

Integrating climate change action across the Australian international development sector: Setting the scene for ANGOs

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AUSTRALIAN
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1. Introduction

1.1 WHY IS CLIMATE CHANGE INTEGRATION IMPORTANT FOR ACFID MEMBERS?

Climate change is a major global risk to sustainable development. As Earth warms faster than at any other point in recorded history, changing and less predictable weather patterns are causing harm to humans, ecosystems we depend on and the places we live.

Climate change is an urgent issue, requiring a response within all sectors and all scales across the globe. Addressing climate change is a critical issue for the international development sector because of the interlinkages between climate change, poverty, injustice and inequality. Communities experiencing poverty and marginalised people are affected first and worst due to pre-existing vulnerabilities. Climate change also exacerbates fragility and conflict and amplifies food and water resource scarcity. System transformation of the development sector is therefore needed to ensure climate change does not reverse development progress. All ACFID members have a role to play in this system transformation, which includes integration of climate action within aid and development programs.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is aimed at ACFID members, and it describes the system in which Australian NGOs (ANGOs) operate for integrating climate change considerations in their development programming. This document also provides a background of the types of climate change programming ANGOs undertake, and their local engagement approaches in-country – and provides links to the ACFID Climate Action Framework (described in Section 1.2) where possible.

BOX 1: BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

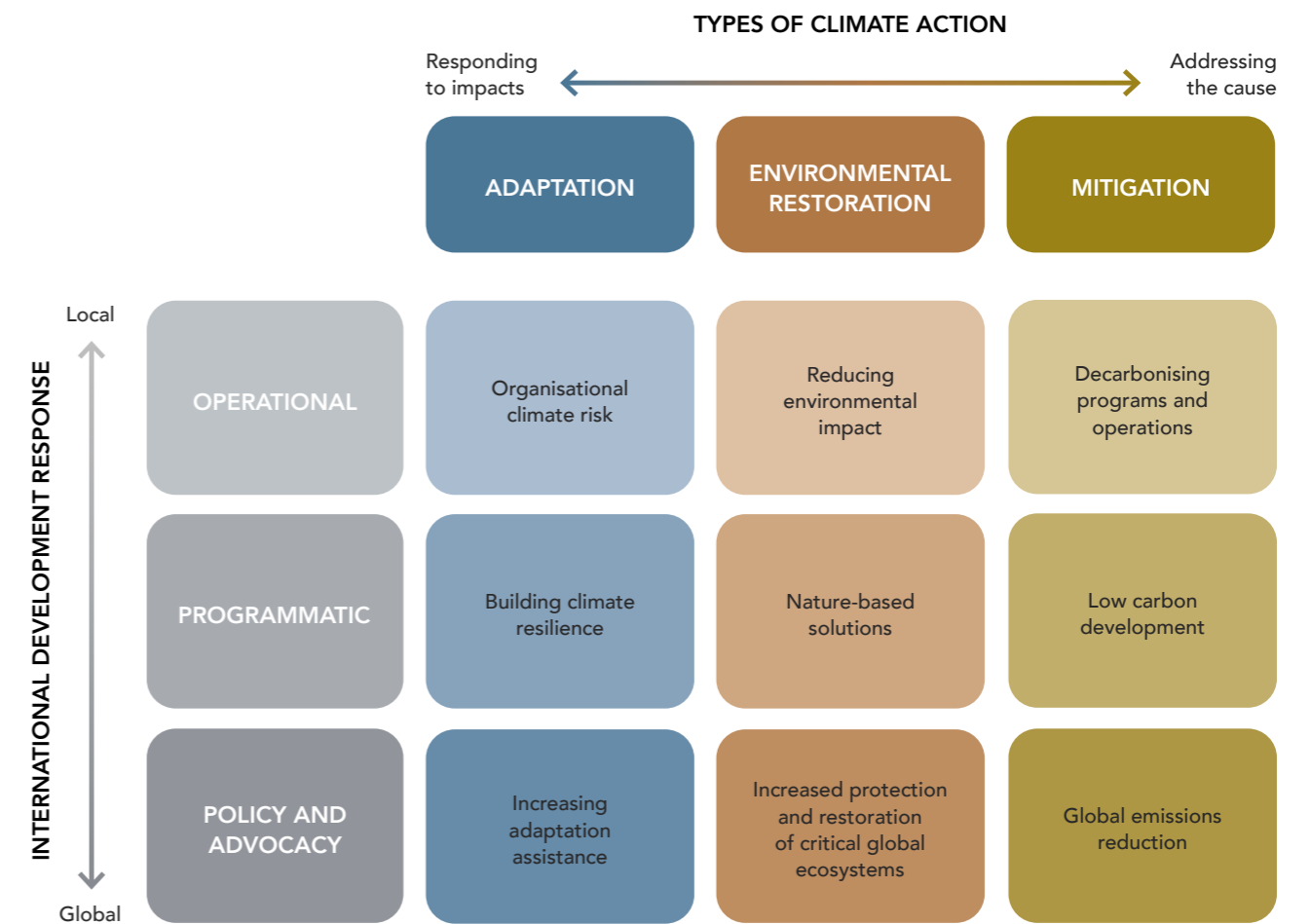
This document has been prepared by the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology (ISF-UTS). Evidence and findings presented in this document are drawn from two phases of research. The first phase of the research involved a project undertaken over 2021-2022, funded by the Australia Pacific Climate Partnership (APCP) Support Unit titled 'Climate Change Action through Civil Society Programs'. The methodology for phase one involved ISF-UTS working closely with Australian and Pacific non-government organisations (NGOs) to explore enablers and best practices associated with climate change integration in NGO programming. The project involved a Reference Group of experts, participatory workshops, key informant interviews, online surveys, focus group discussions and collective sensemaking and validation activities. It also involved a desktop review to understand aspects of ANGO programming relevant to climate change risk and sector-based programming in the Pacific. The methodology for phase two involved ISF-UTS engaging with the Climate Change Working Group within ACFID's Development Practice Committee (DPC), drawing on the findings from the APCP-funded research. While no new data was collected, the Working Group supported ISF-UTS to present phase one findings to be fit-for-purpose for the ANGO sector and ACFID members.

1.3 ACFID'S CLIMATE ACTION FRAMEWORK

ACFID's Climate Action Framework provides a typology of climate actions relevant to ANGOs, and includes adaptation, environmental restoration, and mitigation. The aim of the framework is to increase the understanding of the types of action that can be undertaken at different activity levels and provide clearer entry points for organisations wanting to start working on climate change or seeking to step up their work.

ACFID's Climate Action Framework is an important start. However, many ANGOs within the sector are seeking further support and more detailed guidance to significantly and rapidly shift practices to respond effectively to climate change impacts on human development and to ensure any specific climate actions undertaken by development actors centre marginalised communities' needs, priorities and leadership in driving solutions.

FIGURE 1: ACFID CLIMATE ACTION FRAMEWORK



This document provides links between past research on integrating climate change considerations in development programming, and the ACFID Climate Action Framework.

2. Findings

BOX 2: MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

Mitigation activities were not raised as key focus areas of the ANGOs participating in this research. While mitigation is a critical part of climate action, it represents a priority of fewer ACFID members as compared to adaptation and environmental restoration. This is in part because ACFID members often support communities directly experiencing climate change impacts, where actions to reduce vulnerability and build resilience are prioritised. Climate mitigation activities are often led by government or private sector where NGO roles are to support community perspectives to influence design and construction. ANGOs also have a role in influencing government and private sector actors directly in the Australian landscape. For these reasons, actions related to mitigation are not included in this research, and future work might consider exploring ANGO roles further in this space.

BOX 3: WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'INTEGRATION'?

Climate change 'integration' means consideration of climate risks across policy, programming and practice. Rather than having separate climate change programs, or considering climate change a 'sector' on its own, climate change integration means taking steps to consider the risks and opportunities associated with climate change across development programming. Much like the way the international development sector has made progress in considering gender and social inclusion, the sector now needs to consider climate change as a critical aspect of programming, no matter the context or programmatic focus an organisation has.

2.1 THE SYSTEM OF INTEGRATING CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION FOR ANGOS

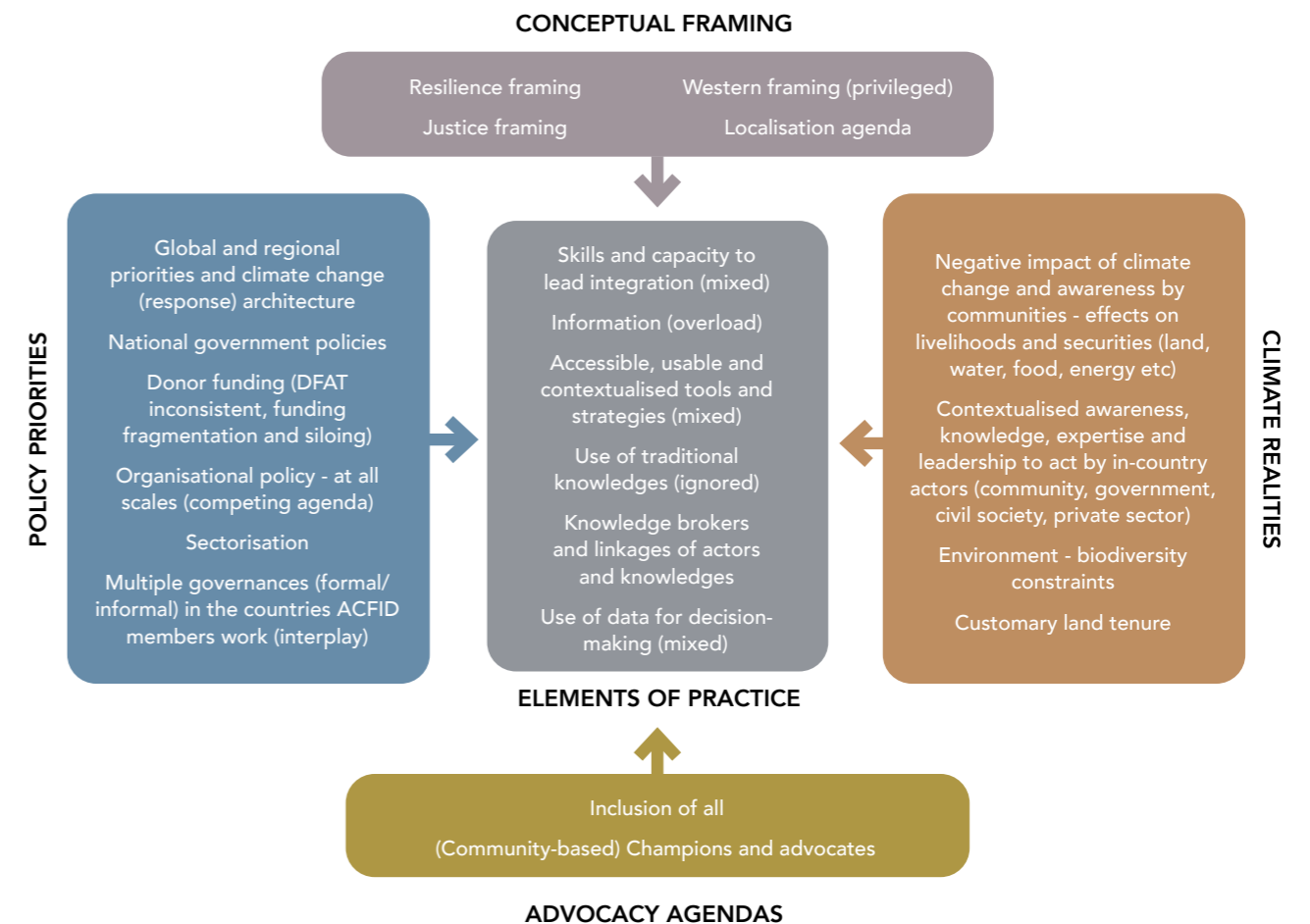
To transform ANGO practice, a systems change is required within the international development sector, as described in Section 1.1. But what is the 'system' of climate change integration? What practices does it include and what drives it?

Through a participatory process with a project Reference Group of climate change experts, a systems diagram was developed that includes current understanding of the system, its drivers and the practice of climate change and disaster resilience, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 describes broad types of drivers of ANGO climate change integration, and the 'system' in which ANGOs are operating for integrating climate change. The outside dimensions of the figure describe different types of drivers, which could enable or hinder ANGO integration of climate change and disaster resilience.

Firstly, the different sets of conceptual framing are listed across the top. Organisations, including ACFID members, conceptualise climate change integration depending on their vision, values and internal agendas. Policy priorities at different scales are listed on the left, which can either enable or hinder ANGO integration of climate change and disaster resilience. For example, 'sectorisation' refers to the consideration of climate change as a 'sector' on its own, which has a negative impact on integration.

FIGURE 2: THE PRACTICE OF INTEGRATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RESILIENCE BY ANGOS



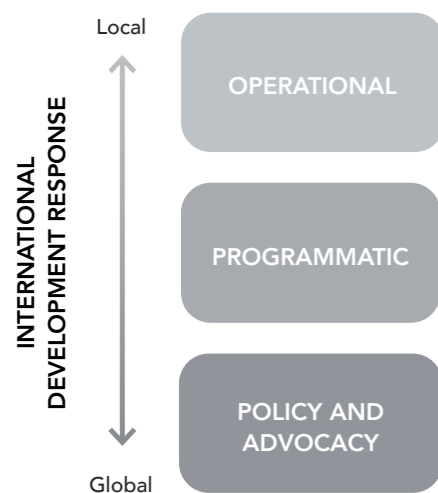
Consideration of ‘multiple governances’ is an enabling driver. Climate realities for people experiencing climate change at the local level are described on the right. Advocacy agendas are listed at the bottom of the figure.

The inside of the figure includes elements of the practice of climate change integration. These elements of practice are mixed (some are strong, others weak or mixed) as indicated within the brackets for most of the elements.

What do these findings mean for future integration of climate change and disaster resilience by ANGOs?

The findings have the following implications for ANGOs:

- **Recognising complexity:** Integration of climate change and disaster resilience is not a simple task. It requires appreciation of complexity and complex systems, and the diverse entry points ANGOs will approach integration, based on their particular programmatic focus.
- **Integration at multiple scales:** Integration practice must happen at multiple scales - community, sub-national and national levels and regionally. Within an organisation, integration also requires consideration of climate change risks and disaster resilience as part of organisational policies, programs and projects and considers how such integration contributes to planned objectives. The ACFID Climate Action Framework notes the need to work at local scale on operational activities up to global scale on policy and advocacy activities.



- **Integration needs to be informed by local context:** Local experiences, knowledge and leadership should be key elements of ANGO programming.
- **Inclusion of multiple actors:** Integration practice must involve multiple actors - community, civil society (inclusive of faith-based organisations), government and the private sector. NGOs also need to consider linking and aligning with government stakeholders and leaders at multiple scales as well.
- **Recognising multiple drivers and framings of climate action:** There are multiple drivers of integration, which influence, inform and direct practice that needs to be considered and catalysed to inform change. There are also various framings of climate action, and these have implications for advocacy efforts. NGOs should consider which drivers and framings are important to them, and also be aware of other drivers less connected to the work they do.
- **Types of integration activities:** The systems diagram reflects the perspectives of key ANGOs and climate change experts already working on climate change integration. These ANGO experiences describe work on adaptation and environmental activities, linking to two of the three aspects of the Climate Action Framework's types of climate action.

2.2 SNAPSHOT OF ANGO PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON CLIMATE CHANGE

A desktop mapping activity was undertaken, with the aim to understand the extent of civil society programming relevant to climate change, disaster risk and sector-based programming in the Pacific.

Findings are presented relating to the sector focus of DFAT-funded ANGO programs, and the local engagement approaches ANGOs take to their work on climate change programming in the Pacific as seen in Table 1 and Figure 3.

BOX 4: APPROACH

The approach to the desktop mapping activity involved analysing publicly available data from four DFAT-funded ANGO programs to explore specific dimensions of ANGO's climate change programming in the Pacific. The four programs included in the mapping are Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), Water for Women, Pacific Women. These programs were selected as they reflect the main programs through which DFAT supports civil society in the Pacific, and that had some focus on climate change and disaster resilience. Data from the four DFAT-funded programs was consolidated into a single data set for analysis, with projects between 2016 – 2021 in the Pacific being included. Data across the four programs were filtered for Pacific-only countries, then assessed manually focusing on the project title, description, sector focus and DAC codes relating to climate change and disaster resilience.

Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP)	Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP)
Water for Women	Pacific Women

TABLE 1: PROJECTS INCLUSIVE OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RESILIENCE ACROSS DFAT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

DFAT FUNDED PROJECT	MAPPED PROJECTS
ANCP	24
AHP Disaster READY	23
Water for Women	6
Pacific Women	1
TOTAL	54

FIGURE 3: NGOS INVOLVED IN THE MAPPED PROJECTS

Act for Peace	Action on Poverty	ActionAid Australia
Adventist Development & Relief Agency (ADRA)	CARE Australia	Caritas Australia (CAN DO)
ChildFund	Engineers Without Borders Australia	Habitat for Humanity Australia
International Water Centre (IWC)	Live and Learn	Muslim Aid Australia International
Oxfam Australia	Plan International Australia	Save the Children Australia
Shifting the Power Coalition	WaterAid	World Vision Australia
World Wide Fund for Nature Australia (WWF-AU)		

2.2.1 ANGO SECTOR FOCUS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE INTEGRATION IN THE PACIFIC

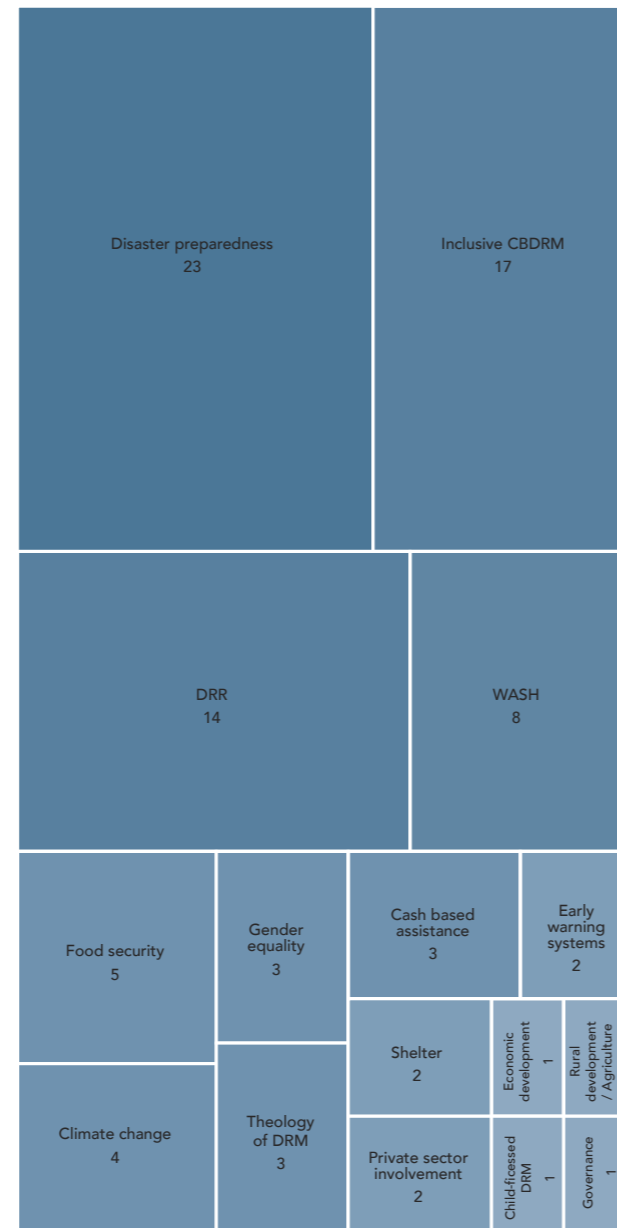
Data gathered from climate change and disaster related DFAT-funded ANGO programs in the Pacific were analysed to explore the sectors ANGOs were focused on in their climate change-related programming. Results show programs work across 16 sectors.

Figure 4 highlights the dominance of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and preparedness, in part driven by the focus of the AHP programs which make up a large proportion (43%) of the dataset. ANGOs also work across multiple other sectors to integrate climate change.

The low number of projects classed as 'climate change' reflects how ANGOs are already integrating climate change and disaster resilience as opposed to describing climate change as a stand-alone 'sector'. Three of the four projects classed as 'climate change' were also tagged to the 'gender' sector. The remaining 'climate change' project was focused on collaboration and learning.

Livelihood and food security projects with a climate change or disaster resilience focus are not reflected in the data (Figure 4) as significant priorities for ANGOs. This may reflect a limitation of the data, or may be due to climate change not being an explicit priority within DFAT over the 2016-2021 timeframe, thus ANGOs may not have directly identified climate change in project reporting e.g., within project titles or descriptions.

FIGURE 4: SECTORAL FOCUS OF THE DFAT-FUNDED ANGO PROGRAMS¹



1 From Figure 4: Inclusive Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM); Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR); Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH); Disaster Risk Management (DRM)

What do these findings mean for future integration of climate change and disaster resilience by ANGOs?

The findings have the following implications for ANGOs:

- **Learning from disaster resilience experiences:** There is opportunity for ANGOs experienced in disaster resilience to share lessons of best practice, and how this is done in the context of localisation, working with partners and using non-technical approaches which could support ANGOs less experienced with embedding climate change into their programming.
- **Opportunity to leverage local knowledge and leadership:** Pacific leadership in the disaster resilience sector is strong, across civil society and government. This presents an opportunity for ANGOs to partner with organisations and communities already leading on disaster resilience, and find ways to strengthen the future focus on climate change risks.
- **Dominance of adaptation and environmental projects:** Findings demonstrate the strong connection to the Adaptation and Environmental Restoration aspects of the ACFID Climate Action Framework. These examples of practice will likely be useful for ANGOs new or less experienced in climate change integration.
- **Opportunity to strengthen climate and disaster risk integration:** This desktop mapping activity exposed the large number of DFAT-funded Pacific projects that do not prioritise climate and disaster risk as a focus area, particularly in the ANCP dataset. This demonstrates the need for many Pacific projects to strengthen the ways climate change risks are considered and addressed.

2.2.2 ANGO'S LOCAL ENGAGEMENT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMMING

The international development sector has made commitments to progress the localisation agenda. In practice, one aspect of localisation relates to the ways in which ANGOs implement their programs, and who their implementation partners are. Findings presented here describe how ANGOs engage with local partners and who they engage with in the Pacific.

Types of partners on each ANGO project: For projects with information available on in-country partners², results show that the most common type of in-country partner was other NGOs (25 projects). This was followed by national and sub-national governments (12 and 10, respectively). The remaining partner types were fewer as seen in Figure 5. Within AHP, ANCP and Pacific Women, there was a relatively equal spread of partner types. Water for Women was the only DFAT-funded program that included partnerships with Pacific-based universities.

FIGURE 5: TYPES OF ORGANISATIONS ANGOS WORK WITH IN-COUNTRY



2 Gaps in data included information about ANGO in-country partners, i.e., who ANGOs worked with in-country. For 22 of the 54 projects, no information was available on in-country partners, and this included 19 ANCP projects and 3 AHP projects. Results presented here are for the 32 projects with available information on in-country partners.

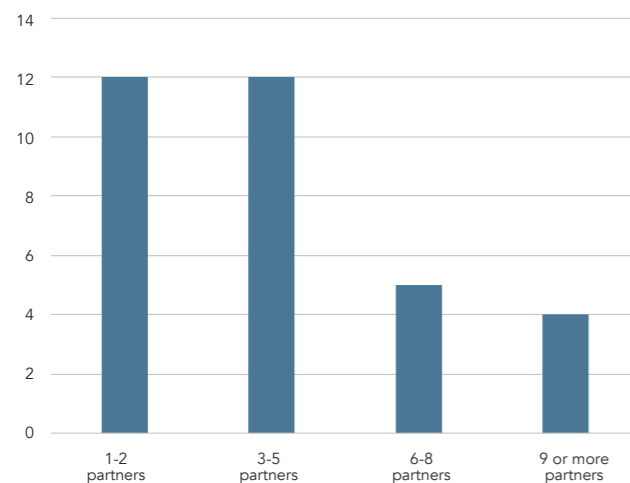
3. Further Support for Climate Change Integration

Number of partners involved in each ANGO project: For the projects where in-country partner information was available (32 out of 54), the number of partners ANGOs were working with on each of their projects was assessed, and this is provided in Figure 6. For example, World Vision Australia’s AHP Disaster Ready project titled “Building Resilient Communities in Solomon Islands” listed five partners.

Figure 6 shows that 12 projects had one or two in-country partners, and 12 projects had three to five in-country partners. Five projects had six to eight in-country partners and another four projects had nine or more partners.

Overall, this shows that for 63% of ANGO projects (20 out of 32 projects), there were three or more in-country partners involved. This reflects the multiple ways ANGOs are engaging on climate change and disaster resilience in the Pacific.

FIGURE 6: NUMBER OF PARTNERS ON EACH ANGO PROJECT



What do these findings mean for future integration of climate change and disaster resilience by ANGOs?

The findings have the following implications for ANGOs:

- **Diverse partnerships should continue:** ANGOs are working with multiple and diverse partners (over 60% working with more than one type of partner) which should continue. Diverse partnerships help to achieve impact on climate change and disaster resilience by targeting multiple entry points within the system they are trying to influence (e.g., national government, NGO, UN), and may reflect some ANGO’s commitments to the localisation agenda.
- **Stronger collaboration is possible:** There is opportunity for stronger collaboration between ANGOs working in same country contexts. Based on the multiple connections that ANGOs have, it is likely that they are working with the same organisations in country. These connections and common networks might be better supported, harmonised and leveraged to influence and inform climate change integration.
- **Working at multiple scales continues to be important:** NGOs are used to working at multiple scales with connections between sub-national and national levels which will need to continue. This is particularly important, given the impacts of climate change are felt locally, and actions and decisions at national, regional and global levels influence the future extent of climate impacts. Recognising work and connections between scales is also described in the ACFID’s Climate Action Framework, particularly relating to Adaptation Actions.

ACFID members can access further support for climate change integration through the following channels:

- Participating in ACFID’s “Climate Policy and Practice” Community of Practice
- Accessing resources through ACFID’s Climate Action Resource Hub
- Diplomatic Academy – Climate Change, Energy and the Environment Toolkit
- World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal and Climate Risk Country Profiles





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Cover photo: Women from Wala Island, Malampa Province, Vanuatu, participate in activities and discussions to learn about their resilience to climate change and disasters. Photo: Anna Gero.

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