

Climate Change Adaptation

A Strategic Narrative for Climate Change Adaptation

Building Climate Resilience: Adapting to a Warming World: The Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 set a global goal to limit warming to well below 2°C, ideally 1.5°C, while recognizing climate adaptation as equally important as mitigation. As climate change is already occurring, both people and ecosystems must adapt to its impacts, such as floods, storms, droughts, and heatwaves. Effective adaptation measures must be integrated with sustainable, fair, and conflict-sensitive development and applied systemically across all sectors of society. National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) are a key international tool that guide countries in identifying and implementing priority adaptation actions based on climate risk analyses. These aim to build climate-resilient societies and economies, ensuring inclusivity and equity. Achieving the Paris goals requires joint efforts from governments, civil society, and industry, along with financial and technical support from industrialized nations to developing countries.

The Philippines is among the most climate-vulnerable countries worldwide, experiencing more frequent extreme weather events that cause severe damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and livelihoods—particularly affecting poorer communities. Rising sea levels already threaten several coastal areas. Similarly, Pacific Island states face acute climate risks, including hurricanes, droughts, flooding, and freshwater scarcity—especially on low-lying atolls. The predicted changes in sea levels, rainfall, temperature, and ocean acidification further endanger the natural resource-dependent economies and tourism. Education systems in these regions currently offer limited climate instruction, highlighting the urgent need for more experts in adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable development.

Key Challenges in Advancing Climate Adaptation



Incorporating Local and Indigenous Knowledge: In both the Philippines and the Pacific Islands, there remains a significant gap in integrating indigenous and local knowledge into formal climate adaptation strategies. Communities in these regions have long histories of living in harmony with nature, possessing valuable traditional practices for coping with environmental changes. However, these insights are often overlooked in mainstream adaptation planning. This disconnect not only misses out on potentially effective and culturally grounded solutions but can also result in adaptation measures that fail to align with local values and ways of life.

Financing and Resource Allocation: Financing continues to be a major challenge. Although there are international commitments to support climate adaptation, actual funding flows often fall short of what is needed. Given their high vulnerability, the Philippines and Pacific Islands require significant investments in climate-resilient

infrastructure, early warning systems, capacity building, and ecosystem restoration. Yet funding tends to favor mitigation over adaptation, and within adaptation, high-profile projects may receive preference over grassroots or community-led initiatives—despite the latter often being more context-specific and sustainable.

Stakeholder Coordination and Coherence: Climate adaptation efforts in both regions involve a wide range of stakeholders—local and national governments, NGOs, international partners, and the private sector. However, a lack of coordination frequently leads to fragmented efforts, duplication, inefficiencies, and even conflicting strategies. The absence of a cohesive, centralized framework for collaboration and information sharing undermines the overall effectiveness of adaptation measures and

can leave communities uncertain about which initiatives to follow. Strengthening coordination mechanisms is crucial for maximizing impact and ensuring clarity on the ground.

GIZ in the Philippines – A strategic partner: For over 50 years, GIZ—wholly owned by the German government—has supported Philippine development through international expertise and local partnerships. Our work on climate adaptation focuses on:



Strengthening Local Resilience in the Philippines: In one of the world's most climate-vulnerable nations, GIZ has played a vital role in advancing climate adaptation. Its initiatives focus on building the resilience of both ecosystems and communities by mainstreaming climate change adaptation into development planning—particularly at the local level, where the impacts are most acutely felt.

Empowering Institutions and Communities Through Knowledge: Through targeted technical assistance, GIZ has supported Philippine institutions in crafting and implementing adaptation policies and strategies. By facilitating capacity-building activities, knowledge exchanges, and technical consultations, GIZ has strengthened the ability of communities and stakeholders to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate risks.

Protecting the Frontlines: Climate Action in the Pacific Islands: In the Pacific Islands, where rising sea levels pose an existential threat, GIZ has prioritized boosting resilience through a suite of climate adaptation programs. These include the promotion of climate-resilient agriculture, the protection and restoration of coastal ecosystems, and the establishment of early warning systems. GIZ has also driven regional collaboration by facilitating knowledge sharing and joint action among Pacific Island nations.

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Building Bridges for Climate Solutions: Collaboration is at the heart of GIZ's approach. In both the Philippines and the Pacific, it works closely with local governments, civil society, communities, and international partners to ensure that climate solutions are inclusive and effective.

Local Wisdom, Global Impact: By anchoring its efforts in local realities, GIZ ensures that adaptation measures are culturally grounded, technically sound, and community-driven—resulting in strategies that are not only impactful, but sustainable in the long term.

GIZ Promotes Climate Resilience Globally: Developing and emerging countries face the brunt of climate change impacts—be it stronger storms, longer droughts, or rising seas. GIZ supports these nations in boosting their adaptive capacity to build long-term resilience.

Adapting to Extremes—and the Slow-Onset Threats: On behalf of the German government, EU, Green Climate Fund (GCF), and other partners, GIZ helps countries prepare not just for weather extremes, but also for slow-moving climate shifts like rising temperatures, water scarcity, and sea-level rise.

Climate Risk? Plan, Insure, and Innovate: GIZ's support spans government policy, private sector engagement, and civil society empowerment. Its integrated approach includes: Climate risk analysis, Cross-sectoral planning, Financing and implementation of adaptation measures, and Promotion of climate risk insurance. But adaptation isn't just about defense—it's also about seizing opportunities. GIZ

helps partners harness climate shifts to explore new potentials, such as expanding agricultural production zones or opening new destinations for tourism.

Global Action, Local Impact: GIZ's Collaborative Initiatives: Germany is driving climate action by supporting international initiatives that translate the Paris Agreement into real-world results:

- ✓ NDC Partnership: Supports countries in implementing their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to climate mitigation and adaptation.
- ✓ NAP Global Network: Facilitates national adaptation planning through expert consultations, peer learning, and coordination across donor programs.
- ✓ InsuResilience: Aims to provide 500 million vulnerable people with access to insurance against extreme weather by 2025.

With its global know-how and community-based approach, GIZ is uniquely positioned to address climate adaptation gaps in the Philippines and the Pacific Islands. A key opportunity lies in elevating **indigenous and local knowledge**, ensuring that traditional wisdom is not lost but embedded into national adaptation strategies through inclusive engagement.



Community
Engagement



Knowledge
Documentation



GIZ as a Catalyst
for Climate
Investment



Support for
Grassroots
Initiatives

Community Engagement: GIZ can lead participatory planning, workshops, and consultations that involve indigenous and local communities—bringing to light traditional adaptation techniques that have long ensured survival in climate-sensitive environments.



Public-Private
Partnerships
(PPP)



Creation of
Coordination
Platforms



Policy Advisory
Support



Monitoring
and Evaluation

Knowledge Documentation: By creating repositories of local practices and facilitating knowledge-sharing with policymakers, GIZ ensures this wisdom informs formal adaptation policies—creating culturally rooted and practical solutions.

GIZ as a Catalyst for Climate Investment: Training local institutions to access global financing, like the Green Climate Fund, empowers communities to secure the resources they need.

Support for Grassroots Initiatives: GIZ ensures small-scale, community-led adaptation efforts receive funding—not just large-scale infrastructure—ensuring no one is left behind.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP): By developing enabling frameworks, GIZ can attract private sector investments in climate adaptation, making resilience-building a shared responsibility.

Creation of Coordination Platforms: GIZ can lead the setup of centralized platforms to align stakeholders, avoid duplication, and promote collaboration across adaptation efforts.

Policy Advisory Support: With its technical depth, GIZ can assist governments in crafting coherent, inclusive adaptation policies grounded in real-world needs.

Global Knowledge Exchange: Leveraging its international network, GIZ connects local actors to global best practices and innovations—boosting adaptation effectiveness.

Monitoring and Evaluation: GIZ can design adaptive M&E systems to track progress, ensure accountability, and integrate lessons learned into ongoing and future adaptation efforts.

GIZ's commitment to local context, sustainability, and inclusive partnerships makes it a trusted ally in climate adaptation. As a connector of global expertise and local action, GIZ helps ensure that adaptation efforts in the Philippines and the Pacific Islands are not only effective—but also enduring.

Project References

[Transformative Actions for Climate and Ecological Protection and Development \(TRANSCEND\)](#) (2023 – 2029)

Donor: International Climate Initiative BMWK

Country: Philippines **Lead Agencies:**

Conservation International Philippines (CI), Rare, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Clean Air Asia, International Council on Clean Transport, Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, Climate Analytics, University of the Philippines Center for Women's and Gender, Studies, Wuppertal Institut für Klima, Umwelt, Energie gGmbH, Foundation for the Philippine Environment

TRANSCEND supports and aligns with national climate and biodiversity agenda plans such as the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), and the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (PBSAP). It brings together expertise from relevant organisations and political partners to tackle the climate change and biodiversity crises. It includes the following components: Biodiversity, Urban ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), Energy efficiency in micro, small, and medium enterprises, Transport, Governance, and Interface of the International Climate Initiative (IKI).

[Integrated Urban Climate Action for Low-Carbon & Resilient Cities \(Urban-Act\)](#) (2022 – 2026)

Donor: International Climate Initiative BMWK **Countries:** Philippines, China, India, Indonesia, Thailand **Lead Agency:** Department of the Interior and Local Government

Urban-Act works to help enable countries in the Asia-Pacific region to create better enabling conditions for the planning and implementation of evidence-based and inclusive urban climate action. It focuses on improving relevant regulations, procedures and services; providing technical advice and knowledge transfer to cities so that they can integrate climate change evidence into spatial and urban development plans and budgets; and facilitating regional advocacy through intergovernmental and city-to-city dialogue.

[Strengthening Disaster Resilience and Risk Mitigation through Ecosystem-based Planning and Adaptation \(E4DR\)](#) (2021-2027)

Donor: Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) - International Climate Initiative (IKI) **Country:** Philippines **Lead Agency:** Department of Economy, Planning, and Development

E4DR aims to institutionalize sustainable disaster risk management in the Philippines by integrating ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) and climate risk financing. It will train partners and communities to mainstream EbA, pilot biodiversity-focused measures, develop climate insurance products for SMEs, agriculture, infrastructure, and communities, and feed lessons learned into national and global frameworks.

[Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change II \(HMCCC\)](#) (2023 – 2027)

Donor: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) **Countries:** Global, Fiji (Pacific), Philippines, ECOWAS (West Africa) **Lead Agency:** Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (Fiji), Commission on Population and Development

HMCCC advises BMZ and supports pilot projects in West Africa, the Pacific, and the Philippines. Building on previous gender-responsive work and strategic knowledge, it focuses on policy advice and capacity building for regional and national stakeholders. It also addresses knowledge gaps, fosters communication among key actors, and shares insights internationally, with a strong emphasis on supporting vulnerable groups.

(Philippines), ECOWAS Commission (ECOWAS/West Africa)	
<u>Towards a South-South-South Collaboration on Climate Information Services (SSCIS)</u> (2019-2025) Donor: Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) - International Climate Initiative (IKI) Country: Philippines Lead Agency: Climate Change Commission	SSCIS aims to help improve the availability of climate information and services by using infographics and maps to visualise the effects of rising temperatures on agriculture and health; charting the impacts of extreme weather conditions; producing hazard maps of areas and populations that are facing extreme events due to climate change; and simplifying studies and including socio-economic variables such as poverty levels, incomes, health and environmental status.
<u>Ecosystem-based Management of River Basins in the Philippines (E2RB)</u> (2019-2024) Donor: International Climate Initiative BMWK Countries: Philippines, Grenada, Costa Rica Lead Agency: Department of Environment and Natural Resources	E2RB enhances forest and wetland protection in river basins, reducing flood and landslide risks while improving groundwater recharge and water quality. It also boosts native tree density along forests and riverbanks, strengthening ecosystem services. Local authorities are trained to lead protection efforts. It also promotes adaptation through education, awareness campaigns, and a structured knowledge management plan, ensuring long-term sustainability of river basin management.
<u>Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal Areas (ACCCoast)</u> (2011-2014) Donor: German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) Country: Philippines Lead Agency: Department of Environment and Natural Resources	National and local adaptation strategies have strengthened coastal ecosystems and community resilience to climate change. The Project supported 16 initiatives—including coastal management, research, and education—resulting in 25 hectares of rehabilitated mangroves, management plans for 20 marine protected areas, and new conservation regulations. Philippine authorities also improved collaboration in mangrove protection.
<u>Promoting the Transition to Sustainable Transport in Asia</u> <u>(NDC Transport Initiative for Asia)</u> (2019-2025) Donor: International Climate Initiative (IKI) Countries: China, India, Viet Nam, Thailand, Philippines Lead Agency: China Ministry of Ecology and Environment, Department of Atmospheric Environment, India National Institute for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), Viet Nam Ministry of Transport, Department of Science and Technology	The Programme promotes measures for compliance with the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in transport. Additionally, it supports long-term climate strategies and the attainment of the 2025 NDC milestone. As a regional initiative, the Programme uses events, media and publications to draw attention to the topic. With the Council for Decarbonising Transport in Asia and targeted activities in Thailand and the Philippines, it supports the development of long-term strategies for decarbonising transport in the region.
<u>Adaptation to Climate Change and Conservation of Biodiversity</u> (2008 – 2011) Donor: German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) Country: Philippines Lead Agency:	The Project supported the Philippine DENR and various partners in developing and implementing strategies to address climate change and biodiversity loss. It provided advisory services and training to aid climate adaptation, improved biodiversity conservation through protected area

Department of Environment and Natural Resources	monitoring and mangrove rehabilitation, and promoted knowledge sharing and public awareness on environmental issues.
<u>Towards Climate-friendly Transport Technologies and Measures (TRANSfer II)</u> (2013-2018) Donor: German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) within the scope of the International Climate Initiative (IKI) Countries: China, Colombia, India, Peru, Philippines, South Africa Lead Agency: Department of Environment and Natural Resources	TRANSfer assisted emerging economies and developing countries to develop and roll out Nationally Appropriate Mitigations Actions (NAMAS) for the transport sector. The TRANSfer project assisted the traffic ministries to select, design and implement NAMAs for the transport sector; promoted the learning process on transport NAMAs with a comprehensive set of measures: workshops and seminars, expert groups and networks, a manual on the development of transport NAMAs and a database containing information on transport NAMAs around the globe.
<u>Support to the Philippines in Shaping and Implementing the International Climate Regime (SupportCCC II)</u> (2015 – 2019) Donor: German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) Country: Philippines Lead Agency: Philippine Climate Change Commission, Department of Energy, Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board	SupportCCC II built on a previous GIZ and Climate Change Commission initiatives that strengthened institutions for implementing the National Climate Change Action Plan and promoted renewable energy and climate-resilient planning. It supported national agencies in coordinating climate policy aligned with international commitments, including the Philippines' leadership in the Climate Vulnerable Forum. At the local level, it helped government units develop climate-adaptive plans and access climate finance, such as the People's Survival Fund.
<u>The InsuResilience Global Partnership for Climate and Disaster Risk Finance and Insurance</u> (2016 – 2019) Donor: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) Country: Global Lead Agencies: Global	The InsuResilience Global Partnership supported climate risk finance and insurance solutions worldwide. It helped expand existing insurance schemes and develop new ones. The Partnership supported 25 programmes in 78 countries through its implementing partners. About half of these programmes were operational and were expected to bring roughly half of the targeted 400 million people under protection in 2020.