

Responses to feedback from stakeholders

The review team thanks everyone who provided feedback on the methodological plan for a mixed method systematic review on the effectiveness of adaptation interventions. The comments, submitted in October and November 2020, were extremely valuable. They have greatly improved our work.

Here are comments and our detailed responses to them. We have grouped them in the following categories: [general feedback](#), [review scope](#), [theory of change](#), and [search strategy](#).

General feedback

Topic	Comment	Response
Ambition	Fears that the ambition is too broad for the analysis, which will be limited because some types of finance are not included, and because of limits on the resources to which we have access. What kind of conclusions can we draw with this approach?	We are aware of the limitations of this review, and that we are only including a small set of funders. However, project-type support is still a common practice for adaptation finance, and we expect to identify what works within this specific type of financial support. Further research on other types of financial support can follow this review.
Limitations	The limitations of the approach and dataset should be clearly stated, especially in the final products.	This will be done at the report stage. (The protocol includes a methodological plan for the review and a methods and background section; it does not include findings or associated limitations.) Please note that the limitations to scope of the review are clarified in the section " Criteria for inclusion and exclusion of studies in the review ".
Link	The link to UNFCCC website is inactive, it says "page not Found".	We have added the correct link.

Comments on the scope: sources of funding, geographical scope, and type of interventions included

Topic	Comment	Response
Sources of funding	It is good at this point to specify the UNFCCC multilateral climate funds to be assessed (GCF, AF, and GEF (LDCF and SCCF)) as one would imagine (before you get to page 16) that all the UNFCCC funds are under assessment.	We have clarified, including in the abstract, the set of multilateral funds (AF, LDCF, SCCF, PPCR) and bilateral donors (Sweden and United Kingdom).
Sources of funding	Should collect evidence at meta-portfolio level, make an effectiveness database; compare two bilateral donors (UK and Sweden for example).	We explained more clearly how we will compare project portfolios from different multilateral funds, and the portfolios of projects funded by two bilateral donors. A database will be created for all the projects, according to their funders. In addition, to identify characteristics of the funders that can influence project outcomes, we have added review question that reads as follows: <i>What are the design differences between adaptation projects funded by bilateral sources and those funded by multilateral sources?</i>

Sources of funding	Sources of Finance. Do private and public sources include instruments such as crowd funding, bank guarantees, etc.?	We have clarified that we are looking into a set of funders, two bilateral funders (Sweden and United Kingdom) and four multilateral climate funds. We are not including private sources of finance.
Geographical scope	Recommends looking at similar countries, and examining how donors complement each other (coordination issues) especially in cases where funding is scarce. Are there relationships between donors?	We have reduced the scope to sub-Saharan Africa. The income levels of countries where activities are implemented are also part of the implementation context information to be recorded. However, the issue of funding coordination is beyond the scope of the current review.
Geographical scope	Type of participants. Why is the scope limited to sub-Saharan Africa? Maybe justify this. Why is the Climate Investment Fund not considered (page 16)? Is it because it is managed by MDBs? They have the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR), which could be interesting.	The justification for sub-Saharan Africa is now provided in the revised version of the protocol. We have focused on this region because of its vulnerability to climate change, and because of the amount of resources invested in that region. We have also included the PPCR as part of the set of funders.
Interventions	I wonder why you specifically include heat waves and extreme weather but do not consider other types of climate impacts (sea-level rise, drought, etc.).	We have now changed the search approach. As a result, the search will be conducted based on project names, not on hazards or specific climate impacts.
Interventions	What is an adaptation intervention? How do you define it? Will the definition be based on the outcomes?	We have clarified that an intervention in this review is an adaptation project. The concepts used for adaptation and risks are explained in the new version on the protocol. We use adaptation definition from the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) glossary, which defines adaptation as “the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In some natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects.” We further clarified how the adaptation intervention in this review is an intervention designed to respond to a climate event or hazard.
Interventions	Look at bigger individual projects, national priorities, legislation, etc.	We focus on projects implemented across different scales, from national to local. Compliance of these projects with national priorities and legislation is one of the assumptions incorporated in the revised theory of change (ToC).
Interventions Rio marking for adaptation: significant vs. principal objective	Not including MDB financed adaptation projects or projects marked as significant will mean that the sample set will not be balanced across the type of activities – social, institutional, physical and structural. The climate funds and bilateral aid agencies, some by definition, target institutional adaptation (e.g., providing funding for national adaptation plans). The nature of adaptation is a mainstreaming activity at its core. The weaknesses in aiming to understand adaptation finance flows and effectiveness of impacts is trying [to separate] out the adaptation areas rather than to accept its mainstreamed nature. The clear-cut social and institutional adaptation activities (early warning systems, individual planning, etc.) are well	Our unit of analysis or intervention is the adaptation project. Therefore we only work with a group of funders that provide finance through project-type financial support. We are also including the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience in our set of funders, to include a funder part of the MDBs. Whereas we recognize the importance of mainstreaming, we need to identify projects that can provide evidence on changes in adaptation outcomes. Therefore, only those projects aiming to address adaptation as a main objective (e.g., Rio marker for adaptation, with a principal objective) are included in this review. We will also do our

	known and obvious. Where gaps in research are in understanding the clear-cut adaptation activities in economic sectors and infrastructure that individual adaptation finance may be directed to, especially private finance.	own assessment of the compliance of this, reviewing all project objectives to ensure they do comply with this criterion, and identifying which climate hazard the project is aiming to address.
Interventions significant vs. principal Rio marker for adaptation	For Sida, only contributions marked “principal” would be considered. How about if the “significant” contribution takes a good chunk of climate financing, say 45%? Won’t this assessment miss out capturing this substantial funding? Isn’t it possible to “track” these “significant” funds as well?	Only those projects aiming to address climate change adaptation will be considered. Whereas we understand the importance of projects with a significant score in its Rio marker for adaptation, evidence from the impact of these projects will not be able to answer our question on what works for adaptation (if adaptation is not the main objective of the project).
Interventions type of aid	Non project-based support, such as core funding will not be included in this review. How about core funding to an organization where all the co-funds go to a climate adaptation intervention? Sida has such type of arrangement where the Embassy in Nairobi is providing core funding to an organization that implements only one project, meaning, the core funding is also termed project funding.	We are considering the adaptation project as the unit of analysis. In the case of bilateral funding, we are considering projects that have received funding from at least one of the set of funders. In addition to “project-type interventions” funding, we include the aid-type category, “Contributions to specific-purpose programmes and funds managed by implementing partners”, because these funds can be linked to a specific project or programme. However, we do not include “core support” or “core contributions” because, by definition under the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS), these are not linked to a specific project or programme.
Interventions	In our view, the classification of adaptation activity proposed in the document “The effectiveness of climate change adaptation interventions in developing economies and the impact of funding modalities: a systematic review protocol” is not appropriate for the assessment of adaptation activities. We think that the classification employed by the SEI suffers from the following shortcomings: first of all, the typology used does not make a clear distinction between measures aimed at adaptation to the consequences of climate change and measures for general development cooperation purposes (e.g., which impacts of climate change are addressed by food banks/storage, how does knowledge sharing reduce the negative effects of climate change on a community?). Furthermore, we see a significant risk of overlap between categories in the applied classification. Especially for the sub-category of the “Social adaptation” pillar: namely, the educational and behavioural adaptation activity types. The same projects could be put into several categories, which could lead to confusion and/or double counting. Hence, we propose the following alternative classification which defines activities types based on climatic parameters and their related impacts. We suggest a three-level approach: the highest level differentiates between the two main manifestations of climate change – sudden, extreme events and slow-onset events. The mid-level describes the climate parameter causing the effect: precipitation, wind, temperature, sea-level rise; and the lowest level	We clarified in the new version of the protocol that we are looking into projects (not activities) with a main objective to address climate change adaptation (e.g., a climate hazard). We are doing this through a two-step screening process. In the first screening, in the case of the multilateral climate funds, a project is considered as focused on adaptation by the fund’s own classification of projects as adaptation. In the case of bilateral funders, we will only consider those projects identified with a Rio marker for adaptation with a score of 2. In the second screening, we assess the objectives and outcomes of the projects, to ensure they are addressing climate change adaptation, for which we expect they need to respond to a specific climate hazard. We are aware that a project is composed of a combination of activities, and this combination of activities will also be part of the analysis.

	<p>highlights the negative impacts to which humans need to adapt.</p> <p>In order to promote effective and, most importantly, meaningful adaptation projects, we must clearly distinguish adaptation to climate change from other financing purposes. We hope you can understand our objections and maybe reconsider your position.</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>....</p> <p>High, middle, and low levels with example activity types:</p> <p>Sudden extreme events: precipitation/flooding (e.g., dyke building, early warning systems and evacuation planning, climate resilient agriculture).</p> <p>Sudden extreme events: precipitation/drought (e.g., water use efficiency improvement, improvement of freshwater availability including capture and storage).</p> <p>Sudden extreme events: wind/destruction by wind (e.g., establishment of vegetative windbreaks and shelter belts).</p> <p>Sudden extreme events: wind/storm flood (e.g., early warning systems and evacuation planning).</p> <p>Sudden extreme events: temperature/heat wave (e.g., develop heat-tolerant crop varieties).</p> <p>Sudden extreme events: temperature/cold spell (e.g., adjustment of building design planning, building insulation).</p> <p>Slow-onset events: precipitation/desiccation (.g., long-distance water provision, change in cropping patterns).</p> <p>Slow-onset events: precipitation/waterlogging (e.g., pumping of excess water, change in cropping patterns).</p> <p>Slow-onset events: temperature/exceedance of tolerance thresholds (crops, animals, humans) (e.g., adjustment of infrastructure).</p> <p>Slow-onset events: temperature/glacier melting (e.g., emptying of glacial lakes, temporary adjustment of irrigation systems). (Beware of maladaptation.)</p> <p>Slow-onset events: sea-level rise/coastal inundation (e.g., dyke building, relocation).</p> <p>Slow-onset events: sea-level rise/coastal erosion (e.g., beach nourishment)</p>	
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	Slow-onset events: sea-level rise/salination of freshwater resources (e.g., anti-salt dykes).	
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Comments on the theory of change and its elements

Topic	Comment	Response
TOC – general	The ToC as it is now is siloed; the silos should be broken to make the causal links appear.	We have now developed a causal-process-tracing theory of change (pToC) with provides detailed visualization of causal links between interventions and various outcomes, including effect modifiers and moderators. These links will be adjusted as we progress with the review.
TOC – general	The infographic is illegible; some words are too small.	This has been addressed.
TOC - activities	In types of activities, please correct “individual” to “adaptation”	This has been addressed.
TOC – activities	The social contents of adaptation should also include social protection. In social adaptation, is there a way to include in the name of the classification the economic aspects of this type of adaptation (i.e., is not only behavioural if is related to livelihood diversification)?	The typology of activities terms and the examples is now included in our ToC following the adaptation options categorization in Table 14-1 in Chapter 14 in IPCC WG2 AR5. This table shows adaptation options categories and examples of such categories, but it is not an exhaustive list. The table also notes that these options " should be considered overlapping rather than discrete", so "examples can be relevant to more than one category". We will consider this overlapping characteristic when classifying the activities.
TOC - duration	The duration of a project is an important aspect.	We are including the duration of project as part of the characteristics recorded, both on the design and implementation phases of the projects.
TOC - outcomes and duration	For the types of adaptation outcomes, I am not sure how you will deal with different time scales. An adaptation project can be beneficial in the short run, but harmful in the long run (or vice-versa). Same applies to target groups, as some may benefit, and others lose out.	We will collect information on the duration of the project, as well as target groups; both for project design and project evaluation. For the target groups, we aim also to identify impact evaluations on non-targeted groups and locations as part of the maladaptation outcomes identification. However, this will also depend on the information available.
TOC - implementation context	The “implementation context” categories need to be expanded and more detailed.	Implementation contexts have been clarified in the new ToC, and further expanded in the pToC. So far, we include the climate hazard, and the level of income of the country. More modifiers related to the implementation context will be added as a result of the iteration process.
TOC - implementation context	Implementation context: does it include externalities such as climate disruptions?	Climate- and social-related disruptions are considered part of the pToC as derailers.
TOC - implementation context	I would add the legal and institutional framework (not only policies) to the second block.	In our ToC and pToC, we consider as an assumption that the project design includes the legal and institutional framework. The requirements on responding to these characteristics will be identified at the funder level. In addition, there is an outcome on strength of policies, institutions, and governance structures. This is intended to capture those activities related to change in

		institutions (which encompass legal, organizational, and political elements).
TOC - implementation context	Recommends looking how projects are embedded into wider efforts (e.g., to what extent the project contributes to the national adaptation strategy of the recipient country as opposed to fitting the priorities of the donor); i.e., GCF has not implemented anything yet. Would recommend instead to include the PPCR.	This will be part of the implementation context, and will also depend on the requirements of the funder. The PPCR has been included in the scope.
ToC-stakeholder involvement	Recommends looking at the level and quality of stakeholder engagement in projects in determining the outcome.	These are elements that will be monitored as part of the research. See initial pToC in section in the updated protocol.
TOC - gender	Is there any way to incorporate gender here?	Yes, Outcomes can be analysed according to different gender identities. We have clarified that gender will be used in sub-group analysis.
TOC - outcomes	How about a brief description on change; from where/what, a baseline survey, vulnerability assessment, etc.?	This information is part of the information on quantitative and qualitative outcomes.
TOC - outcomes	Different theory for each outcome will be the outcome of this review.	This is now clarified in the text.
TOC - outcomes	How do certain impacts come about? What conditions are associated with success? These are not captured in the existing model - where would they fit? Do you intend to develop the ToC through the project to accommodate such findings? Where would they go?	We have now developed causal-process-tracing theory of change (pToC) with detailed visualization of causal links clarifying derailleurs, safeguards, enablers.
TOC - outcomes	On the quality of outcome (i.e., positive, neutral or negative), I wonder whether the negative (maladaptation) could be a separate way, to be either addressed upstream (at the safeguard level) instead of at the time of outcome measurement, or at both stages. The question would be whether risk of maladaptation has been taken into account in the design of the adaptation activity.	We are including maladaptation as an outcome in two ways. The first one concerns whether the quality of the outcome is negative. The second concerns whether information records negative spillover effects on non-targeted populations or locations. However, we will also consider funder-level safeguards to avoid maladaptation, as well as project-level elements to avoid maladaptation in the project design. We expect that evidence on the occurrence of maladaptation as an outcome will be available through evaluations and academic literature.
TOC - outcomes	Effective adaptation leads to the reduction of risks and increase in "resilienc"; "Elements of justice AND EQUIT"l." Should avoiding maladaptation be included?	Maladaptation is included as a potential outcome, in particular if the impact is negative to non-targeted populations or locations. In other cases, if the impact is detrimental, it could also be considered as maladaptation.
TOC - outcomes	Page 9: "All outcomes can be characterized as positive, neutral, or negative." Is negative outcome synonymous to maladaptation?	Negative is not synonymous of maladaptation. This will depend on the outcome.
TOC - outcomes	In addition, the section on "outcome" is framed with a very quantitative focus. "outcomes" are not typically used to refer to the findings of qualitative research. What kinds of qualitative findings do you plan to use and how? These outcomes also do not map back well to the review question - especially those about process (Q0, Q2, and Q4). What kind of evidence will inform these questions?	We have now made a clearer link between questions, the inclusion criteria for each question, and type of evidence needed to answer the question – including both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

TOC - outcomes	Recommends relabeling the “intermediary outcomes” as “secondary outcomes”.	We have clarified the connection between our outcomes chosen to retain the term “intermediate outcomes”. We explained how change in risk to climate change is our outcome that can be achieved through changes in intermediate outcomes, including (a) quality or quantity of ecosystems or natural resources, (b) social well-being for individuals or communities, (c) accessibility to economic resources (e.g. profits and savings), and (d) strength levels of institutions, policies, or governance structures.
TOC - outcomes	Define vulnerability and risk as primary outcomes (and others as secondary). Define vulnerability and risk (and add those search terms to the string).	Please see above. We have provided all definitions now.
TOC outcomes	I have realized that adaptation experts often refer to “risk” and “vulnerability”, but according the IPCC risk framework vulnerability is an element of risk. So, maybe limit to “change in risk to climate change impact” to be aligned with the IPCC?	We are now referring to risk only.
TOC outcomes	What are indicators of success? We need to be looking ‘on the ground’: How has the livelihood changed over time, and has that change contributed to more adaptive capacity? - Indicator systems are needed rather than solitary indicators - In the documents is adaptation considered as a one-off action or a process-driven approach over time? Is this a journey? - What thresholds to adaptation were used in the projects? Moving from static to dynamic adaptation – explore what may have been traded off to achieve adaptation. Can projects hit the panacea of integrated adaptation (and) human, social, economic and ecological wellbeing over time? - Identifying stakeholder priorities - Who identified? Who reported? And who benefitted? Plus, [regarding] the discussion on the attributes of the most effective channels, institutions are key. Much depends on whose perspective is being considered as a priority in terms of achieving effectiveness.	Please see above. Specific indicators for changes in outcomes will be clarified during the review process.
TOC-co-finance	you only consider one direction (finance => project => outcomes). Arguably, there also links the other way. E.g., depending on the type of project I plan (e.g., as an individual or a community), I will turn to different funding sources (e.g., use my own savings or look for support from the (local) government or international donors).	We will extract information on co-financing including co-financing requirements at funder level, co-financing in the project design, and co-finance reporting as part of the project evaluations. This is now more clearly visible in the revised theory of change.
TOC-co-finance	Co-funding could be represented as a moderator.	See response above.
TOC - decision tree	Decision tree: Clarify that reduction /risk should be in relative terms.	This has been clarified in the updated version of the protocol.

Comments on the search strategy

Topic	Comment	Response
Search strategy	Recommends first identifying projects, and then the literature around it by also searching for the name of the project on Google Search and Google Scholar. This should be clearly explained in the protocol.	This is now more clearly explained in the protocol.
Search strategy	Regarding the "search strategy" section on page 13, the websites of the evaluation bodies of multilateral climate funds might not be the best source for information on portfolio-level funding. Those would rather be sources of information to address question 1 on impact, or information on portfolio evaluation. For example, the first overall evaluation of the performance of Adaptation Fund portfolio is available on the website of the AF-TERG: http://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/AFB.EFC_.22.9_Evaluation-of-the-Fund-Phase-II.pdf For information on mid-term evaluations, project annual reports or final evaluations, information could be found, in the case of the Adaptation Fund, in the AF website under each project/programme link: http://www.adaptation-fund.org/projects-programmes/	This is now clarified.
Search strategy	Portfolio analysis publications should help you to answer question 0 because they look at the overall practices of the donor institutions you consider.	This is now clarified in the protocol.
Search strategy	Effectiveness of climate finance (many studies on this from ODI, OECD library, etc.).	This is now included.
Search strategy	Scopus is missing from databases and platforms.	Scopus was left out following trial exercises in which it did not prove to be a very repeatable source of bibliographic literature.
Search strategy	I note that using "adj3" might give a lot of hits, but I assume that you have piloted the search. Besides, I wonder if keywords specific to adaptation and agriculture could be used or you think it would be too narrow? Ex: climate-smart; drought-tolerant	We changed the search strategy, and will be using project names as search terms.
Search strategy	About search string: what about adding "adapt* evaluat*"? OR "adapt* metric*"?	We changed the search strategy, and will be using project names as search terms.
Search strategy	Sector-specific search	We changed the search strategy, and will be using project names as search terms.
Search strategy	keywords: could also work "adaptation metrics", "adaptation evaluation"	We changed the search strategy, and will be using project names as search terms.
Search strategy	3.4 Screening: I guess that this step mostly applies to the academic literature, as many reports in grey literature don't include abstracts.	We have added this clarification to the protocol.
Search strategy	Include www.climatepolicyinitiative.org	Done.
Search strategy	Include https://www.weadapt.org/ ...though not sure to what extent they have the type of information you are looking for.	Done.
Search strategy	Include World Vision International (www.wvi.org)	Done.

Topic	Comment	Response
Search strategy	Include Organizational websites: What about the LEDS Global partnership and Euroclima (for Latin America) if applicable to the established criteria?	Our scope has been limited to sub-Saharan Africa and to adaptation. LEDS is mainly for mitigation related project, and Euroclima is for Latin America. Therefore, they are out of the scope of our analysis, and will not be included in the search list.
search strategy	The search is very comprehensive, but yields very different types of documents. You first search for specific projects (e.g., on GCF website), and then search academic databases for articles. To what extent and how can you compare these very different types of documents?	We will use different types of documents with different types of evidence to answer different review questions. This is now better explained in the protocol.