



**Adaptation
Without
Borders**
Responding to a
global challenge

Adaptation Without Borders

An overview



The challenge: Transboundary climate risks

COVID-19 has revealed with startling clarity the vulnerabilities inherent in our global systems and supply chains – how impacts can leap from sector to sector and escalate from country to continent – with consequences that often hit the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest.

Climate change is also a catalyst for cascading effects: effects from which no country can fully insulate itself and which will only become more acute with time.

But climate risk assessments – upon which the adaptation plans of countries and companies are based – are often unable to account for the systemic connections and interdependencies that define our world today, leaving us unaware of the true scale of risks and under-prepared for their potential effects.

And the way we plan adaptation – predominantly at the local or national scale – fails to reflect the realities of how risk is driven and distributed in the 21st century. One country's adaptation efforts could all too easily undermine another's – redistributing vulnerability rather than reducing it – or miss opportunities to harness economies of scale and maximise the co-benefits shared adaptive action could bring. A transboundary perspective raises important questions about the inclusivity of adaptation and whether we are building global resilience to climate change that is truly resilience for all.

Left unchecked, cascading climate impacts could impede progress towards virtually every one of the Sustainable Development Goals – increasing food and water insecurity, threatening trade and energy supplies, risking jobs and livelihoods, spurring social unrest and endangering our collective wellbeing. The most vulnerable will have the least resources to cope – undermining our pledges to 'leave no one behind' and achieve the Paris Agreement's Global Goal on Adaptation.

If our connections to each other expose us to the transboundary nature of climate risk, they also present a seminal opportunity – to shape an inclusive and sustainable path to the future. Our collective exposure provides a strong rationale for raising ambition on adaptation and mitigation; risks of common concern must spur much greater levels of collaborative action. There will be new opportunities and strategic alliances to harness – to build the next generation of adaptation action that befits our interdependent world.



What is Adaptation Without Borders?

Adaptation Without Borders is a new global partnership, created specifically in response to the emerging challenge of transboundary climate risks.

Adopting an innovative and solutions-focused approach to managing transboundary climate risks, the partnership will generate tools and tactics to identify, assess and track climate impacts – within and across the international pathways via which they flow. We'll also produce implementable policy recommendations and adaptation options to mitigate or manage their effects.

Founded on the belief that global climate change requires solutions beyond the efforts of any single actor, our partners will work with policymakers, adaptation planners and the private sector to catalyse new alliances and forms of cooperation. We'll reveal why it is in all our interests to work together and convene discussions on the solutions, transformations and co-benefits that could be harnessed.

This approach, at the frontier of climate risk management, could inject new purpose in adaptation negotiations in the crucial years leading up to the first Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement; scale up ambition, investment and multilateral cooperation on systemic risk reduction, as envisioned by the Sendai Framework; and support the revitalisation of global partnership articulated in Goal 17 of the SDGs.

- Countries will be better equipped to assess the transboundary climate risks they are exposed to and gain an enhanced understanding of the policy implications and trade-offs they present
- Regional organisations will be better able to coordinate and implement adaptation within and between their constituencies, and support their members to mitigate and manage cascading climate risks effectively
- International organisations will gain critical insights into managing systemic risks that threaten to undermine their operations, and stand better able to sustain progress towards the 2015 global frameworks they govern
- Private-sector companies will increase the resilience of their business plans and supply chains, and gain clarity on their roles and responsibilities for managing risk, as well as access to forums for dialogue and discovery
- Civil-society organisations will be equipped with new knowledge, tools and resources for adopting a transboundary climate lens to their adaptation work

Our vision

Countries, communities and companies are empowered to effectively and justly manage the full range of climate risks to which they are exposed. Together, they coordinate their adaptation efforts in ways that deliver global public goods, building a resilient world in which all people are secure and can prosper.

Our mission

To support policymakers and planners to more effectively identify, assess and manage transboundary climate risks and to promote principles of reciprocity and 'do no harm' in approaches to adaptation in ways that support the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.

“Climate change and its impacts are indiscriminate, and do not recognise national borders. As we scale up adaptation action to respond to climate change, transboundary approaches are becoming increasingly essential. Assessments that take on board transboundary perspectives are a central component of this emerging and forward-looking area of discourse.”

– Youssef Nassef, Director of Adaptation, UNFCCC



How will Adaptation Without Borders work?

The partnership aims to maintain an active community through strategic communications, coordinated mobilisation and targeted policy engagement, to develop the necessary momentum behind international solutions to cascading climate risk. Our work is driven by four key outcomes:



1. To create visibility of transboundary climate risks: raising awareness, shifting perceptions and changing narratives

Investing in communication activities, media engagement and high-visibility events, launches and campaigns pivoted around key influencing moments



2. To gather evidence of transboundary climate risks: conducting research, pooling knowledge and presenting analysis

Producing new methods, case studies, toolkits, dashboards and flagship reports and providing technical support and guidance for implementing agencies and funders



3. To build connections on transboundary climate risk management: bridging siloes, convening stakeholders and forming partnerships

Hosting high-profile events and regional roadshows, stakeholder engagement consultations and knowledge transfer/translation activities



4. To inspire action to advance transboundary climate risk management: influencing policy, engaging practitioners and harnessing opportunities

Engaging in international negotiations, coordinating submissions to relevant policy reviews, drafting policy/negotiator briefs and building the capacity of adaptation planners



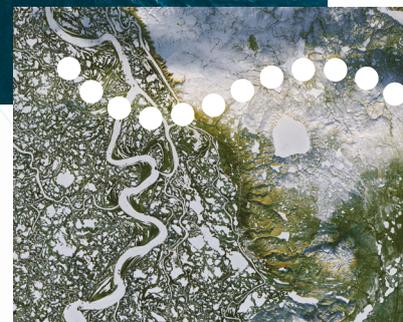
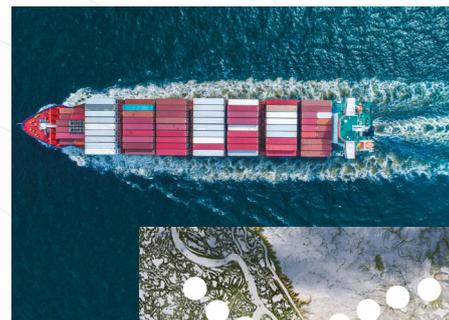
What will Adaptation Without Borders do?

The Adaptation Without Borders 2020–23 workplan, co-developed by partners to meet the most immediate stakeholder needs, is organised into three workstreams:

Workstream 1: Pathways of risk

This workstream advances the state of knowledge on transboundary climate risk: filling the gaps in information and current understanding which most constrain the capability and motivation of policymakers to act. It aims to provide breakthrough insights – conceptually and empirically – on the transboundary climate risks which pose the greatest threat to our societies. The workstream also takes a deep dive into one of the critical transmission routes via which transboundary climate risks propagate – with a 2020–21 focus on trade and supply chains, including agricultural commodity trade and threats to food security.

The workstream will engage a range of stakeholders and provide access to information on the most prevalent or severe transboundary climate risks, including tipping points or hot-spots, so they can be better tracked, managed and reduced – supporting risk-informed development and strengthening our collective resilience to the impacts of climate change.



Proposed deliverables:

- Conceptual frameworks and digital tools - such as data dashboards and risk platforms - to identify, measure and track transboundary climate risks
- Flagship reports and case studies on the top transboundary climate risks globally and in key sectors and regions
- Deep-dive analysis into the pathways via which transboundary climate risks propagate: trade, financial flows, human mobility, ecosystems
- Dialogues between public and private actors to facilitate the joint management of transboundary climate risks towards achieving just resilience

Highlights of relevant past work:

- **Assessment:** In 2016, SEI developed the world's first global index assessing national-level exposure to transboundary climate risk; SEI is developing a further index in 2020 on crop market exposure, indicating which countries are key sources of risk and which importers are dependent on at-risk flows of trade
- **Intellectual leadership:** In 2019, ODI was commissioned to prepare an agenda-setting report on transboundary climate risks by the Global Commission on Adaptation; IDDRI has authored contributions on risk assessment and management to several reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – including for the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere (2019) and the forthcoming Sixth Assessment Report (2022) – and argued the case for adaptation as a 'global concern' in the top-level academic journal *Science*
- **Private-sector support:** Since 2017, Winrock's 'Private Investment for Enhanced Resilience' (PIER) programme (funded by US Dept of State, \$5.4M) has facilitated corporate investments in climate adaptation, designing finance and investment tools, policy mechanisms and national capacity-building activities to strengthen the enabling environment for climate risk management
- **Value-chain resilience:** In 2018, BSR and IDRC developed a private-sector framework, supported by developing country case studies, on building the resilience of value chains to climate risk. It led to the Value Chain Risk to Resilience collaboration, which convenes nine companies across sectors to assess climate risk, develop standard approaches, methodologies and metrics, and build resilience for communities, farmers and workers along value chains
- **Trade-policy engagement:** In 2020, Adaptation Without Borders is partnering with the European Commission and Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management to raise awareness of transboundary climate risks, convening adaptation and trade focal points from EU member states to inform the EU Adaptation Strategy and EU Trade Policy Review

Workstream 2: Policy

This workstream aims to address a critical blind spot in the UNFCCC policy agenda, where the framing of adaptation is focused (solely) on national and local level action. This framing has significant knock-on impacts – undermining political will and funding for adaptation as well as incentives to coordinate and collaborate.

This workstream will raise transboundary climate risk up the policy agenda of the UNFCCC and harness the insights a transboundary lens reveals to support the operationalisation of the Global Goal on Adaptation and Global Stocktake in 2023. It will advocate, from a robust, evidence-based perspective, that recognition of transboundary risk, and a reframing of adaptation as a global public good, is of paramount importance for building resilient societies in a globalised world. Such recognition could spark a multilateral approach to adaptation that raises levels of ambition, investment and cooperative action the world over.



Proposed deliverables:

- Dialogues to encourage and enable enhanced cooperation on adaptation: between countries, within regions, spanning sectors and across public-private divides
- Insights for climate negotiators on the implications of transboundary climate risks for the Global Goal on Adaptation and the Global Stocktake
- Support to multilateral climate diplomacy to enable the operationalisation of the Global Goal on Adaptation more broadly
- The development of indicators to measure progress in effectively managing transboundary climate risks
- Visibility and engagement at key policy moments to harness the momentum of global climate action

Highlights of relevant past work:

- Policy-influence capacity: Core individuals engaged in the partnership have high-level access and influence as: former Co-Chair of the Adaptation Committee, Special Advisor to the COP22 Presidency, Manager of National Adaptation Plans and Policy under the UNFCCC, Advisor to the African Group of Negotiators, Convener of the Climate Leadership Initiative and former Co-Director of Research on the Global Commission on Adaptation
- Convening power: In 2019, ODI, SEI and IDDRI, together with the UK's Wilton Park, hosted the first ever multi-stakeholder dialogue on transboundary climate risk, convening 40 participants from 19 countries. This resulted in the Wilton Park Agenda on Adapting to Transboundary Climate Risk and, together with successive events at UNFCCC COP23, COP24 and COP25, paved the way towards the formation of Adaptation Without Borders
- Regional focal points: ICIMOD acts as the Regional Collaborating Agency for the Nairobi Work Programme and the Regional Support Office for UN-SPIDER (space-based technologies for disaster management), while also working with the Convention on Biological Diversity and contributing to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; UWI leads the Global University Consortium on SDG 13, bringing together 10 universities from across the globe to advance knowledge exchange, collaboration and South-South cooperation on climate action and cross-SDG interlinkages
- National policy engagement: Partners and individuals across the collaboration have provided technical assistance and policy design support to various governments, such as ODI's work with the Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning (2018–20) to develop a framework for understanding climate risks and appraisal of adaptation and resilience options
- Private-sector policy engagement: Over the last five years, BSR has created guidance and frameworks for companies to understand how climate risk impacts their operations, supply chains and communities, in support of the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures



Workstream 3: Planning and implementation

This workstream aims to build the capacity of national adaptation planners to manage both the transboundary climate risks their countries are most exposed to, and the impacts of their adaptation actions on others. Working together, we'll aim to strengthen the resilience of adaptation plans, enhance protection of the vulnerable and minimise the risk of maladaptation – embedding a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess our impact and implement lessons learnt. We'll also aim to support more inclusive transboundary adaptation planning processes – assessing the potential benefits and opportunities for coordinated regional responses (initially in the Hindu Kush Himalaya, Caribbean and Sahel) – in recognition of the importance of joint approaches and shared responsibility for climate risk management.

This workstream will ground the work of the partnership in stakeholder engagement and consultation – assessing risk perceptions, policy priorities and political economies to reality-check recommendations and enhance impact. By identifying relevant responsibilities and governance mechanisms, we'll build accountability for managing transboundary climate risks.



Proposed deliverables:

- Development of guidance on integrating transboundary climate risks into national adaptation plans
- Pilot technical support with national governments and regional organisations to build resilience to transboundary climate risks on the ground and harness real-world learning on implementation challenges
- Political-economic analysis to assess risk ownership, map governance options and build decision-making support
- Risk perception and prioritisation exercises with select regional, national and local actors
- Scoping papers on the demand for sector-specific guidance and tailored tools on topics such as food security, trade or watershed management

Highlights of relevant past work:

- Governance expertise: In 2018, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, ODI analysed the governance mechanisms and conventions offering opportunities to address transboundary climate risks and enhance adaptation; as part of the Mistra Geopolitics project, funded by the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research, SEI is exploring the geopolitical dimensions of transboundary climate risks
- Legal expertise: Pace faculty have published many highly relevant articles and books on the law of adaptation to climate change, while in 2020, the University's 'Climate Adaptation and the Law' students presented analyses of international, regional and bilateral agreements with relevance to transboundary adaptation
- Mediation expertise: Mediators Beyond Borders International has facilitated the design and implementation of a number of high-impact and sustained collaboration and conflict-transformation projects in response to environmental and resource-based conflicts
- Capacity-building: In 2019, UNEP and Adaptation Without Borders co-hosted the first-ever training session on transboundary climate risk assessment, working with Least Developed Countries in Southeast Asia to build the capacities of adaptation professionals; ICIMOD works closely with the UNFCCC LDC Expert Group to support the preparation of National Adaptation Plans in the Hindu Kush Himalaya
- Transboundary action: Through the 2016–21 Sustainable Water Partnership, funded by USAID (\$89 million), Winrock is promoting transboundary resilience to water-security risks, which included the development of the USAID Methodology for Incorporating Climate Change Adaptation in Infrastructure Planning and Design



The partnership

Adaptation Without Borders brings together the research capacities and convening power of globally-recognised experts and partners from across four continents. Our governance structure aims to efficiently deliver results as well as harness each organisation's individual strengths and collective weight. Adaptation Without Borders already has a modest network of partners across the globe and actively seeks to expand this – across regions, sectors and disciplines – including actors that are often absent from adaptation-focused networks (such as trade, finance and security experts).

The commitment of all stakeholders to making the partnership a success has propelled a series of impressive advancements in our inaugural year – from creating a brand and launching a website to hosting a series of prestigious events in five capital cities around the world.

The partnership currently encompasses:

Three founding members



Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDDRI) is a think tank which facilitates the transition towards sustainable development. IDDDRI provides expertise on methodologies to assess trajectories of risks and vulnerabilities, including the levers and barriers within adaptation planning and implementation, risk governance and UNFCCC policy.



Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is an independent, global think tank on international development and environmental issues. Through its Global Risks and Resilience Programme, ODI undertakes cutting-edge policy-driven research on the nexus between new and emerging risks to reduce vulnerability and realise a sustainable future for all.



Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) is an international non-profit research and policy organisation that tackles environment and development challenges. SEI has been a world leader in methodological innovation on transboundary climate risk and plays a central role in several multimillion-dollar research consortia on their assessment and governance.

The founding members, who each have a representative on the Steering Committee (the executive-level decision-making body of the partnership), have led a series of agenda-setting programmes and projects on transboundary climate risk and are routinely approached by governments and other stakeholders to provide technical advisory services and assessments. Their engagement and leadership of major project-based consortia, exploring different aspects of climate risk, offer potential to leverage significant co-benefits and synergies with existing research and outreach on this topic.



Partners



Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) is a global network of more than 250 member companies and partners working to develop sustainable business solutions that deliver ambitious climate strategies, both on emissions reduction and climate risk management and resilience.



Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University in New York has some of the foremost scholars and practitioners in the field of environmental law, and is one of only two law schools that is a voting member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.



ENDA Énergie is an international NGO based in Dakar, Senegal (founded 1982). Based on the 'research-action-training' triptych, ÉNDA works directly with communities on poverty reduction, energy services, climate change, desertification and sustainable development, driven by the experiences, expectations and goals of vulnerable groups.



International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is an intergovernmental knowledge and learning centre that develops and shares research, information and innovations to empower people in the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalaya.



Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) is mandated to work on environmental issues in Asia and the Pacific and works closely with local communities, governments, non-governmental and donor organizations to promote scientific evidence-based policymaking and implementation in the field of climate change adaptation.



Mediators Beyond Borders International (MBBI) works with partners in 33 countries to build local skills for peace and reconciliation, and promote mediation, collaboration and leadership skills, prioritising the elevation of women's roles and those of black and indigenous populations.



PlanAdapt is an independent global network-based organisation that provides knowledge services in support of effective, economically just and socially inclusive climate change adaptation and climate risk management around the world, with particular focus on the Global South.



University of the West Indies (UWI) serves 17 Caribbean Territories and has over seven decades of applied research experience in the region and a strong track record in maximising the value of its work to the benefit of local and regional economies and societies.



Winrock International is a global nonprofit centre of excellence in climate science, agriculture, clean energy and economic development that has implemented over US\$ 1 billion in contracts, cooperative agreements and grants to date and currently has 132 active projects in 35 countries, plus 10 global activities.

Our partners' specialist knowledge and on-the-ground implementation experience in a rich diversity of sectors ensures Adaptation Without Borders can leverage and translate knowledge into practical action and policy uptake. The interdisciplinary partnership model facilitates the matching of bespoke skills and capacities to project requirements and maximises the impacts and influence that working together can bring. As trusted and independent conveners, our partners are well-placed to attract the critical interlocutors on this global agenda.

Strategic advisors and ambassadors

A number of strategic advisors and three high-level ambassadors who ensure outcomes from the partnership can inform decision-making and dialogue at the highest level:

Ayman Cherkaoui (Coordinator of the Mohammed VI Prize for the Climate and Sustainable Development, Strategy Development Officer of the Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection, Climate Change Lead Counsel at the Centre for Sustainable Development Law, and Regional Facilitator of Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa, UNEA 5)

María del Pilar Bueno Rubial (Researcher at National Council for Scientific and Technical Research of Argentina (CONICET), Professor at Universidad Nacional de Rosario (UNR) and Member (and former Co-Chair) of the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee.

Djimé Adoum (Executive Secretary of the Permanent Inter-states Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and former Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, Chad)



Europe:

SEI is a core member of CASCADES – CAScading Climate risks: towards ADaptive and resilient European Societies – a Horizon 2020 project analysing the transboundary climate risks that will significantly alter Europe's risk exposure; SEI will lead the development of a multilevel governance framework to align responsibilities with identified risks

The Hindu Kush Himalaya:

ICIMOD draws on its networks and regional expertise, within and across its eight member countries, to advance research, information and innovation on adaptation and resilience, transboundary landscapes, river basins, the cryosphere and the atmosphere. In 2019, ICIMOD coordinated the Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment (HIMAP) report to support regional evidence-based decision making and is working to promote an inclusive and resilient post-pandemic recovery in the region

The Caribbean:

UWI serves 17 Caribbean Territories and provides technical support and leadership for the development and implementation of policies, projects and programmes on climate change and disaster risk reduction in the region

West and Central Africa:

ENDA Énergie supports community-based adaptation measures across West and Central Africa and coordinates the Francophone Climate & Development Network, comprising 70+ NGOs; as part of DFID's BRACED project, ENDA established innovative knowledge-sharing platforms (Agora) in Niger, Mali, Senegal, Chad, Burkina Faso and Kenya aimed at transformational change and resilience-building

South-East Asia:

Adaptation Without Borders is engaging new partners with expertise in regional adaptation planning in the ASEAN region including IGES who have published on the transboundary impacts of climate change in Asia



Join us

The transboundary nature of climate risk is a rapidly emerging but underexplored issue that responds to an identified gap in existing policy frameworks and risk management processes. By joining Adaptation Without Borders, your institution has the opportunity to be at the forefront of efforts to build resilience to climate change on a truly transformative and global scale.

For more information or to enquire about partnerships with Adaptation Without Borders, please contact:

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“Adaptation Without Borders is of paramount importance to lay to bear some of the hidden vulnerabilities that stem from the transboundary risks of climate change and to summon both expertise and a coalition of stakeholders to work towards innovative solutions for policy and practice.”

*– Dr Mikael Allan Mikaelsson,
Europe Head of Clean Growth and Climate Change, UK Government’s International Science & Innovation Network*





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