

Chapter 2

Greening national development planning processes

National development planning processes must consider the environment if sustainable development is to be ensured. But the capacity for greening these processes is often lacking in developing countries. This chapter outlines the legal and political context and the key actors involved in national planning processes. It then draws on the five-step framework to provide guidance on building the capacity for greening these planning processes. Case studies illustrate how capacity development has allowed environmental issues to be incorporated into national planning processes in a variety of developing countries.

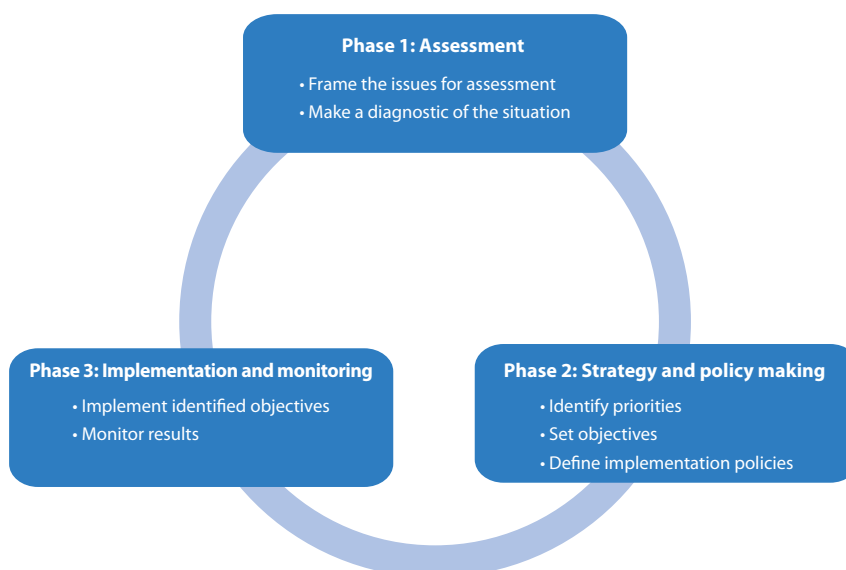
What is national development planning?

National development planning is an important driver of a country's environmental management system. It can set the objectives for government programmes at national, local and sectoral levels. It also directs national budgetary processes and corresponding support from development assistance providers. Planning processes may differ in their scope of the task, the leading agency, their analytical base and the degree of stakeholder participation. Some countries have a long tradition of development planning, with NDPs often having a strong operational character and clear budgets. In other cases, NDPs provide a general policy orientation, leaving investment programming to complementary action plans.

Although countries have various approaches to development planning and implementation, these approaches tend to share three basic phases, which occur in a continuous cycle, usually lasting five to ten years (Figure 2.1):

1. *Assessment*: identification of the issues to be assessed and diagnosis of the situation. The diagnosis builds on monitoring results of the previous planning cycle and newly available analysis and evidence. Occasionally, it also includes an assessment of investment needs. Often, the evidence available to develop the diagnostic is not comprehensive and does not cover all policy issues at the same level of detail.
2. *Strategy and policy making*: identification of the priorities to be addressed, setting the policy objectives and defining the policies to be implemented. These components build on the results of the assessment, but they are also influenced by other factors, such as political negotiations. This phase may also include identification of institutional reforms and investment programmes needed to achieve the intended objectives.
3. *Implementation and monitoring*: implementation of measures to achieve the objectives defined in the previous phase, and monitoring of results. Implementation requires the allocation of resources and the programming and execution of individual measures. The monitoring information will feed into the next planning cycle.

Figure 2.1. National development planning cycle



How can national development plans contribute to greening development?

An environmentally sound NDP commonly takes into account: *i*) environmental issues; *ii*) causal links; *iii*) responses; and *iv*) processes (Bojö and Reddy, 2003). Table 2.1 gives examples of these four dimensions. In reality, the process of integrating them all is very difficult and demands that the actors involved have the capacity to address each dimension. For instance, in order to understand the impacts of changes in ecosystem services on the indigenous population, it is necessary to conduct a detailed analysis of these people's livelihoods, the percentage of the population that depends on that particular ecosystem, and the population's preparedness to take on alternative occupations. All these factors need to be assessed when a government prioritises development objectives that benefit the affected population.

Successful greening of NDPs means that policies and strategies identified within the national planning process result in better (pro-poor) management of environmental assets. Successful integration also means that institutional processes under the NDP make it easier for the development community to consider environmental management. Importantly, it encourages active participation of environmental actors in the planning process.

This ambitious goal requires long-term commitment. Rather than focusing on a particular process or document, it is important to focus on developing a legal and political context that makes it easier to integrate environmental issues within the different phases of a national planning process. This includes sector plans and budgets established during successive national planning cycles.

Table 2.1. **Environmental dimensions of a national development plan**

Aspects	Dimension	Details
Environmental issues	Land use	Soil and sub-soil resources (e.g. mining, water logging and nutrient depletion) and above-ground resources (e.g. deforestation and forest/woodland degradation)
	Water	Quantity and quality of water supply for human consumption, irrigation and other uses; coastal zone and marine aspects; and droughts and floods
	Biodiversity	Degradation of ecosystems, threats to species or genetic resources and opportunities for sustainable use
Causal links	Natural resource degradation and poverty	What are the linkages between the quality of ecosystem services and livelihoods, employment and income (e.g. how do natural resources contribute to sustainable livelihoods)?
	Vulnerability	How do climate variability and natural disasters, such as droughts, floods, earthquakes and hurricanes, affect the poor and their livelihoods?
	Incentives	How do policies on pricing, subsidies, taxes, restrictive trade practices, and the exchange rate influence the use of natural resources and the emission of pollutants into the environment?
	Empowerment	To what degree do the poor participate in decision-making processes about a country's natural resources and environment?
Responses	Environmental policy/fiscal instruments	Legislation, regulation and standards; and the use of economic instruments such as user fees, emission charges and green taxes
	Investment in natural capital	Programmes for natural resource management, such as restoration of soils, forests, woodlands, wetlands, coral reefs, fisheries and management of protected areas
	Investment in human-made capital	Programmes for sustainable infrastructure such as slum improvement, water supply, sanitation, energy efficiency, waste management, urban and rural infrastructure investments aimed at environmental improvements
	Monitoring natural resource outcomes	Targets and indicators for natural resource management such as rate of deforestation, per capita water availability, and dependence on traditional energy sources
Processes	Environmental integration	Approaches used to promote the inclusion of environmental constituencies and the environmental agenda

Source: Adapted from Bojö, J. and R.C. Reddy (2003), *Status and Evolution of Environmental Priorities in the Poverty Reduction Strategies – An Assessment of Fifty Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers*, World Bank, Washington, DC.

Building the capacity for greening national development plans: a five-step framework

Having explored what green NDPs ideally look like, this section explains how do developing countries achieve them? Taking the five-step framework introduced in Chapter 1, the following guiding questions should be explored when preparing a capacity development initiative for greening national planning processes:

- What is the *political and institutional context* that shapes the national planning process? Will it encourage linkages between environment and development outcomes or not?
- Who are the *key actors* that have a potential role to play and do they have the relevant capacity needs?
- How can capacity development be conceptualised as a *programme* consisting of a range of different elements and prioritised activities tailored to the particular process, entry points, targets, timescale and resources required?
- What *organisational* capacities should be prioritised to facilitate environmental integration?
- What are the mechanisms to *raise awareness* and improve access to high-quality *knowledge products* at both the organisational and individual levels?
- What kind of training and technical support can be provided for the use of specific *analytical tools*?
- How can citizens engage in the national planning process and *influence* the specific outcomes?

Table 2.2 summarises the principal actions discussed in this chapter, drawing on the five-step approach. The table also highlights the challenges for greening national planning processes. While the priorities, challenges and actions are grouped into five steps, these are not necessarily sequential actions with each depending on the completion of the previous step. Instead, the table outlines a number of possible options to be considered. However, some of the steps can be followed in a logical sequence. For example, after capacity development training has been completed (Step 4), it is useful to have follow-up measures to ensure that the lessons from the training are implemented in practice (Step 5). At the same time, the training exercises may highlight the need for certain actors to be involved (Step 2) and shed light on the fact that the actors involved often are not well-informed of the interests and perspectives of other stakeholders.

Step 1. The political and institutional context

When greening NDPs, it is crucial to first develop a clear overview of the planning processes, the steps involved and the opportunities for key actors to provide input and feedback. This should be complemented by a good understanding of national policy objectives and issues, and the scope for greening components of the national planning process. This process will always be context specific, based on a country's geographic location, political structure and economic development.

Support to capacity development for greening national development planning processes rarely starts with a clean slate. In most countries, there have already been various efforts to address the integration of environmental issues and the associated capacity development needs. However, in many cases these efforts may not have been sustained or programmatic. It is therefore useful to facilitate a self-assessment exercise that brings together different

Table 2.2. Steps for building capacity for greening national development planning

Strategic priorities	Challenges	Actions to deliver capacity development for greening national planning processes
Step 1: Assess the political and institutional context		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall policy process • Specific NDP process • Public dialogue on key issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National planning process and institutional roles are often not widely understood by policy makers • National planning process may not be well linked to public dialogue on key issues • Policy actors are not always effectively involved in formal NDP process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess national planning cycle and institutional set-up, e.g. PRSP • Link to national policy issues, e.g. water shortages, food production, rural poverty • Enlist senior policy makers with an understanding of environment-development linkages • Engage stakeholders in “self-assessment” exercise
Step 2: Identify the key actors and their capacity development needs		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government actors • Opinion formers • “Champions” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the number of stakeholders that contribute to the planning process, it is difficult to define a set of capacity needs for individual actors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to key actors and identify their capacity development needs. Actors include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment ministry/agency - Finance/planning ministry - Sector ministries - CSOs - Private sector - “Champions”
Step 3: Identify opportunities to shape organisational incentives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives • Cross-agency work • Understand different perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of environment staff is usually limited to environment agency activities and not linked to development outcomes • Planning staff are not always motivated to look at the potential contribution of environmental issues to development objectives • Environment staff have limited experience with cross-agency work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable participation of environment staff in national planning cycle, e.g. involvement in central working groups • Ensure incentives for planning staff to consider the importance of the environment for achieving development outcomes • Promote operational collaboration between planning and environment staff e.g. joint committee/team
Step 4: Identify awareness/knowledge needs and existing analytical tools		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support/training • Knowledge products • Country specific evidence • Make the economic case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment staff are not always familiar with the national planning process • Environment staff are not used to framing and communicating the contribution of the environment to development • Country-specific evidence for making the economic case can be limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make planning/environment staff aware of the links between environment, poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods • Provide technical support/training on economic analysis of environmental assets and services to make the economic case for greening NDPs • Provide technical support/training for SEA-type analysis of national planning process • Collect country-specific data to strengthen the economic case for greening NDPs
Step 5: Address options for policy influence		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise NDP priorities • Implement strategies • Measures and investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal analysis is not always tailored to the nature of the decision making process • Environment staff not experienced in influencing decision making and have limited negotiation skills • CSOs often have limited influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support on integrating technical analysis into decision-making process • Train environment staff in using the language of policy makers • Engage CSOs with potential to influence policy debate

stakeholders to learn from previous efforts and current priorities for greening national planning processes and identifies complementary capacity needs.

Although important, it should be noted that explicit treatment of environmental issues in NDPs is a narrow indicator of greening development. An assessment of the actual level of environmental integration should take into account how NDPs are prepared and to what extent environmental issues are budgeted for and addressed with the growing emphasis on greening development (see Bojö and Reddy, 2003; Bojö *et al.*, 2004; IIED, 2009).

Step 2. Key actors and their capacity development needs

Key actors

The preparation of a NDP typically includes a number of *ad hoc* working groups or commissions, led by a line ministry that reaches out to other ministries or agencies responsible for key economic sectors. These usually include agriculture, energy, health, public works and transport. Other actors, who are not formally part of the planning process (*e.g.* academic institutions, environmental NGOs and CSOs) are also essential stakeholders. CSOs that demand and practise improved environmental management are the engine of environmental change in many developing countries and often provide important input into these preparatory commissions and working groups. Private sector actors, usually under the umbrella of a business association, can also be invited to participate in sectoral and environmental working groups. However, government actors need to provide the incentives for the private sector to become an advocate of greening development. The information generated by the working groups is usually collated by the “core team” responsible for drafting the national planning document. This process provides opportunities for other government agencies and non-governmental actors to comment on the draft plan. Once the NDP is finalised, it is usually discussed in cabinet for approval.

While the ministry of environment or a related agency play an important role in ensuring that the development goals outlined in the NDP are environmentally sustainable, the ministries of finance and economic planning usually have the final say on policy priorities and budget allocation. It is therefore important to make key power holders within these ministries and related line ministries aware of the interface between economic growth and the environment.

Capacity needs

The challenge of effective environmental integration is to use good analysis to influence the institutional process. The aim is to convince decision makers and planners of the valuable economic contribution of good environmental management so as to improve national development planning outcomes. This requires the following capacities:

- Capacities to help build long-term environmental constituencies and include all affected stakeholders.
- Effective institutional mechanisms that systematically provide environmental input to the national development planning process.
- Capacities to frame environmental issues in the language of the policy maker and other stakeholders.
- Capacities to co-ordinate initiatives funded domestically and by development support providers.

Table 2.3 provides an example of the capacity needed by an environment agency if it is to actively participate in the planning process. However, the needs could equally apply to a planning agency and members of other working groups.

Table 2.3. **Capacity needs for greening national planning**

Goal	Enabling environment	Organisational level	Individual level
Relevant stakeholders understand the importance of environmental issues	Policy makers involved in national policy dialogues recognise links between environment and development	Incentives exist for environment staff and key stakeholders to communicate with other development policy actors	Environment staff and key stakeholders understand environment-development linkages
Formal involvement of environment agencies in national planning process	Roles agreed for environment agencies to engage in the national planning process e.g. environment working groups	Planning agencies agree on institutional mechanisms for including environment agencies and issues in planning	Environment and planning staff have appropriate mechanisms and technical knowledge
Analysis of environment and development links – making the economic case	The planning process brings in policy makers and experts from different backgrounds to analyse and rank strategies and budgets according to evidence	Incentives exist for planning and sector staff to take account of environment data in the planning process	Environment staff have economic analysis and presentation skills to make the environmental case to the planning agency
Formulation of environmental priorities, strategies, measures in national plan – influencing policy	The planning process allows for the formulation of environmental priorities, strategies and measures to achieve development outcomes	Environment agencies are able to participate effectively in relevant working groups and decide on priorities, policies and investments	Environment agencies have the analytical skills to identify and cost environmental measures and to implement planned objectives
Use of environment-development indicators and monitoring mechanisms	A well-functioning system is set up for monitoring the strategy or implementation plan	Environment, planning and sector agencies develop management systems to monitor implementation progress e.g. designing indicators	Environment and planning staff have good monitoring and evaluation skills and can identify targets and indicators

Step 3. Shaping organisational incentives

The main constraint to greening national development planning processes is often the exclusion or marginalisation of environment agencies and constituencies. For their part, environment agencies often do not pay enough attention to strategic issues, focusing more narrowly on environmental protection. Furthermore, deliberations on NDPs rarely discuss natural resource rights, ownership and control. Many planning processes fail to balance various sets of interests such as those of extractive industries, people who live on the land, traditional leaders, the government, and other such groups. These interests must be reconciled so that the mutual benefits of protected natural resources can be realised by all (Waldman, 2005).

For stakeholders to be able to carry out the functions identified above, capacities need to be developed at the individual, organisational and enabling environment levels. For example, if a particular government agency is to meaningfully take part in monitoring the implementation of NDPs, that role must be seen as legitimate by other stakeholders. The agency itself must have the resources (human, financial and informational) to carry out the function effectively. Individual staff members of the agency must also have the required knowledge and technical skills to play their part. Even if there is an environment working group within the national development planning process, other working groups may be better placed to take the lead in providing environment-related input. For integration to be effective, environmental issues must be examined at the same time as broader economic and social concerns.

Many developing countries have limited capacity to co-ordinate domestic programmes on the environment across governmental agencies, or to harmonise initiatives funded by development support providers. Such co-ordination capacity should be strengthened and placed within a central state agency that has the political clout and convening power to facilitate integration across agencies and sectors and to harmonise externally funded initiatives (Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2011). However, given the unequal power between providers of such support and developing countries, building co-ordination capacity is challenging (Box 2.1). Although experience in this area is still limited, initiatives by developing countries include developing guidance material; establishing inter-agency learning units; and adjusting practice such as engagement with local experts and integration of context-based learning.

Box 2.1. Sri Lanka: Greening the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

The integration of environmental issues into Sri Lanka's PRSP in 2003 was the result of more than 10 years of gradual capacity development that involved a set of reforms of the institutional structure. In 1990, an inter-ministerial committee led by the Ministry of Environment prepared the first National Environmental Action Plan of an Asian country. In 1991 a powerful inter-ministerial National Environmental Steering Committee (NESC), chaired by the Secretary to the Treasury, was established. With the change of government in 1994, the NESC ceased to function. Subsequently, ten sectoral Committees on Environmental Policy and Management (CEPOM) were established, chaired by the respective secretaries of the sector ministries (Energy, Transport, Health, Water, etc.). By the end of the process, the Ministry of Environment acted as a facilitator and succeeded in creating an enabling environment that encouraged the sector ministries to take leadership and ownership for integrating environmental issues into their development plans.

Source: Bojö, J., *et al.* (2004), "Environment in Poverty Reduction Strategies and Poverty Reduction Support Credits", *World Bank Environment Department Paper*, No. 102, World Bank, Washington, DC.

Step 4. Knowledge and analytical tools

Knowledge and analytical tools to demonstrate the linkages between environment, economic growth and national development objectives are essential for greening national planning processes. This includes enhanced communication and negotiation skills for key stakeholders and the ability to apply technical tools and conduct economic analysis. Technical input from environment ministries contributing to the national planning process should be provided in a form that can be easily processed by the stakeholders involved, such as policy makers, the media and local communities. At the same time, it is important that key stakeholders have the capacity to undertake technical analysis such as SEA for greening national development planning processes (Box 2.2).

The ability to "make the economic case" for the environment through cost and benefit analysis during national planning is also critical. This requires economic analysis that focuses on selected environmental issues and links them to broader development objectives. It also requires the participation of policy makers at an early stage and effective communication of the results (Drakenberg *et al.*, 2009).

Box 2.2. Ghana: Using strategic environmental assessment to meet green development objectives

In 2002, the Ghana National Development Planning Commission and the Environment Protection Agency undertook a SEA of the recently completed Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS). The aim was to improve the integration of environmental issues in the next revision of the GPRS. The SEA was carried out by the National Development Planning Commission and Environmental Protection Agency in collaboration with the Netherlands Embassy in Accra, with technical advice provided by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment. All the key ministries were exposed to SEA processes and guided on how to incorporate environmental issues into policy formulation. The SEA process resulted in refinements to the development policy, alterations of district level plans, and revision of planning guidelines on how to include environmental considerations into planning at sector and district levels. As a result of the capacity development support that was provided, the 2006-09 GPRS was drafted with direct inputs from the SEA team.

Source: OECD (2006), Applying Strategic Environmental Assessment: Good Practice Guidance for Development Co-operation, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, OECD, Paris.

Step 5. Options for policy influence

Measures to improve the integration of environmental issues and greening development concept into NDPs are mainly about improving governance. Relevant improvements include establishing mechanisms that *i)* consider a range of viewpoints during the policy formulation and implementation process; *ii)* bring about social accountability in the context of the environment, and *iii)* facilitate social learning (World Bank, 2005). One approach to increasing the participation of different stakeholders is to legalise citizens' rights to engage in national planning processes and couple that with a formalisation of the governments' responsibilities to address these concerns (Waldman, 2005).

Capacity needs at this level will depend on the role of individual actors in the policy formulation and implementation process. Environment actors participating in preparatory commissions and working groups will need the capacity to negotiate and make the case for greening NDPs, while finance and planning staff may need the capacity to interpret the results from SEA and other environmental analysis. When formulating NDPs, the actors involved must also have the capacity to identify emerging environmental issues and their potential impacts on development. One example is the capacity to integrate climate change consideration into planning processes (Box 2.3).

The dynamic nature of capacity needs

The identification and development of capacity needs is not a one-off exercise that is external to the national development planning process (Box 2.4). In the early phases, capacity priorities are likely to focus on the assessment stage by engaging with environmental actors and leading national development planning agencies. Together they can make the economic case for greening the national development process. As the process evolves, the emphasis shifts towards implementation and monitoring. This requires capacity development for other line ministries, local government actors and civil society representatives who must understand the role they are to play in ensuring that NDPs are successfully implemented.

Box 2.3. Indonesia: Capacity development for integrating climate change into the NDP

Indonesia is one of the world's largest emitters of GHGs and levels are expected to increase with economic growth. At the same time, Indonesia is likely to be adversely affected by climate change, especially reduced rainfall and longer dry seasons. This has increased the urgency of integrating climate change into development planning at both national and local levels. In 2008 the Government of Indonesia developed, in collaboration with a group of development support providers, a policy matrix that outlined concrete actions to be undertaken on climate change, complementary goals, targets and timelines. The consultation and involvement of the National Planning Agency and line ministries created ownership over proposed climate change actions and facilitated the alignment of these initiatives with national and sector development policies and programmes. A results-based framework was also developed and agreed upon by all stakeholders.

The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is providing technical support to the Government of Indonesia for integrating climate change into national policy programmes. These measures include:

- capacity development for low carbon development strategies;
- capacity development for climate change vulnerability assessments;
- capacity development for the preparation of a GHG inventory;
- training on low carbon design.

The goal is that this programme will strengthen Indonesia's capacity to further integrate climate change considerations into their next five-year policy strategy.

Source: Communication with JICA, July 2011.

Box 2.4. Identifying capacity needs: practitioners' voices

In March 2010, participants at the 15th meeting of the Poverty Environment Partnership (PEP) discussed what capacities are needed for integrating environmental issues into national planning processes. Priorities for capacity development identified by the meeting participants can be grouped in three broad areas:

- **Analytical and technical skills** to be able to relate environment issues to emerging priorities (growth, poverty). This includes natural resource accounting, economic valuation, and articulation of poverty-environment linkages in an economic and distributional language.
- **Policy capacity** of government officials, parliamentarians and civil society. In particular, this includes goal formulation, priority setting, and understanding national policy development processes.
- **Governance capacity.** Two broad aspects were identified: *i*) effective environmental governance systems are needed to create the capacities and incentives for sector ministries to have ownership of environmental goals, and *ii*) society needs capacity to hold the government accountable.

Note: PEP is an informal network of development agencies which seeks to improve the co-ordination of work on poverty reduction and the environment. More information on the 15th PEP meeting is available at www.povertyenvironment.net/pep15.

Beyond the evolution of capacity needs as the national planning process comes to maturity, “structural” changes on national development processes are also taking place. The evolution of the development agenda, particularly the recommendations that have emerged from the Paris Declaration and the subsequent Accra Agenda for Action, are increasingly influencing national development processes. In the future, this is likely to also affect the capacity needs for greening development.

The role of development support providers

The role of development support providers in national planning processes has evolved from being the primary drivers of the process to assisting developing countries taking the lead. This reflects the commitments agreed upon in the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action to use country systems in the distribution of support (Box 1.1, Chapter 1). Development support providers can play a fundamental role in assisting developing countries to enhance the capacities needed to effectively green NDPs and in supporting the participation of environmental actors in the planning process.

Promoting the greening of NDPs requires effective prioritisation, realistic targets, and the adoption of a programmatic approach to capacity development that develops over several planning cycles. Throughout the process, domestic country systems are strengthened by a continuous improvement of the design and implementation of relevant public policies on environmental management. These policies can thus more effectively influence economic development and/or poverty reduction. When designing the NDP, emphasis is therefore often on sustaining the national planning process rather than on achieving a particular output. Given the limited resources often allocated to capacity development initiatives, it is important to ensure that these initiatives are carefully prioritised (Box 2.5).

As development support providers increasingly channel their assistance through budget support, they need to ensure that their commitments are in line with the principles of the aid effectiveness agenda. Specific action points that are necessary for greening development at the national level and for adopting better environmental governance include:

- *Expanding the focus from policies and plans to actual implementation.* Development support providers implementing programmes on greening NDPs should ensure that these efforts are not confined to policies and plans but progress to implementation and development of corresponding capacity needs. This implies building a “results orientation” at all levels of decision making.
- *Making effective use of mechanisms co-ordinating development support.* Development support providers should make effective use of existing co-ordination mechanisms at the country level to ensure that they adopt a coherent and co-ordinated approach to integrating environmental issues and the associated capacity development efforts. Where such co-ordination mechanisms are weak or non-existent, development support providers may wish to support the development of such a mechanism.
- *Demonstrating good practice.* Development support providers should set an example by integrating environmental issues into the execution of their own funding instruments. They should also collaborate on developing shared knowledge products on lessons learned and country-based experiences to promote a coherent approach to capacity development for greening development. Importantly, development support providers should apply a realistic, prioritised, and results-oriented approach that ensures a high level of country ownership.

Box 2.5. Prioritising capacity development initiatives

External actors must understand the local context in developing countries in order to establish realistic expectations and identify priority actions. Development support providers seeking to assist capacity development for environment initiatives therefore need to recognise that this involves more than just a transfer of skills. Capacity development is first and foremost about the collective institutional capabilities needed to achieve national goals and to contribute to changing social values. Country leadership to create the space for change is critical, but the context determines what is possible at any given time.

Setting specific priorities requires a joint understanding and dialogue around a set of fundamental questions: capacity for what, by whom, why and how? Several elements are important to consider when prioritising capacity development efforts:

- **Seek collaboration.** It is essential to have a shared understanding of objectives and priorities in addressing a particular challenge and readiness for change. Joint approaches allow development support providers to understand local perspectives better, while ensuring a degree of developing country ownership and leadership of the change process.
- **Be transparent and talk with key stakeholders.** Capacity development is a dynamic process and requires regular consultation and dialogue. Transparency requires the participation of key stakeholders (CSOs, parliament, press, and others) wherever possible. Those involved will need to regularly assess the need for political support and how to achieve it.
- **Start small, learn and adapt.** Countries often tend to set overly ambitious targets but under-estimate timeframes. Capacity development often responds well to more humble beginnings, associated with a more gradual learning and scaling-up process.
- **Target “pockets of energy” and opportunities for “win-wins”.** The most effective initial priorities for support are often those where readiness for change already exists and where win-win arrangements are possible for both developing countries and development support providers.

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