

LoCAL NEWS BRIEF



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Cambodia workshop sums up lessons learned so far from the Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility

Over 100 participants from some 17 countries met last November in Siem Reap, Cambodia, to share lessons learned and experience gained through their participation with the Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL). LoCAL, a five-year-old initiative of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), applies the UNCDF core approach to local development finance to support climate resilience.

The two-day workshop, 'Strengthening Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Change through Local Government Systems: Lessons Learned from LoCAL,' was one of the first major opportunities for LoCAL participating countries (Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Cambodia, Ghana, Lao PDR, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nepal, Tanzania and Uganda) to meet and share their experiences in rolling out the mechanism. As such, it attracted high-level representatives both from the countries and from LoCAL partner agencies, including the Green Climate Fund, the Korea Environment Institute, the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative and the World Resources Institute.

Purpose

The workshop had several objectives:

- **Collect lessons learned and good practices** based on country experiences; these will inform the

development of an upcoming LoCAL publication, 'Financing adaptation at the local level: Experiences with performance-based grants for climate resilience' – which will in turn, it is hoped, inform the work of local governments and the international community.

- Share experiences across LoCAL countries and regions and **develop a network** of LoCAL practitioners.
- Review the LoCAL approach and **develop a common understanding and vision for LoCAL** with a view to collecting further lessons learned and good practices through regular monitoring.
- Support the advocacy work of the LoCAL Programme Board aimed at having **LoCAL recognized as a standard country-based mechanism** that can support direct access for local governments to international climate finance through their central governments.

Coverage

Eight topics were explored in presentations, plenary sessions and working groups:

- Setting up a LoCAL in-country initiative and designing performance-based climate resilience grants (PBCRGs)





- Understanding vulnerabilities and planning for adaptation
- Channelling adaptation finance and integrating adaptation in budgeting
- Investing in adaptation
- Assessing and reviewing performance and measuring resilience
- Promoting participatory approaches, gender equality, inclusion and good governance
- Making LoCAL a nation-wide mechanism
- Making LoCAL a standard and recognized mechanism for channelling international finance

Site visit

Before the actual workshop began, participants made a day-long field visit to Battambang Province. As one of the first local governments in the world to implement the LoCAL initiative, Battambang was an appropriate place to begin the lessons learned workshop. On site, participants inspected tangible evidence of the LoCAL mechanism

“LoCAL...specifically focuses on how climate change affects people in their communities, in their homes and in their local economies.

– Judith Karl, Executive Secretary, UNCDF

at work, viewing a water gate, a rural road and a drip-irrigation system built with LoCAL PBCRGs.

Financing adaptation at the local level

The workshop's first day focused on the nuts and bolts of LoCAL, drawing heavily on its implementation in Cambodia. High-level officials from the Cambodian Government and from UNCDF and LoCAL made a series of overview presentations on climate change and the importance of – and challenges to – addressing it at the local level. In this regard, Yin Kim Sean, Secretary of State of the Cambodian Ministry of Environment, shared eight lessons learned through the country's experience in mainstreaming climate change in commune and district planning and budgeting. These included the following:

- Local actors and authorities play very important roles in implementing climate change adaptation because they are closest to the community, and their **bottom-up planning** results in simple and pertinent responses.
- Clearly and appropriately **separating tasks** between the national and sub-national levels helps in meeting the challenges of addressing climate change adaptation.
- Better **collaboration** and joint planning across communes are needed, along with **capacity building**



at the line department and local levels, better record keeping and a **monitoring and evaluation** (M&E) framework.

A set of 'how-to' presentations and discussions followed. Among others, Luc Gnacadja, Special Representative of the LoCAL Programme Board, reviewed the LoCAL procedure, highlighting as **good practices** linkage to the annual budget, strong M&E, timely flow of funds, and links to existing initiatives on climate change to create synergy and reduce transaction costs. Hendrik Visser, international expert, noted pragmatically that 'we need to know that **we cannot address everything**' and that by looking at vulnerability, 'we can generate good ideas on where to start for the pilot.' Jérôme Dendura, international expert, pointed out that LoCAL is directly affected by country



decentralization and public financial management reforms, and should thus be clear about where it should be integrated within the country's system.

Working groups

Three working groups tackled key questions drawn from the presentations. Among the groups' findings were the following:

- **Cross-ministry collaboration** is very important; to achieve it, existing coordination systems should be used rather than create new ones.
- Four elements are particularly important in a **good local planning process**: the inclusion of climate vulnerability and risk assessment, an asset-based planning process for self-action and community

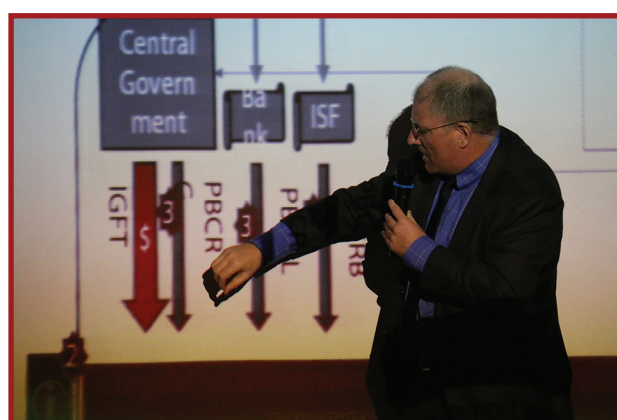


empowerment, prioritization of community demand in the local government plan, and addressing climate vulnerability and risk at the appropriate scale (household, district, national, etc.).

- LoCAL's minimum conditions, triggers and performance could be improved to better support adaptation financing through **simplification, elimination of redundancy, clarity and relevance**. Progress, and not just capacity, should be rewarded.

Making LoCAL a standard and recognized country-based mechanism

Day 2 looked at how to broaden, tailor and grow LoCAL, a topic addressed from several perspectives. First, Hoon Chang from the Korea Environment Institute discussed the latest developments in climate science and how to **connect least developed countries (LDCs) to global scientific thought**. Next, Nambi Appadurai and Colleen McGinn from the World Resources Institute explored ways to make **LoCAL programme M&E** relate better to climate change adaptation and how to better learn from, and use the findings of, this M&E. Binu Parthan, Regional Technical Advisor for the Asia Readiness Programme from the **Green Climate Fund**, outlined the possibility of LDCs' direct





access to the fund and a possible roadmap and timetable for approaching the fund involving the LoCAL mechanism.

Julian Abrams, international expert, in discussing investing in climate change adaptation, explored the challenges of **adaptive technical design**, noting that the past is no longer a reliable guide in designing for future climate. He also touched on ways to evaluate climate change adaptive investments. Hendrik Visser next spoke on issues related to good governance, explaining that LoCAL can help **enhance participation and inclusiveness** through its support to climate vulnerability and risk analysis. Ugen Norbu, international expert, highlighted six essential elements in making **LoCAL a nation-wide mechanism**: (i) an enabling policy environment, (ii) integration in a larger development program and management system, (iii) capacity development, (iv) coordination and partnerships, (v) building country evidence and making the case, and (vi) technical and financial resources.

The day's three working groups explored questions based on these presentations; highlights of their findings include the following:

- Countries first need to understand the issue of climate change and be clear on the specific problems it poses before specifying investments.

“LoCAL is actually about people...finance is only an instrument.

– Hendrik Visser, International expert

- Several elements are needed to make LoCAL a nation-wide system, including a conducive policy and legal framework for climate change and local governance.

Concluding remarks

Sak Setha, Secretary of State of Cambodia's Ministry of Interior, wrapped up the workshop and underscored the necessity of LoCAL by noting that the causes of climate change are global, yet its impacts are often local. The effects will differ from community to community; because of this, we will need to depend on local governments to take the most appropriate actions on a case-by-case basis.

All photos by Cédric Jancloes, UNCDF LoCAL. For more information on the lessons learned workshop, including video presentations and interviews, go to <http://www.local-uncdf.org/videos-from-the-local-workshop-2015.html>.