Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme

LESSONS on the **EFFECTIVENESS** and **IMPLEMENTATION** of climate action programmes in the **Asia and the Pacific region**

A REGIONAL SYNTHESIS OF UNDP EVALUATIONS

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Acronyms

AFOLU	Agriculture, forestry and other land use
AIDA	Artificial Intelligence for Development Analytics
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
FCV	Fuel cell vehicle
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GIS	Geographic information system
ICPE	Independent country programme evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
LDC	Least developed country
LNOB	Leave no one behind
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NDC	Nationally determined contribution
PACC	Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change
R2R	Ridge-to-reef
RBAP	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
REDD	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Evaluation synthesis: purpose, objectives and questions

The purpose of this regional evaluation synthesis is to enhance learning within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and facilitate evidence-informed decision-making and programme delivery in the Asia and the Pacific region. This report aims to articulate UNDP's value proposition in the climate action space, by synthesizing evidence from UNDP evaluations on the effectiveness of projects and programmes, as well as the barriers and facilitators to implementation.

This synthesis is framed around the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific's (RBAP) work on climate action, which can be defined as efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-induced impacts, focusing on mitigation, adaptation and risk reduction strategies [1, 2, 3]. It is an inherently broad and highly complex thematic area, and this synthesis focuses on specific subsectors, as presented in section 1.3 below.

The synthesis sought to draw lessons from regional project and programme evaluations by posing five questions, as follows:

- **SQ1:** What lessons can be drawn on the effectiveness of efforts to support the integration of climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction (DRR) into national and local policies, strategies and governance frameworks?
- **SQ2:** What lessons can be drawn on the effectiveness of efforts to mobilize finance and investment for climate action, including from both the public and private sectors?
- **SQ3:** What lessons can be drawn from UNDP's efforts to support and promote innovative solutions and technology for climate action?
- **SQ4:** What lessons can be drawn on the incorporation of gender and 'leave no one behind' (LNOB) principles in climate action programming?
- **SQ5:** What lessons can be drawn from the contextual, design and implementation factors influencing the effectiveness of climate action interventions and the achievement of results in RBAP?

1.2 Regional context

In the Asia-Pacific region, UNDP RBAP operates in 36 countries and territories through 24 country offices. The area covered encompasses around 60 percent of the global population. This vast area includes diverse landscapes, from densely populated urban centres to remote rural communities, each facing unique climate challenges.

The climate and weather in this region are complex and vary by location due to geographical diversity. The region covers all climate zones—from tropical to high mountain to polar—and has diverse weather and climatic patterns such as the monsoon in South Asia and tropical cyclones in the Pacific. Country social, political, economic and geographical contexts also vary widely across the region, including fragile political contexts (such as Afghanistan and Myanmar), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (including the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu), least developed countries (LDCs) (including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu), and mountainous countries (such as Bhutan and Nepal).

With respect to climate action, RBAP supports countries in the region to prepare and meet their climate commitments made through the Paris Agreement. UNDP is supporting 27 countries in the region to prepare or update their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), the majority (74 percent) of which have submitted updated or new NDCs to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), signalling their intention to enhance their climate mitigation or adaptation ambitions [1, 4].

During the period from 2018 to 2023, UNDP RBAP implemented 825 projects focused on climate action, with a budget of US$2,536,289,685 and expenditure of $1,757,211,828, achieving an average execution rate of 69 percent.[1]

Vertical trust funds were the leading sources of funding, contributing 51 percent of the total expenditure. They were followed by donor country governments, which accounted for 23 percent of the expenditures, and programme country governments, which provided 7 percent [5]. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) trust fund was the largest individual contributor, providing $466,526,949 (27 percent of the total expenditure). The Green Climate Fund was the second largest donor, with $302,724,870 (17 percent of total expenditure). Additional contributions from vertical funds included those of the Montreal Protocol, which furnished 6 percent of the total expenditure, the Forest Carbon Partnership, at 1 percent, and the Adaptation Fund, with 0.2 percent of the total expenditure.

The project portfolio encompassed a diverse range of initiatives, including climate change mitigation projects that addressed biodiversity conservation, marine ecosystem enhancement, wetland restoration and climate-smart agriculture. These projects accounted for 42 percent of total expenditure and 44 percent of the total number of projects identified. UNDP supports plans by higher-income countries (as a complement to NDCs) to reach net zero emissions by an agreed date. Given the region's rapid increase in energy consumption over recent decades, the transition to large-scale clean and renewable energy production, particularly in middle-income contexts, is a major mitigation imperative.

The portfolio also included climate change adaptation projects, which focused on renewable energy, low-carbon technologies, and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD). These projects represented 32 percent of total expenditure. UNDP supports countries to build capacities to prepare and respond to the effects of climate change. This entails supporting countries to act in advance of climate impacts, increasing their capacity to anticipate and act, especially in the region's SIDS. Related to NDC development, UNDP also supports countries to strengthen the enabling environment for directing development financing and private sector investment support finance for mitigation and adaptation efforts [1, 2].

[1] Financial data extracted from UNDP's Atlas (2018–2022) and Quantum (2023) systems, as of July 2024.

DRR projects were also a significant focus, centring on disaster early warning systems, resilience building and post-disaster recovery. These projects constituted 26 percent of total expenditure.[2] Strategies include strengthening policies and frameworks at the national and subnational levels; promoting coherence between DRR and climate change adaptation; enhancing early warning systems to help communities prepare for and respond to disaster more effectively; building resilient infrastructure; community engagement and capacity-building; and investing in the public and private sectors for risk reduction, including leveraging international funding [3].

Underpinning UNDP's support on climate action is the LNOB principle, recognizing that climate change most affects women, the poor and those living in environmentally precarious locations, and that the transition to green economies may have serious implications for those whose jobs and livelihoods depend on polluting sectors [1, 2].

1.3 Scope and methodology

Climate action is an inherently broad and highly complex thematic area, and UNDP's strategies, ambitions and pathways in the region are diverse, multifaceted and cover a wide array of themes. To ensure the manageability of the synthesis and usefulness of the resulting lessons, this synthesis focuses on specific subsectors: (1) climate change adaptation and resilience—agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU) and coastal protection; (2) climate change mitigation—AFOLU and energy; and (3) DRR.

These subsectors were identified through an initial scoping exercise conducted on UNDP's Artificial Intelligence for Development Analytics (AIDA) tool. This exercise provided an overview of the quantity and nature of evaluative evidence on different climate action topics. In addition, other key documents—including relevant UNDP strategic and policy documents at the global level, regional assessments, and literature relating to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 targets—were reviewed to assess regional priorities.

This qualitative synthesis includes 43 evaluations of projects and programmes commissioned by UNDP and completed between 2014 and 2023 in the Asia and the Pacific region that focus on the stated subsectors. A list of evaluations used in this synthesis is provided in Annex I.

The qualitative synthesis followed a rigorous and systematic approach to analysis. Searches were undertaken using AIDA to identify potentially relevant evaluations. These were then screened against pre-defined eligibility criteria relevant to the synthesis objectives, first by title and executive summary and then by interrogating the full evaluation text (see Annex III for the full eligibility criteria). Data on key findings and conclusions relevant to the synthesis questions were then extracted from evaluations using a pre-defined coding framework. Finally, the data and information were further subcategorized with analytical codes, analysed by subsector and findings across emergent themes. Findings were then compiled in the form of overarching lessons.

[2] Financial data extracted from UNDP's Atlas (2018–2022) and Quantum (2023) systems, as of July 2024.

2. CHARACTERISTICS of INCLUDED EVALUATIONS

This section presents findings on the quantity, nature and characteristics of the evaluations included in this synthesis.

2.1 Types of included evaluations

The synthesis included 43 evaluations published between 2014 and 2023. Although the types of evaluation included thematic, multi-country programme and project evaluations, most of these evaluations were from single-country project evaluations (51 percent) and independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) (37 percent) (see Table 1 below). Over 80 percent of the evaluations were published after 2018.

TABLE 1: Distribution of evaluation types included in the synthesis

Type of evaluation	No. of evaluations
Multi-country project evaluations	2
Single-country project evaluations	22
ICPEs	16
Thematic evaluations	3

2.2 Thematic coverage of included evaluations

There was a good representation of all three thematic focus areas, with an almost equal representation of evaluations on adaptation and resilience, mitigation and DRR. Unsurprisingly, there was a high degree of thematic overlap within evaluations; those that reported on adaptation programmes also had evidence on mitigation and/or DRR programmes. Within evaluations reporting on adaptation and resilience, coverage of AFOLU was higher than that of coastal protection. Within evaluations reporting on mitigation, energy had a higher coverage than AFOLU (see Table 2 below).

TABLE 2: Distribution of thematic coverage among the reports included in the synthesis

Thematic focus	No. of evaluations
Adaptation and resilience	**24**
AFOLU	16
Coastal protection/adaptation	8
Mitigation	**23**
AFOLU	8
Energy	15
DRR	**21**

2.3 Geographic coverage of included evaluations

Evaluations included in this synthesis cover every RBAP programme country. Most evaluations maintained a national focus, concentrating on individual countries or country programmes. Three thematic evaluations had a regional focus, focusing specifically on the Pacific region [6, 7, 8].

3. KEY TAKEAWAYS

This section presents key takeaways from the synthesis and lessons presented, underscoring UNDP's value proposition for climate action in Asia and the Pacific. These takeaways illustrate that UNDP has been effective in many contexts in supporting the integration of climate change adaptation, mitigation and DRR into national and local policies. The organization has effectively mobilized climate finance, fostered public–private partnerships and promoted innovative solutions and technologies for climate action.

Despite these achievements, UNDP has faced several challenges. Key contextual challenges include inadequate financing, political barriers, and the impacts of natural and climate-induced disasters. Additionally, geographical diversity, such as the remoteness of islands and mountainous terrains, complicates programme implementation. Moreover, balancing nature conservation with local livelihoods presents further challenges, especially when local communities resist top-down approaches. These challenges highlight the need for UNDP to adopt flexible, adaptive management practices and robust stakeholder engagement strategies. They also outline the importance of strategic alignment, robust risk management, stakeholder engagement and institutional capacity-building in the successful implementation of climate action projects in the Asia-Pacific region.

3.1 Integrating climate action priorities into national and local policies, strategies and governance frameworks

UNDP was effective in integrating climate change adaptation, mitigation and DRR into national and local policies across several contexts. UNDP's strengths lie in successful policy development and capacity-building initiatives. For instance, in Cambodia, UNDP effectively incorporated climate change adaptation into national policies, enhanced early warning systems, and supported the Royal Government of Cambodia's strategic climate resilience goals. In Nepal, UNDP aided local governments in risk-informed development planning and assisted in formulating national DRR policies. Similarly, in Bhutan, UNDP played a vital role in strengthening climate change adaptation frameworks but faced challenges in integrating environmental management with social objectives for better outcomes. In Myanmar, there was progress in policy development and institutional capacity-building, but UNDP faced challenges in effective implementation due to limited intersectoral coordination. Bangladesh also saw progress in enhancing policy frameworks for climate change mitigation, although there were challenges in government buy-in and scaling up projects. UNDP's initiatives in this region highlight the importance of coordinated efforts, continuous engagement, tailored approaches, robust institutional frameworks and government support.

3.2 Mobilizing climate finance and fostering public–private partnerships

UNDP demonstrated strengths in mobilizing climate finance and fostering public–private partnerships, although there was room for further progress in private sector engagement and market-based financing. Evaluations suggest that UNDP support for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises and the crafting of a strategic narrative for its climate action portfolio could be helpful towards this end. While UNDP has been proactive in developing financial instruments and strategies for private sector involvement, further progress is needed to refine these approaches.

UNDP has effectively aggregated support for climate finance across various projects, attracting funding from 55 traditional and non-traditional donors. Notable successes include advocating for increased budget allocations for climate adaptation and mitigation and integrating climate finance into national budget systems, as seen in India and Nepal. Limited investment appetite was noted in countries with underfunded governments or small, underdeveloped private sectors, such as Timor-Leste. In such contexts, gaps between planned and actual co-financing commitments were identified, affecting the implementation of climate action projects. These evaluations highlight UNDP's success in mobilizing resources but also underscore the need for enhanced strategies to ensure sustainable and effective private sector engagement in climate finance.

3.3 Enhancing climate action objectives through technology and innovation

UNDP demonstrated capacity for integrating innovative technologies and strategic approaches to enhance climate resilience, resource management and DRR across the region. By deploying and supporting the adoption of green technologies and innovations, UNDP's efforts contributed to improved environmental sustainability and local capacities to maintain these advancements.

UNDP's approach was multifaceted, employing a range of technological solutions to address specific contextual challenges. In the Pacific Island Countries, various ridge-to-reef (R2R) projects exemplify this approach, utilizing refined methodologies for coastal management and innovative agricultural practices to enhance food security and biodiversity. Technologies such as crop banks, spatial information management systems, and drones for ecological surveys have significantly bolstered local resilience against climate impacts. In the field of renewable energy, projects such as the 'Palau Sustainable Economic Development through Renewable Energy Applications (SEDREA)' and the Indonesian 'Wind Hybrid Power Generation (WHyPGen) Market Development Initiative Project' illustrate UNDP's efforts in advancing solar, wind and hybrid energy solutions. These initiatives contributed to reducing GHG emissions and increasing the share of renewable energy in national grids.

Despite these successes, UNDP's initiatives face substantial challenges. Financial constraints and high initial costs often hinder the scalability and sustainability of projects. Regulatory barriers and the complexity of coordinating multi-island or cross-regional projects add layers of difficulty, necessitating robust policy frameworks and legislative support. Moreover, the sustainability of pilot projects is threatened by limited funding for ongoing maintenance and technical support, as seen in the disaster resilience projects in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. To overcome these barriers, there is a need for innovative business models, financial instruments and continuous capacity-building that engage private sector investment and ensure local ownership and maintenance of technological solutions.

3.4 Integrating gender equality and LNOB into climate action initiatives

UNDP has made some progress in integrating gender equality into its climate action initiatives, with several programmes explicitly targeting women's empowerment and equality in climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience. Programmes such as the 'Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Cambodia to Support Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change Project' have successfully trained women in disaster management and climate change adaptation, which led to the creation of a Women's Resilience Index. Others, such as the Pacific Island Countries regional R2R project,[3] have embedded gender within their design, ensuring both men's and women's needs are considered and equal access to decision-making is provided.

Despite these advancements, UNDP faces challenges in systematically incorporating gender equality across all projects; some attempts have been ad hoc or insufficient due to budget constraints and a lack of political will. Additionally, integrating the LNOB principle beyond gender to include other vulnerable groups—such as youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly, migrants or communities at risk from climate change—remains limited. To effectively address these challenges, further development of inclusive strategies, active participation from vulnerable communities, and better data collection and monitoring are required.

3.5 Mitigating the risks of natural resource disputes emanating from climate action interventions

Climate action interventions often create conflicts within and between various entities, primarily due to differing policy mandates and resource disputes. These tensions can manifest between government agencies, local communities and sectors such as fossil-based industries versus renewable energy advocates. UNDP has played an important role in addressing these challenges by fostering coordination, dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders; clarifying roles; and aligning with national development policies. However, significant obstacles were encountered when coordination was strained, which hindered shared visions and the engagement of diverse actors, ultimately affecting project objectives and success. Evaluations highlight that insufficient coordination among partners can result in the inability to engage diverse actors, a lack of shared vision, and unclear partner roles, all of which impede effective project implementation.

Exemplary practices from various contexts demonstrate how UNDP navigated these challenges, which often emanate from complex political-economy factors beyond the organization's influence. For instance, in Malaysia, UNDP's programme for sustainable development managed tensions between economic advancement and natural resource maintenance, with ambitious projects that were vulnerable to conflict. UNDP facilitated coordination and dialogue among stakeholders, developed information bases for planning, and prepared cost-recovery mechanisms. In Myanmar and the Philippines, UNDP's collaboration with national and subnational governments fostered environments conducive to designing context-specific interventions and inclusive implementation. Despite these successes, challenges such as institutional territorialities and competing mandates among ministries continue to complicate climate change governance.

[3] The full project name is 'Ridge to reef: Testing the integration of water, land, forest and coastal management to preserve ecosystem services, store carbon, improve climate resilience and sustain livelihoods in Pacific Island Countries'.

3.6 Engaging relevant stakeholders and fostering local ownership

Engaging relevant stakeholders, including governments, communities and the private sector, during project design and implementation is crucial for successful outcomes. For example, in Cambodia, extensive consultation ensured alignment with government priorities, and in Thailand the 'Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction in Development Planning in Thailand (MADRiD)' project utilized a public–private partnership model to unite different sectors in developing DRR approaches. Similarly, in Samoa, pre-existing relationships with local communities improved project communication and access, enhancing climate change resilience efforts.

Successful projects ensured local ownership, which contributed to smooth institutionalization, local-level implementation capacity and project sustainability. In SIDS, innovative engagement approaches were essential due to geographic isolation and a reliance on natural resources. For instance, in Tuvalu, the project 'Effective and Responsive Island-level Governance to Secure and Diversify Climate Resilient Marine-based Coastal Livelihoods and Enhance Climate Hazard Response Capacity' coordinated with institutional partners and local authorities, resulting in early institutionalization and local capacity-building. In Vanuatu, local climate change committees and resource-sharing arrangements improved residents' quality of life and promoted sustainable practices. However, challenges arise when stakeholder engagement is limited and hindered by bureaucracy or a lack of political will.

3.7 Incorporating comprehensive risk assessments and adaptive management practices into project designs

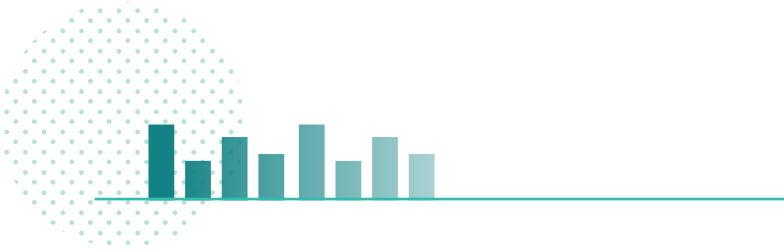
UNDP has effectively integrated climate science into project designs, utilizing scenario-based approaches and developing climate information infrastructures for accurate risk assessments. The project 'Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate-induced Disasters in the Dili to Ainaro Road Development Corridor, Timor-Leste (DARDC)' tailored disaster risk management in Timor-Leste to the socio-economic and environmental context, improving resilience. However, challenges arise when national capacity constraints and contextual and sociopolitical factors are not adequately addressed in risk assessments, leading to delays and inefficiencies.

Moreover, UNDP's adaptive management practices have been successful when they have incorporated stakeholder feedback and adjusted plans to navigate delays and disruptions. This adaptability is seen in projects such as the 'Integration of Climate Change Risks and Resilience into Forestry Management in Samoa', which benefited from robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems with clearly identified baselines and SMART indicators. However, persistent challenges in some other contexts include inconsistent integration of mid-term review learnings and weaknesses in M&E design, often due to poorly defined indicators and overambitious targets. These issues hinder the assessment of project effectiveness, highlighting the need for realistic goals and relevant indicators. This all suggests the necessity for more strategic planning and knowledge integration to ensure sustainable outcomes and to mitigate risks effectively.

3.8 Institutional capacity and technical expertise

Institutional capacity, staff availability and technical expertise were fundamental components for the successful execution of climate interventions. Several evaluations highlighted effective strategies to bolster these components, such as supplementing small or lean core teams with external consultants for specialized technical input. This approach was successful in projects such as the climate information and early warning system project in Cambodia and 'Integrating Climate Change Risk and Resilience into Forestry Management in Samoa'. Alternative strategies include embedding financing within partner organizations, collaborating with local authorities and establishing registries of local experts. An example of this is the 'Effective and Responsive Island-level Governance' project in Tuvalu, where national fisheries officers were embedded within the government to strengthen communication and enhance national technical capacity.

However, human resource management challenges pose significant barriers in some contexts—for example, high staff turnover and a lack of dedicated project staff can undermine institutional memory and disrupt project timelines. Frequent turnover of UNDP, implementing partner and national government staff hindered project implementation by eroding continuity and expertise. This affected project timelines, the ability to effectively track activities and results, and overall intervention effectiveness.



4. CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING the IMPLEMENTATION of CLIMATE ACTION INTERVENTIONS in the ASIA and the PACIFIC REGION

This section collates the key contextual challenges that evaluations identified as affecting the effectiveness and implementation of climate action programmes and projects in the Asia and the Pacific region. Taken together, these challenges speak to part of synthesis question 5, highlighting the key overarching contextual factors that impeded UNDP's climate action work in the region.

4.1 Financing

Inadequate financing for climate change investment was identified as a key operational challenge. Limited appetite for investments was noted in countries with underfunded governments, such as Pakistan [9] and Timor-Leste [10], or where the private sector was small and underdeveloped, such as Bhutan. Co-financing issues were also highlighted, with some implementation partners unable to meet the co-financing amounts stated in project documents. This challenge was exacerbated by cuts in green energy subsidies, such as in Palau, where the withdrawal of subsidies for solar photovoltaic investments failed to attract consumers [11]. Similarly, capped tariff policies for renewable energy in Indonesia led to private sector dissatisfaction, potentially hindering investment [12]. In China, a shortage of green finance for innovative investments and a lack of necessary technologies and regulations in certain sectors, such as conservation co-management and ecosystem service payments, were noted. Concerns also linger about the slow adoption of newer, less ozone-depleting technologies due to cost considerations, given the global significance of China as a producer and consumer [13].

4.2 Natural and climate-induced disasters

Natural and climate-induced disasters, such as cyclones, floods, droughts and wildfires, have posed significant challenges to UNDP's climate action initiatives, particularly those involving renewable energy infrastructure. For instance, Cyclone Winston caused widespread destruction in Fiji in February 2016, including the devastation of newly established biofuel mills, hydropower plants and wind monitoring stations [14]. Mountainous contexts such as Nepal and Bhutan are particularly vulnerable to climate change and experience significant risk of natural disasters, including landslides and floods [15, 16]. In many cases, a flexible and adaptive approach was required by UNDP and partners to ensure relevance and effectiveness (see lessons 10 and 11 below).

4.3 Geographic and contextual diversity

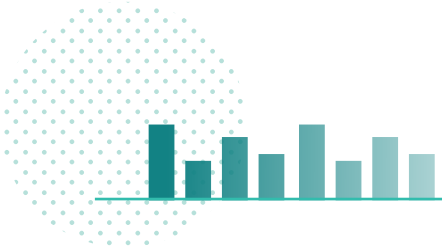
The geographic diversity of the region, including the remoteness of certain islands and mountainous locations, critically affected planning and implementation. Multi-country offices faced difficulties administering programmes in remote island locations, necessitating novel outreach and logistical strategies [17]. Mountainous terrain in contexts such as Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, Nepal and Pakistan complicates data collection and the capacity to respond to disasters effectively and in a timely manner, and therefore complicates integrating longer-term disaster and climate change adaptation into planning processes [15, 16]. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, such as Afghanistan and Myanmar, security challenges, protracted conflict and institutional fragility hampered overall programme delivery. Efforts to strengthen environmental governance were impeded by challenges in institutional coordination, the capacity of implementing partners in such contexts and weakly regulated natural resource extraction [18, 19].

4.4 Balancing nature-based solutions and local community livelihoods

The protection of nature is essential for biodiversity conservation and establishing nature-based solutions to climate change. However, top-down conservation approaches often present challenges in balancing conservation goals with local community livelihoods, leading to delays in planning and implementation. Environmental issues such as habitat destruction and land-use change from logging, mining and overharvesting of resources, combined with population growth and land conversion for farming, housing and infrastructure, exacerbate the situation. Limited land tenure rights, as seen in the Philippines, further complicate matters [20]. Additionally, interventions focusing on alternative livelihoods for communities dependent on natural resources pose challenges, as it remains unclear whether these alternatives can fully replace existing livelihoods or merely serve as supplementary activities, given that households often engage in multiple livelihood pursuits [9]. Various evaluations have noted local community opposition to interventions as a significant contextual challenge. For example, a coastal and marine biodiversity conservation project in Maharashtra, India faced resistance from communities, resulting in considerable implementation challenges and delays [21].

4.5 Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted climate action efforts across the region, affecting both large countries and SIDS with few or no confirmed cases [15]. Lockdown measures and travel restrictions hindered planning, management and capacity-building efforts, disproportionately impacting vulnerable communities. UNDP interventions, such as R2R projects in the Cook Islands and Niue, faced planning, implementation and monitoring difficulties, leading to activity cancellations or delays [22, 23]. Many SIDS, heavily reliant on tourism, experienced detrimental impacts on income, employment and livelihoods. Consequently, numerous island countries, including the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, shifted their focus to immediate emergencies, affecting long-term natural resource management planning [7].



5. LESSONS on the EFFECTIVENESS of UNDP'S EFFORTS to SUPPORT CLIMATE ACTION in the ASIA and the PACIFIC REGION

This section presents the evidence synthesized on the effectiveness of UNDP's efforts to support climate action. This section presents six collated lessons that speak to the synthesis questions regarding (1) the integration of climate change adaptation, mitigation and DRR into national and local policies, strategies and governance frameworks; (2) efforts to mobilize finance and investment for climate action, including from both the public and private sectors; (3) efforts to support and promote innovative solutions and technology for climate action; and (4) the incorporation of gender and LNOB principles into climate action programming.

Lesson 1

Many of UNDP's interventions have been effective in supporting the integration of climate change adaptation, mitigation and DRR into national and local policies, strategies and governance frameworks. Strengths include successful mainstreaming in numerous contexts across the region, with strong policy development and capacity-building initiatives. However, challenges in intersectoral coordination, local ownership and sustainability in some contexts highlighted the need for continuous engagement, tailored approaches and robust institutional frameworks for long-term success.

There are notable examples from the region where UNDP's efforts have successfully integrated climate change adaptation with DRR in governance frameworks at all levels.

In Cambodia, the 'Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Cambodia to Support Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change Project' was highly effective. It supported the climate resilience goals of Cambodia by incorporating climate change adaptation and DRR into national policies, enhancing early warning systems, and building capacity across various levels. This project helped the Royal Government of Cambodia achieve its 'Climate Change Strategic Plan for Water Resources and Meteorology (2013–2017)', 'National Strategic Plan on Green Growth 2013–2030' and 'Strategic National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction 2008–2013' [24]. In Nepal, UNDP assisted local governments in sensitizing municipal representatives and officials, guiding them in risk-informed development planning across seven provinces and 16 municipalities. This support included capacity-building, strategic action plan preparation, and integrating long-term disaster and climate change adaptation initiatives into local plans. At the national level, UNDP provided technical assistance for formulating the 'National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018' and the 'National Policy and Strategic Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management 2018–2030'. It also supported the creation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, which coordinates DRR efforts across the levels of government [15].

There were instances where UNDP's efforts faced challenges, such as the overambitious scope of projects, lack of integrated theories, limited political will, and coordination issues. One example is the 'Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change' projects (PACC and PACC+), which had varying results across the 14 implementation countries. Efforts were particularly successful in the Federated States of Micronesia, where the project demonstrated success in mainstreaming climate change adaptation, as evidenced by the development and incorporation of the Climate Change Act, Kosrae Strategic Plan and other related frameworks. The establishment of a climate change and disaster coordination unit under the Kosrae State Governor's office reflects strong engagement with national policy processes. Similar success was seen in the Marshall Islands, with a successful integration of climate change into national water resource policies and master plans, including the drafting of several plans and policies such as the 'National Climate Change Policy Framework' and the 'Joint National Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation & Disaster Risk Management 2014–2018'. However, there was limited success in the Cook Islands, Samoa and Vanuatu, where there were challenges in fully mainstreaming climate change adaptation into national or local policies, with various stages of policy development and limited local ownership. The evaluation suggests that differences in results were a result of contextual factors in each of the 14 islands, as well as coordination and exchange challenges across them [6].

Similarly, while there were significant achievements in integrating climate change adaptation and DRR into the national and local frameworks in Bhutan, further efforts and improvements were necessary to ensure sustainability and comprehensive integration. UNDP's strategic positioning in Bhutan was relevant and responsive to emerging national needs, especially in developing a low-carbon, climate- and disaster-resilient economy through an integrated approach combining environmental management and socio-economic development objectives. UNDP was effective in working with the government to strengthen institutional and coordination capacity for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management at both the national and local levels. This support includes strengthening early warning systems and response mechanisms. The evaluation noted that while UNDP was effective in its initiatives, there was a need for a comprehensive theory of change that integrated environmental management, climate and disaster resilience, and measures to address inequality, unemployment and livelihood issues, with a focus on vulnerable groups [16].

The Myanmar 'Disaster Risk Reduction Project' achieved milestones for policy development and institutional capacity-building. UNDP's role in developing the 'Myanmar National Framework for Community Disaster Resilience', in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, integrated relevant international commitments and strengthened the DRR policies of Myanmar. However, there were challenges in translating these policies into effective action plans at subnational levels, ensuring sustainable capacity development, and mainstreaming DRR across different government departments. Some ministries lagged due to the absence of a common framework and tools/criteria for DRR integration. The evaluation states that further engagement is needed to ensure effective implementation at the regional and township levels [25].

The 'Myanmar UN-REDD National Programme' advanced the integration of forestry and climate change mitigation within Myanmar's national frameworks. The programme boosted the land-use change and forestry component of Myanmar's Intended NDC by providing new data from the Forest Reference Emission Level and National Forest Monitoring System, enabling quantification of emission reductions and projections for achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2045. However, there were challenges in achieving effective intersectoral coordination due to limited high-level political will and the tendency of government departments to operate in silos. This resulted in the programme being perceived more as a Forest Department initiative rather than as a cross-sectoral coordination effort [18].

Finally, in Bangladesh, while UNDP made some constructive contributions to enhancing the policy, legal and institutional frameworks for climate change mitigation, there were areas for improvement. UNDP made positive contributions to improving the capacity of policy and institutional stakeholders to implement commitments under the Rio Conventions. For instance, training modules on the Rio Conventions were incorporated into the curriculum of the Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Academy, and communication and outreach activities were delivered to government officials, youth and the media. UNDP was also successful in laying the foundations for future carbon emission reductions. Projects such as the 'UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme' and the 'Sustainable Renewable Energy Power Generation' initiative were noted for establishing management processes, developing national strategies and improving understanding of deforestation drivers. However, there were challenges in government buy-in and scaling up, with a lack of clarity on how the interventions leveraged government buy-in for scaling up carbon emissions reduction. There was also limited evidence of intersectoral coordination or attempts to exploit synergies between different projects focused on climate change adaptation and disaster resilience. Activities were designed and implemented in isolation, contrary to the aspirations of comprehensive and coordinated risk management approaches [26].

Lesson 2

UNDP has comparative strengths in mobilizing climate finance and fostering public–private partnerships, but there is room for further progress in private sector engagement and market-based financing. Evaluations suggest that UNDP could better prioritize private sector engagement, support micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises and develop a strategic narrative for its climate action portfolio. Enhancing focus on market-based mechanisms and effectively communicating their benefits to government officials could ensure the long-term sustainability and replicability of project outcomes.

At a global level, the evaluation of UNDP's support for climate change adaptation highlights a proactive approach in developing new financial instruments and strategies to engage the private sector, although further progress and refinement were needed. UNDP recognized the importance of public–private partnerships and secured a significant share of adaptation finance through vertical funds. From 2010 to 2020, it mobilized over $2.8 billion for projects across 100 countries, including LDCs and SIDS. UNDP adopted a structured approach to engage the private sector in climate change adaptation, focusing on de-risking investments. Initiatives such as the 'Adaptation Fund–UNDP Innovation Small Grant Aggregator Platform' supported early and growth-stage organizations in becoming investment-ready. However, mobilizing private sector finance was challenging due to the difficulty in identifying optimal entry points for adaptation activities, which typically involve a diverse set of actors compared to mitigation activities [27].

The independent subregional programme evaluation of Pacific Island Countries highlights UNDP's multifaceted approach to mobilizing finance and investment for climate adaptation, mitigation and DRR. This approach involved both the public and private sectors. UNDP effectively leveraged multiple projects to aggregate support for climate finance. UNDP's innovative climate finance work involved mobilizing and managing financial resources from governments, international donors, financial institutions and the private sector to address climate change issues. The organization was particularly noted for its ability to attract funding from both traditional and non-traditional donors, mobilizing around 55 donors and significantly increasing funding for the Pacific region [8].

The evaluations included in this synthesis reported several instances of UNDP successfully advocating for increased budget allocations and expenditures related to climate adaptation, mitigation and risk management across various regions. In Nepal, UNDP supported the integration of climate finance into sectoral plans and budget systems, providing capacity-building for government officials. Notable achievements include defining roles for the Ministry of Finance as the national designated authority for the Green Climate Fund and establishing technical committees for decision-making [15]. In India, the 'Market Transformation and Removal of Barriers for Effective Implementation of the State-level Climate Change Action Plans' project (in Jharkhand and Manipur) exemplifies UNDP's success in mobilizing co-financing from government and private sector entities, surpassing initial targets by over 60 percent. This co-financing supported various activities, including projects under the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change. However, challenges were noted in transitioning from grant-based to market-based financing solutions. The project focused more on creating institutional frameworks and building technical capacities, with less emphasis on engaging financial intermediaries [28].

Limited investment appetite was noted in countries with underfunded governments or small, underdeveloped private sectors. For example, in Pakistan, UNDP effectively engaged with global funds such as GEF, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund. However, weaknesses in co-financing for climate-related activities were identified, with gaps between initially envisaged project sizes and actual co-financing commitments. The government's initial co-financing commitment for the 'Pakistan Sustainable Transport Project' did not materialize, leading to the completion of only the GEF-funded components [9]. In Timor-Leste, government support and collaboration with international partners showed strengths, but co-financing expectations were unmet. The government demonstrated commitment by funding ministry staff from its budget for resilience, disaster and climate risk management projects. However, the 'Strengthening Resilience of Small-Scale Rural Infrastructure and Local Government Systems to Climate Variability and Risk' project fell short of achieving the anticipated support, indicating a gap between planned and actual co-financing outcomes [10]. In Bhutan, UNDP significantly contributed to implementing climate change adaptation priorities by mobilizing resources from GEF-managed trust funds. However, challenges remain in shifting Bhutan from a grant recipient to a development partner, with limited success in exploring government cost-sharing [16].

Lesson 3

UNDP's adoption of technology and innovation has significantly enhanced coastal and water resource management, as well as climate change adaptation in Pacific Island Countries. Successful elements include refined methodologies for coastal management, innovative waste and farming practices, and advanced technologies such as geographic information systems (GIS) and drones. These efforts improved resource monitoring, climate resilience and local capacity-building. However, challenges included the ambitious scope, the sustainability of pilot projects and coordination across geographically dispersed islands.

The synthesis included several evaluations of R2R projects located in Pacific Island Countries. These highlighted the role of UNDP in deploying, supporting and building local capacity in the use of innovative and integrative approaches to integrated coastal management, integrated water resource management and climate change adaptation.

The Pacific Island Countries regional R2R project included 14 national pilot projects across different islands. These pilots included refined methodologies and procedures for characterizing island coastal areas, which were crucial for coastal management. These projects also demonstrated innovative approaches to pig waste management, sustainable farming and catchment management, and wastewater and pollution management [7]. In the Cook Islands, the R2R project supported integrated water resource management technologies, such as spatial information management systems and GIS, aimed at improving the management and monitoring of water resources. Local communities were successfully involved in data gathering and agricultural training [22]. The Niue R2R project incorporated key innovations and technologies, such as crop banks, which ensured immediate replanting after cyclones, thereby maintaining food security and biodiversity. The project also established the AgINTEL agricultural intelligence database to collect, analyse and disseminate market information, enhancing data-driven agricultural practices and market opportunities. Drones were deployed for efficient and accurate surveying of plant populations, providing better data for conservation efforts [23].

Evaluations suggest these innovative approaches significantly improved the monitoring and management of water resources, contributing to climate resilience and environmental sustainability objectives. Their deployment also supported national and international climate ambitions, including those of UNDP, GEF and global multilateral environmental agreements. However, while these projects made notable strides in promoting innovative solutions and building capacity, they faced challenges related to the ambitious scope and complexity of the initiatives, the sustainability of pilot projects amid bureaucratic hurdles, and coordination complexities across the 14 islands involved in the Pacific Island Countries regional R2R project [7, 22, 23].

Lesson 4

While UNDP effectively facilitated renewable energy adoption through technological innovation, capacity-building and policy support, several challenges persisted. These include financial constraints, regulatory barriers and high initial costs that impeded scalability and sustainability. The development of robust business models and financial instruments that attract private investment and address these barriers could help ensure long-term success and sustainability in renewable energy projects.

At a global level, UNDP recognized the crucial role of innovative solutions and technology in advancing climate action. Over the past decade, significant progress was made in renewable energy technologies, particularly in solar photovoltaic cells, which have become more affordable and widely available. The adoption of wind energy and, to a lesser extent, biomass and small-scale hydropower also increased. The digitalization of energy systems revolutionized the management of energy supply and usage. UNDP facilitated the development of these technologies by creating enabling environments, translating national priorities into policy frameworks, and building necessary capacities. Additionally, UNDP worked on developing new financial instruments to encourage investment in technology and innovation, including performance-based payments and guarantees to attract private sector investment [27, 29].

Despite these advancements, financial, policy and implementation challenges persisted, particularly in ensuring the sustainability and scalability of new technologies. Scaling up innovative solutions was hindered by a lack of robust business models, high initial costs associated with advanced technologies, and insufficient policies, standards and regulations. Furthermore, projects often faced sustainability risks due to limited assessment of user experiences and inadequate project designs that failed to consider how supplied equipment fitted within local budgets [27, 29].

Evaluations from Asia and the Pacific reflect both the strengths and challenges faced by UNDP at a global level. These evaluations indicate that UNDP's adoption of green technology and innovation has advanced renewable energy adoption and reduced GHG emissions. However, several implementation challenges remain, including financial constraints, legislative and policy hurdles, and technical and market barriers at the inception of projects.

The 'Palau Sustainable Economic Development through Renewable Energy Applications (SEDREA)' project supported the installation of solar photovoltaic systems and solar water heaters in commercial buildings. It also conducted training programmes for National Bank of Palau staff, local vendors and contractors to enhance local capacity for installing and maintaining renewable energy systems. This increased capacity ensured the sustainability of these technologies beyond the project's lifecycle. The evaluation suggests that the project, along with other donor-funded renewable energy projects, contributed to a reduction in the growth rate of GHG emissions from diesel-based power generation and a fourfold increase in renewable energy's share in the national energy mix. However, this fell short of the planned target of 4.6 MW. Key challenges included securing co-funding, legislative and policy hurdles that impeded the establishment of a conducive regulatory environment, and market barriers, such as a lack of suppliers at the project's inception [11].

The 'Wind Hybrid Power Generation (WHyPGen) Market Development Initiative Project' in Indonesia employed several technologies and innovations to promote renewable energy use and reduce GHG emissions. These included advanced wind mapping and measurement technologies to identify promising sites for wind power generation and testing wind–solar–diesel hybrid systems to ensure a reliable power supply in remote locations. The project also focused on local manufacturing, capacity-building, and training to support the development of local supply chains and enhance technical skills in design, engineering, installation and maintenance. As a result, 19 large-scale wind power projects with an aggregate capacity of 1,187.5 MW were in the pipeline by the end of the project. It also laid the groundwork for long-term indirect GHG emission reductions, which is significant due to the establishment of these large-scale wind projects and the increased share of wind energy in the national power generation mix. These outcomes were achieved despite challenges, including difficulties in attracting private sector investment due to a lack of financial incentives, such as feed-in tariffs, and the high upfront costs of installing wind hybrid systems, which made it difficult for smaller companies and entrepreneurs to participate in the market [30].

The 'Accelerating the Development and Commercialization of Fuel Cell Vehicles in China' project introduced renewable energy-based hydrogen production on a substantial scale and achieved a reduction in the cost of hydrogen production and fuel cell vehicles (FCVs). The project conducted extensive capacity-building activities, increasing the technical capacity for operating and maintaining FCVs and hydrogen refuelling stations. It also raised awareness about the benefits of FCVs and renewable energy-based hydrogen among the public and stakeholders, which was crucial for the project's long-term impact. Overall, the project exceeded its GHG emissions reduction goal. Although the target was 132,707 tons of CO_2, the project achieved a reduction of 230,261 tons of CO_2, primarily through the deployment of 6,407 FCVs by private companies and substantial investments in hydrogen refuelling stations using renewable energy sources. This progress was made despite financial and regulatory challenges, such as the lack of comprehensive policies and regulations for FCV deployment, which hindered large-scale adoption and investment. Additionally, the initial cost of FCVs was significantly higher than conventional vehicles, posing a barrier to widespread adoption [31].

Lesson 5

UNDP's DRR projects showcased strengths in integrating innovation and technology, such as automatic weather stations and GIS-based systems, enhancing real-time data collection and risk analysis. Community engagement and gender-focused initiatives further strengthened these efforts. However, challenges included ensuring long-term sustainability due to limited financial resources and the need for continuous technical support and improvement, highlighting areas for future focus and investment to maintain and advance these capabilities.

Several examples of UNDP-supported early warning system projects demonstrate how technology-based solutions have improved the accessibility and usability of climate information, which is crucial for DRR and climate change adaptation. These efforts were bolstered by enhancing the capacity of national and local institutions to manage and respond to climate-related risks effectively, forming strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, and ensuring that the needs of women and marginalized groups were incorporated into approaches to improve overall disaster resilience.

The 'Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Cambodia' project, supported by UNDP and GEF, implemented several innovative approaches, including the installation of automatic weather and hydrological stations to provide real-time data. Training was provided for the operation and maintenance of these stations and their associated software systems to ensure sustainability and accuracy in data collection. Additionally, a GIS-based risk analysis system was developed using data from the monitoring stations, aiding in assessing and managing risks related to climate variability and water resources. This project significantly enhanced national capacity for generating and sharing climate information, by installing equipment at various locations, training government staff on operations and maintenance, and improving data collection and analysis. Community engagement and advocacy led to the development of a Women's Resilience Index for Cambodia, a global tool assessing gender-related capacity in early warning, DRR and climate change adaptation. However, the sustainability of newly built infrastructure was threatened by limited financial resources for operation and maintenance. Ensuring long-term funding was identified as a critical challenge for maintaining these systems' functionality [24].

In Mongolia, UNDP, in cooperation with the National Emergency Management Agency, developed a smartphone application to raise awareness and improve skills for DRR and disaster response. Other measures included assisting herder households affected by severe winters and supporting the largest nationwide earthquake drill. However, overall efforts were partially hampered by a lack of clarity on applying LNOB principles in disaster risk management and response efforts. Additionally, the lack of national gender-disaggregated data made it difficult to identify and address the specific needs of women during disaster response and risk reduction activities [32].

The 'Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate-induced Disasters in the Dili to Ainaro Road Development Corridor, Timor-Leste (DARDC)' project, in Timor-Leste, utilized innovative solutions such as automatic weather stations and a GIS-based database that integrated geographical, geological and land-use data with community vulnerability and capacity assessments. This database informed the development of watershed hazard and risk maps, aiding in planning and prioritizing DRR measures.

Implemented alongside community engagement, this approach included participatory vulnerability capacity assessments and community-driven, gender-focused action plans to reduce identified risks and vulnerabilities. By incorporating the needs and knowledge of local communities into disaster preparedness strategies, the project ensured an inclusive approach. Despite being underpinned by sound science, certain components, such as automatic weather stations, suffered from weak technical support. Continuous technical improvements and proactive roles from relevant institutions were needed to address these challenges [33].

Lesson 6

UNDP has made progress in integrating gender equality into its climate action initiatives, with many explicitly targeting women's empowerment and equality in climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience. However, systematic gender mainstreaming and data collection remain challenges due to budget constraints and cultural barriers. Expanding the LNOB principle beyond gender to include other vulnerable groups is limited and could benefit from the further development of inclusive strategies, active participation, and better data and monitoring to tailor interventions effectively.

At a global level, the evaluation of UNDP's support to climate change adaptation states that the organization has made progress in integrating gender equality into its adaptation programming. For instance, 71 percent of climate change adaptation expenditures in 2018 made significant contributions to gender equality or had gender equality as a principal objective [27]. Similarly, the evaluation of UNDP's support to energy access and transition (conducted in 2021) states that about half of the UNDP energy budget is allocated to project outputs expected to benefit women's equality and economic empowerment [29].

Out of the 43 evaluations included in this synthesis, 37 included a gender component. Across these evaluations, gender was incorporated in several ways. Some programmes and projects explicitly targeted both women and men in capacity-building and public awareness components. For example, in the 'Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Cambodia' project, women were trained in disaster management and climate change adaptation, leading to increased women's voices in these areas and the creation of a Women's Resilience Index for Cambodia [24]. Gender mainstreaming in design was evident in several other projects and programmes. For example, the Pacific Island Countries regional R2R project embedded gender matters within the project design by developing a gender mainstreaming strategy, toolkit and action plan. The project ensured that gender inequality was addressed by considering women's and men's differing needs at all intervention levels and ensuring equal power and access to decision-making choices and resources [7].

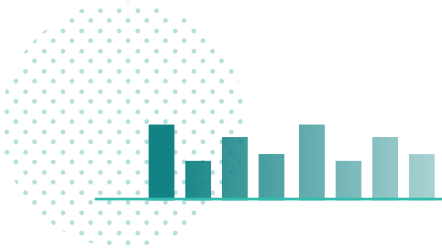
However, across the 43 evaluations, there is a sense that some initiatives lacked a systematic approach to gender mainstreaming, where gender issues were not a primary focus and efforts to address them were ad hoc or insufficient due to budget constraints and lack of political will [7, 9].

There were examples of the integration of gender considerations in policy and planning. Projects such as the 'Low Emission Climate Resilient Development Project (LECReD)' in the Maldives included gender-focused activities, such as revising local councils' development planning methods to incorporate gender-specific advocacy on community-based DRR. Adjustments were made to encourage women's participation by shifting to single-day meetings to accommodate travel challenges [34]. There were also examples of women's empowerment initiatives in renewable energy projects. In India, the 'Market Transformation and Removal of Barriers for Effective Implementation of State-level Climate Change Action Plans' project included support for women-led self-help groups to utilize renewable energy technologies. This positively impacted the confidence and revenue growth of nearly 200 women [28]. In other cases, despite efforts to include women, their participation in decision-making and leadership roles was often limited. Cultural and social norms continued to be significant barriers to women's full engagement and empowerment in project activities [35, 36].

There were few examples where programmes demonstrated an explicit focus on gender-disaggregated data and analysis or included specific indicators and monitoring. One example was the 'Managing Climate Change-Induced Water Shortages' project in Maldives, which incorporated thorough gender analysis and gender equality indicators such as access to water and employment/training opportunities for both men and women [34]. The Tuvalu R2R project set specific indicators to monitor the participation of women, with targets such as ensuring at least 30 percent female participation in various project activities [17]. Several other projects lacked gender-disaggregated data and robust monitoring mechanisms, which made it difficult to assess the impact of projects on women and other vulnerable groups. This gap hindered the ability of UNDP and implementing partners to make informed decisions and adjustments during project implementation [24, 28, 34].

Evidence on the integration of LNOB principles beyond gender was more limited, appearing explicitly in only eight evaluations. These projects and programmes had a focus on other vulnerable groups such as youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly, migrants or communities living in areas vulnerable to climate change-induced impacts. Examples include the 'Bangladesh Inclusive Budgeting and Financing for Climate Resilience' project, which focused on supporting vulnerable local communities, including developing gender and climate-responsive action plans and budgets [26]. The Tuvalu R2R project involved youth and children in conservation activities and provided opportunities for participation and access to resources for adolescent females, mothers and the elderly [17].

Evaluations of initiatives where a focus on vulnerability, beyond gender, is lacking suggest that further efforts are needed in developing inclusive strategies and action plans (e.g. through community assessments), promoting the active participation of vulnerable groups (including young people, persons with disabilities, the elderly, migrants or communities vulnerable to the effects of climate change) in decision-making processes, improving the collection and monitoring of disaggregated data, and tailoring interventions to the specific needs of various vulnerable groups [19, 20, 28, 37].



6. DESIGN and IMPLEMENTATION FACTORS INFLUENCING the EFFECTIVENESS of CLIMATE ACTION INTERVENTIONS

In this section, the evidence synthesized on key design and implementation factors influencing the effectiveness of climate action interventions is presented in the form of six collated lessons. These lessons speak to synthesis question 5. UNDP evaluations have a strong formative focus, particularly on design and implementation issues, and the lessons can generally be applied across all of UNDP's climate action initiatives in the region.

Lesson 7

UNDP's climate action interventions in the Asia-Pacific region effectively align with national and international development policy frameworks, integrating climate solutions with national development objectives, fostering national ownership and facilitating coordination among partners. Challenges such as implementing isolated projects, lack of shared vision and top-down approaches can threaten sustainability and ownership.

UNDP's climate action interventions in the Asia and the Pacific region were largely relevant and aligned with national and international policy frameworks and programme priorities. This alignment enabled the integration of climate solutions with national development objectives and ensured ownership at the national and local levels. The Cambodia country programme is a notable example, where national and international priorities in various strategic plans align with UNDP's focus areas. These plans include the 'Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan 2014–2023', the 'Agricultural Sector Strategic Development Plan 2014–2018', the 'National Policy on Green Growth' and the 'National REDD+ Strategy 2017–2026'. The cross-sectoral nature of UNDP's programme enhanced its relevance to multiple sectors, such as climate change, poverty reduction and the empowerment of vulnerable groups. This approach created synergies—for example, by harnessing climate change adaptation activities to enhance agricultural productivity and reduce poverty. Through coherent and synergistic plans, UNDP helped Cambodia meet its international commitments, such as participation in REDD+ activities under the UNFCCC and implementing the three Rio Conventions [35].

There are numerous other examples of interventions aligning with international climate commitments, including renewable energy development projects in the Marshall Islands and Nepal that contributed to international commitments under the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol [38]; Paris Agreement; Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 11, 13 and 15; and other sectoral policies [15, 39]. The Small Grants Programme further exemplifies this alignment by addressing specific environmental issues and contributing to national biodiversity strategies and action plans, as well as efforts to combat desertification [40]. The 'Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction in Development Planning in Thailand (MADRiD)' project was closely aligned with future global agendas for DRR and climate change adaptation, including the Sendai Framework and UNDP's new 10-year global programme to support countries in mitigating disaster risks. The project was further guided by Thailand's 'Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012–2016)', particularly its sixth development strategy focused on sustainably managing natural resources and the environment [41].

Despite these successes, challenges were noted from evaluations of projects and programmes implemented in fragile states, LDCs and SIDS. These challenges include isolated projects, a lack of shared vision among stakeholders, and top-down approaches that limit ownership and threaten sustainability. For instance, initiatives such as the World Bank financed 'Building Climate and Disaster Resilience in Communities' and the 'Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate-induced Disasters in the Dili to Ainaro Road Development Corridor, Timor-Leste (DARDC)' project, both in Timor-Leste, lacked sufficient complementarity with national policies and plans [10]. Additionally, coordination issues between partners and insufficient integration with the country policy framework were observed in the Pacific Island Countries regional R2R project [7].

Lesson 8

Climate action interventions can create conflicts within and between entities due to differing policy mandates and resource disputes. UNDP has addressed these challenges by fostering coordination, dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders; clarifying roles; and ensuring alignment with national development policies. However, challenges to achieving project objectives arise when coordination is strained, which hinders shared visions and the engagement of diverse actors.

Climate adaptation and mitigation interventions can create conflicts within and among government agencies and local communities. Tensions often arise from differing policy mandates, conflicting policy priorities and natural resource disputes. Evaluations highlight these conflicts as significant barriers to implementation, with specific examples including debates over taxing carbon emissions versus supporting fossil-based industries versus promoting renewable energy, and the balance between relief and response versus resilience building [14, 42, 43]. Effective coordination of implementing agencies, often facilitated by UNDP, was pivotal for project success.

There are exemplary practices from various contexts in the region, including middle-income countries, LDCs, SIDS and fragile states. For instance, UNDP's programme for sustainable and resilient development in Malaysia was implemented amid tensions between economic advancement and natural resource maintenance. Projects focusing on the conflict between development and conservation, particularly forest projects, were ambitious and vulnerable. UNDP's role in facilitating coordination and dialogue among stakeholders, developing information bases for planning and decision-making, and preparing cost-recovery mechanisms and revenue-sharing was crucial [42].

UNDP country offices play a crucial role in addressing resource and nature-based tensions by engaging local governments and fostering relationships with international agencies and other UNDP offices, such as in the Philippines [20]. UNDP's collaborative efforts with national and subnational governments created conducive environments for designing context-specific interventions, leveraging project financing, and facilitating inclusive implementation and collaborative learning. For example, UNDP's role as Chair of a DRR working group in Myanmar was instrumental in creating collaborative spaces for all agencies involved [25]. Globally, the thematic evaluation of UNDP support for climate change adaptation highlights UNDP's impartiality, neutrality, visibility and reputation, which enhance advocacy activities and government access. In Tuvalu, the evaluation of the 'Effective and Responsive Island-level Governance' project highlighted challenges related to the marine resource dependence of outer island communities. However, UNDP's partnership coordination efforts helped clarify roles and responsibilities, enhancing project legitimacy and alignment with national policies and legislation [44].

Challenges arise when coordination is strained among government entities (both within ministries and across different sectoral ministries) and partners (including the private sector), when multiple stakeholders are involved. In many contexts UNDP is a trusted entity that can facilitate coordination and cooperation among different stakeholders; however, in some cases political-economy issues extended beyond UNDP's influence. Evaluations suggest that insufficient coordination among partners manifested in three main ways: (1) the inability to engage diverse actors, including the private sector; (2) lack of shared vision; and (3) unclear partner roles in the project's implementation. For example, in the evaluation of a project to enhance the adaptive capacity of communities in Papua New Guinea, vertical (within one ministry) and horizontal (with personnel from other ministries) coordination was reported as being absent or inadequate. This situation hindered project outcomes such as geospatial data management, which was dependent upon technological infrastructure and data provided by different partners [36]. In the Cook Islands R2R project, limited cooperation and coordination across government entities and with implementing partners not only led to delays but also reduced the overall effectiveness of the project. The National Environment Service, as the lead executing agency, faced significant challenges in managing and coordinating the project's activities. Institutional territorialities and a weak project management unit led to poor collaboration between government entities, resulting in inadequate focus on results and timeliness. This led to a lack of ownership among implementing partners, who also lacked sufficient motivation to work together due to the absence of clear memoranda of understanding and clear achievement benchmarks [22]. In Malaysia, competing mandates among ministries created complications for effective climate change governance. For example, the Ministry of Transport, with its focus on high-energy-use development, and the Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change, with its regulatory role, had conflicting agendas. These conflicting agendas impeded the implementation of comprehensive climate policies and projects [42]. Similarly, an evaluation of the 'Wind Hybrid Power Generation (WHyPGen) Market Development Initiative Project' in Indonesia found the lack of clarity in the scope of the project among different partners to be a significant barrier [30].

Lesson 9

Successful climate outcomes can be achieved through effective consultation and coordination with national and local stakeholders. In various contexts, UNDP fostered implementation capacity and project sustainability when it engaged with the right mix of stakeholders, coordinated sectoral efforts and harmonized approaches with local needs.

Evaluations indicate that engaging relevant local and national stakeholders—including national or subnational governments, communities and the private sector—during project design and implementation is crucial for successful outcomes. In various contexts, engagement has been achieved by effective consultative processes with key stakeholders and coordinated efforts among implementing agencies. In Cambodia, extensive consultative processes with key stakeholders ensured the alignment of the UNDP programme with government priorities [35]. The public–private partnership model in the 'Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction in Development Planning in Thailand (MADRiD)' project brought together government, private sector and civil society actors in Thailand to prototype DRR approaches with at-risk communities. These innovations were subsequently adopted by private enterprises for scaling up [41]. In Samoa, the 'Integrating Climate Change Risk and Resilience into Forestry Management (ICCRIFS)' project leveraged pre-existing relationships and collaborative arrangements with local communities, facilitated by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, which improved the project team's access to and communication with these communities [45].

Projects where UNDP ensured local ownership experienced smooth institutionalization and mainstreaming, fostering local-level implementation capacity and contributing to local project uptake and sustainability. Several good-practice examples from SIDS contexts illustrate this, where geographic isolation and a reliance on natural resources may necessitate innovative engagement approaches [29]. In these island contexts, UNDP fostered implementation capacity and project sustainability of coastal protection and DRR approaches when it engaged with the right mix of stakeholders, including devolved island-specific authorities, coordinated sectoral efforts and harmonized approaches with local needs. In Tuvalu, the 'Effective and Responsive Island-level Governance' project successfully coordinated with key institutional partners, including the Tuvalu Fisheries Department, the Department of Rural Development and the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications, as well as local-level island-specific devolved authorities (known as *Kaupules*), which were engaged in project implementation. These collaborations led to early institutionalization (from national to local-island level) and the building of local-level implementation capacity, which was vital for project success [44]. Similarly, the Vanuatu PACC project engaged local communities by establishing local climate change committees and fostering cooperation and resource-sharing arrangements among village chiefs. This resulted in quality-of-life improvements for island residents and increased awareness on sustainable resource management [6, 46]. There was a clear and explicit approach to fostering country ownership in the 'Integrated Environmental Management of the Fanga'uta Lagoon Catchment' project in Tonga. A participatory design approach was used to engage government and local authority stakeholders and communities residing in the lagoon area. This led to enhancing knowledge and fostered the adoption of integrated environmental management practices [47].

Implementation challenges arise when stakeholder engagement is limited, introduces additional bureaucracy, or lacks sufficient contextual and institutional analysis. The UN-REDD national programme in Myanmar encountered low participation from local government staff in training activities, with participating officials often being relatively junior [18].

Lesson 10

Effective risk assessment and the incorporation of lessons from other projects in initial project design can enhance project management and success. UNDP has been successful when approaches to risk management incorporate socio-economic and environmental assessments. Challenges emerge when risks resulting from national capacity constraints or geographic isolation, such as those in SIDS, are not fully considered in project design.

At a global level, UNDP's thematic evaluation on climate change adaptation support found that UNDP has made substantial progress in integrating climate science into project design, especially those funded by vertical funds. There has been improvement in scenario-based project designs and in developing the climate information infrastructure necessary for accurate risk assessments. Furthermore, UNDP has been proactive in developing and updating guidelines for climate risk screening. This includes the integration of rigorous analysis informed by scientific data and detailed climate risk and vulnerability assessments. Initial and ongoing risk assessments have been critical in identifying potential vulnerabilities and adapting project designs accordingly. This proactive approach has helped in mitigating risks and ensuring the resilience of projects against climate impacts. However, there remains room for improvement in ensuring these assessments are consistently applied and integrated across all projects [27].

UNDP's strengths in risk assessment for climate change adaptation are supported by evaluations in the Asia and the Pacific region. Here, evaluative evidence indicates that implementation improves when intervention scope and objectives are clearly defined and aligned with country climate priorities, and when detailed risk assessments are integrated into the design processes. For example, the 'Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate-induced Disasters in the Dili to Ainaro Road Development Corridor, Timor-Leste (DARDC)' project adopted a scenario-based landscape planning approach to disaster risk management in Timor-Leste, tailored to the country's socio-economic and environmental context, and enhancing disaster resilience in road infrastructure [33]. There are also examples of continuous risk assessment as part of adaptive management, which enabled projects to remain flexible and responsive to emerging risks. This adaptability has been key in managing unforeseen challenges and ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes. In Cambodia, an early warning systems project benefited from adaptive management strategies and ongoing risk assessment, which were essential in addressing and mitigating risks as they arose. This included adjustments in response to initial setbacks, delays and unforeseen challenges. These initial challenges included problematic financial management and staffing issues at the outset, which were causing delays and inefficiencies [24].

There are also examples of the inconsistent or fragmented application of risk assessment from the region. For example, the evaluation of the 'Action for the Development of Marshall Islands Renewable Energies (ADMIRE)' project noted that project design and objective settings did not account for national capacities, nor did they consider the land and population distribution across the country's many islands and atolls [39]. For the project 'Mainstreaming Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Conservation into Production Sectors in the Sindhudurg Coast, Maharashtra', in India, some major risks were not suitably addressed in the initial assessment. This included an assumption that the project would be able to operate in the project area from the start without resistance from the local community, related to contentious relationships between local communities and the Forest Department. This caused significant delays in implementing key activities and incurred additional costs not originally envisaged. Resistance from local communities, especially towards the establishment of a marine sanctuary, delayed the project's inception activities and the development of a management plan [21].

It should be noted that even when the capacities or good intentions for risk-informed project design and implementation exist, external contextual factors or institutional arrangements may introduce challenges. The evaluation of the UN-REDD national programme in Myanmar noted findings on the strengths and weaknesses of risk assessment. The programme identified various risks at the project's inception, including weak political support and weak intersectoral coordination. Mitigation measures were included for managing these risks, including capacity-building efforts and policy advocacy. However, external sociopolitical factors beyond the control of the programme, such as the ongoing peace process, which affected stakeholder participation (e.g. of forest-dependent communities), impeded effective risk assessment and mitigation [18].

UNDP climate interventions have attempted to benefit from processes of reflection and learning, to incorporate data and evidence from within interventions and from other projects and initiatives. However, the extent of their integration has varied across different initiatives, which led to delays and the need for additional corrective measures. For example, the success of the 'Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change' projects (PACC and PACC+) has been attributed to a blended bottom-up and top-down approach, which facilitated knowledge transfer among key stakeholders. Knowledge transfer was facilitated through several mechanisms, including effective consultation among national and local stakeholders; localized on-the-job training to increase community involvement, ownership and the absorption of new technologies; and effective community participation of local communities at the identification and implementation stages, which was crucial for the success of demonstration projects. Additionally, incorporating key lessons learned from other relevant climate change adaptation interventions during the design stage contributed to better management. This was facilitated through experience exchanges and site visits among Pacific Island Countries. A series of best practices were highlighted through this process, including on design and context adaptation, the importance of community ownership, and the vitality of integrated approaches to more comprehensive and sustainable outcomes (e.g. integrating climate change adaptation with DRR and water management) [6].

Similarly, a regional R2R project in Pacific Island Countries sought to build upon previous interventions such as the 'Pacific Integrated Water Resource Management' project, integrating lessons from community-based and participative interventions in integrated watershed management and conservation of coastal ecosystems. However, the evaluation underscored the need for robust strategic mechanisms and careful planning to ensure that follow-up projects accrue knowledge and learn from past interventions [7]. The evaluation of the Cook Islands R2R project highlights a missed opportunity to integrate lessons from other UNDP-supported, GEF-financed biodiversity projects, despite UNDP's extensive experience, particularly in the South Pacific and Caribbean regions. Lessons from these examples indicate that such projects are often overly ambitious for their time frame, budget and implementing capacity. These critical lessons were not considered during the design of the project, which consequently suffered from similar issues [22].

Lesson 11

UNDP's adaptive management practices have shown effectiveness in Asia and the Pacific, where projects successfully navigated delays and disruptions by integrating stakeholder feedback and adjusting plans. However, challenges persist, including the inconsistent integration of mid-term review learnings and weaknesses in M&E design. Overambitious targets further complicate the assessment of project effectiveness, highlighting the need for realistic goals and relevant indicators.

In some projects, M&E systems facilitated the systematic collection of data, thereby supporting programme improvement and learning. For instance, the 'Integration of Climate Change Risks and Resilience into Forestry Management in Samoa' project featured a robust M&E system with clearly identified baselines and SMART indicators [45]. Similarly, in Tuvalu and Solomon Islands, documented baselines for clearly stated indicators in R2R and water sector adaptation projects enabled the assessment of potential longer-term impacts of interventions [17, 37].

However, many evaluations identified inadequate and inefficient M&E design as a significant issue. Key barriers included poorly defined indicators resulting from generic definitions of project outputs and outcomes, and indicators that were not sufficiently aligned with country-level output results frameworks. For instance, the China ICPE observed that small-scale climate action-related projects were poorly aligned with country-level programme outcomes [13]. Similarly, the Viet Nam ICPE reported that the indicators selected for measuring project performance were macro-level statistics on disaster response, which were very difficult to link with specific UNDP activities [48].

Overambitious targets and unachievable results were common M&E issues reported in many evaluations, often leading to ambiguous strategies, implementation delays and inefficiencies [34]. Some evaluations were unable to assess UNDP's contribution due to overly broad outcomes and a lack of clearly defined indicators. For example, the Afghanistan ICPE found that the M&E design was not adequate for the ambition of the programme, which aimed to deliver a wide range of fragmented outputs and outcomes, including developing irrigation infrastructure, supporting rural energy and strengthening biodiversity, spread over at least 17 provinces [19].

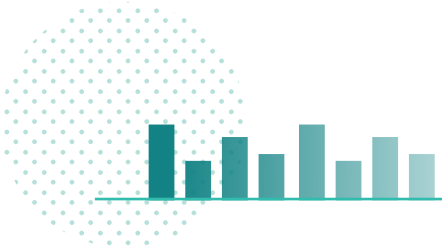
Lesson 12

Institutional capacity, staff availability and technical expertise are crucial for successful climate interventions. Strategies such as supplementing core teams with external consultants and financing embedded technical staff within partner offices can enhance technical capacity and strengthen partnerships. However, challenges such as high staff turnover and lack of dedicated project staff can hamper institutional memory, disrupt timelines and impede effective implementation.

Evaluations emphasize the critical role of institutional capacity, staff availability and technical expertise in the success of climate action projects. Several evaluations highlighted the effectiveness of supplementing small or lean core teams of UNDP staff with external consultants for specialized technical input in areas such as M&E, financial management, administrative support and technical input. This approach was effective in the early warning systems project in Cambodia [24] and the 'Integrating Climate Change Risk and Resilience into Forestry Management (ICCRIFS)' project in Samoa [45].

Alternative strategies for enhancing technical expertise included embedding financing within partner organizations, collaborating with local authorities for project management, and establishing registries of local experts. For example, the 'Effective and Responsive Island-level Governance' project in Tuvalu employed national fisheries officers who were embedded within the government for two years. This strategy strengthened communication between implementing partners and enhanced national technical capacity, with these staff being retained as government employees beyond the project's lifespan [44]. Similarly, the 'Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change' projects (PACC and PACC+) implemented in 14 countries created a registry of local experts, deployed to provide technical advice to national project coordinators [6].

In contrast, human resource management challenges emerged as significant barriers in some contexts. Frequent turnover of UNDP, implementing partner and national government personnel undermined institutional memory and the continuity of expertise, adversely affecting project implementation. Additionally, staff assigned to projects sometimes lacked exclusive dedication, leading to prolonged vacancies that disrupted implementation timelines and partnership communication. For example, the evaluation of PACC and PACC+ projects noted that only 3 out of the 14 national coordinators (employed by the implementing partner) remained throughout the project duration, impeding timely delivery [6]. Similarly, in Bangladesh, the lack of a full-time M&E officer in some climate action projects limited the ability to keep track of all activities and results [26]. The 'Palau Sustainable Economic Development through Renewable Energy Applications (SEDREA)' project, in Palau, highlighted the issue of insufficient full-time staff, as the Director and an energy planner were often diverted to other activities, limiting their availability for project implementation [11].



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Annex II: Descriptive table of included evaluations

		N	%
Type of evaluation			
	Single-country project evaluations	22	51%
	Country programme evaluations	16	37%
	Thematic evaluations	3	7%
	Multi-country project evaluations	2	5%
Publication year			
	2014	1	2%
	2015	1	2%
	2016	4	9%
	2017	2	5%
	2018	6	14%
	2019	10	23%
	2020	6	14%
	2021	9	21%
	2022	4	9%
Quality rating (for project evaluations only)			
	Moderately satisfactory	19	79%
	Satisfactory	5	21%
Implementation modality (for project evaluations only)			
	National implementation modality	19	79%
	Direct implementation modality	5	21%
	Others	1	4%
Implementation scale			
	Global (thematic evaluations)	3	7%
	Regional (more than one country)	3	7%
	National (includes country programme evaluations)	33	77%
	Subnational	4	9%

Annex II (cont'd)

Thematic focus (thematic evaluations not included)			
Adaptation and resilience			
	AFOLU	16	37%
	Coastal protection/adaptation	8	19%
Mitigation			
	AFOLU	8	19%
	Energy	15	35%
DRR		21	49%
Unit (office in charge of the evaluation)			
	Cambodia	2	5%
	China	1	2%
	Fiji	9	21%
	IEO	18	42%
	India	2	5%
	Indonesia	1	2%
	Myanmar	2	5%
	Papua New Guinea	1	2%
	Philippines	1	2%
	Samoa	4	9%
	Thailand	1	2%
	Timor-Leste	1	2%

Annex II (cont'd)

Countries/territories (where the implementation took place; does not include thematic evaluations)			
	Afghanistan	1	3%
	Bangladesh	1	3%
	Bhutan	1	3%
	Cambodia	2	5%
	China	2	5%
	Cook Islands	4	10%
	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	0	0%
	Federated States of Micronesia	3	8%
	Fiji	4	10%
	India	3	8%
	Indonesia	2	5%
	Kiribati	2	5%
	Malaysia	1	3%
	Maldives	1	3%
	Marshall Islands	4	10%
	Mongolia	1	3%
	Myanmar	2	5%
	Nauru	3	8%
	Nepal	1	3%
	Niue	4	10%
	Pakistan	1	3%
	Palau	4	10%
	Papua New Guinea	3	8%
	Philippines	2	5%
	Republic of Korea	0	0%
	Samoa	4	10%
	Solomon Islands	4	10%
	Sri Lanka	0	0%
	Thailand	1	3%
	Timor-Leste	2	5%
	Tokelau	2	5%
	Tonga	4	10%
	Tuvalu	5	13%
	Vanuatu	4	10%
	Viet Nam	1	3%

Annex III: Methodology

Searches

IEO conducted an initial scoping to identify evaluations relevant to climate action themes and topics, using UNDP's AIDA tool. Search terms included those relevant to the Climate Promise key work areas, RBAP work mentioned in the UNDP intranet and website, the AIDA taxonomy, and keywords from a quick literature review. The search included all types of centralized and decentralized evaluations completed between 2014 and 2023, except for mid-term evaluations. The geographic scope included all the countries and territories of RBAP.

As 'climate action' is an inherently broad and highly complex thematic area, we identified thematic sub-focus areas for this synthesis work. For this, we reviewed UNDP Climate Promise documents and regional assessments, cross-referenced key technical work areas with SDG 13 targets, consulted with subject-matter experts and reviewed the scoping results of the initial IEO evaluation searches.

We identified the following major sub-focus areas to maximize the usefulness of findings for the Asia-Pacific region:

- Climate change adaptation and resilience—AFOLU and coastal protection
- Climate change mitigation—AFOLU and energy
- DRR

The AIDA searches found 76 evaluation reports from the RBAP region that were relevant to the climate action themes identified.

Screening

Based on screening the title and executive summaries of the reports, we excluded 31 reports and considered the remaining 45 for full-text screening. We used EPPI Reviewer 6 for managing references, full-text screening and coding of evaluations. After assessing the full texts, we excluded two evaluations. Of the two excluded evaluations, one was excluded as we had the latest report of the same (the Small Grants Programme evaluation), and the other one was excluded as we could not find sufficient content to code that was relevant to climate action themes. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were as follows.

Table A1: Eligibility criteria used in the synthesis

	Exclusion criteria	Inclusion criteria
Thematic coverage	Excluded if it was not relevant to select climate action themes	Included if it was relevant to select climate action themes
Regional coverage	Excluded if there was not enough content from RBAP regions	Included if there was enough content from RBAP regions
Latest publication	Excluded if a more recent evaluation on the same project/programme was available	Included the latest available evaluation report on a certain project/programme
Type of evaluations	Mid-term evaluations	Final evaluations

We included 43 evaluations after screening, and we considered these for data extraction.

Coding process

The synthesis team followed Thomas and Harden's (2008) three-stage approach to thematic synthesis of qualitative data [49].

- **Stage one:** inductive line-by-line coding of relevant evaluation findings, conclusions and lessons structured by the key synthesis review questions
- **Stage two:** grouping of coded text by descriptive themes around intervention design, implementation and contextual factors
- **Stage three:** translating the descriptive themes into higher-order analytical themes around design, implementation and context factors

Coding framework

A coding framework was iteratively developed through two rounds of piloting, covering six evaluations. The selected evaluations reflected different types of evaluation, countries and climate action areas of focus. Pilot coding helped to ensure consistency of coding and interpretation across both team members involved. We decided to code the texts under barriers and facilitators related to design/implementation and context for each study, along with other important categorizations. (The coding framework is presented in Annex IV.)

Analysis and synthesis

The coding of individual evaluations was followed by analysis of the newly organized data across all evaluations. We further subcategorized the findings under design/implementation and context to observe the themes as they emerged. We cross-analysed to merge or integrate findings across themes and design/implementation/context to avoid duplication and redundancy of findings. We then articulated lessons based on the coded texts and final themes under design/implementation/context.

Annex IV: Data extraction form

Evaluation information	**Type of evaluation**
	Project
	ICPE
	Outcome
	Thematic
	Other (mention)
	Report publication year
	Quality rating
	Satisfactory
	Moderately satisfactory

Country classification	**Country (countries) of implementation**

Implementation information	**Implementation modality**
	National implementation modality
	Direct implementation modality
	Other
	Not applicable
	Implementation scale
	Local
	Subnational
	National
	Regional

Thematic focus	**Adaptation and resilience**
	AFOLU
	Coastal protection/adaptation
	Mitigation
	AFOLU
	Energy
	DRR
	Others (mention if a theme with substantive content emerges that is not already covered in the themes given above)

Annex IV (cont'd)

Design factors	Design barriers
	Design facilitators
Implementation factors	Implementation barriers
	Implementation facilitators
Contextual factors	Contextual barriers
	Contextual facilitators
Transferability	What are the main considerations for transferability of learnings?

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