




Home CDM JI CC:Net

TT:Clear

**NEGOTIATIONS**

- Meetings
- Documents & Decisions
- Bodies

**PROCESS**

- Essential Background
- Kyoto Protocol
- Cooperation & Support
  - Financial Mechanism
  - Technology
  - Least Developed Countries Portal
    - LDC Work Programme and NAPA
    - Submitted NAPAs
    - NAPA Priorities Database
    - LDCF/NAPA Projects
    - LDC Expert Group
    - LDC Fund
    - Relevant Decisions
    - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
  - Education & Outreach
  - Response Measures
  - Capacity-building
  - Cooperation with International Organizations
  - Activities Implemented Jointly
- Adaptation
- National Reports
- GHG Data
- Methods & Science
- Parties & Observers
- Press
- Secretariat

**KEY DOCUMENTS**

- The Convention
- Kyoto Protocol
- Bali Road Map
- Cancun Agreements

Issues Quickfinder:

Please choose -

Your location: Home > Cooperation & Support > Least Developed Countries Portal > Frequently Asked Questions

**Frequently Asked Questions about LDCs, the LEG and NAPAs**

**GENERAL ISSUES**

**1. Who are the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)?**

The UN identifies LDCs as countries that meet the following criteria:

- **Low income countries** with a three-year average per capita gross national income (GNI) of under USD 750 are included, those above USD 900 qualify for graduation;
- **Weak human assets** – which involves a combined Human Assets Index (HAI) based on indicators of: (a) nutrition; (b) health; (c) education; and (d) adult literacy;
- **High economic vulnerability** – which involves a combined Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) based on indicators of: (a) the instability of agriculture production; (b) the instability of exports of goods and services; (c) the economic importance of non-traditional activities (share of manufacturing and modern services in GDP); (d) merchandise export concentration; (e) the handicap of economic smallness (as measured through the population logarithm); and (f) the percentage of population displaced by natural disasters.

To be added to the list of LDCs a country must satisfy all three of the criteria listed above and have a population of less than 75 million.

To qualify for graduation from LDC status, a country must meet the thresholds for two of the three criteria in two consecutive triennial reviews by the Committee for Development Policy of the UN Economic and Social Council. Alternatively, its GNI per capita must exceed at least twice the threshold level, and it must be highly likely that this level of GNI per capita can be sustained.

[See LDC Brochure for more information](#)

**2. Who are the LDCs under the Convention ?**

The UN begun paying special attention to LDCs in the late 1960s, recognizing them as the most vulnerable members of the international community.

The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994, and recognizes LDCs in [Article 4, paragraph 9](#) which states that "The Parties shall take full account of the specific needs and special situations of the least developed countries in their actions with regard to funding and transfer of technology".

The COP (Conference of the Parties) adopted a resolution at its sixth session ([resolution 2/CP.6](#)) as input to the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Conference that adopted the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 on 20 May 2001 in Brussels, Belgium. The programme aims to improve the living conditions of LDC populations and provides a framework for partnerships between LDCs and their development partners.

The COP initiated the implementation of Article 4, paragraph 9 of the Convention at its third session. Following this, and progress at subsequent sessions, at its seventh session the COP established a special work programme for the LDCs, a Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), and a Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG).

**3. What is the LDC work programme, and what elements does it contain ?**

The COP, at its seventh session, acknowledged the specific needs and special situations of LDCs, in that they are least capable of dealing with the adverse effects of climate change, and established the LDC work programme. The implementation of the work programme is supported through the LDCF and through contributions from Annex II Parties.

The LDC work programme includes:

- Supporting the preparation and implementation of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs);
- Strengthening existing and, where needed, establishing, national climate change secretariats and/or focal points to enable the effective implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol in the LDC Parties;
- Providing ongoing training in negotiating skills and language, where needed, to develop the capacity of negotiators from the LDCs to participate effectively in the climate change process;
- Promotion of public awareness programmes to ensure the dissemination of information on climate change issues;
- Development and transfer of technology, particularly adaptation technology (in accordance with decision 4/CP.7);
- Strengthening the capacity of meteorological and hydrological services to collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate weather and climate information to support the implementation of NAPAs.

**4. What is the current status of the implementation of the LDC work programme ?**

Two elements of the programme have been partially addressed so far: namely ongoing training in negotiating skills and the preparation and implementation of NAPAs. UN agencies, particularly United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Environment Programme, are carrying out a number of activities to support LDC negotiators. The European Commission through the European Capacity Building Initiative also provides annual training for developing countries, which includes LDCs. LDCs have received support from the LDCF to prepare their NAPAs and several single projects from LDCs that have submitted a NAPA are now in various stages of the GEF project cycle.

Elements of the LDC work programme	Status of implementation
Supporting preparation and implementation of NAPAs	Ongoing
Strengthening existing and, where needed, establishing, national climate change secretariats and/or focal points	Ongoing
Providing training in negotiation skills and language	Ongoing
Promotion of public awareness programmes	To be implemented
Development and transfer of technology, particularly adaptation technology (in accordance with decision 4/CP.7)	To be implemented
Strengthening the capacity of meteorological and hydrological services to collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate weather and climate information to support the implementation of NAPAs	To be implemented

**5. How is the LDC work programme funded ?**

At COP 7, decision [5/CP.7](#) invited Annex II Parties to support the LDC work programme, including by providing financial support.

The Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) was established under decision [7/CP.7](#) to support the implementation of the LDC work programme. To access funding from the LDCF LDCs must be a Party to the Convention.

The LDCF is operated by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which was entrusted with this by decision [8/CP.8](#)

#### [More information on LDCF](#)

Main decisions:

- COP 7 mandated LDCF to fund NAPA preparation (decision [5/CP.7](#));
- COP 11 mandated LDCF to fund NAPA implementation (decision [3/CP.11](#));
- COP 14 mandated LDCF to fund the rest of the work programme (decision [5/CP.14](#)).

#### **6. What are NAPAs and where can completed NAPAs be accessed?**

NAPAs are documents whose preparation provides LDCs with a process to:

- Communicate information relating to the vulnerabilities and adaptation needs of the LDCs through a simple and direct channel;
- Identify priority activities that respond to the urgent and immediate needs of LDCs with regards to adaptation to climate change;
- Offer a platform to create national, country-owned plans.

[Click here to access NAPAs submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat to date](#)

#### **7. What are the rationale behind NAPAs?**

The rationale for developing NAPAs rests on the high level of vulnerability and low adaptive capacity of the LDCs. Any delay in addressing vulnerabilities means increased vulnerability and/or increased adaptation costs at a later stage. However, before the NAPA process was established there was no avenue through which LDCs could identify and report their urgent adaptation needs. Prior to this the LDCs could only communicate their vulnerability and adaptation needs through their national communications, which are elaborate, time-intensive documents that are not designed for communicating urgent and immediate needs. Hence, a new approach was needed that would allow the urgent adaptation needs of the LDCs to be reported so that support could be provided for their implementation. This need gave rise to the NAPA.

The concept of NAPAs was developed through a series of meetings and workshops and through the COP process. At COP 7 in Marrakech, Morocco in 2001, decision [5/CP.7](#) established the LDC work programme which includes the preparation and implementation of NAPAs. Guidelines for the preparation of NAPAs are given in decision [28/CP.7](#)

#### **9. What is the Least Developed Country Expert Group (LEG)?**

The LEG is the expert group that provides advice to LDCs on preparing and implementing NAPAs. It was established by COP 7, through decision [29/CP.7](#). In addition, as outlined by its new mandate received at COP 16 in Cancun (decision [6/CP.16](#)), the LEG will also provide technical guidance and advice on the revision and update of NAPAs, strengthening gender considerations in NAPAs, integrating NAPAs into development planning, and the implementation of the five remaining elements of the LDC work programme.

At COP 16, the membership of the LEG was also increased from 12 to 13 Members: five from African LDC Parties, two from Asian LDC Parties, two from small island LDC Parties, three from Annex II Parties and one from an LDC Party. The group meets twice a year.

[Click here for more information about the work of the LEG](#)

#### **10. What is the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and what is its role in funding NAPAs to address climate change in LDCs ?**

The GEF is a global partnership among countries, international institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector which aims to address global environmental issues while supporting national sustainable development initiatives. In addition to the UNFCCC, the GEF also operates the financial mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. It assists Parties in meeting their obligations under the conventions. These conventions and Multilateral Environmental Agreements provide guidance to the two governing bodies of the GEF: the GEF Council and the GEF Assembly.

The GEF manages the LDCF (see question 5) and as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention also manages wider adaptation funds, namely the Strategic Priority on Adaptation and Special Climate Change Fund.

#### **11. Can non-LDCs prepare and submit NAPAs to the UNFCCC secretariat ?**

The preparation of NAPAs is part of the LDC work programme that was adopted by COP 7 to serve as a simplified channel through which the LDCs could communicate their urgent and immediate needs relating to adaptation to climate change. In principle, there is nothing to prevent non-LDC Parties from preparing and submitting NAPAs to the secretariat. However, such NAPAs cannot receive funding for preparation and/or implementation under the LDCF and hence the Party will have to raise funding from other sources.

#### **12. What is the status of NAPA preparation ?**

As of September 2011, the UNFCCC Secretariat has received NAPAs from 46 of the 48 LDCs that received funding for the preparation of NAPAs. It is expected that the remaining 2 LDC Parties will submit their NAPAs in the course of 2012.

#### **13. What is the status of NAPA implementation ?**

As at 26 May 2011, the GEF informed that:

Number of projects that have received endorsement by the GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	25
Number of PIF approved by the CEO of the GEF and the GEF Council	45
Number of PIF pending clearance by the CEO of the GEF and approval by the GEF Council	4

#### **TECHNICAL ISSUES:**

##### **NAPA preparation**

#### **14. What does a NAPA contain ?**

A NAPA generally contains 11 sections, including:

1. Introduction and background information on the country;
2. Synthesis of available vulnerability and adaptation plans and policies;
3. A framework for the adaptation programme;
4. An assessment of main vulnerabilities;
5. Potential barriers to implementation;
6. Identification of priority adaptation needs;
7. Development of a list of adaptation activities and projects;
8. A ranking of priority areas;
9. Identification of the most urgent needs;
10. An implementation strategy;
11. Project profiles for priority activities.

**15. What support is available to LDCs for preparing their NAPAs ?**

Project proposals for the preparation of NAPAs are submitted to the GEF through a GEF agency chosen by the country. In turn the GEF agency provides technical support to the country on the preparation of the project documents and other aspects of executing the project in preparing the NAPA.

In addition, the LEG provides technical support and advice to LDC Parties as they prepare their NAPA. This is done through training workshops, guidance papers and by reviewing draft NAPAs upon request or answering any questions that NAPA teams may have. The LEG can be reached by sending an e-mail to [leghelp@unfccc.int](mailto:leghelp@unfccc.int).

Additional support is available from other agencies including the United Nations Institute for Training and Research through its Climate Change Programme, or through regional centres and NGOs which have programmes designed to support LDCs.

The following guidelines are available:

- [Annotated Guidelines for the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action](#)
- [Global Environment Facility Operational Guidelines for expedited funding for the preparation of national adaptation programs of action by least developed countries](#)
- [Programming Paper for Funding the Implementation of NAPAs under the LDC Trust Fund](#)
- [National adaptation programmes of action : Overview of preparation, design of implementation strategies and submission of revised project lists and profiles](#)
- [NAPA Primer](#)
- [UNFCCC LDC web portal](#)

**16. What are the necessary steps for finalizing and formalizing the NAPA at the national level ?**

After the NAPA is prepared and a draft is ready the LDC Party normally requests comments from the LEG. Upon conclusion of the preparation phase the UNFCCC focal point processes the NAPA for national endorsement. Such an endorsement normally comes from senior politicians and is obtained by engaging national policy makers in launch and endorsement workshops. Some countries have used parliament or Ministerial councils for this purpose. This is an important process as it ensures that the NAPA is fully aligned with national priorities and goals and that national policy makers are both aware of the NAPA and supportive of it. In many cases this process has provided useful feedback for the NAPA teams which has demonstrated the need to more carefully reflect national development priorities.

**17. Where should the NAPA be submitted ?**

Following national endorsement the NAPA can then be submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat, where it is recorded and published on their website. The GEF agency also takes responsibility for sending a copy of the NAPA to the GEF which manages the LDCF for NAPA implementation. The country can then prepare and submit projects from the NAPA for implementation under the LDCF.

**18. Where else should the NAPA be sent ?**

The UNFCCC displays NAPAs on their [website](#) where various interested and cooperating partners can view them and design assistance programmes to support the LDCs. In addition to this it is important that countries also submit their NAPAs to various development partners, not forgetting their national planning and finance ministries. Possible partners include the embassies of diplomatic missions, NGOs, multilateral agencies, and any other channels that could create publicity for the document and attract support for its implementation.

**NAPA implementation****19. What support is available to LDCs during NAPA implementation ?**

Project proposals for the implementation of NAPAs are submitted to the GEF through a GEF agency chosen by the country. The GEF agency in turn provides technical support to the country in the preparation of the project documents and other aspects in executing the project to implement NAPA priorities.

In addition, the LDC Expert Group provides technical support and advice to LDC Parties as they implement their NAPA. This is done through training workshops on NAPA implementation, guidance papers and other forms of support upon request. The LEG can be reached by sending an email to [leghelp@unfccc.int](mailto:leghelp@unfccc.int), or by contacting the UNFCCC secretariat at [LDCunit@unfccc.int](mailto:LDCunit@unfccc.int).

The following resources are available:

- [Step-by-Step Guide for the Implementation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action](#)
- [UNFCCC LDC web portal](#)

**20. What are the various stages in the implementation process ?**

- Review the current list of NAPA priority activities that need to be implemented and verify whether or not the list requires revision;
- Choose one or more NAPA priority to be implemented under the LDCF to fit within the ceiling of funding currently available; Choose a GEF agency and identify executing agencies;
- Align NAPA adaptation priorities with development goals;
- Define adaptation baseline activities and additional components based on the assessment of national development plans, programmes and activities;
- Develop a project implementation plan through
  - Preparation and submission of a Project Identification Form (PIF);
  - Preparation and submission of a Project Preparation Grant (PPG);
  - Preparation and submission of a full project proposal for endorsement by the GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) also called CEO endorsement.
- Manage the project;
- Control and monitor its progress;
- Seek funding for other NAPA priorities from other sources;
- Prepare and submit more proposals to the LDCF as funding becomes available.

**21. What type of information is needed to submit a project proposal ?**

The submission of a project proposal is subject to the development of a project plan.

The project plan should help Parties to find a justification for the project by shaping its objectives and ensuring that it is consistent with country priorities. It should also help to identify relevant stakeholders including the implementing agency and the executive agencies, and it should lead to the design of a realistic time frame, a strategy for monitoring and reporting progress and a plan for the cost of the activities to be implemented. All this information will be required to submit an eligible project proposal.

**22. Is it mandatory to apply for a PPG ?**

Parties are not obliged to apply for a PPG. However, this grant is useful as it covers the costs related to the development of a fully documented and elaborated project proposal. Parties may also combine the PIF and PPG submissions if sufficient information is available to prepare the PPG.

**24. When can a PPG be submitted ?**

A PPG can be submitted as soon as the PIF is cleared by the GEF Secretariat and even if it is not yet approved by the GEF Council the project is eligible for a PPG.

**25. Can a country choose to work with more than one GEF agency ?**

Countries can select more than one GEF agency to assist them with the implementation process and so utilize GEF agencies' expertise in specific

sectors. This ensures that the country can get all the assistance it needs to effectively implement projects. Countries should, however, be aware of the need for increased coordination between the activities of the multiple agencies, and should be guided by the experience of similar arrangements in other projects.

"GEF agencies are requested to focus their involvement in GEF project activities within their respective comparative advantages. In specific cases of integrated projects that include components where the expertise and experience of a GEF agency is lacking or weak, partnerships with other GEF agencies should be established with clear complementary roles, so that all aspects of the project can be well managed" - Comparative advantages of the GEF agencies –[GEF/C.31/5](#)

**26. Is a country obliged to work with the same GEF agency during both the preparation and implementation of the NAPA?**

"Each eligible country may choose the Implementing or Executing Agency that it deems appropriate to implement activities under its NAPA. This choice may be entirely independent from any previous agency choices, regardless of which agency assisted in NAPA preparation". Programming paper for funding the implementation of NAPAs under the LDC Trust Fund [GEF/C.28/18](#)

Several countries have successfully switched agencies, such as Malawi and Mauritania.

**27. Can a country change its GEF agency in the middle of implementing a project ?**

Once an agency has been endorsed by the country to submit a proposal and the proposal has been approved for implementation, the country should try to resolve any difficulties it faces with the agency by seeking assistance from the GEF Secretariat. If a country chooses to change its GEF agency after a project has been approved, the country will have to terminate the project with the GEF. After the termination procedures are completed the country can then request another agency to submit a new proposal. This would lead to delays in the implementation of the urgent activities in the NAPA. LDC Parties are thus encouraged to seek assistance through the LEG and the GEF Secretariat should they face any difficulties in implementing their projects.

**28. Where can information on the status of NAPA implementation be accessed ?**

The LDC portal on the UNFCCC website provides all relevant information on the NAPA process, including links to important GEF/LDCF guidance documents. LEG reports to the SBI (Subsidiary Body for Implementation) before each session include reports on the latest implementation status of NAPAs. Information on the progress of individual projects is available from the [GEF project database](#). National GEF focal points also have access to a more detailed GEF project tracking system that shows the status of all the processes for a given project in real time.

**Mainstreaming NAPA into national plans and policy making**

**29. How do NAPAs link with other national action plans, for instance those resulting from environmental conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Convention on Combating Desertification ?**

In the process of designing an implementation strategy, either for an individual project or for the whole NAPA, Parties should first assemble information on existing national plans, projects and programmes such as poverty reduction strategies or any sector-wide plans. This exercise will help them highlight funded baseline activities that already exist in their country. These can be matched with NAPA activities or NAPA projects to then assess the additionality components needed to address climate change issues. While there is no formal requirement that NAPA projects be implemented jointly with other similar activities, countries are encouraged to explore synergies with ongoing efforts in order to enhance cost-effectiveness and improve results and outcomes.

**30. How do NAPAs link with longer term adaptation planning ?**

The proposed adaptation projects under the NAPA usually cover small areas and address a few components within a given sector with a view to addressing urgent and immediate needs. The choice is based on the urgency of the actions as well as cost-effectiveness in cases where delays would increase the costs of addressing the issue at a later stage. In this sense, NAPAs are but a subset of a country's broader adaptation needs and cover immediate time scale, while broader adaptation plans would also consider medium to long-term adaptation needs.

NAPA forms a good basis for developing medium-and-long-term adaptation and development needs. The capacity within NAPA teams and other networks which is created during the NAPA preparation phase would be very useful in the design of broader national adaptation plans.

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Secretariat	Employment	Most requested	Procurement	This site
<a href="#">History</a>	<a href="#">Vacancies</a>	<a href="#">Mitigation</a>	<a href="#">Expression of Interest</a>	<a href="#">Sitemap</a>
<a href="#">Executive Secretary</a>	<a href="#">Consultancy</a>	<a href="#">Finance</a>	<a href="#">Procurement Plan</a>	<a href="#">Disclaimer</a>
<a href="#">Secretariat Structure</a>	<a href="#">Fellowships</a>	<a href="#">REDD</a>	<a href="#">Award Procedure</a>	<a href="#">About the Website</a>
<a href="#">Contact</a>	<a href="#">Internships</a>	<a href="#">LULUCF</a>	<a href="#">Contact</a>	<a href="#">Fraud Alert</a>
<a href="#">Maps &amp; Directions</a>		<a href="#">Private Sector Initiative</a>		

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