

JOINT PRINCIPLES FOR ADAPTATION

A CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE AND EQUITABLE ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Preamble

The Joint Principles for Adaptation are a statement by civil society organisations from across the world of what they consider to be a benchmark for good adaptation planning. They were developed in 2014 as a joint initiative by civil society networks working on climate change from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and will be further revised as they are tested in more countries. They take the form of a set of seven principles, each with a subset of qualifying criteria.

On the basis of their experience of successful community development, civil society organisations consider that:

NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ADAPTATION PLANNING LEAD TO A MORE EQUITABLE AND MORE EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE WHEN

PRINCIPLES	Criteria
A. The planning process is participatory and inclusive	1. The knowledge and experience of local communities and indigenous peoples is incorporated
	2. Communities affected by climate change participate in defining options and priorities
	3. Plans are publicised in ways that local people can understand and engage with
B. Public funds for adaptation are utilised efficiently and managed transparently and with integrity	1. The implementation and financing of plans is periodically monitored by a body on which civil society is represented
	2. Adaptation funding is made available through a transparent process of allocation
	3. There is full and free access to information on how adaptation funds are being spent (finances and processes)
	4. There is a mechanism in place to safeguard against initiatives that might have negative impacts
	5. A secure mechanism for expressing grievances and seeking redress is available
C. All government sectors and levels of administration have defined responsibilities and appropriate resources to fulfil them	1. National adaptation plans carry the authority to enable different government sectors to work in a coordinated way
	2. Existing initiatives are enhanced to take climate change into account
	3. Funding for adaptation is explicitly provided for within the national budget and respective sectorial allocations
D. Local adaptation plans developed through community-based approaches are a core element	1. Local adaptation plans are formalised and integrated into the development priorities of local administrations
	2. Significant resources are allocated towards implementation of local adaptation plans
	3. Financing arrangements make commitments for multi-year programmes of support to vulnerable communities
E. The resilience of women and men who are most	1. Plans identify and target people who are socially and economically most vulnerable

vulnerable to climate change is built	2. Programmes take into account the differentiated needs and capacities of women and men in different social groups
	3. Initiatives that enhance community adaptation through greater social integration and cohesion are promoted
F. There is a balance between the investment in physical infrastructure and the building of skills and capacities	1. Adequate resources are made available to improve the effectiveness of institutions responsible for managing climate change adaptation
	2. Adequate resources are made available for raising public awareness and education about climate change
	3. Investment plans contains targets for both “soft” and “hard” interventions
G. Plans respond to evidence of the current and future impacts of climate change	1. Adaptation plans consider how climate is affecting existing vulnerabilities
	2. Planning scenarios are based on the best available science and evidence from the ground
	3. Interventions are modified as new information becomes available
	4. Climate information is made accessible to enable adaptive decision making by all stakeholders

How the Joint Principles for Adaptation can be used

The Joint Principles are framed in a way that can be generally applicable across a wide range of country contexts. While they are useable in that form, in most cases they will need to be customised for a particular context. The first step in using the Joint Principles is to ensure that they are expressed in a way that is appropriate to the intended audience.

The Joint Principles can be used in one or more of three ways, outlined below. In all modes, a useful starting point is to use the Joint Principles to assess the status of national adaptation policy and planning in their countries. This might be in the form of a scorecard, with an assessment made against each principle and/or each criterion.

“Advocacy Mode”: To set advocacy objectives

An assessment against the Joint Principles can be used to identify the gaps between the existing status of adaptation planning in a country and the desired level. These can then be used to define the areas on which civil society might undertake advocacy, either where the gap is largest, or where the potential for closing it is highest. Used in this way, the Joint Principles serve as an internal tool or reference point for civil society organisations.

Example: As a result of the analysis, civil society may choose to mount a campaign to ensure that “Adaptation funding is made available through a transparent process of allocation” (Principle B.2)

“Dialogue Mode”: To promote dialogue with government

The assessment of performance against the JOINT PRINCIPLES can be carried out as a collaborative exercise with government counterparts, and subsequently used to develop an agreed national benchmark for the adaptation framework of plans, policies and

programmes in the country. If governments are using the LEG guidelines¹, the JOINT PRINCIPLES indicates those areas of particular interest to civil society and where they might have a role. Thus the Joint Principles serve as an input for developing a nationally determined adaptation standard, towards which all the stakeholders in the country agree to work.

Example: By jointly considering the Joint Principles, government and civil society might formally agree the roles that civil society will play in the process of developing a National Adaptation Plan.

“Capacity-building Mode”: To determine capacity building needs

A JOINT PRINCIPLES assessment can help identify the areas where capacity among civil society, government or other actors needs to be built in order for the desired level to be attained.

Example: The Joint Principles may highlight that local government staff need training and support in how to develop local adaptation plans using community-based approaches.

These modes can be used singly or in combination – for instance, the assessment may indicate that certain principles need to be upheld through advocacy, while for others capacity building may be a more effective response.

Developing the Principles

The current version 1.0 of the Joint Principles for Adaptation was based on initial contributions from a number of civil society networks from across the world. The next step is to test them in practice, and proposals are being received from civil society networks interested in doing this, and customising them to suit particular country circumstances. Following a year of testing, the Joint Principles will be reviewed in 2015 and a revised version issued for wider dissemination.

For further information and developments see www.southernvoices.net

¹ Least Developed Countries Expert Group “Technical Guidelines for National Adaptation Plan Process”