



Adaptation Briefings

Alignment to Advance Climate-Resilient Development – an Introduction

Angie Dazé, Anika Terton and Malte Maass

The Adaptation Briefings under the NDC Support Cluster are a series of papers that provide concise and easy to digest information on various key topics relevant to projects working on climate change adaptation. The Briefings – besides short thematic introductions – offer insights into the often complex debate under the UNFCCC and help translating negotiation results into practical implementation of the Paris Agreement at country level. Well-selected references provide a rich source of further knowledge and information on practical solutions and can help projects navigate adaptation process in their respective countries.

1 Why Alignment may matter – to you

Recent years have seen a number of global commitments aimed at putting human development on a more sustainable pathway (Bradley & Hammill, 2017; Hammill and Price-Kelly, 2017). There is broad agreement that climate change represents a threat to sustainable development (Denton, et al., 2014); consequently, development efforts must be resilient to the impacts

of climate change and related disaster risks in order to be sustainable. This has been recognized in international agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; all of which have drawn links between climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Adaptation Briefing information

For questions on this issue, please contact:

- Anika Terton aterton@iisd.ca (NAP Global Network)
- André Fabian andre.fabian@giz.de (GIZ SPA Project)

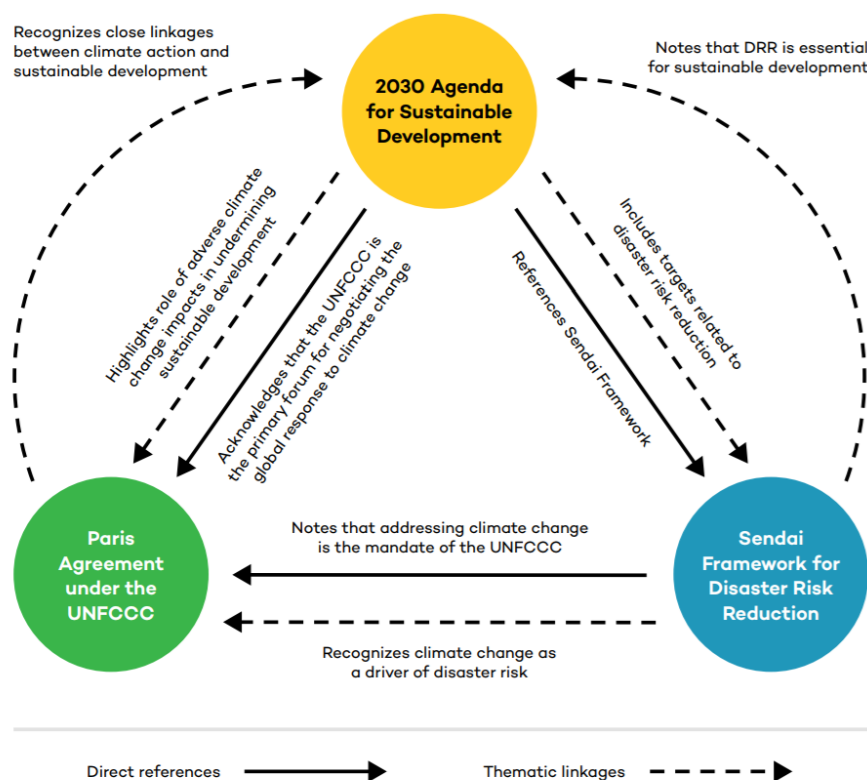
For information on related networks, please visit:

- NDC Support Cluster: <https://www.ndc-cluster.net/>
- NAP Global Network: <http://napglobalnetwork.org>
- Adapt. Community: <https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/>

Upcoming Adaptation Briefings will be on:

- Adaptation Finance
- Monitoring and Evaluation and Learning
- Gender in Adaptation

Figure 1. Connections in the texts of the global agendas¹



Within countries, a number of policy processes have been established under these global agendas, elaborating individual commitments, strategies and plans for meeting the objectives therein, including strategies aimed at achieving the SDGs; National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement; and DRR strategies under the Sendai Framework. These represent key national policy processes that can advance climate-resilient development by facilitating systematic consideration of climate change in decision-making (USAID, 2014). Alignment of the different processes is necessary to increase coherence, efficiency and effectiveness towards development outcomes that are resilient and sustainable.

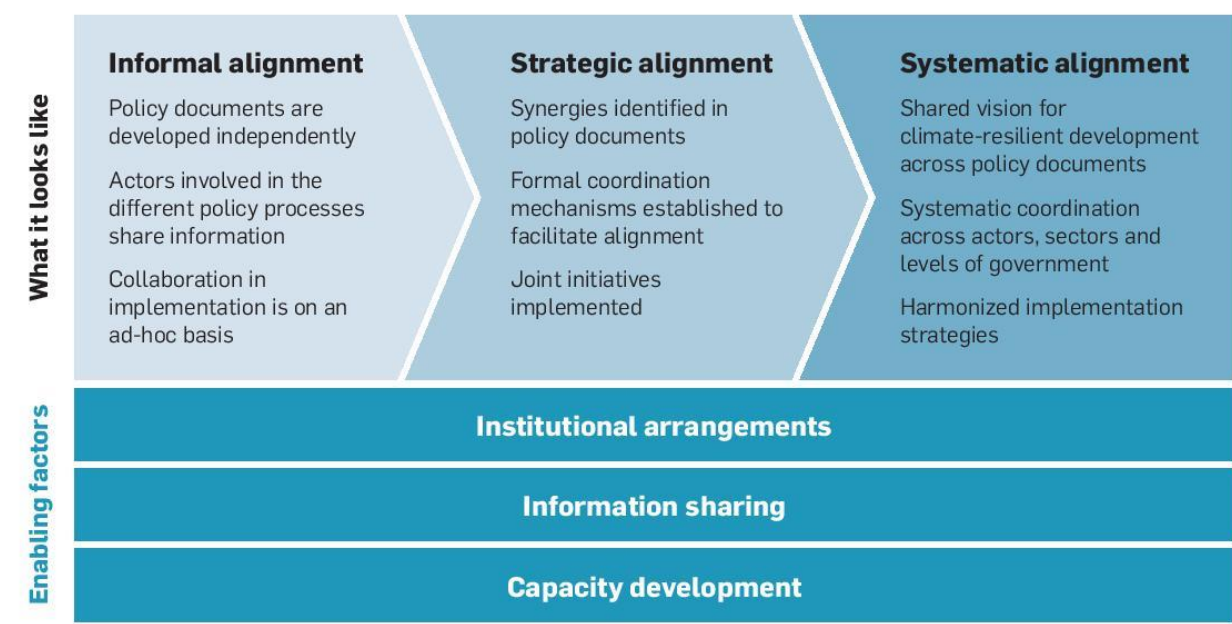
However, a recent stocktake review and expert discussions revealed a need for clearer understanding of what “alignment” means in a practical sense, how countries approach alignment based on their specific context and how to operationalize linkages between SDGs, NDCs, NAP processes and DRR strategies at scale where feasible. Further, the majority of literature appears to be focused on the content-related linkages between SDGs, NAPs and NDC rather than the institutional challenges associated with alignment of multiple planning processes at the national level (e.g. coordination among different ministries and divisions, information sharing) and how these best translate into action on the sub-national and local level.

The approach to alignment will differ depending on the particular country context. The figure below presents a continuum of progress on alignment, from informal collaboration, through strategic

¹ From: NAP Global Network (IISD, 2018): Alignment to Advance Climate-Resilient Development – Overview Brief 1: Introduction to Alignment, <http://napglobalnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/napgn-en-2018-alignment-to-advance-climate-resilient-development-overview-brief.pdf>

coordination to systematic alignment. It also highlights the importance of institutional arrangements, capacity development and information sharing at all points on the continuum.

Figure 2. The alignment continuum²



How countries approach alignment is dependent on a number of factors, including political will, power dynamics and capacities. The most likely starting point for most countries is informal alignment, characterized by information sharing and ad-hoc coordination. As commitment to alignment increases, countries may move along the spectrum to more strategic approaches involving formal coordination mechanisms and joint initiatives. Systematic alignment, comprising a shared vision for climate-resilient development, systematic coordination among relevant actors and harmonized implementation strategies for the different policy processes, may represent a longer-term goal of alignment processes. However, for many countries, aligning multiple processes at once may not be feasible (or even desirable). In some contexts, it may make sense to invest in strategic or systematic alignment of some processes, while remaining informal for others.

Countries must therefore seek out the entry points for alignment that make the most sense in their specific context or at a particular point in time. In identifying entry points for alignment, countries may consider:

- Key milestones in the different policy processes, such as the development of particular documents or reporting cycles;
- Coordination mechanisms that exist already for climate change adaptation and/or disaster risk reduction;
- Where champions for alignment sit within the government and how they can be engaged to facilitate action;
- Where the objectives of the policy processes clearly converge, so the benefits from alignment are easily demonstrated.

² Ibid.

2 What you need to know about the current debate on Alignment

The principle of alignment is included in international agreements and processes. While NDCs represent the signature vehicle of the Paris Agreement, it also includes a call for all countries to engage in NAP processes, which are considered an important part of a country's efforts to implement the Agreement. Further, although the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement were negotiated under separate international forums, both agendas are deeply intertwined. Climate impacts have the potential to slow progress on the SDGs. Sustainable development policies and actions have a positive impact on GHG emission reduction and enhance resilience to climate impacts, while climate policies and measures for both mitigation and adaptation can advance sustainable development objectives.

In addition, a number of high-level technical discussions are taking place under the UNFCCC process related to alignment. Specifically, under the Technical Examination Process on Adaptation (TEP-A) which has prepared a technical paper on [“Opportunities and options for integrating climate change adaptation with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030”](#).

As part of the assessment of progress on NAPs in developing countries under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, developing countries are to provide information on the type of technical support required for the formulation and implementation of NAPs – “how to practically link NAPs with other low-carbon development strategies, the SDGs and other relevant processes” has been identified as a potential area in need of technical support. The [“Submission by Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on behalf of the Least Developed Countries Group on National Adaptation Plans”](#) (2017) identifies “linking and aligning with 2030 sustainable development agenda, Sendai Framework on disaster risk reduction and Habitat III New Urban Agenda and other relevant initiatives” under lessons learned, gaps and needs in formulating and implementing NAPs.

However, alignment may not always be desirable or favoured. For example, development partners' approaches toward alignment of adaptation planning processes with current NDC implementation strategies differ from “full endorsement” to “hesitation”. Concerns are mainly related to the importance of mitigation within the NDCs, which may potentially be undermined if information on adaptation becomes mandatory and prescriptive.

At COP24 in Poland, countries continued to negotiate the “Paris Rulebook” or the operating manual the agreement needs when it enters force. One key issue was whether the NDC guidance should cover mitigation alone, or also adaptation, climate finance and loss and damage. At COP24, views strongly diverged on reflecting differentiation and the need to reflect mitigation as a mandatory requirement in NDCs. Parties diverged on the scope of further guidance, with some countries stressing it is mitigation only and others saying it applies to the “full scope” of NDCs. Some countries suggested agreeing on a few specific features at COP 24 and mandating future sessions to develop guidance for the second round of NDCs. Finally, countries decided to continue consideration of further guidance on features of NDCs to a later meeting.

Information on adaptation remains a voluntary component of the NDC. However, with respect to the provisions related to the adaptation communication under the rule book, parties agreed that countries can submit their adaptation communication via their NDCs, national communications, or national

adaptation plans. Specifically, it invites parties to include information on their national circumstances, impacts and vulnerabilities, adaptation priorities, plans and actions, and support needed and provided; and, as appropriate, additional information, including on implementation.

To conclude, the dialogue around alignment and linkages between NAPs and NDC must be treated carefully until the “adaptation in NDC issue” is finally agreed upon in the international negotiations.

At country level, national governments are working to operationalize the commitments under the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework. There are several common approaches in these country-level policy processes that create an impetus for alignment. Pursuing at least a certain degree of alignment can increase:

- **Coherence**, by facilitating analysis of shared objectives, co-benefits and trade-offs between differing objectives, leading to more strategic investments and ensuring that efforts in one area do not undermine progress in another.
- **Efficiency**, by avoiding duplication of efforts and enabling smart use of resources, including finance and human resources.
- **Effectiveness**, by approaching climate-resilient development in an integrated way, leading to improved quality of planning, implementation, and measurement and evaluation processes for better results.³

Many countries are still in the early stages of considering alignment, creating a significant opportunity for learning and knowledge exchange.

The process of alignment may be perceived by some actors to be slowing down progress – a balance must be struck between coordinated actions and making progress, taking the particular country context into account. Inevitably, there will be trade-offs. These include trade-offs between investing in alignment and making progress on the individual policy processes. Alignment requires an investment of time and resources, which will likely provide returns in the form of improved outcomes. This relies on a shared commitment to alignment.

Upcoming knowledge products developed under the SPA Adaptation Component will focus on how countries can get started on aligning different policy processes by defining alignment objectives, identifying entry points and putting enabling factors in place, the continuum of approaches countries may choose to align planning processes to advance climate-resilient development, and recommendations on identifying and establishing crosswalks between how priorities are identified, addressed, monitored and reviewed in a country’s NDC adaptation communication, NAP processes, SDGs and DRR strategies. These foundational overview briefs will be supported by a number of country specific case studies.

³ In a recent technical paper, the UNFCCC Secretariat highlighted these same benefits, but in relation to what they refer to as “partial, but robust” policy integration (UNFCCC, 2017, p.10).

Where you find more information, and practical solutions?

The following table presents a body of completed and recorded work produced by international think tanks and organizations related to alignment of NDC adaptation targets with related national and international processes. The in green highlighted publications are recommended as the top five introductory reads to further explore the topic of alignment.

#	Resource	Author	Purpose	Key messages	Focus
1	Alignment to Advance Climate-Resilient Development	NAP Global Network (IISD)	This is the first in a series of briefs focusing on alignment of country efforts under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. It provides an introduction to the concept of alignment as it relates to these policy processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment of country-level policy processes under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction can help to advance climate-resilient development. Alignment can increase coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in country policy processes for improved outcomes. At the global level, these agendas share objectives to strengthen resilience, build adaptive capacity and reduce vulnerability to climate change and disasters, creating a strong rationale for alignment. The approach to alignment will differ depending on the particular country context. Progress on alignment may follow a continuum from informal to systematic. 	Paris Agreement, SDGs, Sendai Framework
2	Using NDCs, NAPs and SDGs to Advance Climate-Resilient Development (2017)	NAP-Global Network (IISD) and NDC-Partnership	<p>How to define the relationship between NAP and NDC processes?</p> <p>How to leverage the NAP process through which developing countries can implement or identify NDC adaptation priorities?</p> <p>How can adaptation commitments be leveraged in support of achieving the SDGs?</p>	<p>Provides a framework for linking NAPs and NDCs to help countries identify starting point and how they can link NDC and NAP processes based on two questions placed along two axes:</p> <p>(1) Is a NAP process currently underway in the country?</p> <p>(2) Was adaptation included in the country's NDC?</p> <p>Countries can identify from 4 quadrants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quadrant 1: Adaptation component in the NDC and a NAP process well underway Quadrant 2: Adaptation component in the NDC in the absence or early stages of a NAP process Quadrant 3: A NAP process is well underway with a brief (or no) NDC adaptation component Quadrant 4: No adaptation component in the NDC and in the absence or early stages of a NAP process Multiple intersections exist between SDGs and NDC-A/NAPs -> delivering on NDCs and NAPs will help countries achieve their SDGs SDGs are shaping development agenda that NDC and NAP processes should be supporting The NAP process can provide an operational bridge to link SDGs and NDC-A commitments Agendas must cross-reference each other, and alignment must be operationalized in implementation, tracking, and reporting. Linking priorities identified through NDCA, NAPs and SDGs potentially help build broader political support for adaptation and demonstrating importance. 	NDC & NAPs and SDGs

#	Resource	Author	Purpose	Key messages	Focus
3	Opportunities and options for integrating climate change adaptation with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (2017)	UN Climate Change Secretariat	The objective of this technical paper is to identify opportunities for enhancing adaptation action, as well as options for supporting the implementation of specific actions, including by integrating adaptation with efforts to achieve the SDGs and implement the Sendai Framework. The paper attempts to answer how integrating adaptation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction can contribute to strengthening resilience, reducing vulnerabilities and increasing the understanding and implementation of adaptation actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unprecedented levels of coordination and coherence will be needed; strong need for capacity building and encourage partnerships Better data management, more informed policymaking and capacity-building are also needed. While maintaining the autonomy of each of the post-2015 frameworks, improved coherence of action to implement the three frameworks can save money and time, enhance efficiency and further enable adaptation action There are many opportunities to support further policy integration between adaptation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction, owing in part to the common themes, scopes and objectives of the three global agendas The process to formulate and implement NAPs can effectively support the implementation of enhanced adaptation action and the development of integrated approaches to adaptation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction Adequate, sustainable support for adaptation efforts from sources public, private, international and national alike is crucial 	NAPs and SDGs and Sendai Framework
4	‘Resilience’ across the post-2015 frameworks: towards coherence? (2016)	Overseas Development Institute (ODI)	The paper aims to translate commitments to ‘resilience’ in the post-2015 frameworks from the global level down to the national and sub-national levels. It aims to help those working on building resilience – from policy-makers to community leaders and technical experts – to understand how resilience features in the frameworks and what the opportunities are for a more coherent agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilience is featured in all of the four major post-2015 frameworks on development, climate, disasters and humanitarian issues. Resilience provides a useful umbrella under which to address the range of hazards and risks that a country or community might face Coordinating actions taken to deliver against each framework can also help to avoid duplication, maximise gains and manage trade-offs between different risks and goals Greater institutional incentives are needed to reinforce coherence on resilience across the agreements, particularly among UN agencies and national governments 	Post-2015 Frameworks
5	The Role of the NAP Process in Translating NDC Adaptation Goals into Action. Linking NAP processes and NDCs (2017)	GIZ	<p>The study aims to answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase understanding of the (I)NDC adaptation components, the extent to which they are aligned with existing adaptation planning documents (such as NAPs) and provide arguments for their increased alignment; Address how NDCs and the NAP process can together help to 	<p>The product aims to provide guidance to national policymakers on how to link the NAP processes and NDCs. The study concludes that linking the NAP process to the development of NDCs can, inter alia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerate enhanced adaptation action and raise the profile of adaptation on the national agenda Increase international and domestic political support, as well as national budgetary support, for the NAP process The NAP process can inform the development of possible future iterations of adaptation goals – ‘what’ a country is seeking to achieve Above all, the NAP process can facilitate the implementation of the adaptation goals and define ‘how’ NDC adaptation goals are implemented 	NAPs and NDCs

#	Resource	Author	Purpose	Key messages	Focus
			<p>accelerate adaptation action by indicating how, on the one hand, the NAP process can support implementation of the adaptation goals expressed in the (I)NDCs while, on the other hand, the NAP process can inform possible future iterations of adaptation goals;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance to national policymakers on how to define and realise the links between the NAP process and NDCs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help identify mitigation and adaptation co-benefits; and support delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) • Establishing coherent governance structures at the national level can help avoid duplication of effort and make efficient use of limited resources • Linking NDC implementation to the NAP process facilitates the integration of adaptation into national budget cycles • Streamline countries' transparency frameworks, such as countries' adaptation communications • Support delivery of the SDGs 	
6	Connecting the Dots: Elements for a Joined-Up Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement	WRI	The paper examines the ways in which the alignment of the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement can be increased, despite their distinct histories, communities of actors and political dynamics. The paper draws on examples and lessons learned from 11 countries and the EU.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National-level implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change generally proceed on different tracks, despite growing recognition of the ample opportunities they present for synergies. • In most countries, climate actions under the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national targets underpinning the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been defined and advanced separately. This siloed approach makes little sense given the short window of opportunity for tackling the interlinked challenges of climate change, ecosystem degradation, inequality rise, and political instability. • The paper provides core elements and concrete examples for jointly advancing these agendas, with a focus on five challenges: coordinating institutions, aligning national climate and SDG-relevant targets, mainstreaming both set of goals into policy planning, optimizing financial resources, and building mutually reinforcing monitoring and reporting frameworks. The research also explores how international development can better support national efforts at linking both agendas. 	SDGs and NDCs
7	Examining the alignment between the intended nationally determined contributions and sustainable development goals (2016)	WRI	The paper explores the extent to which SDGs and (I)NDCs are aligned in a concrete way by identifying examples of climate actions in the INDCs that have the potential to generate mutual benefits with the SDGs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across the INDCs examined, climate actions were aligned with 154 of the 169 SDG targets • Climate policies and measures for both mitigation and adaptation can advance development objectives (SDGs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mutual sustainable development and climate benefits ○ Sustainable development co-benefits from climate action ○ Climate co-benefits from sustainable development action • Alignment becomes evident when comparing the climate actions communicated in INDCs to the SDG targets. • New approaches need to be developed to mobilize and efficiently distribute resources for successful implementation – key component: information, expertise and priority sharing • Need whole government approaches – horizontal and vertical • Focus must be on 'how' to maximize mutual benefits of multiple frameworks 	NDCs and SDGs

#	Resource	Author	Purpose	Key messages	Focus
8	Integrating Climate Action into National Development Planning (2017)	SIDA	This guide is part of a series of guides to support implementation of the Paris Agreement with focus on the linkages made between the SDGs and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SDGs provide a development first framing for NDCs and if well-coordinated could help to increase the ambition of NDCs • The context in each country is different – in some countries NDCs are the driver while in others it is the SDGs • Dealt with in isolation there is a risk that NDCs could result in countries focusing on a narrow range of sectors, particularly those relevant to emissions reductions • The SDGs provide a normative framework to guide approaches to implementing the actions set out in NDCs and NAPs, such as human rights, gender equality and inclusion • NAPs can operationalise the commitments set out in NDCs. In addition, the adaptation actions delivered by NDCs and NAPs can also result in benefits for the SDGs, by building resilience in sectors from agriculture and food to cities and disaster risk reduction • Two of the targets in SDG 13 directly relate to adaptation: target 13.1 on strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity and target 13.2 on integrating climate change policies into national policies, strategies and planning processes • Report provides almost a dozen case studies 	NDCs and SDGs
9	Synergies in monitoring the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the SDGs and the Sendai Framework (2017)	GIZ	This policy brief describes the opportunities and limits of connecting the monitoring of the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data sources, indicators and institutional arrangements may be shared to reduce the reporting burden • Countries should seek opportunities to connect the monitoring of the three agreements without expecting they could substitute each other. Several countries are aligning M&E framework with SDG indicators as they realized synergies between them • It should not be assumed that a national SDG progress report with a limited set of indicators will automatically cover the specific targets of the NDCs or of the Sendai Framework • It should also be noted that despite their close references each agreement has a different rationale and addresses a distinct content. • Countries should aim to connect monitoring and reporting by integrating SDG and Sendai indicators into country specific M&E frameworks and consider using country specific M&E systems for national reporting on SDGs and SFDRR • Seeking synergy should not be mistaken for substituting one with another. 	M&E & SDGs & SFDRR

Annex – Glossary

Alignment	A process of identifying synergies among policy processes with common objectives to increase coherence, efficiency and effectiveness for improved outcomes.
Climate change adaptation	The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or to exploit beneficial opportunities. In some natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects (IPCC, 2014).
National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process	The NAP process helps countries conduct comprehensive medium and long-term climate adaptation planning. It is a flexible process that builds on each country's existing adaptation activities and helps integrate climate change into national decision-making.
Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)	NDCs communicate individual countries' post-2020 climate actions to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are part of a wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They represent a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.
Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction	The Sendai Framework is a 15-year, voluntary, non-binding agreement which aims for the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.

Published by:
Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices
Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
65760 Eschborn

T +49 61 96 79-0
F +49 61 96 79-11 15

E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de

Berlin, 2019

Authors:
Angie Dazé, Anika Terton (NAP Global Network/IISD) and Malte Maass (GIZ)

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of:



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety

of the Federal Republic of Germany