

88. Monitoring the effectiveness of adaptation investments

by

Nicolina Lamhauge and Michael Mullan

Development projects often have the reduction of vulnerability to climate change as a key objective. Monitoring and evaluation methods are now being introduced to analyse the effectiveness of such measures. Remaining challenges include the long timescales of climate change, and the role of climate change adaptation within many major development initiatives.

The reduction of people's vulnerability to climate change is a common aim of development programmes, policies and plans. Given the wide range of possible measures to achieve this goal, it is important to understand the approaches to adaptation that reduce climate vulnerability effectively. Monitoring and evaluation can help identify which measures are the most effective, and can facilitate mid-course adjustments that may improve the effectiveness of adaptation initiatives. Although monitoring and evaluation frameworks for adaptation are in their infancy, development agencies have a long record of evaluating projects and programmes with adaptation-related components.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) examined 106 projects from six development agencies to identify common challenges, and to learn from the different approaches used to assess project components related to adaptation (Lamhauge, Lanzi and Agrawala, 2011). While some of the projects were funded through specific climate change funds and programmes, most were development projects with activities identifiable as adaptation in the OECD Creditor Reporting System.¹ These projects have been under way for some time and are more likely to have completed their monitoring and evaluation than more recent adaptation initiatives, which are often still in the early planning or implementation phases.

The study identified a number of challenges to the monitoring and evaluation of adaptation. They can be grouped into three broad categories. First, the effects of climate change may only appear over several decades, which makes it difficult to evaluate outcomes in the short and medium term. To address this challenge, the study recommends

differentiating between short- and medium-term activities (such as the number of adaptation workshops conducted) and outputs (such as the percentage of households with more climate-resilient livelihoods) which can be directly attributed to a project, and by contrast, long-term outcomes (such as reduced climate vulnerability) to which a project may contribute but which cannot be regarded as direct outcomes of it (Lamhauge et al., 2011).

The second challenge is how to measure the causal linkages between an intervention and actual change on the ground. This problem is compounded by the call for climate change to be integrated into all development projects and programmes (OECD, 2009). This means that adaptation is often a relatively small component of a specific development initiative. To get around this challenge, qualitative, quantitative and binary indicators are used. For example, the development of a policy framework (a binary indicator) does not ensure its implementation or sustainability. It needs to be complemented by a qualitative indicator that assesses the change brought about by the policy, and by quantitative indicators of the number of initiatives introduced as a result of the policy (Lamhauge et al., 2011).

A third challenge is the difficulty of setting baselines and targets. It has been argued that baselines and targets for adaptation should be based on climate projections. However, the localised nature of most adaptation projects means that appropriate climate projections are not always available. Even when they are, a certain level of technical expertise is required to use them. In most of the projects examined by the OECD, development agencies formulated the baselines and targets on the basis of the current climate (Lamhauge et al., 2011).

These challenges are not unique to adaptation; they are also found in other development fields. Valuable lessons can be learned by examining how they have been addressed elsewhere – in education, health or fragile states, for example. Increasingly, development agencies are also looking beyond the success of individual projects towards monitoring and evaluating the success of broader national programmes. This is partly in response to the 2011 Cancun Adaptation Framework, which called on least-developed countries to move from national adaptation programmes of action towards more strategic national adaptation plans, with the support of developed countries.

Note

1. The OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) is a database that brings together financial statistics on projects and programmes funded by members of the OECD Development Assistant Committee (DAC), non-DAC development partners, EU institutions and other international organisations and private donors. Since 2009, the CRS has also been tracking development assistance in support of climate change adaptation.

Bibliography

Lamhauge, N., E. Lanzi and S. Agrawala (2011), "Monitoring and evaluation for adaptation: Lessons from development co-operation agencies", *Environment Working Paper No. 38*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, www.oecd-ilibrary.org/monitoring-and-evaluation-for-adaptation-lesson...

OECD (2009), *Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Co-operation: Policy Guidance*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, www.oecd.org/dac/43652123.pdf.

Nicolina Lamhauge's work at the OECD focuses on the links between environment and climate change adaptation in developing countries, particularly the monitoring and evaluation of climate change adaptation.

Michael Mullan leads the OECD's work on climate change adaptation, including the analysis of adaptation policies in OECD countries and the integration of adaptation into development assistance.



From:
World Social Science Report 2013
Changing Global Environments

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264203419-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

Lamhauge, Nicolina and Michael Mullan (2013), "Monitoring the effectiveness of adaptation investments", in International Social Science Council/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *World Social Science Report 2013: Changing Global Environments*, OECD Publishing, Paris/Unesco Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264203419-92-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.