

Planning for Adaptation in Bangladesh: Past, Present and Future

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Key Messages

Bangladesh has been carrying out adaptation planning and implementation for over a decade and has gained much experiential knowledge.

Based on the lessons learned the next steps need to ensure that adaptation to climate change is now mainstreamed into national and sectoral development plans, instead of keeping adaptation planning as separate parallel process.

At the same time specific vulnerabilities of agro-livelihood ecological zones warrant to be treated separately as their adaptation plans and actions remain different. These include the Sundarbans and Coastal areas, the Haor region, the Barind tract, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Urban cities, etc.

Funding adaptation activities in Bangladesh needs to be based on a blend of national budgetary resources and external climate finance.

Private sector, civil society, media, academia, youth and other groups –all have to be mobilized to design and implement such plans in an integrated way.

This paper discusses the experiential learning that Bangladesh gained during more than a decade of adaptation planning, its on-going process and what is next for achieving better effectiveness in this area of vital national importance.

1. Introduction

The world community already lives in a climate changed world. However, the need to adapt to its increasing impact is extremely urgent for the particularly vulnerable countries, such as the least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS) and Africa. Of all these countries, Bangladesh stands unique in terms of climate impacts on a huge population of 160 million living in a small territory sandwiched between the Himalayas in the North and Bay of Bengal in the South. Obviously, Bangladesh has a huge groundswell of experiential learning from living with climate disasters for ages. This experience has been reinforced during the last decade and a half when Bangladesh started anticipatory adaptation planning, first in the form of developing the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) under the mandate of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Since then Bangladesh has accepted adaptation to climate change impacts as a national priority, with gradual integration of adaptation needs into national development planning. This Policy Brief is a stock-taking of what Bangladesh has done so far and how she can proceed with future adaptation planning.

2. Domains of Adaptation Planning

There are two domains and perspectives – international and national - that have guided our adaptation planning, funding and actions so far and how we may need to rethink the strategies going forward.

2.1 International

The first is the global policy and decision making domain of the UNFCCC, under which the first action was to support the LDCs to prepare their respective NAPA, which were to prioritize the immediate and urgent adaptation needs. Bangladesh was one of the first LDCs to complete the NAPA and submit it to the UNFCCC Secretariat, supported by the LDC Fund. Later, the UNFCCC decided to support all developing countries, not just the LDCs, to move from immediate and urgent adaptation projects to medium and long term adaptation planning and programming through the preparation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

At the same time the UNFCCC also decided that all countries must prepare and submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in which every country will spell out its plan of mitigation actions. However the NDC provision kept the option also to include adaptation actions for developing countries.

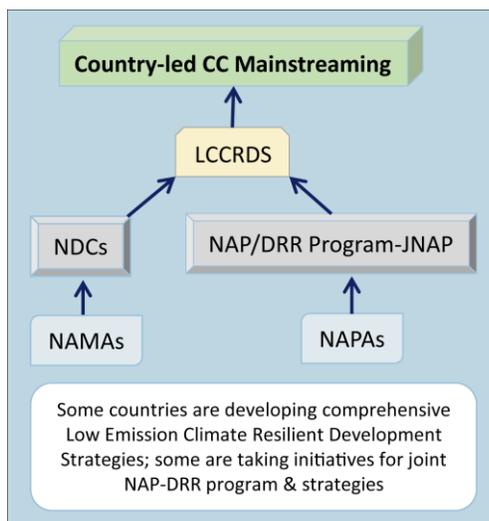
2.2 National

The second domain is the national development planning in Bangladesh which has mainly gone through the five year planning cycle over the decades. These plans have been prepared by the Planning Commission with inputs from all other ministries and agencies. In between the UNFCCC driven process and the national development planning, we also had the development of the Bangladesh Climate Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) in 2009 and the setting up of the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF), supported by national resources and Bangladesh Climate Resilience Fund (BCCRF), established with donor support for implementation of climate actions under the BCCSAP.

3. Mainstreaming of Adaptation into Planning Process

The ultimate and sustainable solution to human-induced climate change is to develop an integrated low-carbon and climate-resilient development strategy (LCCRDS) (Fig.1). However, for Bangladesh adaptation planning for climate resilience is the priority. It is becoming clear that implementing a set of adaptation projects is not going to be sufficient. So climate change adaptation (as well as mitigation) needs to be embedded into regular national planning at all levels. Thus the NAP process should be seen as a process of mainstreaming rather than producing a stand-alone plan. All the development ministries need to integrate climate change into their respective sectoral plans. Also very important is the need to mainstream into local level planning. Nepal is developing Local Adaptation Programmes of Action (LAPA). Also the need is to prioritise the most vulnerable communities, who also tend to be among the poorest. The goal of our adaptation actions should be aimed at fully mainstreaming or integrating adaptation into our national planning process in coming years, through the 8th five year plan for 2021 to 2026 as well as in the Perspective plan to 2040 and Delta Plan to 2100.

Fig. 1: Process for CC mainstreaming



4. Phases of Adaptation Planning

4.1 Phase – One

At its 7th Conference of Parties (COP7) of the UNFCCC held in Marrakech, Morocco in 2001, adaptation actions to climate change were recognised for the first time to support the LDCs in carrying out the NAPA. Since then, all 48 LDCs finished their NAPAs and have started to implement their priority adaptation projects, funded by the LDC Fund (LDCF), set up to support the NAPAs. With technical support from the UNDP, Bangladesh was one of the first countries to prepare and submit the NAPA to the UNFCCC Secretariat in 2005 (MoEF, 2005). By end of this phase (Fig. 2), Bangladesh also developed the BCCSAP and established two funds – the Climate Change Trust Fund (CCTF) with national resources and the Climate Change Resilience Fund (CCRF), with donor support.

4.2 Phase – Two

Under the Cancun Adaptation Framework agreed at COP16 in 2010, countries have agreed to move from NAPAs to NAPs, which were meant to be longer term and more mainstreamed into national development, rather than just a set of discreet, standalone immediate and urgent adaptation projects under the NAPA process. However, the biggest change from NAPAs to NAPs is the need for a shift to sustained and systemic process of incorporating adaptation into national, sectoral and local level plans.

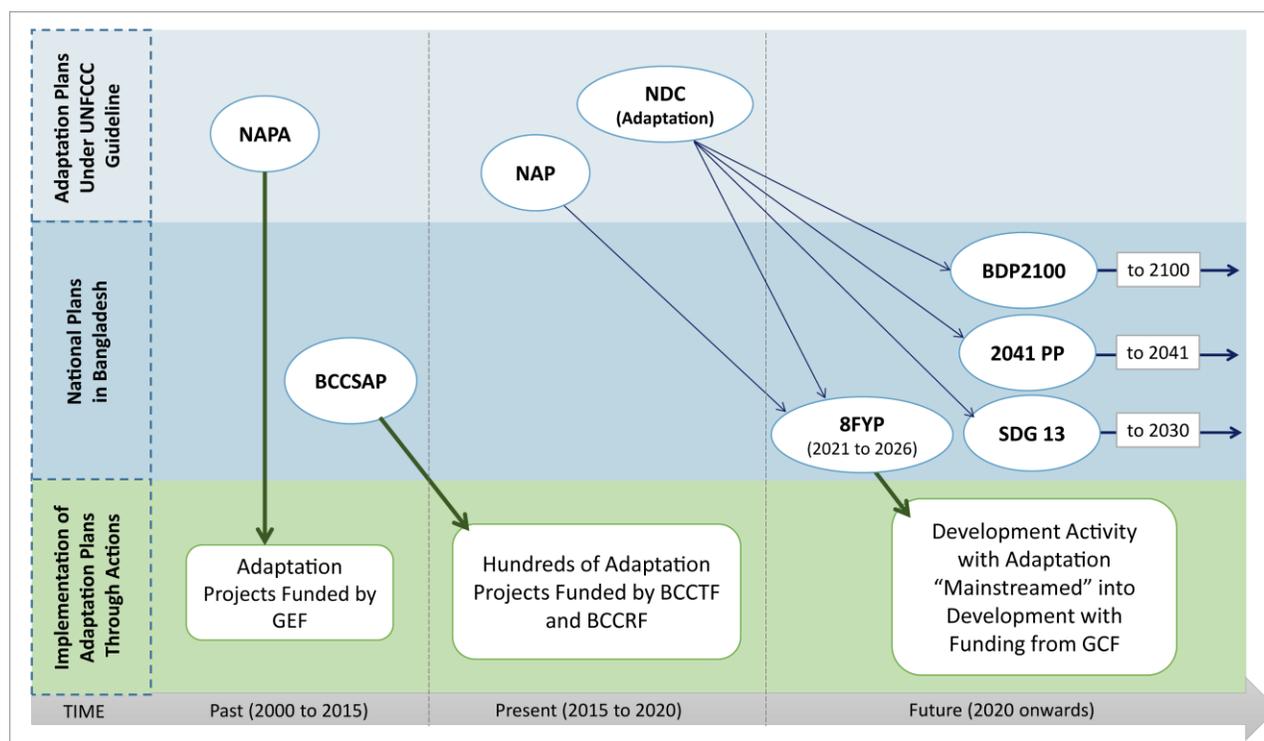
In this phase, under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) support, the NAP Roadmap was prepared by Bangladesh, based on which the development of NAP is underway (Fig.2). During this time, also the 7th Five-Year Plan was adopted, which incorporates both mitigation and adaptation actions (MoP, 2016).

4.3 Phase – Three

Further, based on COP20 decisions in Lima, almost all countries have prepared their mitigation action plans under the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), now called the NDCs under the Paris Agreement (PA). It also has the voluntary option to include adaptation needs and priorities. Accordingly, Bangladesh has submitted the INDC, which included the Adaptation options and resource needs (Fig.2).

Further, the Government has already started the process of mapping and then planning on how to implement both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the PA. Under the Planning Commission, the mapping of responsibilities of different ministries regarding each SDG has been done, and a unit has been set up in the Prime Minister's Office to support and monitor the process. The Perspective Plan to 2040 and the Delta Plan to 2100 are about to be started by the Planning Commission. Then

Fig. 2: Schema Showing Adaptation Planning and Actions in Bangladesh over Time



they will begin to prepare the 8th Five Year Plan for the period 2021-2026 in a few years. This plan is expected to fully integrate the adaptation planning.

Bangladesh is on the road to becoming one of the leading centres of global research and knowledge on adaptation to climate change and has already started sharing it with other countries. When it comes to the issue of how to deal with the adverse impacts of climate change, Bangladesh is already well ahead of being an LDC and on the way to becoming a global leader on adaptation. This third phase will certainly push this leadership forward.

5. Funding for Adaptation Planning and Implementation

5.1 International funding for adaptation

The UNFCCC has provisions of support for adaptation and mitigation in the form of new and additional, adequate and predictable funding. Specifically Article 4.4 obligates the developed countries to assist the particularly vulnerable countries in their adaptation activities. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) jointly administered by the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP, has been working as the financial mechanism of the Convention since the mid-1990s. At COP7 in 2001, two funds – LDC Fund and Special Climate Change Fund under the Convention, and Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol have been established. Later, in 2010 at COP16 in Cancun, the Green Climate Fund as another financial mechanism has been established, and operationalized by 2014. Since then several billion dollars have been provided to

developing countries including the LDCs particularly for implementation of NAPA projects and other programmes. In future, many more billions, as pledged, are expected to flow into the developing countries including the LDCs. The GCF Board has decided to allocate half of their funds to support adaptation, again with a goal to deliver half of adaptation money to the most vulnerable countries.

However, most of the funding of billions so far delivered has gone to support mitigation actions in a few major middle-income developing countries such as China, India, Brazil, Republic of Korea, Indonesia and South Africa, while only a small share has gone to the most vulnerable and poorest countries, such as Bangladesh, for adaptation. Still, Bangladesh has received several hundred million dollars for climate actions including almost \$200 million from the CCRF. However, because of some rows over its governance between the MoEF and the World Bank, the CCRF has remained stalled at the moment.

A recent review of all sources of global climate finance found that only about 10 percent of such funding could be shown to reach the local communities where the most vulnerable people live (Soanes et al., 2017). The review also found acute lack of granularity in project level information for tracking of flows to the local level. This lack of details and transparency is valid both for global and national funds. This experience warrants two things: that both the developed countries providing the funds and developing countries receiving it must be more transparent, as stipulated in the PA and that greater money must flow to the local levels. This warrants a shift from the existing project-based short-term funding to

programmatic and long-term investments for adaptation, clearly aligned and integrated with national budgets.

5.2 National Funding for Adaptation

During the last decade, Bangladesh has spent more than \$1.5 billion of its own resource, particularly for adaptation activities, of which almost half a billion came from the CCTF. However, in future two major overarching trends Bangladesh will have to deal with, and plan for as well. The first is the move to graduate out of the LDC status. This means that the share of grants and concessional loans in development assistance will gradually decline. The other, a negative trend, is to tackle the increasingly adverse impacts of climate change. This means that adaptation financing both from external and domestic sources will assume an increasingly critical role.

Though the developed countries have promised for such funding, this has been slow to materialize, with a huge gap persisting between needs and actual delivery. Hence, Bangladesh needs to think about how to mobilize and use their own budgets more effectively under the government's newly-developed climate fiscal framework, to promote and integrate adaptation into national, sectoral and local development plans.

6. Conclusion

The above short review shows that Bangladesh has developed a groundswell of experience in anticipatory adaptation planning and its implementation. The approach of learning by doing has enriched this experience in terms what works and what does not. So Bangladesh can claim an edge over both developed and developing countries in practicing how to address the impacts of climate change.

This leadership can be strengthened further with few specific steps: First, Bangladesh must succeed in developing an eco-system based locale-specific NAP, based on community participation across the country. Second, research and knowledge stakeholders will have to play a bigger role, consolidating the experiences and sharing it globally. Third, capacity building at all levels, individual, institutional and systemic, must be strengthened and sustained over time. This includes climate change education and regular training of officials and other stakeholders involved in the process. Finally, we have to think for ourselves and do on our own, without being dependent on donors, claiming forcefully at the same time external climate finance. Our commitment for graduating into middle-income countries will demand a firmer and stronger footing on our own.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

2041PP: 2041 Perspective Plan
8FYP: Eighth Five Year Plan
BCCRF: Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund
BCCSAP: Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
BCCTF: Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund
BDP2100: Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100
CC: Climate Change
COP: Conference of Parties
DDR: Disaster Risk Reduction
GCF: Green Climate Fund
GEF: Global Environment Facility
INDC: Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
JNAP: Joint National Action Plan
LAPA: Local Adaptation Programmes of Action
LDCs: Least Developed Countries
LCCRDS: Low Carbon & Climate Resilient Development Strategy
NAP: National Adaptation Plans;
NAPA: National Adaptation Programme of Action
NAMA: Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action
NDC: Nationally Determined Contributions
PA: Paris Agreement
SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS: Small Island Developing States
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

ICCCAD is a three-way partnership between:

