

# Climate adaptation and democracy support: Assessment framework



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# Glossary

## Adaptation strategies

Strategies employed by people, institutions, organisations and systems, using available skills, values, beliefs and resources, to adjust to potential damage, take advantage of opportunities and respond to consequences (usually over the long term).

## Climate adaptation

Process of adjustment employed by individuals or groups to accommodate climate change impacts. Can range from adjusting daily routines to changing entire livelihood strategies and social structures. Aims to moderate harm or difficulties associated with climate change, while taking advantage of any opportunities.

## Climate change

Large-scale changes in the pattern and predictability of weather over longer time periods, typically 30 years. Local people may experience this as changes in the timing of seasons, as well as more frequent (and unpredictable) climate shocks, such as droughts or floods.

## Climate variability

Short-term weather changes (for example, rainfall, temperature, wind), normally the result of natural causes. By contrast, climate change occurs over a much longer time period.

## Gender

A social understanding defining what it means to be a man or woman (or boy or girl) in a given society at a specific time and place. Refers to the specific roles, livelihood activities, status and expectations that society assigns to women and men within households, communities and culture. Differs from sex, which refers to the biological differences between men and women.

## Gender analysis

A systematic approach to identifying key issues and factors contributing to gender inequalities.

## Hazard

A natural or human-induced physical event that has the potential to cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, as well as damage to property, infrastructure, livelihoods, service provision and environmental resources. A climate hazard refers to an unexpected and disruptive weather event, such as an extended drought, a period of flooding, or high winds.

## Resilience

Ability of an individual, social group or community to anticipate, absorb or recover from the effects of a (climate) hazard in a timely and efficient manner. Local people may think of this as the ability to do relatively well during and after a severe climate shock (such as a drought), at a time when others may be struggling.

## Vulnerability

Degree to which individuals, families or communities are unable to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard. It is the opposite of capacity or resilience.

## Introduction and Purpose

This framework is intended to help assess the potential of a climate adaptation program or project as a vehicle for deepening citizen participation and democratic accountability in governance. It offers an analytical framework for systematically reviewing the design architecture and performance of a program from an “environmental democracy” perspective and assessing its democratic credentials.

This practical tool accompanies a more theoretical discussion paper (Greene, 2023).

Program here is intended in a very wide sense, and can include:

- Adaptation programs and projects awarded to national actors by multilateral climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) or Adaptation Fund. This includes projects initiated or driven by international, national (Direct Access Entities) and sub-national entities (e.g. through Enhanced Direct Access).
- Adaptation finance projects that are funded directly through grants to grass-roots or civil society entities, for example, the GEF Small Grant Programme (SGP) or the Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DSM) under the Climate Investment Funds Forest Investment Program (FIP).
- Adaptation finance projects funded directly through grants or loans by bilateral development agencies.
- National programs based upon financial mechanisms for allocating adaptation financing directly to the local level, e.g. the Decentralised Climate Finance (DCF) model pioneered in Kenya, Mali, Senegal and Tanzania. A version of this is currently being scaled out as the Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCCA) program in Kenya.
- National adaptation programs (and their constituent projects) financed through the UN

Capital Development Fund’s Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL)

- National social protection programs (and their devolved implementing entities) with an adaptation component, such as MGNREGA in India.

## Who this framework is intended for

This framework can be used by a variety of different actors interested in assessing the degree and quality of democratic accountability and citizen participation in an adaptation program or project. This may be national level actors, civil society organisations and government institutions interested in furthering democratic practices and/or a good governance agenda; equally, given the established links between meaningful citizen engagement and effective adaptation/avoidance of maladaptation, it could be used by national level organizations keen to promote more effective and transformative adaptation investment.

## What the framework can be used for

The framework can be used to conduct a 'democracy audit' in a variety of different ways:

- 1.** Comparative assessment of different existing real-world examples for delivering adaptation finance and governance of adaptation projects, to compare their performance across indicators of environmental democracy.
- 2.** Assessment of a planned adaptation finance project or program through assessment of its 'foundation documents' to identify opportunities for increasing citizen participation and democratic accountability.
- 3.** A one off assessment of a current adaptation program (either at national or sub-regional level) to assess its strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities for increasing citizen participation and democratic accountability.
- 4.** On-going assessment and evaluation of a current adaptation program (as in the point above), but with the aim of tracking progress towards increased participation over time by measuring changing performance across agreed indicators.

## Theoretical Roots of the Framework

This framework has its origins in both the Adaptation community of practice and the Environmental Democracy community of practice and draws on themes of citizen engagement and democratic accountability common to both. For a deeper exploration of the theoretical underpinnings of the framework, consult Greene (2023).

### Adaptation community of practice

Two analytical approaches to adaptation underpin this practical framework: the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation and the IPCC Adaptation, Impact and Vulnerability working group.

Firstly, the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation. Now endorsed by over 80 governments, leading global institutions and prominent NGOs, these eight principles envisage 'local people having individual and collective agency over defining, prioritising, designing, monitoring and evaluating adaptation options, and working with the higher levels to implement and deliver climate adaptation solutions' (Soanes et al. 2019).

The eight fundamental principles were distilled from a comparative analysis of what works best on the ground. Making these the cornerstone of an adaptation program will help to ensure that local communities and citizens are empowered to lead (and hold accountable) sustainable and effective adaptation action at the local level (Steinbech et al. 2022).

Secondly, the IPCC Working Group II report on Adaptation, Impact and Vulnerability (IPCC, 2022) identifies four essential conditions for adaptation success. These are firmly rooted in different aspects of justice (recognitional, procedural and distributive), together with a commitment to the kind of revitalised institutions (adaptable, flexible, responsive and strong) that are capable of tackling the unique challenges of climate change.

The IPCC also emphasizes the need to foreground transformational<sup>1</sup> approaches to adaptation (IPCC, 2022).

Transformational interventions seek to address the root causes of climate vulnerability through fundamental systemic<sup>2</sup> changes in the properties of socio-ecological systems (Fedele et al, 2019). These transformations are likely to require a similarly profound reconfiguration of the citizen-state relationship if they are to be socially and culturally acceptable. Only the strongest forms of democratic participation and transparency will enable the necessary public discussion and negotiation of the scale and nature of these transformations (and the difficult but necessary trade-offs required).

### Key conditions for adaptation success

<p><b>Recognitional Equity and Justice</b></p>	<p>The need for inclusion and integration of indigenous and local community knowledge and perspectives into adaptation interventions.</p>
<p><b>Procedural Equity and Justice</b></p>	<p>The need for inclusive, participatory processes in decision-making, seeking to ensure the voices of all citizens are heard and that structural barriers to inclusion are acknowledged and addressed.</p>
<p><b>Distributive Equity and Justice</b></p>	<p>The need to ensure equitable outcomes for adaptation interventions, where the benefits are shared fairly and transparently, and existing inequalities are not exacerbated.</p>
<p><b>Flexible and strong institutions to address long term risk reduction goals.</b></p>	<p>The need to ensure that institutions and processes for decision making are flexible enough to change course in response to monitoring, evaluation and learning, and can made decisions that incorporate knowledge and priorities across sectors, spatial scales and jurisdictions.</p>

## Principles for locally-led adaptation

1.	<b>Devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level</b>	Giving local institutions and communities more direct access to finance and decision-making power over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritised, designed and implemented; how progress is monitored; and how success is evaluated.
2.	<b>Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, disabled and displaced people, Indigenous Peoples and marginalised ethnic groups.</b>	Some groups within the community are more vulnerable to climate risk than others because the lack power to access or make decisions about important livelihood assets/resources and/or governance arrangements in the community. These structural inequalities are all too often reproduced in development initiatives.
3.	<b>Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily</b>	The transformative change necessary to address climate risk requires institutional, political, economic shifts that cannot be facilitated in the span of a short project life-cycle. As climate risk is dynamic, adaptation must be an on-going process rather than a single, one-off event. As a result, 'patient' in this context means at the very least a commitment of 10 years, but preferably a continuous commitment across generations.
4.	<b>Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy</b>	Improving the capabilities of local institutions to ensure they can understand climate risks and uncertainties, generate solutions and facilitate and manage adaptation initiatives over the long term without being dependent on project-based donor funding.
5.	<b>Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty</b>	Informing adaptation decisions through a combination of local, Indigenous and scientific knowledge that can enable resilience under a range of future climate scenarios.
6.	<b>Flexible programming and learning</b>	Enabling adaptive management to address the inherent uncertainty in adaptation, especially through robust monitoring and learning systems, flexible finance and flexible programming.
7.	<b>Ensuring transparency and accountability</b>	Making processes of financing, designing and delivering programmes more transparent and accountable downward to local stakeholders.
8.	<b>Collaborative action and investment</b>	Collaboration across sectors, initiatives and levels to ensure that different initiatives and different sources of funding (humanitarian assistance, development, disaster risk reduction, green recovery funds and so on) support one another, and their activities avoid duplication, to enhance efficiencies and good practice.



## Environmental Democracy community of Practice

'Environmental democracy is rooted in the idea that meaningful participation by the public is critical to ensuring that land and natural resource decisions adequately and equitably address citizens' interests.' (Worker & Ratte, 2014).

Environmental democracy concentrates on deepening, reforming and strengthening existing or emerging liberal democratic institutions to support more effective environmental action. It is based around the three critical pillars of citizen rights to Participation, Transparency and Justice (WFD, 2020).

Seen through an Adaptation lens, the rights of Participation and Transparency are most relevant and overlap significantly. These synergistic rights allow citizens to participate more effectively in adaptation decision-making and allow them to hold governments, NGOs and the private sector accountable for their action (or inaction) in this sphere. Justice rights are slightly less applicable in the adaptation context, but also have a role to play.

### Environmental Democracy Rights

#### Participation

The right to participate meaningfully in setting the agenda of adaptation programs/initiatives and in evaluating their success: framing the problem space, shaping visions of the future, deciding priorities, choosing among adaptation options/interventions and monitoring and evaluating any actions undertaken.

#### Transparency (of Information)

The right of all citizens to freely access information about climate change, and climate risks and impacts (differentiated by geography and agro-ecology, livelihood, social status and category, various kinds of social and cultural difference, etc.).

#### Justice

The right of all citizens to appeal and judicial review when adaptation initiatives infringe the environmental/human/statutory rights of citizens and/or lead to maladaptive outcomes and/the needs for redress or compensation (This need not be restricted to remedies available to citizens through the courts).

## Adaptation and Environmental Democracy Assessment Framework

This Adaptation and Environmental Democracy Assessment Framework operates at the intersection of these guiding sets of principles, using the 3 pillars of Environmental Democracy

as the basic organising structure, but creating a series of principles and indicators inspired by the Principles of Locally Led Adaptation within each of them of them. The principles for effective adaptation identified by the IPCC also feature strongly in the rationale behind each indicator:<sup>3</sup>

### Framework overview

	Environmental Democracy Pillar	Framework Principle	Indicator	
Adaptation Theme	Participation	Commitment to Participation	Vision	
			Resourcing	
		Devolution & Subsidiarity [1]	Subsidiarity	
		Representativeness & Inclusion [2]	Legitimate Participatory Institutions	
			Addressing Structural Inequalities	
		Participatory Program Operations at the Local Level [1] [4] [5] [6]	Participatory Climate Information	
			Program Priorities and Strategic Objectives	
			Choice of Interventions and Investments	
			Management of Implementation	
			Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation	
		Capacity & Resource [3]	Sustainable Participation	
		Transparency	Transparent Information [7]	Program Information
				Climate Information
Justice	Protection of Rights [2] [7]	Appeal and Redress		

## The Framework Explained

The framework consists of:

(a) An excel spreadsheet with a scorecard made up of a series of indicators<sup>4</sup>, a ratings system, a notes section for justifying the ratings; and an opportunities column for suggestions as to how the program might be improved.

(b) An explanatory note (this document) which introduces the framework, explains the importance of the indicators and provides examples of how to apply the Ratings: system.

### User Guide: How to apply the framework

This user guide document provides a step-by-step guide to applying the framework principles and their associated indicators.

Each indicator is treated in detail, providing the rationale behind the indicator and how to score a program using it.

#### Rationale:

The rationale for adopting the indicator is given, with reference to the theoretical framework (above) and practical considerations based on evidence from case studies.

#### Ratings:

Concrete guidance on how to score the program/project on an ordinal response scale common to all indicators. This is in the form of a description (or a list of attributes) of how the program/project might look to merit a particular rating. Given the huge variety of contexts in which this framework could be used, this is only indicative as it is unlikely that the description will exactly match the example being evaluated.

Two additional columns are also feature in the scorecard but are not described in this document.

The first provides space for the assessor to provide evidence in support of the rating they have given (the 'why?'), facilitating harmonization of ratings if more than one person is conducting the assessment or consistency in approach across multiple programs.

The second allows an assessor to describe how the program might improve their rating. It provides space for suggestions as to practice procedural or operational change in support of strengthened democratic practice and more effective adaptation.

The user guide should be read in conjunction with the accompanying paper on Environmental Democracy and Climate Change Adaptation (Greene, 2023).

#### Ratings used in the framework

None
Low
Medium
High
Not Applicable

**CAUTION:** The assessment framework will require the user to make some subjective judgements (backed by evidence). This means that different people may reasonably disagree when rating: a program on any given indicator. For best results, assign a small team of people to assess the program individually and then encourage triangulation through open discussion of the results.

# THE PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS

# Participation Pillar

## Principle 1: Commitment to Participation

### Vision

#### Indicator:

To what extent does the program design understand the aim of citizen participation as citizen empowerment?

#### Rationale:

Empowering citizens to make decisions and set their own agendas and priorities is itself an effective adaptation strategy, and it is a necessary condition of distributional and procedural justice (IPCC, 2022). Citizen participation should ideally play a transformative role in the program design, shifting power away from international donors and national actors to the citizens and communities most affected by the impacts of climate change. Participation should give expression to the right of citizens and stakeholders to decide on, design, modify, evaluate and reshape the climate adaptation actions, interventions and investments that affect them. The degree of citizen participation in governance falls on a continuum of engagement ranging from cynical manipulation of citizens by elites ('non-participation') to the fullest expression of self-determination and autonomy through political empowerment ('citizen power') - see Figures 1 and 2. This indicator explores the program's vision for participation and measures where it falls on this continuum. It answers the question: what's the real purpose of citizen participation in the program design?

#### Ratings:

##### Low:

Participation is mentioned by the program foundation documents but its role is very limited. Its purpose may simply be to 'extract' information from citizens and/or manage community relations so that project actors can implement externally designed, top-down interventions without organised opposition from the citizens and the community. Alternatively, citizen participation may feature in the program design simply to satisfy donor requirements – a nominal, tick-box exercise.

##### Medium:

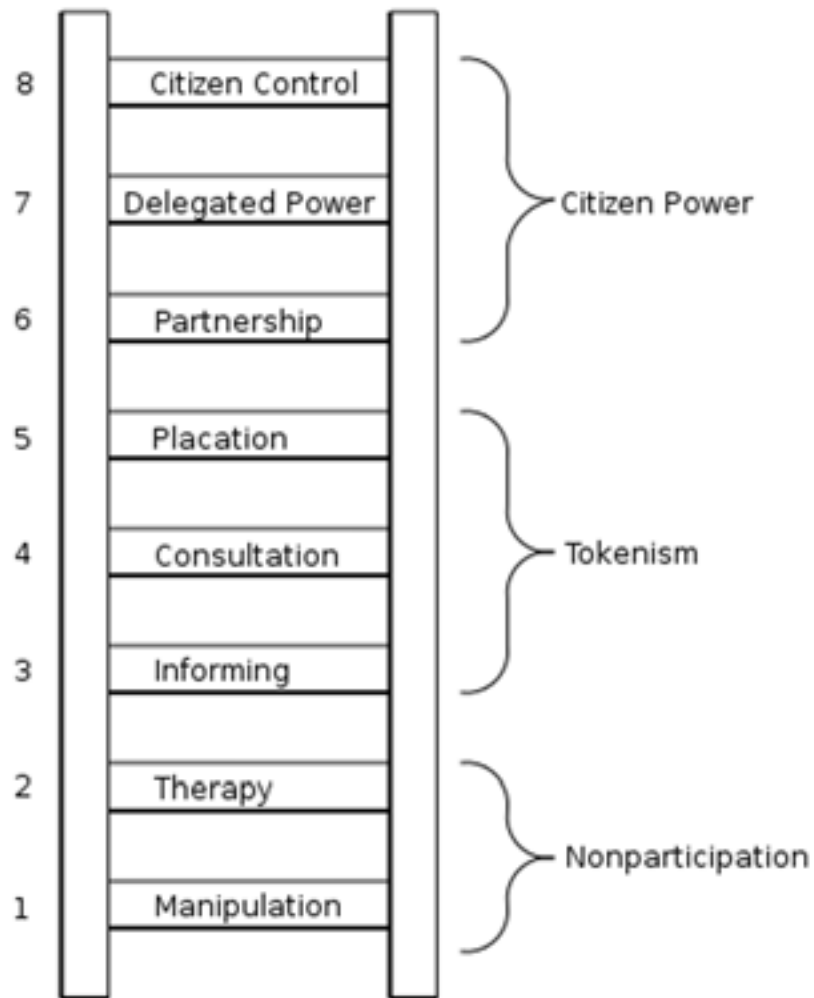
The program design has a vision of citizen participation somewhere between steps 3 and 6 on Arnstein's ladder, corresponding to Instrumental/Representative in White's typology. The program agenda and priorities may still be largely framed and led by external actors or at the centre, but the instrumental value of meaningful partnership with citizens, communities and local stakeholders is fully recognised, as is its importance for sustainability. The program is upwardly accountable to donors and national level actors (e.g. government ministries), but also incorporates elements of downward accountability to citizens and local actors.

##### High:

The program design prioritises the deepest form of citizen participation ('citizen control', Arnstein's steps 7-8) and establishes an institutional and operational framework to enable a demand-driven, downwardly accountable, citizen-led program cycle. The design expects that the program's vision, objectives and decisions at all levels will be driven by citizens, their representatives and civil society stakeholders through a transparent process of engagement and negotiation, with a flexible and responsive feedback mechanism that facilitates engagement between different administrative levels.

**Figure 1: Arnstein's "ladder of citizen participation"**

Source: Arnstein, S. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216-224.



**Figure 2: White's typology**

Source: Sarah White (1996): *Depoliticising development: the uses and abuses of participation*.

*Development in Practice*. Vol.6

Form	Top-Down	Bottom-Up	Function
Nominal	Legitimation	Inclusion	Display
Instrumental	Efficiency	Cost	Means
Representative	Sustainability	Leverage	Voice
Transformative	Empowerment	Empowerment	Means/End

## Resourcing

### Indicator:

To what extent are participatory processes and/or institutions in the program adequately resourced (given the program design)?

### Rationale:

The program must be adequately resourced to achieve its vision of citizen participation - at all levels of the program.

Even if the program design envisages participation as nominal or limited (a rating of 'Low' on the previous indicator), there should still be adequate funding to employ competent consultants/trained personnel to engage with citizens and communities in a professional and systematic manner.

If the aim of citizen participation is more ambitious, there must be sufficient funding to cover the costs associated with citizen engagement processes (meetings, elections, etc.), citizen communication (community radio, text messaging, social media) and institutions (travel, operational costs, liaison with other project actors etc.). Citizens will most probably need to be supported by technical program support actors who can provide capacity building, training and close technical advice and support with administration, finance, logistics, operations, workshop facilitation and technical design and implementation. If these are local government actors, they will themselves need to have sufficient capacity to perform this function; the program may benefit from partnering with civil society actors who have the necessary expertise in working with communities.

### Ratings:

#### Low:

There is little awareness of the real cost of supporting the program's vision of citizen participation (see previous indicator). Very little budget is set aside and/or estimated costs bear little relation to real costs. If the program design expects participation to lead to empowerment, citizens are given a mandate they are unable to execute. Local technical support actors have little or no capacity to establish and maintain participatory processes/institutions or to provide the necessary guidance to communities.

#### Medium:

The program budget includes resources enough for local actors to facilitate adequate participatory processes such as workshops or focus groups throughout design, planning, implementation and MEL of the programme or project. However, funds to ensure high quality interpreters or to ensure people from often marginalised groups can fully participate are limited or uncertain. Funds are made available for capacity building of local partners on participatory processes. However, these sums are established to deliver a set number of trainings within a set timeframe rather than on guaranteeing a quality outcome. There is little room for further training if it is necessary.

#### High:

The program budget and operational set up reflects a realistic assessment of the resources required to set up and maintain participatory processes/institutions at all levels of the program, providing sufficient contingency to respond to unexpected events. This covers the operational costs of participation in addition to any capacity building and technical support that citizens may require to take the lead on program decision making. This support can be provided by partnerships with civil society organisations and NGOs, in addition to local government.

## Principle 2: Devolution and Subsidiarity

### Subsidiarity

#### Indicator:

To what extent is the principle of subsidiarity recognised in the program design (and implemented in practice)?

#### Rationale

Subsidiarity is the principle that decisions should be taken at the lowest appropriate level of governance. The rationale is that people most affected by an issue should have the final say in shaping the response to it; for adaptation, this allows strategies to be tailored to very diverse and dynamic local contexts (Patel et al, 2020; Steinbech et al 2022). Subsidiarity is a key tenet of the Locally Led Adaptation Principles (Soames et al, 2019). While subsidiarity does not by itself commit the program to greater citizen participation and democratic accountability<sup>5</sup>, it is a necessary condition for it.

The term 'lowest appropriate level of governance' requires a little further clarification.

Firstly, the 'lowest' level will vary significantly according to context. If we are discussing levels of government administration (as is often the case with adaptation projects), the lowest level will be mandated by legislation, statute or constitution. However, when considering environmental democracy there are also an array of other non-government actors involved in local governance that may also qualify as relevant decision-making spaces for an adaptation program. This includes social movements, traditional resource management groups, urban street or block committees, youth/women's savings groups and other expressions of civic society that operate at levels below local government.

Secondly, the subsidiarity principle refers to the 'appropriate lowest level'. There may be cases where taking decisions at the lowest level would not lead to the most effective and equitable governance outcomes. Examples of this would include situations where there are significant spill-over or transboundary effects<sup>6</sup>, where ecosystems or landscapes need to be administered as a unit, where an intervention may only be possible through integrated planning at a higher scale of operation, where the impact of an intervention is demonstrably greater through management at a higher scale, or where there are insufficient resources or capacity to conduct decision making at the lowest level (Garrick, 2018). In such cases, decisions need to be taken at higher levels or through horizontal co-governance arrangements between different bodies at the same level. Deciding which level is 'appropriate' is to some extent subjective.<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, the fact that a final decision is best taken at a specific level does not mean that lower levels should be excluded from the decision-making process. Quite the opposite: every effort should be made to consult them wherever possible, and to represent these interests in the final decision making forums.



## Ratings:

### Low:

This indicator would be rated 'None' or 'Low' in the case of a pure top-down system, where all program decisions are taken centrally at the national level or international level and cascaded down to lower levels for implementation and monitoring or evaluation against centrally agreed standards. This could happen, for example, where a program is being administered by government agencies against a backdrop of a centralised or imperfectly decentralised administration.

### Medium:

The indicator would be rated 'Medium' where lower levels of governance are systematically engaged in all most aspects of a project's activity on an equal footing with higher level institutions: budgets and decision making are genuinely decentralised downwards. However, higher level institutions retain a significant degree of control over decision making at the lower levels. This power can take the form of framing the program objectives, focus areas (e.g. sectors) and budget flows, together with retaining a degree of control (and the possibility of veto) over the decisions made.

### High:

The indicator would be rated 'High' where the program clearly prioritises decision making at the local level, except where there is a demonstrable case for a different governance structure (with reference a limited range of acceptable exemptions, open to appeal). The institutions at the 'lowest appropriate level' lead on decision making and have full discretion to determine budget allocations and intervention areas according to their own priorities. Where final decisions must be taken at higher levels, meaningful consultation is conducted with lower levels and there is downwards accountability.

## Principle 3: Representativeness and Inclusion

### Legitimate participatory institutions

#### Indicator:

To what extent are steps taken to ensure that participatory processes and/or institutions (at all levels) offer adequate and fair representation of all citizens and stakeholders according to transparent rules, agreed with them in advance?

#### Rationale:

Participatory processes and/or dedicated representative institutions are the crux of citizen engagement, and, whatever their formal mandate in the program, it is essential that they have local legitimacy and are perceived to be fair by the relevant citizens and communities.

This indicator recognises that 'democratic arrangements can be many and diverse, with plenty of scope for innovation and integration of non-westernised perspectives' (Greene, 2023). It relates to the choice of 1) specific institutional or procedural form that citizen engagement will take at different levels and at different stages in the program cycle (e.g. village assemblies; elected executive bodies, community interest groups or multistakeholder forums) and 2) the process for determining eligibility to participate in such processes, or represent the community in these institutions.

If traditional/preferred governance structures and civic spaces are ignored or replaced, the program runs the risk of undermining the legitimacy of the entire engagement process, making it either irrelevant or redundant as other more established institutions take precedence. Moreover, if the procedure for selecting participants/representatives is opaque (or left

entirely at the discretion of the program staff or to program actors with little guidance as to how to ensure the process is sufficiently inclusive) it leaves the citizen engagement process open to the twin risks of elite capture or manipulation for political/economic ends.

### **Ratings:**

#### **Low:**

The institutional forms and composition of the citizen engagement process are determined externally by the program designers, with very little consideration of existing traditional governance or decision-making structures, norms of governance and/or patterns of authority that are customary in the community.

#### **Medium:**

The program is sensitive to existing traditional governance or decision-making structures and incorporates these into program participatory processes/institutions through co-design with local communities. The terms of engagement are agreed with citizens in a transparent and consultative process at the beginning of the program, with the possibility of occasional review and refinement if the program duration permits.

#### **High:**

Citizens and stakeholders self-organise, taking the lead in deciding upon their preferred institutional/procedural forms and the process of citizen eligibility and/or selection. For example, this might take place where a grass roots organisation has applied for climate finance and is leading on the design of a particular program (see for example the Huairou Commission Community Resilience Fund) [Greene, 2023; Huairou Commission, 2021].

One risk of delegating the design of the participatory process to citizen bodies entirely is that existing power dynamics and entrenched

inequalities may lead to processes/institutions that reproduce the exclusion of marginalised groups (e.g. women, young people, certain ethnic minorities). The need to ensure inclusion in participatory procedures is therefore considered in the next indicator.

## **Addressing Structural Inequalities**

### **Indicator**

To what extent are specific measures taken to overcome the effect of entrenched structural inequalities upon disadvantaged social groups, empowering them to participate meaningfully, and ensuring that their interests are included and protected at all stages of the project cycle? (procedural justice for the structurally disadvantaged).

### **Rationale**

Individual citizens are situated within a complex matrix of social relationships between groups of unequal power and influence. Entrenched structural inequalities can manifest themselves in many ways: e.g. through formal laws and informal social rules, socio-cultural and gender norms, segregation of various kinds, and exclusion of particular social groups from certain economic activities and/or decision-making spaces. These structural disadvantages can both increase the likelihood that an individual will be affected by climate risk (exposure) and that the individual will be harmed by it (vulnerability).

The particular social groups facing discrimination will vary by context, but among those most often affected are women, young people, the infirm, the disabled, ethnic minorities and people without resources. These groups may be associated with specific customary livelihood roles and responsibilities, with particular economic activities, or live/work

in specific locations - any of which can result in a very different climate risk profile to people belonging to other social groups. But discrimination means that they are second class citizens, with limited access to and/or control over the resources that they need and use every day. Often, they are systematically excluded from the most important community decision making places and spaces – including those potentially associated with a participatory adaptation project. Consequently, their distinctive climate risk priorities and interests may go unrecognised and they may benefit only tangentially from program benefits - or such benefits may be appropriated by others.

Adaptation programmes need to recognise and respond to these structural inequalities at each stage of the project cycle.

One of the ways this can be done is to make appropriate modifications to the participatory processes/institutions in the program (this meeting the needs of procedural justice). Best practice dictates that this strategy should be researched, co-designed and implemented together with citizens and communities as part of the process of designing legitimate participatory institutions and processes. Transformational change involves a lasting reconfiguration of power relationships within the community, and this means including both the powerful and the powerless in the conversation. This requires commitment and buy-in from across the community over a sustained period of time. Ideally, the program will work together with civil society organisations that have long standing links to the community and a deep and nuanced understanding of evolving community dynamics.

## **Ratings:**

### **Low:**

The program will likely:

- Show only a basic awareness of the presence of structural inequalities and patterns of discrimination in the areas where the program operates.
- Have a limited understanding of how these inequalities translate into distinctive and elevated patterns of exposure and vulnerability to climate risk for disadvantaged social groups.
- Use broad, generic categories imported from outside the program context (e.g. women, young people) and propose generalised solutions for addressing barriers to participation, with little real understanding of community dynamics.

### **Medium:**

The program will likely:

- Clearly identify social groups (e.g. indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, women, caste, class, etc.) that suffer from structural discrimination in the different contexts the program operates (recognitional justice), e.g. through a stakeholder analysis conducted at multiple levels.
- Demonstrate an understanding that members of disadvantaged social groups usually have different and distinctive climate risk profiles from other community members.
- Demonstrate an understanding that structural inequalities of power create barriers to participation in program processes by citizens who belong to these groups.
- Seek to understand barriers to participation and differentiated climate risk, for example through the sensitive use of participatory tools (such as power analyses or gender analyses) by suitably trained experts.

- Devise strategies for over-coming barriers to participation, for example, by striving for gender balance in representative institutions, or by amending participatory processes so that marginalised voices can be heard (e.g. through the use of separate focus groups for women, older people or ethnic minorities), or by providing specific advocacy training and capacity building for members of disadvantaged groups.

### High:

The program will include many of the features outlined in Medium, but there will be a commitment to a deeper understanding of the nature of the structural inequalities and entrenched discrimination faced by disadvantaged social groups. The program will seek to build upon and complement locally-led processes of transformational social change aimed at reconfiguring power relationships over the longer term.

For example, it may:

- Demonstrate an understanding of how discrimination arising from membership of multiple disadvantaged social groups can overlap and aggregate (e.g. poor + woman + older) to create distinctive patterns of exclusion and climate risk (i.e. intersectionality).
- Establish partnerships with civil society organisations that have long standing links to the local communities and a deep and nuanced understanding of evolving community dynamics.
- Work with disadvantaged groups (and the wider community) to find ways to represent and protect their interests and climate priorities in a sensitive and locally appropriate manner across the range of program participatory processes (procedural justice), with a view to bringing about long-term transformational change.
- Introduce a formal review and vetting process to ensure that project priorities and activities take into account the specific climate risks of marginalised and minority groups (e.g. a compulsory review panel prior to final approval)
- Ensure that outcomes for marginalised groups are included in MEL processes (distributional justice).

## Principle 4: Participatory Program Operations at the Local Level

### Program Priorities and Strategic Objectives

#### Indicator

To what extent are citizens and stakeholders involved in setting the overall program agenda, priorities and focus intervention areas in their local area?

#### Rationale

Adaptation responses need to be tailored to local context. This is critical in ensuring that the program objectives match the actual climate risks experienced by the community, as well as the aspirations, needs and priorities of the citizens and stakeholders who live there.

This indicator measures the degree to which local citizens have a say in deciding overall program agenda and medium/long term priorities<sup>8</sup> in the areas where they practice their livelihoods.

#### Ratings

##### Low:

The program determines the medium/long term priorities of the local project area with little or no consultation with the local community. For example, project actors may use a top-down system for determining these specific priorities, perhaps using high-level 'growth' focused, national macro-economic targets that don't reflect local priorities or that implicitly marginalise indigenous/local production systems. These high-level targets are then used to determine 'appropriate' corresponding local level assigned to local program areas.

Where participatory process do take place, they will be 'nominal' (White's typology) and 'non-participatory/tokenistic' (Arnstein's ladder) – largely an exercise in box-ticking.

##### Medium:

Medium/long term adaptation objectives are reviewed and prioritised by citizens through participatory institutions or processes. While these processes may go well beyond 'tokenistic' forms of participation, the process is still externally driven and largely framed by an agenda determined outside the community (e.g. limited in scope or restricted to specific sectors or areas). Citizens may be presented with (or strongly encouraged to select) a menu of possible choices which may not reflect the lived realities of climate risk, local priorities or preferred future development pathways. Finally, other program actors reserve the right to modify or adjust the priorities decided through this process in accordance with national or international program frameworks.

##### High:

The highest form of citizen participation is transformative, placing the selection of overall program priorities at the local level fully in the control of citizens; program objectives therefore match the community's own vision of its preferred future given the constraints of future climate risk. Citizens and community stakeholder groups lead<sup>9</sup> on all aspects of this process, requesting advice, information or resources from other program actors as needed. In making these decisions, citizens and community stakeholder groups draw on a range of sources of information, including their knowledge and understanding of local livelihood and production systems, their lived experience of climate change and climate risks and impacts, and climate information summaries and scenarios prepared by the project. Other project actors can only override their choices for a limited set of valid<sup>10</sup> reasons, laid out in advance in the program documents.

## Choice of Interventions and Investments

### Indicator

To what extent are citizens and stakeholders involved in identifying, design and selecting specific intervention activities and investments in their local area?

### Rationale

This indicator measures the degree to which citizens and local stakeholders are free to identify, design and select the specific intervention activities and investments that the program will make in their local area.

Once a program has decided its strategic priorities and intervention focus over the Medium: and longer term in the local area (see above), planning must focus on the specific, concrete interventions, activities and investments that are needed to achieve them; when completed, these are measurable as project outputs.<sup>11</sup> Research into good practice in adaptation and environmental democracy suggests that such decisions are best made by citizens through local participatory processes and/or institutions. The greatest degree of autonomy involves informed and authoritative decision making by citizens working to a known budget over which they have full discretionary control.

### Ratings:

#### Low:

Here, the selection of program activities, interventions and investments is decided mainly by other program actors (be they international, national, sub-national or even local, e.g. technical teams) without reference to local participatory processes/institutions. Citizen participation is not considered an important input: where it takes place, it is not systematic and may be limited to anecdotal reports or informal dialogue with (probably unaccountable)

local brokers or intermediaries – with the aim of facilitating action decided elsewhere.

#### Medium:

Citizens and communities are systematically involved in the selection of interventions in the local area through formalised participatory processes/institutions. However, the scope of their choices is restricted to a limited menu of activity/investment options; for example, choices may be limited to a specific sector, or feature predetermined solutions and interventions which have been already been decided upon elsewhere. There may be some limited scope for negotiation over design features and tailoring to local context. However, other project actors (horizontal or vertical) have the discretion to veto or adjust citizen choices without further consultation.

#### High:

Citizens and local stakeholders are able to make informed, authoritative decisions about the specific interventions/investments they would like, the indicator should be rated 'High'. In this case, regularly functioning participatory institutions enable citizens to freely propose, select and decide on the activities and investment that will be made in the local area. While they may have additional options to choose from shared by technical experts, a High: level of democratic practice in support of adaptation would facilitate their free choice to enhance traditional adaptation strategies, apply locally relevant technology, or experiment with approaches new to their locality. For the greatest empowerment, citizens should have full discretionary control over a known budget for the local area, established in advance - a practice known as 'participatory budgeting' (Bartocci et al, 2022) This encourages both agency and ownership by promoting a thorough understanding of the opportunity costs and trade-offs of particular decisions – helping them to prioritise with a realistic understanding of the available resources and to bring local knowledge of context to influence the decision making process.

## Management of Implementation

### Indicator:

To what extent are citizens and stakeholders involved in managing and overseeing the implementation of adaptation activities as part of the project?

### Rationale:

Once specific actions, activities, and/or investments in the local area have been decided upon, they must be implemented. In addition to physical infrastructure, these interventions may include capacity building, reform of local institutions, advocacy programs in addition to the construction/rehabilitation of physical infrastructure, etc. In the case of physical infrastructure, technical design documents will be drawn up, bills of quantities devised, contracts awarded and construction will begin.

Meaningful citizen participation in all these processes (e.g. procurement, financial sign-off, quality/performance monitoring, service delivery as well as and contractor management) helps to create a sense of ownership and can ensure more effective and more impactful interventions. Local communities are ideally placed to direct and manage the implementation phase, bringing to bear their deep understanding of their local context and their own priorities. Community scrutiny and bottom-up transparency builds downward accountability – helping to address donor concerns about fiduciary risk.

### Ratings:

#### Low:

In this case, citizens and communities would only be minimally involved in the final stages of the design process, the tendering and contacting process, and management/oversight of program actions, activities and/or

infrastructure at the local level. Consultation might be restricted to anecdotal or unstructured feedback on contractor performance, or the most cursory community engagement (e.g. based on communication with one or two (probably unaccountable) members of the local community).

#### Medium:

In this case, the citizens and communities are systematically consulted at each stage of the process through participatory processes/institutions, but this engagement is generally 'after the fact' and reflective rather than proactive and empowering. Citizen engagement will typically be to ratify decisions already taken or shaped by other program actors (at various levels). Communities may be engaged by others as part of the implementation oversight/monitoring functions. There may be some opportunities for amending or challenging the choice of contractor/service provider, flexibly making design changes in response to specific local conditions, and/or calling to account poor or substandard performance. However, these opportunities will be occasional and other program actors responsible for implementing will have final discretion as to how to respond.

#### High:

Here citizens and communities are empowered to act as fully autonomous program implementation agents in their own right, responsible for providing oversight and management of the delivery of adaptation programs, including investments, trainings etc. With relevant technical support and training from other actors (as needed), they are able to: design, lead and run procurement processes; manage, monitor (and sanction) local contractors following an appraisal of the quality of their work; amend design specifications in response to local knowledge and emerging community concerns; reflect on the overall performance of the contractors, and sign off on monitoring activities once implementation is complete.

## Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation

### Indicator:

To what extent are citizens and stakeholders involved in monitoring, evaluating and learning from the performance of program interventions?

### Rationale:

Adaptation monitoring, evaluating and learning (MEL) poses particular challenges because of the uncertainty of climate futures and the longer time frames over which outcomes need to be measured to gauge success (Brooks and Fisher, 2014). Indeed, newly emerging climate hazards can make previously successful adaptation maladaptive by changing fundamental conditions of the context. To address this dynamic climate risk, the most adaptive and effective MEL should be continuous and institutionalised into existing systems to continue beyond the end of the program (Schipper, 2020). Good adaptation may be best understood as a continual process of adaptive management to uncertain future conditions, informed by regular learning and feedback mechanisms (Steinbech et al, 2022).

Monitoring, evaluation and learning is an also important part of ensuring distributive justice in adaptation interventions. Understanding how the costs and benefits from adaptation programmes are distributed among citizens is central to ensure that socially disadvantaged and excluded people are being reached.

Citizens and communities are particularly well placed to contribute to adaptation MEL (Coger et al., 2021). In addition to having first-hand experience of the latest local trends in climate change, they have direct experience and knowledge of the full range of intervention outcomes (whether these are intended or not). Involving citizens in establishing the very benchmarks and criteria used to define successful adaptation ensures that programs are gauged against locally meaningful priorities, rather than ones that are set externally. They can evaluate outcomes against existing program theories of change<sup>12</sup>, critiquing the program logic by highlighting undesirable and unexpected outcomes or development pathways, especially emerging issues involving maladaptation or increased climate vulnerability e.g. transferred vulnerability (Erikson et al 2021).

Ensuring communities are at the heart of shaping theories of change, identifying indicators, shaping and implementing MEL plans therefore shows a commitment to both more effective adaptation and deepening democratic practice.



## Ratings:

### Low:

- The program MEL plan (e.g. data collection methods, indicators of successful adaptation, standards of program success) is designed outside of the local context, for example by an external consultant or a project actor at the national or international level.
- Communities are only involved as passive sources of information, e.g via standardised surveys administered by external enumerators or very limited qualitative engagement to assess the quality of program outputs.
- Learning and knowledge is extracted from communities and concentrated at the centre – not shared among citizens.
- The MEL plan is timebound and limited to the lifetime of the program or project ('projectised'); it is internal to the program and it is not institutionalised into wider, lasting MEL processes that can measure the long-term impact of interventions in a dynamic risk context.

### Medium:

The MEL plan is developed with qualitative and quantitative community consultation, but performance indicators are ultimately determined by the donor or implementing institutions.

Data collection for monitoring is sporadic rather than continuous and triggered by project implementers rather than through empowered community engagement.

Some efforts to institutionalise MEL tools and tracking takes place, but few incentives are established to maintain their use beyond the project. Learning is shared with communities and stakeholders, but little action is taken to ensure it is integrated into future activities.

### High:

- Citizens have a pivotal role in designing and implementing the project MEL plan (indicators, standards of success etc.).
- Program participants and beneficiaries can contribute directly to data collection through information and communications tools (ICT) such as mobile phones, social media and bespoke digital platforms ('crowdsourcing').
- Assessments may involve appropriate mixed methods approaches (quantitative and qualitative techniques) and track outcomes for (locally defined) socially disadvantaged and excluded groups, ideally with an intersectional lens.
- Social audits may be used to conduct citizen driven, regular, structured reviews of the performance of program actors and institutions.
- Social learning, knowledge exchange platforms and peer to peer learning approaches to foster decentralised citizen communities of practice.
- To capture instances of displaced vulnerability, program evaluations are not restricted to people in the immediate locality of the program; they are integrated into assessment frameworks at wider scales of operation.
- The MEL plan complements and augments the capacity of existing MEL institutions outside the program – enabling the learning to continue beyond the lifetime of the project and/or program.
- Citizen driven MEL feeds into adaptive learning in program planning at higher levels for subsequent project cycles.

## Principle 5: Capacity and Legacy

### Sustainable Participation

#### Indicator:

To what extent does the program leave a sustainable legacy of increased local capacity for meaningful citizen participation?

#### Rationale:

A good adaptation program will leave a lasting institutional legacy of better capacity for understanding climate risks and uncertainties, and enhanced citizen representation/mobilisation and citizen/community-state communication<sup>13</sup> (Steinback et al., 2022). Time-bound project-based approaches typically give little thought to sustainability once project funding ends: institutions for community participation wither, capacities decline over time, and MEL processes for assessing the impact of investments/intervention come to an end.

#### Ratings:

##### Low:

If the program design is on the 'non-participation' end of Arnstein's ladder, external/non-local consultants are brought in to manage community consultation (e.g. data collection) on a casual, one-off basis; climate risk assessments done with communities will be processed centrally to inform top-down project decision making. This does not build the capacity of local government actors, civil society organisations or citizens/communities.

If the program design aspires to citizen empowerment, new participatory processes and/or institutions are created without reference to existing structures or stakeholders - creating a parallel but unsustainable system that cannot exist without project support.

##### Medium:

The programme makes some efforts towards a sustainable legacy of participation, carrying out capacity building, providing participatory tools, and engaging with local stakeholders to encourage use of new approaches. Few incentives are explored or put in place to encourage long term use of such approaches. Participatory tools and techniques may be offered, but are not practical or affordable in context and remain aspirational as to their use.

##### High:

The program is designed with sustainability and institutionalisation in mind. The programme is long enough to facilitate meaningful changes in the way local institutions facilitate citizen participation. Participatory processes/institutions build upon existing models of citizen engagement and participation enshrined in national, local policy or endorsed by other national programs (including formalised processes of consultation or formal bodies and institutions habitually convened to represent stakeholder interests). The project builds the capacities of existing actors and traditional informal community governance structures – leaving in place a practical and affordable system for assessing and monitoring dynamic climate change risk and a sustainable institutional legacy for enhanced citizen participation and empowerment.

## Information (Transparency) Pillar

### Background:

The second pillar of the framework concerns Information and Transparency. When assessing a climate adaptation program and the degree to which it deepens environmental democracy, transparency relates to the production and provision of information about:

- The program itself: its design, targeted actions, operations, funding flows and differentiated impacts. This information is essential to allow citizens to participate fully and meaningfully in program decision making. It is also essential for democratic, downward accountability and progress towards distributional justice – making it clear who is being targeted by the program, what is being done and what the differentiated outcomes are for different groups in the community (especially those facing the those facing greatest discrimination and social exclusion).
- Information about the current and future climate risks (in the short and longer term), and the range of adaptation options available to respond to them.

## Principle 1: Transparent Information

### Transparent Program Information

#### Indicator:

To what extent does the program establish an effective system for producing and delivering accessible program information in support of democratic accountability and distributional justice?

#### Rationale:

Transparency requires that citizens be able to access many kinds of information about the program in a timely fashion, in a format appropriate to their needs. Information needs to be provided as part of routine operations, but also on-demand in response to requests by citizens. This indicator assesses the range of information made available to citizens as well as its accessibility.

#### Types of program information:

There are many kinds of program information that citizens should be able to access in order to participate fully in decision making and to hold program actors to account. This list is illustrative, not exhaustive:

- Foundation documents for the program (e.g. constitution, statutory commitments, project design documents, operational manuals and guidelines, etc).
- Clear information on the governance arrangements, mandates of different project actors, lines of accountability and avenues of appeal.
- An organisational directory of the program, indicating key personnel together with contact details.

- A clear timetable of program cycle activities, events and milestones at different levels.
- Meeting reports for all project teams at different levels including agenda, decisions taken, with full minutes and details of participants present.
- Summaries with key informational inputs in advance of participatory activities by citizens and their institutions.
- Workshop or participatory process reports detailing agenda, activities, decisions taken and participants present.
- Clear financial information including:
  - Total available budget (both unallocated and targeted);
  - Financial allocation formulas, and actual financial flows by administrative levels and program actors;
  - Operational costs and administrative costs by project actors;
  - Details of expenditure on project activities, disaggregated by administrative level;
  - Fully audited financial reports satisfying local and international accounting requirements;
  - Other financial details.
- Implementation data, including:
  - Invitations to tender, selection criteria and contracts awarded.
- Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation reports and knowledge sharing at different levels (program, project, etc.), including:
  - Theories of change/log-frames/intervention logic narratives;
  - Details of the indicators used and why selected;
- Methodologies employed, possible limitations and biases;
- Social audits;
- Outcomes tracking and reporting for different social groups, particularly those most subject to discrimination and exclusion;
- Peer-to-peer learning resources and networks.

## **Accessibility**

Citizens and stakeholders affected by the program have different capacities, levels of education, life circumstances and experiences of marginalisation and oppression. This means that their ability to understand and access program information can vary immensely. Ideally, the program should consider potential barriers to understanding basic program documentation, routine program communications and updates, and information feeding into participatory processes. It should also put in place measures to overcome these.

For example, alternative communications and delivery formats can be considered, tailored to the level of literacy, local languages and formal education of citizens at local scales. In place of written text and official printed reports, this might include radio broadcasts, verbal reports or recorded messages at community meetings, posters featuring graphics to convey information, and videos featuring images and cartoons. Establishing community focal persons for the project (e.g. extension/outreach workers) can also help citizens to request, access and interpret information as and when they need it (on-demand access).

## **Ratings:**

### **Low:**

Little priority is given to availability and accessibility of project information. Foundation project documents may mention transparency, but there are no clear institutional mandates and no costed strategy for producing and distributing information in a systematic way. Some kinds of information (see list above) may be available through a limited number of channels (e.g. through project websites), but access may be limited, restricted or intermittent. The accessibility needs of different stakeholders are not considered and barriers to access by citizens are considerable.

### **Medium:**

The program recognises the importance of transparency of information and the role it plays in downward accountability, effective participation and monitoring of differential impacts of the program on socially excluded and disadvantaged social groups. Most kinds of program information (see list above) are generated in some form, but standards of reporting may vary, and delivery platforms may be limited (e.g. only available online) due to unclear institutional mandates and lack of capacity/resources. There is recognition of barriers to access for some citizens, and some efforts are made to tailor project information to citizen needs and capacities, but these are not comprehensive, adequately resourced or supported. There is a limited on-demand system of access to information – but this is only available for certain types of program information e.g. High: level program reports and evaluations.

### **High:**

The program makes an official commitment to accessible and transparent program information and establishes the institutional, financial and operational framework that is needed to achieve this. Program foundation documents explain how transparency of information is integrated into all processes, and operationalised into all processes, institutions and procedures at all levels. Institutions will have clear mandates, including costed, practical strategies developing and publishing sharable information (see the list above), making it accessible to different kinds of stakeholder, and disseminating it widely. Strategies will make clear who is responsible and how they are accountable. Institutions are able to deliver on these strategies – providing both timely information inputs for participatory decision making processes, and responding to on-demand requests for information by citizens.

## Transparent Climate Information

### Indicator:

To what extent does the program provide citizens and stakeholders with access to inclusive and relevant climate information for adaptation planning at different temporal scales (both in the context of the project and more widely, in their everyday lives)?

### Rationale:

This indicator measures the degree to which citizens and stakeholders have access to useful, intelligible and relevant climate information to enable them to participate meaningfully in program processes and make informed decisions about their livelihoods.

Understanding the nature of climate and disaster risk and impacts - and the historical, current and future climate context - is fundamental for adaptation planning by citizens and local stakeholders. This makes climate information a distinct and special kind of information. As with other forms of program information, transparency is needed for democratic accountability, since climate information plays a pivotal role in adaptation projects in framing the context for interventions, guiding decisions, allocating funding flows and shaping program priorities. But timely access to climate information is also critical for building the climate resilience of citizens and stakeholders in their own individual, family, business, livelihood and community contexts outside of the program. Widespread climate change literacy is also critical for holding governments to account on their more general climate change and environmental commitments.

Climate information provided by the program should map out the range of possible short, Medium: and long term climate futures (e.g. trends in temperature, precipitation and extreme weather events) and the ways in which these will affect local communities. An adaptation program does not necessarily need to produce all climate information itself: it can source some kinds of information from climate information producers/intermediaries and use/transform this information through inclusive participatory processes to make it more transparent and relevant for citizens. It can also repackage existing climate information services to make them more accessible.

## **Effective climate information for adaptation: the role of participation.**

Roughly speaking, there are two major sources of climate information: (a) top-down, scientific measures produced by technical experts using data from meteorological stations, remote sensing data, and various kinds of computer modelling; (b) bottom-up reports, expressed in terms of the current and historical lived experience of local communities, with a focus on traditional knowledge and on the impacts that extreme weather events and slow-onset climatic changes have already had on people, landscapes, livelihoods and production systems.

Scientific measures and traditional top-down climate and weather products are often too abstract, and the underlying data too sporadic or unreliable, for ordinary citizens and stakeholders to be able to use in their decision-making and planning activities. Where such data exist, they need to be translated into information that is locally meaningful and relevant to local people's everyday livelihoods and activities. Long range (10 year+) climate change projections generated by computer models apply to large areas and are difficult to 'downscale' to local conditions. They also tend to underestimate the intensity of extreme weather events (Garcia et al., 2014).

Consequently bottom-up climate risk assessments conducted with citizens essential for effective (and democratic) adaptation planning. Local peoples' lived experience of climate change and extreme weather, together with their indigenous and traditional knowledge systems (covering both weather forecasting and traditional responses to climate variability) are vital sources of data in their own right. But they are also key to translating predicted or measured changes in scientific variables into human impacts felt at the local level.

To generate climate information products that are useful for adaptation decision making by citizens and by project actors, both these sources of information must be combined and integrated. Research indicates that this is best done through a recursive process of participatory co-production by citizens and scientific/technical information providers (Carter et al, 2019; Hansen et al. 2019). Through these processes, climate information products can be produced in formats tailored to the capacities, needs and interests of all stakeholders affected by the program. This creates local ownership and understanding of forecasts.

Finally, climate information also needs to convey the uncertainty associated with forecasting in way that is supportive of planning; the use of future climate scenarios is a recognised approach for testing for possible maladaptation.

## **Rating:**

### **Low:**

A Rating of 'low' suggests that the program does not establish a formal institutional, financial and operational framework for producing and disseminating climate risk information. The sources of climate information used by the project to assess climate risk are not transparent, and data may not be consistent across operations.

The project does not provide access to regular climate information services intended for use by citizens (e.g. short and medium-term weather forecasts). The project relies on top down-methods for assessing long term climate risk (e.g. climate projections from computer models) and uses them as reliable predictions of future conditions, rather than snap-shots of possible (but uncertain) climate futures. No systematic effort is made to make climate information products accessible and relevant to citizens through participatory co-production. The specific climate information needs of socially excluded and marginalised groups are not acknowledged.

### **Medium:**

The program establishes a framework for the production and dissemination of standardised climate information across its operations. The project provides or facilitates access to regular climate information services (e.g. weather forecasts) intended for use by citizens, but these are likely driven by top-down sources of information with little systematic attempt to tailor them to local needs and livelihood systems; there are probably only a limited number of information formats and distribution channels. During project planning, participatory bottom-up methods such as resilience/vulnerability assessments may be used to understand localised and intersectional climate risk, but these findings are not integrated into accessible climate information products that can be accessed on-demand by citizens. Robust techniques for planning under

conditions of future climate uncertainty are not generally used (i.e. no scenario planning or consideration of alternative possible climate futures).

### **High:**

The program makes a commitment to providing accessible, actionable and relevant climate information at all levels and establishes the institutional, financial and operational framework that is needed to achieve this. Institutions will have clear mandates, including costed, practical strategies for publishing sharable climate information in variety of different formats. Climate information products are tailored to the needs of planning at different temporal and spatial scales and cover short term, medium-term and long-term forecasts. Climate information products integrate both top-down and bottom-up sources of information and make use of local and expert knowledge. Climate information products are generated through regular participatory co-production processes that foster knowledge exchange between different stakeholder groups (at different levels) and ensure relevance for all citizens – in their capacity as individuals, households, livelihoods, businesses and production systems. Climate information is disseminated through a wide range of appropriate channels, taking into account citizen accessibility requirements. Uncertainty is explicitly dealt with in climate information products, e.g. climate scenarios are produced to make planning processes more robust to uncertain and more extreme future climate hazards; there is capacity building to ensure that the meaning of different forms of forecast is well understood.



## Justice Pillar

### Indicator:

To what extent does the program protect citizens' environmental, human and statutory rights through an accessible and transparent system of appeal and redress?

### Rationale:

The third pillar of environmental democracy is access to justice by citizens and stakeholders. This is about protecting their rights under domestic environmental legislation and international treaties that their nation has ratified or endorsed, allowing them to challenge the actions of governments and development agencies and seek compensation or redress.

While national legislation and the accessibility of the ordinary courts and formal justice system fall outside the scope of this program assessment, this assessment indicator measures the degree to which the program provides a transparent appeals process against project plans, decisions and interventions, and a right of redress if the program negatively impacts the statutory and human rights, livelihoods and ecosystems of citizens and stakeholders living both within and beyond its official target intervention area.

It is normal for some program activities to result in distributional effects within and between communities - trade-offs between benefits for some and costs for others. While the program decision making and MEL processes should provide protections and safeguards for socially excluded and disadvantaged groups and an accountable forum for debating trade-offs, there may be occasions where citizens are nonetheless negatively affected by the program in ways which are not properly acknowledged or possibly illegal, ultimately increasing their

vulnerability to climate change.<sup>14</sup> This is a particular risk if the program does not score well on subsidiarity or participation more generally.

### Ratings:

#### Low:

The program does not raise awareness of environmental rights. Aside from formal judicial procedures external to the program, there are limited avenues for appeal by citizens against program decisions or on-going interventions.

#### Medium:

The program creates an accessible, internal system of appeal against program decisions/ on-going activities that can be used by individuals and communities in the program area of operations. The appeals process provides advisory judgements and cannot provide compensation or redress to injured parties. The appeals process and outcomes are transparent.

#### High:

The program features awareness raising of environmental rights as part of its capacity building activities. In addition to an internal system of appeal against program decisions. In addition to an accessible internal system of appeal against program decisions/ interventions, the program provides access to an independent system of arbitration or appeal (e.g. an ombudsman) to mediate in cases where disputes cannot be resolved internally (available to anyone affected by the program, not just citizens located in areas where the project is operating). The program provides for compensation or redress in cases where human or statutory rights have been infringed as a result of program activities.

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## Endnotes

- 1 The IPCC view adaptation as a continuum, contrasting 'incremental' changes at one end with 'transformational' changes at the other. Incremental changes seek to build climate resilience by making modifications to existing social-ecological arrangements and structures.
- 2 Including profound and lasting reconfigurations of the distribution of power and wealth in society, including: re-evaluations and re-orientations of production/livelihood system systems, fundamental changes in governance of natural resources and ecosystems, the redistribution of rights and responsibilities among different types of citizens, etc.
- 3 The number in brackets after the framework principle indicates which of the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation apply.
- 4 An indicator is a measure of program performance on a particular dimension of performance for the framework. It is framed as a question.
- 5 All decision making could be taken by local government technical departments, for example, in response to purely technical criteria with limited community consultation.
- 6 As in a river basin, where upstream activities (such as water abstraction for irrigation) may have spill over effects on downstream communities.
- 7 'Lack of capacity' is often cited as a reason for not taking decisions at lower levels of governance. However, the program should consider whether addressing this lack of capacity might be a suitable objective for transformative climate action.
- 8 These medium-term priorities may have a variety of different names (e.g. strategic objectives or strategic outcomes) but they for programming purposes they often to be expressed in a similar format (e.g. e.g. increase the area under irrigation by 30%; increase the proportion of households with access to clean, potable water in under 10 minutes by 40% etc.)
- 9 Note that this does not preclude the use of the findings of top-down analysis, coordination with national policy objectives, and experience sharing between other 'similar' areas; it's simply that, if used, such information should feed into participatory decision-making processes rather than limiting their scope.
- 10 E.g. that a chosen priority is illegal or unconstitutional, or that it is incompatible with other government programs/priorities.
- 11 Examples would include: e.g. providing training on agricultural techniques for x number of people; building a health post at a particular location; erecting a fence and gate around a rainfed pond; building a dedicated piped water kiosk for domestic use at a strategic location.
- 12 A theory of change is an explicit model of the expected causal pathway through which a project will create changes in patterns of behaviour and impacts in the wider social milieu. It is only a model and the real outcomes of an intervention may diverge significantly from what was originally expected.
- 13 Principle 4 of the Locally Led Adaptation guidelines
- 14 For a detailed discussion of maladaptation and the forms it can take, see Eriksen et al. (2021) and Schipper (2020).  
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