



# Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative's Knowledge to Action Lab

20 and 21 November 2018, New Delhi, India



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*Concept note developed by the Global Development Network, ICIMOD, Oxfam, GIZ India, UNFCCC and UN Environment,*

## **Background:**

**Effectively adapting to climate change has become one of the most pressing needs of our times**, even more urgent for developing countries, including least developed countries and small island developing states and mountain areas, all of which are extremely vulnerable to climate change and its impacts. Today, it has become clear that climate change impacts threaten development; and effective adaptation does not only contribute to present and future human well-being, it also underpins sustainable development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Resilient communities are necessarily the result of the integration of adaptation *into* development. **Integrating adaptation knowledge into development knowledge, with a view to better inform development action improving development outcomes, is accordingly a priority.** It also remains a challenge. Decision making today influences directly the adaptive capacity of the people, governments and businesses of the future. Place- and context-based scientific knowledge is needed to inform better adaptation action. Forums and platforms which can bring together researchers, the community of practitioners and financial actors would contribute significantly in creating new knowledge, repackaging and disseminating existing knowledge and fostering the integration of adaptation learnings into development.

With this vision, the Nairobi work programme (NWP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was created in December 2005 with the goal to [“facilitate and catalyze the development and dissemination of information and knowledge that would inform and support adaptation policies and practices”](#). At COP 20, the [Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative](#) (LAKI) was launched and endorsed by the COP Presidency with the mandate to prioritise and catalyse responses to strategic knowledge needs for adaptation action. The [first phase](#) (2014–17) of the LAKI identified 85 priority knowledge gaps in six subregions (Andean, Western Asia, North Africa, Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH), Indian Ocean islands, and Southern Africa), covering a total of 38 countries.

More recently, during the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) (30 April to 10 May 2018, Bonn, Germany), Parties welcomed a second phase of the LAKI aiming to *bridge* knowledge gaps identified during the first phase of LAKI.

As a first step towards action in the second phase of the LAKI, the Global Development Network, in collaboration with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), OXFAM, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) India, the UNFCCC and UN Environment,

are collaborating in organizing a **Knowledge to Action Lab** aiming to define a strategy and develop the tools to close knowledge gaps in the HKH subregion and downstream countries (South and Southeast Asia).

The organisers recognize that the [IPCC \(2014\)](#) has taken stock of the fact that, since the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) in 2007, **adaptation research has evolved from a purely technical perspective based on natural sciences, engineering and technological adaptation, to be more place- and context-specific**. The focus today needs to be on the linkages between biophysical changes and vulnerability, socioeconomic processes, social–cultural contexts, governance and sustainable development efforts. Knowledge efforts also aim increasingly at informing better development policies. The ‘social sciences’ and ‘development’ turn of adaptation knowledge implies a new challenge linked to questions of scale: it has been acknowledged that to be able to “craft adaptations that make a real difference to people’s lives” ([Lebel & McLean, 2018](#)), data needs to be identified, collected, interrogated and analyzed, and new information pushed into the policy debate at the local level, involving local researchers with a long-term commitment to addressing adaptation issues locally in a globally interconnected way. The ‘social sciences’ and ‘development’ turn of adaptation knowledge also broadens the scope of collaborations between knowledge and policy actors across sub-regions. In a subregion like the HKH, for instance, the significance of evidence on upstream climate change impacts cannot be fully grasped till the downstream implications of these impacts on downstream countries in South and Southeast Asia are not taken into consideration.

The Lab, which will take place in November 2018 with a view to give visibility to its results at the COP24 in December 2018 and/or the Climate Conference in Bonn in June 2019, will focus specifically on the **challenges and opportunities to link, on one hand, adaptation research and, on the other, implementation knowledge and data in the context of projects funded by multilateral and bilateral climate funds in the context** of upstream-downstream interactions. Adaptation efforts financed by the different investment banks, private sector, and global climate funds are consistently in the need of data, information and knowledge to encourage “adequate adaptation”. Despite existing tools designed to assess risks and determine knowledge gaps when developing adaptation projects, this exercise does not systematically leverage the latest knowledge from adaptation research and does not systematically engage local researchers committed to studying adaptation locally. The proposition of the Lab – in a nutshell – is that close interaction between researchers and implementers working on adaptation can significantly strengthen both adaptation action and research agendas on adaptation.

### **What is a Knowledge to Action Lab?**

The Lab is a highly interactive workshop format that brings together knowledge users, knowledge producers and financial actors working on the same (or closely related) issues. The Lab uses advanced facilitation techniques to build a ‘safe space’ for high quality engagement, informal face-to-face feedback and the building of collaborations between knowledge users and producers. It focuses on knowledge efforts at their seminal stage of development, supporting an early feedback loop on knowledge efforts that strives to build on, and respond to, the imperatives of action.

The concept and format of the Lab has been developed within GDN's program to strengthen the salience of policy relevant research produced in developing countries, with an emphasis of the early stage of definition of research questions. Typically, Labs offer researchers an opportunity to interact with potential research users from practice and policy. The November 2018 Lab will innovate on this model, and introduce an opportunity for participants from the policy, funding, and practice community to also pitch their knowledge needs, as a basis to engage with the research community on how to address them, and therefore bridge and close some the knowledge gaps already identified in the first phase of the LAKI. The Lab will also integrate a training session of Oxfam's experience using the Research for Impact approach.

The November 2018 Lab will therefore focus on:

- **Identifying the type of knowledge and data available from implementation that can be leveraged by researchers** interested in bridging research and action;
- **Identifying the kind of actionable knowledge needed to develop efficient and adequate adaptation projects** that can emerge from a closer collaboration between local researchers and local policy makers, practitioners, investment banks and/or climate funds;
- **Identifying concrete knowledge collaboration linked to implementation challenges, between policy and financial actors and researchers participating in the Lab**, that can be further supported as part of current adaptation projects and efforts;
- Identifying ways for key stakeholders and researchers in the region to collaborate in the curation of **“existing” knowledge in a way that can address specific audiences for specific purposes, and which still requires in-depth knowledge of adaptation and of the realities of the region in order to be effective.**

The Lab engineers intensive, face-to-face exchanges through attentively designed tools and formats of interactions, geared to offer a comfortable and engaging space where the feedback loop between producers, users of knowledge and financial institutions can influence further work.

The Lab is typically linked to research funding programs, such as the [“Policy Lab: The Quality of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean”](#) organized by GDN and the Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE), as part of a selection process that embraced the need for capacity development for research-practice collaboration, and as a strategy to enhance the quality and salience of research agendas a donor will fund. The format appeals to researchers with a strong interest in the societal and policy impact of their work. Policy actors and practitioners typically include policy makers, private sector, media professionals, NGO practitioners and consultants, with a mix of decisionmakers and working/implementation level experience.

The November 2018 Lab will not be linked to a specific funding window but will serve to showcase the scope and potential of more systematic collaborations to actors likely to use the knowledge need for implementation in their own operations. The Lab will therefore also feature a number of institutions who might be interested in using the Lab as part of their own adaptation work – linking closely research and ‘operations’.

## How does the Lab work?

Below, we present in a schematic fashion the structure and steps of the November 2018 Lab.

**Structure of the Lab.** The Lab is structured over two days in a modular manner, combining:

- a. **Trust building:** through a ‘speed networking’ exercise that allows everyone to meet everyone at the lab and puts everyone on the same level irrespective of their institutional affiliation, specialization or seniority.
- b. **Presentations:** through ‘elevator pitch’ presentations (based on a format provided by the organizers) by both researchers and policy actors/practitioners about the main questions they are interested in exploring in response to the LAKI priorities, or the type of knowledge relevant to project implementation. Presentations happen at different times during the lab, allowing the presenters to incorporate feedback before a final pitch, and allowing organizers and observers to track the evolution of the knowledge efforts taking shape, based on different version of the pitch at the beginning and at the end of the Lab.
- c. **Feedback:** through brief one-on-one conversations that allows presenters to received feedback on their presentation from virtually everyone at the Lab (researchers, implementation specialists, donors, policy persons). Also, through open Q&A sessions.
- d. **Independent work:** allowing presenters to rework their elevator pitch, based on the interactions received.
- e. **Collaborative work:** allowing researchers and policy actors/practitioners to work together on a joint project that will be pitched to financial actors for feedback on its feasibility and strategic framing.
- f. **Trainings:** technical training sessions might be offered, based on the common interest of presenters identifying during the selection of participants.

### The steps of the Lab preparation:

#### A. Selection of knowledge producers

‘Knowledge producers’ include researchers from the HKH region and downstream countries (South and Southeast Asia), with a preference for developing young researchers (post-doc and PhD), who are currently working on a research project that could support bridging the knowledge gaps already identified by the LAKI first phase, and who are committed to the highest scientific standards and equally passionate about the policy relevance of their work and its societal value.

Participants on the research side will be selected through an **open call**, targeted at projects developed in the HKH region and downstream countries (South and Southeast Asia) that will need to match specific knowledge gaps identified in the Call for Expressions of Interest.

Importantly, beyond the standard biographical data and information regarding relevant experience, **applications** will need to specify – in no more than 800 words:

1. the link to knowledge gaps identified in the first phase of the LAKI, and the adaptation needs for their country of focus (this will help the organizers balance the composition of the participants);
2. the background, question, and hypothesis the presenters wish to put forward to the Lab participants (this is the seed of the ‘elevator pitch’ presentation delivered at the Lab);
3. identify potential institutional actors interested in using the knowledge sought, as well as specific projects or policy that it might support *directly* and describe the applicant’s relationship and early engagement with these actors (this will support the identification of demand-side actors from policy and practice that might be invited to the Lab).

A closed number of participants will be selected on a competitive basis to take part in the Lab, by GDN, ICIMOD, Oxfam, GIZ India, UNFCCC and UN Environment. The key criteria for selection will be the relevance to action of the proposed knowledge needs, the capacity of the applicants to lead the effort, and the capacity of the applicant to build strong collaborations with key stakeholders on the implementation/research side. Financial assistance may be available for some of the selected candidates from developing countries to attend to the Knowledge to Action Lab.

#### **B. Matching of knowledge producers with knowledge users**

Selected researchers will be matched with ‘knowledge users’ in the Lab, identified and nominated by the organizers based on the focus of the submissions received.

‘Knowledge users’ include policy actors and practitioners broadly understood as potential ‘users’ of the research produced: national policy makers, national adaptation plans focal points, financial institutions, representatives of NGOs, national and international organizations actively engaged in strengthening relevant adaptation policy, and research institutions and universities.

#### **C. Identification of climate finance actors and experts**

Representatives of selected climate finance institutions and actors with a presence in the region will be identified and invited to participate in the Lab as resource persons, to provide feedback to ‘knowledge users’ and ‘knowledge producers’ on the scope of fundable work in the adaptation space.

‘Financial actors’ include members from development cooperation agencies, private banks, climate and adaptation funds actively engaged in strengthening relevant adaptation policy, and research institutions and universities.

#### **Outcomes:**

The policy lab will:

- Strengthen the capacity of researchers and research institutions in the HKH region and downstream countries (South and Southeast Asia) to advance their scientific work on adaptation to climate change, and to link their future work based on the knowledge gaps already identified on the first phase of the LAKI.

- Strengthened capacity of researchers, financial institutions, policy actors and international experts to interact and collaborate on policy-relevant research work that can close the existing knowledge gaps on adaptation to climate change.
- A better understanding by the policy actors of the types of information, data and knowledge that already exists, and those that can be developed by local and national research institutions and universities in partnership with financial institutions and governments.
- A better understanding on ways to work together to curate the “existing” knowledge in the HKH region and downstream countries (South and Southeast Asia).