

Policy pointers

LDC NDCs need to outline a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response to climate change, covering all vulnerable sectors, including health, education and infrastructure. Such an approach would help move towards cross-sectoral transformational interventions.

They also need to ask for greater resources, breaking their financing needs down to each area and level to build clearer national adaptation strategies. These strategies need to be supported through appropriate financing mechanisms that can support, aggregate and deliver local action to scale.

The international community should support LDCs to implement adaptation measures in their current priority areas: agriculture, food security and natural resource management.

They should also help LDCs develop broader, multi-sectoral, multi-level adaptation strategies in new areas such as health and infrastructure and identify their support needs around all adaptation measures.

LDC NDCs: adaptation priorities and gaps to address

This briefing explores the Least Developed Countries' (LDCs)' adaptation priorities as outlined in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and highlights gaps to address ahead of the 2020 update deadline. With the impacts of climate change increasing in frequency and intensity, it is vital that LDCs implement adaptation measures to safeguard their populations and the international community fulfil its commitments to provide financial, technology transfer and capacity support to vulnerable societies. The five-year NDC update cycle is an opportunity for LDCs to clearly articulate their adaptation strategies and signal where they need international support. LDCs should use a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to develop the scope of the sectors they include in their updated NDCs and comprehensively outline their resource needs.

The LDC Group represents many of the international community's poorest members. Among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, these countries are increasingly experiencing its devastating impacts. Under the Paris Agreement, developed countries have pledged financial, technological and capacity-building support. The need to deliver this is now urgent.

NDCs are a means of communicating domestic adaptation and mitigation plans to an international audience. Parties submit new or updated NDCs every five years. The next iterations in 2020 and 2025 are an opportunity for LDCs to ensure an ambitious response to climate challenges and help the international community better recognise their needs, improving the flow of targeted resourcing. Learning from and supporting each other, LDCs can improve their reporting to clearly articulate their priorities, commitments and raised ambition and request the international support they need for a climate-resilient future.

LDC NDCs: an overview¹

At the 2013 UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP 19) in Warsaw, all parties were asked to publish their intended NDCs (INDCs), which would automatically become their first NDC upon ratification of the 2015 Paris Agreement, unless they chose to update or revise it. Of the 47 LDC Group members, 4 updated their INDCs and 38 converted them into NDCs without revision. The other 5 INDCs have yet to be converted.

All NDC documents must contain a mitigation component but including adaptation is optional. Given the threat faced by LDCs and the fact that their greenhouse gas emissions are negligible,² adaptation actions take higher priority at the group and national levels.³

There is no formal structured guidance for presenting information in NDCs, so countries can report in a format most suitable to their existing structures. As a result, the LDCs present measures at differing scales and detail, which we can broadly group as follows:

As climate change impacts worsen, the need for and scale of adaptation interventions will increase

Overall sector objective or target. High-level statement of work for a sector or quantitative target for a sector. Two LDCs present at this level.

Overarching programme of work. High-level statement of programmes within and/or across sectors, with several activities and/or projects under each. Seven LDCs present at this level, and another two present without detail on activities.

Key activity. Lists actions to be taken within a sector, but not necessarily as part of a wider context. Fourteen LDCs present at this level.

Specific activities. Lists developed and costed interventions. Only 16 LDCs present at this level.

Such variety in detail affects comparability across LDCs and makes it difficult to understand both their resourcing needs as a group and the scale of adaptation interventions. Operating projects on multiple scales and levels — regional, national, sub-national (provincial, municipal) and local (community, household) — helps support a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach by engaging actors and delivering interventions at multiple levels. Such an approach can then help in moving from siloed sectoral responses to cross-sectoral interventions. This can be facilitated through supporting local governments, local enterprises and households through developing appropriate financing mechanisms, which will help aggregate and deliver local action to scale. Consistent reporting on the scale(s) of action for proposed adaptation interventions would allow the international community to engage with appropriate channels and create or use more appropriate funding and resource instruments and mechanisms to make their support more effective.

LDC adaptation priorities

Table 1 lists the sectors and subsectors emerging from the adaptation measures presented in the LDCs' (I)NDC documents. The number of measures gives an idea of their distribution across documents but the variety in detail means they are not directly comparable.

Almost all LDCs (37) prioritise agriculture and food security and most present hydrological, water resources, coastal zones (35); forests, land use change and ecosystems (35); and policy, strategy and planning (34) as key sectors for action.

Table 1 also illustrates significant gaps: fewer than half the (I)NDCs contain health (22), infrastructure (21) or energy (18) interventions; education, social protection and industry are largely unrepresented. Agriculture, food security and natural resource

management are typically the largest economic sectors in LDCs and therefore the focus of their adaptation planning. Actions in these areas are entrenched in planning and implementation experience, indicating a path dependency in LDC adaptation planning. As the challenges of climate change increase, LDCs must move beyond their historical experience towards a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to understand where interventions are needed, branching out into broader areas such as education and social protection.

LDC resourcing needs

Thirty-one LDC NDCs state the total costs of implementing adaptation measures. Of these, 16 break the costs down to the sector or project level;⁴ 23 state total costs of implementing mitigation measures; 25 mention technology needs; and 29 mention capacity-building needs at the overall, sector and/or project level.

The sum of costed adaptation interventions across the (I)NDCs is approximately US\$167 billion. Based only on the documents that explicitly state costs, this represents a narrow coverage of sectors across different timeframes.

The total required adaptation costs are necessarily higher. As LDCs improve the coverage of their NDCs and refine the metrics for costing interventions, they will provide clearer and more comprehensive figures. Greater convergence between adaptation and mitigation interventions will increase cost requirements and, as climate change impacts worsen, loss and damage costs will also increase, as will the need for and scale of adaptation interventions. LDC NDCs must better reflect this.

As well as costing the adaptation component, LDCs need to disaggregate the costs they plan to meet domestically from their total costing need. They also need to be consistent in presenting requests for financial, technology and capacity-building needs at the overall and intervention-specific level. Providing clarity around both these issues will help the international community identify where best to channel resources and support. Where a lack of finances, capacity or technology presents a barrier to providing this level of detail, LDCs should signpost where the international community can support resourcing for actions such as scoping studies and stakeholder workshops.

Cost of adaptation

Figure 1 shows the average costs of adaptation interventions, based on the 16 NDCs that specified to the sector level.⁴ The largest projects, by funding need, are in agriculture and food security, followed

Table 1. Adaptation priorities represented in 47 LDC (I)NDC documents

Sector and subsector	Identified measures	In number of (I)NDCs
Agriculture and food security	185	37
Crops and cropping systems	52	22
Farming resilience (food and livelihood security)	42	25
Aquaculture and fisheries	29	14
Policy and capacity	25	12
Livestock	20	14
Agroforestry	7	4
Land management	7	5
Environmental resilience	3	2
Natural resource management: hydrological, water resources, coastal zones	174	35
Water management	81	30
Water infrastructure	39	19
Coastal zones	37	19
Water ecosystems	9	7
Water defences	8	7
Natural resource management: forests, land use change, ecosystems	122	35
Forests	52	25
Land management	43	12
Ecosystems	27	17
Policy, strategy, and planning	125	34
Policy development, including national plans and strategies	37	22
Monitoring, climate data and knowledge management	32	22
Cross-cutting area: capacity building and knowledge transfer, climate services, technology transfer, international financing	27	18
Climate change mainstreaming	17	10
Governance and participation	12	8
Disaster risk management	55	26
Early warning systems	28	19
Disaster risk management	14	9
Disaster risk reduction	13	7
Health	50	22
Capacity development	31	16
Diseases and epidemic prevention and control	12	9
Vulnerability reduction	7	6
Infrastructure	43	21
Resilience building	16	14
Policy and regulation	16	10
Urban development	6	5
Transport	5	4
Energy	41	18
Renewable energy development	17	12
Electricity	7	5
Energy efficiency	6	5
Biomass energy	6	4
Energy production and generation	5	4
Other	17	10
Production and industry	8	7
Tourism	7	3
Culture	2	2

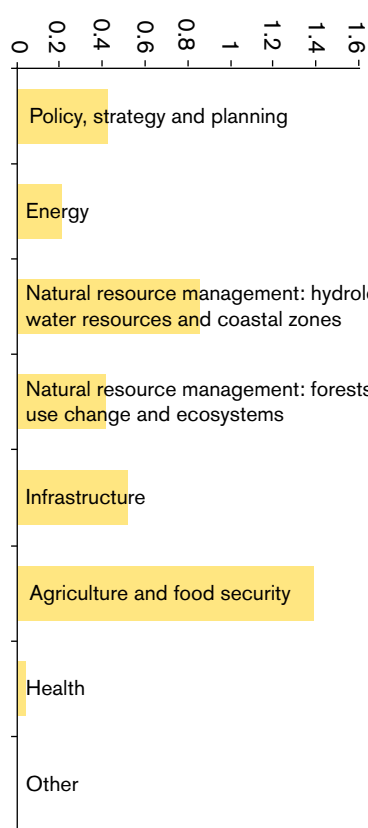
by hydrological, water resources and coastal zones, matching the top priority sectors in Table 1.

Infrastructure interventions had the third-largest average cost but emerged as a lower priority in

Table 1. While they are likely to cost more than energy or health initiatives, the difference may also indicate that LDCs have not yet fully considered and formed — and therefore developed and

Figure 1. Average cost of planned adaptation projects, by sector

Financing required (US\$ billions)



costed — interventions in some sectors. As countries move to a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to developing adaptation intervention needs, the average cost of interventions in various sectors will increase.

What next for decision makers?

1. We recommend LDCs take the learnings from their first-round (I)NDCs to refine and update their communications in line with Paris commitments, focusing their energies on developing:

- **Sectors and subsectors that are missing from their NDC documents:** LDCs must be wary of significant gaps in the scope of adaptation measures. Their next NDC iterations should consistently take a whole-of-government and, where feasible, a whole-of-society approach. Engaging all relevant departments and non-government actors will help incorporate all vulnerable sectors in adaptation and resilience building.

- **Granularity and consistency in reporting the scale of action:** NDC documents are largely unclear about the scale of adaptation interventions. Consistent reporting on this can direct international support through more appropriate channels and funding instruments.
- **The resourcing ask:** inconsistency in reporting financial, technology and capacity needs impedes the flow of international support. All LDCs must be clear about these needs at the overall and intervention levels, disaggregating the costs they will meet domestically from their ask.

2. The LDC Group is supporting the development of adaptation priorities and refining its vision for a climate-resilient future through the **LDC Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR)**.⁵ This LDC-owned and driven initiative will help drive forward climate action according to LDC needs and priorities, presenting a strong case for domestic, donor and private investment to deliver long-term, innovative action at scale. LIFE-AR aims to identify immediate priorities that will build national institutions, domestic systems and capabilities, and define National Action Plans (NAPs), NDCs and wider efforts to build resilience and address poverty.

3. Countries have been invited to submit **long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LTS)** by 2020. These will develop overarching long-term visions for LDCs to draw on and align with when updating their short-term NDCs.

4. The **international community** should use the information in LDCs' existing (I)NDCs as a guide for channelling support and utilise the **United Nations Secretary General's Climate Summit** in September 2019 to reaffirm their commitments to support the poorest and most vulnerable and accelerate support for adaptation to ensure the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Sejal Patel, Neha Rai and Sarah Mclvor

Sejal Patel is a researcher in IIED's Climate Change Group. Neha Rai is a senior researcher in IIED's Climate Change Group. Sarah Mclvor is a researcher in IIED's Climate Change Group.

The authors would like to thank to Simon Addison, principal researcher in IIED's Climate Change Group, for review and comments.



Knowledge Products

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Contact

Sejal Patel
sejal.patel@iied.org

80–86 Gray's Inn Road
London, WC1X 8NH
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399
www.iied.org

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ISBN 978-1-78431-696-9

This briefing has been produced with the generous support of Danida (Denmark), Irish Aid and Sida (Sweden).

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Notes

¹ The findings in this briefing come from a background analysis of the 47 LDC (I)NDC documents submitted to the UNFCCC, using the most recent version of each (I)NDC. See all the documents at: www4.unfccc.int/sites/NDCStaging/Pages/All.aspx. The background analysis will be presented in an IIED background paper (Patel, forthcoming, IIED, London). / ² See <https://tinyurl.com/y3yjxtg5> / ³ Of the 47 documents, 46 have an adaptation component. The exception, Tuvalu, points to its adaptation priorities in its National Adaptation Programme for Action and National Strategic Action Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Management. / ⁴ **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Kiribati, Lao PDR**, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Haiti, **Angola**, Benin, **Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad**, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, **Eritrea**, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, **Mali, Mauritania, Niger**, Rwanda, **Senegal**, Sierra Leone, **Somalia**, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, **Togo**, Uganda, Zambia. Those in **bold** are the 16 that have broken costs down to the sector or project level. / ⁵ See www.iied.org/lcd-initiative-for-effective-adaptation-resilience-life-ar