Climate adaptation and democracy support: Learning from one another

Assessment Framework & Guidance for Program Design

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May 2024

WFD

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

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Glossary

Adaptation strategies

Strategies employed by people, institutions, organisations and systems, using available skills, values, beliefs and resources, to adjust to potential damage, take advantage of opportunities and respond to consequences (usually over the long term).

Climate adaptation

Process of adjustment employed by individuals or groups to accommodate climate change impacts. Can range from adjusting daily routines to changing entire livelihood strategies and social structures. Aims to moderate harm or difficulties associated with climate change, while taking advantage of any opportunities.

Climate change

Large-scale changes in the pattern and predictability of weather over longer time periods, typically 30 years. Local people may experience this as changes in the timing of seasons, as well as more frequent (and unpredictable) climate shocks, such as droughts or floods.

Climate variability

Short-term weather changes (for example, rainfall, temperature, wind), normally the result of natural causes. By contrast, climate change occurs over a much longer time period.

Gender

A social understanding defining what it means to be a man or woman (or boy or girl) in a given society at a specific time and place. Refers to the specific roles, livelihood activities, status and expectations that society assigns to women and men within households, communities and culture. Differs from sex, which refers to the biological differences between men and women.

Gender analysis

A systematic approach to identifying key issues and factors contributing to gender inequalities.

Hazard

A natural or human-induced physical event that has the potential to cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, as well as damage to property, infrastructure, livelihoods, service provision and environmental resources.
A climate hazard refers to an unexpected and disruptive weather event, such as an extended drought, a period of flooding, or high winds.

Resilience

Ability of an individual, social group or community to anticipate, absorb or recover from the effects of a (climate) hazard in a timely and efficient manner. Local people may think of this as the ability to do relatively well during and after a severe climate shock (such as a drought), at a time when others may be struggling.

Vulnerability

Degree to which individuals, families or communities are unable to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard. It is the opposite of capacity or resilience.

Introduction and Purpose

This framework is intended to help assess the potential of a climate adaptation program or project as a vehicle for deepening citizen participation and democratic accountability in governance. It offers an analytical framework for systematically reviewing the design architecture and performance of a program from an "environmental democracy" perspective and assessing its democratic credentials.

In the second edition, new sections have been added to provide concrete guidance for the design of programs that bring together principles for effective adaptation and the principles for environmental democracy.

This practical tool accompanies a more theoretical discussion paper (Greene, 2023).

"Program" here is intended in a very wide sense, and can include:

- Adaptation programs and projects awarded to national actors by multilateral climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) or Adaptation Fund. This includes projects initiated or driven by international, national (Direct Access Entities) and sub-national entities (e.g. through Enhanced Direct Access).
- Adaptation finance projects that are funded directly through grants to grass-roots or civil society entities, for example, the GEF Small Grant Program (SGP) or the Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DSM) under the Climate Investment Funds Forest Investment Program (FIP).
- Adaptation finance projects funded directly through grants or loans by bilateral development agencies.
- National programs based upon financial mechanisms for allocating adaptation financing directly to the local level, e.g. the Decentralised Climate Finance (DCF) model pioneered in Kenya, Mali, Senegal and Tanzania. A version of this is currently being scaled out as the Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCCA) program in Kenya.
- National social protection programs (and their devolved implementing entities) with an adaptation component, such as MGNREGA in India.

Who this framework is intended for

This framework can be used by a variety of different actors interested in assessing the degree and quality of democratic accountability and citizen participation in an adaptation program or project, or in designing new projects and programs that draw on these principles. This may be national level actors, civil society organisations and government institutions interested in furthering democratic practices and/or a good governance agenda; equally, given the established links between meaningful citizen engagement and effective adaptation/ avoidance of maladaptation, it could be used by national level organizations keen to promote more effective and transformative adaptation investment.

What the framework can be used for

The framework can be used in a variety of different ways:

1. Comparative assessment of different existing real-world examples for delivering adaptation finance and governance of adaptation projects, to compare their performance across indicators of environmental democracy.

2. Assessment of a planned adaptation finance project or program through assessment of its 'foundation documents' to identify opportunities for increasing citizen participation and democratic accountability.

3. Support the integration of environmental democracy principles into climate adaptation program design, or vice versa.

4. A one-off "democracy audit" of a current adaptation program (either at national or sub-regional level) to assess its strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities for increasing citizen participation and democratic accountability.

5. On-going assessment and evaluation of a current adaptation program (as in the point above), but with the aim of tracking progress towards increased participation over time by measuring changing performance across agreed indicators.

Theoretical Roots of the Framework

This framework has its origins in both the Adaptation community of practice and the Environmental Democracy community of practice and draws on themes of citizen engagement and democratic accountability common to both. For a deeper exploration of the theoretical underpinnings of the framework, consult Greene (2023).

Adaptation community of practice

Two analytical approaches to adaptation underpin this practical framework: the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation and the IPCC Adaptation, Impact and Vulnerability working group.

Firstly, the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation. Now endorsed by over 80 governments, leading global institutions and prominent NGOs, these eight principles envisage 'local people having individual and collective agency over defining, prioritising, designing, monitoring and evaluating adaptation options, and working with the higher levels to implement and deliver climate adaptation solutions' (Soanes et al. 2019).

The eight fundamental principles were distilled from a comparative analysis of what works best on the ground. Making these the cornerstone of an adaptation program will help to ensure that local communities and citizens are empowered to lead (and hold accountable) sustainable and effective adaptation action at the local level (Steinbech et al. 2022).

Secondly, the IPCC Working Group II report on Adaptation, Impact and Vulnerability (IPCC, 2022) identifies four essential conditions for adaptation success. These are firmly rooted in different aspects of justice (recognitional, procedural and distributive), together with a commitment to the kind of revitalised institutions (adaptable, flexible, responsive and strong) that are capable of tackling the unique challenges of climate change.

The IPCC also emphasizes the need to foreground transformational[1] approaches to adaptation (IPCC, 2022).

Transformational interventions seek to address the root causes of climate vulnerability through fundamental systemic[2] changes in the properties of socio-ecological systems (Fedele et al, 2019). These transformations are likely to require a similarly profound reconfiguration of the citizen-state relationship if they are to be socially and culturally acceptable. Only the strongest forms of democratic participation and transparency will enable the necessary public discussion and negotiation of the scale and nature of these transformations (and the difficult but necessary trade-offs required).

Key conditions for adaptation success

Recognitional Equity and Justice	The need for inclusion and integration of indigenous and local community knowledge and perspectives into adaptation interventions.
Procedural Equity and Justice	The need for inclusive, participatory processes in decision-making, seeking to ensure the voices of all citizens are heard and that structural barriers to inclusion are acknowledged and addressed.
Distributive Equity and Justice	The need to ensure equitable outcomes for adaptation interventions, where the benefits are shared fairly and transparently, and existing inequalities are not exacerbated.
Flexible and strong institutions to address long term risk reduction goals.	The need to ensure that institutions and processes for decision making are flexible enough to change course in response to monitoring, evaluation and learning, and can made decisions that incorporate knowledge and priorities across sectors, spatial scales and jurisdictions.

Table 1: Locally Led Adaptation Principles

1.	**Devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level**	Giving local institutions and communities more direct access to finance and decision-making power over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritised, designed and implemented; how progress is monitored; and how success is evaluated.
2.	**Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, disabled and displaced people, Indigenous Peoples and marginalised ethnic groups.**	Some groups within the community are more vulnerable to climate risk than others because the lack power to access or make decisions about important livelihood assets/resources and/or governance arrangements in the community. These structural inequalities are all too often reproduced in development initiatives.
3.	**Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily**	The transformative change necessary to address climate risk requires institutional, political, economic shifts that cannot be facilitated in the span of a short project life-cycle. As climate risk is dynamic, adaptation must be an on-going process rather than a single, one-off event. As a result, 'patient' in this context means at the very least a commitment of 10 years, but preferably a continuous commitment across generations.
4.	**Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy**	Improving the capabilities of local institutions to ensure they can understand climate risks and uncertainties, generate solutions and facilitate and manage adaptation initiatives over the long term without being dependent on project-based donor funding.
5.	**Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty**	Informing adaptation decisions through a combination of local, Indigenous and scientific knowledge that can enable resilience under a range of future climate scenarios.
6.	**Flexible programming and learning**	Enabling adaptive management to address the inherent uncertainty in adaptation, especially through robust monitoring and learning systems, flexible finance and flexible programming.
7.	**Ensuring transparency and accountability**	Making processes of financing, designing and delivering programs more transparent and accountable downward to local stakeholders.
8.	**Collaborative action and investment**	Collaboration across sectors, initiatives and levels to ensure that different initiatives and different sources of funding (humanitarian assistance, development, disaster risk reduction, green recovery funds and so on) support one another, and their activities avoid duplication, to enhance efficiencies and good practice.

Environmental Democracy community of Practice

'Environmental democracy is rooted in the idea that meaningful participation by the public is critical to ensuring that land and natural resource decisions adequately and equitably address citizens' interests.' (Worker & Ratte, 2014).

Environmental democracy concentrates on deepening, reforming and strengthening existing or emerging liberal democratic institutions to support more effective environmental action. It is based around the three critical pillars of citizen rights to Participation, Transparency and Justice (WFD, 2020).

Seen through an Adaptation lens, the rights of Participation and Transparency are most relevant and overlap significantly. These synergistic rights allow citizens to participate more effectively in adaptation decision-making and to hold governments, NGOs and the private sector accountable for their action (or inaction) in this sphere. Justice rights are slightly less applicable in the adaptation context, but also have a role to play.

Environmental Democracy Rights	
Participation	The right to participate meaningfully in setting the agenda of adaptation programs/initiatives and in evaluating their success: framing the problem space, shaping visions of the future, deciding priorities, choosing among adaptation options/interventions and monitoring and evaluating any actions undertaken.
Transparency (of Information)	The right of all citizens to freely access information about climate change, and climate risks and impacts (differentiated by geography and agro-ecology, livelihood, social status and category, various kinds of social and cultural difference, etc.).
Justice	The right of all citizens to appeal and judicial review when adaptation initiatives infringe the environmental/human/statutory rights of citizens and/or lead to maladaptive outcomes and/the needs for redress or compensation (This need not be restricted to remedies available to citizens through the courts).

Adaptation and Environmental Democracy Assessment Framework

This Adaptation and Environmental Democracy Assessment Framework operates at the intersection of these guiding sets of principles, using the 3 pillars of Environmental Democracy. As the basic organizing structure, but creating a series of principles and indicators inspired by the Principles of Locally Led Adaptation within each of them of them. The intention has been to find the linkages between the sets of principles, particularly those given new meaning in the context of long-term and uncertain climate risks. The principles for effective adaptation identified by the IPCC also features strongly in the rationale behind each indicator:[3]

Framework overview

	Environmental Democracy Pillar	Framework Principle	Indicator
Adaptation Theme	Participation	Commitment to Participation	Vision
			Resourcing
		Devolution & Subsidiarity [1]	Subsidiarity
		Representativeness & Inclusion [2]	Legitimate Participatory Institutions
			Addressing Structural Inequalities
		Participatory Program Operations at the Local Level [1] [4] [5] [6]	Participatory Climate Information
			Program Priorities and Strategic Objectives
			Choice of Interventions and Investments
			Management of Implementation
			Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation
		Capacity & Resource [3]	Sustainable Participation
	Transparency	Transparent Information [7]	Program Information
			Climate Information
	Justice	Protection of Rights [2] [7]	Appeal and Redress
			Accountability

User Guide: How to apply the framework

This user guide document provides a step-by-step guide to applying the framework principles and their associated indicators.

Each indicator is treated in detail, providing the rationale behind the indicator and how to score a program using it.

Rationale:

The rationale for adopting the indicator is given, with reference to the theoretical framework (above) and practical considerations based on evidence from case studies.

Ratings:

Concrete guidance on how to score the program/project on an ordinal response scale common to all indicators. This is in the form of a description (or a list of attributes) of how the program/project might look to merit a particular rating. Given the huge variety of contexts in which this framework could be used, this is only indicative as it is unlikely that the description will exactly match the example being evaluated.

Guidance is offered on how to assess an indicators at to the level of achievement, ranging from low to high.

None
Low
Medium
High
Not Applicable

The user guide should be read in conjunction with the accompanying paper on Environmental Democracy and Climate Change Adaptation (Greene, 2023).

CAUTION: The assessment framework will require the user to make some subjective judgements (backed by evidence). This means that different people may reasonably disagree when rating a program on any given indicator. For best results, assign a small team of people to assess the program individually and then encourage triangulation through open discussion of the results. This should encourage sharing of perspectives and expertise, particularly necessary for applying a whole of society approach to the assessment and exploration of possible improvements.

THE PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS

Participation Pillar

Principle 1:
Commitment to Participation

Vision

Indicator:
To what extent does the program design understand the aim of citizen participation as citizen empowerment?

Rationale:
Empowering citizens to make decisions and set their own agendas and priorities is itself an effective adaptation strategy, and it is a necessary condition of distributional and procedural justice (IPCC, 2022). Citizen participation should ideally play a transformative role in the program design, shifting power away from international donors and national actors to the citizens and communities most affected by the impacts of climate change. Participation should give expression to the right of citizens and stakeholders to decide on, design, modify, evaluate and reshape the climate adaptation actions, interventions and investments that affect them. The degree of citizen participation in governance falls on a continuum of engagement ranging from cynical manipulation of citizens by elites ('non-participation') to the fullest expression of self-determination and autonomy through political empowerment ('citizen power') - see Figures 1 and 2. This indicator explores the program's vision for participation and measures where it falls on this continuum. It answers the question: what's the real purpose of citizen participation in the program design?

Ratings:

Low:
Participation is mentioned by the program foundation documents but its role is very limited. Its purpose may simply be to 'extract' information from citizens and/or manage community relations so that project actors can implement externally designed, top-down interventions without organised opposition from the citizens and the community. Alternatively, citizen participation may feature in the program design simply to satisfy donor requirements – a nominal, tick-box exercise.

Medium:
The program design has a vision of citizen participation somewhere between steps 3 and 6 on Arstein's ladder, corresponding to Instrumental/Representative in White's typology. The program agenda and priorities may still be largely framed and led by external actors or at the centre, but the instrumental value of meaningful partnership with citizens, communities and local stakeholders is fully recognised, as is its importance for sustainability. The program is upwardly accountable to donors and national level actors (e.g. government ministries), but also incorporates elements of downward accountability to citizens and local actors.

High:
The program design prioritises the deepest form of citizen participation ('citizen control', Arnstein's steps 7-8) and establishes an institutional and operational framework to enable a demand-driven, downwardly accountable, citizen-led program cycle. The design expects that the program's vision, objectives and decisions at all levels will be driven by citizens, their representatives and civil society stakeholders through a transparent process of engagement and negotiation, with a flexible and responsive feedback mechanism that facilitates engagement between different administrative levels.

Figure 1: Arnstein's "ladder of citizen participation"

Source: Arnstein, S. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 35(4), 216–224.

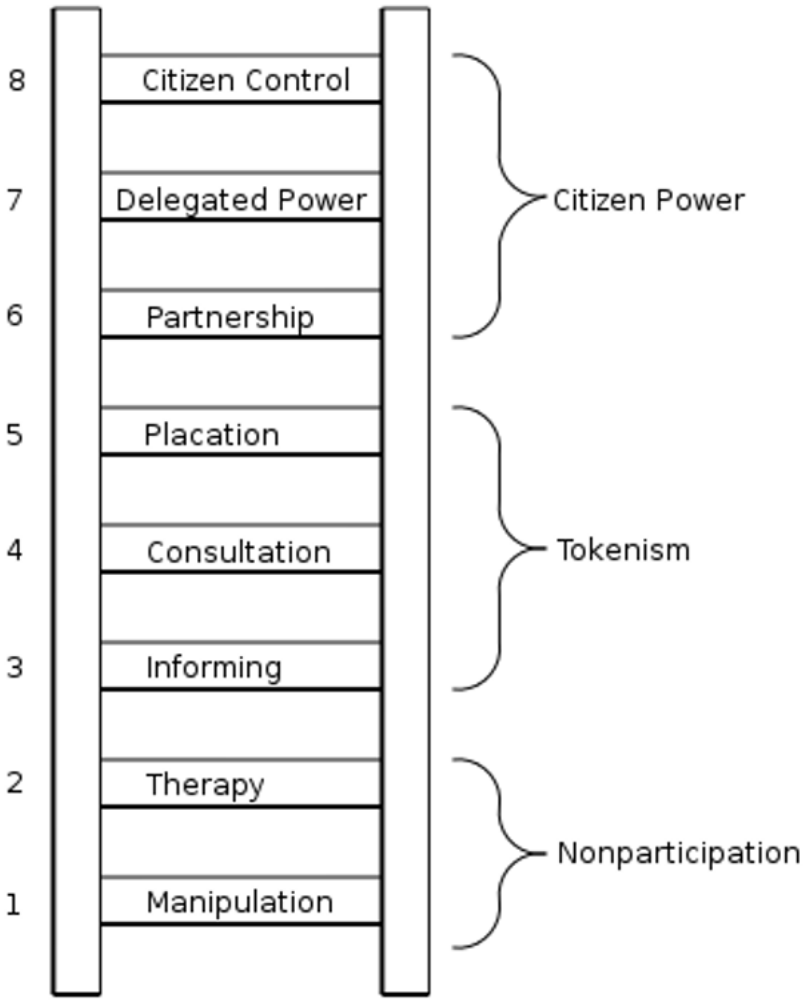

Figure 2: White's typology

Source: Sarah White (1996): Depoliticising development: the uses and abuses of participation. Development in Practice. Vol.6

Form	Top-Down	Bottom-Up	Function
Nominal	Legitimation	Inclusion	Display
Instrumental	Efficiency	Cost	Means
Representative	Sustainability	Leverage	Voice
Transformative	Empowerment	Empowerment	Means/End

Guidance for program design (Vision)

- Identify the opportunities for engagement of climate vulnerable citizens throughout the project cycle - from the setting objectives through to planning, implementation and evaluation. Begin the process by identifying options at each stage for creating spaces for citizen leadership and decision making backed by technical support and training.
- For donors, this takes places before any funding has been issued, through objective setting for a business case or program. Engaging communities, potentially through country partners, might be necessary to co-design program outcomes that reflect local priorities. Doing so creates space for locally-led approaches that may incorporate support for customary natural resource management approaches and local knowledge that is often excluded.
- National policy processes may inform program intended outcomes, such as National Adaptation Plans, where they are judged to have been sufficiently participatory in their design. However, augmenting this by directly engaging communities and community representatives to shape specific program objectives and methods demonstrates a commitment to a transformative, democratic principles. This is particularly true in the context of changing climate contexts and highly regionalized impacts that require context specific consideration.
- For donors as well as implementing NGOs, getting this process right requires investment in processes that facilitate program or project design by hard to reach or marginalized groups. This might right require funding for interpreters, female facilitators, local language materials and training.
- Some foundations are pioneering locally led program design and decision making, establishing a board consisting of people from climate vulnerable communities around the world, with full decision-making power over the funds focus and grant making.
- Adaptation objectives are inherently political (Eriksen, 2015). There is no simple and "correct" route to long term resilience – different solutions will have winners and losers, positive as well as negative consequences and risks. A commitment to transformative application of environmental democracy principles will create space for different perspectives to find compromise and opportunities for collaboration.
- A further consideration to facilitate participatory approaches is to consider how the organization – particular donors and their government partners with convening power – can facilitate collaborative action through a whole of society approach. Bringing together multiple expertise and perspectives can reduce the risk of maladaptation and encourage innovative approaches.

Resourcing

Indicator:

To what extent are participatory processes and/or institutions in the program adequately resourced (given the program design)?

Rationale:

The program must be adequately resourced to achieve its vision of citizen participation - at all levels of the program.

Even if the program design envisages participation as nominal or limited (a rating of 'Low' on the previous indicator), there should still be adequate funding to employ competent consultants/trained personnel to engage with citizens and communities in a professional and systematic manner.

If the aim of citizen participation is more ambitious, there must be sufficient funding to cover the costs associated with citizen engagement processes (meetings, elections, etc.), citizen communication (community radio, text messaging, social media) and institutions (travel, operational costs, liaison with other project actors etc.). Citizens will most probably need to be supported by technical program support actors who can provide capacity building, training and close technical advice and support with administration, finance, logistics, operations, workshop facilitation and technical design and implementation. If these are local government actors, they will themselves need to have sufficient capacity to perform this function; the program may benefit from partnering with civil society actors who have the necessary expertise in working with communities.

Ratings:

Low:
There is little awareness of the real cost of supporting the program's vision of citizen participation (see previous indicator). Very little budget is set aside and/or estimated costs bear little relation to real costs. If the program design expects participation to lead to empowerment, citizens are given a mandate they are unable to execute. Local technical support actors have little or no capacity to establish and maintain participatory processes/institutions or to provide the necessary guidance to communities.

Medium:
The program budget includes resources enough for local actors to facilitate adequate participatory processes such as workshops or focus groups throughout design, planning, implementation and MEL of the program or project. However, funds to ensure high quality interpreters or to ensure people from often marginalized groups can fully participate are limited or uncertain. Funds are made available for capacity building of local partners on participatory processes. However, these sums are established to deliver a set number of trainings within a set timeframe rather than on guaranteeing a quality outcome. There is little room for further training if it is necessary.

High:
The program budget and operational set up reflects a realistic assessment of the resources required to set up and maintain participatory processes/institutions at all levels of the program, providing sufficient contingency to respond to unexpected events. This covers the operational costs of participation in addition to any capacity building and technical support that citizens may require to take the lead on program decision making. This support can be provided by partnerships with civil society organisations and NGOs, in addition to local government.

Guidance for program design (Resourcing)

- Assessment of the costs of facilitating meaningful community participation across different aspects of the program are an important first step. Establishing institutions within a program or project that facilitate participants to explore complex issues and make decisions requires consideration of any capacity building needed, costs of travel and accommodation for potential multi-day meetings, as well as compensation for the time of participants who in some cases may be delaying investment in their existing livelihoods. The implication is that budgets are necessary for program or project design stages as well as for implementation.

- Local CSOs may be able to facilitate and support this community engagement better than a larger, more distant donor or international NGO can. Funding CBO's as connections may be a useful way to build their own experience while enabling donors to access parts of communities that are usually inaccessible.

- Facilitating active participation also requires efforts to invest in communication about projects and programs and to facilitate feedback for further consideration. Radio shows, local language communication, WhatsApp updates, all can help to ensure there is enough knowledge across a target group to enable greater local ownership and awareness of processes within the program.

Principle 2:
Devolution and Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity

Indicator:

To what extent is the principle of subsidiarity recognised in the program design (and implemented in practice)?

Rationale

Subsidiarity is the principle that decisions should be taken at the lowest appropriate level of governance. The rationale is that people most affected by an issue should have the final say in shaping the response to it; for adaptation, this allows strategies to be tailored to very diverse and dynamic local contexts (Patel et al, 2020; Steinbech et al 2022). Subsidiary is a key tenet of the Locally Led Adaptation Principles (Soanes et al, 2019). While subsidiarity does not by itself commit the program to greater citizen participation and democratic accountability[5], it is a necessary condition for it.

The term 'lowest appropriate level of governance' requires a little further clarification.

Firstly, the 'lowest' level will vary significantly according to context. If we are discussing levels of government administration (as is often the case with adaptation projects), the lowest level will be mandated by legislation, statute or constitution. However, when considering environmental democracy there are also an array of other non-government actors involved in local governance that may also qualify as relevant decision-making spaces for an adaptation program. This includes social movements, traditional resource management groups, urban street or block committees, youth/women's savings groups and other expressions of civic society that operate at levels below local government.

Secondly, the subsidiarity principle refers to the 'appropriate lowest level.' There may be cases where taking decisions at the lowest level would not lead to the most effective and equitable governance outcomes. Examples of this would include situations where there are significant spill-over or transboundary effects[6], where ecosystems or landscapes need to be administered as a unit, where an intervention may only be possible through integrated planning at a higher scale of operation, where the impact of an intervention is demonstrably greater through management at a higher scale, or where there are insufficient resources or capacity to conduct decision making at the lowest level (Garrick, 2018). In such cases, decisions need to be taken at higher levels or through horizonal co-governance arrangements between different bodies at the same level. Deciding which level is 'appropriate' is to some extent subjective.[7]

Thirdly, the fact that a final decision is best taken at a specific level does not mean that lower levels should be excluded from the decision-making process. Quite the opposite: every effort should be made to consult them wherever possible, and to represent these interests in the final decision making forums.

Ratings:

Low:
This indicator would be rated 'None' or 'Low' in the case of a pure top-down system, where all program decisions are taken centrally at the national level or international level and cascaded down to lower levels for implementation and monitoring or evaluation against centrally agreed standards. This could happen, for example, where a program is being administered by government agencies against a backdrop of a centralised or imperfectly decentralised administration.

Medium:
The indicator would be rated 'Medium' where lower levels of governance are systematically engaged in all most aspects of a project's activity on an equal footing with higher level institutions: budgets and decision making are genuinely decentralised downwards. However, higher level institutions retain a significant degree of control over decision making at the lower levels. This power can take the form of framing the program objectives, focus areas (e.g. sectors) and budget flows, together with retaining a degree of control (and the possibility of veto) over the decisions made.

High:
The indicator would be rated 'High' where the program clearly prioritises decision making at the local level, except where there is a demonstrable case for a different governance structure (with reference a limited range of acceptable exemptions, open to appeal). The institutions at the 'lowest appropriate level' lead on decision making and have full discretion to determine budget allocations and intervention areas according to their own priorities. Where final decisions must be taken at higher levels, meaningful consultation is conducted with lower levels and there is downwards accountability.

Guidance for program design (Subsidiarity)

- Identify the spatial scale of decisions likely to be made during the project. While smaller interventions may be focused within single Local Government Authorities – or even smaller jurisdictions - larger interventions may include spatial scales including that of the village, ward, district, commune, circle, water catchments and basins, customary territories, rangelands, regions or the entire country. Informal or customary understandings of spatial scale should be recognized also – for example, customary landscapes and territories as perceived by communities, urban street or block committees. These perceptions may more closely reflect the way in which people use, understand and manage resources in practice.

- The appropriate spatial scale for decisions may be dependent on factors including the nature of climate risks, which do not respect formal borders and jurisdictions, the nature of local existing established institutions and their relationships. For example, watershed management for climate risk cannot be left only to village level if the catchment includes multiple villages across multiple local government authorities – an institution that can integrate priorities across multiple villages is required to identify how funds should be prioritized and allocated.

- Where decisions are made for wider spatial scales, decision making processes should include representatives from multiple local geographies within the relevant areas. These might extend across country borders. Transparency of communication and decision processes between all actors is essential. This helps to ensure the program is designed with horizontal and vertical integration in mind. Horizontal and vertical integration integrates stakeholders at different spatial scales and hierarchies of planning, as well as ensuring multi sectoral and multi- stakeholder engagement. It attempts to keep stakeholders aligned and informed.

- Spatial planning vulnerability tools exist in various formats. One effective way to explore resource use over a wider area is Participatory Digital Resource Mapping, which uses open source mapping tools to identify and categorise resources and their use over time (Greene & Hesse, 2017). Technology free participatory methods can also be effective, such as Transect Walks and non-digital area mapping, although these are often lost and can be more easily misinterpreted.

Principle 3:
Representativeness and Inclusion

Legitimate participatory institutions

Indicator:

To what extent are steps taken to ensure that participatory processes and/or institutions (at all levels) offer adequate and fair representation of all citizens and stakeholders according to transparent rules, agreed with them in advance?

Rationale:

Participatory processes and/or dedicated representative institutions are the crux of citizen engagement, and, whatever their formal mandate in the program, it is essential that they have local legitimacy and are perceived to be fair by the relevant citizens and communities.

This indicator recognises that 'democratic arrangements can be many and diverse, with plenty of scope for innovation and integration of non-westernised perspectives' (Greene, 2023). It relates to the choice of 1) specific institutional or procedural form that citizen engagement will take at different levels and at different stages in the program cycle (e.g. village assemblies; elected executive bodies, community interest groups or multistakeholder forums) and 2) the process for determining eligibility to participate in such processes, or represent the community in these institutions.

If traditional/preferred governance structures and civic spaces are ignored or replaced, the program runs the risk of undermining the legitimacy of the entire engagement process, making it either irrelevant or redundant as other more established institutions take precedence. Moreover, if the procedure for selecting participants/representatives is opaque (or left entirely at the discretion of the program staff or to program actors with little guidance as to how to ensure the process is sufficiently inclusive) it leaves the citizen engagement process open to the twin risks of elite capture or manipulation for political/economic ends.

Ratings:

Low:
The institutional forms and composition of the citizen engagement process are determined externally by the program designers, with very little consideration of existing traditional governance or decision-making structures, norms of governance and/or patterns of authority that are customary in the community.

Medium:
The program is sensitive to existing traditional governance or decision-making structures and incorporates these into program participatory processes/institutions through co-design with local communities. The terms of engagement are be agreed with citizens in a transparent and consultative process at the beginning of the program, with the possibility of occasional review and refinement if the program duration permits.

High:
Citizens and stakeholders self-organise, taking the lead in deciding upon their preferred institutional/procedural forms and the process of citizen eligibility and/or selection. For example, this might take place where a grass roots organisation has applied for climate finance and is leading on the design of a particular program (see for example the Huairou Comission Community Resilience Fund) [Greene, 2023; Huairou Commission, 2021].

One risk of delegating the design of the participatory process to citizen bodies entirely is that existing power dynamics and entrenched

inequalities may lead to processes/institutions that reproduce the exclusion of marginalised groups (e.g. women, young people, certain ethnic minorities). The need to ensure inclusion in participatory procedures is therefore considered in the next indicator.

Guidance for program design (Legitimate participatory institutions)

- The conditions for the legitimacy of different institutions to make decisions may vary depending on local histories, cultures and politics. In some areas, formal government institutions will have far less power and influence over citizens lives that information or customary institutions, which may also be male or tribally dominated. Transformative approaches need to balance these realities while finding compromises that create equitable and respected decision-making spaces.

- Finding the right balance will require consultation with communities in each context to find where the limitations are and where boundaries can be challenged. Local partners with knowledge of the context is likely to be essential to this process. Particularly where local institutions are male dominated, consideration of how to create forums for women's voices to be heard and acted upon is important.

- Legitimacy of decision-making institutions, particularly citizen-led ones, may also hinge on how information and meeting outcomes are communicated, disseminated and established. For example, people with disabilities may need additional support to engage with discussions, and enough information needs to be shared in advance, in accessible formats, for people to plan their participation and engagement. Technology can help withs some of these issues, but may not be accessible to more vulnerable people to the same extent, particularly in rural areas. Technology is rarely a replacement for establishment of genuine inter and intra-communal institutions to discuss hazards, risks and local priorities.

- Consider how the convening power of being a funding or well recognized organization might facilitate a collaborative or whole-of-society approach. Doing so will enable people to feel they are represented while facilitating decisions that cross sectoral boundaries.

- Types of decision making that work may , vary from place to place. Some community-led institutions may prefer a consensus approach to decision making drawing on wider discussions with different groups, while others may prefer a representative democratic process. The Dema fund in Brazil supports Amazonian social movements over a wide area. They have several funding windows, each with its own governing body, representation and rules relevant to the population in focus (Soanes et.al, 2017).

Addressing Structural Inequalities

Indicator

To what extent are specific measures taken to overcome the effect of entrenched structural inequalities upon disadvantaged social groups, empowering them to participate meaningfully in climate resilient development processes, and ensuring that their interests are included and protected at all stages of the project cycle? (procedural justice for the structurally disadvantaged).

Rationale

Individual citizens are situated within a complex matrix of social relationships between groups of unequal power and influence. Entrenched structural inequalities can manifest themselves in many ways: e.g. through formal laws and informal social rules, socio-cultural and gender norms, segregation of various kinds, and exclusion of particular social groups from certain economic activities and/or decision-making spaces. These structural disadvantages can both increase the likelihood that an individual will be affected by climate risk (exposure) and that the individual will be harmed by it (vulnerability).

The particular social groups facing discrimination will vary by context, but among those most often affected are women, young people, the infirm, the disabled, ethnic minorities and people without resources. These groups may be associated with specific customary livelihood roles and responsibilities, with particular economic activities, or live/work in specific locations - any of which can result in a very different climate risk profile to people belonging to other social groups. But marginalization or active exclusion leads to limited access to and/or control over the resources that they need and use every day.

Often, they are systematically excluded from the most important community decision making places and spaces – including those potentially associated with a participatory adaptation projects. Consequently, their distinctive climate risk priorities and interests may go unrecognised and they may benefit only tangentially from program benefits - or such benefits may be appropriated by others.

Adaptation programs need to recognise and respond to these structural inequalities at each stage of the project cycle. They must also consider how they contribute to long term changes in governance, public perception or information that will actively reduce exclusion and marginalization.

One of the ways this can be done is to make appropriate modifications to the participatory processes/institutions in the program (this meeting the needs of procedural justice). Best practice dictates that this strategy should be researched, co-designed and implemented together with citizens and communities as part of the process of designing legitimate participatory institutions and processes.

Transformational change involves a lasting reconfiguration of power relationships within the community, and this means including both the powerful and the powerless in the conversation. This requires commitment and buy-in from across the community over a sustained period of time. Ideally, the program will work together with civil society organisations that have long standing links to the community and a deep and nuanced understanding of evolving community dynamics, able to continue the work after a specific project or program ends.

Ratings:

Low:
The program will likely:

- Show only a basic awareness of the presence of structural inequalities and patterns of discrimination in the areas where the program operates.
- Have a limited understanding of how these inequalities translate into distinctive and elevated patterns of exposure and vulnerability to climate risk for disadvantaged social groups.
- Use broad, generic categories imported from outside the program context (e.g. women, young people) and propose generalised solutions for addressing barriers to participation, with little real understanding of community dynamics.

Medium:
The program will likely:

- Clearly identify social groups (e.g. indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, women, caste, class, etc.) that suffer from structural discrimination in the different contexts the program operates (recognitional justice), e.g. through a stakeholder analysis conducted at multiple levels.
- Demonstrate an understanding that members of disadvantaged social groups usually have different and distinctive climate risk profiles from other community members.
- Demonstrate an understanding that structural inequalities of power create barriers to participation in program processes by citizens who belong to these groups.
- Seek to understand barriers to participation and differentiated climate risk, for example through the sensitive use of participatory tools (such as power analyses or gender analyses) by suitably trained experts.
- Devise strategies for over-coming barriers to participation, for example, by striving for gender balance in representative institutions, or by amending participatory processes so that marginalised voices can be heard (e.g. through the use of separate focus groups for women, older people or ethnic minorities), or by providing specific advocacy training and capacity building for members of disadvantaged groups.

High:
The program will include may of the features outlined in Medium, but there will be a commitment to a deeper understanding of the nature of the structural inequalities and entrenched discrimination faced by disadvantaged social groups. The program will seek to build upon and complement locally-led processes of transformational social change aimed at reconfiguring power relationships over the longer term.

For example, it may:

- Demonstrate an understanding of how discrimination arising from membership of multiple disadvantaged social groups can overlap and aggregate (e.g. poor + woman + older) to create distinctive patterns of exclusion and climate risk (i.e. intersectionality).
- Establish partnerships with civil society organisations that have long standing links to the local communities and a deep and nuanced understanding of evolving community dynamics.
- Work with disadvantaged groups (and the wider community) to find ways to represent and protect their interests and climate priorities in a sensitive and locally appropriate manner across the range of program participatory processes (procedural justice), with a view to bringing about long-term transformational change.
- Introduce a formal review and vetting process to ensures that project priorities and activities take into account the specific climate risks of marginalised and minority groups (e.g. a compulsory review panel prior to final approval)
- Ensure that outcomes for marginalised groups are included in MEL processes (distributional justice).

Guidance for program design (Addressing Structural Inequalities)

- Identify structural changes that could secure inclusion of marginalized groups at different levels or create changes in patterns of access and use of various resources. These might relate to governance of resources at the most local level, such as that of water or forests, or to local cooperatives and savings groups, but could also apply at higher spatial scales of planning. It is often through existing governance of resources that patterns of exclusion or vulnerability are reinforced. For example, rules on who can access water sources and at what times of day, have a significant impact on women and the time left available for productive activities. Programs that understand and target specifically the barriers to inclusion are more likely to be effective in addressing them.

- Structural inequalities are often rooted in long held cultural practices and beliefs that may be beyond the time and capacity of one project or one organization to address. Ideally, projects should seek to offer patient and predictable resources to support local organisations who have been and will continue to be engaged in these kinds of approaches in partnership and with the legitimacy of their own communities. Care is needed in selecting appropriate organisations who genuinely represent local groups, rather than the interests of more educated or urban elites (Hodgson, 2017)

- Build flexibility into the design of the program to take advantage of windows of opportunity where leaps forward can be made. Flexibility requires the ability for funding to be reallocated from already planned activities once local actors identify key moments. Knowledge of such windows for change also requires sources of information that can inform project stakeholders. These might policy or institutional processes, moments of particular climate stress or opportunity, or emergence and attention on new technologies.

- Initial program design processes must carry out activities to understand profiles of vulnerability and specific priorities created by patterns of marginalization. A sound understanding of the nature of heterogenous target communities and how there are vulnerable to different risks is essential before developing interventions using an inclusive approach. Recognition of intersectionality is important, as it helps to identify how specific identities that people have such as their gender, caste or age, may combine together to create specific patterns of vulnerability and marginalization and therefore specific needs when in relation to resilience building.

- Analysis should also include power analysis to understand relations between different groups in the community, to identify the risks of elite capture and indeed circumstances where engagement of elites may have positive outcomes (Kahn et.al, 2022).

- Many tools exist to explore power relations exercised through communities and through livelihoods. These include:

- The Pamoja Voices Tools (Greene, 2019)

- Care Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (Care, 2019)

- Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis

- A compendium of tools to explore gender responsive and intersectional approaches by Bastick & Risler (2022) can be found here: https://www.climatexchange.org.uk/media/5476/cxc-tools-for-gender-responsive-and-conflict-sensitive-climate-programming-june-2022.pdf

Principle 4:
Participatory Program Operations at the Local Level

Program Priorities and Strategic Objectives

Indicator

To what extent are citizens and stakeholders involved in setting the overall program agenda, priorities and focus intervention areas in their local area?

Rationale

Adaptation responses need to be tailored to local context. This is critical in ensuring that the program objectives match the actual climate risks experienced by the community, as well as the aspirations, needs and priorities of the citizens and stakeholders who live there.

This indicator measures the degree to which local citizens have a say in deciding overall program agenda and medium/long term priorities[8] in the areas where they practice their livelihoods.

Ratings

Low:
The program determines the medium/long term priorities of the local project area with little or no consultation with the local community. For example, project actors may use a top-down system for determining these specific priorities, perhaps using high-level 'growth' focused, national macro-economic targets that don't reflect local priorities or that implicitly marginalise indigenous/local production systems. These high-level targets are then used to determine 'appropriate' corresponding local level assigned to local program areas. Where participatory process do take place, they will be 'nominal' (White's typology) and 'non-participatory/tokenistic' (Arnstein's ladder) – largely an exercise in box-ticking.

Medium:
Medium/long term adaptation objectives are reviewed and prioritised by citizens through participatory institutions or processes. While these processes may go well beyond 'tokenistic' forms of participation, the process is still externally driven and largely framed by an agenda determined outside the community (e.g. limited in scope or restricted to specific sectors or areas). Citizens may be presented with (or strongly encouraged to select) a menu of possible choices which may not reflect the lived realities of climate risk, local priorities or preferred future development pathways. Finally, other program actors reserve the right to modify or adjust the priorities decided through this process in accordance with national or international program frameworks.

High:
The highest form of citizen participation is transformative, placing the selection of overall program priorities at the local level fully in the control of citizens; program objectives therefore match the community's own vision of its preferred future given the constraints of future climate risk. Citizens and community stakeholder groups lead[9] on all aspects of this process, requesting advice, information or resources from other program actors as needed. In making these decisions, citizens and community stakeholder groups draw on a range of sources of information, including their knowledge and understanding of local livelihood and production systems, their lived experience of climate change and climate risks and impacts, and climate information summaries and scenarios prepared by the project. Other project actors can only override their choices for a limited set of valid[10] reasons, laid out in advance in the program documents.

Guidance for Program Design (Program Priorities and Strategic Objectives)

- Even though the language of participation has spread widely across the development, adaptation and resilience space, the design and objective setting of the majority of programs remains top down. Business cases and design documents are developed in donor or INGO offices, with prospective grantees seeking to fit their own ideas into the discourse and objectives of the donor. This might be sectoral or geographical limitations or focusing on economic over environmental benefits. This system undermines local leadership and is potentially maladaptive. An excellent hypothetical example of the pitfalls is given in Rahman (2023), in which an INGO intending to deliver Locally-Led Adaptation ends up delivering a business as usual and unsatisfactory project.

- Applying this principle will have different considerations for different actors. Donors should consider investing – as described earlier – in program objective shaping with target communities, providing spaces for different views to surface and creating opportunities for compromise and shared ownership over the program. This must happen before sub-grants are made.

- If the intention is to sub-grant to smaller organisations, providing funds to enable them to co-design projects collaboratively with communities to then submit for funding may be more effective than a traditional grant application process. This helps to ensure that local organisations with limited cashflow but in-depth connections to local knowledge and the communities that hold it can develop locally led proposals for funding.

Choice of Interventions and Investments

Indicator

To what extent are citizens and stakeholders involved in identifying, design and selecting specific intervention activities and investments in their local area?

Rationale

This indicator measures the degree to which citizens and local stakeholders are free to identify, design and select the specific intervention activities and investments that the program will make in their local area.

Once a program has decided its strategic priorities and intervention focus over the Medium: and longer term in the local area (see above), planning must focus on the specific, concrete interventions, activities and investments that are needed to achieve them; when completed, these are measurable as project outputs.[11] Research into good practice in adaptation and environmental democracy suggests that such decisions are best made by citizens through local participatory processes and/or institutions. The greatest degree of autonomy involves informed and authoritative decision making by citizens working to a known budget over which they have full discretionary control.

Ratings:

Low:
Here, the selection of program activities, interventions and investments is decided mainly decided by other program actors (be they international, national, sub-national or even local, e.g. technical teams) without reference to local participatory processes/institutions. Citizen participation is not considered an important input: where it takes place, it is not systematic and may be limited to anecdotal reports or informal dialogue with (probably unaccountable) local brokers or intermediaries – with the aim of facilitating action decided elsewhere.

Medium:
Citizens and communities are systematically involved in the selection of interventions in the local area through formalised participatory processes/institutions. However, the scope of their choices is restricted to a limited menu of activity/investment options; for example, choices may be limited to a specific sector or feature predetermined solutions and interventions which have been already been decided upon elsewhere. There may be some limited scope for negotiation over design features and tailoring to local context. However, other project actors (horizontal or vertical) have the discretion to to veto or adjust citizen choices without further consultation.

High:
Citizens and local stakeholders are able to make informed, authoritative decisions about the specific interventions/investments they would like for the indicator should be rated 'High.' In this case, regularly functioning participatory institutions enable citizens to freely propose, select and decide on the activities and investment that will be made in the local area. While they may have additional options to choose from shared by technical experts, a high level of democratic practice in support of adaptation would facilitate their free choice to enhance traditional adaptation strategies, apply locally relevant technology, or experiment with approaches new to their locality. For the greatest empowerment, citizens should have full discretionary control over a known budget for the local area, established in advance - a practice known as 'participatory budgeting' (Bartocci et al, 2022) This encourages both agency and ownership by promoting a thorough understanding of the opportunity costs and trade-offs of particular decisions – helping them to prioritise with a realistic understanding of the available resources and to bring local knowledge of context to influence the decision making process.

Guidance for Program Design (Choice of Interventions and Investments)

- Many projects are unable to achieve high levels of environmental democracy because they continue to rely on feedback or consultation in identifying interventions rather than on investing in processes that facilitate the integration of local knowledge and local priorities and active leadership of decision making by people affected by those decisions. Relying only on stakeholder consultation will leave projects far more vulnerable to sampling limitations, elite capture or more limited information. Outcomes are less likely to bring systemic change.

- Consider processes that will enable community representatives to control their own budget for both engaging with their own communities and then deciding how project funds should be spent on building resilience. This may indeed be with the technical support of an NGO or government, but ultimately handing over control of spending represents the most participatory and democratic approach. The County Climate Change Funds established in Kenya seek to facilitate this, establishing sub-county level (ward) decision making institutions with control over budgets. The funds also sought to ensure that committees knew their budgets in advance, enabling them to make more effective prioritization.

- Systems can be set up that facilitate downward transparency and accountability– for example through social audits, requirements for community representatives to report activities to local level assemblies or groups, and the possibility for reporting to higher levels to explore expenditure risks (see below). As always, context matters – the % of budget allocated to different layers (i.e village, ward, or district), and the % that is budgeted in a participatory way should be discussed locally. The nature of participation might also change – in some cities, technology has created for a for public discussion. Elsewhere, in person meetings are required.

- Transparency of resources and decision-making processes is important to make participatory budgeting work. Participatory approaches ensure that information is widely disseminated using radio, traditional leaders or other contextually appropriate formats, and that feedback can be heard and responded to.

- Tools and resources on participatory budgeting can be found in detail here: https://www.peoplepowered.org/participatory-budgeting

Management of Implementation

Indicator:

To what extent are citizens and stakeholders involved in managing and overseeing the implementation of adaptation activities as part of the project?

Rationale:

Once specific actions, activities, and/or investments in the local area have been decided upon, they must be implemented. In addition to physical infrastructure, these interventions may include capacity building, reform of local institutions, advocacy programs in addition to the construction/rehabilitation of physical infrastructure, etc. In the case of physical infrastructure, technical design documents will be drawn up, bills of quantities devised, contracts awarded and construction will begin.

Meaningful citizen participation in all these processes (e.g. procurement, financial sign-off, quality/performance monitoring, service delivery as well as and contractor management) helps to create a sense of ownership and can ensure more effective and more impactful interventions. Local communities are ideally placed to direct and manage the implementation phase, bringing to bear their deep understanding of their local context and their own priorities. Community scrutiny and bottom-up transparency builds downward accountability – helping to address donor concerns about fiduciary risk.

Ratings:

Low:
In this case, citizens and communities would only be minimally involved in the final stages of the design process, the tendering and contacting process, and management/oversight of program actions, activities and/or infrastructure at the local level. Consultation might be restricted to anecdotal or unstructured feedback on contractor performance, or the most cursory community engagement (e.g. based on communication with one or two (probably unaccountable) members of the local community).

Medium:
The citizens and communities are systematically consulted at each stage of the process through participatory processes/ institutions, but this engagement is generally 'after the fact' and reflective rather than pro-active and empowering. Citizen engagement will typically be to ratify decisions already taken or shaped by other program actors (at various levels). Communities may be engaged by others as part of the implementation oversight/ monitoring functions. There may be some opportunities for amending or challenging the choice of contractor/service provider, flexibly making design changes in response to specific local conditions, and/or calling to account poor or substandard performance. However, these opportunities will be occasional and other program actors responsible for implementing will have final discretion as to how to respond.

High:
Here citizens and communities are empowered to act as fully autonomous program implementation agents in their own right, responsible for providing oversight and management of the delivery of adaptation programs, including investments, trainings etc. With relevant technical support and training from other actors (as needed), they are able to: design, lead and run procurement processes; manage, monitor (and sanction) local contractors following an appraisal of the quality of their work; amend design specifications in response to local knowledge and emerging community concerns; reflect on the overall performance of the contractors, and sign off on monitoring activities once implementation is complete.

Guidance for Program Design (Management of Implementation)

- A locally led approach to management of implementation brings citizens into positions of influence during the implementation process. The nature of this will depend on the nature of the project – but enabling citizens to monitor the quality of service delivery and report poor performance, or to monitor the construction of infrastructure to ensure that materials are properly purchased and used are both good examples. Budget will be needed to ensure citizens can play this role. This may be for regular meetings to review implementation, petrol or funds for travel to particular locations, or accommodation to stay the night where necessary.

- Consider how community monitors will have public authority to ask difficult questions of service providers. Capabilities may need to be built to enable them to ask questions about materials or bills of quantity. It may also need to be written into contracts with service providers that they are subject to community monitoring, with technical support of NGOs or government if necessary. This process has been shown to be effective in reducing corruption risk and speeding up construction processes (Greene, 2019).

- Effectively communicating project progress and enabling comment and feedback is key. Technology can support this process, through, for example, creating public, smartphone accessible platforms that monitor progress of service delivery. However, technology driven processes bring new sets of problems related to maintenance, trust in the information, accessibility and smart phone penetration and use capacity, so traditional means of disseminating information should not be ignored.

- Consider identifying champions within the community who can channel information about project implementation and collect it from target groups.

- An important question is whether those responsible for monitoring implementation are the same as those making decisions about funding allocations. For example, if institutions are established to allocate funds towards local adaptation projects, it's not clear if they should also be responsible for monitoring quality. Independent groups may have less conflict of interest – however this will depend on context.

- Ultimately, intervention design must consider how those offering the intervention will be held accountable or at least answerable for decision made. This also includes donors or program managers.

Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation

Indicator:

To what extent are citizens and stakeholders involved in monitoring, evaluating and learning from the performance of program interventions?

Rationale:

Adaptation monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) poses particular challenges because of the uncertainty of climate futures and the longer time frames over which outcomes need to be measured to gauge success (Brooks and Fisher, 2014), Indeed, newly emerging climate hazards can make previously successful adaptation maladaptive by changing fundamental conditions of the context. To address this dynamic climate risk, the most adaptive and effective MEL should be continuous and institutionalised into existing systems to continue beyond the end of the program (Schipper, 2020). Good adaptation may be best understood as a continual process of adaptative management to uncertain future conditions, informed by regular learning and feedback mechanisms (Steinbech at al, 2022).

Monitoring, evaluation and learning is an also important part of ensuring distributive justice in adaptation interventions. Understanding how the costs and benefits from adaptation programs are distributed among citizens is central to ensure that socially disadvantaged and excluded people are being reached.

Citizens and communities are particularly well placed to contribute to adaptation MEL (Coger et al., 2021). In addition to having first-hand experience of the latest local trends in climate change, they have direct experience and knowledge of the full range of intervention outcomes (whether these are intended or not). Involving citizens in establishing the very benchmarks and criteria used to define successful adaptation ensures that programs are gauged against locally meaningful priorities, rather than ones that are set externally. They can evaluate outcomes against existing program theories of change[12], critiquing the program logic by highlighting undesirable and unexpected outcomes or development pathways, especially emerging issues involving maladaptation or increased climate vulnerability e.g. transferred vulnerability (Erikson et al 2021).

Ensuring communities are at the heart of shaping theories of change, identifying indicators, shaping and implementing MEL plans therefore shows a commitment to both more effective adaptation and deepening democratic practice.

Ratings:

Low:

- The program MEL plan (e.g. data collection methods, indicators of successful adaptation, standards of program success) is designed outside of the local context, for example by an external consultant or a project actor at the national or international level.
- Communities are only involved as passive sources of information, e.g via standardised surveys administered by external enumerators or very limited qualitative engagement to assess the quality of program outputs.
- Learning and knowledge is extracted from communities and concentrated at the centre – not shared among citizens.
- The MEL plan is timebound and limited to the lifetime of the program or project ('projectised'); it is internal to the program and it is not institutionalised into wider, lasting MEL processes that can measuring the long-term impact of interventions in a dynamic risk context.

Medium:

- The MEL plan is developed with qualitative and quantitative community consultation, but performance indicators are ultimately determined by the donor or implementing institutions.
- Data collection for monitoring is sporadic rather than continuous and triggered by project implementers rather than through empowered community engagement.
- Some efforts to institutionalise MEL tools and tracking takes place, but few incentives are established to maintain their use beyond the project. Learning is shared with communities and stakeholders, but little action is taken to ensure it is integrated into future activities.

High:

- Citizens have a pivotal role in designing and implementing the project MEL plan (indicators, standards of success etc.).
- Program participants and beneficiaries can contribute directly to data collection through information and communications tools (ICT) such as mobile phones, social media and bespoke digital platforms ('crowdsourcing').
- Assessments may involve appropriate mixed methods approaches (quantitative and qualitative techniques) and track outcomes for (locally defined) socially disadvantaged and excluded groups, ideally with an intersectional lens.
- Social audits may be used to conduct citizen driven, regular, structured reviews of the performance of program actors and institutions.
- Social learning, knowledge exchange platforms and peer to peer learning approaches to foster decentralised citizen communities of practice.
- To capture instances of displaced vulnerability, program evaluations are not restricted to people in the immediate locality of the program; they are integrated into assessment frameworks at wider scales of operation.
- The MEL plan complements and augments the capacity of existing MEL institutions outside the program – enabling the learning to continue beyond the lifetime of the project and/or program.
- Citizen driven MEL feeds into adaptive learning in program planning at higher levels for subsequent project cycles.

Considerations for Intervention Design (Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation)

- Monitoring, evaluation and learning typically remains undervalued and extractive, rather than participatory and a necessary aspect of building climate resilient development systems. Prioritising MEL implies supporting systems for developing and communicating learning as well as ensuring that someone is accountable for acting on that learning.

- As should be clear by now, a participatory approach to MEL is preferred because it enables citizens to identify contextually relevant indicators of a successful intervention, is more likely to be pragmatic and sustained once the project ends, and enables citizens to learn directly about what works, what does not, and various consequences. Community based MEL tools and approaches include Tracking Adaptation and Measuring Development (IIED, 2014). An additional toolkit for considering MEL in programs includes Beauchamp et. Al (2020), which advises on MEL for climate resilient development more generally. Smaller organisations may consider guidance on the "Better Evaluation" website (2023)

- Learning is an important aspect of resilience and climate resilient development more generally. Evaluation is often hired out to external firms who carry out a thorough evaluation but with little time to return that learning to the community so they can put it into practice themselves. An environmental democracy approach will seek to actively communicate learning with all stakeholders, enabling them to process it and consider how it can be actioned in practice. The implication is that the evaluation cannot be the last thing that takes place in a project or program – time is needed to ensure funds are available to institutionalise that learning in practice.

- A question to consider is whether evaluation is internal or external. There is value in independent assessors applying various methodologies to explore mechanisms of change and unintended consequences as a result of a project, but these are unlikely to be replicated by project stakeholders in the near future. Community led approaches tend to be simpler but facilitate a process of experiential learning by community-based evaluators. Considering combining both types of approach may be helpful for robust evaluation and learning.

Principle 5:
Capacity and Legacy

Sustainable Participation

Indicator:

To what extent does the program leave a sustainable legacy of increased local capacity for meaningful citizen participation?

Rationale:

A good adaptation program will leave a lasting institutional legacy of better capacity for understanding climate risks and uncertainties, and enhanced citizen representation/ mobilisation and citizen/community-state communication13 (Steinbach et al., 2022). Time- bound project-based approaches typically give little thought to sustainability once project funding ends: institutions for community participation wither, capacities decline over time, and MEL processes for assessing the impact of investments/intervention come to an end.

Ratings:

Low:
If the program design is on the 'non-participation' end of Arnstein's ladder, external/ non-local consultants are brought in to manage community consultation (e.g. data collection) on a casual, one-off basis; climate risk assessments done with communities will be processed centrally to inform top-down project decision making. This does not build the capacity of local government actors, civil society organisations or citizens/communities. If the program design aspires to citizen empowerment, new participatory processes and/or institutions are created without reference to existing structures or stakeholders - creating a parallel but unsustainable system that cannot exist without project support.

Medium:
The program makes some efforts towards a sustainable legacy of participation, carrying out capacity building, providing participatory tools, and engaging with local stakeholders to encourage use of new approaches. Few incentives are explored or put in place to encourage long term use of such approaches. Participatory tools and techniques may be offered but are not practical or affordable in context and remain aspirational as to their use..

High:
The program is designed with sustainability and institutionalization in mind. The program is long enough to facilitate meaningful changes in the way local institutions facilitate citizen participation. Participatory processes/ institutions build upon existing models of citizen engagement and participation enshrined in national, local policy or endorsed by other national programs (including formalised processes of consultation or formal bodies and institutions habitually convened to represent stakeholder interests). The project builds the capacities of existing actors and traditional informal community governance structures – leaving in place a practical and affordable system for assessing and monitoring dynamic climate change risk and a sustainable institutional legacy for enhanced citizen participation and empowerment.

Considerations for program design (Sustainable Participation)

- Institutionalizing new behaviours, tools, approaches or governance standards takes significantly longer than is often anticipated. If funding is not available for a long enough period, consider whether this is a reasonable objective. Ideally, adaptation and resilience programs will run for long enough to be able to develop, test, assess and then learn enough to create impactful changes, but this is likely to take several years.

- Work with existing systems in country where possible. These may be formal institutions of government or informal customary institutions. Indeed, in some contexts governments themselves may have informal yet effective ways of engaging communities. If they have existed long before the beginning of a project, they are likely to continue long after it in some form. This means a focus on strengthening existing institutions over time with new capabilities is preferred over creation of parallel new structures which work temporarily but cannot be sustained. Scoping out such systems at the early stages of the project is an important first step, as well as taking a locally led approach to identify which to work with and in what ways. Local governments are often a first port of call, as they are at the centre of a wider devolution agenda and play many roles in linking local actors and facilitating development initiatives. Building their capabilities to understand the value of and enable participatory forms of governance and decision making, may be an important contribution.

- An exception may exist when significant changes are being made – such as through constitutional reform – that creates new long term institutions that can be shaped early on. The County Climate Change Funds in Kenya are one such example, taking advantage of renewed efforts toward devolution to work with and build capabilities of County and ward governments.

- As described in the section on MEL, integrating learning into existing systems is an important aspect of long-term capability development. A lasting legacy is one in which institutions appropriate and take ownership of new systems and processes, adapting them to their needs – with community input – based on what works and what does not in context.

Information (Transparency) Pillar

Background:

The second pillar of the framework concerns Information and Transparency. When assessing a climate adaptation program and the degree to which it deepens environmental democracy, transparency relates to the production and provision of information about:

- The program itself: its design, targeted actions, operations, funding flows and differentiated impacts. This information is essential to allow citizens to participate fully and meaningfully in program decision making. It is also essential for democratic, downward accountability and progress towards distributional justice – making it clear who is being targeted by the program, what is being done and what the differentiated outcomes are for different groups in the community (especially those facing the those facing greatest discrimination and social exclusion).
- Information about the current and future climate risks (in the short and longer term), and the range of adaptation options available to respond to them.

Transparent Information

Transparent Program Information

Indicator:

To what extent does the program establish an effective system for producing and delivering accessible program information in support of democratic accountability and distributional justice?

Rationale:

Transparency requires that citizens be able to access many kinds of information about the program in a timely fashion, in a format appropriate to their needs. Information needs to be provided as part of routine operations, but also on-demand in response to requests by citizens. This indicator assesses the range of information made available to citizens as well as its accessibility.

Types of program information:

There are many kinds of program information that citizens should be able to access in order to participate fully in decision making and to hold program actors to account. This list is illustrative, not exhaustive:

- Foundation documents for the program (e.g. constitution, statutory commitments, project design documents, operational manuals and guidelines, etc).
- Clear information on the governance arrangements, mandates of different project actors, lines of accountability and avenues of appeal.
- An organisational directory of the program, indicating key personnel together with contact details.

- A clear timetable of program cycle activities, events and milestones at different levels.
- Meeting reports for all project teams at different levels including agenda, decisions taken, with full minutes and details of participants present.
- Summaries with key informational inputs in advance of participatory activities by citizens and their institutions.
- Workshop or participatory process reports detailing agenda, activities, decisions taken and participants present.
- Clear financial information including:
  - Total available budget (both unallocated and targeted);
  - Financial allocation formulas, and actual financial flows by administrative levels and program actors;
  - Operational costs and administrative costs by project actors;
  - Details of expenditure on project activities, disaggregated by administrative level;
  - Fully audited financial reports satisfying local and international accounting requirements;
  - Other financial details.
- Implementation data, including:
  - Invitations to tender, selection critera and contracts awarded.
- Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation reports and knowledge sharing at different levels (program, project, etc.), including:
  - Theories of change/log-frames/intervention logic narratives;
  - Details of the indicators used and why selected;
  - Methodologies employed, possible limitations and biases;
  - Social audits;
  - Outcomes tracking and reporting for different social groups, particularly those most subject to discrimination and exclusion;
  - Peer-to-peer learning resources and networks.

Accessibility

Citizens and stakeholders affected by the program have different capacities, levels of education, life circumstances and experiences of marginalisation and oppression. This means that their ability to understand and access program information can vary immensely. Ideally, the program should consider potential barriers to understanding basic program documentation, routine program communications and updates, and information feeding into participatory processes. It should also put in place measures to overcome these.

For example, alternative communications and delivery formats can be considered, tailored to the level of literacy, local languages and formal education of citizens at local scales. In place of written text and official printed reports, this might include radio broadcasts, verbal reports or recorded messages at community meetings, posters featuring graphics to convey information, and videos featuring images and cartoons. Establishing community focal persons for the project (e.g. extension/outreach workers) can also help citizens to request, access and interpret information as and when they need it (on-demand access).

Ratings:

Low:
Little priority is given to availability and accessibility of project information. Foundation project documents may mention transparency, but there are no clear institutional mandates and no costed strategy for producing and distributing information in a systematic way. Some kinds of information (see list above) may be available through a limited number of channels (e.g. through project websites), but access may be limited, restricted or intermittent. The accessibility needs of different stakeholders are not considered and barriers to access by citizens are considerable.

Medium:
The program recognises the importance of transparency of information and the role it plays in downward accountability, effective participation and monitoring of differential impacts of the program on socially excluded and disadvantaged social groups. Most kinds of program information (see list above) are generated in some form, but standards of reporting may vary, and delivery platforms may be limited (e.g. only available online) due to unclear institutional mandates and lack of capacity/resources. There is recognition of barriers to access for some citizens, and some efforts are made to tailor project information to citizen needs and capacities, but these are not comprehensive, adequately resourced or supported. There is a limited on-demand system of access to information – but this is only available for certain types of program information e.g. High: level program reports and evaluations.

High:
The program makes an official commitment to accessible and transparent program information and establishes the institutional, financial and operational framework that is needed to achieve this. Program foundation documents explain how transparency of information is integrated into all processes, and operationalised into all processes, institutions and procedures at all levels. Institutions will have clear mandates, including costed, practical strategies for developing and publishing sharable information (see the list above), making it accessible to different kinds of stakeholder, and disseminating it widely. Strategies will make clear who is responsible and how they are accountable Institutions are able to deliver on these strategies – providing both timely information inputs for participatory decision making processes, and responding to on-demand requests for information by citizens.

Guidance for Program design (Transparent Program Information)

- There are different approaches to transparency that might be used in a program. Passive transparency shares information on request, while active transparency implies that information is actively shared with stakeholders. There can also be transparency of inputs – such as financial information, decision making processes, but more challenging is transparency of outcomes, which shares the quality, successes and failures of various interventions and service delivery. Programs must consider what kind of transparency most facilitates a democratic approach in their context.

- Active transparency is more in line with an environmental democracy and locally led approach. However, consideration is needed in how information is shared or how participating institutions are encouraged to share information. A large mass of data – through long documents or complex spreadsheets – is not accessible to the public. Working with local organisations and institutions, or "infomediaries", may be necessary to translate information into formats and findings that citizens understand.

- The format and methods to communicate information is therefore a key aspect of active transparency. Different contexts will likely suit different approaches ranging from radio and fliers to more technology driven tools such as wide SMS messaging.

- Transparency is a key condition for accountability. The nature of information that is publicly available determines for which activities stakeholders can be held accountable for.

- An often-neglected aspect of programs is development of a communication strategy and skills to implement it. Such a strategy can be designed with program stakeholders and with citizen feedback, tested during the life of a program, and remain with participating institutions – such as governments or servicer providers, once the program ends.

Transparent Climate Information

Indicator:
To what extent does the program provide citizens and stakeholders with access to inclusive and relevant climate information for adaptation planning at different temporal scales (both in the context of the project and more widely, in their everyday lives)?

Rationale:
This indicator measures the degree to which citizens and stakeholders have access to useful, intelligible and relevant climate information to enable them to participate meaningfully in program processes and make informed decisions about their livelihoods.

Understanding the nature of climate and disaster risk and impacts - and the historical, current and future climate context - is fundamental for adaptation planning by citizens and local stakeholders. This makes climate information a distinct and special kind of information. As with other forms of program information, transparency is needed for democratic accountability, since climate information plays a pivotal role in adaptation projects in framing the context for interventions, guiding decisions, allocating funding flows and shaping program priorities. But timely access to climate information is also critical for building the climate resilience of citizens and stakeholders in their own individual, family, business, livelihood and community contexts outside of the program. Widespread climate change literacy is also critical for holding governments to account on their more general climate change and environmental commitments.

Climate information provided by the program should map out the range of possible short, medium and long term climate futures (e.g. trends in temperature, precipitation and extreme weather events) and the ways in which these will affect local communities. An adaptation program does not necessarily need to produce all climate information itself: it can source some kinds of information from climate information producers/intermediaries and use/transform this information through inclusive participatory processes to make it more transparent and relevant for citizens. It can also repackage existing climate information services to make them more accessible.

Effective climate information for adaptation: the role of participation.

Roughly speaking, there are two major sources of climate information: (a) top-down, scientific measures produced by technical experts using data from meteorological stations, remote sensing data, and various kinds of computer modelling; (b) bottom-up reports, expressed in terms of the current and historical lived experience of local communities, with a focus on traditional knowledge and on the impacts that extreme weather events and slow-onset climatic changes have already had on people, landscapes, livelihoods and production systems.

Scientific measures and traditional top-down climate and weather products are often too abstract, and the underlying data too sporadic or unreliable, for ordinary citizens and stakeholders to be able to use in their decision-making and planning activities. Where such data exist, they need to be translated into information that is locally meaningful and relevant to local people's everyday livelihoods and activities. Long range (10 year+) climate change projections generated by computer models apply to large areas and are difficult to 'downscale' to local conditions . They also tend to underestimate the intensity of extreme weather events (Garcia et al., 2014) .

Consequently bottom-up climate risk assessments conducted with citizens essential for effective (and democratic) adaptation planning. Local peoples' lived experience of climate change and extreme weather, together with their indigenous and traditional knowledge systems (covering both weather forecasting and traditional responses to climate variability) are vital sources of data in their own right. But they are also key to translating predicted or measured changes in scientific variables into human impacts felt at the local level.

To generate climate information products that are useful for adaptation decision making by citizens and by project actors, both these sources of information must be combined and integrated. Research indicates that this is best done through a recursive process of participatory co-production by citizens and scientific/technical information providers (Carter et al, 2019; Hansen et al. 2019). Through these processes, climate information products can be produced in formats tailored to the capacities, needs and interests of all stakeholders affected by the program. This creates local ownership and understanding of forecasts.

Finally, climate information also needs to convey the uncertainty associated with forecasting in way that is supportive of planning; the use of future climate scenarios is a recognised approach for testing for possible maladaptation.

Rating:

Low:
A Rating of 'low' suggests that the program does not establish a formal institutional, financial and operational framework for producing and disseminating climate risk information. The sources of climate information used by the project to assess climate risk are not transparent, and data may not be consistent across operations.

The project does not provide access to regular climate information services intended for use by citizens (e.g. short and medium-term weather forecasts). The project relies on top down-methods for assessing long term climate risk (e.g. climate projections from computer models) and uses them as reliable predictions of future conditions, rather than snap-shots of possible (but uncertain) climate futures. No systematic effort is made to make climate information products accessible and relevant to citizens through participatory co-production. The specific climate information needs of socially excluded and marginalised groups are not acknowledged.

Medium:
The program establishes a framework for the production and dissemination of standardised climate information across its operations. The project provides or facilitates access to regular climate information services (e.g. weather forecasts) intended for use by citizens, but these are likely driven by top-down sources of information with little systematic attempt to tailor them to local needs and livelihood systems; there are probably only a limited number of information formats and distribution channels. During project planning, participatory bottom-up methods such as resilience/ vulnerability assessments may used to understand localised and intersectional climate risk, but these findings are not integrated into accessible climate information products that can be accessed on-demand by citizens. Robust techniques for planning under conditions of future climate uncertainty are not generally used (i.e. no scenario planning or consideration of alternative possible climate futures).

High:
The program makes a commitment to providing accessible, actionable and relevant climate information at all levels and establishes the institutional, financial and operational framework that is needed to achieve this. Institutions will have clear mandates, including costed, practical strategies for publishing sharable climate information in variety of different formats. Climate information products are tailored to the needs of planning at different temporal and spatial scales and cover short term, medium-term and long-term forecasts. Climate information products integrate both top-down and bottom-up sources of information and make use of local and expert knowledge. Climate information products are generated through regular participatory co-production processes that foster knowledge exchange between different stakeholder groups (at different levels) and ensure relevance for all citizens – in their capacity as individuals, households, livelihoods, businesses and production systems. Climate information is disseminated through a wide range of appropriate channels, taking into account citizen accessibility requirements. Uncertainty is explicitly dealt with in climate information products, e.g. climate scenarios are produced to make planning processes more robust to uncertain and more extreme future climate hazards; there is capacity building to ensure that the meaning of different forms of forecast is well understood.

Guidance for Program Design (Transparent Climate Information)

- Programs or projects need to consider which aspect of the climate information cycle they seek to contribute to, recognizing that the path from data collection by various agencies and institutions through to use by citizens can be challenging to successfully navigate. Data driven climate information must come through in-country data providers such as meteorological agencies, sector ministries and their experts, "infomediaries" who translate complex information into usable information, through to various types of planning and private section institutions and finally reaching community level users (Conway & Vincent, 2021). Considering the whole system is key to ensuring climate information is usable and sustainable in its delivery.

- The most participatory approaches to climate information generation and dissemination take a co-production approach, which are more likely to generate uptake and be used by communities. Co-production seeks to integrate the expertise and experience of the users of climate information into the communication of climate information products. Dialogue with the users is a key part of this process. All stakeholders should consider how they might use co-production to combine both top down and bottom-up forms of climate information. Such an approach may also be better able to take indigenous forms of prediction into account, which can be both as accurate and more likely to be trusted by users.

- Recognise that different groups may require different types of climate information, distributed in a variety of different ways. Men and women, farmers and pastoralists, young and old, may live in similar spaces, but require quite different information about rainfall, over a variety time scales, and in formats that they can access. Working with in country institutions to recognize these nuances, and with communities directly, is key to ensuring information remains usable.

- It is important to work with climate information proactively to identify investments that are robust to a range of possible climate futures. Uncertainty is a characteristic of climate hazards – we are uncertain of the scale of GHG emissions as well as their impact on specific locations. Therefore, consideration of investments across different futures, with community members, reduces the risk of maladaptation.

- A helpful manual has been developed by Future Climate Africa, offering different approaches and scales of co-production that will have different relevance depending on the context and the type of information being shared (Carter, S. et. Al, 2019).

Justice Pillar

Background

Access to justice is the final pillar of environmental democracy. In its original conception, this referred to justice through the courts and through juridical processes and right to appeal. However, in relation to adaptation and resilience programs it can more closely be related to the ability seek redress for grievances arising as a result of poorly implemented or planned projects. More broadly, it can relate to accountability for implementing organisations.

Redressing Grievances

Indicator:

To what extent does the program protect citizens' environmental, human and statutory rights through an accessible and transparent system of appeal and redress?

Rationale:

The third pillar of environmental democracy is access to justice by citizens and stakeholders. This is about protecting their rights under domestic environmental legislation and international treaties that their nation has ratified or endorsed, allowing them to challenge the actions of governments and development agencies and seek compensation or redress.

While national legislation and the accessibility of the ordinary courts and formal justice system fall outside the scope of this program assessment, this assessment indicator measures the degree to which the program provides a transparent appeals process against project plans, decisions and interventions, and a right of redress if the program negatively impacts the statutory and human rights, livelihoods and ecosystems of citizens and stakeholders living both within and beyond its official target intervention area.

It is normal for some program activities to result in distributional effects within and between communities - trade-offs between benefits for some and costs for others. While the program decision making and MEL processes should provide protections and safeguards for socially excluded and disadvantaged groups and an accountable forum for debating trade-offs, there may be occasions where citizens are nonetheless negatively affected by the program in ways which are not properly acknowledged or possibly illegal, ultimately increasing their vulnerability to climate change.[14] This is a particular risk if the program does not score well on subsidiarity or participation more generally.

Ratings:

Low:
The program does not raise awareness of environmental rights. Aside from formal judicial procedures external to the program, there are limited avenues for appeal by citizens against program decisions or on-going interventions.

Medium:
The program creates an accessible, internal system of appeal against program decisions/ on-going activities that can be used by individuals and communities in the program area of operations. The appeals process provides advisory judgements and cannot provide compensation or redress to injured parties. The appeals process and outcomes are transparent.

High:
The program features awareness raising of environmental rights as part of its capacity building activities. In addition to an internal system of appeal against program decisions. In addition to an accessible internal system of appeal against program decisions/ interventions, the program provides access to an independent system of arbitration or appeal (e.g. an ombudsman) to mediate in cases where disputes cannot be resolve internally (available to anyone affected by the program, not just citizens located in areas where the project is operating). The program provides for compensation or redress in cases where human or statutory rights have been infringed as a result of program activities.

Guidance for Program Design (Redressing Grievances)

- In complex and changing environments, it is easy for external actors to make mistakes, misjudge the consequences of their actions, or perhaps be manipulated by unscrupulous actors. In such cases, negative consequences may occur through poor planning, negligence, or criminal actions of stakeholders. It is important that there are routes through which citizens can make authorities and implementing agencies aware of the consequences, how they have been affected, and seek compensation or where appropriate, sanctions against offending parties.
- Grievance redress systems must offer protections from recriminations by accused parties, with anonymity where it can be offered. Working with civil society organisations with the scope to support individuals with knowledge of the law, financial protections or else a measure of independent adjudication may be necessary.
- Communicating the availability of grievance redress mechanisms, phone numbers or other methods must be built into the communications plan. Such mechanisms are often promised but then neglected once the busy work of implementation begins.

Accountability

Indicator:

To what extent does the program create conditions by which citizens can hold implementing stakeholders accountable for their actions.

Rationale:

This indicator assesses opportunities for project beneficiaries or participants to hold stakeholders accountable for their actions. Accountability is a cornerstone of democratic approaches, disincentivizing criminal or corrupt behaviour through the threat of answerability, professional or criminal sanctions. Accountability offers the opportunity for citizens to enact justice by securing a relationship between communities and stakeholders, and donors, in which there may be consequences for their actions.

Accountability is often classified as upward or downward. Upward accountability – the most widely recognized, involves partners or government reporting expenditure and activities to donors or more senior officials for review. Downward accountability involves reporting of activities to communities who have the opportunity to act on those reports in some way.

Accountability can also be "soft" or "hard" (Fox, 2007). Hard accountability suggests the possibility of professional or legal sanctions against individuals or potentially institutions and private companies. Soft accountability focuses more on the requirement of institutions to answer for their actions, facing embarrassment rather than punishment.

Ratings:

Low:

The program does little to consider accountability mechanisms. By default, most programs will have upward accountability systems, in which implementing partners report to donors or funders their activities. Donors or funders set the terms entirely in a top-down approach. The consequence of non-delivery is withholding of funding, however there is the risk that the time and effort required to find new partners reduces the willingness to do so.

Medium:

The program introduces upward and downward accountability mechanisms. For the former, clear conditions and consequences are agreed for poor performance between donors and implementers, with consequences followed through. For the latter, some downward accountability mechanisms are in place such as reporting to communities through meetings, establishment of websites to share information and working with mediating institutions who can translate transparent information into usable formats and communicate it.

High:

Citizens are given the opportunity to shape accountability structures in the project themselves. Collaboration with implementing partners is made possible to negotiate sanctions or bonus for poor or effective performance. Monitoring is led by citizens who have capability to report more widely. Training is delivered to build skills for this kind of approach within local institutions. Upward accountability may continue but with greater recognition of local perceptions of the projects implenentaiton shaping the nature of reporting,

Guidance for Program Design (Accountability)

- Consider the kinds of accountability that are required for the project and that are more likely to support high quality delivery. Hard accountability may not always be necessary or desirable, with the requirement for institutions to publicly answer for their actions often being enough.
- Link accountability with transparency, ensuring the required information is generated and communicated in formats that enable accountability processes to operate with wider legitimacy.
- Consider how enacting accountability in practice might leads to changes in program delivery and focus where processes are not working, and how flexibility of budgets and the freedom to change course might be required. Being tied into specific partners and remaining unwilling to change reduces the legitimacy of citizen led accountability processes.
- Often donors and international NGOs remain remote from accountability, with limited requirements to answer for failed projects or damaging environmental and social consequences. A forward thinking and equitable approach will seek ways for representatives of such organisations to be more available for feedback from communities. Alternatively, it might ensure commit to funding organisations local to particular contexts, who can not only bring greater knowledge but who are also more directly accountable to their own citizens. However, it should also be recognized that doing so places such organisations at greater risk – if donors provide funds that are short term and inflexible in response to events, their partner organisations are left with greater reputational and financial risk.

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Endnotes

1 The IPCC view adaptation as a continuum, contrasting 'incremental' changes at one end with 'transformational' changes at the other. Incremental changes seek to build climate resilience by making modifications to existing social-ecological arrangements and structures.

2 Including profound and lasting reconfigurations of the distribution of power and wealth in society, including: re-evaluations and re-orientations of production/livelihood system systems, fundamental changes in governance of natural resources and ecosystems, the redistribution of rights and responsibilities among different types of citizens, etc.

3 The number in brackets after the framework principle indicates which of the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation apply.

4 An indicator is a measure of program performance on a particular dimension of performance for the framework. It is framed as a question.

5 All decision making could be taken by local government technical departments, for example, in response to purely technical criteria with limited community consultation.

6 As in a river basin, where upstream activities (such as water abstraction for irrigation) may have spill over effects on downstream communities.

7 'Lack of capacity' is often cited as a reason for not taking decisions at lower levels of governance. However, the program should consider whether addressing this lack of capacity might be a suitable objective for transformative climate action.

8 These medium-term priorities may have a variety of different names (e.g. strategic objectives or strategic outcomes) but they for programming purposes they often to be expressed in a similar format (e.g. e.g. increase the area under irrigation by 30%; increase the proportion of households with access to clean, potable water in under 10 minutes by 40% etc.)

9 Note that this does not preclude the use of the findings of top-down analysis, coordination with national policy objectives, and experience sharing between other 'similar' areas; it's simply that, if used, such information should feed into participatory decision-making processes rather than limiting their scope.

10 E.g. that a chosen priority is illegal or unconstitutional, or that it is incompatible with other government programs/priorities.

11 Examples would include: e.g. providing training on agricultural techniques for x number of people; building a health post at a particular location; erecting a fence and gate around a rainfed pond; building a dedicated piped water kiosk for domestic use at a strategic location.

12 A theory of change is an explicit model of the expected causal pathway through which a project will create changes in patterns of behaviour and impacts in the wider social milieu. It is only a model and the real outcomes of an intervention may diverge significantly from what was originally expected.

13 Principle 4 of the Locally Led Adaptation guidelines

14 For a detailed discussion of maladaptation and the forms it can take, see Eriksen et al. (2021) and Schipper (2020).

For a detailed discussion of maladaptation and the forms it can take, see Eriksen et al. (2021) and Schipper (2020).

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