



THE STATUS OF CLIMATE ACTION IN MALAWI

OCTOBER 2021

KEY MESSAGES

- Malawi has demonstrated strong commitment to inclusive climate action and promoting adaptation and resilience through national development plans and policies and under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- Malawi is an active participant in regional, continental and international climate initiatives, including the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR) programme and Adaptation Action Coalition (AAC).
- A range of adaptation and resilience projects are underway or recently-completed. These are implemented by government, non-government organisations and the private sector, and funded by bilateral and multilateral donors, international climate finance, and with some support from the domestic national budget.
- Adaptation projects span the six thematic priority areas for adaptation outlined in the Nationally Determined Contributions (effective and efficient early warning systems; accessible and harmless water; blooming biodiversity, ecosystems and eco-tourism; climate-smart agriculture, livestock and fisheries; climate-proofed infrastructures, buildings and energy systems; and healthy and protected people), and are distributed throughout the country, with a particular concentration in the Southern Region.

ADAPTATION COMMITMENTS IN MALAWI

CLIMATE POLICY CONTEXT

Climate change is integrated into long- and medium-term development plans in Malawi. The recently-launched **Vision 2063** recognises climate change as a key factor of the global context that may influence attainment of the vision of “an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant nation” by 2063, and includes environmental sustainability as one of seven enabling pillars.



Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III 2017-2022 has agriculture, water development and climate change management as one of its five pillars. It also recognises the role of adaptation as having a large multiplier effect on poverty alleviation, education, health, agriculture and water development, economic growth, urbanisation and governance.



Lake Malawi provides water and fish to many Malawians
(Photo credit: BRACC programme)

Malawi's dedicated climate policy is the **National Climate Change Management Policy (NCCMP)** 2016 that aims "to promote climate change adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and capacity building for sustainable livelihoods through Green Economy measures for Malawi". As well as mitigation and adaptation priorities, the NCCMP is the key instrument that aims to create an enabling policy and legal framework for a pragmatic, coordinated and harmonised approach to climate change management, including acting as a guide for integrating climate change into development planning.

There is also a **National Resilience Strategy (NRS)** 2018-30, which is a cross-cutting strategy that recognises that resilience must be built across multiple sectors and different levels (household and systems). Structured around four pillars: resilient agriculture; risk reduction, flood control, early warning and response systems; human capacity, livelihoods and social protection; and catchment protection and planning; the NRS serves as a roadmap for programme design, funding decisions

and priorities towards reaching the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Malawi submitted its first **Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC)** in October 2015. The INDC identified mitigation activities across a range of sectors, focusing on forestry, agriculture and energy. Implementing all unconditional and conditional mitigation activities was intended to reduce the per capita emissions of Malawi from 1.4 t CO₂e per capita in 2010 to around 0.7 to 0.8 t CO₂e per capita in 2030, compared to expected business as usual emissions of around 1.5 t CO₂e per capita in 2030. The INDC also outlined priority sectors for adaptation, namely agriculture, fisheries, water, human health, wildlife, forestry, energy, infrastructure and gender.

Malawi's updated **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)** were submitted in July 2021 with more ambitious mitigation commitments and more detailed adaptation outcomes and measures for the previously-identified sectors. The revised NDC commits to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of 6% relative to BAU in the year 2040 (equivalent to an estimated mitigation level of 2.1 million t CO₂e in that year), with an additional 45% reduction (15.6 million t CO₂e) conditional on international support and finance.

The revised NDC extended the sectors for adaptation and specified adaptation actions. Additional included sectors are disaster risk reduction (DRR) and early warning systems (EWS); biodiversity, tourism, culture and wildfire; social protection (added to gender) and cross-cutting; and these were then consolidated into six thematic areas, each with adaptation actions:

- Effective and efficient EWS
- Accessible and harmless water
- Blooming biodiversity, ecosystems and eco-tourism
- Climate-smart agriculture, livestock and fisheries
- Climate-proofed infrastructures, buildings and energy systems
- Healthy and protected people.

A National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Framework was developed in 2020 to guide the process of developing the NAP, building on the roadmap and stocktaking undertaken in 2016.

There are a range of aligned policies and strategies that provide part of the institutional framework for climate change. Key among them are Malawi's Strategy on Climate Change Learning 2021, which outlines priority actions for climate response relating to 3 pillars: individual human capacity building; institutional capacity building; and climate change financing; and the National Meteorological Policy 2019, which supports provision of climate information climate information for the development of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

REGIONAL, CONTINENTAL AND INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

Malawi is engaged in a number of regional, continental and international initiatives. Among these, Malawi is a member of the **Least Developed Countries (LDC) Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience programme (LIFE-AR)**. LIFE-AR aims to support the LDC 2050 Vision for a climate-resilient future, prompting a shift away from 'business-as-usual' approaches to a more effective and ambitious climate response based on the principles of equality, integration, ownership, local action and inclusion.

Malawi is also a founder member of the **Adaptation Action Coalition (AAC)**. The AAC was formed at the Climate Ambition Summit in early 2021 by the UK in partnership with Egypt, Bangladesh, Malawi, the Netherlands, Saint Lucia and UNDP. It aims to build momentum and support action to adapt and build resilience the impacts of climate change through partnerships, inclusion and locally-led principles through sector-specific, action-oriented workstreams that demonstrate real world impact, build the evidence base on adaptation, and support integration of climate risk into planning.

GENDER AND CLIMATE ACTION

The NCCMP outlines the commitment to reduce people's vulnerability to climate change, with a specific aim of ensuring that "women, girls and other vulnerable groups are engaged and involved in planning and implementing climate change adaptation interventions".

Gender is also noted as a key sector for adaptation (with social protection) and a cross-cutting consideration for programming in the NDC.

A Women's Network on Climate Change was launched at the National Green Climate Conference in August 2021, and joins an already-active Civil Society Network on Climate Change and National Youth Network on Climate Change in ensuring inclusive approaches to climate change response.



Minister of Forestry and Natural Resources, Nancy Tembo, participates in the National Green Climate Conference in August 2021 (Photo credit: Philip Pemba)



Lake Malawi provides water and fish to many Malawians (Photo credit: BRACC programme)

NATIONAL GREEN CLIMATE CONFERENCE

Malawi held a National Green Climate Conference on 26-27th August 2021 with the theme “Collective Responsibility for Enhanced Climate Action in Malawi”. The conference brought together experts and stakeholders from different sectors and levels of society from across the country. They discussed key issues related to the impacts of climate change in Malawi, and charted out climate action to overcome these impacts. In total 230 participants attended in person, and 1,050 virtually.

The conference resolved to:

- Strengthen focus on addressing existing environmental challenges such as deforestation and land degradation
- Improve and strengthen cross-government climate action coordination
- Increase access to financing for climate change actions
- Extend and expand partnerships with the private sector, including through a “Framework for a Common Climate Action Agenda” to ensure a cross-sectoral and whole of society approach in accelerating climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience measures that will contribute to national development priorities.

“Collective Climate Action Now! When we work together to exchange knowledge, share experiences, and design innovative solutions, there is no challenge we cannot overcome, not even the climate crisis.”

- President Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera at the National Green Climate Conference



President Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera stands with members of the Women’s Network on Climate Change as they display key priorities for climate action (Photo credit: Philip Pemba)

OVERVIEW OF RECENT AND CURRENT ADAPTATION PROJECTS

SOURCES OF CLIMATE FINANCE

Climate action in Malawi is undertaken by a number of actors, including government, non-government organisations and the private sector, and is funded by a variety of sources, including bilateral and multilateral donors, international climate finance, and with some support from the domestic national budget.

Malawi currently has one project under implementation funded by the Green Climate Fund (covering climate information and early warning systems). Four projects are currently under implementation or approved and funded by the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), covering water and sanitation, fisheries and aquaculture and climate-resilient planning. Another three LDCF projects have recently completed (covering agriculture, climate information and early warning and climate-resilient planning). Two projects are under implementation funded by the Adaptation Fund, covering urban resilience and agriculture and food security.



Climate change threatens rural livelihoods, and so much adaptation action focuses on the NDC priority areas of climate-smart agriculture, livestock and fisheries, and healthy and protected people (Photo credit: BRACC programme)

The Climate Investment Funds, through the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience, is supporting adaptation through water resources management.

Bilateral donors that are actively supporting climate action through adaptation include the UK, USA, EU, Germany, Norway, Ireland, Belgium (Flanders) and Japan.

THEMATIC PRIORITIES

When adaptation projects are mapped against the six priority thematic areas identified in the NDC, there is a variable distribution (Figure 1). Climate-smart agriculture, livestock and fisheries is addressed the most frequently, which is not surprising given the importance of these sectors for Malawi's economy and livelihoods.

Large numbers of projects also contribute to healthy and protected people, which is important given the vulnerability of Malawi's population. Similarly large numbers address effective and efficient early warning systems which are critical to reduce the risk of extreme events such as floods and droughts. Climate-proofed infrastructures, buildings and energy systems are only addressed by a handful of adaptation projects. However, in the case of energy note that this adaptation priority is for the resilience of infrastructure and does not include projects in the energy sector designed for mitigation, for example investments in solar PV and wind.

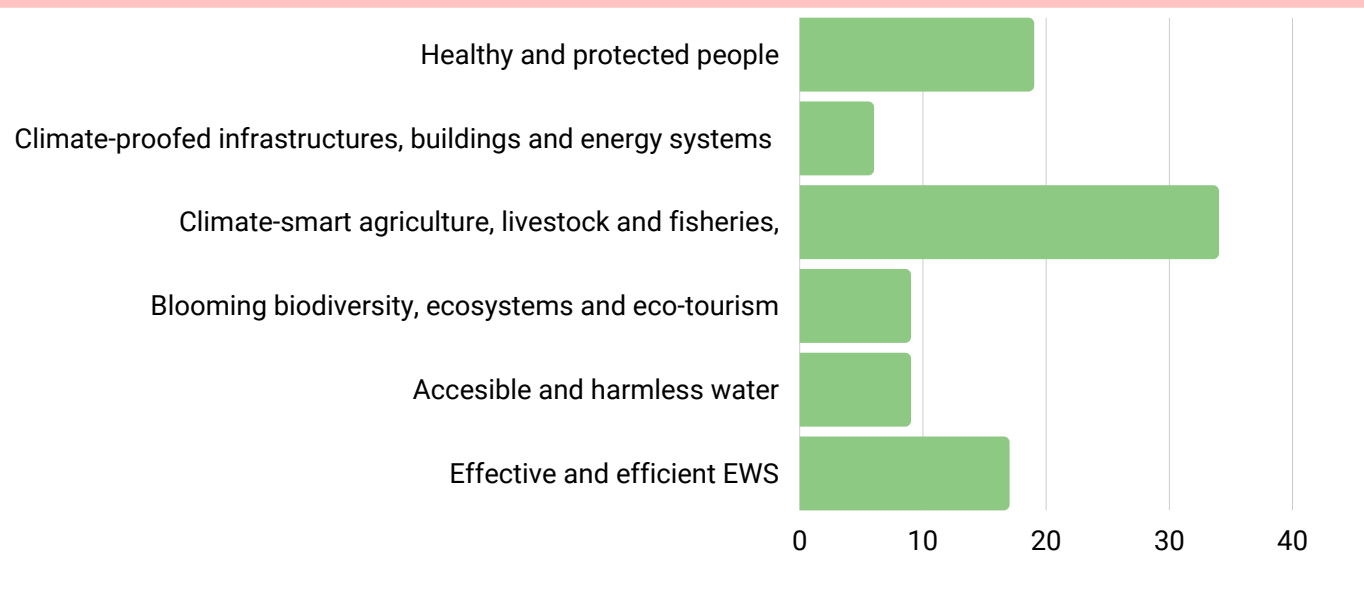


Figure 1: Number of current and recently-finished adaptation projects addressing adaptation thematic priorities in the NDC (note projects can address more than one thematic priority)

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Adaptation projects are taking place across the country with every district having at least one project covering it. However relatively speaking the greatest emphasis is in the Southern Region, with Zomba having 15 projects, Balaka and Machinga having 13 each, and Chikwawa and Mangochi having 12 each (Figure 2).

According to the Third National Communication to the UNFCCC, many of the lowland districts in the Southern Region have high levels of exposure to weather extremes (floods, droughts and strong winds, including the consequences of tropical cyclones in the Mozambique channel) combined with vulnerability across multiple sectors.

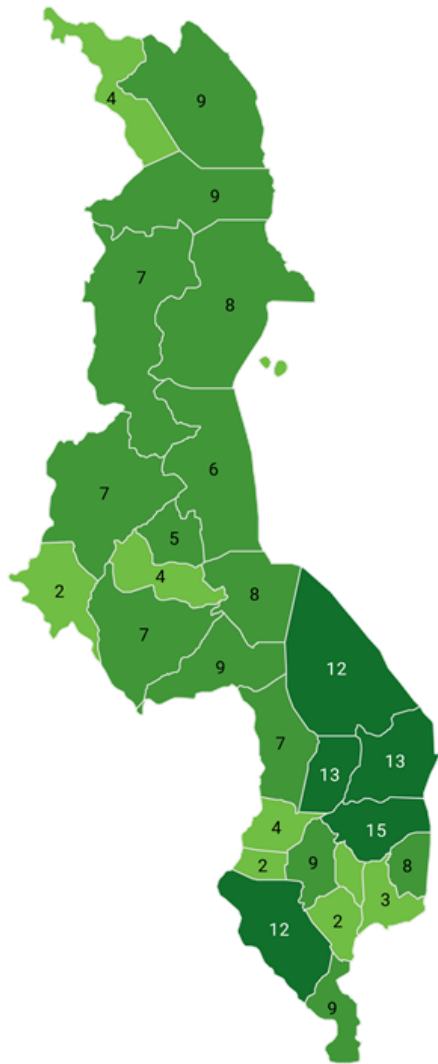


Figure 2: Distribution of adaptation projects across Malawi’s 28 districts (note: does not include projects with national coverage or where the districts of operation are unspecified)

SELECTED ADAPTATION PROJECTS

BUILDING RESILIENCE AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE (BRACC)

AIM:	To contribute to a reduction in extreme poverty and end the recurrent cycle of hunger and humanitarian assistance in Malawi through strengthening resilience of an estimated 1.7 million people to withstand current and future weather and climate related shocks and stresses. The programme does this through taking market-based approaches to develop climate-resilient livelihoods; developing scalable social safety net systems that respond more predictably and efficiently to weather and climate related shocks; and addressing environmental degradation that increases vulnerability to extreme weather events.
FUNDER:	UKAID through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
IMPLEMENTERS:	Concern Worldwide, CUMO, FAO, GOAL, Kadale Consultants, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Resident Coordinator's Office, United Purpose, WFP (PROSPER); GIZ on behalf of the German Government (Social Protection for Ultra-Poor People in Malawi); Tetra Tech in partnership with CEPA, Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, Winrock International, World Resources Institute, mHub (Modern Cooking for Healthy Forests); African Parks (Building Climate Resilience in Communities Surrounding Protected Areas); CDM, CEPA, Kulima Integrated Development Solutions, NIRAS-LTS International, ODI (BRACC Knowledge and Policy Hub)
DISTRICTS OF OPERATION:	Balaka, Chikwawa, Mangochi, Phalombe (PROSPER) Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu, Zomba, Salima, Dedza, Mzimba, Nkhata Bay (MCHF), Chikwawa, Nkhotakota (African Parks), national (GIZ and BRACC Hub)
ADAPTATION THEMATIC AREAS:	(ii) Accessible and harmless water (iii) Blooming biodiversity, ecosystems and eco-tourism (iv) Climate-smart agriculture, livestock and fisheries (v) Climate-proofed infrastructures, buildings and energy systems (vi) Healthy and protected people

SCALING UP THE USE OF MODERNIZED CLIMATE INFORMATION AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

AIM:	Targets vulnerable communities, including women, in selected areas to access and use climate related risk information to enhance livelihoods and increase resilience by 2023. This is achieved through improving the capacity of the hydro-meteorological network, developing and communicating agriculture-focused advisories, and strengthening community-based early warning systems. The project has 2.1 million direct beneficiaries who will gain access to critical weather information, with 3 million indirect beneficiaries.
FUNDER:	Green Climate Fund
IMPLEMENTERS:	Department of Disaster Management Affairs (in partnership with the Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services, Department of Fisheries, Department of Irrigation and Water Resources, Department of Agriculture Extension Services and National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi) and UNDP
DISTRICTS OF OPERATION:	Improving climate information across all 28 districts; scaling up community-based early warning systems in Karonga, Salima, Dedza, Nkhosha, Nkhosha Bay, Rumphi, Phalombe and Zomba
ADAPTATION THEMATIC AREAS:	(i) Effective and efficient EWS (iv) Climate-smart agriculture, livestock and fisheries

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