



FOSTERING SUCCESS FACTORS FOR NDC IMPLEMENTATION – LESSONS FROM THE GOOD PRACTICE DATABASE

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This input aims to inform the debate on how to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement through a successful implementation of countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The analysis of good mitigation, adaptation and cross-cutting country practices has revealed that there exist certain factors that facilitate the successful materialisation of such practices. Key factors across country contexts for the realisation of ambitious climate policies are "political buy-in", "stakeholder engagement" and "scientific analyses and technical support". Going forward in NDC implementation, it seems worthwhile to devote more attention to them while acknowledging country conditions and priorities. A particularly important issue in this context is how such factors can be influenced and supported in order to assist NDC implementation and raise ambition in the medium-to long-term.

1. WHAT ARE INSPIRING CASES FOR CLIMATE ACTION?

To accelerate climate action and lend support and inspiration in the process of NDC implementation, the Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement (PATPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the NDC Support Cluster jointly maintain a Good Practice Database (GPD) on successful climate actions in different countries. Developed on the basis of desk research and a number of semi-structured interviews with experts in the field, the case studies included in the database showcase climate actions - both in the area of mitigation and adaptation - around the globe that have proven to work well in terms of their process or impact, representing prime examples that may be worth replicating. These climate actions were identified as good practice cases for a variety of reasons, ranging from being transparent and scalable to being scientifically sound and effective. The GPD serves as a source of inspiration to develop and implement effective and efficient climate actions, and thus to make the NDC process a success. Currently, the GPD contains 40 good practice cases. More than 50 cases will be added over the next months.

2. WHAT ARE KEY FACTORS THAT MAKE CLIMATE ACTIONS SUCCESSFUL IN THE FIRST PLACE?

Two previous analyses of the 40 good practice case studies currently included in the GPD have revealed a number of factors that facilitated the successful development or implementation of a policy, programme or project¹. Three factors were most often named as particularly important:

- **POLITICAL BUY-IN AND LEADERSHIP AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL:** Political commitment and leadership comprises activities such as direct and long-term support from the President or Prime Minister, or endorsement by other state entities or ministries, in particular the Ministry of Environment.
- **INCLUSIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:** Stakeholder engagement refers to involvement of key actors in the design and implementation process and includes activities such as the conduct of institutionalised dialogues, workshops or focus group meetings with a variety of actors (e.g. policy-makers, private sector representatives, non-governmental organisations, formal and informal interest groups) or coordination at the ministerial level to foster political buy-in.
- **THOROUGH SCIENTIFIC ANALYSES AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT:** Scientific analyses comprise activities such as the conduct of studies, the implementation of trainings, and the use of existing knowledge platforms and/or other scientific/technical support services.

¹ The analysis is based on: GIZ (2014): Global Good Practice Analysis on LEDS, NAMAs and MRV. Summary Report. Available at https://gpd.transparency-partnership.net/sites/default/files/ws14098_gpa_12-seiter_summary_web.pdf and GIZ (2015): Good Practice Analysis 2.0 on INDCs, LEDS, NAMAs and MRV. Summary Report. Available at: https://gpd.transparency-partnership.net/sites/default/files/ws15223_gpa2015_summaryreport_final_web.pdf



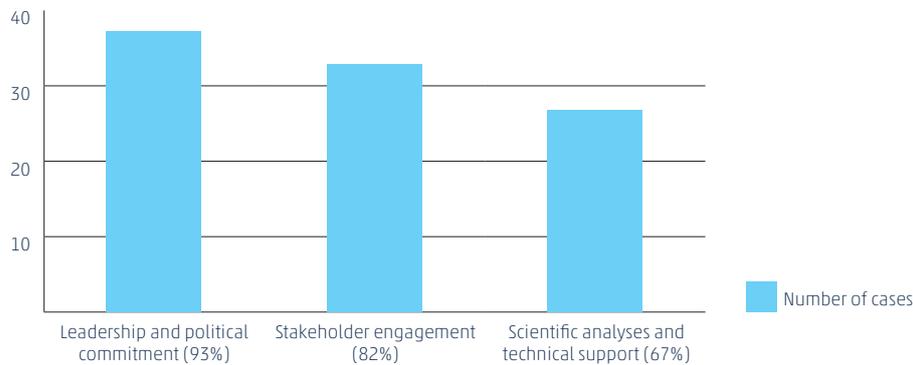


Figure 1: Key factors leading to successful implementation of climate actions

3. WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR THE REALISATION OF THESE SUCCESS FACTORS? A thorough analysis of the GPD case studies that featured the three success has indicated that the following measures have the potential to bring about what is needed from in-country authorities (e.g. local policy-makers/national governments/agencies) to stimulate the realisation these factors:

3.1 SUCCESS FACTOR: POLITICAL BUY-IN AND LEADERSHIP AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL

Political leadership and commitment (i.e. political buy-in) is an essential component for implementing the NDCs. For ambitious climate policies to succeed, leaders need to advance the implementation of NDCs with willpower and conviction, and with the right instruments at hand. The materialisation of ambitious climate policies critically depends on creating the necessary buy-in from political leaders. Also, these leaders need to sustain their support over time to make sure that policies are getting implemented. There are the following entry points to spur political buy-in and maintain it over time:

- **PRESENT THE PROBLEM AND TAILOR IT TO THE AUDIENCE:** In order to convince leaders from the necessity to take action, it is worthwhile to abstain from providing overly technical information on long-term climate trends and developments, and instead speak to what they are most concerned about: immediate and concrete problems that are occurring now. In this context, it is instrumental to frame the climate-related problems in a way that resonates with their way of thinking. Apart from finding the right framing, timing and identifying the right people to approach is important. Politicians (as well as the general public) are more prepared to listen and act as soon as the adverse impacts of climate change become visible on the ground (e.g. in the form of extreme weather events). Also, it may be useful to focus on policy-makers that are already aware of climate-related problems, but who might need some more impetus to take decisive action.
- **LAY OUT A COHERENT IDEA AND PROVIDE SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:** Laying out a concrete and coherent idea to take action against climate change is another important step to create political buy-in. Solid data and robust studies help to show political leaders the risks and consequences of inaction. Highlighting the opportunities and co-benefits (e.g. social, health or economic benefits) that can arise from taking ambitious climate action, and acknowledging uncertainties and possible areas for improvement is equally important. The goal is to co-create solutions and find practicable approaches that are acceptable for the key stakeholders involved.
- **DEVELOP A LONG-TERM VISION AND COMMUNICATE IT:** A long-term vision demonstrates long-term commitment and the direction in which climate policies are headed. It also gives various communities such as the private sector clear signals to adapt to the changing policy environment. Communicating this vision, associated policy goals and progress to a wider public helps to foster understanding and creates transparency. It is also important to invest some time in finding appropriate and effective communication channels to reach the desired target audience.

• **STRIVE FOR INSTITUTIONALISATION AND MAKE USE OF EXPERTS:** To realise a long-term vision and embed this vision firmly in national institutions, it has proven successful to put in place the necessary institutional bodies, e.g. a national steering committee, ministerial focal points or networks, or an inter-ministerial working group. These bodies can achieve collaboration across institutions and sectors. Also, they have potential to translate climate change issues into different sectoral understandings. Legal instruments such as a climate change law can enforce climate policies substantially, as they give a clear mandate to public administration and policy-makers. Expert institutions can provide a more politically independent source of input for evidence-based policy-making. They have high potential to improve the quality of the political debate.

3.2 SUCCESS FACTOR: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Climate change is a multi-sectoral challenge, affecting societies across all levels. Congruently, NDC commitments span sectors ranging from agriculture to energy to transport and ultimately affect stakeholder groups as diverse as governments, the private sector, civil society and the public at large. Engaging with these stakeholders, understanding can be built for their priorities, expectations and concerns. Climate policies based on knowledge gained from such stakeholder engagement processes are poised to be more holistic and sustainable. Here are key steps to realise a meaningful stakeholder engagement process:

• **BUILD AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENGAGEMENT VISION:** A key prerequisite for successful stakeholder engagement is being aware of the goals behind the actions. Reflecting on past experiences in engaging with stakeholders and evaluating success stories as well as failures is important. This process should also comprise developing a preliminary strategy based on the country's vision.

• **IDENTIFY KEY STAKEHOLDERS:** The key stakeholders that need to be involved in this process based on parameters such as their influence, their level of interest and their dependence on the policy, programme or project outcome need to be identified. One useful exercise in this regard can be stakeholder mappings to understand stakeholders' background in further depth. Key stakeholders can range from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local communities to business representatives.

• **ENGAGE GOAL-ORIENTED AND IN A WELL-STRUCTURED MANNER:** There should always be clarity about the purpose and method of engagement with individual stakeholders in the process. It can range from more active levels of involvement such as working groups to more passive forms such as stakeholder consultations. Flexibility should be maintained to adapt initial processes as relationship and power structures as well as individual preferences may change over time. Throughout the process, it is important to work on the basis of commonly agreed decision-making structures, a work plan and defined targets.

• **MONITOR THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS:** In order to conduct stakeholder engagement successfully, attention should be devoted to monitoring the perspectives and inputs of stakeholder groups throughout the engagement process. This helps to identify and analyse interpersonal developments and use experiences for future activities. Formulating indicators that reflect the progress intended to achieve through a policy, programme or project can help to fix clear common goals with stakeholders from the outset.

3.3 SUCCESS FACTOR: SCIENTIFIC ANALYSES AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Scientific analyses and technical support in the domain of climate change can take manifold forms, ranging from climate models, cost-benefit analyses to vulnerability studies. Scientific analyses help policy-makers take informed decisions about climate change. To do so, national institutions and policy-makers need reliable data about climate change and robust knowledge about its consequences for various regions and sectors and about available mitigation and adaptation options. In-country scientific expertise is key in that regard and should be built up or strengthened to capacitate key actors to follow sustainable pathways independently in the long run. Consideration of the following may help support such efforts:

• **CONDUCT POLICY-RELEVANT SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENTS:** Scientific information is sometimes not available in a way that is useful for policy-makers. Research should strive to provide insights on a high level of detail (e.g. local level) and possible options for action in tangible time-frames. Making scientific assessments a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral task, involving diverse stakeholders and viewpoints, is thereby also of high importance.



- **IMPROVE SCIENCE-POLICY COMMUNICATION:** Scientific knowledge should be communicated in a way that is accessible for policy-makers. Science-policy dialogues or working groups could help facilitate learning processes. Another possibility consists in using intermediary institutions such as knowledge brokers or other formats and media (e.g. blogposts) to translate scientific findings for policy-making. It should be ensured that policy-makers understand the implications of scientific findings and the impacts that climate change has on the ground.
- **SET UP A COMPREHENSIVE CLIMATE RESEARCH CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:** Actions should be undertaken to strengthen local, regional and international collaborations between research institutions, NGOs, consultancies and other bodies, and to increase the quality and quantity of research through funding, knowledge management tools and research networks. Investing in the creation of study programmes and curricula dedicated to sustainable development and climate change and the establishment of climate research centres that address issues relevant for NDC implementation may also be helpful.
- **MANAGE AND MONITOR DATA:** A key priority should be the strengthening of in-country institutional and academic knowledge on climate change in order to sustain it over the long run. It needs to be clear what the goals of certain climate policies, programmes or projects are in order to keep track of developments and contextualise the latter. Building a framework that defines the goals of the policy, programme or project, and setting concrete indicators can facilitate this process, as this can ensure they are accessible, understandable and transparent.

4. CONCLUSION

A review of the case studies currently contained in the GPD demonstrates that (1) strong political leadership and commitment, (2) an effective stakeholder process as well as (3) a thorough scientific analysis and technical support can help countries to achieve their NDCs. More attention should therefore be devoted to these factors that may underpin and support the successful achievement of the NDCs while also helping to increase ambition overtime.

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DISCLAIMER

On behalf of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, adelphi in collaboration with various partners (Centre de Suivi Ecologique, Libélula, NewClimate Institute, and The Energy and Resource Institute) currently enhances and expands the Good Practice Database. As part of this work, adelphi has conducted research on how to influence previously identified success factors. This research forms the basis for this policy brief which was inspired by the Talanoa Dialogue and one of its guiding questions: "How do we get there?".

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