

MULTISTAKEHOLDER PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT MANUAL: GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

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Multistakeholder platform development manual: Guidelines for successful implementation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this manual is to provide a structured approach to developing, implementing, and sustaining multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) for CbCCA by giving attention to foundational concepts, methodology, and process.

The information is drawn from the author's experiences, analyses, and reviews of setting up and participating in various such platforms. It is hoped that these experiences will assist stakeholders in designing and implementing multi-stakeholder processes that effectively support community-level climate adaptation efforts at local, regional, and national levels. By doing so, these processes can enhance the reach and impact of interventions, ensuring more meaningful and sustainable outcomes. The target audience for this manual is relevant actors and individuals in government agencies, non-government organisations, academia, the private sector, and funding agencies.

By fostering collaboration, leveraging diverse knowledge systems, and aligning local efforts with broader frameworks, multi-stakeholder platforms play a pivotal role in achieving sustainable and equitable community-based climate adaptation.

Guiding principles for multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) in community-based climate change adaptation (CbCCA) ensure the engagement, equity, and effectiveness of diverse stakeholders in addressing climate challenges. (OECD, 2015). These principles can help foster collaboration and sustainable outcomes. By adhering to these principles, multi-stakeholder platforms can enhance the resilience of communities to climate change while fostering sustainable and inclusive development.

There are still conceptual and methodological challenges in defining adaptation goals and in what effective adaptation looks like, with several seemingly divergent approaches being used. The Climate Change Act forms the first legal framework for South Africa's response to the impacts of climate change and formalises the requirements for provincial and municipal structures to develop climate change needs analyses and implementation plans. Several principles outlined in the act are congruent, although not explicit, in terms of community-based climate change adaptation.

There is a broad set of steps required to set up and run a multi-stakeholder platform. The details and chronology of these steps will depend on the context and members to a large extent. A section in the manual will provide a summary table of steps and then a brief example of the initiation and development of a recently established catchment forum, known as the Northern Drakensberg Collaborative.

Different monitoring and evaluation approaches for MSPs and CbCCA are discussed, and a new community-level resilience measurement framework and tool, developed within this research brief, is outlined as an example of a framework for multistakeholder platforms engaged in CbCCA.

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ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

CbCCA	Community-based Climate Change Adaptation
CMF	Catchment Management Forum
CoP	Community of Practice
COSA	Committee on Sustainable Assessments
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSI	Department of Science and Innovation
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LG	Learning Group
LLA	Local-level Adaptation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning
MSP	Multistakeholder Platform
NCCAS	National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Nongovernment Organisation
NRVF	National Risk and Vulnerability Framework
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PME	Planning, monitoring, and evaluation
PMEL	Planning, monitoring, evaluation, and learning
REM	Ripple Effects Mapping
SANBI	South African National Botanical Institute
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VCF	Value Creation Framework
V-STEEP	Value- Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to provide a structured approach to developing, implementing, and sustaining multistakeholder platforms (MSPs) for Community-based Climate Change Adaptation (CbCCA) by giving attention to foundational concepts, methodology, and process.

The information is drawn from the authors' experiences, analyses, and reviews of setting up and participating in various such platforms. It is hoped that these experiences will assist stakeholders in designing and implementing multistakeholder processes that effectively support community-level climate adaptation efforts at local, regional, and national levels. By doing so, these processes can enhance the reach and impact of interventions, ensuring more meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

The target audience for this manual is relevant actors and individuals in government agencies, non-government organisations, academia, the private sector, and funding agencies.

1.2 IMPORTANCE OF MSPS IN CBCCA

By fostering collaboration, leveraging diverse knowledge systems, and aligning local efforts with broader frameworks, multistakeholder platforms play a pivotal role in achieving sustainable and equitable community-based climate adaptation. They do this through:

1. **Facilitating inclusive decision-making:** By bringing together diverse stakeholders and ensuring that all voices, particularly those of marginalised or vulnerable groups, are heard and integrated into adaptation strategies.
2. **Enhancing local knowledge integration:** By combining scientific knowledge with indigenous and local knowledge to create context-specific and practical solutions and by building on community insights, ensuring adaptation measures are grounded in local realities.
3. **Promoting collaboration and resource sharing:**
4. By fostering partnerships among stakeholders that enable the pooling of expertise, financial resources, and technical capacities, and by encouraging collective ownership of adaptation initiatives, thereby reducing duplication of efforts and improving efficiency.
5. **Strengthening adaptive capacity and resilience:** By empowering communities to actively participate in identifying risks, prioritising actions and implementing solutions, and by creating platforms for continuous learning and adjustment of strategies based on evolving climate conditions.
6. **Supporting policy alignment and scaling:** By bridging the gap between local actions and regional/national policies, ensuring alignment with broader climate goals, and facilitating the scaling of successful community-based initiatives to other areas or contexts.
7. **Building trust and social cohesion:** By encouraging dialogue and collaboration among groups with varying interests, thereby building trust and reducing conflicts, and by strengthening community networks and collective action to address shared challenges.
8. **Improving accountability and transparency:** By establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and monitoring mechanisms to ensure effective governance and by enhancing stakeholder accountability and transparent decision-making processes.
9. **Boosting financial sustainability:** By engaging diverse actors, including the private sector, to mobilise funding and investment for climate adaptation initiatives and by promoting innovative financing mechanisms such as public-private partnerships or climate adaptation funds.

CHAPTER 2: FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

2.1 DESCRIPTION OF KEY CONCEPTS

2.1.1 Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience

For any process or intervention, to frame the most impactful course of action, the first step is to comprehensively assess the status of the systems and communities. The links between the vulnerabilities in the system/community, the actions to be undertaken, and the impact on resilience need to be defined, in a participatory manner, from the outset.

Vulnerability assessments are the first step towards framing the context for implementation of adaptation measures, especially within the broader understanding that building resilience requires longer-term, participatory, and holistic approaches rather than purely technical, short-term responses, to address all the underlying structural vulnerabilities in our society.

Understandably, the developed frameworks are thus quite complex and comprehensive and require considerable capacity and resources to undertake. In most cases, the level of vulnerabilities was determined using the IPCC-endorsed framework ($\text{Exposure} + \text{Sensitivity} = \text{Potential Impact} + \text{Adaptive Capacity} = \text{Vulnerability}$).

In South Africa, the National Risk and Vulnerability Framework (NRVF) is intended to provide an overarching approach and guidance towards undertaking risk and vulnerability assessment using a suite of available methodologies and tools.

The concepts of vulnerability and risk focus on differentiating between who or what is exposed to climate hazards and why they are impacted in different ways and to varying degrees. **Resilience** places a stronger focus on whole systems and their combined capacity to function and change in the face of climate hazards, pressures, or disturbances.

Reducing the climate vulnerability and risks of various communities, businesses, sectors, and jurisdictions contributes to increasing the resilience of South Africa's social, economic, and environmental systems (DEFF, 2020).

To start to define the boundaries, context, timescales, and uncertainties in adaptation, three key imperatives – **human, environmental, and economic** – have been defined, and within these, broad systems, namely **food, natural environment, water, cities, infrastructure, disaster risk management, and finance**. (Global Commission on Adaptation, 2019).

Vulnerability: The degree to which someone or something can be affected by a particular hazard (from sudden events such as a storm to long-term climate change).

Vulnerability depends on physical, social, economic, and environmental factors and processes.

-Physical vulnerability relates to the built environment and may be described as "exposure".

-Social vulnerability is caused by such things as levels of family ties and social networks, literacy and education, health infrastructure, and the state of peace and security.

-Economic vulnerability is suffered by people of the less privileged class or caste, ethnic minorities, the very young and old, etc. They suffer proportionally larger losses in disasters and have limited capacity to recover. Similarly, an economy lacking a diverse productive base is less likely to recover from disaster impact, which may also lead to forced migration.

-Environmental vulnerability refers to the extent of natural resource degradation, such as deforestation, depletion of fish stocks, soil

Adapting to climate change while also achieving healthy food for all, mitigating climate change, protecting ecosystems, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will require systemic changes to the global food system and global land use.

In South Africa, the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy was finalised in August 2020 (DFFE, 2020). It outlines the goals, strategic outcomes, activities, timelines, and expected impacts nationally, as well as the responsibilities and actions of all relevant government structures at the national, provincial, and municipal levels.

Resilience in the context of climate adaptation and multistakeholder forums refers to the capacity of individuals, communities, ecosystems, and systems to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate-related shocks and stresses in a way that ensures long-term sustainability and equity. It emphasises

adaptability, risk management, and collaborative decision-making among diverse stakeholders. Resilience in this dual context intertwines the ecological, social, and institutional dimensions to ensure that responses to climate challenges are holistic, just, and capable of enduring future uncertainties.

Adaptation refers to adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts. It refers to changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change. (UNFCCC 2014)

Climate resilience is the capacity of social or ecological systems to recover or bounce back from disturbances, shocks and extreme loads or to absorb these disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning (UNDP 2005; UN/ISDR 2004; IPCC 2007; Rockefeller Foundation 2009; Arctic Council 2013 referred to in IPCC 2014).

2.1.2 Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Adaptation

South Africa is increasingly vulnerable to climate-related disasters, particularly affecting its rural and marginalised communities. Climate change exacerbates droughts, floods, heatwaves, and other extreme weather events, disproportionately impacting those with limited resources to cope and recover. Effective disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies are essential to build resilience, ensure sustainable development, and reduce vulnerabilities in these communities.

To date, the thinking and programming for adaptation and DRR in South Africa have run along parallel streams, with different departments and government structures responsible for each. There is a growing body of research and evidence that points to the need to integrate these approaches and to coherently embed DRM into communities with community-level planning and implementation. (Environmental Sciences Rhodes University, 2017).

Examples of DRR strategies are:

- **Early warning systems:** Including expanding weather-monitoring stations and the use of mobile technology.
- **Sustainable land and water management:** Including climate-resilient agriculture and soil and water conservation.
- **Building resilient infrastructure:** Including upgrading rural infrastructure and decentralised sustainable energy systems.
- **Community-based disaster preparedness and capacity building:** Including workshops, the establishment of local committees, and the development of disaster response plans.
- **Social safety nets and economic empowerment:** Including appropriate microfinance options and small business development.
- **Ecosystem-based adaptation:** Including the use of nature-based solutions to restore and protect degraded ecosystems.
- **Disaster risk reduction policies and local municipal disaster management plans:** Including strengthening local disaster management plans and enhancing collaboration.

There are clear overlaps and synergies with adaptation initiatives and efforts in these proposed strategies.

2.1.3 Locally Led Adaptation (LLA)

The CbCCA term used in this document falls within the broader definition of locally led adaptation approaches.

These approaches have primarily been promoted through civil society organisations and large international development organisations. In this regard, eight LLA principles were developed by the Global Commission on Adaptation and launched at the 2021 Climate Adaptation Summit to guide efforts to promote LLA. (Sharma, 2021). These principles are meant to guide the development of projects, outputs, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks, with indicators, as a process towards outlining coherent sets of indicators applicable globally.

The principles are the following:

- **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.
- **Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, the disabled, displaced, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalised ethnic groups:** Integrating gender-based, economic, and political inequalities that are root causes of vulnerability into the core of adaptation action and encouraging vulnerable and marginalised individuals to meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decisions.
- **Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily:** Supporting long-term development of local governance processes, capacity, and institutions through simpler access modalities and longer-term and more predictable funding horizons, to ensure that communities can effectively implement adaptation actions.
- **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.
- **Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty:** Informing adaptation decisions through a combination of local, traditional, Indigenous, generational, and scientific knowledge that can enable resilience under a range of future climate scenarios.
- **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.
- **Ensuring transparency and accountability:** Making processes of financing, designing, and delivering programmes more transparent and accountable downwards to local stakeholders.
- **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, etc.) support each other and their activities avoid duplication, to enhance efficiencies and good practice.

These principles include specific ideas around devolving decision-making, addressing structural inequalities, and building local capacity for action and governance. The concepts of adaptive management and multistakeholder engagement are also important. This is, for example, reflected in a recent evaluation of the National Small Grants facility within SANBI, who manage the National Adaptation Fund. (CA-SGF, 2018). Their learnings, which should now be incorporated into the next round of implementation, emphasise a holistic approach, partnerships at multiple levels, locally driven processes, adaptive management, and capacity enhancement. The learnings are summarised below as they provide critical insights into what is required programmatically:

- **A holistic approach is required to address the complexities** of the challenges experienced by local communities and the design of interventions that address, or at least acknowledge, the multiple factors that contribute to climate resilience. Integrated interventions can be used to leverage multiple benefits effectively.

- **Partnerships with external stakeholders at multiple levels and in various forms are critical** for success, allowing for skills transfer, leveraging expertise, and flexibility to access resources as needed.
- **Participatory, inclusive, and locally driven processes are required for climate adaptation intervention success.** Locally determined interventions, based upon community priorities and supported by local leadership, can bolster achievements.
- Projects must **plan for sustainability** from the outset and account for a range of climate change impacts based upon scientific projections, including the sustainability and maintenance of assets developed during a project.
- Adopting **adaptive management practices promotes the responsiveness and customisation required** for Community-based Climate Change Adaptation projects.
- **Capacity building is an integral component** of community-based interventions as new technical information becomes available. The breadth and level of capacity building span various technical expertise and include financial and administrative skills as well as project management.

2.1.4 Community-based Climate Change Adaptation (CbCCA)

Shammin et al. (2022) highlight community-based initiatives as promising approaches to lessen the impacts of climate change while empowering people and bolstering community resilience. Local innovation and agency are critical components of these programmes in fostering sustained community resilience. Community-based approaches with the direct engagement of the vulnerable population, and which are adequately supported by international agencies, national and local government, academics, experts, and nonprofit organisations, have the potential to develop locally relevant, culturally appropriate, and sustainable solutions. A holistic approach to designing community-based adaptation programmes that builds on past approaches while maximising the opportunities presented by recent developments in SDGs, resilience principles, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) initiatives is important. CbCCA can include activities in the following six broad categories: livelihood diversification, capacity building, ecosystem integrity, resource management, microfinance and insurance, and infrastructure, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Classification of community-based adaptation activities.

Source: Shammin et al. (2022)

The model outlines elements such as the context, the process followed, and the outcomes, as shown in Figure 2. It is a flexible model in which programmes may be initiated by the community, the government, or NGOs.

Solutions are developed in **context** by integrating indigenous knowledge, scientific information, and global experiences. They focus on supporting livelihood opportunities, and they are governed at the



Figure 2: Community-based adaptation framework for climate adaptation and community resilience. Source: Shammin et al. (2022)

community level, making use of existing social capital and other complementary programmes.

The **process** includes participatory solutions and iterative learning at the local level, complemented by transformative action at national, regional, and international scales. Monitoring and learning are a key part of the process. The scope considers the impacts of climate change alongside poverty, ecological integrity, gender equality, and other development priorities.

The **outcomes** include proactive planning for maximising Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) attainment and disaster risk reduction, which allows CCA activities to tap into and find synergies with these cross-cutting imperatives.

2.1.5 Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is not new but has become increasingly relevant in response to rapidly changing situations, including the COVID-19 pandemic and weather-related disasters. It involves implementing a management strategy, closely monitoring its effects, and then adapting future actions based on the observed results. In this way, planners simultaneously apply management practices and learn from those management practices. Adaptive management is equally relevant to the activities of multistakeholder platforms and the implementation of projects and programmes.

Adaptive management can be broken into six general steps:

1. Assess the current conditions; identify any problems; determine goals.
2. Design a management plan that incorporates these goals.
3. Implement the management plan.
4. Monitor the impact(s) of the management plan.
5. Evaluate the results of the monitoring process.
6. Modify the plan as needed to respond to changing conditions, as identified through the monitoring and evaluation process.

Adaptive management is a cyclical process, running continuously through these steps. The first two steps involve establishing goals for the management process, while steps three through five represent the actual implementation and evaluation of the process. In practice, many adaptive management plans run through steps 3–6 several times before returning to steps 1 and 2, which may involve a reassessment of the entire management plan, including target goals. It is important to evaluate results and modify management strategies as needed to respond to changing conditions. (Land Trust Alliance, 2021).

Adaptive management involves continually monitoring a process to evaluate its effectiveness and improving the process based on this evaluation. It requires transparent planning systems and implementation strategies, and a strong emphasis on monitoring and reviewing to ensure emerging information is reflected in future planning. (Rogers & Macfarlan, 2020).

2.1.6 Communities of Practice (CoPs)

Stakeholder engagement through CoPs is conceptualised on three levels: micro-, meso-, and macro-levels. These are briefly described below.

2.1.6.1 1st LEVEL: Practical implementation (micro)

The focus for the local individuals and groups is on co-creation of knowledge, social learning, and innovation related to climate change adaptation. To increase the impact of knowledge, we need to move beyond a focus on knowledge products (on the infomediary and knowledge translation end of the spectrum in the diagram below) to knowledge activities that revolve around the creation of strong, lasting, and reflexive relationships between the science and policy worlds and beyond for collaborative co-construction and synthesis processes.

There is a need for an engaged approach that sees knowledge users as partners in defining the questions, interpreting the answers, and contributing their expertise and learning, and that provides a more multifaceted appreciation of climate change in which relationships, power dynamics, trust, and conflict management are as important as access to accurate information in moving towards climate resilience.

Many sources of knowledge (local, experience-based, indigenous, scientific) are relevant in the adaptation decision-making and implementation context. The role of a climate knowledge broker is that of a facilitator of change who ensures that better decisions are taken (based on evidence, including multiple perspectives) and who ensures that these are effectively implemented for a more climate-resilient future.

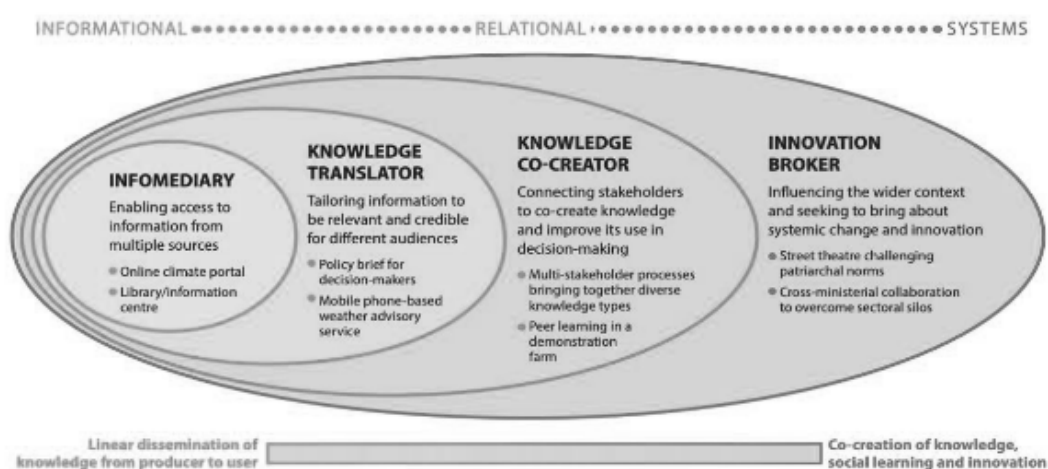


Figure 3: Spectrum of knowledge broker roles, adapted from Harvey et al. (2012) and Shaxson et al. (2012) (Scodanibbio, Cundill, & McNamara, 2023)

The concept of CoPs to engage, understand, and move towards action, as well as the exchange of lessons learned, is one way to do this (Phipps & Morton, 2013).

Communities of practice (CoPs) are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. They often focus on sharing best practices and creating new knowledge. Interaction on an ongoing basis is an important part of this.

Essential elements of a CoP:

- Share experiences and know-how
- Discuss common issues and interests
- Collaborate in solving problems – analyse causes and contributing factors
- Experiment with new ideas and novel approaches
- Capture/codify new know-how
- Evaluate actions and effects

Community learning networks are connections formed and maintained by local people with the aim of sharing information and supporting each other's learning. They are generally called learning groups or social support groups. These networks are important in bringing together local people, development practitioners, researchers, and other role players to access and share resources and information that can encourage communities to take up improved practices. Most importantly, community learning networks are an effective way for local people to share experiences and assist each other in understanding and implementing new practices (Steeple & Jones, 2002). The first level of a CoP involves working with individual community members through village-based learning groups (LG) where awareness raising, training, local-level experimentation, implementation, monitoring, review, and re-planning take place. This is where, for example, climate-resilient agriculture practices are introduced and implemented.

Onto this basic platform, further activities are scaffolded, for example, village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), local marketing initiatives, local food systems development activities (nutrition, value adding, seed saving networks, etc.), the exploration of collaborative actions related to water and resource conservation, local disaster response plans, and interactions with stakeholders.

2.1.6.2 2nd LEVEL: Communication & Innovation (meso)

The second level of CoPs is the innovation platforms, which consist of clusters of learning groups from and between areas, coming together to share information and insights and engage with external stakeholders in thematic events to explore social agency, advocacy, and further implementation aspects related to CbCCA.

Innovation platforms aim to counter weaknesses in **innovation systems** by building interaction amongst different kinds of actors and their organisations, promoting change in practices, institutions, and policies, and effectively deploying available human and financial resources to solve problems and capitalise on opportunities (Davies, et al., 2018). Regardless of whether innovation platforms are established at local or higher levels, they can explore technological, organisational, and institutional solutions, making them ideal for addressing problems in an integrated manner (Schut, et al., 2019). The formation and operation of innovation platforms are important building blocks of successful multistakeholder platforms. It entails changes in ways of collaborating and interacting and in relationships between actors and organisations to overcome obstacles and improve the impact of their collective action.

In general terms, innovation platforms are useful when:

- People or organisations that represent different socio-economic backgrounds, interests, and perspectives have a stake in a particular problem or solution.
- Multiple people or organisations want to or need to experiment jointly on aspects that they cannot solve individually, or on aspects that benefit from synergies.
- New solutions require a combination of new technologies (technological innovation), effective collaboration (organisational innovation), and/or new rules, funding, and incentive structures (institutional or policy innovation).

- Actors and organisations are willing to share knowledge, resources, benefits, and risks, and have sufficient common interest and trust to engage in collective innovation to address a common challenge (Buerkler, 2013).

These conditions are also frequently mentioned in relation to other types of multistakeholder approaches, such as public-private partnerships and platforms. The functions of innovation platforms have been characterised as shown (Hounkonnou, et al., 2018) in Table 1.

These farmer innovation platforms can be used to support research and action at a systems level (such as a landscape, agroecosystem, or food system). Working in networks that include actors besides farmers may catalyse and strengthen systems thinking. Networks create opportunities to link farmers to other actors, bringing in perspectives, knowledge, and technologies from others in the farming and broader food system. This can be done by researching multiple components of the agroecosystem and by supporting farmers in making informed choices about how to best sequence and combine a variety of techniques to suit their own needs, farming systems, and resources (Kruger, et al., 2021). Additionally, landscape-level management practices can be encouraged, as well as support for value chain research to facilitate the gradual transition to a sustainable system (Richardson, et al., 2021).

Table 1: Functions and activities of multistakeholder platforms

Innovation platform functions	Description of activities to fulfil the functions
Knowledge generation and brokering	Experimentation, learning, knowledge development and exchange as central elements of innovation, with better integration and synergies among technical, organisational and institutional options.
Facilitation of multi-directional information flows	Exchange of information and views of those concerned through networks, allowing information to spread. Identifying and linking different actors, stimulating new actor relationships.
Creation of, or an increase in, momentum for change	Generating solutions in context, on the basis of shared expectations and vision, creates buy-in and unity among innovation platform members and legitimacy for the innovations being generated. It motivates collective action to develop and test innovations in a real-world context.
Guidance of research, policy and investment priorities	Prioritisation of challenges and innovation options based on preferences or expectations of informed stakeholders, for targeted resource allocation. Challenges and options can include access to information, technologies, finance or institutional gaps.
Market formation	Facilitation of (niche) market creation, in marginal areas, post-conflict zones, illustrating market opportunities, creating trust in market agents, transportation of produce to faraway markets.
Capacity development and building entrepreneurial skills	Creation of business opportunities by deploying new technologies, markets, learning and networking. Developing the system's inherent capacity to learn, self-organise and innovate, incubating new organisational forms, nurturing its members' skills (entrepreneurship, representation, coordination and communication).
Policy development and advocacy	Institutional support: facilitating and lobbying for institutional change (for example, policy innovation and new business models)
Resources mobilisation	Assembly of diverse resources (c.g. financial, human, social and physical resources) required to leverage change.

2.1.6.3 3rd LEVEL: Multi-sectoral involvement of relevant institutions & stakeholders (meso & macro)

The third level of CoPs consists of multi-stakeholder networks and processes that provide the platforms for national and international learning and collaboration, as well as for upscaling the CbCCA work and providing for further collaborations and potential funding opportunities.

Partnerships and collaborations to enable effective climate adaptation for communities are conceptualised through different CoPs on three levels: micro-, meso-, and macro levels.

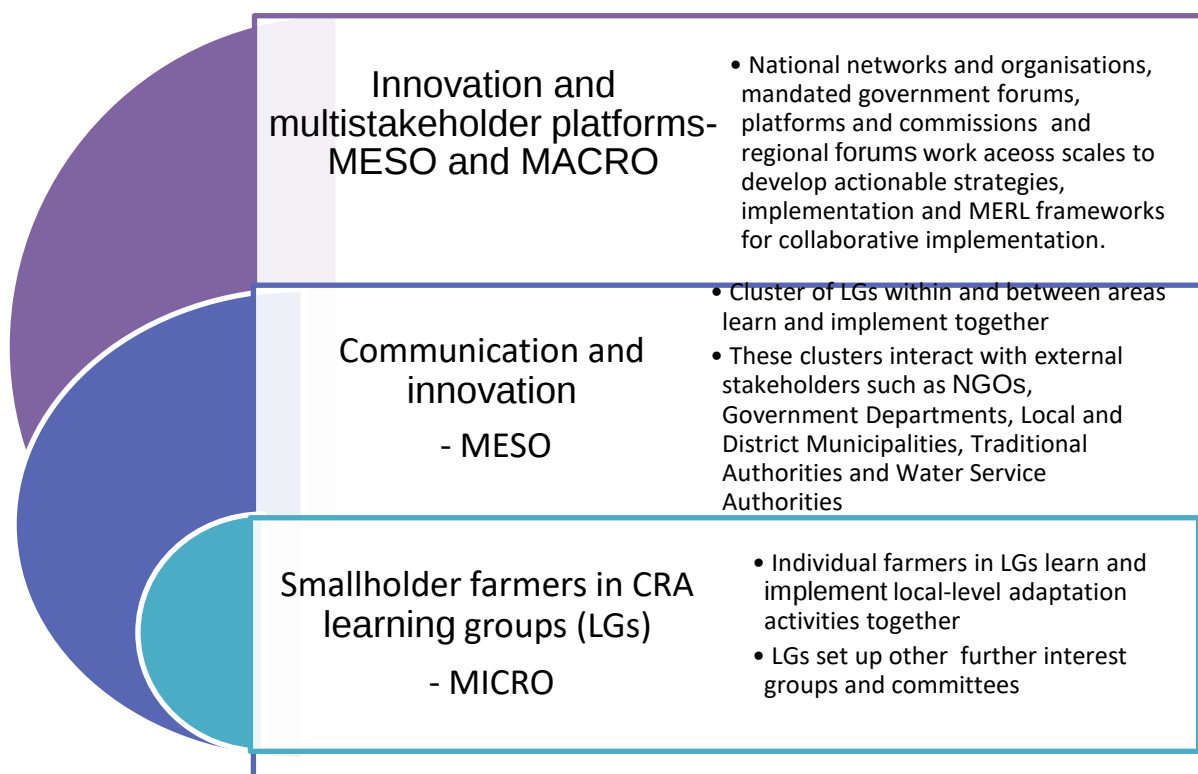


Figure 4: Micro-, meso- and macro-level multistakeholder platforms CbCCA

2.1.7 Multistakeholder platforms

There are various ways in which people or groups come up with solutions to complex situations or explore new and promising opportunities that require working in partnership. These partnerships and interactions are expressed in different ways, ranging from coalitions, alliances, networks, and platforms to participatory governance, stakeholder engagements, and interactive policymaking. The term multistakeholder platform (MSP) is an overarching concept for partnerships that highlights the vision that different groups sharing a common goal can work together (Surminski & Leck, 2016). These different groups include government, both local and national, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), the private sector, and academia (Forino, 2015). They also include local people and communities.

An important feature of an MSP is that it includes multiple stakeholders at different levels coming together with a shared vision or aim to resolve a complex issue, and learning and sharing knowledge to reach a collective resolution.

Successful MSPs are observed through the following principles:

- They achieve lasting outcomes.
- They involve a wide variety of actors.
- They create sustainable working groups.
- They work towards finding common solutions. (Thorpe, Guijt, Sprenger, & Darian, 2021)

If these principles are in place, then MSPs can facilitate and promote policy and legal reforms, create neutral spaces for climate- and other related issues, and promote buy-in for responsible governance. The way in which the partnerships are set up, the processes used, the capacity for leadership, and the skill of facilitation are important underlying considerations for success.

There is a broad range of multistakeholder engagement platforms in South Africa, as well as a broad range of approaches to such platforms. In this manual, the term multistakeholder platform is used to describe partnerships consisting of different groups (as outlined above), all working together towards a common goal.

Multistakeholder platforms are not a one-workshop or multi-actor gathering, instead they are viewed as a semi-structured process supporting people to work together over a shorter or longer period. In the interim, different groups or people will engage with one another in different ways. Although MSPs will be diverse in practice, a well-functioning MSP is most likely to possess most, if not all, of the following characteristics (Herman Brouwer, Woodhill, Hemmati, Verhoosel, & van Vugt, 2015):

- **Shared and defined 'problem-situation' or opportunity:** Stakeholders need to have a sense of why they form part of the MSP. This usually emerges during the platform development process.
- **All key stakeholders are engaged in the partnership:** Actors who have an influence or who are affected by the problem at hand need to be involved from the beginning or the MSP can be easily undermined.
- **Works across different sectors and scales:** Underlying causes of the problem and possible solutions are usually found across different disciplines. It is therefore important for the MSP to work across different sectors and scales.
- **Follows an agreed but dynamic process and timeframe:** It is vital for the stakeholders involved to understand the process they will be part of and how long it will take.
- **Involves stakeholders establishing their expectations for a good partnership:** Actors in the MSP need to create clearly defined rules explaining how they will be working together. This may include means of communication, decision-making, roles, and responsibilities.
- **Works with power differences and conflicts:** If those with power dominate while leaving those with less or no power feeling excluded, the partnership will not be constructive. This also applies to conflict – if left unresolved, it will result in destructive influence.
- **Fosters stakeholder learning:** Good MSPs promote a supportive environment with interactive learning processes.
- **Balances bottom-up and top-down approaches:** MSPs are required to find a balance between working with structures and decisions that emerge from the top while supporting inputs from diverse stakeholders from the bottom.
- **Makes transformative and institutional change possible:** MSPs need to focus on transformative change to erase underlying institutional blockages.

Multistakeholder involvement is considered crucial for horizontal and vertical scaling of implementation processes and practices that show promise for broader implementation and for facilitating inclusive governance coupled with regional and local development mechanisms. How these multistakeholder platforms are set up, function, and operate, however, is more complicated.

Presently, there are several models of engagement with a mixture of statutory processes and volunteerism. The requirement of collective action at all levels and working towards a shared vision is, however, an important underlying principle (PCC, 2022), as is working across traditional public, private, and civil society boundaries.

Key learnings about multistakeholder platforms are contained in Pollard et al. (Pollard, Retief, & Clifford-Holmes, 2020) and (Kotshcy & Pollard, 2022) include:

- Relationship building is important (and takes time).

- Crises often act as catalysts for collective action. If carefully considered and supported by evidence, they can be a useful entry point and can help to prevent a perceived lack of action and implementation, from which many participatory forums suffer.
- Systems thinking is an important framework for the collaborative management and governance of complex socio-ecological systems.
- A style of practice that is adaptable and flexible is able to deal with uncertainty and build the capacity to adapt to change.
- Multistakeholder forums involve embarking on a collaborative learning journey, where what needs to be learned is not necessarily apparent at the start. Attention to how learning happens and how to support learning that enables growth and progress is foundational. They need to collectively figure out what to do through practising, experimenting, learning, and adapting. A practice is produced over time by those who engage in it, as is a community of practice.
- Participatory modelling (conversation-based) approaches and causal loop diagrams can be useful for deriving a systemic, collaborative picture of risks and underlying drivers and impacts.
- Learning exchanges can be very successful as a way to foster interest, exposure, and action.
- For institutionalisation of systemic, social learning to occur (i.e., for practices, processes, and tools to be embedded), stakeholders need to be involved from the start. This does not only mean attendance at workshops and training events, but rather a facilitated, expansive learning process.



Figure 5: Expansive learning cycle. Source: (Pollard et al. 2020)

CHAPTER 3: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The principles of engagement in the development of an MSP and the steps towards achieving these principles are summarised below.

Guiding principles for MSPs in CbCCA ensure the engagement, equity and effectiveness of diverse stakeholders in addressing climate challenges (OECD, 2015). These principles can help foster collaboration and sustainable outcomes:

- **Inclusivity and representation:** Ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including marginalised groups, indigenous communities, and women, to reflect the diversity of perspectives and needs. Use participatory approaches to actively engage local communities in decision-making processes.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Foster open communication about goals, decisions, and resource allocation, and establish clear mechanisms for accountability among stakeholders, ensuring mutual trust and credibility.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** Design processes that allow for adjustment to evolving climate conditions, local priorities, and stakeholder needs and encourage iterative learning and feedback loops for continuous improvement.
- **Local empowerment and ownership:** Build the capacities of local communities to lead adaptation efforts, ensuring that solutions are locally relevant and sustainable, and strengthen local institutions and governance structures to support long-term adaptation.
- **Equity and justice:** Address power imbalances and prioritise the needs of vulnerable and marginalised populations, and ensure fair distribution of resources, risks, and benefits among stakeholders.
- **Knowledge integration and co-creation:** Combine scientific knowledge with traditional and indigenous knowledge to design robust adaptation strategies and foster collaborative research and innovation to address context-specific climate challenges.
- **Conflict resolution and consensus building:** Create neutral platforms for stakeholders to discuss differing priorities and resolve conflicts, and use consensus-driven decision-making to ensure widespread agreement and commitment.
- **Sustainable financing and resource allocation:** Mobilise and allocate financial resources equitably to support adaptation initiatives and promote shared responsibility for funding and resource management.
- **Long-term vision and scalability:** Align initiatives with long-term climate adaptation goals while addressing immediate needs and exploring opportunities to scale successful local initiatives to regional or national levels.
- **Monitoring, evaluation, and learning:** Establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress and assess impact, and share lessons learned among stakeholders to replicate successes and to avoid repeating challenges.

To operationalise these principles, facilitators should act as neutral entities, bridging gaps among stakeholders. Policy frameworks must support multistakeholder engagement at all levels, and communication strategies should ensure that information is accessible and actionable for all stakeholders.

By adhering to these principles, multistakeholder platforms can enhance the resilience of communities to climate change while fostering sustainable and inclusive development.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

4.1 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO ADAPTATION

There are still conceptual and methodological challenges in defining adaptation goals and in what effective adaptation looks like, with several seemingly divergent approaches being used.

Since the Paris Agreement, nations are required to consider their contributions towards the global goal on adaptation as well as adequacy and effectiveness of their adaptation responses. Assessments, implementation, and impact measurements are not the same across these approaches, notwithstanding calls for standardisation on the national level towards coherent reporting of the NDC (Nationally Determined Contributions). A recent comprehensive review of these concepts across a broad range of literature by a group of international experts has outlined eleven guiding principles for adaptation research and practice (Singh, et al., 2021).

The frames underlying the principles outline the different views in understanding and operationalising adaptation effectiveness and “*suggest that opening up thinking about the purpose, processes, and outcomes of adaptation from different perspectives can lead to (1) better conceptualized and designed adaptation processes, which acknowledge the inherent biases and strengths of different effectiveness approaches, and (2) adaptation outcomes that are better aligned to the overarching SDG objective of ‘leaving no one behind’*” (Singh, et al., 2021).

These frames are:

(1) maximised economic benefits; (2) improved wellbeing; (3) reduced vulnerability or enhanced adaptive capacity; (4) enhanced resilience; (5) sustainable adaptation; (6) avoided maladaptation; (7) ecosystem-based adaptation; (8) community-based adaptation; (9) adaptive governance; (10) equity and justice; and (11) transformation.

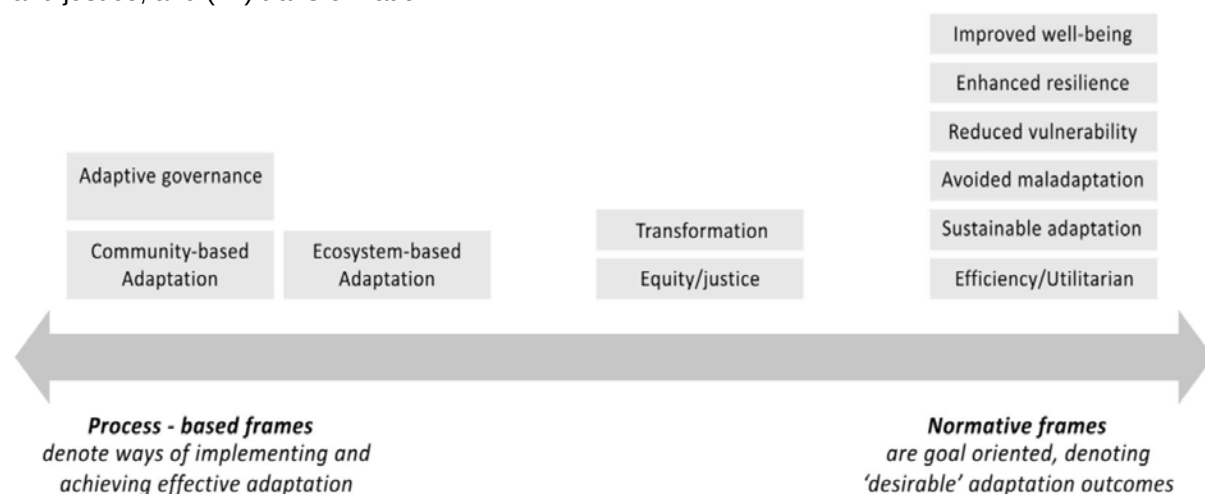


Figure 6: Frames to understand adaptation effectiveness range across a continuum of being process- or outcome-based. Source: (Singh, et al., 2021)

Actions and processes within these frames are:

- **Minimise costs and maximise benefits** (*Efficiency/Utilitarian*): Looks at adaptation interventions from financial and social cost perspectives and assumes that benefits can be estimated and calculated.
- **Support achievement of material, subjective, and relational wellbeing goals** (*Improved wellbeing*): Broadly covers material, relational, and subjective wellbeing, emphasising the agency of actors in determining their wellbeing, tending to focus on the individual.
- **Reduce vulnerability and/or increase adaptive capacity, especially of the most vulnerable and those most at risk to climate change** (*Reduced vulnerability*): Focuses on enhancing capacities to adapt to, avoid, reduce, or capitalise on risk. Indicator-based vulnerability assessment

methods or participatory approaches serve as metrics to monitor vulnerability reduction over time. Projects of this nature dominate the adaptation landscape at present.

- **Increase resilience by building functional persistence over long timescales so that systems have the ability to bounce back from climatic shocks** (*Enhanced resilience*): Originates in the Ecological Sciences and outlines three fundamental constituents of resilience within socio-ecological systems theory as functional persistence, self-organisation, and adaptation. Depending on the scale and scope of the system being considered, the resilience framing helps focus on temporal and spatial trade-offs and trade-offs between objectives (e.g., human wellbeing vs. environmental services).
- **Be economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable, explicitly looking at longer-term, cross-generational viability of adaptation actions** (*Sustainable adaptation*): Focuses on climate change vulnerability and gaps in adaptive capacity and adheres to the principles of sustainable development, moving towards goals of social equity and environmental integrity, looking primarily at the confluence of vulnerability and poverty reduction.
- **Take into account unintended negative consequences and explicitly look at the cross-scalar, long-term impacts of adaptation actions** (*Avoiding maladaptation*): Defines maladaptation as an action taken ostensibly to avoid or reduce vulnerability to climate change that impacts adversely on, or increases the vulnerability of other systems, sectors, or social groups. It calls for thinking of the most vulnerable, but the lack of assessment metrics is a big gap in this approach.
- **Invest in ecosystem conservation, management, and restoration to enhance ecosystem services, and hence reduce impacts of climate change on human systems** (*Ecosystem-based adaptation*): Highlights that human wellbeing and adaptive capacities are deeply dependent on biodiversity and functioning ecosystem services, and focuses on sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem functioning. Metrics include quantification of ecological limits and indicator-based assessments of how adaptation strategies are benefiting/eroding ecosystem services.
- **Be co-produced with communities to ensure inclusive and sustainable adaptation** (*Community-based adaptation*): A bottom-up approach that focuses on increasing the participation and agency of vulnerable communities in adaptation prioritisation and implementation. It argues that co-producing adaptation solutions can facilitate more effective adaptation. CbA explicitly focuses on mainstreaming community priorities, needs, knowledge, and capacities into adaptation, thereby aiming to empower people to adapt more effectively. Participatory vulnerability assessment tools before and after adaptation interventions are often used for evidence-based adaptation planning and tracking adaptation outcomes.
- **Be oriented towards achieving transparency, accountability, and representation in governance through multi-scalar, participatory, and inclusive processes** (*Adaptive governance*): Draws from research on managing complex, dynamic, social-ecological systems to argue for institutions that are flexible and forward-looking, have the capacity to prepare for uncertainty and explicitly address current climate change impacts, while planning for future risks. It also includes the concept of good governance. A key assumption of this framing is that unequal power structures can be balanced by greater participation and inclusion. While policy learning is seen to be important in the multi-level governance literature, social learning is identified as critical in the adaptation literature.
- **Be oriented towards socially just and equitable processes and outcomes** (*Equity/justice*): A normative, people-centred approach that explicitly focuses on winners and losers from both climate change impacts and adaptation action. It frames effective adaptation as redressing imbalances to achieve more equitable adaptation and reduce socially unjust outcomes. It makes the case for ensuring that the most vulnerable are shielded from climate impacts and that their well-being is not compromised further through actions taken to respond to climate change. It includes the concepts of gender equity and empowerment. Lack of good metrics is a gap in this approach.
- **Be a process that fundamentally changes human thinking and practices in the face of climate change and overtly challenges the power structures that generate vulnerability to its impacts** (*Transformation*): Generally assumes that climate change brings risks that are beyond society's ability to manage through 'business-as-usual' (or incremental) approaches to adaptation, and that fundamental change is both feasible and desirable. It is centrally concerned with reducing marginalisation and strengthening the capacities of the most vulnerable.

Embedded in this framework are further suggested theoretical and methodological frameworks such as systems thinking, community-based participatory approaches, ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), agroecology, V-STEOP, adaptive planning and a range of similar frameworks.

A policy area that has gained much traction recently in South Africa is Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA), which is an area in which the DFFE is active. EbA is defined as “sustainable management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems, as part of an overall adaptation strategy that takes into account the multiple social, economic and cultural co-benefits for local communities” (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2010). The rationale for EbA is laid out in the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS), under the key message “Adapting to build a strong South Africa.” (DEA, 2019).

4.2 SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORKS AND STAKEHOLDER PLATFORMS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION (CBCCA)

The Climate Change Act forms the first legal framework for South Africa’s response to the impacts of climate change and formalises the requirements for provincial and municipal structures to develop climate change needs analyses and implementation plans. The act was promulgated in July 2024 with the intention to enable the development of an effective climate change response and a long-term, just transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy and society for South Africa in the context of sustainable development, and to provide for matters connected therewith.

The following principles for the interpretation and application of the Climate Change Act are congruent with CbCCA:

- Principle 3(d): A contribution to a just transition towards low-carbon, **climate-resilient and ecologically sustainable economies and societies** which contribute to the creation of decent work for all, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty. While this is most often considered in terms of the “just energy transition” away from coal and towards renewable energy sources, it applies equally well to CCA by smallholder farmers.
- Principle 3(f): The need for decision-making to consider the **special needs and circumstances of localities and people that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, including vulnerable workers and groups such as women, especially poor and rural women**, children, especially infants and child-headed families, the aged, the poor, the sick, and the physically challenged.

The Climate Change Bill specifies that national adaptation objectives must be set up and incorporated into all relevant national planning instruments, policies, and programmes, along with indicators for measuring progress towards achieving the national adaptation objectives. The Minister must collate, compile, and synthesise information relevant to the achievement of the national adaptation objectives and thereafter publish a Synthesis Adaptation Report for consideration by Cabinet and to be used in national and international reporting processes.

A final area of policy is provincial and municipal government climate adaptation policy. The Climate Change Bill requires MECs and mayors of metropolitan and district municipalities to undertake a climate change needs and response assessment for their province, metropolitan or district municipality, and a climate change response implementation plan that will form part of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

The Presidential Climate Commission is an important national multistakeholder forum provided for in the Climate Change Bill, and which is now operational. It includes representatives from civil society, business, government, and organised labour, with the purpose of advising, monitoring, and evaluating progress towards the country’s adaptation goals.

At the District Municipality level, the Disaster Management Advisory Forums also act as multistakeholder forums for climate change responses. Besides disaster response and preparedness,

their role includes the development and maintenance of disaster risk management information and communication systems, including early warning systems, which often include climate-related information. They are also meant to assist by means of focused, integrated, and holistic risk reduction strategies within the broader context of sustainable development.

Catchment Management Forums (CMFs) are public forums under the national Department of Water and Sanitation, specifically focused on water resources management. They may be established for a river catchment or a portion of a catchment. Their role is to provide stakeholders with relevant and up-to-date information, to provide advice and input into water management processes, to implement decisions, and to act as a watchdog.

Another relevant type of regional-level forum that is gradually becoming more widely established across the country is multistakeholder catchment-based forums known variously as catchment partnerships, water source partnerships, or water funds, which aim to bring a variety of land and water users together to facilitate integrated management of land and water; alongside significant support from SANBI. The Living Catchments Programme has provided significant funding (DSI, WRC, and SANBI) to support such partnerships over ten years (2015–2025) in selected river catchments.¹ However, these partnerships are also often led and resourced by NGO and civil society partners rather than the government.

¹ <https://www.sanbi.org/biodiversity/science-into-policy-action/mainstreaming-biodiversity/living-catchments-project/>

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY FOR PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT

The following are a broad set of steps required to set up and run a multistakeholder platform. The details and chronology of these steps will depend on the context and members to a large extent. This section will provide a summary table of steps and then a brief example of the initiation and development of a recently established catchment forum, known as the Northern Drakensberg Collaborative.

5.1 STEPS IN MULTISTAKEHOLDER PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT

The impetus for creating multistakeholder platforms in CCbCA lies in the recognition that effective and sustainable solutions to climate challenges require collaboration across diverse sectors and perspectives. Communities face complex, interconnected vulnerabilities that no single actor can address alone. Once a group of people and organisations comes together to discuss such an option and how it could be done, then the process can be initiated. Table 2 outlines the steps. It should be noted that most of these steps require multiple activities, meetings, and workshops, with different groups of people and role players.

Table 2: Steps in the development of multistakeholder platforms

Step	Description
Initiation	- Concerned individuals, groups, and organisations discuss the potential of setting up a forum that includes relevant role players and stakeholders. - Initial meetings and workshops serve to highlight issues and reasons for such a forum and to pull in the initial core group who are prepared to drive the process, providing time and resources to the effort. - Stakeholder meetings are undertaken to develop interest and motivation and start to build the collaboration for a forum and partnership.
Stakeholder identification and analysis	- A process of mapping all role-players (or the initial set of critical role-players) is undertaken and usually includes people from the affected communities, NGOs, the private sector, local government, and academic institutions. - This could be an iterative process and is refined over time to include an analysis of roles and influence. - Ensure diverse representation and inclusive participation.
Climate risk and needs assessments	- This could consist of conducting vulnerability assessments and resource mapping, gathering both local knowledge (participatory) and using available scientific and desktop information. - It can also take the form of a baseline or initial assessment of the current situation in the area, conducted as a participatory process. - This step also helps to define the boundaries of the forum, both geographically and thematically.
Visioning and goal setting	- Before or as part of a visioning process, the issues of concern for the participants in the fledgling forum are raised and discussed, so that the resultant vision can clearly incorporate goals for working towards solutions. - This step usually consists of facilitated workshops to develop and establish a shared vision between stakeholders. It helps at this stage to work with experienced facilitators who can also guide the process. - Define clear and measurable objectives of the effort.
Sharing and learning	- This is not a single step but happens throughout in a structured way, decided upon by the participants. This could be through regular workshops where members present their work and thematic questions are explored, and through experiential learning in different contexts through field days, cross visits, and the like. - This step helps participants to understand each other, build rapport, and identify initial areas of joint interest and action. - Address barriers to participation for marginalised groups. - Promote leadership roles for women and youth in adaptation planning. - Facilitate peer learning and capacity building. - Develop and share best practices, case studies, and toolkits.

Step	Description
	- Implement joint projects, pilot initiatives, or policy advocacy efforts. - The role of research organisations and support within the platform is defined, and a broad adaptive research agenda in line with the objectives and inclusive of stakeholders and the communities is outlined. - A formal launch event to create awareness and buy-in for the platform is usually undertaken once the structure and process are reasonably well defined. - Set up a knowledge-sharing repository such as a website or document hub.
Structuring the platform	- Explore governance models and set a process for formalisation in motion. This step should not be rushed and can often happen in incremental steps over time, which is preferred over formalising a platform before participants are coherently interacting or committed to the outcomes of the process. - Developing a value proposition that outlines the 'services' of the platform and the outputs or benefits to members/collaborators is a good way to focus such discussions. - Create guiding principles for participation and engagement. - Work through collaborative decision-making processes, outlining how they will occur, who should be involved, and how. - Define a core team or secretariat and set up a steering committee for strategic oversight. - Develop clear roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes for the structure. - When the timing is right, choose a legal or informal structure based on needs (e.g., a coalition, working group, or registered entity).
Establishing initial action plans and milestones	- The adaptive planning process is continued to work on activity sets and implementation plans for the forum, based on the refined vision and objectives. - Collaborative work packages are outlined with deadlines and milestones. - Collaborative planning sessions for designing climate adaptation interventions that can pilot and scale up locally driven solutions are a central component. - Platforms set up in complex environments, with members or participants from a range of sectors, may want to set up working groups or CoPs within the platform to focus the efforts of specific interest groups within the broader platform.
Coordination and communication	- Set up regular meetings, progress reports, and knowledge-sharing sessions. - Create accessible communication channels for all stakeholders, including digital tools for data sharing and ongoing communication, such as newsletters, blogs, and social media, to share updates. - Develop reports, infographics, and videos for broader dissemination. - Engage members through surveys and interactive discussions. - Organise annual conferences, webinars, or high-level summits. - Document processes for adapting the platform model to other communities and areas and share experiences with similar platforms.
Resource mobilisation	- Identify funding opportunities both for the platform itself and for fostering collaborative implementation and partnerships. - Create transparent resource management systems. - Allocate resources for staffing, events, research, and digital infrastructure. - Develop long-term funding strategies (e.g., local revenue generation, grants). - Promote private sector partnerships for co-financing adaptation.
MERL	- Design a monitoring, evaluation, reflection, and learning process, linked to the objectives, outputs, and outcomes. - Define key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress. - Conduct regular assessments of impact and effectiveness, gather feedback, and continuously refine strategies. - Document lessons learned and best practices for scaling up, highlighting replicable approaches, tools, and strategies.
Sustaining the MSP	- Strengthen partnerships with policymakers and funders. - Ensure alignment with regional and national policies. - Institutionalise the network (e.g., legal registration, long-term funding). - Establish culturally appropriate protocols for resolving disputes. - Expand outreach to new stakeholders and regions. - Foster leadership succession and community ownership.

5.2 EXAMPLE: THE NORTHERN DRAKENSBERG COLLABORATIVE (NDC)



Figure 7: Some of the initial convenors and core team members exploring and discussing aspects of the landscape (Photo: Kirsten Oliver)

5.1.1 Partnership principles

There are several principles that underpin and guide the NDC, namely:

- Inclusivity: The operation of the NDC and its activities will be designed to allow for the inclusion of all member groups.
- Equity: The structures of the NDC will represent all member groups.
- Respect: Members will respect the views of others.
- Diversity: The NDC recognizes different races, genders, religions, and is apolitical.

5.1.2 Value proposition

As shown in the figure below, the NDC provides a range of benefits for its members while also requiring certain inputs from them. This was developed to foster a clear understanding of the reciprocal nature of a forum and its members, and to clearly define what this collaboration is about.

The benefits of the partnership for its members can be summarised as follows:

- Networking: Providing a platform for different stakeholders to engage and exchange.
- Monitoring: A vehicle for monitoring the implementation of activities.
- Co-learning: A mechanism for co-learning among stakeholders within and beyond.
- Fundraising: Stakeholders can work collectively to raise funds.
- Sharing: The platform allows for the sharing of information through different channels.
- Co-implementation: Members can implement activities collectively.
- Lobbying: The platform provides a voice for its members.
- Supporting research: The platform can support research and share research outcomes.

The input required by its members can be summarised as:

- Participate: Members need to participate in meetings, events, and discussions.

- Provide: Members need to be willing to provide resources of different types.
- Share: Members need to be open to sharing information and experiences.
- Commit: Members need to commit to the partnership.
- Collaborate: Members need to be willing to collaborate on activities.

The NDC will provide benefits to its members through the following:

- A stakeholder database.
- Collaborative working groups.
- A website and newsletter.
- Co-opting multiple stakeholders.

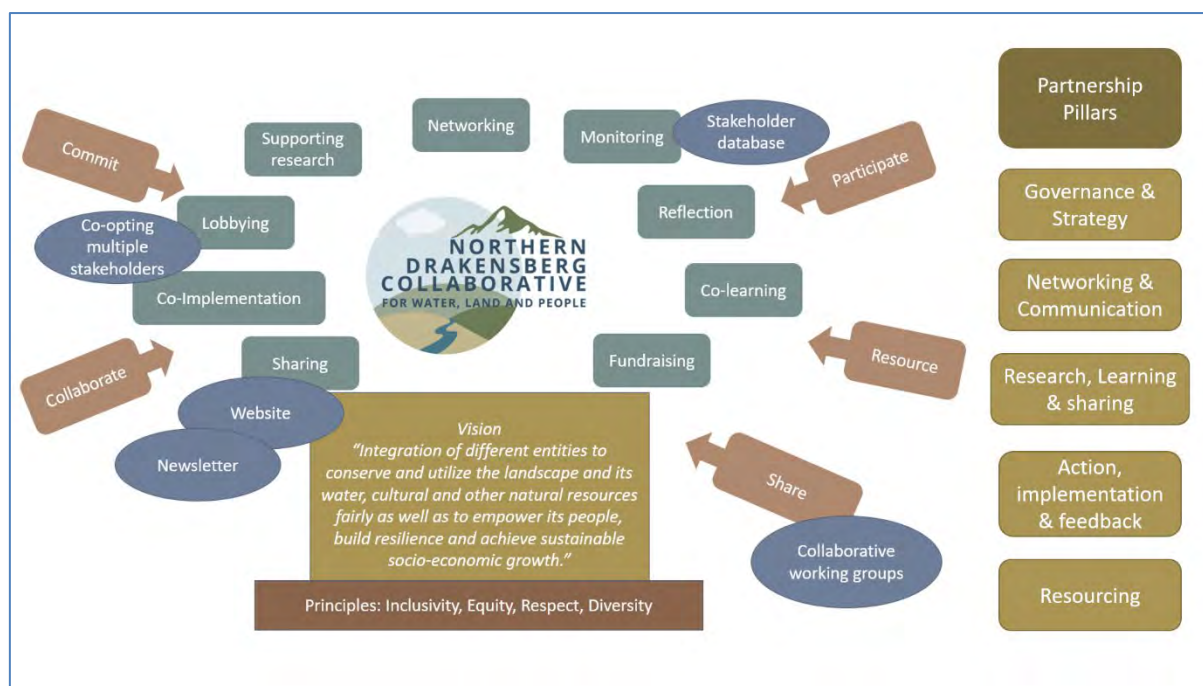


Figure 8: Diagram showing the elements of the Northern Drakensberg Collaborative (NDC)

5.1.3 Partnership pillars

The NDC relies on five partnership pillars:

1. Governance and strategy
2. Networking & communication
3. Learning & sharing
4. Action, implementation, and feedback
5. Resourcing

The expected outcomes for each of the pillars, together with activities required to achieve the outcomes, are summarised below.

Table 3: Summary of outcomes and activities associated with each of the NDC partnership pillars

Pillar	Outcome	Activities
Governance and strategy	Internal: Effective governance of the NDC partnership. External: Effective governance within the SWSA; integrated catchment management.	Establish a secretariat for the NDC and CoP theme leaders to drive action. Monitor the effectiveness of the partnership and the impacts on the ground. Engage LM about alignment with IDP.

Pillar	Outcome	Activities
Networking & communication	Internal: Enhanced sharing between partners. External: Enhanced communication with partners beyond the catchment.	Enhance sharing over email and website. NDC members to participate in other forums to network information.
Research, learning, and sharing	Sharing of information and knowledge leads to enhanced impact. A shared research agenda for the catchment.	Make reports and guidelines available on the website. Establish a research task team to drive an agenda.
Action, implementation & feedback	Solutions to address challenges are co-developed, tested, and assessed.	Update the map of partner activities. Develop a joint database for action.
Resourcing	Partnership resourced for good governance, to network, learn, share, and implement	Find ways to resource NDC activities when there is no funded convener team. Fundraise for a partnership. Fundraise for action.

5.1.4 Membership

Membership of the NDC is open to all organisations with a presence in the Northern Drakensberg SWSA that work/operate in the water-livelihoods-biodiversity and climate change adaptation space. This includes community structures and Traditional Authorities. Signing the commitment statement is the first step in the membership process.

Member activities have been summarised across the different sectors and groups of members as shown in the list below:

- Engage in lobbying activities to drive shared agendas.
- Co-implement projects that meet shared objectives.
- Collectively fundraise for activities by co-developing concept notes and proposals.
- Implement projects that provide jobs, improve livelihoods, and eradicate poverty.
- Promote sustainable land management practices related to grazing, restoration, and clearing of alien invasive species.
- Contribute resources that can support landscape management activities.
- Invest in the catchment to contribute to companies' sustainability targets.
- Collaborate to strengthen governance arrangements for better natural resource management in communal areas.
- Share knowledge and create awareness about the NDC and its members.
- Share research findings with other members and translate research outcomes into action.

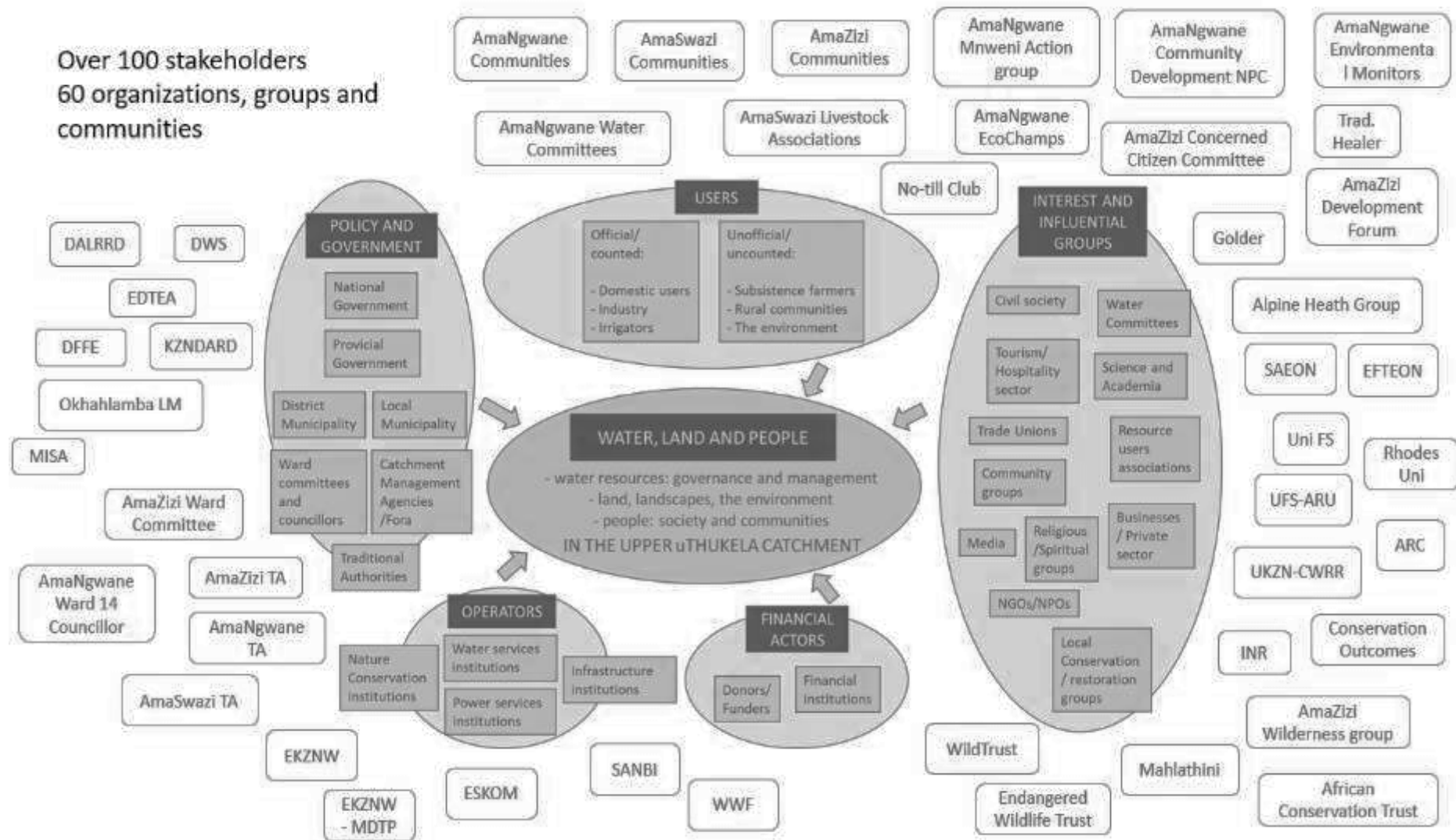


Figure 9: Stakeholder mapping for the Northern Drakensberg Collaborative

5.1.5 Structure

During these early stages of establishing and strengthening the NDC, there has been an intermediate arrangement that has comprised a convening team, guided by a core team that represents the members of the NDC. There have been efforts to establish CoPs or working groups that focus on different topics. In time, the structure will adopt a different arrangement, where a secretariat will be guided by a management committee that comprises a leader from each of the CoPs/working groups. The CoPs will draw their membership from the NDC members, who are free to participate in one or more CoPs/working groups.

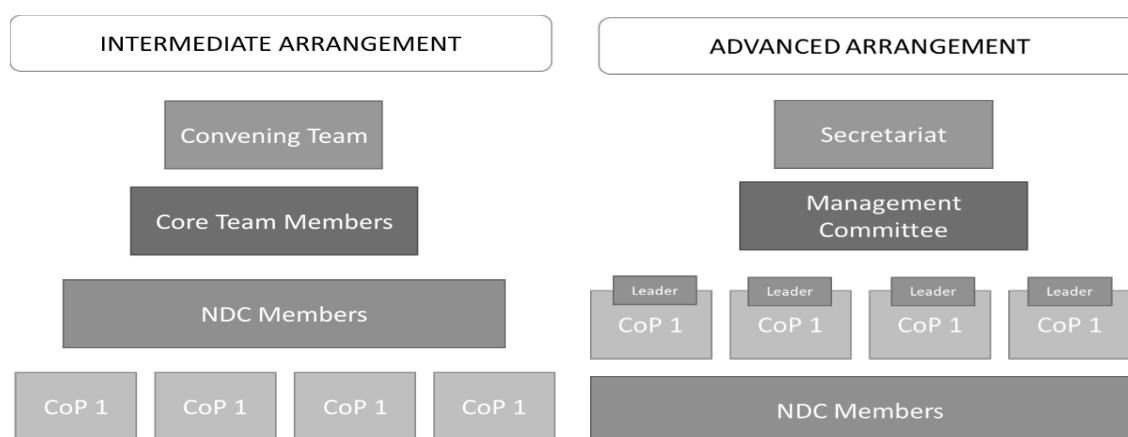


Figure 10: Diagram representing the present and future organisational structure of the NDC

5.1.6 Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation process for the partnership is seen as a tool for reflecting on the performance of the partnership itself as well as the contribution it is making to improving livelihoods and the state of the natural resources within the Northern Drakensberg SWSA, with a focus on the upper uThukela Catchment. Given that the vision for the NDC goes beyond the partnership towards having positive impacts on natural resources and the people that depend on them, the M&E system should consider the different levels as shown in Figure 11.



Figure 11: Different elements that require monitoring and evaluation

For the overall partnership, the M&E process can focus on the pillars as shown in Table 4. Later, when CoPs/working groups develop their own visions and objectives, the M&E process can be expanded to incorporate them.

Table 4: Examples of indicators for monitoring anticipated outcomes for the partnership pillars

Relationship to the NDC	Components of the vision	Indicators to track
Within the partnership	Collaboration Different entities	Evidence of collaboration Number and diversity of entities
Beyond the partnership	Conserve and sustainably utilise resources fairly Empower its people Build resilience Achieve sustainable socio-economic growth	Implementation of projects towards these objectives – tracking, for example: - o Areas cleared of invasive aliens - o Areas under improved management - o Areas restored - o Jobs created Changes in policies/plans towards these objectives Research undertaken towards achieving these objectives

5.3 MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

Monitoring and evaluation systems include, at a minimum, a monitoring component through which data are collected to track project progress and record outputs and achievements, and an evaluation component through which the merit of these achievements is assessed. In the development sector, these two components typically look like this:

- **Monitoring:** A monitoring framework is designed to collect quantitative (or, less often, qualitative) indicator data based on the planned objectives, activities, outputs, and outcomes. These data often need to be reported to funders or higher-level institutions as evidence that progress is being made.
- **Evaluation:** Evaluation processes are typically carried out by external experts, at the end of a project or initiative, and possibly also mid-way, to determine its effectiveness, efficiency, value-for-money, and sustainability. Additional data are collected (besides the monitoring data) to inform the evaluation, often from project reports and other documents, interviews, and site visits.

A third component that is often mentioned as part of M&E systems is learning:

- **Learning:** Most M&E frameworks will say that they intend to promote learning. However, the details of what type of learning is expected, by whom, and when, are often not specified. Learning is most commonly stated as being important for developing 'best practice' guidelines, allowing upscaling of successes, and sharing knowledge with other projects, practitioners, or institutions. This implies a kind of learning that is focused on documenting and communicating successes, which is most easily done at the end of a project. Learning may (less commonly) also be considered important for facilitating ongoing adaptive management and responsiveness to changing conditions, or as part of a capacity development process.

Monitoring and evaluation that places particular emphasis on learning is often referred to as **MEL** (monitoring, evaluation, and learning), or **MERL** (monitoring, evaluation, reflection, and learning – which specifies reflection as an important process to enable learning).

A fourth component that may be included or emphasised is planning:

- **Planning:** The planning component is usually added to indicate a specific desire to integrate monitoring, evaluation (and possibly learning) processes into planning processes, for example, within an organisation, usually for the purposes of strengthening the use of M&E data or recommendations and strategic adaptive management.

The acronyms **PME** (planning, monitoring, and evaluation) and **PMEL** (planning, monitoring, evaluation, and learning) foreground the planning component. Integration into planning processes is important because, without it, M&E becomes disconnected from management and decision-making and is not acted upon or prioritised, even if effective learning is taking place among other actors in the system. The above overview is outlined in Figure 12 and shows AWARD's MERL system for RESILIM-O – a seven-year resilience-building programme in the Olifants River catchment in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and Mozambique.

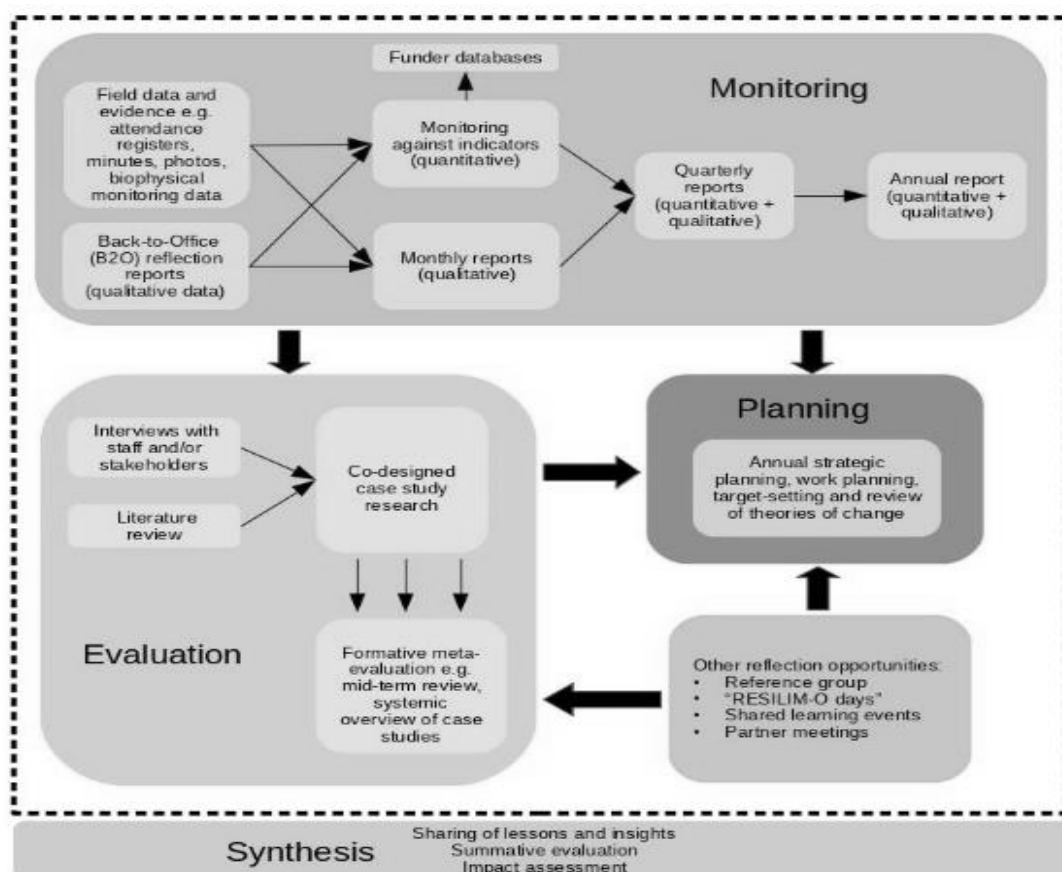


Figure 12: Components of a MERL system

Learning does not appear in a particular box because it was deliberately embedded across the whole system.

5.1.7 Factors to take into account when designing an M&E system

Much has been written about the need for M&E designs to consider the complexity of the social-ecological contexts in which programmes are implemented (e.g., Bellamy et al., 2001; Patton, 2008, 2010; Funnell & Rogers, 2011; Pringle et al., 2011; Douthwaite & Hofecker, 2017; Hertz et al., 2021; USAID, 2021). Features of complex systems are well documented (Preiser et al., 2020) and include high levels of relationality or interconnectedness, 'radical' openness (making them difficult to bound), profound contextual influences, dynamism, adaptive capacity, emergence, complex causality, and non-linear pathways of change. These features have implications for the way in which progress and success can or should be monitored and evaluated. Table 5 summarises the implications of complex systems features (as identified by Preiser et al., 2018) for monitoring and evaluation.

Table 5: Features of complex social-ecological systems (SES) and their implications for M&E.
Source: Kotschy et al. (unpublished)

Features of complex SES (Preisner et al., 2018)	Implications for monitoring and evaluation
Constituted relationally - Process-dependent interactions on multiple scales result in networks of interactive relations. - Complex systems are defined more by the interactions among their components than by the components themselves.	Multiple activities and role players will be linked to outcomes; it is often difficult to attribute change to the actions of individual stakeholders. Different stakeholders have different interests and criteria for the success of an intervention, and different ways of making sense of past events. Social complexity is often not easy to see or understand from the outside, and simply listing the stakeholders is not sufficient. Since interactions are structured by processes, there is a need to evaluate processes, such as processes of social learning, participation, relationship- and team building, planning, learning, innovation, sharing of information, capacity development, and collaboration.
Radically open - All systems exhibit hierarchy as each is part of a wider system and is made up of sub-systems. Systemic interactions generate effects that have impacts across scales and domains. - How we describe (or identify) systems is a function of our individual points of view.	System boundaries need to be chosen and assumptions clarified. Evaluators may need to go beyond their areas of expertise or work in transdisciplinary teams to identify and evaluate impacts and influences beyond the chosen system boundary. Need to link across multiple scales, e.g., international, national, local. There are often long-time lags between actions and outcomes or impacts.
Context dependent The identity and functions of complex systems are defined by the context in which they exist.	Evaluators need to understand context, and often need help to do so, or they need to be embedded in the context themselves. Cause-and-effect mechanisms interact dynamically with the context and so need to be evaluated in a context-sensitive way.
Adaptive Complex systems have self-organising capacities and can adjust their behaviour as a response to changes in their environments.	Ongoing learning is vital to guide the strategic direction of interventions. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting processes must stimulate as well as adequately capture and share learning. Evaluation needs to provide timeous and effective feedback to enable appropriate responses and adaptation. Over the life of a programme, the focus and methods of evaluation may need to change. Initially, a more open-ended and developmental approach is required, which progressively becomes more focused while retaining the system gaze. People have multiple motivations for changing their behaviour, e.g., people don't only respond to climate when adapting. Maladaptation is also possible. Transformation is also possible.
Dynamic Non-linear dynamic processes and feedback loops can dampen or amplify perturbations. Small changes can have significant, cascading effects resulting in multiple modes of system-wide reorganisation or regime shifts.	Shifting baselines and contexts. Stakeholder interests and criteria for success change over time. Power and politics are pervasive within social networks and can exert strong influences on the potential for change in a system. Patterns and effects are inherently uncertain and cannot be accurately predicted. There is a possibility of unintended consequences (positive or negative).
Complex causality Through the interaction of the individual components, novel qualities and phenomena emerge. Hence, the whole is more than the sum of its parts, and systems cannot be understood based solely on information relating to the individual parts.	It is difficult to link causes and effects, and multiple complicated pathways and mechanisms interact dynamically with the context. Pathways to impact are often non-linear. Multiple outcomes and confounding factors are present. It is difficult to measure non-events or damage avoided. Many outcomes of interest cannot be adequately captured using simple quantitative measures.

5.1.8 MERL for CbCCA

A resounding call for evidence-based measurements (both qualitative and quantitative) of the impact of interventions and processes in climate change adaptation and climate resilience can be heard across sectors. While the primary emphasis globally is on governmental contributions, commitments, and flows of finance, a broad range of other institutional role players have been grappling with the need for and possibility of a synergised framework for monitoring and evaluation. Given the wide range of methodological approaches, from top-down to locally led adaptation, and the different contexts for implementation, this has been a complicated and confusing task.

The CCA M&E approach for South Africa has been organised into nine Desired Adaptation Outcomes (DAOs). Each is of crosscutting, cross-sectoral relevance and describes, in a general sense, a desired state that will enhance South Africa's transition towards climate resilience. These DAOs fall into two distinct groups and are shown in the table below.

Table 6: South Africa's desired adaptation outcomes

Inputs to enable effective adaptation	
G1	Robust/integrated policies, programmes and plans for effective delivery of climate change adaptation, together with monitoring, evaluation and review over the short, medium and longer term.
G2	Appropriate resources (including current and past financial investments), capacity and processes (human, legal, and regulatory), and support mechanisms (institutional and governance structures) to facilitate climate change adaptation.
G3	Accurate climate information (e.g., historical trend data, seasonal predictions, future projections, and early warning of extreme weather and other climate-related events) provided by existing and new monitoring and forecasting facilities/networks (including their maintenance and enhancement) to inform adaptation planning and disaster risk reduction.
G4	Capacity development, education, and awareness programmes (formal and informal) for climate change adaptation (e.g., informed by adaptation research and with tools to utilise data/outputs).
G5	New and adapted technologies, knowledge, research, and other cost-effective measures (e.g., nature-based solutions) are used in climate change adaptation.
G6	Climate change risks, impacts, and vulnerabilities identified and addressed.
Impacts of adaptation interventions and associated measures	
G7	Systems, infrastructure, communities, and sectors are less vulnerable to climate change impacts (e.g., through the effectiveness of adaptation interventions/response measures).
G8	Non-climate pressures and threats to human and natural systems reduced (particularly where these compound climate change impacts).
G9	Secure food, water, and energy supplies for all citizens (within the context of climate change and sustainable development).

(From NCCAS, 2020)

The idea of resilience, particularly as a programming tool in response to disaster and climate-change phenomena, has become increasingly prevalent in international development. Given the widespread use of the terminology in various fields and by various technical and non-technical actors, it is important to present a synthesised view of resilience and create a common language to advance core terms. It is particularly important to translate high-level concepts of resilience into actionable measurement metrics to implement, monitor, and evaluate resilience programmes.

The COSA (Committee on Sustainable Assessments) resilience measurement approach builds on the best current work globally to distil the optimal practices into a pragmatic and relatively low-cost process that permits a solid basic understanding while increasing broad access to these simpler tools (COSA, 2017).

Indicators Classification

Capacity approach: The capacity approach was developed by Béné et al. and is founded on a belief that resilience is a dynamic construct described by three main strategies used to cope with stressors and shocks: absorptive, adaptive and transformative.

- **Absorptive capacity:** This is the ability to reduce both risk of exposure to shocks and stressors and to absorb the impacts of shocks in the short term. We classify into absorptive capacity all the indicators necessary for risk prevention and risk mitigation.
- **Adaptive capacity:** Adaptive capacity is the ability to respond to longer-term social, economic and environmental change. We classify all the proactive choices about alternative livelihood strategies in light of changing conditions into adaptive capacity.
- **Transformative capacity:** Transformative capacity represents the ability to enhance governance and enable conditions that make households and communities more resilient. In other words, transformative capacity refers to system-level changes that enable a more lasting resilience.

Capital approach: The capital approach is founded on a belief that people require a range of assets to achieve positive livelihood outcomes. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (DFID, 2000) inspired this vision.

- **Human capital** includes indicators referring to skills, knowledge, ability to work and good health that are important to the pursuit of livelihood strategies.
- **Socio-political capital** includes the quantity and quality of social resources (e.g. networks, membership in groups, social relations and access to wider institutions in society) from which people draw in pursuit of their livelihoods. It encapsulates good governance indicators.
- **Natural capital** includes all indicators that represent factors affecting households' livelihoods through climate change variables (e.g. adaptation, mitigation and sequestration practices) and through human activity.
- **Physical capital** includes infrastructure, services and productive assets that enable people to maintain safety and enhance their relative level of well-being.
- **Financial capital** includes all indicators referring to the financial resources that households use to achieve their economic and social objectives. It includes cash and other liquid resources, (e.g. savings, credit, remittances, pensions).

The approach used to classify the indicators and balances a multi-dimensional view based on dynamic resilience capacities (adaptive, absorptive, and transformative) with static social, environmental, and economic dimensions (see text box: *Indicators classification*) to capture the complexity of factors relevant to measuring agricultural resilience. These elements are, in turn, disaggregated into the commonly accepted capitals (human, physical, socio-political, financial, natural) of a resilience measurement system in line with the Sustainable Livelihood Framework devised by the Department for International Development (DIFD, 2000).

The lessons learned from the field allowed COSA to define a set of Resilience Key Performance Indicators (R-KPIs) to create pragmatic knowledge on critical aspects of resilience and to address two main challenges of the current resilience approaches: complexity and high implementation costs.

Table 6 captures the full set of resilience indicators as outlined by COSA and provides a comparison with the indicators used in the South African Adaptation Fund process.

Table 7: Outline of resilience indicators considered globally and nationally for CC adaptation

COSA Resilience indicator library			Adaptation Fund: Core indicators
Global theme	Indicator	Description	
Shock and risk	Risk context information	The type of risks that households are exposed to.	
	Occurrence and severity of shocks	The occurrence of three major shocks (social, economic, or environmental) that led to a serious reduction in a household's income.	

COSA Resilience indicator library			Adaptation Fund: Core indicators
Global theme	Indicator	Description	
		assets, or consumption in the last production year. Shocks ranked in order of severity.	
	Type of coping strategies and severity	Type of coping strategies that households applied to face the main shock experienced in the last production year (migration, aid, new sources of income, reducing expenses, using savings). Coping strategies ranked in order of importance.	
	Individual preparedness strategies	Strategies implemented by the household to face shocks (stock of feed/seeds, storage of water, measures taken to overcome leaf rust, new seed varieties/animal breeds, irrigation systems).	
	Recovery ability	Perceived speed and ability to recover from the main shock experienced in the last production year.	
	Early warning systems	Access, source (extension agents, government officials, ICT), and frequency of critical information about adverse events. Perceptions about the quality of information.	
Community and institutional environment	Perceptions around the political environment	Perceptions about accountability and transparency of the political process, feelings of safety in community life, and trust in institutions.	
	Participation in decision-making structures	Involvement and participation of household and minority groups (women, youth) in decision-making structures (village councils, tribal councils, producer organisations).	
	Participation in community activities	Involvement and participation of household members in community activities (improvements in agricultural facilities, access to water or sewage, medical care, road or school construction).	
	Perceptions about the political environment	Perceptions about accountability and transparency of the political process, feelings of safety in community life, and trust in institutions.	
	Access to safety nets	Availability of safety nets, both formal and informal, providing reasonable or ready support (food, work, cash) in case of necessity.	
Living conditions	Poverty status*	Progress out of Poverty Index score (PPI) and evaluation of poverty propensity; this compares a household's revenue to the national (or regional, if available) poverty line.	
Basic human rights and equity	Household adults' level of education (primary, secondary, etc.)	Number of household members aged 15 years and older who have a primary school or higher level of education.	
	Days without sufficient food*	Number of days in the past year that any member of the household cut food consumption due to lack of food, and months/times of year of comparatively less household food security.	
	Nutritional diversity	Number of different food types (from list) that a family has eaten in the past seven days.	
Innovation	Access to information	Access to information about cropping and livestock practices through training programmes (hours and type of training); access to market information (prices buyer receives, other local prices, global prices); access to weather information; access to health/nutrition information.	
	Adoption of new technologies	Adoption of new cropping/livestock practices and new agricultural equipment in the last five years.	
Information	Source of information	Source of information: extension agents, government officials, ICT, elders, peers.	
Basic services and infrastructures	Access to school	Availability (presence and affordability) of school within a reasonable travel distance.	
	Access to medical care	Availability (presence and affordability) of medical care (nurse, doctor, or clinic) within a reasonable travelling distance.	
	Access to electricity	Availability (presence) of electricity at home (private generator or public electricity supply).	
	Access to water	Household access to water they consider safe to drink.	
Producers' livelihood	Diversification of income	Portion of total production net income from focus crop, other crops, livestock activities, and business activities.	
	Net household income	Total household revenue less total costs for focus-crop production, other crop and livestock production costs, and costs for businesses run by household members.	

COSA Resilience indicator library			Adaptation Fund: Core indicators
Global theme	Indicator	Description	
Financial resources	Access to credit	Access to medium-sized production loans within a reasonable time (if needed); a potential source of the loan.	
	Productive assets	Number of agricultural productive assets (medium-scale equipment and large vehicles), livestock, and hectares of land owned/rented.	
	Access to savings	Type of savings tools implemented by the household and the corresponding amount saved (when applicable): investment in livestock/crops/material assets; participation in local savings group; money lending to others; money savings at home; savings at banks and formal institutions.	
Diversification	Number of income sources	Number of other crops (including those intercropped with the focus crop) cultivated by the household. Number of self-employed (e.g., taxi driver, plumber, technician, etc.), or business activities (e.g., convenience store, handcrafting, etc.) in which the household is involved. The number of animal products (meat, dairy, wool, honey, etc.) produced on a farm for sale or for consumption. Number of other sources of income for the household (gifts, remittances, land rental, etc.).	
Climate change	Soil and Water Conservation	Measures taken to conserve soil and improve water use by plants (contour planting, soil cover, live fences, hedgerows, buffer zones, soil berms, etc.), erosion control, inter cropping.	
		Practices used to conserve water, such as drip irrigation, catchments, water-efficient processing, etc.	
	Local nutrient cycle	Soil fertility management practices (composting, mulching, etc.) and recycling of organic matter and crop wastes.	
	Land use change	Conversion of natural land (e.g., prairie, forest, etc.) to land used for cultivation or pasture and forest, or conversion from cultivated or pastureland to natural land.	
	Fertilizer use	Nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium amounts in synthetic fertilizers used and compared to focus-crop yields. This indicates both efficiency and potential pollution.	
	Pesticide use	Amount of natural or synthetic insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, etc. that are used on the focus crop.	
	Integrated pest management practices	Integrated pest management practices are employed on the farm.	

(from COSA, 2018)

5.1.9 MERL for MSPs

Here, in essence, one is trying to measure the impact of improved relationships in a system. Evaluation methodologies that can track the relational complexity in systems are quite varied, but not that well developed. Several evaluation methods that can be used are briefly described below.

Social network analysis: Network analysis software (such as Gephi and many others) can be used to represent networks or communities of practice graphically and to calculate various statistics that can be used to describe the network and quantify changes over time. Thus, comparing a social network analysis at the beginning of an MSP development with an analysis at later stages can provide valuable insights and statistics in relationship building. Figure 13 provides an example of a network analysis, in this case, the Sabie River stewardship project.

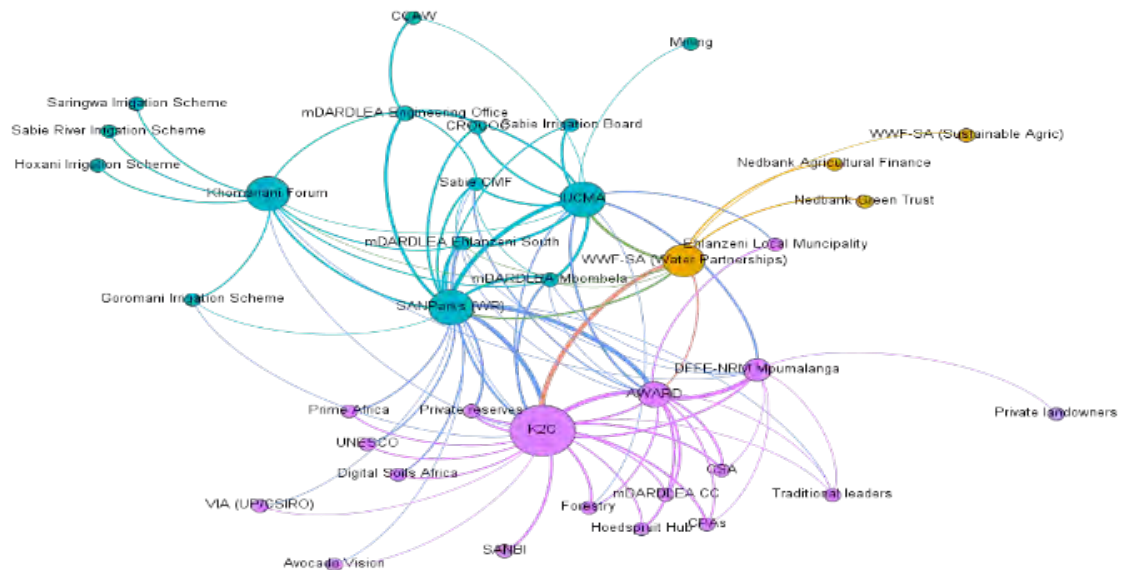


Figure 13: Stakeholder network at the end of the Sabie River Water

The **Value Creation Framework (VCF)** (Wenger et al., 2011; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020) is an evaluation framework that is especially useful for assessing value created through collaboration and social learning in networks and communities of practice. It links the *process* of engagement in networks to eventual *outcomes* such as changes in practice, which often follow later. The general underlying theory of change behind the VCF is as follows: CoP members participate in activities that generate interest or excitement or deliver some tangible benefit (immediate value). This participation develops insights, skills, and relationships, or strengthens participants' resolve (potential value). Members apply these insights, skills, and relationships to benefit their individual and collective work or do something new (applied value), leading to new, hopefully improved, practices and outcomes (realised value). Learning occurs in various ways throughout this process and may include reframing of issues and questioning of fundamental assumptions (transformative value).

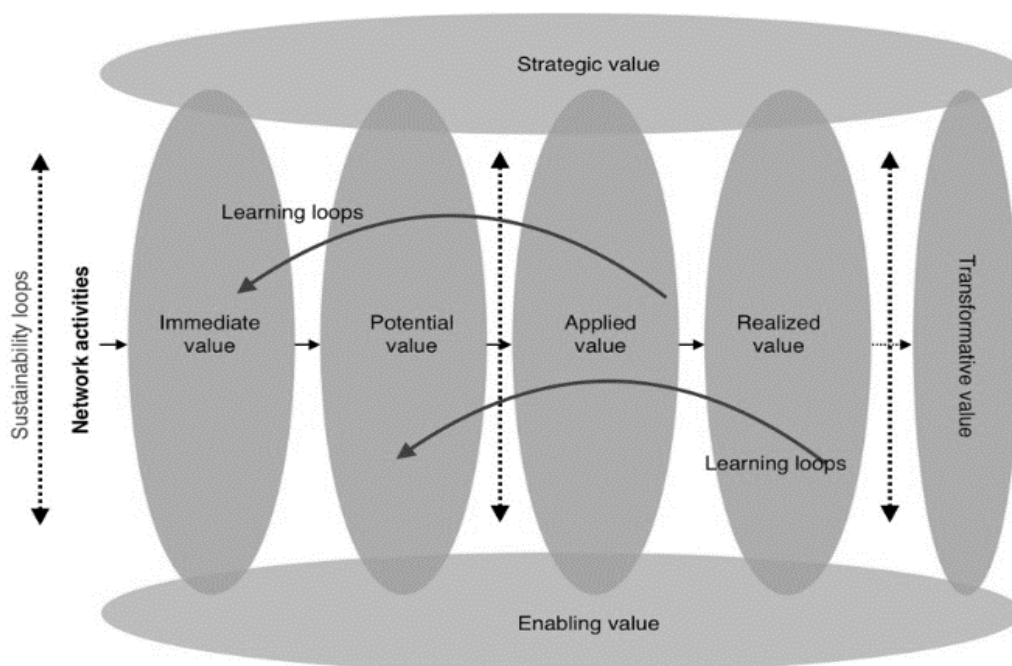


Figure 14: Value Creation Framework. Source: Wenger-Trayner (2014)

Ripple Effects Mapping was described by Medley-Daniel and Troisi (2019). A “three-pillar” evaluation model was used, which involved:

- Measuring connectivity using Social Network Analysis.
- Gathering anonymised quantitative data on the network’s health using a custom scorecard.
- Describing some of the network’s intermediate results and impacts with Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) and case study processes.

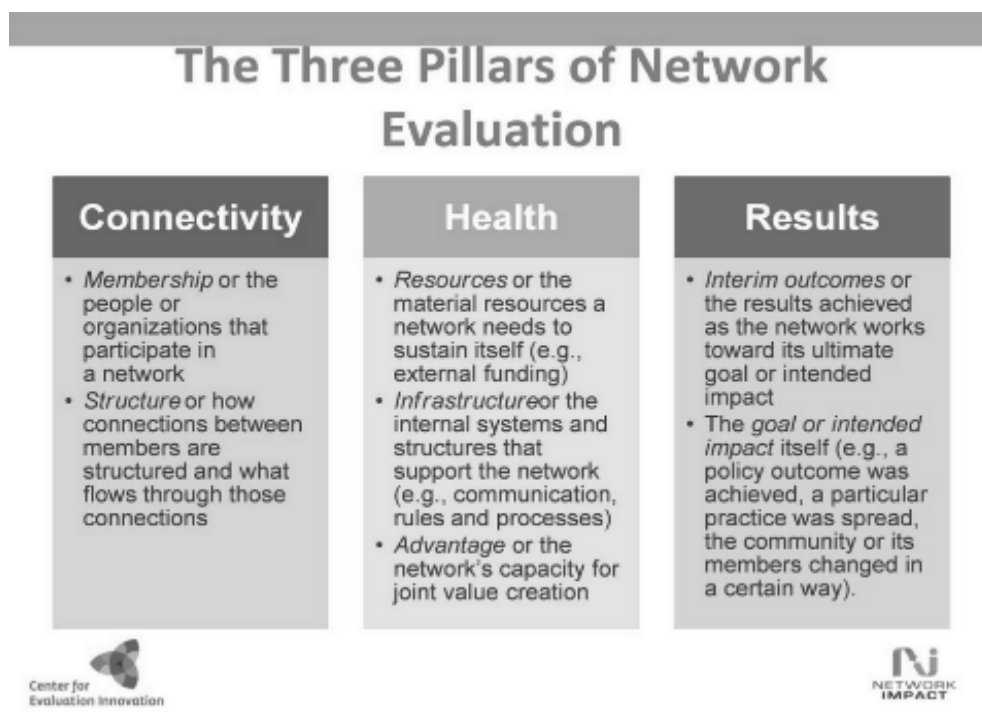


Figure 15: Three pillars of network evaluation as described as used to evaluate the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network by the Centre for Evaluation Innovation and Network Impact

The **Self-evaluation and Holistic Assessment of Climate Resilience of Farmers and Pastoralists (SHARP+)** tool (Hernandez et al., 2022; <https://www.fao.org/in-action/sharp>) assesses household climate resilience based on the knowledge and priorities of farmers using an integrated approach. The assessment follows Cabell and Oelofse’s 13 agroecosystem indicators of resilience (Cabell and Oelofse, 2012) and is based on a set of questions covering social, economic, environmental, and agronomic aspects of rural-based livelihoods. The assessment is operationalised in the field via an offline tablet-based questionnaire through which quantitative and qualitative answers are transformed into numerical scores reflecting the resilience levels of rural households, as well as the priority areas as considered by farmers.

Monitoring changes in SHARP+ scores at different points in time reveals whether household resilience is declining or improving, as well as how and if farmers’ priorities have changed over time. The comprehensive and holistic nature of the information collected through SHARP+ also supports the analysis and identification of the contributing factors to changes in resilience levels at different points in time (Hernandez et al., 2022).

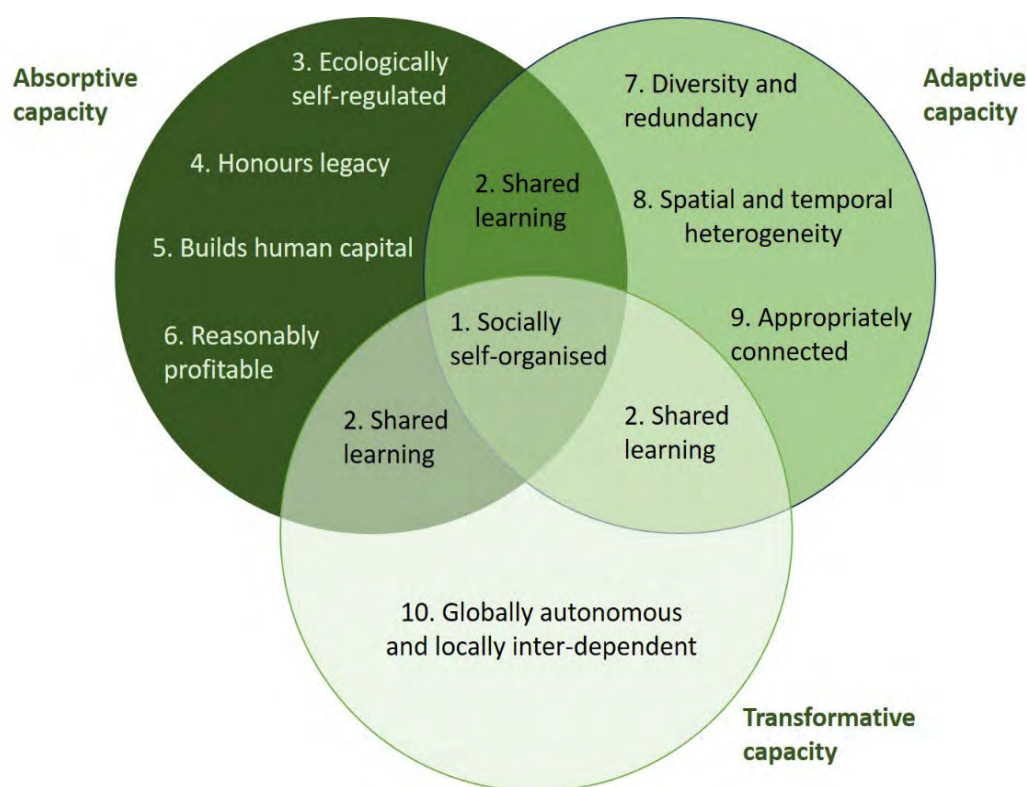
Table 8: Examples of progress, outcome, and impact indicators that can be based on the SHARP+ questions. Source: Hernandez et al. (2022)

Types of indicators	How?	Example
Progress and output indicators	Monitoring the advancement of project activities through the definition of output indicators based on questions in the tool.	Number of households using sustainable practices to manage land. Number of households using agricultural water management practices. Number of households with access to community-based groups. Number of household income sources, including non-farm options.
Outcome indicators	Short and mid-term effects of project interventions on beneficiaries and community stakeholders can be measured and tracked over time.	Decreased percentage of households using synthetic pesticides. Increased access to community cereal banks. Increased percentage of households with better nutrition, reflected in a higher dietary diversity score.
Impact indicators	Long-term changes resulting from project interventions can be measured through the data collected, especially when projects focus on increasing smallholders' resilience to climate and other shocks.	Increased climate resilience of farmers. Increased food security of rural households. Increased capacity of farmers to respond and adapt to climate shocks in a timely manner. Increased ownership of productive assets, particularly among rural women.

5.4 A NEW COMMUNITY-LEVEL RESILIENCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK AND TOOL

Mahlathini Development Foundation's (MDF) carefully and collaboratively developed resilience assessment snapshots and indicator framework have many similarities with the SHARP+ tool.

The first step in strengthening MDF's tools for assessing smallholder farmer resilience was to strengthen the underlying theoretical framework. This was done by combining the indicators of agroecosystem resilience (Cabell and Oelofse, 2012) with the concept of absorptive, adaptive, and transformative resilience capacities as used by Oxfam and others (Jeans et al., 2017) to produce the theoretical framework shown in Figure 16.



**Figure 16: Theoretical framework for assessing resilience of smallholder farmers.
Based on Cabell & Oelofse (2012) and Jeans et al. (2017)**

Cabell and Oelofse (2012) present 13 behaviour-based indicators² which together provide a measure of agroecosystem resilience, particularly for smallholder farmers. Agroecosystems are defined as social-ecological systems bounded by the intentionality to produce food, fuel, or fibre and influenced by farmers' decision-making, including the physical space and resources used as well as related infrastructure, markets, and institutions at multiple, nested scales (Cabell and Oelofse, 2012). In addition to the individual interviews, there are aspects of resilience, notably social organisation, changes in human capacity, and learning related to climate change that are better analysed in groups, as these aspects are more relational in nature and rely on people's understanding, thinking, and opinions. For these aspects, a participatory impact assessment process was developed. A third tool has been developed to explore in some depth the impact of the VSLAs on a selected number of individuals' income-generation, business-development, and expansion activities.

5.5 ADAPTIVE LEARNING IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF MSPS

The following list highlights some MERL-specific learnings for multistakeholder platforms (Tsitsa, Kotschy, Cockburn, Conde-Aller, & Rosenberg, 2021), (AWARD, 2019).

- When designing, monitoring, and evaluating, both processes and outcomes should be considered.
- Participatory, learning-focused MERL can be a powerful tool for building collaboration, a common vision, and a strong basis for ongoing strategic adaptive management.
- An approach that includes and capacitates local residents brings multiple benefits, including motivation, agency, capacity to participate in collective action, and changes in power relations.
- Participation and inclusivity must be explicitly planned for and appropriate capacity developed. Monitoring practices and tools must be developed to support this.

² These are not specific, measurable indicators but rather aspects or dimensions of resilience that should be included.

- Reflection practices do not emerge spontaneously; opportunities for reflection and sense-making need to be specifically designed and prioritised. They need to be cultivated with patience and consistency.
- A coordinating entity with secured long-term funding and strong partnerships should be prioritised to act as a hub for managing knowledge, coordinating MERL activities, and for advancing strategic investment in the region.
- Resources must be allocated to support MERL personnel as well as MERL processes that involve other stakeholders.
- The MERL's needs and purposes tend to change over time, and the system needs to adapt. Appropriate resourcing, therefore, means not only an adequate budget but a flexible budget.
- In addition to a responsive design, a successful MERL system requires a responsive disposition from implementers, funders, and stakeholders alike.

CHAPTER 6: SUSTAINING THE PLATFORM

In a generic sense, activities that sustain these platforms effectively institutionalise and embed them in local and national governance structures. In South Africa, with our complex and diverse political landscape, there is also a strong case to be made for voluntary MSPs, of which there are already numerous examples. These platforms have the significant advantage of being voluntary (i.e., not enforced and thus not needing heavy regulation) as well as focused on what really interests and affects the participants. Solving stuck problems by viewing the elephant in the room from all angles becomes much easier with a diverse group with a common goal. A CoP can create a safe space, where, unlike a formal workspace or committee, innovation can occur with limited external pressure, and where common issues can be tackled *together* with people who understand these issues and who may have different perspectives for approaching and possibly solving them. CoPs can help to effectively integrate and scale meaningful community-based climate-smart agricultural approaches if the real entrusted and affected parties are a core part of the practice.

6.1 EMERGING GOVERNANCE GUIDELINE CONSIDERATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY MULTISTAKEHOLDER PLATFORMS

Essential ingredients for a successful MSP to emerge, survive, thrive, and have its desired impact include:

- Common challenges and visions
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Convening
- Co-learning

Unpacking this a little further in terms of some basic guidelines, the following are relevant.

- **An MSP needs an energetic convenor:** Without an enthusiastic champion or driver/s, the CoP can start up with passion and then fade away. A key factor for sustaining a living CoP is active, attentive 'convening' by a dedicated secretariat that provides a networking, communication, and central hub function, along with supporting logistics and information sharing.
- **MSPs need a mission:** A group of passionate people gathered around a common cause is the spark required. Often, a crisis can spark a response, and amazing things happen.
- **MSPs often emerge best organically from the ground up:** This often means they are under-resourced because they are unplanned, and this is where real support and resourcing should be focused. Follow the passion.
- **The impact or value of an MSP is hard to measure:** Using non-traditional measures and stories of change is a good way to see their impact, rather than standard quantitative metrics that may not show any real impact because they are an inappropriate form of measurement.
- **MSPs often appear disorganised and unstructured:** CoPs should not be forced to regulate or conform to a predefined structure as this can stifle their innovation and passion. This does not suggest anarchy but rather allowing innovation to emerge in a welcoming space.

(Snorek, et al., 2022) have summarised best practice in multistakeholder forums.

- **A social network structure:** Connection of actors to facilitate collaborative governance and natural resource outcomes.
- **Norms of trust and reciprocity.**
- **A core-periphery network model:** Highly connected core nodes or role-players interact with a larger subset with fewer linkages. This conserves network functioning over time, provides stability and cooperativeness, and facilitates coordinated network responses through multiple pathways.
- **Periphery actors are kept on board through boundary acting:** These actors serve as a bridge between disparate groupings, provide social learning opportunities across boundaries, and support navigation of intercultural and cognitive barriers between heterogeneous groups, allowing for continuity in governance.

- **Generally, leadership is informal and** based on relational value, which is important in contested spaces characterised by multifunctionality. This avoids structural and hierarchical problems.
- **Based on ethics of care:** This is rooted in relationality, collective wellbeing, and subjectively situated types of knowledge – thus solidarity and respect. In addition:
 - o There are no single right answers.
 - o Accountability through relationships is cultivated.
 - o Requires being open to emotion and some level of vulnerability.

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APPENDICES

7.1 APPENDIX 1: THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-LEVEL INSTITUTIONS IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE: THE PROPOSED INTEGRATION OF VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOANS ASSOCIATIONS INTO DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

6.1.1 Introduction

Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) play a crucial role in enhancing community resilience and disaster risk reduction (DRR). These community-based financial institutions promote mutual support, social cohesion, and financial stability, which are essential in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. This document explores how VSLAs can serve as learning platforms for DRR by integrating disaster preparedness strategies within their existing structures (Mtshengu, 2017).

VSLAs enable peer learning, allowing members to share experiences, knowledge, and skills related to disaster preparedness. Their group-based nature fosters collective action, information dissemination, and the adoption of coping mechanisms. Strategies for integrating VSLAs into DRR include curriculum development, partnerships, community-based planning, and structured monitoring and evaluation (Trogrlić et al., 2017).

- The Sendai Framework for DRR (2015–2030) is a key international agreement emphasising inclusive, multistakeholder approaches. It highlights four priorities:
 - o Understanding disaster risk
 - o Strengthening DRR governance
 - o Investing in DRR and resilience
 - o Enhancing disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

The framework sets seven global targets, including reducing disaster mortality, economic losses, and infrastructure damage, and increasing access to early warning systems and international cooperation (Trogrlić et al., 2017).

6.1.2 Multistakeholder Engagement in DRR

Effective DRR requires overcoming challenges in stakeholder engagement, such as a lack of understanding, coordination gaps, and power imbalances. Multistakeholder forums, including national and regional DRR platforms, provide avenues for collaboration. Key principles of effective multistakeholder engagement include:

- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring representation of all relevant stakeholders, including government, civil society, private sector, and local communities (Shwe et al., 2013; Onyeagoziri et al., 2021).
- **Clear objectives and governance:** Establishing well-defined roles and responsibilities (Hare et al., 2014).
- **Information sharing and capacity building:** Encouraging training, workshops, and peer learning (IFRC, 2014).
- **Joint planning and resource mobilisation:** Coordinating DRR strategies, monitoring and evaluation (Tau et al., 2016).
- **Linking local, national, and international levels:** Ensuring coherence across governance levels (IFRC, 2014).

6.1.3 Barriers to Climate Change Adaptation and DRR in Indigenous Communities

Indigenous communities face various interconnected barriers to effective DRR, including social, political, economic, environmental, and knowledge-related challenges:

- **Social and cultural barriers:** Erosion of traditional knowledge and practices due to cultural suppression and modernisation (Fayazi et al., 2020), social inequalities that limit access to resources for adaptation, and cultural beliefs that may influence perceptions of climate change.
- **Political and institutional barriers:** Historical marginalisation and exclusion from decision-making processes (Ramos-Castillo et al., 2017), poor coordination between government agencies and indigenous organisations, limited political representation, and inadequate institutional capacity.
- **Economic barriers:** High poverty rates that restrict investment in adaptation measures, dependence on climate-sensitive livelihoods (such as agriculture and fishing), and limited market access and economic diversification opportunities.
- **Environmental barriers:** Direct climate change impacts such as extreme weather and rising sea levels that lead to environmental degradation that weakens community resilience and loss of biodiversity, and that undermine traditional livelihoods.
- **Knowledge and information barriers:** Limited access to climate change data and adaptation strategies, gaps in scientific understanding of local climate impacts (Cuaton and Su, 2020), and communication barriers between communities, scientists, and policymakers.

6.1.4 South African Context

South Africa, located in sub-Saharan Africa, frequently faces disasters such as floods, droughts, storms, disease outbreaks, and social unrest, which are exacerbated by climate change (Fatti, 2018). KwaZulu-Natal, for example, experienced severe flooding in April 2021 (Dube et al., 2021; Ndlovu, 2020), followed by social unrest in 2022, alongside the global COVID-19 pandemic (Moonasar et al., 2021). Despite municipal disaster management units, concerns remain about their effectiveness and the implementation of DRR strategies, particularly for vulnerable communities (Mamabolo & Sebola, 2021).

6.1.5 The Power of Communities in DRR

Community structures play a key role in DRR by leveraging local knowledge to enhance resilience and to secure public participation (Davies et al., 2015). Community-based disaster preparedness includes early warning systems, search and rescue teams, first aid provision, and resource mobilisation (Mtshengu, 2017). Community-led initiatives in DRR, such as education and awareness campaigns, can enhance preparedness and response efforts (Azad et al., 2019). However, their effectiveness depends on partnerships with local government and NGOs.

International, regional, and national DRR frameworks emphasise community engagement. Key frameworks include:

- **The Hyogo (2005–2015) and Sendai Frameworks (2015–2030):** Global UN strategies advocating for community involvement and multistakeholder cooperation.
- **IFRC Framework for Community Resilience:** Focuses on empowering local communities through capacity building.
- **Community-based Disaster Risk Management:** Encourages active community participation in all DRR phases (Suharini et al., 2020; Hare et al., 2014).
- **National and Regional Frameworks:** Countries like South Africa (Mtshengu, 2017) and Indonesia (Suharini et al., 2020) tailor DRR policies to their local contexts.

Common principles across these frameworks include community ownership, multistakeholder collaboration, capacity building, gender and diversity mainstreaming, and integration into development

planning (Mtshengu, 2017). Governments and non-state actors must invest in risk-reducing infrastructure, safety evaluations, and innovative DRR methods.

6.1.6 The Potential Role of VSLAs in DRR

VSLAs enhance financial resilience and livelihood diversification, key components in disaster mitigation. Their contributions include:

- **Access to credit:** Members can finance income-generating activities, reducing dependence on disaster-vulnerable sectors (e.g., agriculture; Mtshengu, 2017).
- **Savings and asset accumulation:** VSLAs encourage regular savings, which serve as financial buffers during disasters.
- **Skills development:** Training in financial literacy and business management enhances economic resilience (Mtshengu, 2017).
- **Social networks and support:** VSLAs foster community cohesion, providing mutual aid during crises. Many VSLAs also manage **social funds**, supporting members in emergencies and contributing to community projects.

The effectiveness of VSLAs in DRR depends on their capacity, integration into broader DRR plans, alignment with local disaster risks, and external support from NGOs and governments. They can also function as learning platforms by incorporating disaster-specific financial products (e.g., savings for preparedness, micro-insurance) and peer education on risk reduction (Mtshengu, 2017).

6.1.7 Considerations for VSLA–DRR Integration

To integrate VSLAs into DRR effectively, key considerations include:

- **Representation in multistakeholder forums:** Ensuring VSLAs have a voice in DRR planning.
- **Clear mandate:** Defining their role in preparedness, response, and recovery.
- **Leveraging existing structures:** Incorporating DRR into current VSLA frameworks rather than creating new ones.
- **Communication and capacity building:** Enhancing information sharing and training.
- **Resource mobilisation:** Exploring VSLA savings for community DRR initiatives.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Tracking VSLA contributions to community resilience.

By applying these principles, VSLAs can enhance DRR, improve local resilience, and contribute to more comprehensive disaster mitigation efforts (Mtshengu, 2017).

To enhance the role of VSLAs in DRR, the following recommendations should be implemented:

- **Capacity building:** Train VSLA members in disaster preparedness, response strategies, and risk assessments.
- **Formal partnerships:** Collaborate with government agencies, NGOs, and international bodies to provide technical support and funding.
- **Incorporate DRR into VSLA structures:** Develop disaster preparedness curricula and ensure DRR considerations are part of financial planning.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Establish frameworks for tracking progress in community resilience efforts.
- **Strengthening community-based planning:** Ensure indigenous knowledge and community-driven approaches are at the core of DRR strategies.

In conclusion, community-based financial institutions can be powerful platforms for situated and peer learning, empowering individuals and communities to better prepare for, cope with, and recover from disasters. By leveraging the learning potential of VSLAs and actively involving them in multistakeholder forums, organisations can empower communities to take ownership of their DRR and build a more resilient future.

