



Adaptation Research Alliance

# TRACKING, LEARNING & SHARING WORKSTREAM OVERVIEW DOCUMENT

ADAPTATION RESEARCH ALLIANCE

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2021

## 1) Introduction

The Adaptation Research Alliance is a global collaborative effort to catalyse increased investment and capacity for action-orientated research that supports effective adaptation to climate change – primarily in developing countries – at the scale and urgency demanded by the science. The ARA aims to promote evidence-based solutions that best serve those most

### ARA Key Activity Areas

1. Principles & membership campaigns
2. Tracking, sharing & learning
3. Evidence reviews – and analytical backstopping
4. Consultative processes for identifying research needs & opportunities
5. Co-creation space for network formation, coalition building and new programme development
6. COP-26 & UNFCCC linkages

vulnerable to climate change. This requires an agile ecosystem of action research, with alignment among all influential actors in this nexus: action funders, research funders, policy-makers, beneficiaries on the frontlines of climate change, researchers and intermediaries.

Following the initial consultative phase which counted heavily upon the three ARA working groups (WG 1: Governance, WG 2: Resource Mobilization, WG 3: Action Research), 6 key activity areas have emerged for the next phase of ARA development.

The following concept note outlines the approach for achieving the Key Activity Area 'Tracking, Learning and Sharing' in actualising the vision of the ARA in the run up to COP 26 and beyond. This document serves to provide a direction and insight as to the shape of this workstream, which we invite you to join and co-develop in close collaboration with the ARA Secretariat.

## 2) Overview & Objective(s)

The ARA is committed to “enhanced learning by better engaging the research community in monitoring, evaluation and assessment activities,

improved knowledge management and peer to peer networks across the research and action communities.”<sup>1</sup>

This workstream document outlines how the ARA will deliver this outcome by designing and establishing a framework and systems for Tracking, Learning and Sharing that will facilitate ARA members, their partners and other stakeholders collectively to:

- 1) **track** their progress toward the achievement of the ARA Outcomes,
- 2) actively **learn** about what works and what does not when designing, conducting and using action-oriented research on climate change adaptation,
- 3) **share** learning with each other and with other stakeholders in the adaptation ecosystem.

A Tracking, Learning and Sharing (TLS) approach has been adopted rather than a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) approach. This choice has been made to avoid the implication, often carried by MEL systems, that results will be subject to some form of external judgement and accountability (normally a donor). MEL systems are commonly designed to measure and report on the whether a project, programme or organisation has met certain targets, using concrete standardised indicators, with a view either to informing programmatic decision making or funding decisions.

A MEL approach does not conform with the overall ambition of the ARA's Outcome 5, which focuses on learning, knowledge management and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing. It is also not suitable for application across a wide range of organizations and institutions that are highly diverse in terms of their strategic mandates, technical expertise, capabilities, access to resources, etc. and which are likely to take very different approaches in contributing towards the Outcomes of the ARA and in applying its Principles.

This implies the need for an approach that is less focused on monitoring and evaluating performance against concrete indicators, and one that is more focused on supporting members and other stakeholders to:

- actively **reflect** on and **learn** from their experiences as they design, conduct and use action-oriented research on climate adaptation
- **share** the **lessons** they have learned with one another and with other stakeholders

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<sup>1</sup> Outcome 5 in the ARA Theory of Change

- **track their progress** as a means of identifying and addressing challenges, improving their capabilities over the long term and soliciting support from other stakeholders

a) **Objectives**

1. ARA Secretariat is able to **track** and report progress of the Alliance against its Theory of Change, i.e. extent to which the ARA's principles and planned activities are contributing to the achievement of the ARA's outcomes and impacts
2. ARA Secretariat, ARA members and their partners are able to **track** and report their progress toward achieving the ARA Outcomes and operationalising the ARA Principles
3. ARA members and partners actively **learn** from their experience of designing, conducting and using action oriented research for adaptation and apply their learning to improve performance of adaptation initiatives
4. ARA members and partners actively **share** learning between themselves and with other stakeholders in the adaptation ecosystem using both online and in-person formats

The workstream will achieve these objectives by implementing three main tasks:

1. Develop a **Tracking, Learning and Sharing framework**: This framework will provide an overall description of the ARA approach to tracking progress, fostering learning and sharing knowledge.
2. Design and establish **systems for tracking progress** of the ARA, its members and partners, toward achieving the ARA's outcomes and operationalising its principles
3. Design and establish **systems and approaches** for the ARA, its members and partners **to learn** from their experiences, to **share their knowledge** and to learn from one another, and to share their progress and their knowledge with external stakeholders
4. **Support ARA members and partners** to actively reflect, learn and share knowledge on AOR using the ARA systems and via online and live events.

## b) Contribution to achieving outcomes in the ARA Theory of Change

Outcome	Workstream contribution
1. Increased profile for action-oriented research (AOR) for climate adaptation	The TLS framework and systems will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) enable the ARA, its members, partners and other stakeholders to generate evidence and stories on the use of action-orientated research for adaptation</li> <li>2) provide a platform for communicating evidence and stories about AOR and adaptation to external audiences</li> </ol>
2. Increased funding in developing countries for action-orientated research on adaptation and resilience	The TLS framework and systems will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) enable the ARA, its members, partners and other stakeholders to showcase their results and learnings to action funders</li> <li>2) enable action funders to access evidence on how AOR and the application of the ARA principles contribute to improved adaptation impacts for vulnerable people</li> <li>3) enable action funders to identify partners or programmes that they might have an interest in funding</li> </ol>
3. Enhanced impact of research investments through better coordination, prioritisation and uptake	The TLS framework and systems will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) enable action funders and adaptation practitioners to uptake AOR by providing a platform through which they can access learning, knowledge and evidence from ARA members and partners</li> <li>2) enable improved coordination of research investments by collating and communicating data on AOR projects and programmes planned or implemented by ARA members and partners</li> <li>3) provide a platform for action funders to coordinate with one another and with other ARA members and partners on the design of new research and adaptation initiatives</li> </ol>
4. Capacity built at individual and institutional levels	The TLS framework and systems will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) enable ARA members, partners and other stakeholders to generate, share and access knowledge and learning on AOR for adaptation</li> <li>2) enable members, partners and other stakeholders to increase capacity by engaging in peer-to-peer learning networks/groups</li> <li>3) provide an interactive space in which researchers, funders and practitioners can share learning and knowledge on AOR and on adaptation</li> </ol>
5. Enhanced learning and improved research uptake in implementation	The TLS framework and systems will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) foster learning on AOR between ARA members, partners, funders and other adaptation stakeholders</li> <li>2) facilitate researchers and practitioners to build relationships</li> <li>3) enable researchers to feed evidence and learning into policy development and project design</li> </ol>

	<p>4) support improved knowledge management and peer-to-peer networks across the research and action communities, contributing to increased knowledge and awareness of AOR and adaptation research by planners and decision makers</p>
<p>6. Strengthened collaboration across countries (South-South, South-North) disciplines and scales.</p>	<p>The TLS framework and systems will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) create spaces in which ARA partners from the South and North can share information and learning</li> <li>2) support the development of the ARA as a global multi-stakeholder coalition that is co-developed by southern and northern stakeholders to improve understanding of risks and promote development of locally-relevant solutions</li> </ol>

### 3) Activities

This workstream will be developed through a consultative process in which prospective ARA members will be engaged to co-develop the TLS framework and to map out the longer-term agenda for tracking progress, learning and sharing knowledge. This approach will ensure that the workstream takes into account the diverse ideas and priorities of prospective members, and considers their different capabilities and access to resources.

Generally speaking the TLS approach will be one that favours and facilitates **self-directed tracking, learning and sharing by ARA members and partners**. It is envisaged that the TLS framework and systems will support ARA members and partners to define for themselves:

- 1) how they will contribute to the achievement of the ARA outcomes and the operationalisation of the ARA principles
- 2) how they will track their own progress in doing so
- 3) what and how they will learn from their experiences
- 4) what and how they will share learning and knowledge with one another and with other stakeholders

A TLS Task Force will be constituted to support the co-development process. It is envisaged that this Task Force will assume responsibility for coordinating the TLS workstream, for establishing and implementing the TLS framework, and for steering its evolution to meet the needs of members, partners and other stakeholders over the long term. **The workstream will be delivered through the following iterative process - activities may be implemented concurrently rather than consecutively:**

1. Review of good practice: Mapping and review of similar frameworks and systems in the adaptation/resilience space to gather learning on good practice, to ensure alignment, maximise synergies and reduce duplication

of effort, for instance: Race to Resilience, Global Resilience Partnership, Resilience Knowledge Coalition, Climate Knowledge Brokers, Community Based Adaptation Network, WeAdapt.

2. Preparation of a TLS framework outline: Develop an outline of the TLS framework. This draft will present the overall objectives, principles and approach of the TLS framework, including recommendations for the design of systems and processes for tracking the progress of ARA partners against the principles and outcomes of the Alliance, for creating knowledge, learning and sharing knowledge via online platforms and offline events. It will include suggestions for metrics that might be used to track progress against the outcomes and principles, but these will be validated through consultations with members and partners.

3. Engagement and consultation: Prospective ARA members and partners will be invited to complete an online survey through which they will provide their views on how the TLS framework and systems should be designed and operationalised. The outline of the TLS framework will be presented to an ARA partners and community meeting, in which feedback will be solicited. Following that meeting a core group of interested members and partners will be invited to form the Task Force on TLS and to feed into the finalisation of the framework.

4. Refining the framework: Following the partners and community meeting a full version of the framework will be drafted, in collaboration with members of the Task Force. A workshop will be convened in which ARA members will be asked to a) point out the gaps in the framework; b) improve and strengthen the framework using their own understanding. The framework will then be revised and finalized.

5. Socialising the framework: Once finalized the framework will be socialized across a wider group of ARA members and partners than were engaged in its preparation. A dissemination workshop will be held online to take them through the framework and they will be invited to sign up for a bi-lateral meeting to explore how they can operationalise the framework to track their progress, support learning and to share knowledge with other stakeholders.

6. Operationalising the framework: The TLS framework will be accompanied by ToRs for the design and establishment of the systems required for its operationalisation. These will include: job specifications for Secretariat staff to coordinate and manage TLS systems and activities of the ARA; a draft budget for TLS operations of the ARA; ToR for the design of an online TLS platform, including members only and public spaces; ToRs for the design and delivery of regular learning events (hybrid online

and offline). The ARA Secretariat, in collaboration with the TLS Task Force will then recruit or contract qualified people or companies to build and manage the TLS systems for the life of the Alliance.

#### 4) Outputs & Deliverables

1. Inception and planning meeting
2. Review of literature and similar initiatives
3. 10 Key Informant Interviews
4. 4 consultative meetings with members
5. A zero draft TLS framework
6. Validation workshop with members
7. Final TLS framework document
8. ToRs for operationalisation of the TLS framework
9. Dissemination workshop
10. Bi-lateral member sensitisation meetings

#### 5) Key Milestones

- Jul - Aug 2021: Review good practice examples
- Aug 2021: Begin drafting TLS framework outline
- Aug 2021: Conduct online survey with members
- Aug - Sept 2021: Present framework outline at partners and community meeting
- Oct 2021: Zero draft framework
- Oct 2021: Validation workshop with members
- Oct - Nov 2021: Finalise TLS framework and draft ToRs
- Nov - Dec 2021: Socialise framework with members - workshop and meetings

#### 6) Resource Requirements

To achieve the outputs and outcomes of this workstream, resources across the following categories will be required:

- **logistical support:** in developing events, the workstream will require logistical supporting, including: Setting up zoom events; inviting participants and speakers; tracking member participation to ensure representation.



- **technical support:** events and engagements will need support in terms of access and use of remote conferencing platforms and collaboration software.
- **communications support:** resources to properly publicise and market ARA events and key moments across the calendar to ensure participation
- **editorial support:** outputs, including the TLS framework, will require editorial resources for high quality edit and publication.

In operationalising the TLS framework, more resources are likely to be needed in terms of, for instance, supporting an online space/platform for sharing learning (if that is endorsed as a tool by the members).

## 7) Engagement Opportunities

To ensure effective collaboration throughout the delivery of this workstream, the membership will be engaged in such a way to further consolidate their interest in and support for the TLS framework:

- Members will be invited to help co-develop the framework through online survey, consultation meetings and the Task Force
- Members will validate and revise the draft framework via a validation workshop
- Members will be encouraged to adapt implementation of the framework to their needs, priorities and capabilities
- The co-development process and the framework itself will support members to engage actively with each other and provides the basis for long term peer to peer sharing and learning via online and offline spaces
- A TLS Task Force group will be established through which members can oversee the implementation of the framework and adjust it as required using adaptive approach

### a) Task Force Role & Responsibilities

A Task Force will be convened comprising individuals from the ARA Secretariat, ARA members, and members of the IIED team. The Task Force will guide and contribute to the development of the TLS framework and will oversee the planning and operationalisation of TLS systems and activities. ARA members will also be invited to engage in the workstreams

in a variety of ways – from planning & guiding the work stream, to implementing and delivering, or simply participating in activities.

## **b) Thematic Lead**

Lead: Simon Addison (IIED)

Supporting: Clara Gallagher (IIED), Sydney Church (SSN), Aditya Bahadur (IIED)



Adaptation Research Alliance

### 8) Tentative Timeline

Outputs	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
1. Inception		■	■	■					
2. Lit Review			■	■	■				
4. Consultations				■	■	■			
5. Zero draft framework					■	■	■		
6. Workshop						■			
7. Final draft						■	■		
8. Socialise framework							■	■	■

