



Strengthening Endogenous Capacities of Least Developed Countries to Access Finance for Climate Change Adaptation

Part I: Project Information

GEF ID

Project Type

MSP

Type of Trust Fund

LDCF

CBIT/NGI

CBIT

NGI

Project Title

Strengthening Endogenous Capacities of Least Developed Countries to Access Finance for Climate Change Adaptation

Countries

Global

Agency(ies)

UNEP

Other Executing Partner(s)

UNEP

Executing Partner Type

GEF Agency

GEF Focal Area

Climate Change

Taxonomy

Climate Change, Focal Areas, Climate Change Adaptation, Influencing models, Stakeholders, Capacity, Knowledge and Research

Rio Markers**Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 0

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate Change Adaptation 2

Duration

24 In Months

Agency Fee(\$)

188,100

Submission Date

3/19/2020

A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
CCA-2	LDCF	1,980,000	1,980,000
	Total Project Cost (\$)	1,980,000	1,980,000

B. Indicative Project description summary

Project Objective

To strengthen capacities of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to achieve scaled up and effective adaptation by fostering sustained endogenous technical services for project development, policy mainstreaming and creation of an enabling environment for adaptation to climate change.

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
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Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Collaborative mechanism for sustained endogenous capacity on climate change adaptation finance	Technical Assistance	Adaptation-focused policy and technical service providers established in four LDCs in four different regions	<p>Twinning arrangements made and collaboration agreements signed between 4 universities/local non-profit or knowledge organisations in 4 LDCs (four institutions in total), which will serve as policy and technical service providers for their respective governments, and at least one international climate change policy and technical think tank.</p> <p>1.2 Engagement and support strategy developed including short course training packages for LDC institutions selected in 1.1</p> <p>1.3 Technical working clusters established to provide technical goods and services consistent with Engagement and Support Strategy.</p> <p>1.4 Business plans and technical service list offerings to each of the four governments developed by the four country service providers.</p>	LDC F	500,000	500,000

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Technical capacity building for LDC governments	Technical Assistance	Government technical service demands met by established service providers.	<p>2.1 Call for proposals process established for applied, demand-led policy research.</p> <p>2.2 At least 20 demand-led and policy relevant technical outputs prepared across the four countries.</p> <p>2.3 Develop or strengthen curricula and short training packages on climate change aimed to involve policy makers and government staff on a regular basis.</p>	LDC F	1,000,000	1,000,000

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Scaling up	Technical Assistance	Results disseminated for up-scaling of the model	<p>3.1 A meeting held for an LDC university network to raise awareness of the model and discuss enhancement, up-scaling, and financial sustainability.</p> <p>3.2 A meeting held for representatives from government and Universities of all LDCs to raise awareness of the model and discuss enhancement, up-scaling and financial sustainability.</p> <p>3.3 An online platform developed to share materials and progress with the LDC network that can be replicated in other LDCs.</p> <p>3.4 Sustainability and up-scaling strategy developed</p> <p>3.5 Branding and communication materials developed and disseminated.</p>	LDC F	300,000	300,000

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
				Sub Total (\$)	1,800,000	1,800,000
Project Management Cost (PMC)						
				LDCF	180,000	180,000
				Sub Total(\$)	180,000	180,000
				Total Project Cost(\$)	1,980,000	1,980,000

C. Indicative sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Beneficiaries	4 Universities (To be selected)	Public Investment	Recurrent expenditures	1,500,000
GEF Agency	UNEP	In-kind	Investment mobilized	480,000
Total Project Cost(\$)				1,980,000

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

The two UNEP co-financing initiatives for this project are the Youth and Education Alliance (YEA!) which is managed by the Youth, Education and Advocacy Team at UNEP and the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR). Between them, these initiatives will provide a) access to University IP and south-south collaboration between Universities in addition to b) course materials and access to a range of experiences in creating adaptation knowledge centres as a result of the support of both of these practices. YEA! is an Alliance of up to seven of the world's biggest sustainability networks in the world with partners from Latin America, Africa, Asia, China, US, EU all in the network representing 2,800 Universities across the world. Together, the Alliance has worked to secure commitments to get 14,000 Universities to make decarbonisation commitments by 2030 and is working to support Universities across the world to integrate the environmental components of the SDGS on campus. They are also working to shift mindsets of students with a report titled the Little Book of Green Nudges which will be launched in 2020 and they are also exploring a new piece of research on the Future of Curriculum that will be ready for 2021. In addition, UN Environment also chairs the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) which can look to support this initiative through other UN networks. HESI brings United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNESCO, UNEP, UN Global Compact's Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, United Nations University (UNU), UN-HABITAT, UNCTAD and UNITAR. HESI provides higher education institutions with a "unique interface between higher education, science, and policy making". Through YEA!, UNEP will offer the following support to this initiative:

- South-south collaboration: We can explore how Universities in the south can support selected LDC Universities on this agenda;
- Indigenous think-tanks: As an outcome of the support from UNEP, to help countries to have nascent domestic capacity to support DRR thinking with policy makers;
- Utilising pre-existing thinking / approaches: To work with partners in this network to extract thinking and work that is currently being undertaken to deploy on this work

With EU funding, UNEP is leading a project to develop different models for demonstrating large-scale implementation of Eco-DRR. Some of the focus countries are LDCs such as Uganda, Haiti and Ethiopia, Mali, and South Sudan. UNEP is also a core founder of the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR), a partnership of 24 organizations that promotes ecosystem management as a key strategy to enable vulnerable communities and countries to reduce disaster risk and build resilience to disasters and climate change. In 2019, five regional PEDRR networks (Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America, Middle East-North Africa/ West Asia and Europe/North America) were created to support regional activities. Educational materials have included a national training course on Eco-DRR which has been delivered to more than 300 participants, mostly from government ministries; a post-graduate course on Eco- entitled "Disasters, Environment and Risk Reduction". Approximately 75 universities worldwide are currently delivering the

course or part of the course. The course has been translated into Spanish and French. It is available to Universities and National Training Institutions, following a simple registration process. And a new MOOC on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Disaster Risks is currently being developed for launch in the second half of 2020.

D. Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
UNEP	LDCF	Global	Climate Change	NA	1,980,000	188,100	2,168,100
Total GEF Resources(\$)					1,980,000	188,100	2,168,100

E. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

PPG Required

PPG Amount (\$)

50,000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

4,750

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
UNEP	LDCF	Global	Climate Change	NA	50,000	4,750	54,750
Total Project Costs(\$)					50,000	4,750	54,750

Part II. Project Justification

1a. Project Description

The overall objective of the proposed project is **to strengthen capacities of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to achieve scaled up and effective climate change adaptation by fostering sustained endogenous technical services for project development, policy mainstreaming and the creation of an enabling environment for adaptation to climate change.** The main mechanism to achieve the project's objectives will be via the establishing and capacitating of a network of LDC-based institutions (Technical Service Providers; referred to hereafter as "thinktanks") to be based at existing tertiary education/research institutions. These thinktanks will provide critical services to LDC governments relating to the design and implementation of climate change adaptation policies and projects/programmes. The proposed project has been designed to address key institutional and capacity gaps that undermine the ability of LDCs to effectively mainstream climate change adaptation into public sector planning processes and programmes. The project also combines and builds upon lessons learned and best practices from previous interventions in both climate change adaptation capacity development, and tertiary education/research institutional strengthening. By supporting the development of LDC-based climate change adaptation policy and technical thinktanks, the project will improve the endogenous capacities of LDCs to formulate effective, evidenced-based climate change policies and to develop, implement, and monitor fundable climate change adaptation projects, thereby enhancing LDC access to public and private sector finance from other international and domestic sources.

The project will progress through three largely sequential outcomes aimed at creating a strong foundation for the LDC technical service providers and facilitating the replication of the model in additional LDCs. The first outcome ("**Adaptation-focused technical service providers established**") will result in the establishment of the LDC-based "thinktanks", each of which will be supported through a twinning arrangement with an established international climate change policy and technical institution. These twinning arrangements will provide mentoring services to staff in the LDC-based thinktanks, and will enable these new institutions to benefit from established best-practices. The first outcome will also include the development of training packages that respond to identified needs of LDC governments with respect to climate adaptation policy mainstreaming and project/programme development. Additionally, the first outcome will include development of business and sustainability plans for the thinktanks including technical service offerings to facilitate an ongoing relationship between the thinktanks and the LDC governments.

The project's second outcome ("**Government technical service demands met by established service providers**") will serve as a catalytic proof-of-concept by providing support to the LDC thinktanks to produce demand-led technical products that provide decision-support and policy-relevant information to the LDC governments in relation to climate change adaptation policy development and project design tasks. The project will provide grants to support the development of the initial technical products (at least 20), which will provide an opportunity for the LDC thinktanks to hone their procedures and services, ultimately demonstrating the utility of the LDC thinktanks' role as technical service

providers to LDC governments. This will in turn foster an ongoing demand for the thinktanks' services, creating a continuing relationship between the thinktanks and their host governments which continues to improve the endogenous technical capacity of each country and at the same time promote country ownership over climate change adaptation policy and project development. This in turn will lead to more effective policies and projects, which will contribute to improved flows of funds for climate change adaptation in LDCs.

The project's third outcome ("**Results disseminated for up-scaling of the model**") will aim to capture the lessons learned from the establishment of the LDC thinktanks and create the enabling conditions so that similar thinktanks can be established in additional LDCs, thus expanding the network of thinktanks. This outcome will be achieved by convening meetings of potential LDC host institutions, including LDC-based universities to share lessons learned, success stories, and to provide specific guidance and advice for establishing new LDC thinktanks. In addition, an online platform will be established to share and disseminate information, making information products developed for the four original LDC thinktanks available to new institutions.

The proposed project contributes to Objective 3 of the LDCF/SCCF programming strategy 2018-2022: *Foster enabling conditions for effective and integrated climate change adaptation*. In particular, the capacity development model will:

- Enhance the capacity of LDC countries to engage in adaptation planning processes;
- Advance integrated approaches to allow countries to address their urgent and immediate adaptation needs while also strengthening institutional frameworks and capacities;
- Facilitate replication of successful approaches and incorporate learning opportunities embedded within management practices;
- Enhance efforts to develop stronger climate information and decision-support services tailored to the local context to support for short and long-term adaptation planning;
- Invest in LDC capacities to monitor and evaluate their adaptation processes at various levels; and
- Strengthen the enabling environment for adaptation investments.

The project is also consistent with the UNFCCC's recent guidance to the GEF, specifically decision 11/CP.22, in which the COP:

“Requests the Global Environment Facility, as the operating entity of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention, entrusted with the operation of the Least Developed Countries Fund, to continue to enhance capacity development in the least developed countries for the development of project proposals with a focus on identifying potential funding sources, both national and international, and enhancing long-term domestic institutional capacities”.

1.1. Global environmental problems, root causes and barriers

Anthropogenic climate change has been recognized as one of the most pressing global issues currently facing humanity. However, it has also been recognized that the impacts of climate change are not distributed evenly, and that in many cases, LDCs stand to absorb a disproportionate share of these impacts, whilst at the same time these LDCs lack the resources and capacities to address the impacts. Analysis by the UN Environment indicates that adaptation needs will be greater in LDCs and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), whilst the failure to implement early adaptation in these countries will contribute to an increase in vulnerability and disproportionate impacts after 2020[1]¹. A cornerstone of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the understanding that developing countries, and especially LDCs, have historically contributed the least to the phenomenon of anthropogenic global warming, which is the principle driver of climate change. Because of this, the UNFCCC is predicated on the principle that developed countries provide support to developing countries as the latter work to develop and implement initiatives for both mitigation of global warming and adaptation to climate change. Specifically, article 4.9 of the UNFCCC states that all Parties must “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”[2]². To address the inequity of impacts, developed country Parties to the UNFCCC have committed to channelling “new and additional” financing to developing countries to assist with climate change mitigation and adaptation activities. "New and additional" means that financial resources related to fulfilling their obligations under the UNFCCC should not reduce the funds currently allocated by developed countries to existing and future development programs. Most notably, at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the UNFCCC in 2009, the developed countries agreed to a goal of mobilizing US\$100 billion per year in climate finance by 2020. More recently, this goal was elaborated in the “Roadmap to US\$100 billion”[3]³, which was submitted by 38 countries and the European Union in accordance with paragraph 114 l.c/p/21[4]⁴ of the COP21 meeting in 2015.

Next to the official financial mechanisms of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement - the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), several other multilateral mechanisms have been established to facilitate this mobilization of funds, such as the Climate Investment Funds (CIF), the Adaptation Fund (AF) and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), managed by the GEF. Supplementing these multilateral funds, regional development banks (e.g. African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-

American Development Bank, etc.), bilateral aid agencies and other stakeholders administer a wide range of funds financing climate change adaptation. In addition to these efforts, some developing countries have even taken the initiative to establish funds at national level to finance adaptation and mitigation activities at sub-national level. Some of these funds have been capitalized by donors and development partners (e.g. Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund; Indonesian Climate Change Trust Fund), while the funds for some others have been allocated by national governments from their existing budgets (e.g. Philippines Peoples' Survival Fund; Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund). In addition to these public sources of financing, there has been a dramatic increase in private sector investment in mitigation activities and there is a growing recognition of the role that private sector financing could potentially play in adaptation investments through innovative mechanisms such as green bonds, certification of adaptation benefits and public-private partnerships.

Although much progress has been made, scaled-up action to support climate change adaptation in developing countries is not without obstacles. According to the latest biennial assessment and overview of climate finance flows^[5] of the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance, in the period 2013-2014, public finance for climate change adaptation provided to developing countries through climate funds and bilateral concessional channels accounted for about 25% of the total climate finance and for less than 20% of the MDB investments focussed on adaptation. The assessment also notes that grants represent 88% of the adaptation finance. At the same time, according to a variety of sources, international financing for climate change adaptation projects has remained relatively constant (fluctuating between approximately US\$20-25 billion per year) between 2011 and 2016, the latest year for which comprehensive analysis is available. The obstacles to scaling up climate change adaptation action in developing countries have to date impeded the effective delivery of finance to where it is most needed and have created bottlenecks in terms of project identification, design, and implementation. As climate finance is scaled up in the future, if these obstacles are not addressed they will continue to have a significant impact on the ability to improve the resilience and adaptive capacity of the people and places most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. These obstacles can be grouped generally into three related categories:

1. Mobilization of public and private sector climate finance. A key factor in determining the amount of financial resources that are available to LDCs for addressing climate change is the diversity of available financing options and especially the level of private sector engagement in climate change activities. Based on the research and tracking efforts of several organizations, it can be stated that the vast majority of financing for climate change-related activities originates in the private sector^[6]. However, most private sector investment is for mitigation activities, and most of this money remains in the same country. As far as encouraging and upscaling financing investments in adaptation, there are obstacles that must be overcome, and diversifying financing for adaptation away from an overreliance on grants and concessional loans has been recognized as a major priority. The mobilization of funds is a significant concern; UN Environment's 2016 Adaptation Gap report indicates that the costs of adaptation for LDCs are likely to be two to three times higher than current global estimates by 2030, and potentially four to five times higher by 2050. This means that the costs of adaptation could range from US\$140-300 billion annually by 2030, and between US\$280-\$500 billion annually by 2050^[7].
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2. Flow and delivery of funds. These obstacles relate to the channelling of financial resources from developed countries to developing countries. Obstacles related to delivery and accessibility include the institutional capacity of developing countries to effectively manage and track funds to the standards that have been established by the climate funds. To improve the flow of funds via the direct access modality, a wide range of readiness activities have been implemented by various multilateral agencies and development partners. As a result, there is a fairly well-developed landscape of capacity building initiatives which have begun to bear fruit in the form of an increased number of national entities that are accredited to access financiers such as the GCF, however capacities for the design of projects remains low.

3. Fundability of projects. While mobilization, delivery and accessibility of funds are important parts of the equation, the climate finance must also be programmed effectively. However, obstacles revolving around the selection, design, and implementation of climate change adaptation projects in LDCs impede the access to funds, as well as the efficient and effective utilization of climate finance. According to the “Summary and recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance on the 2016 biennial Assessment and overview of climate finance flows”[8]⁸, low levels of technical capacity to design and develop projects and programmes and to monitor and evaluate progress, next to difficulties in following procedures from the funds to access finance, and low levels of awareness of the need for action, and available sources of funding can present challenges in accessing climate finance by those who need it most. It is worth noting that improvements of capacity within LDCs related to project selection, design and implementation to access and use of funds will also lead to improvements in mobilization (both in terms of public and private sector financing) and delivery/accessibility.

This project will focus on building endogenous capacity to address the third categories of obstacles.

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1.2. The baseline scenario and associated baseline projects

It has been widely recognized that a major obstacle to developing effective climate change adaptation policies and projects in LDCs is a persistent lack of endogenous capacity to conduct essential tasks related to policy formulation and project design and implementation. The overall impact of this situation serves to curtail the resources available to LDC governments from domestic public sources, international climate change financiers, and the private sector to support adaptation efforts. This in turn undermines scaled-up adaptation action and the transformative change that is necessary to move LDCs into climate-resilient economic and social development pathways.

This issue ultimately contributes to an adaptation gap between LDCs, middle income countries (MICs) and high income countries (HICs) which will have increasingly dire consequences in the future. The total annual costs to implement the post-2020 climate action plans of all LDCs are estimated to be approximately US\$93 billion annually, and as noted above, UN Environment estimates that total adaptation needs could run as high as US\$500 billion annually by 2050[9]⁹. However, LDCs currently face an uphill battle in attracting financing for adaptation activities. UN Environment's Adaptation Gap report indicates that the current flow of adaptation finance is highly uneven, with LDCs facing difficulties in attracting private sector investment as well accessing private sector debt to finance adaptation initiatives. Research by Adelphi indicates that Sub-Saharan African states have lagged, capturing only 16% of public adaptation finance in 2013; during the same period LDCs in general captured 22% of adaptation finance, with 43% flowing to middle-income countries[10]¹⁰. A major reason cited by key informants is that the ability to design fundable adaptation projects is lacking, implying that better project preparation capacity would improve access to climate finance for LDCs. To underscore this point, a recent survey conducted by the European Union-funded Low Carbon Cities Lab programme (LoCaL) indicated that poor project preparation has been a major barrier in mobilizing finance for climate change projects in the urban sector[11]¹¹. In other words, it has become clear that an important root factor contributing to the aforementioned adaptation gap is a failure to identify and develop effective adaptation measures, which itself is rooted in institutional and human resource capacity gaps. In a sense then it follows that an ample supply of rigorously prepared adaptation projects would create a demand amongst development partners and investors for these projects.

Clearly though the shortage of fundable adaptation projects from LDCs is only a symptom of a larger problem: fundable projects spring from effective climate change adaptation planning efforts, but LDCs often do not have sufficient technical expertise or the supporting institutions necessary to conduct essential adaptation-related tasks, including:

- the synthesis of a rigorous, evidence-based explanation of climate change processes and observed and projected impacts;
- development of climate change adaptation policies and regulations based on the aforementioned evidence base;
- the design of appropriate actions to address the impacts; and
- the mobilization of sufficient resources from diverse sources to support the actions.

This lack of in-country capacity means that LDC governments and development partners must rely on international experts and multilateral intermediaries, which significantly increases the costs of project preparation and does not resolve the capacity deficit within the country. A recent CDKN study (2016) indicated that on average, 34 person-months over

a period of six and a half months is required to develop a full GCF proposal, at a cost of up to US\$150,000[12]¹². Where project preparation grants are not available (for some national and international funds and for accessing private sector finance), the costs of employing external consultants can make project design prohibitively expensive for many LDCs, which, as noted above, are among the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change impacts.

In addition to the expense, international experts, while well qualified, are generally not as familiar with relevant political, economic, social, and cultural dynamics which are important to engage at local level and for identifying entry points for paradigm shifting interventions and opportunities for transformative change. Moreover, the use of international experts for project design does little to enhance the country's endogenous technical capacity to design climate change adaptation initiatives, as there is generally little to no transfer of skills and competencies, unless specific activities to this end are built into the project's design. In addition, continued reliance on international experts may serve as a disincentive for mainstreaming climate change adaptation considerations into day-to-day processes of governance in priority sectors, which further undermines the enabling environment for programme-based approaches to adaptation (as opposed to project-based ones), as government stakeholders outside the agency responsible for climate change action continue to have low levels of awareness with respect to the need for action on climate change as well as appropriate adaptation measures. Lastly, an over-reliance on international experts, consulting firms, and donor-driven approaches can lead to a lack of tailoring interventions to suit the country's specific circumstances. Indeed, an emerging critique of some adaptation projects is that many of them do not fulfil the paradigm shifting, "transformative spirit" demanded by climate change financiers[13]¹³. Others argue that there is a more general need to involve local government and communities in determining how climate-related decisions are made and how resources are allocated[14]¹⁴. Continued reliance on external expertise also prevents LDCs from developing the endogenous expertise necessary for these countries to identify additional and innovative sources of financing for climate change adaptation, including advancing country-specific approaches that would facilitate involvement of private sector stakeholders and access to private sector finance. This failure to develop endogenous expertise also ensures the continuation of a pattern of dependency in which the LDCs are forced to rely on external actors to develop solutions to their climate change problems. It also inhibits South-South learning and collaboration, and the emergence of a community of practice within the LDCs.

Key areas for improvement that have been identified include[15]¹⁵:

Policy

- Identifying entry points for policy mainstreaming climate change at the national and sub-national levels and carrying out the necessary technical work;
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- Mainstreaming climate change into sectoral performance management frameworks;
- Designing public private approaches to adaptation;
- Revising building standards;
- Mainstreaming climate change adaptation into urban development planning;
- Mainstreaming climate change adaptation into transboundary management processes and legal frameworks; and
- Developing climate change adaptation strategies at national and sub-national levels.

Project development

- Insufficient awareness of the climate finance landscape, the role of different forms of financing (e.g. locally-generated funds, grants, loans, equity investments, etc) and the capability to bundle and blend various sources of climate finance, including domestic and international funding from both the public and private sectors;
- Confusion over financier priorities, procedures, eligibility requirements, and evaluation criteria; information on funds is often scattered across different agencies;
- Matching project concepts to the appropriate financier and assessing options for the appropriate financier;
- Matching projects to domestic sources of financing, including locally-generated public sources;
- Availability/accessibility of appropriate data and information on climate change physical processes, impacts, risks and vulnerabilities;
- Identification and prioritization of sector-specific risks, vulnerabilities and adaptation solutions;
- Procedures for effective and meaningful stakeholder engagement and consultations;
- Economic and financial appraisal of project concepts and economic analysis in project design;
- Effective monitoring and evaluation framework to capture lessons learned; and
- Capacity to articulate a coherent and evidence-based logical framework with inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts specific to financier requirements and format.

In addition to these specific weaknesses, there is a clear need to support endogenous institutions in LDCs so that they can function as technical service providers for other adaptation-related initiatives. For example, currently there are a number of programs aimed at improving capacities of national designated authorities, accredited entities, and other government and non-government stakeholders responsible for the formulation of climate change adaptation policies and projects. A case in point is the Green Climate Fund's Readiness Support Programme, which provides grants for projects that build NDA capacity, support the development of strategic frameworks and planning for adaptation, and other technical tasks. These grants are implemented through "delivery partners", and while these projects have made considerable progress, most that are implemented in LDCs are conducted by external partners: of the 64 Readiness projects that have been approved for LDCs, less than 25% (n=15) are being implemented by endogenous LDC-based institutions (an additional 12 are being implemented by regional entities), while the majority (n=37) are being implemented by international delivery partners (e.g. UNDP, UN ENVIRONMENT, PwC, GGGI, GIZ)[16]¹⁶. Clearly LDC-based institutions can play a larger role in providing Readiness and other adaptation-related services to LDC governments. At the same time, many LDCs have collaborated with development partners to submit larger Readiness proposals to the GCF to support their NAP processes. As these proposals are approved and move into implementation, there will be a strong demand for service providers to implement a wide range of tasks and activities related to adaptation planning, capacity development, prioritization, and project development, all tasks that LDC-based institutions could perform with the appropriate capacity strengthening support. Thus there is a clear need to strengthen endogenous institutions in LDCs so that they can provide Readiness and other services to government entities. In this way, the proposed project strongly complements the readiness programs that have been established by GCF and other entities. The non-exhaustive nature of GCF's Readiness funds (each country may apply for US\$1,000,000 in grants per year) creates a clear opportunity[17]¹⁷ for the proposed project's TSP's to support government adaptation efforts beyond the life of the proposed project.

This project aims to address the gaps noted above and build the requisite capacities among LDC institutions. It is innovative in that it envisions a long-term, sustained institutional approach to addressing the underlying capacity gaps that have been identified. Through institutional strengthening and mentoring, the project aims to move the locus of capacity development from development partners to the LDCs themselves. In this way the proposed project's approach represents a significant departure from existing approaches. Firstly, the project will incorporate lessons learned and successful pedagogical approaches from previous project preparation capacity development activities. Over the years there have been several initiatives aimed at building capacities related to developing climate change adaptation projects among stakeholders in developing countries, and several guides and toolkits have emerged. Notable among these was the **USAID's Climate Change Project Preparation Facility for Asia and the Pacific (Adapt) initiative**, which was active from 2011-2017 and included a capacity building component focusing on climate change adaptation project preparation. The **Adapt initiative** implemented approximately ten project preparation and finance workshops with various partners (UNDP, ADB, International Center for Climate Change and Development) with several hundred participants, including many from ten LDCs within the Adapt initiative's target regions. An analysis of participant evaluations of this initiative indicated demand for capacity strengthening in all areas related to project preparation, in particular for understanding the landscape of climate finance, financiers' requirements and procedures, and the technical aspects of project preparation. The Adapt initiative also worked with the Asian Institute of Technology to establish a **prototype for institutionalizing capacity building efforts** with developed

country institutions. Other similar initiatives include the **GEF-funded National Adaptation Plans Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP)**, the LDCF-funded project **Building capacity for LDCs to participate effectively in intergovernmental climate change processes**, both implemented jointly by UN Environment and the UNDP in collaboration with partners, **USAID’s Climate Ready project**, the European Union-funded projects **Low Carbon Cities Lab programme (LoCaL)** and **ClimSouth**, all of which include components related to improving fundability of climate change adaptation projects. The European Union’s **Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA)**, which was initiated in 2007 and is currently active in a number of LDCs, also provides a platform for policy dialogue and South-South learning as well as technical and financial support for adaptation. However, these projects have a lifecycle, and whilst they achieve meaningful outcomes, a widespread problem is that the lessons learned from the project, as well as the capacity building activities, are often not captured by LDC-based entities institutionalized and mainstreamed within the planning processes of LDCs. Thus, the longer-term impacts are limited. Another weakness is that the existing, predominant approach to project preparation capacity development initiatives often do not include longer-term engagement with LDC agencies and organizations to provide ongoing mentoring and support.

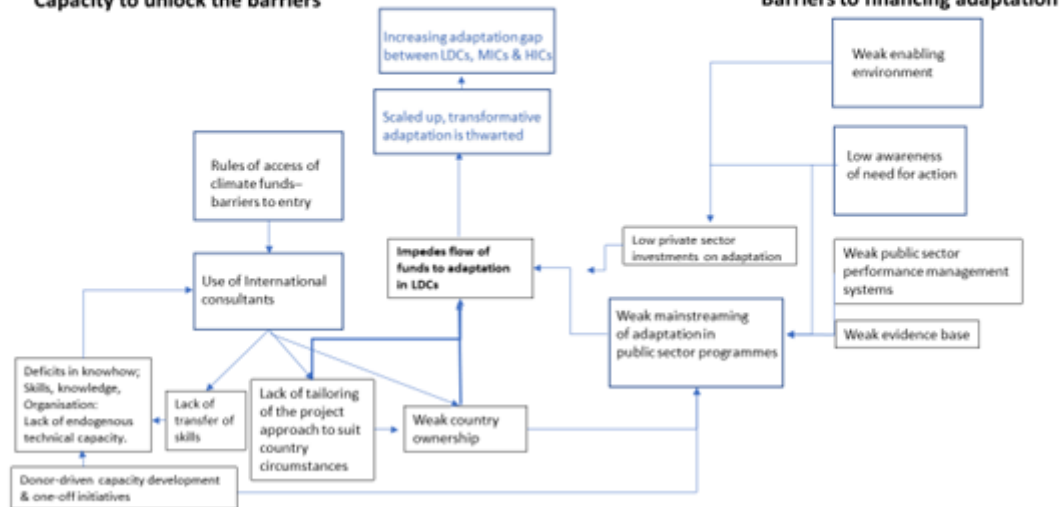
To address the longevity/sustainability issues and build on and enhance the positive elements from the aforementioned capacity strengthening initiatives, the proposed project will incorporate lessons learned from several initiatives that have aimed at strengthening institutional and human resources capacity to support research and improved pedagogy at universities in developing countries in a more permanent manner. For example, DANIDA’s Building Stronger Universities (BSU) initiative began in 2011 and is now in its third phase. The BSU has worked with several universities in the global south, including some based in LDCs to improve teaching, research, outreach, extension, and other functions related to development objectives. Some specific areas in which the BSU project has experienced success (and which are relevant to the current PIF) include:

- Fostering south-led management of donor-supported projects;
- Establishing enabling conditions to conduct policy-relevant research;
- Forming cross-theme interdisciplinary research teams and enhancing collaboration among staff; and
- Forming twinning/mentoring relationships between institutions in developed and developing countries.

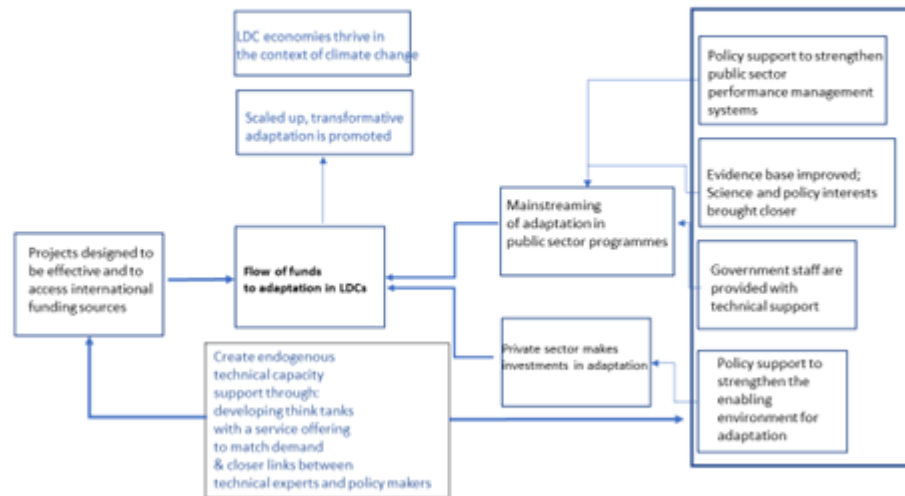
This project, and others like it, while not focusing specifically on climate change adaptation, have experienced significant successes in supporting sustained improvements in institutions, research capability, co-production of knowledge partnerships between the universities and governments, and creating the enabling conditions for universities to serve as service providers to governments and other stakeholders in developing countries. The proposed LDCF project will incorporate approaches and best practices from these initiatives, which when combined with the aforementioned pedagogical approaches, should enable the project to achieve its objectives in line with the project’s theory of change, which is detailed in the diagrams that follow.

Problem analysis

Capacity to unlock the barriers



Solution map



1.3. The proposed alternative scenario

This project aims to address the aforementioned barriers by creating a mechanism (thinktanks twinning arrangement) to build and maintain capacity in LDCs to support their governments in developing and implementing effective adaptation and resilience building responses to climate change. This includes supporting governments in developing climate change adaptation policy, mainstreaming climate change adaptation considerations into national development, sectoral planning, and climate change adaptation project design. According to the proposed project’s theory of change, the project will contribute to improved access to climate finance from international and domestic public and private sector sources, scaled-up transformative change, and improved resilience of LDC economies in the context of climate change. The project assumes that there are existing institutions in LDCs (e.g. universities, research institutions, public-policy centres) that have existing capacities and resources that could be effectively channelled towards providing technical

services to governments, and that through targeted mentoring and additional institutional support, these institutions could provide a wide range of services related to climate change adaptation to LDC governments[18]¹⁸.

The project consists of two components with three outcomes and will be implemented over the course of two years. The overall product of the project will be the establishment of four “thinktank” institutions in four geographically dispersed LDCs. The thinktank institutions will be hosted by universities, research/public policy institutions or NGOs in the LDCs. Candidate institutions will be identified during the project’s design phase and may include some members of the Least Developed Countries Universities Consortium on Climate Change (LUCCC) as well as other organizations/institutions involved in climate change adaptation policy design and project development. Based on consultations with the design team and the application of a set of criteria (including willingness to provide co-financing and/or in-kind support), suitable partners will be selected and formal agreements will be established with these institutions. Selection criteria will also be informed by best practices from other university strengthening initiatives and may include:

- Existence of university/institutional mandate consistent with the project’s objectives (e.g. to improve innovation, outreach and policy-relevant research);
- Existence of research/academic program focusing on climate change or related topic (e.g. Centre for Environment and Climate Studies at Royal Bhutan University; Centre for Climate Change Research and innovation at Uganda’s Makerere University);
- Additional potential criteria are identified in section 1.6.

In addition, the design team will work to identify regional stakeholders (e.g. regional development banks and other institutions) as potential partners to provide technical support to enhance the thinktanks’ capabilities beyond the life of the project.

These thinktank institutions will provide a variety of custom-tailored services to their host governments relating to the aforementioned climate change adaptation tasks. The project will also create an enabling environment so that additional thinktank institutions can be established in additional LDCs. The knowledge management function of the project will facilitate south-south learning and exchange between the thinktank institutions and will serve as a locus of fostering a community of practice.

The project consists of two components:

1. Collaborative mechanism for sustained endogenous capacity on climate change adaptation finance;
-

2. Technical capacity building for LDC governments

Component 1. Collaborative mechanism for sustained endogenous capacity on climate change adaptation finance

The first component of the proposed project focuses on establishing the four thinktank institutions, providing institutional support and mentoring to get them up and running, and establishing a sustainable working relationship between the thinktank institutions and the host LDC governments. The outcome of the first component is to **establish adaptation-focused technical service providers in four LDCs in four different regions**. This outcome will be achieved through four outputs, described below. The diagram below illustrates the basic sequence of activities in establishing the thinktanks.



Output 1.1: Twinning arrangements established between technical service providers and international mentor institutions and workplan developed. As noted above, the LDC thinktanks will be selected during the design phase of the project. During this phase the design team will also identify several candidate institutions to participate in twinning arrangements with the LDC thinktanks as mentor institutions. This output will focus largely on the institutional pre-requisites for establishing the thinktanks. Twinning/institutional mentoring programs have a demonstrated record of success in improving technical capacities of developing country and LDC institutions[19]¹⁹, and so there is a range of best-practice to inform detailed design. In addition, during the project's design phase, the design team will explore additional partnerships with international organizations such as Academics Without Borders (AWB) to provide additional technical support[20]²⁰. Mentor institutions will be regional/international institutions or established universities with a strong track record in research and applied work related to climate change adaptation, as well as experience in supporting governments in developing policies and programmes for

climate change adaptation. Preference will be given to institutions that have experience in working with LDC institutions or that have existing outreach programs in LDC countries and with LDC partner institutions[21]²¹. During the first two quarters of the project the mentoring institution will work with the LDC institution to identify institutional, policy, and human capacity needs with respect to establishing a functioning and sustainable thinktank, as well as a workplan and timeline for addressing these needs. The mentor institutions will assist the LDC thinktanks over the life of the project (and perhaps beyond) in developing a solid operational foundation based on experience and best practice in a number of areas including (but not limited to):

- Identifying existing institutional and human resource capacities that might be applied to the technical service delivery function;
- Appropriate staffing and professional development activities to support thinktank operations;
- Making institutional linkages between existing academic/instructional/research functions and the technical service delivery function of the thinktank institutions;
- Establishing/improving linkages between different units/offices within institutions to facilitate multi-disciplinary approaches[22]²²;
- Establishing the technical building blocks required so that the institutions are empowered to provide research-based advisory and consultancy services;
- Establishing knowledge co-creation relationships between government officials and institutional researchers and formulating a research agenda to produce policy-relevant and decision-support information;
- Identifying government institutional and capacity needs relating to climate change adaptation;
- Meeting institutional capacity requirements of development partners, multilateral financiers, and other relevant international stakeholders (e.g. Financial Capacity Management Assessment for GCF Readiness Delivery Partners; EU Seven-Pillar Assessment);
- Designing practical and relevant professional development programs and materials for climate change adaptation.

Output 1.2: Engagement and support strategy developed including short course training packages for LDC institutions. Once the thinktank institutions have been established (1.1), each of the thinktanks will formulate a strategy to guide engagement with and support to their respective country governments. This output will include the following tasks:

- Conduct a review of policies, projects, analyses, assessments and other relevant materials related to climate change adaptation in the host country. This review will provide a baseline for understanding where the country is with respect to climate change adaptation, and what the country's general needs are in terms of technical support.
-

- Develop communication and outreach plans to guide consultations with government and non-government stakeholders. Preparing the communication and outreach plans will include stakeholder mapping procedures to identify potential partners within government agencies and also among nongovernment stakeholders.
- Capacity strengthening training based on international best practices in conducting consultations with government and non-government stakeholders. Each of the thinktanks will receive capacity building support designed to develop competencies necessary for effectively liaising with government and nongovernment stakeholders and for ensuring inclusive and participatory engagement activities. Capacity strengthening will include a focus on gender issues and mainstreaming, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups.
- Conduct ongoing process of consultations with government stakeholders. These progressive consultations will establish a relationship with government stakeholders (clients), initially raising their awareness as to the function and possibility of the thinktanks. Through this consultative process the thinktanks will identify the most important capacity building, policy, institutional strengthening, and technical areas where support is needed to help the country meet its adaptation goals as elucidated in NDCs, NAPs, and other policies and strategies.

These identified priorities and needs, as well as the results of the policy review and the communication and outreach plans will be compiled into an Engagement and Support Strategy that will be used to guide subsequent activities, including the call for proposals process established in outputs 2.s1. and 2.2 (below), and will also help to identify the resources needed to develop the products. Throughout this process the thinktanks will be provided with capacity building support on issues related to climate change adaptation in the host countries, and will be provided with support in producing outreach materials and knowledge products for government stakeholders. In addition, thinktanks will receive capacity building support for increasing grant writing/project development-relevant skills.

Output 1.3: Technical working clusters established to provide technical goods and services. Output 1.3 focuses on establishing the institutional mechanisms within the thinktank institutions as well as the capabilities to meet the demand for technical outputs in 1.2 and 2.1. Supported by the partner institutions from 1.1, each of the thinktank institutions will establish semi-permanent technical working clusters to implement the Engagement and Support Strategies formulated in 1.2. Establishing technical clusters will include the following tasks:

- Establishing formalized standard operating procedures for the technical working clusters that are consistent with the thinktank's existing policies, regulations, and operating procedures. This will institutionalize the technical working clusters within the thinktank institution.
- Establish logistical arrangements for technical working clusters, including administrative support, logistics and facilities, procurement, and other office support needs.

- Assemble multidisciplinary research teams aimed at developing technical outputs. Here the thinktanks will have consultations with host institution officials (e.g. deans, provosts, faculty) to identify how host institution staff can be involved in and benefit from the technical activities. This task will also involve reconciling existing contractual and ToR obligations with the duties associated with working in the technical working cluster.
- Identify linkages and synergies with host institution instructional and research activities. This task involves identifying entry points in the thinktanks' host institutions existing curricular offerings for providing experiential learning and problem-based learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, thereby strengthening the linkages between the thinktank and the host institutions. The thinktanks will explore synergies between the technical tasks to be conducted by the thinktanks and staff development priorities as well as masters or PhD research opportunities[23]²³.

These teams will be supported by grants from 2.1 and 2.2 and will receive capacity building support (short-courses) designed to empower them to produce the technical outputs; short course material will also provide information on conducting problem-based (demand-driven) research and methodologies for conducted technical analyses that are normally conducted by international consultants. Experienced researchers from partner institutions (see output 1.1) will support the teams. Specific areas of action will depend on the country but may include the following:

- Mainstreaming into public policy frameworks and planning processes;
 - Developing sector-specific climate indexes to monitor climate impacts in priority sectors;
 - Developing and implementing risk and vulnerability assessments;
 - Developing and delivering technical training materials for government staff;
 - Conducting policy/budgetary reviews;
 - Developing and implementing as a delivery partner GCF Readiness projects;
 - Providing specific services for National Adaptation Plan implementation;
 - Developing project concept notes;
 - Conducting feasibility studies/economic analysis/Environmental and social safeguards/gender analyses for adaptation projects.
-

Output 1.4: Develop business plan and technical service list offerings for Technical Service Providers. Each of the four thinktanks will be supported in developing a sustainable business plan to facilitate the sustainable operation of the thinktanks beyond the life of the project. This business plan will include a list of services that the thinktanks will supply to government and non-government stakeholders, staffing needs and formalized ToRs for thinktank staff, staff recruitment and retention plans, and a budget and workplan. The business plan will also include a timeline for the buildout/expansion of thinktank services along with required resources. Business plans will in part focus on strengthening the entrepreneurial capacities of the thinktanks and will incorporate lessons learned on this topic from the DANIDA BSU programme.

Component 2: Technical capacity building for LDC governments.

Component 2 of the project will be conducted primarily in Y2 of the project and consists of two outcomes. The first outcome (2.2: Government technical service demands met by established service providers) aims to fully capacitate and test the LDC thinktank institutions and stimulate demand for their technical services so that they can independently provide the services determined in Output 1.3 (above). The second outcome (2.3: Results disseminated for up-scaling of the model) will establish a knowledge management mechanism to capture lessons learned and best-practices from the LDC thinktanks' operations, and will put in place the enabling conditions so that additional thinktanks can be established in other LDCs.

Output 2.1: Call for proposals process **established for applied, demand-led policy research.** This output will provide at least 20 awards (up to US\$50,000 each) to the thinktank institutions to develop technical products to respond to a prioritised list of needs identified in consultation with the host LDC governments in output 1.2 (above). Proposals received in response to the call for proposals will be reviewed and approved by the UN Environment project implementation team. These grants will be designed to stimulate demand for the thinktank's services on the part of the government while reducing "first-mover" risks for both the government and the thinktanks. The grants will enable the thinktank institutions to engage consultants as needed, which will guide the development of the technical products while training permanent thinktank staff and establishing procedures for developing technical products. This output helps to address a market failure that was identified by a number of institutions and experts consulting during the design of this PIF: in many cases institutions lack the up-front funding to hire experts to provide a service (e.g. an analysis product) that would eventually yield a revenue stream, and current staff are engaged with their existing responsibilities. Thus these grants will provide the liquidity necessary for the LDC institutions to make an initial investment in providing revenue-generating services to governments and other stakeholders, which in turn should catalyse future demand for these services.

Output 2.2: At least 20 demand-led and policy relevant technical outputs prepared across the four countries. Thinktank institutions will utilize grants from the mechanism developed in 2.1 (above) to develop technical products that respond to government needs identified in 1.3. Through the twinning arrangements developed in 1.1, partner institutions will provide mentoring support, technical guidance and peer review of the technical products on an as-needed basis. These technical products will demonstrate the utility of the technical services provided by the thinktank institutions, thus stimulating an ongoing demand for these services. These technical products will be made publicly available via the online platform developed for 3.3 (below), through LDC government public dissemination channels, and via UN Environment's online platform.

Output 2.3: Develop or strengthen curricula and short training packages on climate change aimed at policymakers and government staff on a regular basis. This output will involve establishing procedures for the ongoing evaluation of technical capacity building products and programs developed by the thinktank institutions in response to government needs identified in 1.2 and 1.3, and also for modifying/updating these products as necessary (for example, as new information becomes available). In addition, this output will include the identification of additional capacity development needs according to consultations with government stakeholder and periodic review of capacity assessments, adaptation strategies and policies, NAPs, vulnerability assessments, and other sources.

Output 3.1: Convene a scoping meeting for an LDC university network to raise awareness of the thinktank model and discuss enhancement, upscaling, and financial sustainability. This meeting will be conducted in the first year of the project to raise awareness about the concept and purpose of the four LDC thinktank institutions, to solicit input on the concept and function of the thinktanks, to raise interest and establish connections/collaborative partnerships with other institutions, to identify linkages with other university-strengthening initiatives, and to foster interest in developing new thinktank institutions in additional countries beyond the life of the project. In particular, the meeting will help to identify potential connections between this project's implementation and the implementation of the many NAP projects, many of which have activities based at universities, that have been approved and will soon be entering the implementation phase. This meeting will be conducted in coordination with the Least Developed Countries Universities Consortium on Climate Change. Development partner representatives, climate financiers, and potential mentor-partner institutions will be invited to attend as observers.

Output 3.2: Convene a review meeting for representatives from government and universities of all LDCs to raise awareness of the model and discuss enhancement, upscaling and financial sustainability. This second meeting will be conducted during the second half of the second year of project implementation, possibly in coordination with UNFCCC/CoP proceedings. The objective of this meeting will be to showcase the experiences of the thinktank institutions, to share lessons learned and disseminate best practices. In addition, the meeting will serve as a platform to recruit additional institutions to become Technical Service Providers, thereby expanding the network to additional LDCs.

Output 3.3: An online platform developed to share materials and progress with the LDC network to encourage replication in other LDCs. Beginning in the first year of the project, the project implementation team based within UN Environment will work with the four thinktank institutions to develop an online architecture and platform that will serve as a knowledge-sharing and information dissemination resource for the thinktanks. The online platform will also contribute to the eventual expansion of the network by providing information to interested institutions in additional LDCs. The online platform will also be integrated with the branding and communications materials developed in 3.5 (below). The platform will be hosted and maintained by UN Environment during the project, and prior to project termination UN Environment will reach an agreement with one or more of the thinktank institutions to host, mirror, and maintain the online platform. UN Environment will provide necessary training to thinktank staff to ensure the sustainability of the internet platform. UN Environment will also explore synergies with other relevant initiatives to determine how the online platform can be integrated with other projects and programmes, including potentially the NAP-GSP program and the NAP Global Network.

Output 3.4: Sustainability and up-scaling strategy developed. For this output the project management team at UNEP will coordinate with LUCCC and other networks and institutions to develop a scaling up strategy for the LDC thinktank network. This strategy will include additional universities/institutions to be added to the thinktank network, a timeline, resources required, the identification of partner institutions in developed countries, as well as integration with other relevant initiatives.

Output 3.5: Branding and communications materials developed and disseminated. This output will be executed by the UN Environment project implementation team in consultation with the Technical Service Provider institutions and will include the following elements:

- Establishing a communications strategy for each TSP for outreach to LDC governments, development partners, climate financiers, and to communicate the mission of the TSP to internal stakeholders;
- Publicising lessons learned, case studies, best-practices, and other relevant knowledge products based on the project's activities and outputs;
- Communication and outreach to recruit TSPs in additional LDCs.
- Communications and outreach to host-LDC government stakeholders to increase awareness on the need for developing endogenous capacity to support project and policy development, and also to publicize and highlight the relevance of the services provided by the TSPs.

1.4. The incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF/SCCF and co-financing

Currently, many LDCs lack the technical capacities necessary to design and implement effective responses to climate change impacts. In addition, most LDCs are overly reliant on external expertise from UN agencies, international, and regional institutions with respect to climate change adaptation project preparation. While this situation has produced adaptation benefits, it comes with high transaction costs with respect to the formulation of projects, as well as unsatisfactory transfer of knowledge and capacity to endogenous experts in terms of project formulation, design, and implementation. For application of the Theory of Change, this project assumes that without GEF support, LDC countries will continue to suffer from technical capacity deficits and a weak enabling environment, leading to poor outcomes with respect to climate change adaptation planning and mainstreaming of climate change adaptation considerations into everyday processes of governance. Furthermore, LDC countries will continue to struggle to formulate and design fundable climate change adaptation projects, and because of this the bottlenecks in channelling climate change financing to LDCs will persist. Moreover, it is assumed that without GEF support, most LDCs will continue to experience difficulties in identifying new sources of financing and engaging the private sector. This project will contribute to the overall cost-effectiveness of climate change adaptation activities in LDCs in several ways:

- The emergence of endogenous institutions that provide essential technical services to LDC governments relating to a wide variety of climate change adaptation tasks;
- The emergence of a strong network of LDC professionals capable of providing technical services to LDC governments and interpreting financier requirements and procedures and equipped with technical expertise on climate change adaptation project formulation suitable for submission to various financiers;
- Sending signals to the academic community to improve the evidence base, thereby strengthening the science-policy linkages in LDCs;
- The establishment of the thinktank network would contribute to the implementation of UNFCCC decision 11/CP.22 in which the COP “requests the Global Environmental Facility, as the operating entity of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention entrusted with the operation of the Least Developed Countries Fund, to continue to enhance capacity development in the least developed countries for the development of project proposals with a focus on identifying potential funding sources, both national and international, and enhancing long-term domestic institutional capacities”.

Co-financing initiatives

The two UNEP co-financing initiatives for this project are the Youth and Education Alliance (YEA!) which is managed by the Youth, Education and Advocacy Team at UNEP and the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR). Between them, these initiatives will provide a) access to University IP and south-south collaboration between Universities in addition to b) course materials and access to a range of experiences in creating adaptation knowledge centres as a result of the support of both of these practices.

YEA! is an Alliance of up to seven of the world's biggest sustainability networks in the world with partners from Latin America, Africa, Asia, China, US, EU all in the network representing 2,800 Universities across the world. Together, the Alliance has worked to secure commitments to get 14,000 Universities to make decarbonisation commitments by 2030 and is working to support Universities across the world to integrate the environmental components of the SDGS on campus. They are also working to shift mindsets of students with a report titled the Little Book of Green Nudges which will be launched in 2020 and they are also exploring a new piece of research on the Future of Curriculum that will be ready for 2021.

In addition, UN Environment also chairs the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) which can look to support this initiative through other UN networks. HESI brings United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNESCO, UNEP, UN Global Compact's Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, United Nations University (UNU), UN-HABITAT, UNCTAD and UNITAR. HESI provides higher education institutions with a "unique interface between higher education, science, and policy making".

Through YEA!, UNEP will offer the following support to this initiative:

- South-south collaboration: We can explore how Universities in the south can support selected LDC Universities on this agenda;
- Indigenous think-tanks: As an outcome of the support from UNEP, to help countries to have nascent domestic capacity to support DRR thinking with policy makers;
- Utilising pre-existing thinking / approaches: To work with partners in this network to extract thinking and work that is currently being undertaken to deploy on this work

With EU funding, UNEP is leading a project to develop different models for demonstrating large-scale implementation of Eco-DRR. Some of the focus countries are LDCs such as Uganda, Haiti and Ethiopia, Mali, and South Sudan. UNEP is also a core founder of the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR), a partnership of 24 organizations that promotes ecosystem management as a key strategy to enable vulnerable communities and countries to reduce disaster risk and build resilience to disasters and climate change.

In 2019, five regional PEDRR networks (Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America, Middle East-North Africa/ West Asia and Europe/North America) were created to support regional activities. Educational materials have included a **national training course on Eco-DRR which has been delivered** to more than 300 participants, mostly from government ministries; a **post-graduate course on Eco-** entitled “Disasters, Environment and Risk Reduction”.

Approximately 75 universities worldwide are currently delivering the course or part of the course. The course has been translated into Spanish and French. It is available to Universities and National Training Institutions, following a simple registration process. And a new MOOC on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Disaster Risks is currently being developed for launch in the second half of 2020.

1.5. Adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)

The project is consistent with the LDCF’s goals of funding LDC country-driven, learning-by-doing approaches to building capacity, and is congruent with COP Decision 11/CP.22. It is also consistent with LDCF Objective 2: Strengthen institutional and technical capacities for effective climate change adaptation. The project advances outcome 2.1: increased awareness of climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, outcome 2.2: improved scientific and technical knowledge base for the identification, prioritization and implementation of adaptation strategies and measures, and outcome 2.4: institutional and technical capacities and human skills strengthened to identify, prioritize, implement, monitor and evaluate adaptation strategies and measures.

The project has numerous adaptation benefits at multiple scales, from the global to the local. At the global level, the impacts of climate change have been clearly manifested, and there is near universal agreement within the scientific community that the Earth system is committed to continued impacts, which are likely to be exacerbated by our current emissions trajectory. Moreover, the LDCs are and will continue to bear disproportionately severe impacts due not only their physical and environmental situation, but also due to non-climate political, economic, and social conditions. Thus, there is a critical imperative to address urgent needs associated with climate impacts. The project will also contribute to advancing the implementation of article 4.9 of the UNFCCC, as well as of Articles 9 and 11 of the Paris Agreement[24]²⁴.

At the national level, the adaptation benefits are manifold:

- The project enhances LDC capacities to address their national priorities and contribute to implementing their international ambitions under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement;
- Improves the evidence base by mobilising tertiary education institutions to focus research on improving the climate rationale;
- The project builds implementation and financial planning capabilities that are consistent with the effective implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and which can contribute to establishing and/or enhancing NAP processes in LDCs;
- The project contributes to enhanced country ownership over adaptation activities, which should result in improved awareness and political will at national and subnational levels to address climate change impacts;
- The project contributes to the emergence of a community of practice and a network of climate change adaptation professionals in LDCs;
- The project contributes to an improved ability to identify entry points for paradigm shifting interventions that will contribute to climate-resilient development trajectories in LDCs; the project's activities will contribute to a shift away from donor-driven, ad-hoc adaptation interventions towards more mainstreamed, coordinated adaptation that is harmonized with the broader development context of each LDC.

Progress in meeting these objectives will be determined through pre- and post-assessment trainings as well as surveys conducted during the annual meetings. The baseline study in 1.1.1. and the consultations in 2.1.1 will provide information on the needs and priorities to measure the overall progress of the project.

Additional benefits that might be expected beyond the life of the project through sustained support for the thinktanks include:

- Climate change adaptation planning will be improved in LDCs as thinktank institutions support evidence-based policy design and implementation;
- Mainstreaming of climate change considerations into sectoral and subnational processes of governance will be improved as thinktanks provide technical support and capacity development to sector agencies and sub-national governments through dedicated calls for technical assistance as well through other regular University technical support processes;

- Climate change adaptation project identification and preparation will be improved, reducing delays in project approval by financiers and the costs in time and financial resources to revise projects;
- Improved information on the climate rationale by mobilising tertiary education institutions in support of more targeted research on climate risks and adaptation;
- The costs associated with project preparation will be reduced as in-country technical expertise is developed in LDCs. During the project preparation phase, the design team will work to provide estimates of costs savings;
- Improved in-country capacity will increase the feasibility and effectiveness of financing innovations such as the establishment of country-level climate change funds (e.g. Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund, the Benin National Fund for the Environment and Climate, Rwanda's FONERWA Green Fund);
- Country-to-country learning amongst LDCs will be enhanced, reducing transaction costs and enhancing the spread of innovations and the scaling up of pilot projects;
- The existence of the thinktanks will contribute to developing and maintaining institutional and human resources in LDCs that will facilitate a transition away from ad-hoc project-based climate change adaptation actions to more mainstreaming, and cross-sectoral and vertically-integrated programmes of adaptation actions.

1.6. Innovation, sustainability, and potential for scaling up

This project represents a departure from previous capacity development initiatives in that it situates the locus of capacity building activities within the LDCs by establishing an enduring institutional structure (the thinktanks). Thus, the project builds on successful pedagogical and capacity-building approaches implemented by USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific project, the GEF-supported LDC Negotiators project, the DANIDA BSU programme and the GEF-supported NAP-GSP initiative as well as other donor-supported project preparation facilities and creates a mechanism for sustained capacity strengthening, along with ongoing mentoring and support that is essential for increasing the capability of LDCs to develop their own climate change adaptation projects. The methodologies used in these previous initiatives that will be employed in the current project include:

- Establishing institutional twinning/mentoring relationships between global north and LDC institutions;
- Utilizing consultative processes to determine government technical service needs;
- Targeted technical capacity support to strengthen endogenous institutional capacity;
- Applying a demand-driven model of service delivery;
- Development of practical knowledge products based on best practices and case studies of successful projects;

- Provision of ongoing mentoring support for concept note and project preparation design as well as implementation tasks; and
- Use of an online knowledge management platform to share experiences and disseminate best practices.

The thinktanks/technical service providers also have the potential to grow and be replicated beyond the project, ultimately resulting in increased impact. By housing the thinktanks in LDC institutions, the project will establish permanent training centers that can consolidate and disseminate lessons learned from more than a decade of climate change adaptation practice. Unfortunately, when development partner-implemented projects run their course, much of the knowledge generated by these projects is lost. Therefore, the project institutionalizes existing best practices from successful initiatives while at the same time creating space for LDCs to innovate in a way that is appropriate to their contexts.

The project is also fundamentally innovative in that it addresses structurally-reinforced capacity deficits which serve as an obstacle to scaled-up delivery of climate finance as well as the development of country-driven approaches to climate change adaptation. The project invests LDC-owned, LDC-hosted, and LDC-staffed institutions which are expected to not only increase the effectiveness of climate change adaptation policy development, mainstreaming, and financing in LDCs, but also reduce the cost of developing fundable projects. The aim is for these two outcomes is to contribute to increased access to climate change financing for LDCs both from conventional sources of climate finance (e.g. the GCF, which has earmarked half of its investments in adaptation for LDCs, SIDS, and African States) and the private sector. Improving project preparation should also increase the feasibility of LDCs availing themselves of the streamlined direct access modality of AF, which will also contribute to improved financial flows. The project's investment in these institutions will also contribute to the emergence of a corps of adaptation professionals, which will increase LDC ownership and self-sufficiency with respect to climate change adaptation.

[1] UNEP (2014), *The UNEP Adaptation Gap Report 2014*, United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi, Kenya.

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[12] https://cdkn.org/2016/08/feature-climate-funds-face-tension-country-ownership-pressure-disburse-funding/?loclang=en_gb, last accessed 18/10/17

[13] <https://www.ecoldgroup.com/all-issues/green-climate-fund-paradigm-shift-survey-sheds-light-on-decision-making/>, last accessed 18/10/17

[14] <https://www.iiied.org/expediting-direct-access-gcf-for-least-developed-countries>, last accessed 18/10/17

[15] This list is based on the results of survey/interview with limited LDC stakeholders, a review of literature, an analysis of reports from current and closed project preparation projects, and interviews with key informants involved in capacity building for climate change adaptation action and project preparation.

[16] These numbers are based on projects approved by January, 2019.

[17] This should not be taken to suggest that this PIF aims solely at increasing “readiness” for readiness grants and projects; rather the example is illustrative of one potentially many drivers of demand for the services the PIF aims to provide.

[18] This assumption is based on a review of university capacity strengthening projects as well as extensive consultations with the Least Developed Countries Universities Consortium on Climate Change, a growing network consisting of approximately a dozen LDC universities spread across the world. The LUCCC has conducted stocktaking exercises on institutional capacities of LDC institutions, and has conducted capacity development and training activities for LDC universities on a wide range of climate change topics. It is interesting to note here that according to LUCCC informants as well as other experts and stakeholders that were consulted in designing this PIF, a major aspect of the problem in many cases is not the lack of expertise, but rather obstacles exist with respect to *organizing* expertise and bringing it to bear on specific problems. Moreover, as detailed in subsequent sections, during the project design phase institutions will be selected in part based on the presence of preexisting capacities.

[19] Examples include the aforementioned DANIDA “Building Stronger Universities” initiative and USAID’s “Building Resilience Through Training” project

[20] Academics Without Borders is an established NGO that provides capacity building support to tertiary education institutions in developing countries by engaging volunteer experts from developed country institutions. AWB’s portfolio of projects and its institutional competencies are very much in alignment with this project concept. UN Environment has already engaged in initial discussions with AWB concerning collaboration and has received an enthusiastic response.

[21] It should be noted here that there are numerous universities, thinktanks, and research institutions located in the global north that have existing institutional partnerships and mentoring relationships with LDC institutions. It should also be noted that many of these institutions in the global north have funds and other resources dedicated to supporting these initiatives. This project will exploit these existing relationships to the extent possible during the design phase of the project.

[22] Note that an issue that has been identified in many institutions is that capacity/expertise to conduct relevant cross-diciplinary research is often scattered amongst siloed departments.

[23] Many developing country universities have prioritized improving the research skills and output of junior faculty and graduate students; by providing practical research opportunities the thinktanks will be able to align their activities with the broader priorities of their host institutions.

[24] Article 9 focuses on the responsibility of developed countries to provide financial resources to developing countries with respect to mitigation and adaptation, whereas Article 11 addresses issues related to capacity building.

1b. Project Map and Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.

N/A

2. Stakeholders

Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities No

Civil Society Organizations Yes

Private Sector Entities

If none of the above, please explain why:

A consultation was held at the 25 January 2020 at the 6th International Gobeshona Conference on Research into Action in Dhaka Bangladesh. 43 participants attended from a range of NGOs, Universities and interntional agencies. The project was well taken by the audience.

On the proposal on thinktank from Asia

The group presented the following criteria for

1. The Institution should have the ability to lead most of the other institution from the region for capacity building, keeping in mind the limited funds under the project component
2. The Institution should Ability to coordinate well in the region.
3. The Institution should have Co-management skills.
4. The Institution should be powerful to influence / shape national and international discussions on Climate change adaptation.
5. The institution should be open to coordinate and collaborate with other institutions from the region
6. The Institution should apply gender lens and have gender balance in its activities.
7. The Institution should have Overall experience of climate change adaption scenario of the region
8. The 3 countries from the region was proposed serially, (i) Bangladesh, (ii) Bhutan and, (iii) Nepal

On the proposal on thinktank from Africa:

1. There should be two institutions each from the Francophone/Lusophone and the Anglophone.
2. There can be national hubs that may host these institutions and they can have the government linked to it closely.

In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.

The think tanks initiated under this project will be hosted by academic and research institutions in LDCs, which will also conduct many of the project activities. An initial list of potential university partners, drawn from the membership of the LUCCC follows below, but participation in the project will likely not be limited to these institutions. Final identification of stakeholders will occur during the project preparation stage. The project design team will review and consult with institutions that have participated in other initiatives to determine where this project can build and consolidate on existing progress.

1. International Centre for Climate Change and Development. Dhaka, Bangladesh. LUCCC Network Coordinator

2. Royal University of Bhutan. Thimpu, Bhutan. Network member.

3. Pokhara University. Kathmandu, Nepal. Network member.

4. African Center for Disaster Risk Management. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Network Member.

5. University of Khartoum. Khartoum, Sudan. Network Member.

6. University of Dar-Es-Salaam. Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania. Network Member.

7. Makerere University. Kampala, Uganda. Network Member.

8. University of the Gambia. Banjul, Gambia. Network Member.

9. University of Cheikh Anta Diop. Dakar, Senegal. Network Member.

10. Eduardo Mondlane University. Maputo, Mozambique. Network Member.

11. University of South Pacific, Port Villa, Vanuatu campus.

The specific locations of the thinktanks will be determined during the design phase of the project based on criteria that will be developed by the project design team. Of the 47 LDCs that are party to the UNFCCC, most are located in Africa. Two of the thinktanks will be located in Africa, positioned to address regional considerations and languages. For example, thinktanks may be located in West Africa, the Great Lakes region, the Sahel, or the Horn of Africa. One African thinktank will provide services and resources to an Anglophone country, whereas another will provide services and resources to a Francophone/Lusophone country. This will contribute to the expandability of the thinktank model to additional countries. An additional thinktank will be located in Asia. A final thinktank will be located in the Pacific and will consider also issues of relevance to SIDS. The selection criteria for the thinktanks will include, but not be limited to, the following considerations:

- Thinktank host institutions must be existing institutions within a LDC country;
- Thinktanks will be selected to achieve a equitable regional distribution to cover all regions with high concentrations of LDCs, in particular South and Southeast Asia, the Pacific (+ Haiti), Anglophone and Francophone/Lusophone Africa;
- Thinktanks may not be commercial organisations. Universities and research institutions are the primary target group;
- Potential host institutions must be willing to establish a new unit/office serving as a thinktank to provide the services envisaged in this project also beyond the life of the project;
- Potential host institutions must have a system for knowledge management already in place and the willingness to further improve this system;
- Host institutions must have experience with provision of trainings, extension, and capacity-building activities;
- Host institutions must be willing to provide cost-sharing in the form of in-kind support (e.g. staff time, working space, etc.). If the host institution currently has a mandate that is consistent with the project's activities and objectives, this would make it more likely that cofinancing/in-kind support can be secured;
- Host institutions must commit to complying with UN social and environmental safeguards during and beyond the life of the project.

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis).

During the project preparation stage, the project design team will engage in stakeholder consultations which will contribute to a gender action plan for the project. The gender action plan will provide guidance in terms of ensuring gender balance and representation in all project activities, including training materials, training implementation, thinktank operation, and knowledge creation. The gender action plan will be prepared by a technical specialist in consultation with the potential thinktanks and LDC country representatives, and will include budget allocations to support

gender actions, if deemed necessary during the project design phase. In addition, many institutions in LDCs have mandates that include gender equity considerations and which prioritize and provide substantive support for gender equity in programme implementation; the proposed project will endeavour to identify and work through LDC institutions that have made such a commitment; an institutional commitment to equal opportunity and gender equity will be one of the selection criteria for thinktank institutions.

A major aspect of the capacity building efforts of the thinktanks will be to assist LDC stakeholders in identifying and designing gender sensitive climate change adaptation projects, and how to mainstream gender considerations into all aspects of the project cycle, from planning to implementation. This will include developing^[1] capacity building materials, guidance, tools, and pedagogical resources for the LDCs which raise awareness about the gendered impacts of climate change as well as differential vulnerabilities to climate change and help the LDCs to more effectively incorporate gender considerations into CCA projects. These materials will increase the capability of stakeholders in LDCs to generate gender-disaggregated data, to design project activities, outputs, and outcomes that address differential vulnerabilities of men and women, how to prepare gender action plans (GAP), and how to design gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems for projects. The thinktanks will also work with LDC stakeholder to ensure that benefits from climate change adaptation project flow equitably. The trainings provided by the thinktanks will aim at at least 30% female participation.

The project's management structure, including the advisory committee, will have an equitable gender representation. The project will also seek to recruit thinktank personnel in a gender equitable manner, and will develop a training program during the project preparation stage designed to ensure that a cadre of female project professionals is trained, supported, and empowered by this project, and several gender workshops will enable female leaders to develop skills related to climate finance. The project will include monitoring indicators and targets to ensure equitable gender representation in the project's capacity building activities.

[1] And, where applicable, utilizing existing resources, including those prepared under the NAP-GSP initiative.

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes

closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or Yes

generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

4. Private sector engagement

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.

The four focus universities will be twinned with public-private institutions that will help in developing a priced service offering tailored to demand. A business approach will be developed to promote sustainability and scale up of the pilot.

5. Risks

Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the Project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the Project design (table format acceptable)

Risks will be minimised by operating the project's activities through an established network of reputable academic institutions in LDCs. Confidentiality agreements will be signed with all contracted organisations to ensure the protection of confidential knowledge. Moreover, the project concept note has been prepared with the active participation of stakeholders from LDCs, and draws upon lessons learned from previous capacity building efforts. Incorporation of LDC perspectives into the PIF's design, and into the subsequent design of the project itself, will help to ensure LDC ownership over the project's implementation and the thinktanks themselves. Furthermore, the project has the support of the LDC Group (of climate change negotiators) and the UNFCCC LDC Expert Group (LEG).

There main risk is **Sustainability**. As noted above, this project is innovative in that it seeks to establish a network of institutions to catalyze new capacities in LDCs. As such, there are inherent risks in terms of sustainability, and in transitioning from a structure in which the network is supported by the project to a situation in which the network is supported by the network institutions. Because of the limited lifespan and resources of the proposed project, there is no way to avert these risks entirely. However, the project will endeavour to create the conditions whereby the participating institutions are incentivized to support the thinktanks beyond the life of the project. This includes fostering ownership on the part of the participating institutions, demonstrating the value added by the thinktanks for the participating institutions and developing mechanisms for partial or full cost recovery. There are several potential options for enhancing the sustainability of the project. Specific measures will be determined during the project preparation phase and will be implemented during the two years of the project. Some potential options are described below.

The first steps to address questions of sustainability will be taken during the project preparation stage. The project preparation team will develop a rigorous selection process to identify potential thinktank hosts that are a) best positioned to provide thinktank services; and b) most capable and committed to supporting the thinktank beyond the life of the project. To serve as a thinktank host institution, each facility must already have the potential to fulfil this function beyond the project duration. Universities and/or research institutions are considered suitable host institutions for the thinktanks. These institutions have the potential to provide a reliable platform for maintaining and developing the thinktank function as a self-sustaining activity beyond the project duration. They may already possess specific capacity and expertise in various areas of relevance to the development of fundable adaptation projects. They may also have experience in providing trainings and courses, and they may have knowledge management systems in place and a vested interest in developing new knowledge related products and services. In addition, as noted above, the selection process will identify institutions that have existing mandates and visions that are aligned with the project's goals and activities. This alignment will increase buy-in and ownership over the project and will help the thinktank institutions achieve their existing objectives. The presence of centres or departments focusing on climate change, or the existence of "centres of excellence" on topics relevant to climate change adaptation provide evidence of an institutional commitment to climate change adaptation and resilience; the project will seek to work through these types of institutions.

The selection process will include extensive consultations with candidate institutions to identify opportunities and barriers to sustainability at each specific location. These consultations will focus on determining how the thinktank can contribute to the existing programs of the hosting institution, which will reveal incentives for the institution to provide support for the thinktank. Based on these consultations, the project preparation team and the candidate institution will develop a sustainability plan that details the following elements:

- How does the fit in with the existing programs and overall mission of the host institution? How does it enhance the mission and capabilities of the host institution and help it to fulfil its mandate? - The answer to this question will help identify steps so that the thinktank is "owned" by the host institution, rather than perceived as a separate entity;

- How will the thinktank be integrated into curricular offerings, research activities, extension services, and other ongoing programs at the host institution? - The answer to this question will help identify steps so that the thinktank can be integrated into the host institution's existing activities and thus be an entity that adds value. This will also help to develop an institutional "constituency" for the thinktank;
- What resources relevant to the thinktank functioning (facilities, technical expertise and human resources, administrative support) is the host institution able to provide?
- Transition plan. The goal here is to mainstream the thinktank into the normal operational budget to the greatest extent possible by the end of the project. This will involve examining the host institution's administrative structure and identifying potential "homes" for the thinktank within the institution. The transition plan will also include a detailed costing of everything that is needed for the thinktank. Not only will this information make strategic planning simpler, but it will also help host institutions understand the magnitude of the commitment;
- Financing options. Additional financing options will be identified to supplement the host institution's budget. The elucidation of financing options will also include elements of a business plan, describing which elements of the thinktanks might at some point be able to generate fees. For example, thinktanks may have the potential to charge fees for compliance checks, professional consultation services, and project preparation. Cost recovery options will be explored during the detailed design phase. Management of fees and funds received will also be addressed during the project design phase. Partnerships with external entities will also be explored (e.g. support from regional development bank), and the plan will identify steps to incorporate the thinktank into the existing foundation/fundraising activities of the host institution.

Candidate institutions that meet the criteria established by the project design team, and which complete the sustainability plan, will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the project design team. The selection process will address the social and environmental safeguards of UN Environment, the LDCF and partner organisations, including prevention of forced or child labour, avoidance of corruption and ensuring safe and healthy working environment for any thinktank staff employed as part of the project. At this point the institutions will be eligible to receive a first tranche of funding to support start-up. These institutions will also appoint a member(s) to serve on the project steering committee and thinktank network consultative committee. This will give each host institution a role in determining the direction of the project and network, and will enhance the sense of ownership over the network. The consultative committee as described above will steer the project. The consultative committee will also study existing models of consultative and extension services that are provided by universities to capture and apply lessons about successful administration and marketing.

The project's activities will also contribute to the sustainability of the thinktanks by adding value to the host institutions:

- Host institution personnel will receive training at the onset of the project and through continuing capacity building activities, which will improve the human capital of the host institution. Ongoing participation in the network and community of practice, managed by the UN Environment, will further improve the capabilities of personnel. Moreover,

newly developed expertise in climate finance, project design in different thematic areas related to adaptation, and other areas related to the thinktanks' functions can be leveraged to expand the curricular offerings of the host institutions. Courses in areas such as climate finance are in high demand, and will contribute to the host institution's ability to attract students. Course designs, curricula, and other instructional materials can be shared within the network. In addition, many universities have established or are currently developing academic/research programs on climate change; the thinktank would fit in well with existing programs and would catalyze efforts to develop new programs; Lastly, knowledge and expertise residing in regular research activities can be pulled into climate change policy and technical research as well as be influenced by the climate change policy agenda, generating additional resources to this growing need;

- Creation of an entry point for international cooperation. The establishment of the thinktank network, as well as the connections with NDAs, focal points, and other entities involved in climate finance, policy, and project preparation in participating countries, creates an excellent position for the host institutions to engage in additional international partnerships with development agencies, international NGOs and foundations, etc. The network infrastructure will provide a ready infrastructure to implement additional projects related to capacity building and institutional development for climate change adaptation, and will reduce start-up and transaction costs for such endeavours. Thinkdesks would also provide unique opportunities for collaborations with research institutions and universities in the developed countries. Examples abound (e.g. University of the Philippines PLANADES, Bandung Institute of Technology's Climate Change Center, the Pacific Center for Environment and Sustainable Development at the University of the South Pacific) which demonstrate that, when an in-country implementation is available, there is no shortage of external agencies wishing to partner with that institution;
- To maximize the potential for international cooperation, during the second year of the project the thinktank network and individual institutions will develop relationships with development partners, international NGOs, and bi-lateral aid agencies to explore ongoing partnerships and avenues for technical and material support;
- Prestige. Greater involvement in climate change policy and project development will increase the profile of each of the participating host institutions, and will help them develop a reputation as centers of climate change adaptation research and practice. This would contribute to a positive feedback loop in which the host institution becomes more involved in policy and project development;
- Fee-based services. Over the lifetime of the project, each thinktank will develop relationships with government agencies and non-government organizations in participating LDCs. Moreover, the project's activities will provide experience as well as information on what kinds of capacity building activities are most relevant and useful in participating countries. This information will feed into the refining of existing materials and activities, and will inform the development of new curricula and knowledge products. By the end of the two years of the project, the services and materials offered by each thinktank will be well-tailored to the host country and to a lesser extent to the broader region. This creates the potential for the thinktanks to offer courses on a fee-basis to partially or completely offset the operating cost of the thinktank. There are currently several institutions around the world that provide training workshops on a fee basis, and so the model has been tested. The geographic location of the thinktanks, along with their familiarity with the social and political contexts, and their ability to provide workshops in national/regional languages, creates a significant competitive advantage. To determine the feasibility of adopting a fees-for-service model, the project design team will conduct a willingness-to-pay study during the project preparation phase;
- Indirect revenue generation. The thinktanks' connection to the broader network, its connection to national government and non-government stakeholders, and its co-production of knowledge activities creates an avenue through which other personnel from the host institutions can be involved in aspects of climate change adaptation project

preparation (e.g. conducting risk and vulnerability assessments, conducting parts of feasibility studies, supporting project-related research activities). The host institution can collect a fee for these activities.

At the end of the second year of the project, each thinktank will develop a synthesis report, reflection, and evaluation of the project's activities. This report will consolidate the learning and experience associated with the project, and will provide a foundation for moving forward iteratively, beyond the life of the project. By this time, each thinktank will have identified a set of services and products most relevant to their participating countries, and so they will be able to focus on these goods and services moving forward.

Based on experiences from similar institutions, as well as the demonstrated need for the services to be provided by the thinktanks, there is clearly a demand and niche for the thinktank network. Moreover, based on the reasoning detailed above, there can be a reasonable expectation that the thinktanks will be supported beyond the life of the project because of the significant direct and indirect benefits provided to the host institutions.

(b) **Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.** Because the project aims to improve capacity over the medium- and long-term, it will need to develop indicators to demonstrate the continued effectiveness of the thinktanks. This will also be useful in ensuring the sustainability of the thinktank network.

6. Coordination

Outline the institutional structure of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

Because the proposed process builds capacity building for project preparation, it will be coordinated with LDCF, SCCF, and other GEF-funded projects throughout the LDCs. Notably, as part of its LDC Negotiators project, UNDP and UN Environment are currently developing a plan to establish a secretariat and other institutional support mechanisms for the LDC Group. The current project will be coordinated with this ongoing work to strengthen national systems for climate change information management. UN Environment and UNDP have established a strong relationship with the LDC Group and have familiarity with the issues confronting LDCs in terms of establishing institutions. This coordination will be facilitated by the national focal points. The thinktanks will be available during the design phase of these projects and will endeavour to involve LDC-based consultants in the design teams, either as principle consultants, or in a capacity that will enable them to develop their skills and expertise.

The project will also coordinate with other initiatives and programs aimed at helping LDCs develop bankable projects to identify synergies and potential areas for collaboration and cooperation. These initiatives include the newly-established Commonwealth Climate Finance Skills Hub, which was founded to assist Commonwealth countries, including

several LDCs, in navigating the existing climate finance landscape. The project will also coordinate with the European Union-funded Low Carbon Cities Lab programme (LoCaL), which has developed and continues to develop a suite of capacity building materials focusing on the technical aspects of project preparation and accessing climate finance at the subnational level. In addition, the project will identify and coordinate with other initiatives aimed at establishing national and sub-national level funds for climate change in LDCs, such as IIED's Decentralizing Climate Funds in Mali and Senegal initiative.

Lastly, the project will coordinate with the GCF, AF, and other financiers to ensure that the capacity building strategy and that tools, curricula, knowledge products, and other resources that are used/developed for the project are consistent with the policies and priorities of these financiers. Related to this, the project will coordinate with GCF NDAs and relevant focal points for the UNFCCC, GEF, and other funds in the LDCs to ensure that the project's activities are consistent with country programs for accessing climate adaptation finance.

7. Consistency with National Priorities

Is the Project consistent with the National Strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions

Yes

If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc

The project's capacity building strategy will be developed to enable the thinktanks to field inquiries and provide assistance with a variety of issues related to LDC National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), National Communications, Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) or Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); Technology Needs Assessments for Adaptation (TNAs), Technology Action Plans (TAPs), National Communications, and other relevant national strategies, policies and priorities. This includes assistance with identifying and designing project concepts and proposals that are consistent with the priorities in the abovementioned documents, and providing capacity building support for the design and implementation of these documents, as appropriate.

The project's project preparation assistance to LDCs will also emphasize the selection and design of projects that are consistent with and which reinforce the commitments, priorities, and needs associated with other strategies and conventions. In other words, the projects that are facilitated by the thinktanks will be designed to provide co-benefits and will be consistent with the sustainable development trajectories of the LDCs. Moreover, the skills developed by this project's capacity building program will enable the LDCs to better fulfil their commitments and implement these agreements and conventions as well as achieve the SDGs.

The proposal addresses three of the LDC long-term initiatives. These initiatives focus on several key areas central to LDCs, including access to renewable energy, capacity building in climate research, and development of long-term strategies in effective adaptation, resilience and development.

The first and main one being: Least Developed Countries Universities Consortium on Climate Change (LUCCC). LUCCC is a South-South Consortium of 10 Universities from across LDCs to enhance knowledge on climate change through climate capacity building, with a focus on adaptation measures, such as education and research. LUCCC aims to network and develop the capacity of South-South universities to develop common research projects and implement teaching and training programs in different climate change aspects. It is a two-way collaborative capacity building program which will offer help to others and seek support from others to build capacity within LDCs.

The proposal will also address the LDC Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR), which will outline effective adaptation and resilience mechanisms to further build national institutions, domestic systems and capabilities, and wider national efforts to address poverty.

8. Knowledge Management

Outline the Knowledge management approach for the Project, including, if any, plans for the Project to learn from other relevant Projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.

Because this project aims to establish a network that will persist beyond the life of the project, a knowledge management component has been built into the project design in the form of the online platform. Outcome 3 of the project will support the knowledge management and outreach on behalf of the thinktanks, and also work to advance the knowledge management and communications skills within each thinktank. The online platform coordinated by the global hub will serve as a repository for information generated by the project, as well as a locus for the community of practice and as a coordinator of the network of thinktanks. The online platform will also serve as a modality to manage the training and capacitating of the thinktanks, and for outreach and communications. The project is built on the principle of interaction and knowledge sharing between the thinktanks and between the LDCs that participate in the project.

Ahead of the project closure, the management of the online platform will be passed to a suitably capacitated and appropriate thinktank – to maintain the locus of capacity building within LDCs, beyond the lifespan of the project.

In addition, because there is a significant amount of learning-by-doing in this project's activities, an end-of-project synthesis report to consolidate lessons learned and best practices will be produced. Lessons learned during implementation will also feed back iteratively into the design and development of knowledge products, resources, and other capacity building materials produced for the project.

Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And Gef Agency(ies)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter with this template).

Name	Position	Ministry	Date
Mr Sonam P. Wangdi	Chair, LDC Group, UNFCCC	National Environment Commission, Government of Bhutan	3/12/2020

ANNEX A: Project Map and Geographic Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project intervention takes place

All least developed countries (LDCs)