysing climate solutions: An intro to FAO's work on climate change adaptation in agrifood systems.
- COP28 Agriculture, Food and Climate National Action Toolkit.
- Forest-based adaptation: transformational adaptation through forests and trees.
- Governance challenges for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation convergence in agriculture - Guidance for analysis.
- Forthcoming: Agrifood systems in NAPs: Global Analysis.

Tool highlights

- Adaptation, Biodiversity, and Carbon (ABC) Mapping Tool: a geospatial app that holistically assesses the environmental impact of policies, plans and investments in the agriculture, forestry, and other land-use sectors through Google Earth-based satellite imagery.
- Adaptation Toolbox for Fisheries and Aquaculture: a portfolio of climate adaptation tools and methods to strengthen adaptation in the sector.
- Climate and Agriculture Risk Visualization and Assessment (CAVA) Platform and Analytics: open-source climate information tool with a focus on agriculture, providing long-term climate services based on past and future climate and impact data.
- Climate Action Review (CAR) Tool: supports national adaptation planners through a practical, step-by-step process to identify actionable entry points for transformative adaptation in the agriculture and land-use sectors through multi-stakeholder engagement.
- Climate Risk Toolbox (CRTB): supports the design of climate-resilient agricultural investment projects and plans, by allowing users to conduct climate risk screenings through advanced climate-related geospatial information and data.
- Self-evaluation and Holistic Assessment of Climate Resilience of Farmers and Pastoralists (SHARP+): assesses climate resilience among small farming households to pinpoint areas needing intervention, shape project activities, and monitor and evaluate the adaptive capacity and resilience of communities.
Turning NAPs into inclusive, local-level adaptation solutions in Uganda’s cattle corridor

The FAO–UNDP Scaling Up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture through NDCs and NAPs (SCALA) Programme has identified local-level adaptation solutions through participatory, systems-level assessments using climate impact models, geospatial datasets, household surveys and multistakeholder consultations. In 2024, climate-resilient business cases are being developed through public–private sector engagement to de-risk investments in dairy, cassava and cocoa value chains and support local livelihoods.

Gender-responsive adaptation planning: Increasing climate resilience in the fisheries sector of Belize

FAO supported a GCF readiness project in Belize, a small island developing state, to place a particular emphasis on gender-responsive adaptation approaches, enhancing data collection, climate change awareness, and the integration of gender dimensions into the coastal zone and fisheries sector’s NAP. Over the 18 months of the project, a gender analysis of Belize’s coastal zone and fisheries sector was conducted, and the Fifth Women in Fisheries Forum was successfully hosted, helping to enhance women’s climate resilience in fishing communities.

Subnational adaptation planning to strengthen agricultural adaptation in Senegal

In Senegal, FAO’s Strengthening Agricultural Adaptation (SAGA) global project supported the development of subnational adaptation action plans for agriculture. Socioeconomic surveys were conducted in three regions, assessing the vulnerability of actors in the agricultural sector to climate change and identifying priority adaptation options, feeding into the regional adaptation action plans. These activities were implemented in a harmonized way coordinated by the Ministry of Environment, which worked closely with technical and financial partners involved in the NAP development process across various agroecological zones in Senegal.

Partnering for ecologically sound agriculture and resilient livelihoods in Cambodia

The GCF Public-Social-Private Partnerships for Ecologically-Sound Agriculture and Resilient Livelihood in Northern Tonle Sap Basin (PEARL) project enhances the adaptive capacities of farming communities and systems in Cambodia. The project supports NAP implementation by developing business plans for climate-resilient and inclusive premium value chains for rice, mango, and cashews, equipping farmers with tailored agro-meteorological advisory services, promoting climate-smart technologies through the Farmer-led Agricultural Resilience Mechanism (FARM), and facilitating access to finance via community-driven trust funds to foster investments in climate-resilient agriculture.