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# From Local Action to Lasting Systems The Case for LLCA

Man standing in boat on river within the forest in Thiruvananthapuram, India. Credit: © EyeEm Mobile GmbH/istock.com

This synthesis note was prepared by Jana El-Horr, Janna Tenzing, and Jia Li as part of the Locally Led Climate Action series within the World Bank's Adaptation and Resilience Country Case Studies collection.

**Locally Led Climate Action (LLCA) builds on decades of participatory development and climate approaches, drawing lessons from community-based adaptation, community-driven development, and other models pioneered by civil society. These experiences culminated in the establishment of the Locally Led Adaptation Principles endorsed by the Global Commission on Adaptation in 2021.**

The World Bank uses the term LLCA, in lieu of the Locally Led Adaptation Principles, to emphasize how local climate responses require integrated approaches that both strengthen resilience and advance low-carbon development pathways. While most of the case studies informing this synthesis note are World Bank-supported, LLCA is part of a wider movement in which governments, civil society, and other development partners are showing how climate action can be locally anchored and nationally owned.

LLCA draws directly from these various experiences along with the principles and translates them into [three core design features to allow scalability and replicability](#):

- 1 Subsidiarity:** ensuring finance and decision-making reach the lowest appropriate level
- 2 Participation and inclusion:** empowering communities and amplifying marginalized voices
- 3 Climate-informed planning:** aligning local decision-making and priorities with climate data and national strategies

Through devolving climate finance to local levels, LLCA not only delivers climate co-benefits but also strengthens livelihoods and drives investments that create jobs, build skills, and support local enterprises.

## LLCA in Practice: From Process to Results

**This series of case studies demonstrates that LLCA is as much about process as it is about results.** Embedding inclusive, climate-informed processes in country systems improves equity, accountability, and the ability of local actors to identify climate risks and prioritize context-specific solutions. Kenya's Financing Locally-Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) Program exemplifies this by linking performance-based county systems with capacity building for county climate units, participatory climate risk assessment guidelines, and knowledge-sharing platforms to track expenditures and results. Designed to strengthen public financial management and sustain climate action beyond project cycles, the reforms are already yielding tangible results.

These include local climate investments, stronger fiduciary and environmental-social performance, and regular citizen feedback, while elevating local knowledge into national policy dialogue. Similarly, in Mozambique, performance-based grants have financed more than 100 community-prioritized facilities such as clinics, schools, and water systems. Their construction generated local jobs, fostered ownership, and ensured communities themselves determined the climate investments most critical for resilience.

Taken together, the case studies reveal three central insights about LLCA. These insights highlight why the approach is powerful, strengthening resilience at the local level while delivering lasting, system-wide impacts:



**Locally led climate action delivers scale through cumulative impact.** LLCA is not about isolated projects but about building systems that operate across hundreds of villages and regions. In Togo, consistent participatory processes—combined with local data and digital tools for transparency—have generated hundreds of climate-resilient investments, broadened participation by women, youth, ethnic minorities, and refugees, and reinforced social cohesion and trust. In Solomon Islands, community-driven investments spanning more than 600 infrastructure projects have likewise built local adaptive capacity, improved access to water and energy, and catalyzed programs that embed climate resilience in the national development agenda.



**LLCA builds lasting institutions and processes that outlive projects.** A central strength of LLCA is its ability to embed participatory, climate-informed planning across multiple levels of government. This ensures that climate action is not just donor driven, but nationally owned and integrated into policy frameworks. In Madagascar, decentralized planning—paired with climate-smart agriculture, seed system rehabilitation, small-scale irrigation, dune stabilization, and cash transfers—has strengthened coordination between local and national authorities. Similarly, the Guinea Support to Local Governance Project supports decentralization, local participatory planning, and improvements in national and local capacity for climate-resilient local development. These investments build systems and knowledge that persist beyond project lifecycles, ensuring local voices shape national climate strategies and that climate resilience becomes part of long-term governance.



**LLCA delivers double dividends for climate and development for the most vulnerable.** Its interventions reduce vulnerability to climate hazards while unlocking economic opportunities for livelihoods, jobs, and social development. In Zambia, grants for crop diversification, aquaculture, small livestock, solar-powered water systems, and canal rehabilitation expanded arable land, created new income streams, and improved food security for more than half a million people—many of them women. In the Kyrgyz Republic, projects have leveraged community-driven development platforms to channel local climate action into climate-resilient livelihoods and jobs, reducing vulnerability and strengthening rural economic stability. These “double dividends” ensure every dollar of climate finance delivers greater value, both through immediate resilience and long-term economic development.

## Looking Ahead

LLCA is inherently multisectoral, with bottom-up investments spanning water, agriculture, health, education, energy, and natural resource management. Inclusive processes that engage women, youth, displaced populations, and people with disabilities reinforce accountability and cohesion. And by creating economies of scale, including lower costs, better coordination, and stronger institutions, LLCA ensures each dollar of climate finance has greater impact.

These case studies contribute to a growing evidence base illustrating that LLCA not only reduces climate and disaster impacts but also advances wider development outcomes. This evidence will help governments, donors, and communities sustain momentum and expand investments in LLCA, ensuring climate action reaches those most at risk.

## References

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Two women spinning wool in Bhaktapur, Nepal. Credit: © hadynyah/istock.com

