



Mercy Corps

# **BREAKING THE CYCLE**

## **Practical solutions to unlock climate finance for fragile states**

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# Summary

Many fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS)<sup>1</sup> are highly vulnerable to climate change. 18 FCS rank among the top 25 countries globally for highest vulnerability and least coping capacity towards climate change (ND-GAIN 2022). Alarmingly, despite this high vulnerability, the more fragile a country is, the less climate finance<sup>2</sup> it has historically received from bilateral funders and multilateral climate funds.

The challenges to accessing and utilising climate adaptation finance in FCS across climate funders and recipient countries have been well documented in the literature. These can be mapped onto a life-cycle framework, from the strategies driving climate funders' low risk appetite and tolerance in working in FCS, to the stringent requirements for funding access, project approval and partnerships that limit planning and development of the programme, the inflexible operational protocols that hinder adaptive implementation and delivery, and the data and travel restrictions that make it difficult to monitor project progress and measure outcomes.

**Whilst our understanding of the difficulties in delivering climate finance in fragile and conflict-affected situations has increased in the past few years, the question remains: what can be done to overcome them?**

This report showcases innovative solutions that climate funders could seek to adopt to improve their reach and impact in FCS. [Four case studies are profiled:](#)

- › The UN Peacebuilding Fund
- › Peace bonds by Interpeace
- › Crisis modifiers
- › COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX)

Each provides practical solutions to overcome the diverse challenges in the life-cycle of climate adaptation programmes in FCS. Several common key learning points can be found in the case studies:

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1 FCS are defined by the World Bank as countries having high levels of institutional and social fragility or experiencing violent conflict. The 2022 list features 37 entries, including Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Republic of Yemen, Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Venezuela, West Bank and Gaza (territory), and Zimbabwe. For more information, see <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations>.

2 Climate finance is defined broadly here as finance that aims to reduce emissions and enhance sinks of greenhouse gases, and to reduce the vulnerability and maintain or increase the resilience of human and ecological systems to negative climate change impacts. It can be local, national or transnational financing – drawn from public, private or alternative sources of financing – that seeks to support these objectives.

## Risk aversion

**First, the appetite to invest in FCS can be increased when risks are well conceptualised and tracked.** The prevailing risk aversion among climate funders reluctant to operate in places affected by conflict is often caused by perceptions of high risk, rather than actual high risk.

### Recommendation

To build and improve risk appetite and tolerance, climate funders should look to better understand perceived risks versus the real risks of operating in different FCS. This must be coupled with clear guidance on risk mitigation; roles and responsibilities; feedback mechanisms; and risk level tracking including community-based monitoring. The experience of the UN Peacebuilding Fund provides relevant learnings (further below). Moreover, guidance should bring typically siloed experts from climate, conflict, and peacebuilding together.

### Recommendation

The GCF, and other multilateral climate funds, could consider creating sectoral guidance for FCS. In 2021, the GCF undertook a sectoral guidance consultation for eight result areas (including climate information and early warning systems, energy efficiency, ecosystem and ecosystem services, among others) and could consider tailoring these to operate in FCS. This will help determine risk mitigation strategies and funding modality options.

## Operational flexibility

**Second, operational flexibility must be provided for in guidelines and protocols to help projects remain relevant to the highly dynamic nature of conflict and fragility.**

### Recommendation

Bilateral, multilateral development banks, and multilateral climate funds should systematically adopt flexible budgeting tools, such as Crisis Modifiers (further below), and adaptive programming principles into their programmes in FCS. This needs to be complemented by clear guidance and risk matrices to help guide which type of change may be required, and when. Previous research has explored what it means to shift a mindset to one of greater flexibility towards known or reasonably expected change or unknown and uncertain changes (Obrecht, 2019). Where changes are reasonably expected, anticipatory risk mitigation approaches can be integrated into climate finance programmes. Where unknown and uncertain changes are more likely, adaptive approaches may be better suited.

## Partnerships with local actors

**Third, partnerships with local actors must be strengthened in guidelines and protocols.**

Programming and delivering adaptation projects in conflict and fragile contexts cannot be accomplished without partnering with local actors for reasons of access and acceptance. Community-based organizations, local non-government organizations and institutions are the ones with access to less secure areas, are knowledgeable about local circumstances and remain when insecurity increases. They can ensure that interventions are tailored to local needs.

### Recommendation

Many climate funders are among the 80+ international organizations, governments, local and international non-government organizations that have endorsed the Global Commission on Adaptation's Locally Led Adaptation Principles to shift power to local stakeholders and ensure an equitable approach to climate change adaptation. Climate funders that have not yet endorsed the principles should seek to do so.

## Recommendation

Climate funders should prioritize support to local actors that are committed to staying in and are capable of delivering adaptation projects in conflict areas or areas under non-state governance. Learning from the UN Peacebuilding Fund, this could be achieved by setting internal targets for direct funding to local actors (as a share of overall financing) and integrating them in the organisation's results framework to create organizational incentives to achieve this objective and ensure upward (to taxpayers) and downward (to beneficiaries) accountability.

## Innovation

**Fourth, introduce more innovative pockets of adaptation financing, including catalytic funding tailored to fragile and conflict contexts.**

## Recommendation

Climate funders should consider creating innovative pockets or windows of funding to catalyse climate adaptation in FCS. Multilateral climate funds could consider establishing small grant facilities targeting local, smaller organisations in FCS to build the experience and administrative capacity to meet requirements for partnering with larger organisations in the future. Simplified access and application processes would accompany these smaller envelopes of funding. The processes would be designed and tailored to the limited fiduciary and bureaucratic capacity of local organisations in FCS. These smaller grant facilities would also need to be set up to accept higher operational costs -as transaction costs of smaller project can be similar to that of larger projects (Reda and Wong, 2021) and to accommodate higher expenses to mitigate volatile security risks (e.g. the cost of utilizing armoured vehicles) – so that it does not become a disincentive to work in FCS.

## Recommendation

Multilateral and bilateral actors may want to support proof of concept of private and public-private funding solutions, such as Peace Bonds (see further below), given the overwhelming public debt burden in many FCS and the possibility for these instruments to catalyse more private sector funding for conflict-sensitive climate adaptation.

## Country- and Community-centred

**Fifth, the needs of countries and communities should be at the centre of processes.**

## Recommendation

Climate funders working in the same countries should seek to offer a harmonised menu of funding availability and improve coordination between climate funders within countries. If the needs of the country are prioritised and support offered via a streamlined mechanism such as the 'One Team, One Plan, One Budget' approach (see the COVAX example further below), funders are working together to help countries understand and access the technical assistance and/or operational funding required for the success of programme implementation and desired impact on communities.

Though FCS are characterised by complex operating environments, this should not preclude support to help people adapt to the climate change impacts they have largely not contributed to driving. This report provides a summary of the main challenges and the solutions offered in four case studies. More detailed information and learnings for climate actors can be found in the individual companion case studies.

# Introduction

The capacity of countries to prevent and cope with the consequences of climate change varies enormously. Often, countries with lower financial resources at their disposal face some of the highest vulnerability to climate change. They have limited capacity to prepare and respond, and frequently lack the resources to rebuild between repeated climatic shocks, much less invest in adaptation to reduce the risks. These countries consistently bear the brunt of climate change impacts, despite contributing very little to historic and ongoing global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. Fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS), in particular, are highly vulnerable and among the least ready to deal with climate impacts.

FCS, as defined by the World Bank each year, have high levels of institutional and social fragility or are experiencing violent conflict. For 2023, this list includes 37 countries (see Table 1). More than 790 million people live in the 17 conflict-affected states and more than 171 million live in the 20 states with high social and institutional fragility (authors' calculations based on latest population figures). 18 FCS rank among the top 25 countries globally for highest vulnerability and least coping capacity towards climate change (ND-GAIN 2022).

The urgency to adapt to new and exacerbated shocks and stresses already locked in by global warming is felt most acutely in these countries.

TABLE 1. FCS LIST FOR 2023 (WORLD BANK 2022).

## Conflict-affected

Afghanistan\*, Burkina Faso\*, Cameroon, Central African Republic\*, Democratic Republic of Congo\*, Ethiopia\*, Iraq, Mali\*, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger\*, Nigeria\*, Somalia\*, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen\*.

## High social and institutional fragility

Burundi, Chad\*, Comoros\*, Republic of Congo\*, Eritrea\*, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti\*, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea\*, Solomon Islands, Sudan\*, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Venezuela, West Bank and Gaza (territory), Zimbabwe\*.

Asterix denotes that the country is within the top 25 most vulnerable and least ready to cope with climate change according to the ND-GAIN Index

However, previous research found that climate finance is not going to the countries and people that need it most. For example, the recent SPARC report 'Exploring the conflict blind spots in climate finance adaptation' (Cao et al. 2021) and UNDP and the Climate Security Mechanism's complementary study 'Climate Finance for Sustaining Peace: Making climate finance work for conflict-affected and fragile contexts' (Reda and Wong 2021) illustrate how, over the last decade, the more fragile a country was, the less climate finance it received from bilateral funders and multilateral climate funds. More specifically:

- › Extremely fragile states averaged \$2.1 per person in adaptation financing compared to \$161.7 per person for not-fragile states (Reda and Wong 2021).
- › Country-specific analyses also show a shortfall in how much FCS receive; for example, Niger received \$6.58 per person per year, Mali received \$4.27 per person per year, Zimbabwe received \$2.05 per person per year, and DRC has only received \$0.92 per capita per year (Alcayna 2020) (Figure 1).

This report summarises the current understanding of the challenges for climate funders seeking to target and deliver increased climate finance to countries affected by conflict and fragility.

While these analyses increase our understanding of the difficulties in delivering climate finance in fragile and conflict-affected places, the question remains: what can be done to overcome them?

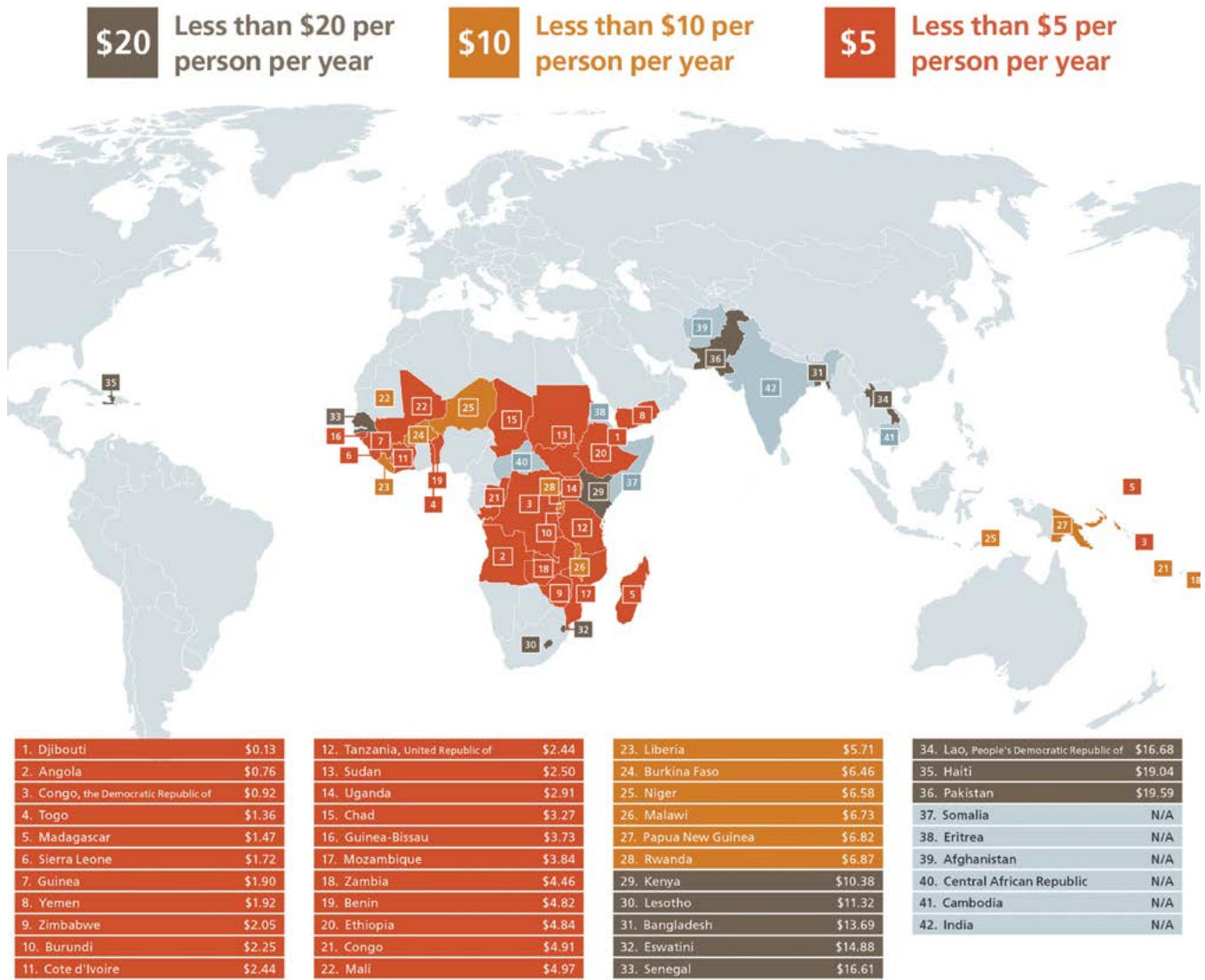
This report explores concrete solutions that could be implemented by major climate funders to increase the delivery of climate adaptation finance to FCS. It draws on examples and learning from a few selected funders and specific mechanisms (both in the climate and non-climate space) already working effectively or with the potential to increase funding for climate adaptation in FCS. This report provides summaries of the main challenges and the solutions offered in the four case studies. More detailed information and learnings for climate actors can be found in the companion case studies.

## **Methodology**

The case studies highlighted in this research were identified based on their relevance in offering potential solutions to the challenges of accessing and implementing climate finance in FCS. After identifying the case studies, interviews were held with representatives from target organisations to collect further information, and strategic, programme and project level documentation was reviewed to triangulate findings. For each case study, a minimum of one representative and two external experts provided peer review and feedback to ensure the accuracy of the information presented. Whilst these case studies provide some innovative solutions, they are not exhaustive and there are likely to be other solutions, piloted in different contexts, from which climate funders could also learn.



FIGURE 1. MAP DEMONSTRATING THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING CLIMATE VULNERABLE COUNTRIES HAVE RECEIVED PER CAPITA OF THOSE LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY PER YEAR (AVERAGE 2010–2017) (ALCAVNA, 2020)



# Challenges to accessing and utilising climate adaptation finance in FCS

The challenges to accessing and utilising climate adaptation finance in FCS across climate funders and recipient countries have been well documented in the literature (Gilder and Rumble 2020; Cao et al. 2021; ICRC 2021; Reda and Wong 2021; CCCPA 2022). These can be mapped onto a life-cycle framework, from the strategies driving funding organisations' low risk appetite and tolerance for working in FCS, to the stringent requirements for funding access, project approval and partnerships that limit planning and programming, the inflexible operational protocols that hinder adaptive implementation and delivery, and the data and travel restrictions that make it difficult to monitor project progress and measure outcomes (see Figure 2).

## Strategic will

In general, FCS are characterised by complex operating environments in which tensions and conflict dynamics evolve rapidly and security can deteriorate quickly. This reality lies at odds with the typical risk tolerance and appetite of climate finance providers, who tend to favour safer operating environments where there is higher certainty of a return on investment and/or of project success (Cao et al. 2021). This low risk tolerance and consequent lack of operational presence also contributes to the deprioritisation or exclusion of conflict-affected communities at the subnational level from adaptation support. This is especially the case in areas controlled by non-state actors, as development partners and multilateral organisations provide support largely through state authorities, and central governments are politically disincentivised to cooperate with these local actors.

From the strategic vision through to programme design, implementation and measuring, climate funders' operating procedures have to date not been configured to suit FCS. Climate funders lack the long-term policies and planning necessary to address the compounding and cascading risks from climate change and conflict, and have not established guidelines on conflict-sensitive climate programming (Cao et al. 2021; Mosello et al. 2021; GEF IEO 2020; World Bank 2020). Part of this rests in persistent silos between climate and conflict teams; a situation that inhibits the exchange of information and insight, and operational collaboration, within climate funder organisations (CCCPA 2022). Overall, there is a disconnect between the rapidly changing conflict contexts and the complex and rigid climate funder access requirements for climate finance – a problem common to development finance as well (Cao et al. 2021). When FCS do receive funding, they tend to receive smaller pots of funding per project, yet the transaction costs of a smaller project can be similar to that of larger projects (Reda and Wong 2021), and where security apparatus is absent or weak it is more expensive to mitigate volatile security risks (e.g. through the cost of buying armoured vehicles).

## Planning and development of programmes

Access to adaptation finance in FCS can be further hampered through the development, planning and implementation of programmes. This includes:

- › Accreditation processes for partners
- › Project approval processes
- › Ability of local civil society and community organisations to access funding sources directly

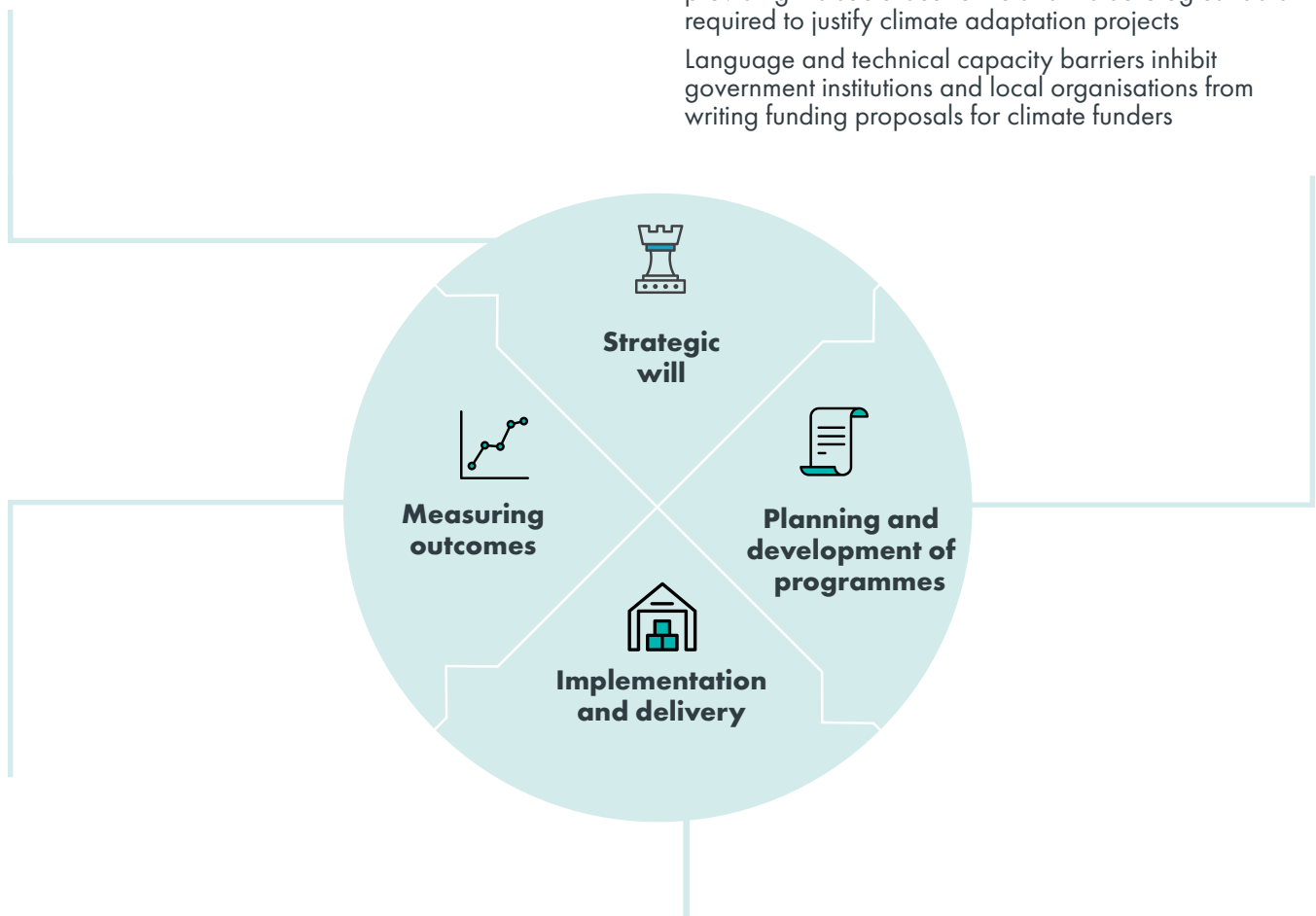
FIGURE 2. CHALLENGES TO ACCESSING AND UTILISING CLIMATE FINANCE IN FCS

**Strategic will**

Perceived risk in FCS is too high for climate funders  
 Funders’ risk aversion deprioritises vulnerable communities in less-secure areas from support  
 Climate finance is delivered through state authorities, weakening delivery in non-state controlled areas  
 Funders lack long-term strategies and organisational structures to manage compound climate–conflict risks  
 Funders’ climate and conflict teams are siloed, preventing operational collaboration

**Planning and development of programmes**

Multilateral climate funds’ complex/rigid accreditation standards are too much for government institutions and national organisations in FCS  
 Accreditation barriers prevent local communities and CSOs directly accessing climate finance  
 Climate funders’ project approval processes may mean 1–2 years’ unfunded work for applicants, without guarantee of application success  
 Structural damage/access issues in FCS lead to difficulty providing the socio-economic and meteorological data required to justify climate adaptation projects  
 Language and technical capacity barriers inhibit government institutions and local organisations from writing funding proposals for climate funders



**Measuring outcomes**

Standard project M&E processes, where information stays between executing organisations and communities, limit climate funders’ monitoring of fiduciary risks and accountability  
 Project M&E cycles are too short for effective evaluation of integrated climate–conflict programming

**Implementation and delivery**

Inflexibility in pre-planned climate projects prevents adaptation to volatile FCS contexts, leading to delays, closure and waste  
 Conflict-sensitive guidance for climate projects in FCS is inconsistently adopted and adaptation projects lacking conflict sensitivity may exacerbate conflict  
 Funders and multilateral implementers may struggle to find right local organisations to operate in areas of conflict, or with relevant climate expertise

Accreditation is the mechanism by which national or international organisations are pre-vetted by certain multilaterals (e.g. the GCF) in order to be eligible to apply for funding. In the case of the GCF, the results of the accreditation process “will specify the project or programme activity size; fiduciary functions, which will shape how it operates using the Fund’s resources (grants, loans, equity, and guarantees); and the highest category of environmental and social risk of its intended projects” (GCF n.d.). Where government institutions are weak (through limited capacity) and fiduciary processes do not meet the rigid accreditation standards (e.g. to mitigate risk of fraud and corruption), then accreditation can be challenging to achieve (Cao et al. 2021). The chronic underfinancing of the public sector in these countries often means public financial management capacity to manage the funds at regional or local level is low, limiting the government’s ability to prove that it could manage adaptation programmes and strategies (Cao et al. 2021). Often, in FCS, it is only multilateral organisations (such as UN agencies) and multilateral development banks that are accredited to the GCF and rarely, national institutions (Cao et al. 2021).

The project approval process represents another hurdle for FCS as proposal development is lengthy, and requires specific types of data and an extensive portfolio of previous work.

- › **Data:** Climate finance providers impose strict requirements on the type of historical climate and socio-economic data needed to justify climate adaptation projects. While national hydro-meteorological services collect data, categorisation and systematisation according to the requirements of the climate funds is lacking. Moreover, in conflict-affected areas, meteorological stations are often damaged or unmaintained.
- › **Technical capacity:** Technical capacity to write these specific proposals can be low as FCS governmental institutions lack national experts familiar with the standards of the vertical climate funds, due to high turnover and brain drain (Gilder and Rumble 20; CCCPA 2022).
- › **Language:** For non-English speaking countries, there is the additional challenge of developing proposals for the GCF in English.

The time and resource investment needed for proposal development, which is specific to each climate funder and may require one or two years’ worth of work, must be funded upfront entirely by the applicant “without guarantee of producing a bankable project” (Cao et al. 2021). This is especially challenging where there is chronic underfunding of government institutions and numerous competing priorities, including major security issues, widespread population displacement and high humanitarian needs.

Local communities and civil society organisations have virtually no avenues to directly access sources of climate finance. The current international climate finance architecture prioritises large-scale climate adaptation projects (e.g. flood defences, ecosystem rehabilitation) that can be transformational, contribute to national development plans, and provide financial returns on investment. Channelling money directly to locally led organisations or communities for smaller projects would require additional staff and resources to manage small-scale budgets, but the administrative cost for UN agencies and multilateral development banks and funds to do so is generally too high.

## Implementation and delivery

As demonstrated by the case studies, in order to be effective in volatile contexts, projects must be flexible and able to adapt to changing contexts. Pre-planned climate projects are often unable to adapt to volatile contexts due to climate funders’ inflexible funding protocols and rigid operational bureaucracy. These have prevented project

implementers from responding quickly to emerging crises, from meeting surges in humanitarian needs created by an unpredictable shock in the project area, to adapting intervention delivery methods or refocusing project target areas, leading to project delays, project closures and waste of resources, and ultimately depriving FCS of support. These consequences have contributed to climate funders' general risk-based aversion to investing in such contexts.

When projects do put effort into preparing for conflict dynamics, they tend to focus on the security risks to the success of the project and not on how the adaptation interventions may impact existing conflict dynamics or stoke new conflicts. This focus leads projects to choose more 'secure' areas for interventions, leaving areas that are particularly in need – and particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change – without support. On the other hand, adaptation projects lacking conflict sensitivity can exacerbate conflict by increasing the insecurity of land tenure; by marginalising minority groups; by increasing environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity; through the elite capture of adaptation funding; or by not considering the history of conflicts appropriately, re-igniting and intensifying conflicts (Cao et al. 2021, Box 1).

Another challenge to delivering projects on the ground and reaching local communities is finding local executing partners willing to operate in FCS, especially in areas prone to conflict, those with active conflict or those deemed to be a security risk. These organisations may also lack relevant climate expertise.

## **Measuring outcomes**

Standard project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices - where information flow stays within executing organizations and communities - limit direct connections between the beneficiaries and funders, as well as other stakeholders (e.g. other donors, INGOs). This limits the funders ability to monitor fiduciary risks by finance providers, and therefore accountability, but also hinders broader information sharing and coordination among funders and development partners that are needed in rapidly changing conflict contexts. There is also a disconnect between the timeframes needed for integrated climate and conflict programming in highly complex and often dynamic contexts, and the short-term M&E cycles and funding provided by climate funders (Mosello et al. 2021).

# How institutions can overcome these challenges

The four case studies profiled in this report provide practical solutions to overcome the diverse challenges in the life-cycle of climate adaptation projects and programmes in FCS. Some of them provide solutions to address challenges across all the stages of the life-cycle, such as the UN Peacebuilding Fund, whereas others have solutions that are tailored to individual aspects of the cycle, such as financing or supporting partners (see Figure 3). They are summarised below, while detailed information, learnings and recommendations for climate actors can be found in each companion case study.

## Case study: The UN Peacebuilding Fund

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is the organisation's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk of or affected by violent conflict. The Fund supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps, to respond quickly and with the flexibility to support peacebuilding opportunities and to catalyse processes and resources in a risk-tolerant fashion. From 2017 to 2021 the PBF funded at least 74 projects, in 33 countries, that responded to climate security dynamics or otherwise incorporated environmental peacebuilding into their approach.

### Key learnings for climate actors



› **The PBF has a high risk appetite and tolerance to working in places affected by conflict.**

This is possible because risk is well conceptualised (clear guidance available), analysed in reality (joint conflict assessments) and planned for (risk matrix, clear coordination and approval process).



› **Local organisations and local stakeholders are provided for systematically in funding to reach the communities that need most support and ensure local ownership.**

The PBF complements funding streams to UN agencies with 40% of funds systematically targeting civil society organisations (CSOs). It has also created a small grant facility to channel smaller grants (between \$2,500 and \$20,000) to grassroots organisations.

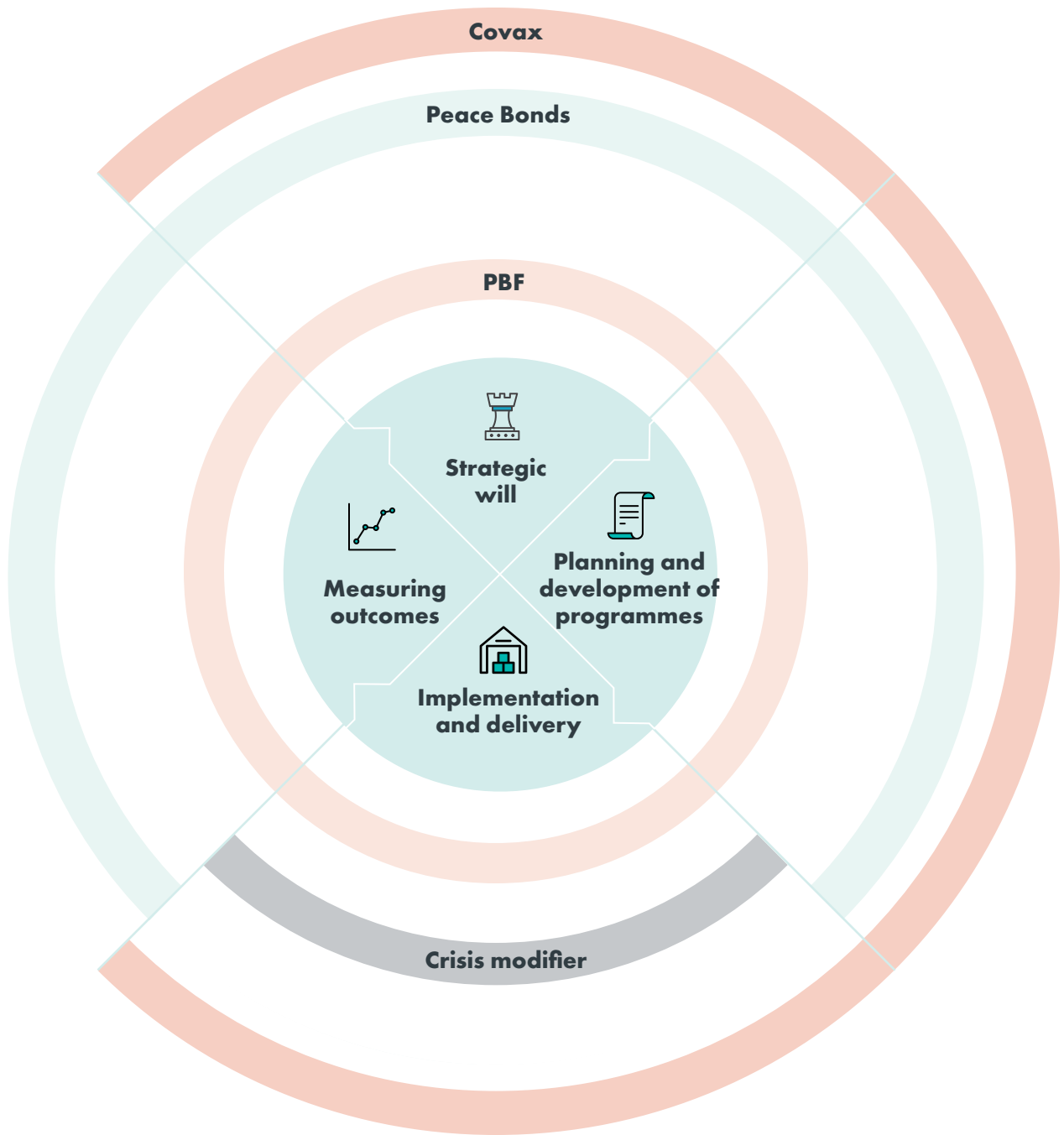


› **Project flexibility is written into guidelines and operational protocols to ensure that approval processes are rapid,**



and appropriate to the type of change being requested, helping to keep projects relevant to changes on the ground. Flexible budget lines allow implementing partners to make direct changes to a project, if these are below 15% of the budget, without going through lengthy approval processes. This is facilitated by local tracking as well as tracking at headquarters.




FIGURE 3 – PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS IN THE CLIMATE ADAPTATION PROJECT LIFE-CYCLE



## Case study: Crisis modifiers

Crisis modifiers (CMs) are ring-fenced contingent funds built into development and resilience programmes to flexibly respond to shocks and emerging crises that would otherwise jeopardise the delivery of programme services and the achievement of programme objectives. They are used to fund responses to geographically limited, smaller crises (e.g. localised flooding in the project area), which are often unaddressed by traditional humanitarian funding (Willitts-King et al. 2020), or to continue with a development intervention but approaching it differently due to a changing situation (e.g. training of community health workers online, instead of in person, as a response to COVID-19).

### Key learning for climate actors


-  **Crisis modifiers (CMs) provide a mechanism for pre-planned climate adaptation interventions to improve operational flexibility** to adapt to reasonably expected crises that will almost inevitably arise in conflict or fragile contexts.
-  **CMs can also lower climate finance providers' risk-based aversion to investing in such contexts**, which is often caused by high risk perceptions rather than actual risks, by supporting more accurate assessment of conflict risks and setting out in advance clear strategies to manage them.
-  **CMs have also expanded the standard risk management mentality to create more enabling and risk-aware internal project environments**, and have enabled local development actors to respond to humanitarian emergencies, accelerating and complementing humanitarian response.

## Case Study: Peace bonds

Peace bonds are a new financial instrument proposed by Interpeace – an international peacebuilding organisation – to fund projects that contribute to development and peace objectives in countries affected by conflict and fragility. They do not exist in the market yet, but would be created as a “type of bond instrument whose proceeds would be exclusively applied to partly or fully finance or re-finance new or existing projects that have a peace impact and are verifiably aligned with peace bond principles and standards” (Interpeace and SEB 2022, 15).

Implementing climate adaptation projects in conflict settings often under hybrid governance (e.g. under state/non-state group governance) requires public and private investors to work in different ways, which necessitates partnerships with peacebuilding and local actors. The innovation of peace bonds would be to build this peacebuilding work directly into the financial cost of the climate adaptation project to decrease risks for both local beneficiary communities and investors, as opposed to more traditional forms of financing that usually reduce risks only for investors.

### Key learnings for climate actors

-  **Peace bonds could decrease the borrowing costs of funding climate adaptation projects.** Adaptation investments in fragile and conflict zones usually have to pay a higher interest rate when borrowing money to compensate for the higher risks associated with the unstable environment. By implementing interventions to mitigate conflict risks to which the project implementer has committed in the peace bond legal documents – such as conflict analyses, local participatory governance mechanisms, social accountability and social listening approaches, and insider mediation practices – lenders could accept a lower interest rate and therefore lower the borrowing cost of the overall adaptation project.





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 › By adopting conflict-mitigating interventions, **peace bonds could also add to the information available about risks to help investors understand which are the real risks, as opposed to perceived risks**, and therefore lower their risk-based aversion to investing in FCS.
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 › Once peace bonds become established and widely commercialised, **they could have the potential to increase the level of private sector funding for climate change adaptation channelled to fragile and conflict-affected countries** which would not add to existing high government debt burdens.

## Case study: COVAX and the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020 and researchers developed effective vaccines against the virus, a specific new alliance – COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) – was established. COVAX was designed specifically to ensure that the most vulnerable in every country get access to COVID-19 vaccines, and implicitly had to consider the hardest to reach in conflict-affected or fragile situations. COVAX also developed a Readiness support mechanism, inclusive of the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership (CoVDP) – an interagency initiative to accelerate vaccination coverage in countries that face the biggest challenges to reaching their vaccination targets, such as Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan (WHO et al. 2022; Kraus 2022).

### Key learnings for climate actors

- 
 › The COVAX Readiness and specifically CoVDP ‘One Team, One Plan, One Budget’ approach demonstrates the **importance of building consensus among actors working in the same country, ensuring that the needs of the countries are the central focus** for all engagement and there is flexibility in funding to address bottlenecks as they arise.
- 
 › The CoVDP ‘One Plan, One Budget’ approach in particular **sped up the administrative processes in the target countries** (which included FCS such as Afghanistan, Burkina Faso and DR Congo) by enhancing coordination and **simplifying the complex funding landscape for countries by providing a menu of funding availability** and what types of bottlenecks or challenges it could address.

# Conclusion

FCS are characterised by complex operating environments, but this should not preclude support to help people adapt to the climate change impacts they have largely not contributed to driving. Interest in improving climate finance access and implementation in FCS is increasing and there is an appetite for practical ideas to unlock climate finance as well as case studies and dialogues around 'what works' in terms of delivering climate finance in fragile places. The four case studies profiled in this report – and the companion case study documents – provide practical solutions to overcome the diverse challenges in the life-cycle of climate adaptation projects and programmes in FCS.

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## **CONTACT**

ADRIANNA HARDAWAY

Program and Advocacy Advisor | Policy and Advocacy  
ahardaway@mercycorps.org

DEBBIE HILLIER

Head of Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance | Policy and Advocacy  
dhillier@mercycorps.org

### **About Mercy Corps**

Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we partner to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within. Now, and for the future.



45 SW Ankeny Street  
Portland, Oregon 97204  
888.842.0842

**mercycorps.org**