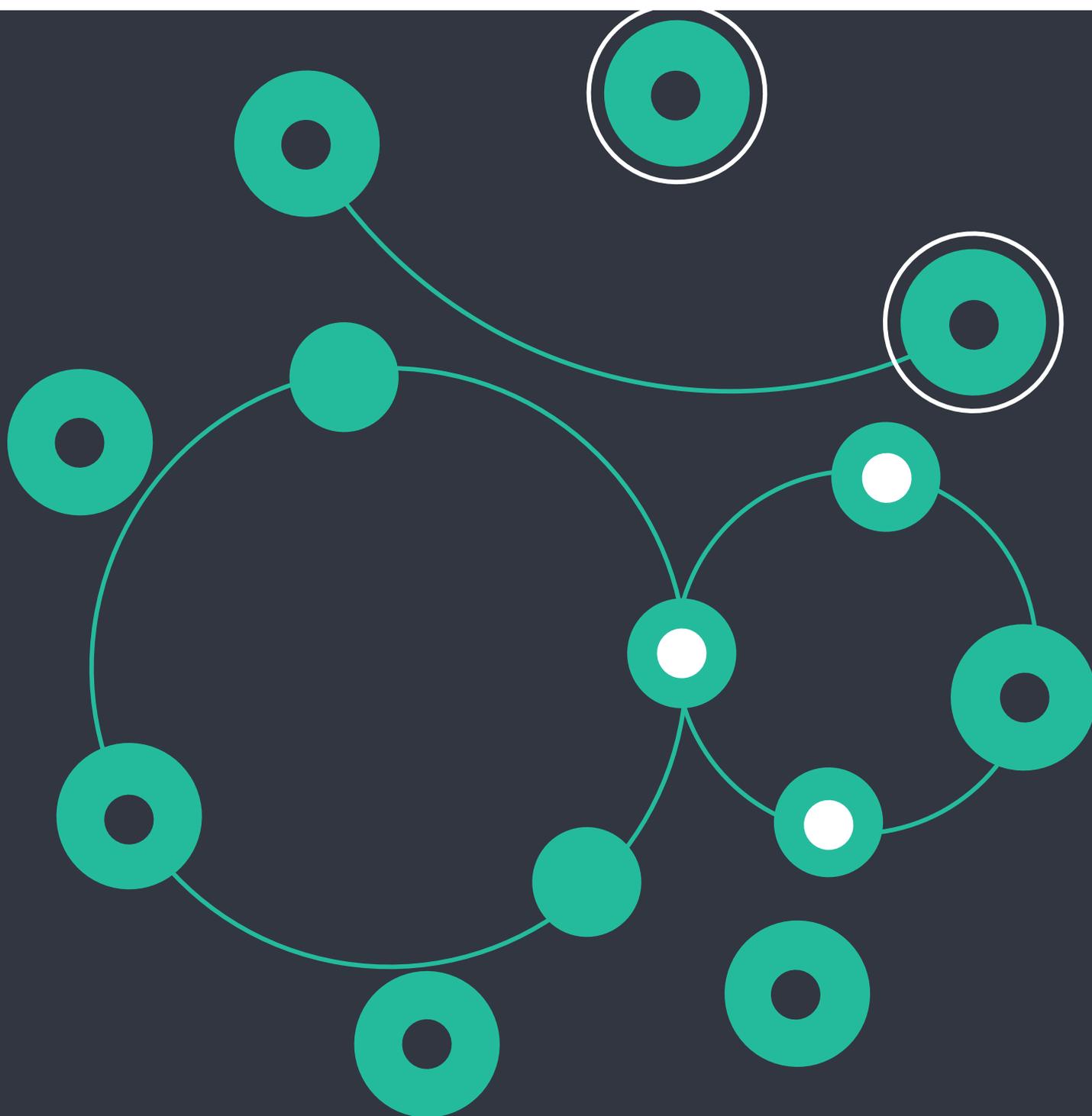


Developing guidance on managing transboundary climate risks in adaptation and sectoral planning



2023



This concept note for prototype guidance on mainstreaming considerations of TCARs into national to regional climate and sectoral policy processes was informed through consultations with, and collaborative input from, several institutions and individuals:

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Developing guidance on managing transboundary climate risks in adaptation and sectoral planning

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Acronyms

AGN	African Group of Negotiators
AGNES	African Group of Negotiators Expert Support
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa’s Development
AWB	Adaptation Without Borders
CGIAR-AICCRA	CGIAR – Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa
CRIFF	Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility
FFLA	Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
LEG	Least Developed Countries Expert Group
LTS	long-term strategies
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programmes of Action
NAP GLOBAL NETWORK	National Adaptation Plan Global Network
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
RECS	Regional Economic Communities (Africa)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The need for guidance on integrating transboundary climate risks in policy

There is a critical need to develop guidance for incorporating transboundary climate risks, including adaptation and mitigation risks, within climate policy and planning processes.

In our interconnected world, both the physical impacts of climate change and the mitigation and adaptation actions taken in one or more countries can generate risks or opportunities to neighbouring countries; these can cascade across regions and even globally.

These cascading impacts demonstrate that the failure to incorporate climate risks within national, regional and continental trade, finance, international migration and cross-border mobility and socio-economic development policies and programmes can have spill-over effects across scales and to other sectors. For example, climate-related stresses on agricultural commodities can trigger risks across

intricate global networks of trade and finance. Therefore, cross-border and cascading climate risks are not just about shared natural resources (biophysical) but the tele-connections that link distant sectors and communities within a range of global processes that are facing a changing climate. All of these risks, taken together, constitute transboundary climate risks or 'TCARs'.

Adaptation challenges therefore cannot be considered solely a domestic issue; collective policies and actions are needed to mainstream these cross-border and cascading risks. Fortunately, there are opportunities to integrate actions dealing with TCARs into existing national and regional adaptation planning processes, and within mitigation planning and policy (refer to Box 1).



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Box 1. Why mitigation must be simultaneously considered with adaptation in TCAR management

Under the UNFCCC, the commitments, architecture and finance options for mitigation (reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through low-carbon economies and land use management) and adaptation (actions to tackle the adverse impacts of climate change by reducing vulnerability and exposure, and to foster climate resilience) are treated somewhat separately through the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and National Adaptation Plan (NAP) processes. The NDCs also include information on adaptation actions and finance flows in addition to mitigation, but they are primarily instruments to set mitigation targets.

However, many mitigation actions may have adaptation co-benefits (or vice versa); conversely some mitigation actions may prove maladaptive to one or more countries. For example, large-scale hydroelectric power is put forth by many countries as a low-carbon, renewable energy option. Such hydropower reservoirs might also improve the water security (and food security through more reliable irrigation) and reduce flood risks for host countries. Downstream countries may find, however, that these reservoirs reduce their water and food security, increase the risk of drought and negatively alter river ecologies; in short, the hydropower limits their adaptation options. Similarly, the pursuit of critical minerals for transitions to low-carbon economies can lead to severe environmental degradation and human rights violations in countries with large deposits, thereby limiting their adaptation and climate resilience. Other examples can be found in trade, in which new regulations are being introduced into trade pacts banning products with high carbon footprints; such products are likely to be agricultural products whose production employs significant populations and whose trade is critical to national Gross Domestic Product.

Mitigation and adaptation need to be considered hand-in-hand under the rubric of climate-resilient development, which the IPCC defines as 'a process of implementing greenhouse gas mitigation and adaptation options to support sustainable development for all'. Mitigation actions can be undermined by TCARs and they can create TCARs. TCARs under both instances need to be managed through adaptation actions (see Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2021; 2022). Likewise, some TCARs might better be adapted to through mitigation actions.

Current national climate policy guidance

The Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), established in 2001 under the UNFCCC, developed the 2012 *Technical Guidelines for the National Adaptation Plan Process* for countries looking to embark on the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process. The Technical Guidelines were crafted after extensive consultations with various adaptation planners, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and experts from multiple international organisations.

The Guidelines are flexible to account for varying national institutional and adaptation contexts. Each of the four elements contain a number of steps and options to help countries build upon their existing adaptation activities and integrate medium- to long-term adaptation considerations within national economic development and sectoral decision making. The four elements of the Technical Guidelines for the NAP process are (adapted from LEG, 2012 and McGray, 2014):

- **Lay the groundwork and address gaps**
This element entails taking stock of needs, opportunities, entry points, capacities and key resources for adaptation in the country, as well as identifying existing datasets and information on vulnerability, climate change impacts and adaptation. It also often means establishing an institutional home for the NAP process within government, and a legal or administrative mandate to legitimise the process.
- **Preparatory elements**
These consist primarily of analytic activities to fill information gaps identified through the stocktaking above. For example, planners might commission a national climate vulnerability assessment and develop or update a set of future climate scenarios. They also synthesise existing adaptation plans from line ministries or sub-national governments, and set procedures for integrating adaptation into key economic sectors.

- **Implementation strategies**
Here planners focus more concretely on who will do what, and how. They use information and criteria from element 2 to set priorities and decide on the sequence of activities. They also might focus on how to pay for adaptation, build needed capacities, and establish roles and responsibilities for coordinated implementation.
- **Reporting, monitoring, and review**
Planners set up systems to track their NAP progress. This often means choosing effectiveness criteria, setting up a review timeline, and establishing a reporting and outreach plan.

A major challenge remains, however, in recognising and managing TCARs within national planning processes.

While the Technical Guidelines promote the identification of regional climate risks, and support coordination and synergy in regional adaptation planning and implementation (LEG, 2012), NAPs are still developed by individual countries in isolation from one another, and vulnerabilities and risks that could cross borders because of trade, finance or infrastructure are rarely considered. As a result, a country's NAP and/or NDC may fail to consider risks – the trade-offs that limit the adaptation, disaster risk management and low-carbon development options – that might be created for neighbours within a regional economic grouping or with distant trading partners.

These issues may be further magnified as countries develop their long-term strategy or LTS. Article 4 of the Paris Agreement invites signatory countries to the Agreement to submit an LTS that outlines their goals through 2050 for achieving net-zero emission economies. The LTS link the shorter-term NDCs, which operate in five-year cycles, and directs them to ramp up ambition over time so that the global goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C is achieved. While LTS submitted so far vary, many contain common elements of sustainable development considerations, adaptation elements and sectoral strategies alongside mitigation (WRI, 2023).

If consideration of TCARs and relevant trade-offs in their management are not made explicit within the LTS, there is the real risk the goals of such strategies may not be achieved because national policies and actions end up being at odds with one another and transmitting vulnerabilities and risks, rather than working to harmonise coordinated climate-resilient development.

There are a number of supplementary materials that exist to bolster the UNFCCC NAP guidelines. No supplementary materials yet exist for TCARs, nor are there any climate training courses in which TCAR management has been integrated, to the knowledge of Adaptation Without Borders.

Action points to bringing TCAR management within local to regional adaptation planning processes

In July of 2023 the Adaptation Without Borders (AWB) team held a Policy Dialogue and consultation with representatives from various African governmental bodies about transboundary climate risks in Nairobi, Kenya. Additionally, further discussions were held with the Least Developed Countries Group. From both sets of discussions, the following issues were raised as needed action points to bring TCAR management within local to regional climate planning processes:

- Use TCAR risk assessment case studies to demonstrate the potential economic, political and social costs of failing to take TCARs seriously, and mainstream their incorporation into NAPs, NDCs, LTSS, sectoral policies, trade pacts and financing agreements at national, regional and international levels.
- Provide initial sets of indicators for identifying and tracking TCARs, including efforts underway to reduce local to national to regional vulnerabilities and exposures through climate resilient development.

- Assist in the development of monitoring, review and reporting frameworks to track progress in addressing TCARs and to assess emerging ones.
- Acknowledge the geopolitical nature of TCARs and that the support and assistance of regional and supranational organisations are needed to diplomatically negotiate the trade-offs between actions that one country or bloc of countries believes is in their interest, but which could have implications for other countries or regions.
- Map out the enabling conditions for multi-scale and multi-stakeholder governance arrangements to leverage existing socioeconomic and development policy frameworks including stakeholder mandates that could enhance coordination to address and manage TCARs.

Addressing these challenges will require a concerted effort on the part of those delivering climate-resilient development technical support and training to national and regional adaptation planners, sectoral ministries and institutions and international bodies. Guidance on TCARs could assist in meeting the challenges and ensuring that TCAR management is being incorporated into policy and decision processes in line with the Paris Agreement.

This document is a concept note presenting a process for moving from prototype to fully operational (and widely deployed) guidance on mainstreaming TCARs within policy and practice that is in line with, and in support of, existing UNFCCC NAP, NDC and LTS guidance. It does this by offering four key considerations for developing credible and salient guidance to manage transboundary climate risks, including the need for an iterative and multi-step process, the need for a dedicated champion to drive it, and the need for collaboration between developers of the guidance, those who will deliver it, and the end users.

Moving from idea to prototype to functional guidance

This concept note outlines a process for developing prototype guidance for incorporating TCARs into national and regional climate planning processes (Figure 1). Guidance on TCAR management should incorporate decision and risk assessment tools, training and capacity building courses and outreach to various policy makers and the scientific community, as well as support for developing coordination mechanisms to bolster risk ownership and accountability.

This concept note is designed to complement the 25 key actions put forward in *A roadmap for African resilience: addressing transboundary and cascading climate risks* (AWB, 2023). The roadmap is envisioned as a potential guide towards the development of an implementation plan to realise the objective of ‘enhancing coordination between the regional economic communities and Member States in addressing and managing transboundary and cascading climate risks’ as specified in the *African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032)* (African Union, 2022).

The process for co-developing guidance on TCARs is not limited to Africa; the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is working with member countries across the Hindu Kush Himalaya to build understanding of transboundary climate risks and increase governments’ capacities to respond. Other organisations are also seeking to enhance understanding of TCARs and options for their management in work with government

and private sectors. Thus, such guidance would need to be applicable across many regions.

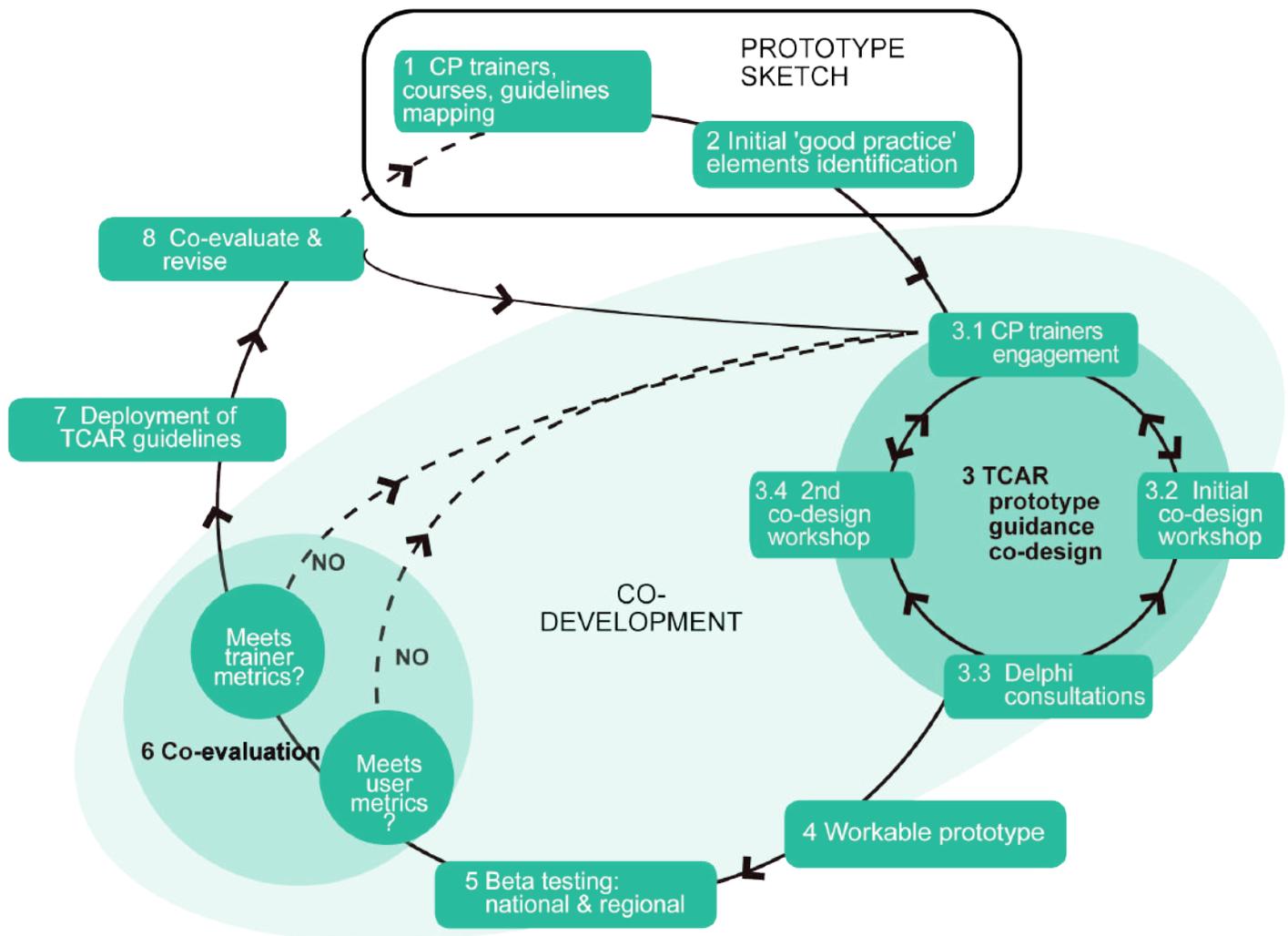
To meet this global challenge, there are several key considerations for developing credible and salient guidance on TCAR risk management in support of NAPs, regional adaptation planning and other climate policy planning processes:

- The development of the guidance needs to be an iterative process, to allow for the incorporation of new data and information, and shifting policy processes and needs within climate planning.
- A dedicated champion should drive the process. This could be the Adaptation Without Borders initiative, whose regionally-based members are working with adaptation/climate policy expert support groups and decision makers in Africa, the Hindu Kush Himalaya and ASEAN regions. Some possible dedicated champions with political convening power are listed in Steps 1 and 2.
- The guidance needs to be flexible, yet adhere to what is known about good practice in climate risk management. This allows the identification both of some common good practice elements that span contexts, and of those elements that need to be more context-, culture- and language-specific – and acknowledges the fledgling methodological approaches for assessing TCARs and solutions for their management (refer to Harris et al. (2022) for a protocol for case-study research on TCARs).



Emmanuel Ikwuegbu/Unsplash

Figure 1. A process for developing guidance on TCAR management to complement climate policy planning processes



Note: CP = climate policy

Source: The authors, modified from Opitz-Stapleton et al. (2021)

The guidance should be co-developed with those likely to deliver it, and also involve policy and other decision makers who might utilise the guidance in policy and programming design, prioritisation and funding, and monitoring. This helps to keep the guidance credible and salient to intended audiences and relatable to their decision contexts, and encourages risk ownership.

Co-development process

In keeping with an iterative process, co-development on TCAR guidance could entail the following steps:

Steps 1 and 2

A mapping of existing trainers/NAP/climate policy support groups and their modalities of support needs to be undertaken, and their guidelines reviewed, to create a first sketch for the prototype guidance.

Steps 3 and 4

As the original NAP technical guidelines were co-designed through an extensive consultation process, so too should guidance for TCAR management within national, regional and continental climate planning processes be co-designed with a broad range of stakeholders.

Steps 5 and 6

The prototype guidance needs to be tested with a select set of NAP planners, regional adaptation planners and climate policy makers to learn how usable it is for their decision contexts, what elements remain unclear or unworkable and what might be missing. Those trainers who support climate policy planning processes also need to evaluate how the prototype guidance is performing when they deliver support and training. This can help illuminate some of the barriers and enablers in different contexts.

Steps 6 and 7

Feedback and learning-by-doing from both trainers and climate policy makers will prompt refinement of the prototype guidelines, possibly through one more co-design workshop or via Delphi consultations. The refined guidelines will then be disseminated more broadly.

Step 8

As scientific knowledge of TCARs increases, tools for assessing them more robustly are developed and the guidance is deployed through training and adaptation planning support in which feedback is generated, the guidance will have to evolve.

Guidelines on TCAR management in support of NAPs, regional adaptation planning and other climate policy processes should not be considered finalised or ready for widespread public dissemination unless it has gone through this iterative, co-design process. Otherwise, 'guidance' will be watered down to 'guidelines' and become just another pdf on a website with little practical application or uptake.

Steps 1 and 2: Prototype sketch

As just discussed, guidance on TCAR management in support of adaptation and other climate policy planning processes must incorporate decision and risk assessment tools, training and capacity building courses (with accompanying guidelines and course materials) and outreach to various policy makers and the scientific community. Steps 1 and 2 involve mapping the organisations that are delivering national or regional climate policy planning support in specific geographies, and their current guidance materials, delivery modalities and reflections on what is working and where challenges are arising.

There are a number of organisations providing capacity building and technical training around climate risk management and adaptation planning. Globally, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the NAP Global Network, the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) and SouthSouthNorth, and the Least Developed Countries University Consortium on Climate Change support multiple countries in adaptation and resilience processes through one-on-one training and capacity building programmes, technical assistance and knowledge exchange. There are also region-specific climate policy support organisations with political convening power who could be dedicated champions, some shown below (list not comprehensive):

- **in Africa:** the African Group of Negotiators Expert Support (AGNES), CGIAR – Accelerating the Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA), the African Union Commission (AUC) and various regional economic community (REC) climate divisions
- **in Asia:** the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN), ICIMOD and the ASEAN secretariat
- **in Latin America and the Caribbean:** Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA), the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance

Facility (CRIFF) and the University of West Indies

This mapping allows for a rapid scanning of lessons already being learned in providing support around adaptation planning, and what common challenges and needs are arising. It involves a review of NAP and regional adaptation planning, NDCs and LTS guidelines and training materials to see where transboundary climate risks are being covered to some degree, where consideration could be incorporated in existing materials and outreach and what is needed to develop a more comprehensive TCAR management guidance for adaptation planners and other decision makers in sectors such as trade, finance and economy and infrastructure planning.

Critically, it is in the prototype sketch in which methodologies and tools are also identified that could be used for assessing the vulnerabilities, exposures and policies that give rise to transboundary climate risks (i.e. TCAR assessments) and to assess trade-offs in various management approaches. As highlighted in its 2023 flagship report, *The Global Transboundary Climate Risk Report* (Anisimov et al., 2023), Adaptation Without Borders discussed the need for new and innovative risk assessment methodologies to capture the systemic and complex nature of transboundary climate risks. This includes not only biophysical risk pathways (e.g. impacts on shared natural resources or human, livestock and crop health) but also for more complex trade, finance (including issues of foreign direct investment, and sovereign debt around infrastructure), human mobility and geopolitical pathways (ibid., 2023).

The mapping would be used to outline an initial set of ‘good practice’ elements and delivery modalities that should be considered in TCAR guidance, and to sketch a preliminary set of guidance materials as discussion seeds for the co-development process (Steps 3 through 7). It is also at this point that an initial theory of change, expected outcomes and points for monitoring the effectiveness and continued salience of the guidance are first proposed.



Box 2. Mapping to sketch prototype seed

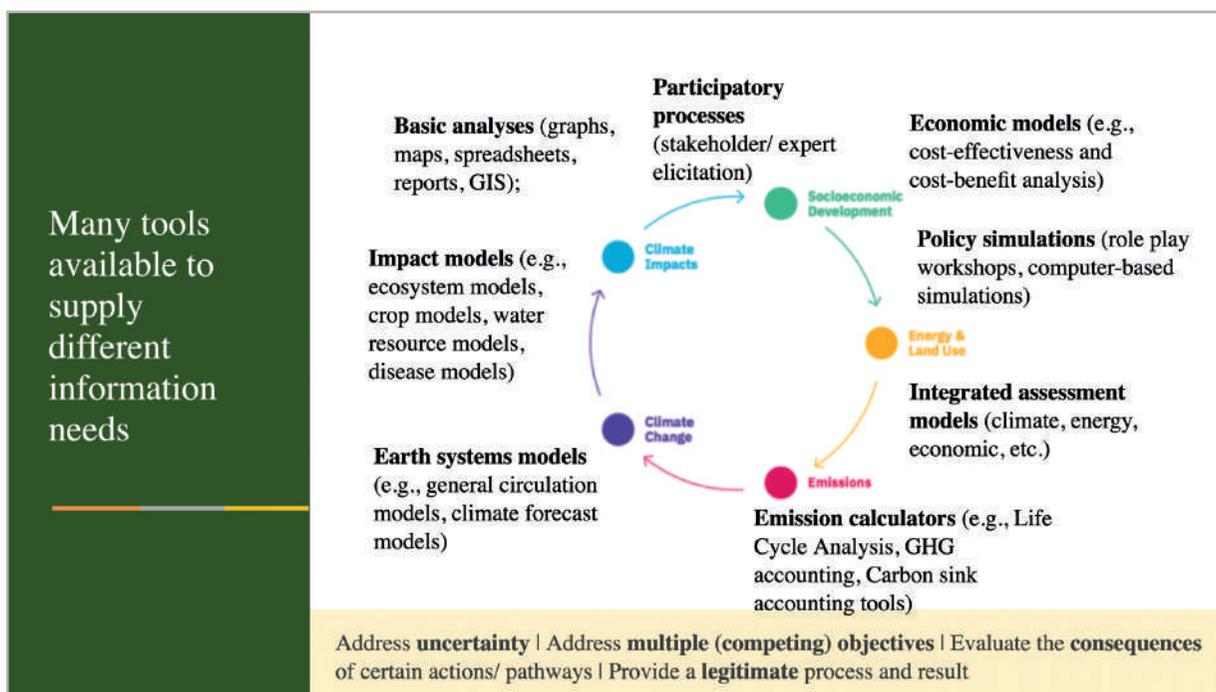
Adaptation Without Borders has been in discussion with AGNES about what is needed to develop technical guidance, training and knowledge exchange within Africa in support of adaptation and sectoral planning around TCARs. AGNES, in cooperation with AICCRA (a World Bank-funded project implemented by CGIAR and partners), offers a ‘Climate Governance, Diplomacy and Negotiations Leadership Program’ to adaptation planners from the member states and RECs, national parliamentarians, and other African policy makers interested or concerned about climate change risks. The course is delivered over eight weeks and consists of 10 modules, each with multiple 2-hour course units. Each unit covers a specific topic under the module theme and is delivered via presentations, course materials and guided exercises.

Example AGNES programme training Module 1 Unit 1: Climate physical science

Weather and climate	Greenhouse gases (GHGs)	Climate change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The difference between weather and climate • Factors controlling weather and climate • Natural and anthropogenic drivers of climate • Global climate system and interactions • Climate variability and cycles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atmospheric greenhouse effect • Sources of GHGs, sinks and sectoral contributions • GHG properties, effects and global warming potential • GHG emissions and climate scenarios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers, manifestations and effects • Interaction between human and natural drivers • Climate projections, modelling and forecasting • Implications of future climate change under 1.5°C, 2°C and other scenarios • AR6 WGI report • Climates of Africa

Source: AGNES (2023)

[Box 2 continued]



Source: Cramer et al. (2023)

At the AWB meeting with AGNES, it was agreed that a first step towards developing a prototype guidance could be to begin mainstreaming TCARs into the existing training materials of the leadership programme.

AGNES also indicated that graduates of their programme have been requesting more technical training and guidance. This advanced technical training and guidance would delve more deeply into methodologies and tools for semi-quantitative to quantitative risk assessment, and into cost-benefit and trade-off analysis of various climate risk management solutions and decision support tools. This technical training and guidance would also necessarily mainstream assessment of TCARs – including through indicators that could be tied to the African Union Commission’s Climate Risk Dashboard (currently under development) and a pan-African transboundary climate risk assessment as described in *A roadmap for African resilience: addressing transboundary and cascading climate risk* (AWB, 2023) – and their options for management throughout the technical training. The training would demonstrate the linkages between local to continental and teleconnected risks (risks between countries or regions that do not share borders – through, for example, trade, health and finance pathways) and management solutions to support Africa’s principal socioeconomic development vision and its climate strategy.

Steps 3 to 8: Co-developing the TCAR prototype into full guidance

Taking the sketch of the prototype to the co-design of the working prototype, and then to full guidance, entails an 'engage and train the trainers' approach in order to target those supporting and guiding climate adaptation and mitigation planners, parliamentarians and other policy makers with an interest in integrating climate change within socioeconomic and sectoral plans. The knowledge and expertise of these groups should be harnessed while taking the guidance through a process of co-development.

Steps 3 through 6 in particular might require several iterations of co-designing and co-testing prototype guidance(s). This is because of the need to: 1) navigate various regional decision contexts and constraints – e.g. the political economy of climate risks, particularly those related to human mobility, national security and interests, trade and the financing of climate risk solutions, and the risk of maladaptation and political sensitivities that will arise around it; and 2) actively scan existing systems' risk assessment tools and methods (see Box 3 for an example) and decision support tools, to determine which could suitably and feasibly be modified to support TCAR assessment, given that few such tools and methods currently exist. This also includes needing to work with climate risk analytical groups to develop indicators of transboundary climate risk that not only align with reporting requirements under the Global Stocktake, but that are supportive of regional efforts to develop climate risk indicator dashboards, such as that proposed by the African Union Commission.

Step 3 explicitly incorporates iteration. It begins (Step 3.1) with a set of interviews with representatives from trainers and key NAP support organisations and enables targeted questioning and refinement of the prototype sketch developed in Steps 1 and 2. This refined sketch – encompassing themes, proposed training materials and risk assessment methods and tools, and a structure – are brought to an initial

in-person co-design and co-creation workshop (Step 3.2).

At this co-design workshop, the sketch is further refined and developed into an initial prototype guidance, which includes functional transboundary climate risk assessment methodologies and decision support tools (for an example, see Box 3). Importantly, participants at the co-design workshop will also refine the theory of change in the guidance, and its objectives and indicators, to begin to develop an initial monitoring framework and metrics against which it will be tested and measured during both the prototype testing steps and full deployment. An initial set of protocols will also be developed with potential training organisations so that they can test the prototype guidance with their audience.

The initial prototype guidance – including methods, tools and a system to monitor the theory of change – is further tested and refined through two to three rounds of Delphi consultations (Step 3.3). Testing protocols will also be refined. The prototype and testing protocols will then be finalised for beta-testing with a select set of trainers at a second in-person co-design workshop (Step 3.4). At this second workshop, the testing protocols for the prototype guidelines will be finalised with select climate risk management training organisations, and memorandums of understanding signed as necessary. The iterative consultative and co-design process of Step 3 will produce the working prototype guidance that is to be tested.

Steps 4 to 6

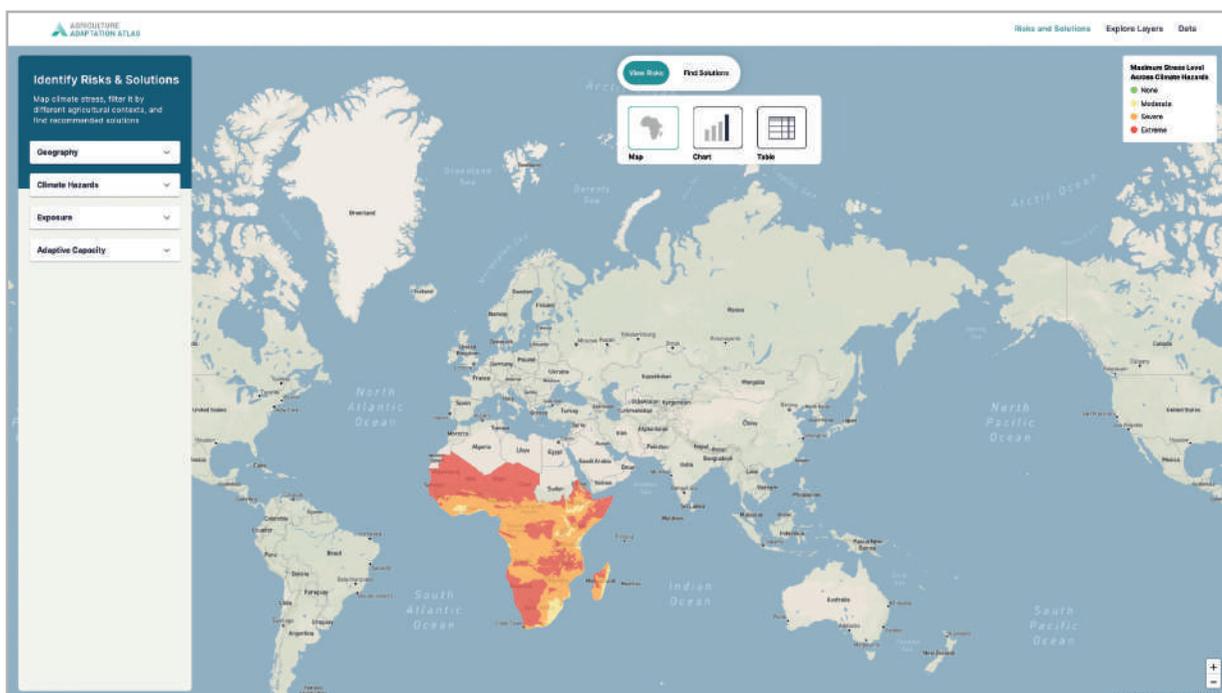
Steps 4 through 6 involve testing the prototype guidance with a small set of trainers from different regions (e.g. Hindu Kush Himalaya and African Union) and a few of those they support. Ideally, the prototype guidance will be tested on a few national governments, some regional bodies (e.g. ECOWAS in Africa or ICIMOD member countries in Asia), and a few non-governmental organisations in order to capture perspectives from various decision-making needs and constraints. Step 4 involves finalising the working prototype guidance and deploying



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Box 3. Example of a systemic climate risk assessment tool

The Agricultural Adaptation Atlas, built by CGIAR, is a visual tool for those working toward climate adaptation in agriculture. Through layers, users can explore climate risks and solutions given different sets of data around specific crops, livestock, known local abilities, exposure and climate projections. The tool does not yet incorporate considerations of trade policies (such as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement), investments in markets or infrastructure or agricultural inputs from outside the region of interest; in short, other elements that contribute to the creation of TCARs in agriculture are absent. Such tools would need to be modified with permission, ideally in collaboration with the tool creator.



Source: Girvetz et al. (2023)

it to selected climate risk management training organisations according to the agreed testing protocols. In Step 5, those training organisations will test the prototype guidance during their training courses and engagements with national to regional climate policy makers, sectoral policy makers and the other decision makers with whom they engage in technical support and/or training and capacity building. Step 6 occurs simultaneously with Step 5.

As the prototype is being tested, feedback will be solicited from trainers and their users to understand how the guidance is being received, its usefulness for decision planning processes, and how it measures against other metrics determined in the theory of change and monitoring framework developed in previous steps.

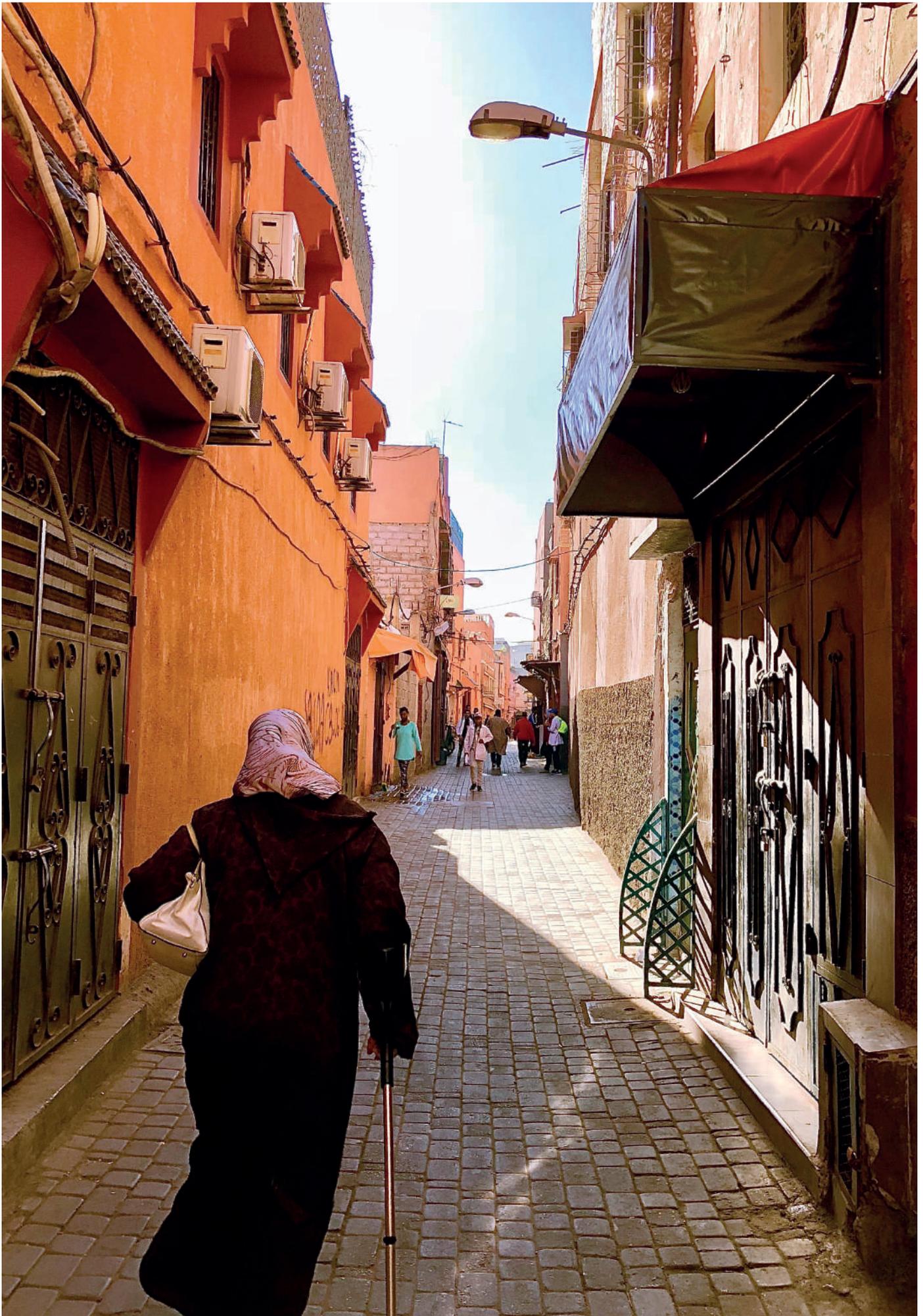
This feedback on the prototype guidance and its ability to meet agreed-upon metrics under the theory of change and monitoring frameworks will trigger the need for refinement. It is also expected that the testing will reveal gaps and challenges in the guidance, and shed light on what elements need to be strengthened or revised. This refinement may entail an accelerated version of Step 3, with a co-refinement workshop and some trainer (and potentially user) engagement. The revised guidance after the iterative prototype testing will then be released as a living guidance on TCAR assessment and management within policy planning processes in accordance with the UNFCCC in Step 7.

Conditions leading to the creation of TCARs, knowledge of them and requirements for managing them will change in the future, as ambitions are increased under the NDCs, NAPs are updated and trade-offs become more apparent. Systemic climate risk assessment methodologies and tools are also likely to improve. This will require the guidance on TCAR assessment and management to be updated through co-evaluation and revision in Step 8.

Steps towards realising TCAR guidance

AWB is taking a number of actions to improve policy-oriented research and strengthen the evidence base around transboundary climate risks – as well as to increase policy awareness and influence UNFCCC processes (such as the Global Goal on Adaptation, NAP designs or the Global Stocktake) – through engagement to address the ‘TCAR governance gap’. It is well placed to play the champion convening role in co-development of TCAR guidance, as part of broader AWB efforts to build the capacity of national and regional adaptation planners and targeted stakeholders (in trade and agriculture, finance and foreign policy) to account for TCARs. These efforts involve developing and promoting response options and solutions to strengthen the resilience of adaptation planning and implementation, particularly at regional scales. There are a few immediate avenues through which AWB could begin the co-development of TCAR guidance, working with AGNES and with ICIMOD.

At a workshop with AGNES in July 2023, AGNES expressed the desire to join AWB. AGNES stressed that capacity building is seldom addressed and actioned in African national climate policies, and that weak capacities can derail countries’ progress towards climate-resilient development. Low capacities are tied with low awareness of climate risks, including how TCARs can undermine national economies and socioeconomic development objectives. As a result, offices of presidents that set national economic objectives and budgets, and parliamentarians who approve national budgets, are not prioritising or funding adaptation studies or solutions within national economic and sectoral policies. Adaptation remains an un- or underfunded ‘priority’. Other barriers and challenges exist; however, there are also opportunities, as there are entry points for TCAR management in African Union and regional economic community policies, as outlined in the AWB report *Policy mechanisms of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities to manage*



Mason Pohlman/Unsplash

transboundary climate risks (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2023).

To combat low awareness of the importance of adaptation, AGNES developed its Climate Governance, Diplomacy and Negotiations Leadership Program in 2020, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In joining AWB, AGNES wishes to work with other AWB partners to fully integrate the available TCAR management science, methods and tools into its current leadership programme. This multi-week programme has already trained around 700 participants, including ministers (from Ministries of Environment, including country focal points to the UNFCCC) and national and regional parliamentarians from 52 of 55 African countries. The leadership programme is also part of the resource materials available to the UNFCCC Capacity Building Committee; the Committee is currently evaluating the programme.

Alumni from AGNES' programme have requested an advanced leadership course that provides more in-depth and hands-on use of climate risk assessment and decision support tools, and a compendium of climate litigation and legal precedents from around the world. AGNES is looking to develop this advanced training course through an iterative co-design process with UNEP, UNDP, the NAP Global Network and AWB over the coming few years, depending on funding. Consideration of TCARs would be built into all modules. Other parties to this co-design process must be the AUC, AUDA-NEPAD and the RECs. This advanced leadership course could comprise a significant portion of the aforementioned prototype guidance, and offer an avenue for testing and refining said guidance.

Another avenue for co-design, testing and refining the guidance lies with the work that AWB partners are doing in the Hindu Kush Himalaya region and with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The *ASEAN State of Climate Change Report 2021* lists as one of its priorities 'the assessment of transboundary climate risks and actions' and calls for the development of a regional adaptation plan to bridge gaps in NAPs. The need for TCAR management

is clear upon review of existing NAPs, in which few TCARs are mentioned.

To facilitate south-to-south learning, AWB is also developing a package of three workstreams to address knowledge gaps in Asia and enhance the capacity of national decision makers and regional bodies to assess and manage TCARs. The workstreams include: 1) policy-oriented research and evidence, including the development of new systemic risk assessment methodologies in support of a regional transboundary climate risk assessment and case studies; 2) policy engagement and a greater understanding of the political economy of TCARs across Asia; and 3) capacity building with national and regional adaptation planners and targeted stakeholders to co-design response options and solutions. The resulting learning, in relation to methods, tools and decision makers' needs around planning for and managing TCARs in Asian contexts, will benefit and feed into the guidance co-design process.

With an emerging evidence base for TCARs, and the increased awareness of policy gaps across critical sectors to address and manage them, the need for guidance across the full risk management cycle is critical (from assessment, to management mechanisms, to monitoring and evaluation). AWB can leverage existing expertise, partnerships and projects to lead a collaborative co-design process that would develop a prototype guidance as presented in this document. The goal is to ensure full integration of TCARs and alignment with existing adaptation and development planning and policy instruments – NAPs, NDCs and LTSS – and their integration and alignment with socioeconomic, trade, finance and other sectoral policies. ●



Emmanuel Ikwuegbu/Unsplash

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Adaptation Without Borders is a global partnership working to strengthen systemic resilience to the cross-border impacts of climate change. We identify and assess transboundary climate risks, appraise the options to better manage those risks and support policymakers, planners and the private sector to develop climate-resilient and inclusive solutions. We catalyse new alliances and forms of cooperation on adaptation that pave the way towards a more sustainable and resilient world.

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