

## Adaptation Policy Brief

# Position on the future of the Nairobi Work Programme

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
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The Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) has been a critical component of international engagement on adaptation, and in many ways, has provided a foundation for continued progress on adaptation both nationally/locally and internationally. The NWP has played a very useful and proactive role in gathering and collecting information and dissemination that has contributed to the growing body of information and knowledge on adaptation to climate change. Nairobi Work Programme input into the adaptation process has strongly complemented guidance from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and has equipped practitioners with tools, as well as a platform to share and receive information. Given the gaps in data and understanding surrounding adaptation, this work remains critical to providing a sound foundation and basis for the effective and successful implementation of adaptation measures globally.

Together, partners and participants in the NWP have delved into the complexities and tough questions inherent in adaptation, effectively fostering collaboration between Parties, academia, multi and bilateral organizations, NGOs, and adaptation practitioners under the same platform. Conservation International has been substantially engaged in submitting pledges, but also through providing technical support under the thematic areas of water and EBA.

At its 17<sup>th</sup> session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC requested the SBSTA to reconsider, at its 38<sup>th</sup> session, the work areas of the Nairobi work programme with a view to making recommendations to the COP at its 19<sup>th</sup> session on how best to support the objectives of the Nairobi work programme (decision 6/CP.17). This consideration offers a timely opportunity to reexamine the overall objective and structure of the programme. Looking to the future of the NWP, there are key areas where enhanced action, further engagement, and restructuring could allow the NWP to evolve and more comprehensively fulfill its objective. Given that it may be infeasible to increase funding and support for the NWP, the following suggestions are ranked in order of priority to maximize the programme's future effectiveness.

*Complementing other agenda items, bodies, and funding mechanisms.* The various bodies of work under the UNFCCC include many devoted to adaptation, but represent different mandates, purposes, and audiences. The NWP should continue to play a pivotal role in educating UNFCCC Parties to make informed decisions on adaptation locally. Since the NWP is in the practice of being a repository for materials, there can tend to be a lag in the timing the information is substantively presented in the NWP platform. To leverage its position as a "clearinghouse" for adaptation, the NWP should evolve into a research service with a clear linkage to another body such as the Adaptation Committee. In this way, the

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NWP would serve a useful purpose of providing specific, balanced support for which the findings of the programme can be fed into policy and long-term work within the Convention. The NWP should also explore linkages with the Least Develop Country Expert Group (LEG), adaptation funding mechanisms (GEF, AF, GCF, etc), and specifically, the NAP process.

*Structure: a dual thematic and sectoral approach.* The NWP should explore a dual sectoral and thematic approach to establishing future work areas. The themes, water and watersheds, ecosystems services, land use management, and communities/livelihoods, run across nearly all adaptation projects and constitute elements that should be considered during the planning process for all adaptation interventions and measures in every context. Water cuts across nearly every sector and, to a large extent, is the resource most impacted by climate change. Ecosystems services (urban and natural) are both the scorecard and the instrument for sustainable development and link to land use management which provides the basis for long term ecosystem service maintenance and food and water security. Communities and their livelihoods are key beneficiaries of adaptation and are also integral and the basis of planning, development, and implementation of all adaptation projects. It is essential that communities be considered throughout adaptation integrally.

The themes themselves, and planning processes, lead to the implementation sectors of adaptation, which materialize in sustainable agriculture, coastal management, disaster risk reduction, and includes capacity building, policy development, and supporting improved governance. These sectors will allow for the integration and mainstreaming of adaptation as a crucial component of decision and policy-making, and fulfillment of development goals. Each sector should provide tools and methods that can be directly implemented, while showcasing best practices in these areas for further replication.



Figure 1: Proposed thematic and sectoral areas

*Pursuing a more evaluative role.* The NWP must continue to serve the needs of the Parties because they are the primary audience and user of its products. The NWP should therefore provide support on developing NAPAs and NAPs, providing expert assessments on project reviews for funding mechanisms, and so on. This would allow the programme to assume a more evaluative role, whereby the work produced by the programme may undertake qualitative assessments of adaptation, additionality, mainstreaming, identifying maladaptive approaches based on lessons learned, and making recommendations. This should also translate into strengthening the knowledge and resource base on monitoring and evaluation and assessing cost-effectiveness and the cost – benefits of approaches. It may be worthwhile to explore the creation of an expert group (or several thematic expert groups) connected to the NWP that can help provide assessments or facilitate consultations that try to identify best practices as a set of standards to judge against.

*Revising the mandate.* The NWP was designed to provide guidance on all aspects of adaptation: assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation, dissemination. However, the mandate of the NWP to focus only on impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation may result in a lost opportunity to consider overlaps and synergies between mitigation and adaptation, especially at the local /landscape level. Many avenues for mitigation and clean energy focus on biofuels, nuclear, solar, and hydropower – most of which are very water-intensive or may have indirect effects on long term adaptation or maladaptation. . Further, REDD policy itself relies on sufficient water in precipitation and soils to retain forest carbon for decades or centuries. This has huge implications for water availability, adaptation and mitigation options, agriculture, and livelihoods. While the Nairobi Work Programme should maintain its focus on adaptation, it is important to understand that oftentimes adaptation does not occupy a discrete, self-contained space, but rather is practiced in complex systems influenced by numerous external factors. Synergies between mitigation and adaptation at landscape level must be considered and introduced into the NWP through an integrated approach, thereby assisting practitioners and policy-makers in making difficult decisions amidst limited and increasingly scarce financial and natural resources. Further, there remains a need to focus on what adaptation is (in practical terms), how it should be monitored relative to the development context.

*Future engagement and activities: wider reach.* The NWP mainly works through the modalities of national governments and countries. Although adaptation impacts are largely local and at the community-level, the work of the NWP seldom scales down to communities and indigenous groups, scales up to transboundary issues, engages the private sector, development banks, or UN agencies, nor does it address implementation issues in protected areas or allow for enhanced understanding around the role of indigenous groups proactively. All of these areas among others represent essential opportunities for further work. Additionally, the programme should explore and implement wider outreach efforts to facilitate in the distribution, utilization, and scale-up of information and knowledge materials to practitioners. Measures should be put in place to facilitate better alignment of action pledges as well.

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Through these substantive changes, the NWP can evolve significantly in the future by enhancing its work, maximizing delivery and application of its products, and catalyzing additional guidance that remains so crucial to parties as we deepen our understanding of adaptation. This will ensure that the NWP contributes to the implementation side of adaptation. CI remains committed to contributing to the work of the NWP and we lend our support in ensuring enhanced, evolved action on adaptation moving forward.